

SAINSBURY'S PIG CONCEPT FARM

JUNE 2013

Leadership & Innovation in Retail winner 2012!

Sainsbury's

BACKGROUND

Sainsbury's is the third largest chain of supermarkets in the UK. Founded in 1869 by John James Sainsbury in London, it operates over 1,000 stores, including 450 convenience stores and employs around 150,000 colleagues.

Sainsbury's works with suppliers globally and recognises its responsibility to manage increasingly complex ethical, environmental and social issues. Its strong culture and values are part of its identity and integral to its success.

Sainsbury's has a clear, long-term strategy to deliver its vision and is committed to delivering against its [20x20 Sustainability Plan](#) which was launched in 2011. The Plan contains sustainability targets which Sainsbury's aims to achieve by 2020. One target in particular focuses on animal welfare: *"By 2020 all of our meat, poultry, eggs, game and dairy products will be sourced from suppliers who adhere to independent higher welfare standards."*

Sainsbury's has a strong relationship with Compassion and values this relationship in helping to achieve a joint vision of having the best welfare standards.

WELFARE ISSUE

The use of intensive systems for housing pigs raises the most serious welfare issues. Whilst they are used widely for their convenience, including climate control, ease of cleaning, use of labour-saving machines, protection from predators and control of the animals, such close confinement of pigs in indoor systems raises welfare concerns. These include the lack of freedom and the resulting stress, injury and development of abnormal behaviours within the pig population.

One of the delivery goals against its [20x20 Sustainability Plan](#) target on animal welfare, is that Sainsbury's will ensure that all of its fresh primal pork will be sourced from suppliers that adhere to independent higher welfare standards by 2018.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Research and Development are vital to ensure that Sainsbury's keeps improving standards in sustainable sourcing, animal health and welfare, and meat quality, as well as achieve all its 20x20 targets.

Its [Concept Pig Farm](#) in East Yorkshire, run by the Morgan family, is a perfect example of this as it goes beyond anything that any other supermarket is doing.

Since 2009, Sainsbury's has been working in partnership with the Morgans on new ideas that continue to push the boundaries on the standard and quality of pork available in Sainsbury's. In August 2010, the farm started trialling a new indoor freedom farrowing system - the first and largest commercial set-up of its kind in the world.



The pen design is based on the latest research from the UK, Denmark, Sweden and Austria on indoor free farrowing pens. Sainsbury's worked closely with Dr Sandra Edwards and Dr Emma Baxter and their work on the PigSafe project, when designing the pen now installed at its Pig Concept Farm. There are 72 free farrowing pens which are all RSPCA Freedom Food approved.

The new farrowing pens give the sows and their piglets more room to move and perform natural behaviours; they regularly see the sows nest building. Sows have an increased appetite, consequently ensuring good milk production and healthier, stronger piglets. This results in a better quality of meat.



They have not needed to tail dock any piglets born into the free farrowing pens, which has been a fantastic achievement for an indoor system.

The leading factor in being able to implement such unique initiatives is down to the high level of internal support at Sainsbury's. The idea of **concept farms** came from its Director of Sainsbury's Brand who is incredibly supportive of robust R&D to support high welfare systems and the initiatives which the agriculture team run in order to drive animal health and welfare standards.

Being the No.1 retailer for animal welfare is something which is integral to its business and is driven right the way through the company from Chief Executive through to colleagues in-store, who are able to talk to customers about Sainsbury's being the largest retailer of RSPCA Freedom Food approved products and the range of higher welfare offers it has.

IMPLEMENTATION

Supply chain engagement

The Sainsbury's Pig Concept Farm is a partnership with the Morgan family and Cranswick (Sainsbury's largest pork supplier, working with them since 1985). Sainsbury's works closely with all of its fresh pork producers through its Pork Development Group and shares the findings of the Concept Farm Freedom Farrowing project with them on a quarterly basis at its Steering Group meetings.

Overcoming the barriers

The main barrier experienced was an extreme nervousness to move to an indoor freedom farrowing system by the farmers involved in the project. This has been overcome with regular communication and data sharing (good and bad) from the trial with the Pork Development Group. Working with both Newcastle and Edinburgh Universities has given credibility to the project. The high level of support Sainsbury's has received internally has been a great boost. A number of producers within the group are now looking at how free farrowing can work for their business, which is a great step forward from the initial scepticism. Another barrier to overcome was a whole new way of supply chain working. Sainsbury's has moved away from a traditional trading relationship to a cost-based model with its Pig Concept Farm.

