**MEDIA RELEASE:** 11 JANUARY 2023

# Australia’s largest pork producer backtracks on ‘sow stall free’ claims after damning investigation

- Pork giant Sunpork has removed a statement from its website claiming that it has eliminated sow stalls, after an investigation by Farm Transparency Project exposed the use of cages for mother pigs in a piggery owned by the company
- The statement was on Sunpork's website up until November 2022, but has now been removed following the exposé which revealed the widespread use of sow stalls in Victorian piggeries, 5 years after the industry claimed to have phased them out
- Sunpork supplies to major supermarkets including Coles and Woolworths, and had proudly claimed themselves to be one of the first pork producers to eliminate sow stalls



Animal rights group Farm Transparency Project claims Australian pork giant Sunpork has been exposed for deceiving consumers after backtracking on its "sow stall free" claim.

An investigation by the organisation late last year revealed that sow stalls are still in use across Victorian piggeries, despite the industry promising to phase them out by 2017. The exposé included Gowanbrae Piggery in Northern Victoria, which is owned by Sunpork, a major producer of Australia’s pork products. Sunpork declined to comment or engage with the investigation at the time, however has since quietly removed a statement from its website which claimed that it was “one of the first pig producers in the country to eliminate sow stalls.”

- Archived page, 2 November 2022
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**Executive Director of Farm Transparency Project, Chris Delforce:**

“What this retraction from Sunpork tells us is that the company has no problem deceiving consumers into believing they are purchasing 'higher welfare' products. If it wasn’t for our investigation, Sunpork would have continued to claim that sow stalls weren’t in use on its farms, exploiting the expectations of most Australians who believe that cruel cages for mother pigs are a thing of the past.”

“This reinforces what we've known for years - that this industry has no intention to communicate honestly and transparently, despite knowing that animal welfare is an issue of great concern to most Australians. Investigations like this one are vital, in order to hold these industries accountable and reveal their cruel, outdated practices which, alongside sow stalls, include the mutilation of piglets without anaesthetic, the violent slaughter of sick piglets through blunt force trauma and the use of CO2 gas chambers to stun pigs before slaughter, a practice which causes unbearable suffering.”

Delforce states that his organisation is calling for a complete ban on sow cages in Australian piggeries, as well as an end to the legal exemptions that permit obscene cruelty towards farmed animals as standard industry practice.

“If there's one thing I've learned in 12 years of investigating and exposing the realities of Australian farming, it's that cruelty and violence are built into these systems. It's not enough to trust these industries to self-regulate or to rely on outdated animal welfare legislation that deliberately excludes farmed animals. We need change on a political and legal level and we need to hold these industries to account until we achieve that.”

*Original statement on Sunpork website:*

**As one of the first pig producers in the country to eliminate sow stalls, we understand that ethically reared produce is critical to success.**

All of our farms are certified by the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQ). This program provides the framework and standards by which Australian pig producers can demonstrate they are responsible farmers who care for their animals, the environment and their customers, by following safe and sustainable practices.




*Current statement on Sunpork website:*

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**Facilities related to this media release:**
Gowanbrae Piggery, Pine Lodge VIC

**Campaigns related to this media release:**
The Price of Pork
Sow stalls

*Farm Transparency Project (FTP) is a non-profit animal protection charity, dedicated to ending the abuse and exploitation of animals in farms, slaughterhouses and other commercial settings. Through comprehensive investigations, documentary films, and the creation of innovative tools and resources, FTP seeks to force industry transparency and educate consumers by shining a light on the brutal reality endured by animals in the name of profit.*