

PIG FARMING



'Free Range' pig flesh can still be factory farmed



Most pigs are kept in over crowded, filthy conditions



All pork, bacon and ham was a baby piglet



Nearly 1 million pigs are kept on farms for either breeding purposes or for fattening (and slaughter) purposes. Many of these pigs are kept in factory farm conditions and a small number are free range. There are three types of confinement used in pig farming; some farms use all three while others (including free range) may only use the farrowing and/or sow stalls. Often pig flesh will be sold as free range because the piglet who was killed was 'free range' but this does not mean that his mother was. Some free range farms use farrowing crates for the mother sows.

The three types of confinement used in pig farming are:

Sow Crate

The sow (female) is made to spend her 16 week pregnancy in a narrow stall on bare



concrete which often leads to strained muscles, inflamed joints, lesions and deformities.

Unable to turn around or lie down, one sow per stall denies social interactions. This coupled with the semi dark conditions leads to frustration.

Farrowing Crate

At the end of her pregnancy the sow gives birth in a farrowing crate which is as restrictive as a sow stall. In these cramped conditions the mother cannot build a nest for her babies, nor care or display any normal mothering behaviours. This leads to intense stress, frustration and depression. Her piglets are then taken from her at 1 month old, even though the normal weaning period would be 12 weeks. She is then impregnated again and returned to the dry sow stall.

Fattening Pens (meat pigs)

These pens provide a bleak and miserable life for the pigs that are kept in them. They are dimly lit, with no straw and bare concrete which prevents the pigs' natural urges to root in the ground. At the age of a few days old their tails are docked and

their canine teeth trimmed to minimise tail biting and cannibalism caused by the crowded and unnatural living conditions. Foot damage and leg weakness is common due to the lack of exercise.

Fattening pigs are killed at 16 -18 weeks of age for pork, or at 20 - 22 weeks of age for bacon. (The normal life span of a pig is about 15 years.) The trip to the slaughterhouse will be their first, and last, glimpse of the outside world.

At the slaughterhouse the pigs are herded up ramps where they are shot with a captive bolt pistol and are then hung up by one foot. Their throats are then slit and their blood is drained. Their young bodies are then cut up, plastic wrapped and sent to your local supermarket.

Help save these pigs from a life of suffering and an even worse death by not consuming pork, ham or bacon.

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