

AUSTRALIA'S PORK INDUSTRY LEADING THE WORLD ON SOW STALL FREE

Australia's pork producers continue to lead the world in moving their sow herd to sow stall free status. The release of the industry's latest Annual Industry Survey results show that most sows (55 per cent of Australia's sow herd) are now sow stall free for the full duration of their pregnancy, consistent with the industry's voluntary commitment.

The results also indicate that at any given moment, only one in four pregnant Australian sows are housed in a sow stall.

Australian Pork Limited (APL) CEO Andrew Spencer said, "This is a massive achievement by the industry since making the commitment in November 2010. To think that in just two years, most of our industry could be sow stall free is a fantastic result. It clearly shows that Australia's pork producers look likely to attain the goal of all Australian pork production free of sow stalls well before the scheduled date of 2017."

The voluntary phase out of sow stalls places the Australian industry well ahead of its global competitors on sow welfare. In Europe, pork producers are moving to limit the use of sow stalls to four weeks per pregnancy from the 1st January next year. In the US and Canada, any reference to "sow stall free" means in their terms "from confirmation of pregnancy" or up to five weeks in a gestation stall, but the vast majority of sows remain in stalls for their full pregnancy in these countries.

Currently in Australia, 65 per cent of ham, bacon and smallgoods are made from imported pork. APL is optimistic that the results of this recent survey will encourage Australian consumers to buy responsibly produced Australian pork, and urges everyone who cares about responsible pig farming to look for the pink square PorkMark when shopping for their ham and bacon. "Anyone who supports better welfare for sows could do no better than to buy Australian ham and bacon, supporting Aussie pig farmers over imports," Mr Spencer said.

"This is a positive and exciting outcome for a small but vital Australian rural industry. This result clearly shows both the leadership and genuine commitment of Australian pork farmers to the care and welfare of their animals."

Mr Spencer said, "This does not mean we can rest on our laurels. There is still a lot more work to be done in moving the remaining producers to sow stall free status. This is the challenge facing the industry in the next 12 to 24 months. For this to happen, there needs to be continuation of support from Australian consumers, governments and retailers."

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