



## Statement from Clare Schlegel, President, Canadian Pork Council, on Maple Leaf Decision to Phase Out Sow Gestation Stalls

January 31, 2007

Today, Maple Leaf Foods announced its intention to phase out the use of sow gestation stalls in favour of group housing in all of its hog operations over the next 10 years. This follows a similar announcement from the U.S.-based Smithfield Foods late last week.

The Canadian Pork Council recognizes the right of these firms to make marketing decisions to respond to their companies' needs. Both firms state that there is no conclusive evidence that one sow housing system is better than another.

Animal welfare involves a host of factors, including housing, management, and barn environment. Sow housing is only one of many that need to be addressed to have optimal animal welfare. The Canadian Pork Council, in 2005, introduced its Animal Care Assessment (ACA) to set minimum standards for care on Canadian hog farms. The ACA addresses critical facets of animal care, including housing.

Our industry recognizes that some consumers have expressed concerns about current sow housing systems, and the CPC remains committed to taking a leadership role in examining sow housing alternatives. It will be important to fully understand the welfare and management implications of current and new housing systems. Efforts to move to new systems should be supported, but only if the new approaches lead to improved animal welfare.

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