

# CAGED UK FARROWING SOWS

SPRING 2019

## WARNING

THIS REPORT CONTAINS  
DISTRESSING IMAGES  
AND DESCRIPTIONS OF  
ANIMAL SUFFERING

INVESTIGATOR'S ACCOUNT

## UK LAW ALLOWS THIS CRUELTY

Long after I walked away from the factory farm sheds, one fact in particular continued to shake me to my core: What I witnessed on two UK pig farms in Spring 2019 is actually legal.

Every time they 'farrow', more than half of our mother pigs are confined for up to five weeks in cages so small they can't turn around. In these tiny, narrow, unnatural spaces, they give birth and nurse their piglets.

These mother pigs are smarter than a dog. Surely it should be a crime to treat an animal like this?



My hidden camera captured the boredom these pigs endure for weeks on end. They are prisoners. These conditions are totally legal in the UK today, and represent the miserable reality endured by over 250,000 British pigs every year.

This report was heartbreaking to write, and I appreciate it may be upsetting to read. But we must expose the truth about the legal caging of British sows. If you feel able, please turn overleaf to see why our laws must change, and why urgent protection is needed for these intelligent, inquisitive, sociable, thinking, feeling animals.

Thank you for reading on...

## UK Factory Pig Farms – A mother's perspective

In both the farms I visited, the suffering inflicted upon the sows was clear and undeniable. Here are the conditions I witnessed for the mothers:



### 1. Unable to move:

Each mother pig was confined in such a cramped and restrictive space that she could not even turn around.



### 2. No access to bedding:

Beneath this sow, like so many I saw, were just plastic slats and concrete – designed for hygiene and convenience, but not for the basic needs of an animal. Driven by her powerful instinct to hollow out a comfortable bed, she scraped in vain at the bare floor.



### 3. No escape:

These mothers can't move to get a break from the persistent attention of the piglets.

A note above one pig read "V bad udder" – she tried to lie on her stomach to stop the piglets from suckling her swollen and red teats.



### 4. Dark, windowless sheds:

With no access to the outside, or in some cases even to sunlight, these animals were deprived of sight, taste or smell of the natural world.



### 5. Shamefully poor 'enrichment':

On this farm, a piece of wood chained to each barren crate was supposed to stop these intelligent animals from getting bored! I watched as, instead one sow chewed the bars of her cage in frustration.



### 6. Painful injuries:

These cages with slippery slatted floors also cause physical suffering. I saw one sow with open wounds and another with blood on her rear feet.



### 7. Trapped beside death:

Stopping sows from moving freely is supposed to reduce piglet crushing. But research proves you can keep overall death-rates down without using farrowing crates, and I saw many dead animals in these cage systems. I can't confirm how this piglet died, but it was terrible seeing the sow forced to lie on her baby when she rested.



"No animal should have to give birth and rear their young in conditions like this.

Almost all natural behaviour is denied to these intelligent creatures and this seems to me to be the very essence of cruelty."

## UK Factory Pig Farms – A piglet's perspective

The sight of the piglets, just babies, born into these conditions was also truly heart-breaking:



### 1. Tragic companionship:

In one crate I saw piglets, seeking comfort under a heat lamp, resting against the body of their seriously ill sibling.



2. Open wounds: I saw several piglets, little more than a week old, who'd already suffered agonising injuries to their feet, and one with a deep gash on its face.



3. Basic care denied: One piglet, lying in afterbirth, was struggling to breathe. His mother, forced to lie in her own waste, couldn't even turn around to see him.



### 4. Dying before they've lived:

Sows kept in cages produce less milk, putting their weaker piglets at risk. I saw dead animals lying apparently unnoticed in the crate or, in one case, discarded in an aisle.

"What I witnessed inside these sheds seemed to be just a relentless cycle of birth, death and misery. What a terrible way for piglets to experience their first weeks in this world."

## Investigator's summary

What I saw on these British pig farms shocked me, and left indelible images in my mind.

Looking into the sheds for the first time was like looking into a horror film. To me, these farming systems are barbaric. An affront to all things natural and decent.

I wanted to help these creatures, to take them away from their appalling conditions. I felt empty and powerless as I walked away, knowing that the animals had no choice but to stay and suffer.

My only hope is that the evidence, photos and footage we obtained will help people see there should be no place in our country for the cruel confinement of farm animals.

### UK FARM ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS ARE NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE

#### Farrowing crates may be legal. But they are not right.

Farming does not have to be inhumane. And the good news is that many farmers have turned their backs on cages. Almost half of the UK's sows give birth in straw-bedded pens, or in outdoor arks where they are free to roam and feel what it's really like to live.

Now we must make sure that all Britain's mother pigs, all farm animals, have the same opportunity of a life free from needless suffering. **If you are able, please make a donation today.**

#### You will be fighting to:

1. Transform animal welfare laws to ban cruelty
2. Inform consumers about the grim reality of factory farming
3. Persuade more companies to give animals a life worth living.



### TO MAKE A GIFT FOR FARM ANIMALS TODAY:

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WHERE YOU CAN ALSO WATCH OUR INVESTIGATION FILM,  
AND HELP TO SPREAD THE WORD.**