

PRESS RELEASE: Actor Dominic West joins campaigners opposing huge pig factory proposal in Derbyshire

Dominic West, star of TV police drama *The Wire* and **Marchioness Tracy Worcester** met local residents to campaign against proposed 25,000 pig factory in Foston, Derbyshire.

[Photos available to download here](#)

Dominic West said:

"I grew up the road in Grindleford where my uncle was a pig farmer, a small-scale pig farmer of the sort that will be put out of business by huge factory farms like this. I became interested through a film called *Pig Business* about vast factory farms in Eastern Europe so I was quite concerned that it was coming here to Derbyshire.

I can hopefully bring a bit of publicity to the campaign against it because they are really up against it because it's a huge, very big company that's behind this proposal that's got interests in lots of things other than pig farming so I think the locals whose lives are going to be ruined by this and need all the help they can get to try to get as much publicity as possible.

The main concern is that in intensive farming like that you need to use so many antibiotics and that is going to have huge health issues for humans. They're going to have 1000 pigs a week transported from this farm and to say there's not going to be a smell, and that there's not going to be traffic issues, there's not going to be disease issues, seems to me an extraordinary claim, and the trouble is that once this place is built there's no clause to say let's shut this down if there is the smell or if there is the health issue.

The company is claiming, that this is a revolutionary way, that we need to move away from smallholdings to vast factory farms, and I think that is completely wrong and I think that we should go the other way. Farms not factories is the mantra."

Tracy, The Marchioness of Worcester, whose film, The Dark side of Factory Farming will be shown at Burton Town Hall on Thursday 23rd of June said;

"I am concerned about the dangers to human health and the environment from factory farms containing 25,000 pigs.

Although this planned farm claims it will be more environment and animal welfare friendly, the closely confined pigs will live in a cocktail of gases from biodegrading faeces, and so will need constant dosing with antibiotics. Overuse of antibiotics in factory farming has already helped cause many human diseases like e-coli, salmonella, campylobacter and the pig strain of MRSA to become resistant to antibiotics

Why risk the lives and health of local people including the inmates of Foston women's prison, plus the effectiveness of antibiotics so that one company can profit?

The Dark Side of Farming: Event 23 June 2011 - 7-9pm

Short film screening of the **Dark Side of Factory Farming** and debate, open to the public
Burton on Trent Town Hall, DE14 2EB

The Soil Association, the UK's leading charity campaigning for planet-friendly food and farming, and the Pig Business film team, activists fighting for food from farms not factories, are opposing the 25,000 pig farm in Foston Derbyshire. Dominic West star of TV police drama *The Wire* visited the site on the 15th of June to support the local opposition against a dramatic escalation of industrial pig farming in the UK. This event will bring attention to a film called *The Dark Side of Factory Farming* which is to be screened along with presentations on mega farms like Foston at Burton on Trent Town Hall on 23 June.

The public meeting is open to anyone who wants to find out more about the harmful impacts these kind of super-sized systems may have on human health, the environment, local communities and animal welfare.

A panel of experts will debate the issue of mega-farms and will answer questions from the floor:

- Peter Melchett, Soil Association Policy Director
- Linda Wardle, Involved in stopping a mega-dairy farm being approved in Lincolnshire
- Marchioness Tracy Worcester, 'Pig Business' Film Producer and Campaign Director
- Jim Davies, Local resident from Foston, Derbyshire

EDITORS NOTES

Find out more about the Soil Association's '[Not in my banger](#)' campaign against a dramatic escalation of industrial pig farming in the UK.

Factory farmed pigs - the facts

- Roughly 9 million pigs are slaughtered every year in the UK - about 1.5% of UK pigs are organic.
- 98% of UK pigs are fattened (finished) in sheds. 93% of growing pigs and 60% of mother pigs in the UK are kept indoors.
- Approximately 80% of UK pigs have their tails cut off (bored and unhappy pigs shut up in sheds will bite the tails of the pigs they are confined with).
- Around 55% of sows in the UK give birth while confined in crates, which they remain in until their litter is weaned. At least 35% of pigs reared for meat in the UK are kept in barren systems without any straw bedding.
- The proposed pig farm in Foston will have 2,500 sows and 25,000 fattening pigs.
- The average size of large-scale intensive pig farms in the UK is around 500–900 sows. The average pig herd size for all farms in the UK is around 75 sows.
- Approximately 92% of pigs are kept on 1,400 pig farms and the rest on some 10,000 small holdings and smaller and mixed farms.
- The future of British pig farming may be about to change - and pigs will pay the price with their welfare if it does. Industrial-scale farms will feature huge numbers of animals, with little or no access to open fields.

Disease, injury and premature death

Our powerful scientific evidence shows that the incidence of a number of serious diseases, including salmonella, could increase when large numbers of pigs are kept together indoors.

Large scale intensive pig factories give reason to be concerned about the build up of antibiotic resistance genes in pigs and pork, local wildlife, soil and pig workers, and potentially everyone living locally to them, due to the frequent use of antibiotics in pig feed to control a wide range of conditions on intensive farms. Approximately half of all antibiotics in the UK are prescribed by vets (of which around 45% are used on farms and approximately 5% are given to pets). Approximately 60% of all antibiotics used on farms are given to pigs. All but one of these are the same as, or closely related to, medically important antibiotics used in human medicine.

Pigs belong outside

Industrialising British pig production will keep many more pigs out of fields and in factory farms. Not only does keeping them in sheds inhibit their natural behaviour, it also highlights the way in which our food and farming systems have become increasingly divorced from what nature intended.

Pigs are highly sociable creatures and prosper when living in small, stable groups. They thrive on contact with each other and have a complex language of grunts and squeaks, which scientists say they can interpret. Scientists have even detected regional variations in pigs' grunts. They sleep together huddled in nests and greet other pigs by rubbing noses much in the way we would shake hands. Pigs are highly co-operative in social groups and show affection by grooming each other. Pigs are the most intelligent of farm animals, and tests have been carried out that prove that pigs can be trained to do more than dogs.

Organic pigs

Soil Association organic pigs spend all or almost all of their lives out of doors, never have their tails cut off, and are free to root and dig in the soil. Organic mother pigs (sows) are never confined in metal crates or on bare concrete floors when they give birth.

Organic pigs live completely different lives from non-organic pigs, but as a result they cost more to rear. Organic pigs always have lots of room to move about, and are moved regularly to clean ground so they can dig and root in fresh earth - they need lots of space compared to a shed, and moving the pigs and their mobile houses around takes more labour. Piglets stay with their mothers longer, which gives the piglets greater natural vitality and causes them and their mothers less stress, but the mothers have longer between litters, and produce fewer piglets each year as a result.

Organic pigs eat organically grown crops which use no chemicals, but cost more, and unlike almost all non-organic pigs, they have no GM crops in their diet. Because they are able to run around and root, organic pigs take longer to get fat, and often organic farmers use slower growing (better tasting) traditional breeds that live longer (costing more to feed) before they are killed.

About Pig Business

Pig Business follows Tracy Worcester, a mother and campaigner, as she confronts the giant pig meat corporations that sweep across the world undermining rural communities, human health, the environment and animal welfare. Her journey reveals how factory pig farming was developed in the USA and has been taken to Eastern Europe where the pork, often produced below legal animal welfare standards, forces smaller independent traditional farmers to get giant or get out of pig farming. It explains how consumers can buy meat raised to high animal welfare standards from local producers at a fair price.

The Pig Business team supports campaigns against factory farms across the world and they have made a new short video highlighting the dangers of the introduction of new so called 'animal friendly' mega farms like Foston into the UK:

www.pigbusiness.co.uk