

Germany – Pig Farrowing Crate Discussion

Friday 22 January 2021

0800 – 0925

Date:	Friday 22 January 2021
Time:	08:00am – 09:25am
Location:	Teams Meeting

Members:	NAWAC Subcommittee (Chair Included)
Attendees:	MPI Representatives
Invited Speakers:	German Federal Ministry of Food and Agricultural, Animal Welfare Unit Representative

Meeting Summary:

On January 22 the NAWAC subcommittee, MPI representatives, and a representative from the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Animal Welfare Unit, met. The legislative process which Germany is undertaking to reduce the use of farrowing crates was discussed. Throughout the process the Federal Ministry studied many farrowing crate alternatives, looked at available science and research, and worked alongside the large industry body to land at a place which fulfilled the regulatory obligations and meets the needs of the industry. The following points were noted:

- To protect the industry from a new set of regulatory changes in five to ten years' time, alternative systems need to be incorporated into legislation and practice now, procuring the diminishing use of farrowing crates.
- The biggest concerns for the German pig industry were the considerable increase of production costs and the chance of increased mortality in young piglets if sows are moved to a loose farrowing system. However, the high variability in published data sets regarding mortality in loose farrowing systems means this cannot be proven.
- The design of pen, type of flooring, temperature, and other elements all contribute to creating a successful system. German legislation decided on a minimum farrowing pen size of 6.5m², which also allows the sow to turn around without any hinderances, and a minimum crate length of 220 cm.
- Manipulable material must be provided to the sows. This needs to be moveable, changeable, rich in fibre, organic, and needs to have the ability to be investigated by the pig.
- For appropriate nesting material and behaviour to be carried out, the system will need to be a farrowing pen without the crates as in Norway or Sweden.
- In Germany, the sows will be allowed to be crated for up to five days around the time of farrowing. The start of these five days can be decided by the farmer however, it is recommended this be as close to the time of farrowing as possible.

- Also, sows in Germany will only be allowed to be crated in mating stalls for a very short time frame, for the process of AI.
- The German Parliament also agreed that post weaning sows need a minimum space of 5m² per sow, with space and places to hide.
- The transition periods decided on were: 8 years for mating stalls, and 15 years for farrowing crates.
- An important consideration should be to change the genetics alongside the changing management practices.
- Criteria for funding states that the new stable facilities must be above the legislative minimum standards – not just meet the minimum standards.