

FARROWING CRATES IN NEW ZEALAND

WHY IT'S TIME FOR THEM TO GO

A farrowing crate is a small metal cage in which a pregnant sow is confined for close to five weeks at a time, 2-3 times a year. She is put in the crate up to five days before giving birth, until her piglets are removed at about four weeks old.

The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) estimates that there are 16,000 sows on 46 large farms that use farrowing crates.



- For the five weeks she is in the crate, the sow will be unable to turn around or move more than a few paces back and forth
- In a 2014 Horizon Poll, 77% of people supported banning farrowing crates
- They are already banned in some countries overseas (Sweden, Switzerland and Norway)
- Regulations to be introduced next year only require the crates be larger than the sow
- SPCA's Blue Tick doesn't allow farrowing crates for welfare reasons
- Sow crates, similar cages used at a different stage of the sow's pregnancy, are banned
- The bare farrowing crates deprive the sow of her natural instinct to build a nest for her piglets
- Large overseas studies have shown piglet mortality rates aren't dependant on housing
- The study done in NZ often cited by NZ Pork, did not consider a range of replacements. It only compared farrowing crates with pens so small they would be illegal in Sweden

What can be done

- Introduce a regulation phasing out farrowing crates
- Require a minimum size for farrowing pens, with enrichment, to manage piglet mortality e.g. Sweden has banned farrowing crates and requires pens to be at least 6m²

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