



Formal Complaint submitted as Ireland fails to protect the welfare of pigs

Dear Supporter,

In our last Compassion in World Farming - Ireland Newsletter, you will remember we talked about serious welfare problems for pigs on intensive farms in the Republic of Ireland.

In a typical intensive pig farm, pigs are kept inside large sheds and they can never go outside. Fattening pigs (the ones that will be slaughtered for meat) are mostly in pens with slatted floors, to allow dung to fall through. There is not a lot of room and activity is very limited, apart from eating and drinking. It's a far cry from a natural environment for pigs.

One of the most important welfare requirements for pigs reared indoors is for them to have straw or some other effective enrichment material to root in, material that they can investigate and manipulate with their sensitive noses and mouths.

Access to rooting material is *crucially important* to the welfare of pigs. Furthermore, it is a legal requirement under EU law, (the EU Pigs Directive). But, despite this, most of the intensively reared pigs in the Republic of Ireland are not provided with effective enrichment material to root in.

Without this material, there is a high risk that pigs will turn to biting the tails of their pen-mates. This abnormal behaviour can become cannibalistic and very serious wounds may be inflicted. Farmers usually deal with tail biting by docking the pigs' tails.

However, the EU Pigs Directive prohibits routine tail docking and says that before tail docking can be carried out, inadequate environmental conditions must be changed. Therefore, in a situation where pigs have no effective rooting material, tail docking is not permitted. In any case, EU law says that rooting material must be provided.

In the Republic of Ireland, most pigs on intensive farms do NOT have effective rooting material, and an EU report shows that 95% of pigs in Ireland are tail docked*.

*European Food Safety Authority report on pig tail biting, Dec. 2007



Above: a natural environment for pigs
Below: intensively reared pigs without straw



Photos © Compassion in World Farming

In January of this year, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland detailed our concerns about these breaches of EU pig welfare law in a letter to Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith. We were not reassured by the reply.

In July, we took the very serious step of submitting a Formal Complaint to the European Commission, with regard to the failure of the Irish authorities to ensure that pig farms are complying with EU law regarding the provision of enrichment material and the prohibition of routine tail docking. (You can read our Formal Complaint in full on our website at www.ciwf.ie)

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland has met with the Animal Welfare Sub Committee of **Veterinary Ireland** to discuss pig welfare, and the **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food** has now agreed to meet us.

It is very welcome that, in an article in *The Sunday Times* (9th August) **leading chefs, Richard Corrigan and Kevin Thornton**, expressed support for our Formal Complaint.

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The theme at a Euro-toques - Ireland forum in September was how pigs are reared, killed and eaten.

Euro-toques represents almost 200 of Ireland's top chefs. A survey carried out amongst its member chefs found that 88% were not happy with the quality of pork generally available in Ireland. The same percentage also had concerns about commercial production, citing feed and GMO use as the greatest concerns, followed closely by **animal welfare issues**.

Mary-Anne Bartlett, Director of Compassion in World Farming - Ireland, attended the Euro-toques forum and drew the attention of **Minister Trevor Sargent**, who made the opening speech, to the fact that EU pig welfare law is being ignored in the Republic of Ireland.

Ireland is not the only EU country where pig farms are ignoring the legal requirement for pigs to have rooting materials, and where many pigs are tail docked. Compassion in World Farming is highlighting this issue throughout the EU.

ACTION:

Please write to Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith, urging him to ensure that all pigs are provided with rooting material that allows them to properly carry out their investigation and manipulation activities, as required by the EU Pigs Directive.

Write to: Minister Brendan Smith, Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Please send us a copy of the reply you get.

BAN FUR FARMING CAMPAIGN

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland is very concerned that the killing season for mink and foxes on Irish fur farms is due to start in the coming months.

Foxes are electrocuted by means of electrodes inserted into their anus and mouth, a method which we believe is totally unacceptable.

Mink may be gassed in carbon dioxide, which a report by the EU Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW) says is "highly aversive" to mink and recommends that killing mink with this gas "should be avoided".

Carbon monoxide is also used to gas mink, sometimes produced from the exhaust gases of a modified petrol engine. Again, the SCAHAW report raises serious concerns about this method of killing.

Killing of foxes and mink takes place on the farm, with no legal requirement for a veterinarian to be present.

Please write to Minister Brendan Smith (see address above), urging him to stop the use of these inhumane killing methods and to ban fur farming.

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland was encouraged by a report in *The Irish Times* (1st October) saying that the Green Party wants to include a ban on fur farming in the new Programme for Government. At the time of writing, the Programme is still under discussion so we do not know the outcome yet. However, we welcome the Green Party's continued commitment to ending fur farming. **SEE STOP PRESS**

Mary-Anne Bartlett, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland's Director, was very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss fur farming and other aspects of farm animal welfare on **RTE's Farm News on Drivetime, RTE Radio 1, on 5th October**. You can listen to the interview from our website at www.ciwf.ie

REFORM OF CAP

Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith recently instigated a consultation process in respect of the future direction that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should take after 2013.

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland's submission argues that CAP money should be re-directed away from supporting farmers' income or production and should instead be used to support societal, environmental and animal welfare benefits that are increasingly valued by taxpayers (who fund the CAP). We propose that CAP payments should be used in areas such as care of the environment, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, food safety, preservation of the landscape, and animal welfare.

You can read our CAP Submission in full on our website at www.ciwf.ie

Supporting Compassion in World Farming - Ireland

Instead of set subscription rates, we now ask supporters to give an occasional donation of an amount they can afford. *Any donation, no matter how small, will help our work.*

Supporters, it is only because of your interest, letter-writing and generosity that Compassion in World Farming - Ireland can continue to campaign in Ireland for improvements in farm animal welfare.

Together we have already made a difference! In 2012 the ban on battery hen cages throughout the EU comes into effect; in 2013 narrow stalls for pregnant sows will become illegal (except for the first 4 weeks of pregnancy); and animals are now recognised in EU law as "sentient beings".

Thank you to each and every one of you.

Mary-Anne Bartlett

Director, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland

STOP PRESS * GOOD NEWS!**3 YEAR PHASE-OUT OF FUR FARMING IN THE NEW PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT**

The decision by the Green Party to include a 3 year phase-out of fur farming in the agreed Programme for Government marks a new era for farm animal welfare standards in the Republic of Ireland. Compassion in World Farming - Ireland congratulates the Green Party on its commitment to improving the protection of animals. The ban on fur farming will send out a strong message to the world that Ireland takes farm animal welfare very seriously. (Our view was included in articles in *The Irish Times* and *The Sun*, 12/10/09)

Fur farming is already illegal in Northern Ireland and Britain. There are 5 licensed mink fur farms in the Republic of Ireland, one of which also has a small number of farmed foxes. In 2008, nearly 130,000 mink pelts were exported from the Republic of Ireland, and 90 fox pelts (CSO figures).

SUPPORTERS, PLEASE WRITE TO THE GREEN PARTY!

Please write and congratulate the Green Party for including a 3 year phase-out of fur farming in the new Programme for Government. Write to:

Minister John Gormley
Department of the Environment,
Heritage & Local Government,
Custom House, Dublin 1

Minister Trevor Sargent
Office of the Minister of State,
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food,
Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Email: trevor.sargent@agriculture.gov.ie

Senator Dan Boyle
Seanad Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Email: dboyle@oireachtas.ie