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## Misrepresentation of Australian pig farmers on 60 minutes

Australia's pig farmers described Channel 9's 60 Minutes report that aired on Sunday 22nd November as extremely biased and designed to sensationalise and misrepresent how the industry conducts its business.

Australian Pork Limited, CEO Andrew Spencer said the program clearly set out to portray the industry in the worst light possible. "Any reasonable person knows that it's clearly not in farmers interests to mistreat their animals."

"Australian pig farmers look after their animals every day of the week and they know what is best for the care and welfare of their animals. The industry has spent millions of dollars on research that supports particular animal care activities. Take for example the limited use of sow stalls."

The facts about the use of sow stalls are:

- Pigs prefer sow stalls in early pregnancy. The scientific evidence clearly indicates that sows are least stressed and feel safe and less threatened if they are in sow stalls for the first six weeks of pregnancy. The scientific research is clearly documented and has been replicated.
- A healthy pig is a productive pig. It is self evident that it is in farmers' best interests to look after their animals. Conversely it does not make sense to suggest that farmers would place pigs in an environment where they are stressed and therefore unproductive.
- The philosophy of most animal activists is vegetarian. Their interest is putting animal farmers out of business and they will stop at nothing to achieve this agenda.

In relation to the 60 Minutes program:

- 60 Minutes was provided with time lapse footage that shows pigs relaxing in sow stalls, without gates. It demonstrates for all, what farmers know - pigs are not disturbed by sow stalls. The program chose not to show it.
- The interview with Andrew Spencer lasted over an hour and was selectively edited to misrepresent the explanation of the industry's point of view. The full unedited interview can be seen on the Australian Pork Limited website.

Mr Spencer said that the industry is deeply concerned at apparent breaches in journalists' ethics. "The agreement to go ahead and be part of the story was on the condition that I was able to fact-check the video footage provided by activists to 60 Minutes. This was prior to having questions posed to me about this footage. I was informed in writing that 60 Minutes did not know the location or who owned the farm in question. This was one of a number of examples where the program was brazenly dishonest as this information was used to ambush me during the interview."

"This ambush technique did not stop there. I was also confronted with documentation relating to the welfare case in Tasmania. I requested twelve times if I could quickly go and check the facts. Liam Bartlett refused, on two occasions saying 'Absolutely not' and on another, 'Frankly, it's not OK'. This type of response and attitude clearly shows the spiteful, unethical and biased nature this program is prepared to go to obtain a preconceived story line.

"To give the impression the footage shown throughout this story was the norm in pig welfare is totally misleading and does not represent what really does happen on a pig farm in Australia," Mr Spencer said.

“In general our industry has good relationships with the media. I am proud of our industry standards, as are the vast majority of farmers that APL represents. The 60 Minutes story was sensationalised and highly selective.

“I encourage all Australian consumers who are truly interested in seeing what actually does happen on an Australian pig farm to visit [www.aussiepigfarmers.com.au](http://www.aussiepigfarmers.com.au) and see for yourselves how many different ways pigs are raised in Australia.”

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