



August 4 2009. 18:00

Issues Alert – Jamie Saves Our Bacon

Screening on Channel 10, Wednesday 5th August 2009

Channel 10 will screen the Jaime Oliver special on the pork industry “**Jamie Saves Our Bacon**” at 9:30pm Wednesday August 5th. It screened in the UK in January as a 90 minute special.

“Can Jamie Oliver do for pigs and pork what he helped do for chickens and eggs? A no-holds-barred look at pig rearing and the current issues surrounding the pork industry. Britain's pig farmers are going out of business and pork production in the UK is under threat. In this 90-minute program Jamie aims to find out why and to examine what can be done to support farmers. Once again, he wants to help consumers make better-informed choices about the food they eat by showing exactly how pigs live and die to put pork, ham and bacon on our plates. With the help of the industry, from producers to retailers, Jamie follows the production process from birth to slaughter and on to our supermarket shelves. He looks at how pigs have been bred to suit the demand for lean meat and to maximise choice cuts. He'll be investigating how the greater cost to UK farmers of meeting higher welfare standards has left them open to competition from some mass producers from the EU, who minimise costs, but may have questionable levels of animal welfare compared to British standards. Jamie also looks at how our food labeling system is leaving customers who want to 'buy British' confused. And, at a time when we're all feeling the pinch, he'll be cooking cheap, but tasty cuts of pork to feed a family on a budget.”

Some excerpts of the program can be found on YouTube -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSXJg2Z7Nxl>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl1rlNaFwx0&feature=channel>

- We feel that the program raised many important issues for the industry and for consumers of pork products in Australia. We would like to provide clarification on some aspects of pig production in Australia to make the show relevant for Australians.
- Australian farmers have sympathy with the difficult circumstances the British industry has been experiencing. The Australian industry has faced the same downturn in the global pig market, and high costs of feed and low pig prices. Many Australian farmers have been forced to leave the industry with only 1600 producers left.
- Australia, like the UK, is not a low cost producer and prefers to operate in a market environment which gives proper recognition to the maintenance of high standards which have earned it a reputation as a supplier of top quality pork products.



P O R K S A F E N O T I C E

- Like the UK, Australia has strict requirements for welfare, safety and environmental standards. The industry is forward thinking, continually improving its production methods and housing systems. Every year it has invests around \$600,000 into animal welfare research and development.
- Overall, APL agrees with a lot of the content of the program and sympathises with the challenges the British farmers face. Australian farmers also carry significant burdens due to the level of imported products coming into Australia. Australian animal welfare legislation also operates at higher level than our main North American competitors.
- Animal welfare in Australia is governed by a Model Code of Practice (The Code), which was reviewed in 2007 and is currently being legislated in all states. The Code provides guidance aimed at ensuring good animal welfare outcomes for pigs under both intensive and extensive systems. The Code details requirements for stockperson requirements, pig feed and water needs, sow housing, pig handling facilities, husbandry procedures and euthanasia.
- The Australian industry has also an animal welfare strategy which provides a five year plan with key strategies and outcomes for the management of animal welfare in the Australian industry. This signals to consumers, the public, and regulators how seriously the industry takes animal care issues.
- In regards to sow housing, gestation stalls are used in the Australian industry to house pregnant sows during the most vulnerable stages of their pregnancy. Under the revised Code, gestation stalls will only be used for a maximum of six weeks per gestation from 2017. The six week maximum period is the right balance between the protection of the sow and their freedom of movement. Without gestation stalls, sows are at heightened risk of aggression, losing their unborn babies and being deprived of feed.
- An estimated 64% of Australian farms use gestation stalls. An estimated 76% of Australian sows will spend at least some of their gestation in a stall, however only 40% of gestating sows are actually living in a stall at any given point in time.
- The Australian pork industry is currently in a period where farmers are transitioning to the 6 week limited gestation stalls use in order to meet the requirements of the Code.



P O R K S A F E N O T I C E

- Farrowing Crates are used to ensure the safety of newborn piglets by preventing the sow from crushing her piglets. Farrowing crates are allowable under the Model Code of Practice.
- Surgical castration is very rare in Australia, the vast majority of Australian pigs are grown and slaughtered in a way that maximises eating quality, without the need for surgical castration.
- The Australian pork industry supports the call for clear and unambiguous country of origin labelling. Australia faces similar difficulties with regards to labelling- current labelling laws do not require products to clearly state if the meat has been entirely grown and processed in Australia. In addition, the requirements for country of origin labelling prominence are insufficient.
- Many consumers don't know that
 - 100% of fresh pork is Australian
 - Up to 70% of processed goods (i.e. ham and bacon) are made from meat imported from other countries who farm without the same adherence to welfare standards dictated in this country by the model code.
- We are proud of our high quality Australian products, and APL has taken the initiative in this issue by producing the distinctive pink logo, now on show in supermarkets and butchers across the country. Australian Meat can also be recognised via the Australian Grown logo. By purchasing fresh or processed pork products displaying these logos, the consumer is certain to be buying 100% Australian product.
- The Australian industry supports Jamie's promotion of underused cuts of meat (belly, shoulder and steaks) and hope that his campaign can help to increase the consumption of pork overall.

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