

MPs Demand An End to Cruelty and Environmental Abuse Behind The Production Of Pork, Bacon and Ham Eaten By Millions In The UK

Miranda Richardson joined 30 MPs at an event last night at the House of Commons organised by Zac Goldsmith and The Marchioness of Worcester. They watched scenes from *Pig Business*, one of the most significant and disturbing films ever made about man's abuse of the environment and the industrialised cruelty to animals inherent in modern factory farming. Attending were many of the 79 MPs who have signed the EDM urging legislative action to tackle the issues discussed.

Scenes from the film *Pig Business* exposed the shocking details of how the often illegal methods used by major corporations not only cause needless animal suffering but wreak devastation on human health, the global environment and the livelihoods of UK pig farmers.

The experts revealed how EU laws requiring straw, (or similar enrichment material), for pigs and prohibiting routine tail docking, are being broken every day in factory farms on the continent that supply the UK retail market. Schools, prisons and hospitals, also serve this illegally produced pork or pork products such as bacon, ham and sausages. This disregard for the law on the continent is forcing UK farmers to break welfare laws in order to compete with cheap EU imports.

The Cross Party event (schedule attached) was sponsored by **Peter Ainsworth MP, Steve Webb MP and Alan Simpson MP**. After the extracts from the film *Pig Business*, there were talks from leading food and farming NGOs, health experts, BPEX and leaders of the UK's farming community.

Below are statements from Zac Goldsmith and Miranda Richardson

Actress Miranda Richardson said:

I'm attending in support of Tracy Worcester's campaigning documentary *Pig Business*, which I initially saw at the Channel 4 premiere.

The issues raised in the film are too important not to be addressed with the utmost urgency and the timing of this event coincides with, thankfully, an increasing interest by the general public, certainly in the UK, to know where their food is coming from and the methods by which it is produced. We are being encouraged quite rightly to take responsibility for ourselves and our children in relation to food, to the betterment of our health, the environment and animal welfare. I believe all these are inter-related, with the last point being of particular concern to me. Regardless of what certain individuals claim the logic behind the lack of information on packaging of products containing meat processed in these hellish factory farms to be, I think it is disingenuous at the very least and would go so far as to say wicked. The long-term effects of this "means of production" have serious implications for the health of workforces, communities and all those who are unwitting consumers and it threatens to destabilise our own farming community in the UK by flooding the

marketplace with cheap meat.

I am against cruelty however it manifests itself and would hope that given the information about the miserable lives led by the animals caught up in this heinous business, those people who still wish to eat pork would decide that the practices evident in Pig Business leave a very nasty taste in the mouth.

Zac Goldsmith, Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Richmond Park, said:

“This extraordinary film demonstrates the true and shocking cost of cheap food. It is a cost which is paid in terms of needless animal cruelty and the pollution and exhaustion of the environment. This imposes a heavy burden on the taxpayer which could be avoided with better use of more localised and organic agriculture.

Equally it demonstrates the inequity of a system whereby the UK insists on its own farmers maintaining relatively high animal welfare standards while permitting the purchase of poor quality food from abroad. It is a major reason why British farmers are being forced out of business. The same standards should be made to apply to imported products as to those produced in the UK.

We also need honest labels on food produce. Currently products can be described as British produce even where they have been produced elsewhere.

It is scandalous that the £2 billion of public money that we spend each year on food for schools and hospitals is wasted on the cheapest junk available on the world's markets. We should use it to support the rural economy, cut food miles and make good quality, humanely produced food available to children and patients everywhere.”

David Handley from Farmers for Action said

“The major problem we have in our industry is profitability. There is only one cause for this and that is the retailer and the government that is not prepared to tackle how the major retailers treat farmers. Everybody in my industry is standing up and saying ‘wonderful we’re going to have an ombudsman..it’s going to sort the problem out’... They’re in cloud cuckoo land. It is not enough for someone to be ‘plucked out’ of the system "we need somebody with teeth who is actually going to do something," he said.

Marchioness of Worcester said, “The only way the food industry persuades us to buy factory pork rather than pork from our traditional butchers and markets is to make it cheaper and hide the facts about how it has been produced. The true cost of cheap pork is paid for, not only by the pigs who are raised in horrendous conditions, but by all of us whose health is threatened by swine flu and antibiotic resistant diseases like e-coli, salmonella, campala bacta and the pig strain of MRSA.”

Notes

Event was held at the **Macmillan Room, Portcullis House from 6 – 9 pm on the 27th of January 2010**

Guests included MPs, representatives from leading Non-Governmental Organisations, key individuals from the food, retail and service industry, union leaders and chefs.

Speakers include Peter Stevenson (Compassion in World Farming) and Mel Andrews (RSPCA).

Richard Young (Soil Association), Professor Mark Enright Molecular Epidemiologist, Imperial College), Helen Rimmer (Friends of the Earth), Dr Vyvyan Howard (Medically qualified Toxicopathologist, University of Ulster), Anthony Kleanthous (author of BPEX report, Pigs and the Environment), Stewart Houston (Chairman of BPEX), and Helen Browning (pig farmer, Director of Food and Farming, Soil Association).

Please contact Tracy Worcester through Ian Monk Associates on 0208 834 1802/3

Tracy Worcester is available for interview through Rachel Monk at Ian Monk Associates – 0208-834 1807

Pig Business is currently available to view on Youtube (<http://bit.ly/2SNoTZ>) or via pigbusiness.co.uk and will also be shown at midnight on More 4 on 2nd of February 2010 and the community channel on 31st January at 10pm

For more information about the film, the issues it raises or to ask any questions please visit the website www.pigbusiness.co.uk or email a member of the Pig Business team on info@pigbusiness.co.uk