

**Strictly embargoed until 2.35pm, 1 December 2010**

## **New Zealand Pork Industry Supports Phasing Out of Gestation Stalls**

*Statement made by New Zealand Pork Chairman Chris Trengrove and CEO Sam McIvor*

The New Zealand pork industry supports the phasing out of gestation stalls by December 2015, announced today by Agriculture Minister David Carter.

We are collaborating with Government, the National Animal Welfare Committee (NAWAC) and farmers to facilitate this next stage in New Zealand pork production.

Today's collaboration places New Zealand pork producers at the forefront of global animal welfare.

This initiative also provides New Zealand Pork the opportunity to differentiate itself against its global competitors who continue to use gestation stalls.

We recognise that this issue is no longer just a scientific argument of whether or not gestation stalls are better for sow welfare. Consumers prefer gestation stalls are not used – we have listened and we are making a change and removing them.

There will be significant additional costs for our farmers with initial estimates in excess of \$20 million over the phase out period. To be successful this initiative will need support from the Government, consumers, the retail sector and the community. This initiative will need to see our farmers paid higher prices for locally produced pork, bacon and ham and we are looking to New Zealanders to support our local industry by buying New Zealand grown products.

We will be continuing consultation and collaboration with farmers, Government and NAWAC over coming months to develop a comprehensive working plan for the phase out by 2015.

We welcome signals from the Government that there could be assistance for farmers to help hasten changes and reduce costs during the phase out period. We will be looking to the Government for concessions to help with this including the encouragement of more consistency of the application of the Resource Management Act by local authorities, improved access to skilled labour and ongoing R&D funding to assess new housing options.

We are hopeful that retailers will also support this initiative by moving to only stock gestation stall free pork including imported pork products.

We are committed to collaborating closely with Government to help the industry to phase out gestation stalls over this time-frame and are committed to playing our part to enable this to happen.

### **Ends**

- Fact sheet follows

- Photographs attached for your use
- For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Strahan Wallis on either email: [strahan@porternovelli.co.nz](mailto:strahan@porternovelli.co.nz) or call 021 410 294.

**Note:** this release has been embargoed to give time for Agriculture Minister David Carter to make his scheduled announcement at 2.30pm.

## **About New Zealand Pork**

New Zealand Pork is the operational name for the New Zealand Pork Industry Board.

The New Zealand Pork Industry Board (NZPIB) is a statutory producer board whose establishment, object and function is governed by the Pork Industry Board Act (1997) (the Act).

For more information go to: [www.nzpork.co.nz](http://www.nzpork.co.nz) & [www.pigfarminginnz.co.nz](http://www.pigfarminginnz.co.nz)

## **About the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC)**

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) is a ministerial advisory committee established under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

The Committee's main function is to advise the Minister of Agriculture on animal welfare matters relating to farm, companion, wild and pest animals. It has a number of other functions, including providing advice on the content of codes of welfare specifying minimum standards for animal treatment and recommendations for best practice.

For more information on NAWAC go to: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regs/animal-welfare/nz/nawac>

## **Facts about New Zealand Pork**

### **Animal Health**

- The New Zealand pork industry has one of the best animal health status's in the world
- The health status of New Zealand pork is one of very few current competitive advantages over other exporting countries and those countries that export to New Zealand and compete in our domestic market
- New Zealand pork's disease freedom comes from New Zealand's relative isolation, the biosecurity policies currently in place, and the relatively low density of our pig population

### **Current use of gestation stalls**

- 60 per cent of sows (female breeding pigs) in New Zealand currently are not in gestation stalls
- Currently, on any given day, less than four per cent of New Zealand's pigs are housed in gestation stalls
- The New Zealand industry is unique in that over 40% of sows are managed outdoors.

### **New Zealand Pork Producers**

- The livelihood of New Zealand pig farmers is totally dependent on producing a high quality product. A high quality pork product requires a healthy pig and excellence in animal care. Pig farmers understand better than anyone the crucial importance of a high standard of care for each and every animal on their farm.

### **Independent welfare audit programme introduced in November 2010**

- PigCare is the name of the New Zealand pork industry's independent welfare audit programme
- The PigCare audit was developed by animal welfare experts at Massey University with input from pig farmers, pig veterinarians, and representatives from NZPork, and MAF. It was independently reviewed by members of the Animal Welfare Science Centre at Melbourne University
- Accredited New Zealand pork, bacon and ham is labelled with "100% NZ Pork" which animal welfare concerned consumers should look out for on product labels
- PigCare is administered by an independent audit organisation AsureQuality
- PigCare auditors are NZQA certified auditors with knowledge of the pork industry and pork industry practices
- AsureQuality moderates auditor assessments to ensure consistency and fairness of audit decisions
- The annual independent audit also aims to identify opportunities for farmers to continuously improve their animal welfare and farm management.

### **Imported Pork**

- Every week about 700,000kgs of pork is imported into New Zealand.
- Compared to New Zealand other countries are lagging behind in phasing out sow stalls – for example:
  - Canada, and the majority of the US have made no commitment to remove gestation stalls
  - Denmark will still be using them for four weeks in 2013 and hasn't set a total phase out date
  - Australia has proposed a phase out by 2017.
- To be sure they are buying New Zealand grown products consumers should look for the 100% New Zealand pork, bacon and ham labels