



**Pig Business press release. Issued September 22, 2011**

## **STUFFED!**

**A new drive to highlight the dangers of Britain's newest pork 'factory' has been launched in the run up to the Christmas season.**

Stuffed! exposes plans to build a giant pig breeding unit in the UK, with Derbyshire council currently considering the application.

Designed, it is claimed, with the latest in technology and animal welfare, the sad truth is that the animals that enter these steel prisons will never see a green field, walk on grass or behave naturally: the pigs will literally be stuffed away for their entire lives, out of sight and mind.

The application by Midland Pig Producers is for a "breeding unit for 2,500 sows near the village of Foston". However when they have had their litters, there will be up to 25,000 pigs in the intensive unit which will be just 130 metres from a women's prison and natal unit.

It has already caused a local backlash with concerns about potential health hazards and fears that the plans herald a new and dark dawn of intensive agriculture that could wipe out the UK's small livestock farms. Dominic West, star of *The Wire* and the nephew of a small-scale pig farmer, is among thousands who have expressed their concerns at the Foston proposal.

"They're going to have 1,000 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," he said.

Campaigners have already successfully fought off an application for two huge dairy farms in Lincolnshire, one of which would have been 66 times larger than the average UK herd of 120 cows.

Pig waste emits a cocktail of gasses including ammonia and hydrogen sulphide mixed with antibiotic resistant bacteria and organic particles. This can have disastrous consequences for peoples' health if it escapes into the environment.

The new Foston unit is designed to minimise the smells, noise and waste that intensive pig

farming creates. To achieve this, the unit is sealed and ventilated with a double filter system. The design includes an anaerobic digester to convert the methane gas from the pigs' biodegrading effluent into heat, which in turn helps power the system. The end product from the digester would be sold to neighbouring farmers to use as fertilizer.

Animals reared in such "zero-grazing" factory units are kept inside throughout their lives. When the sows give birth they are stuffed again – this time into steel stalls which allow them just enough room to turn through 360 degrees and no more. And this is considered "humane" under the UK's animal welfare rules.

Tracy, Marchioness of Worcester, a leading campaigner against such practices, says: "Sadly this is what the UK animal welfare laws deems to be a humane breeding unit, while in reality, we are torturing animals before we eat them"

Tracy's film *Pig Business* also exposes the dangers of intensive pig farming to human health and rural livelihoods, and she dismisses claims that pathogens cannot escape the Foston unit.

"Although this planned farm claims it will be more environment and animal welfare friendly, the pigs will live in a cocktail of gases from biodegrading faeces, and 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. Almost everyone who lives in the area is up in arms as the pathogens are not completely destroyed by the anaerobic digester and up to 40% can escape through the double filter into the surrounding environment. The only people who are not objecting are the local farmers who buy the dried fertiliser."

Midland Pig Producers have stated that economies of scale from the 50,000 pigs produced annually at the Foston unit would help compete against the large-scale foreign imports flooding the British market and which are not subject to the UK's welfare standards.

A statement issued by the company said: "We would like to reassure people that we operate in accordance with the strict DEFRA guidelines and Assured Food Standards. Health and safety has been taken into account throughout the design process and we should stress that there are no airborne diseases originating from pigs which transfer to humans."

All aspects of the operation, it said, would comply with environmental regulations, including light and noise pollution and gas emissions. The buildings would be flushed every 48 hours, and the air filtered twice before being released into the atmosphere.

BPEX, the pig industry body, said the Foston proposal would be "a brand new state-of-the-art unit" – a statement that appears as meaningless as the NFU's support for what it calls "sustainable intensification" of agriculture.

There is no such thing as "sustainable" intensification. It is just intensification in a global completion to produce ever cheaper food at the expense of our health, the environment and animal welfare.

"We should protect our farmers to produce quality over quantity and put health above

profits. The extra cost to consumers could be compensated by our eating less meat, thereby reduce problems of obesity, heart disease and cancer,” says Tracy.

Animal welfare groups have helped to make people aware of the dangers and cruelty involved in intensive poultry farming. But as we sit down to our Christmas dinners we should spare a thought for pigs too and “all the trimmings” which they help provide.

Ends

**Editors notes:**

For more information, photos or to set up an interview with the Marchioness of Worcester please contact Dominika Jarosz.

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To find out more about *Pig Business* visit [www.pigbusiness.co.uk](http://www.pigbusiness.co.uk) or follow these links:

- [Its campaign against the proposed factory pig farm at Foston](#)
- [Take action against the proposal](#)
- [Midland Pig Producers' Planning Application](#)
- [The Soil Association 'Not in my banger' campaign](#)
- [Dominic West visits Foston- short film](#)
- [The Dark Side of Factory Farming- short film](#)

Foston residents with actor, Dominic West at proposed factory farm site 15th June, 2011:



Tracy Worcester with outdoor reared pig:



More photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pigbusiness/>