



Press release
Monday 13 February 2012

Pig development could breach local residents' human rights

An industrial scale indoor pig unit, holding 25,000 pigs, which developers are proposing to build less than 150 metres from a large women's prison, and within 75 metres of houses, poses serious risks to the health of residents, prison officers and prisoners, and could breach their right to protection of their private and family life.

In the light of leading Counsel's legal advice, Friends of the Earth, Foston Community Forum, Pig Business and the Soil Association have written today (1) to Derbyshire County Council urging them to refuse planning permission for the proposed development at Foston in Derbyshire.

The legal letter quotes recent research which shows that intensive pig factories of this kind can affect the health of nearby residents. This has been confirmed by the Government's Health Protection Agency, which says that those living within 150 metres of intensive pig farms "*could be exposed to multi-drug resistant organisms*".

Derbyshire County Council is obliged under the Human Rights Act 1998 to consider the rights of third parties when deciding whether to grant planning permission. The prison staff cannot avoid working close to the proposed development, unless they resign from their jobs. The inmates of Foston Hall prison are not living in the area by choice, and clearly do not have the option of moving away if the pig development goes ahead. They will not be able to escape the risk to their health posed by this development, and the letter warns that allowing the pig factory to go ahead could also breach the inmates' right to be protected from inhumane treatment

Dr Victoria Martindale, representative of the Foston Community Forum, said: '*As a medical professional I am concerned about the health risks that this proposal will bring to local residents. Those living in the closest vicinity to the proposed site include the most susceptible and at risk groups, such as children, the elderly and individuals already with known respiratory and other diseases. It is not fair to expect the residents of Foston to go about their everyday lives while being forced to continuously breathe in air that will put their and their families' health at risk.*'

Peter Melchett, Policy Director of the Soil Association, said: '*The objections to the pig factory at Foston are mounting all the time, because of the growing weight of new scientific evidence of real risks to the health of local people, and to the staff and inmates of the prison right next door to the proposed site. Now it seems that the legal rights of local people may also be infringed by the proposed development.*'

Tracy Worcester, producer of the Pig Business film, said: 'This proposal for a vast intensive pig factory is the wrong direction for British farmers who need to be



protected from cheap imports, not subjected to further unfair competition from subsidised factory farms. The planning committee must listen to the mounting evidence and objections and refuse planning permission. Anyone who does not support this proposal can still make their voice heard by objecting to the County Council.'

Ends

For press enquiries contact the Soil Association Press Office:

Clio Turton, Press Office Manager - 0117 914 2448

Josh Stride, Press & E-communications Officer – 0117 314 5170

press@soilassociation.org

Notes to editor:

[1] Read the Soil Association's detailed scientific review of evidence from around the world submitted last year, [click here](#).

Key points of this evidence include:

- pig farming accounts for approximately 60% of all UK farm antibiotic use
- research shows that the levels of disease and the use of antibiotics both increase as pig farms get bigger
- larger herd size is linked with higher levels of many diseases in pigs, including some that can cause illness in people
- for certain bacteria, such as salmonella and campylobacter, most of the antibiotic resistance in human infections comes from farm-animal antibiotic use
- resistance to antibiotics can transfer between both animals and humans and this occurs more frequently, and with far greater ease, than was previously believed
- a number of very serious new types of antibiotic resistance have developed in recent years and several of these are increasing in farm animals
- C. difficile 'superbug' bacteria which has been found in hospitals is a growing problem in pigs worldwide, and the latest research shows that at least one strain of the pathogen is now present in British pigs
- there is growing evidence that C. difficile may be spreading from pig farms to humans through the environment
- there is concern about the risk of Pig MRSA spreading to the UK; it is now well established that people working with MRSA positive pigs, such as farmers, veterinarians, and even their family members, are at risk of colonisation and infection - there have also been a number of very serious cases and deaths
- there are real concerns that unless antibiotics are used much more sparingly we will soon find ourselves facing a range of serious diseases in humans and animals that can no longer be treated effectively.

[2] 'Not in my Banger'

Sign up to the Soil Association's 'Not in my Banger' campaign. [Read more here](#)