

# SHE LOVES FORAGING FOR FOOD



## Does it matter if she can't?

Foraging for food is in this young pig's nature. Just like her ancestor, the European Wild Boar, she is intelligent, inquisitive and sociable. She loves to root around, explore and forage. She also likes wallowing and living in small family groups.

Yet in many farming systems, she can't do any of this. As an adult, she will be trapped in a cage for months on end, struggling to get up and lie down, unable to even turn around.

**Welcome to the life of a pig. How you respond to the following information could help lead her to a happier, healthier life.**

# INDOOR INTENSIVE FARMING

Barren No forage or bedding Cages Signs of mental stress

## BREEDING SOW – A NON-STOP CYCLE OF TORTURE

**Early life:** The young female pig is placed in a barren pen with other females. Once she has matured, she is inseminated.

**Sow stall:** In most parts of the world\*, she is placed in a sow stall: a steel cage only a little larger than her body. There she stands isolated, on bare concrete or slats, unable to walk or turn around, let alone forage, or explore. Driven by her need to forage and eat, all she can do is bite on the metal bars of the stall.

\*Sow stalls are banned in the UK and a few other states and their use is limited across the EU and a few non-EU nations.

**Farrowing crate:** When about to give birth, the sow is moved to a small, barren farrowing crate. This is like the sow stall, with a small added section for her piglets. Driven by her powerful need to build a nest, she paws the floor, but her need remains unsatisfied.

**Birthing:** She is unable to move around throughout labour and birth. Born on a bare, often dirty floor, her piglets crawl to her teats, but she cannot turn to nuzzle or lick her piglets. She suckles them for a few weeks before they are removed for fattening.

The sow is then returned to the sow stall and repeats the cycle of sow stall and farrowing crate another two or three times before she is taken for slaughter.

## HER PIGLETS – SHORT LIVES FILLED WITH PAIN

At a few days old, her piglets have their teeth clipped and their tails docked. Outside the UK, males may suffer the pain and trauma of castration. All of these are done without pain relief.

The piglets are removed at a few weeks old and placed in an overcrowded barren pig pen. The limited space and zero enrichment create a hostile environment, with weaker piglets becoming victims of aggression and violence. Aged five to nine months old, they are taken to slaughter.



## FIVE FREEDOMS

It is internationally recognised that pigs are entitled to Five Freedoms:

**1** FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST

**2** FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT

# INDOOR ENRICHED FARMING

Straw for foraging and nesting    Space for birthing    No sow stalls

There are many farming systems that, while based on indoor systems, do not use sow stalls. They also enrich the sow's environment with forage material and straw or other bedding. Whilst farrowing crates are still widely used in these systems, crate-free alternatives have been developed and uptake is increasing.

## BREEDING SOW – MORE COMFORT

Higher welfare, enriched indoor systems provide the sow with space to forage and a comfortable resting area with straw bedding and a solid floor. While pregnant, she is given high fibre food and she lives in a group, allowing her to socialise normally.

When ready to give birth in the best indoor farms, she is not confined to a farrowing crate. She is moved to a comfortable pen with straw and no metal bars. There she can build a nest and suckle her piglets, naturally.



## HER PIGLETS – MORE FREEDOM

After weaning, her piglets are taken to indoor weaning pens. They are given straw bedding to forage and explore in. In higher welfare systems, they have more space and keep their tails, teeth and testicles intact.



**3** FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY AND DISEASE

**4** FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NATURAL BEHAVIOURS

**5** FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS

# OUTDOOR FREE-RANGE FARMING

Freedom to forage in fields   No cages   Natural behaviours

**Free-range systems allow a sow and her piglets to roam outside in fields or paddocks. Pig farms which are a mixture of indoor and outdoor systems also exist. For instance, breeding sows may live outside while her piglets may be brought indoors for rearing.**

## BREEDING SOW – A HAPPIER LIFE

The sow lives in a field with a shelter she can wander in and out of, freely. She may forage, root around, play, run, explore and bond with others. She can build a mud wallow and a straw nest for her piglets. Strong, healthy and well-exercised, she is bred for good mothering instincts.

She tends her newborns naturally, fulfilling her strong maternal needs to nurture and suckle them – she can do this for over five weeks in some organic systems. Once the piglets are removed, she is mated and returned to the field amongst a familiar group of sows.



## HER PIGLETS – RUNNING FREELY

After weaning, at four to eight weeks old, her piglets are taken to an outdoor paddock where they can forage, run, play and socialise with other piglets in more natural surroundings. They can fulfil all their natural behaviours and satisfy their intelligent inquisitiveness. They can even wallow in mud to cool down and maintain healthy skin.

Piglets in the best free-range and organic systems do not endure the painful mutilations of tail docking, teeth clipping and castration and are transported for slaughter between five and nine months old.



# KEY WELFARE ISSUES

As the world's leading organisation for farm animal welfare, Compassion in World Farming believes that all farming systems must be fit for the farm animals reared in them. We should not make animals fit into systems that cause them pain and suffering, and that deny even their most basic needs.

The following key welfare issues must be addressed through a choice of good living conditions and good farm management:

## MUTILATIONS

At a few days old, most piglets have their teeth clipped and tails docked. Outside the UK, male piglets are also castrated. Globally, in 99% of cases, these mutilations are performed without anaesthetic, causing the piglets to scream in pain. Where surgical procedures and amputations are necessary for medical reasons, pain relief should be used.



## EXTREME CONFINEMENT

Sow stalls cause physical injury, psychological stress and social deprivation. The sow cannot turn around; take exercise; socialise; dung in a separate area; wallow or forage. She may suffer reproductive and urinary disorders, hunger and psychological stress and display abnormal behaviours and apathy.

Farrowing crates also bring severe welfare issues at a vitally important time – late pregnancy, birth, nursing and weaning. She endures physical injury and psychological stress for she cannot build a nest; move or lay down comfortably; nurse her piglets properly or take a break from them.

## BARREN ENVIRONMENTS

In an intensive system, the piglet is crammed into barren conditions, with uncomfortable, partly or fully slatted flooring and zero enrichment. This leads to boredom, tail biting, frustration and aggressive behaviours.



# DOES THE LIFE OF A PIG MATTER?

Whether a sow can forage, build a nest and be free from hunger, pain and fear, depends entirely upon the farm system she is placed into, as well as its farm management. We have seen just how much this matters to her. Does it matter to you?

## MAKE IT MATTER

### Five Freedoms

All systems must provide a sow and her piglets with their Five Freedoms

### Sow stalls

Sows must not be caged in sow stalls

### Farrowing crates

Sows must not be caged in farrowing crates

### Mutilations

Piglets must keep their tails, teeth and testicles

### Forage

Pigs must be provided with straw or equivalent materials

### Slaughter

Pigs must be transported and slaughtered humanely



Farming systems and practices vary widely across the world. This brochure provides an overview of typical farming systems and the life of a sow – and her piglets - within them. How you respond to the information here could make all the difference in the world to farmed pigs.

For more information about the work of Compassion in World Farming, please visit [ciwf.org](http://ciwf.org)

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