Continuous improvement

Sainsbury's knows that animal welfare is a top priority for its customers, so the work it does with its 2,500 farmers in the Sainsbury's Development Groups is crucial to ensure that welfare standards remain high. Through its Development Groups, Sainsbury's always works in conjunction with its farmers to ensure that through its health and welfare initiatives e.g. lameness in dairy cows – it is focussing on the areas that matter and in a way that encourages the groups to share best practice and improve together on issues affecting all species of livestock.

Driving higher welfare standards

Driving standards of animal welfare is thoroughly embedded within Sainsbury's CSR policy under its "[Sourcing with Integrity](#)" CR work stream. Sainsbury's also has its 20x20 Sustainability commitment to welfare and progress is regularly reported to its shareholders and stakeholders. It has strict brand guidelines which its suppliers must work to and it monitors and manages animal welfare on the ground with animal outcome measures being recorded on farm and in the abattoir.

COMMUNICATION

Through its Development Groups, Sainsbury's always works in conjunction with its farmers through specific regional road shows and meetings. In addition, it holds an annual farming conference which attracts 1,000 farmers and suppliers, where it reports its progress to all its farmers and farming stakeholders.

Sainsbury's also works hard to educate its colleagues and customers with its progress in farm animal welfare. Through its monthly briefing (a DVD which goes out to each of its stores) it updates its colleagues on its commitment to "Sourcing with Integrity", including its progress on key welfare issues.

Whilst keeping its colleagues informed with its progress goes some way to educating its customers in-store, Sainsbury's also uses its marketing channels to help raise awareness with consumers. This includes initiatives such as being the main sponsor of RSPCA Farm Animal Week and using platforms such as this to promote its high standards of animal welfare. Sainsbury's is the largest retailer of RSPCA Freedom Food approved products, selling 60% of all food produced and is proud to be able to talk to customers about this.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

The benefits of the Freedom Farrowing trial at its Pig Concept Farm have been numerous. Sainsbury's has proved that indoor free farrowing can work and it has an ever expanding bank of data which it is able to analyse to drive improvements further and to help the organisation learn more about the workings of the system and the genetics of sows.

Its 'Taste the Difference' dedicated supply chain already operates to an outdoor bred, free farrowed, no tail and teeth clipping RSPCA Freedom Food approved system and Sainsbury's uses 14,000 finished pigs per week. If the Freedom Farrowing trial at the Pig Concept Farm is successful, the system could be rolled out to all Sainsbury's pig farms through its Pork Development Group. This will mean that all fresh pork sold in store will meet tough Freedom Food standards set by the RSPCA, which will improve the welfare of millions of pigs each year.

Sainsbury's has won a number of awards for animal welfare and Compassion was delighted to present its first ever **Leadership & Innovation in Retail** award in 2012 for the work on its Pig Concept Farm. Other awards include Compassion's **Good Calf Commendation** and **Best Volume Retailer** in 2011, as well as winning **Best for Customer Communication** at the RSPCA Good Business Awards 2011.

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION IN RETAIL 2012

In 2012, Compassion challenged UK supermarkets to submit case studies demonstrating their most innovative and pioneering work to improve farm animal welfare. The **Leadership & Innovation in Retail** category sought to recognise the wider work they do outside Compassion's current award categories.

The panel of judges were impressed with the high level of entrants from major supermarkets, but voted unanimously in favour of the **Sainsbury's Pig Concept Farm**. All agreed that the project tackles one of the most pressing welfare issues in pig production and has the potential to transform the industry for the better.

David Main, Bristol University and panel judge, commented *"In taking on this project, Sainsbury's is leading the industry by acknowledging the welfare of farrowing sows in current indoor systems could be improved. This is a true example of leadership"*.

[For more information about Sainsbury's Pig Concept farm click here.](#)

Compassion in World Farming offers free, objective advice and consultancy from a team of staff who work across the whole of the food industry. To find out more about how we can help you improve animal welfare standards, please contact one of the [Food Business Team](#) or visit: www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com