

'Carter gives industry hurry-up on sow crates'. The New Zealand Herald. Politics (21 July 2009).

POLITICS

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Carter gives industry hurry-up on sow crates

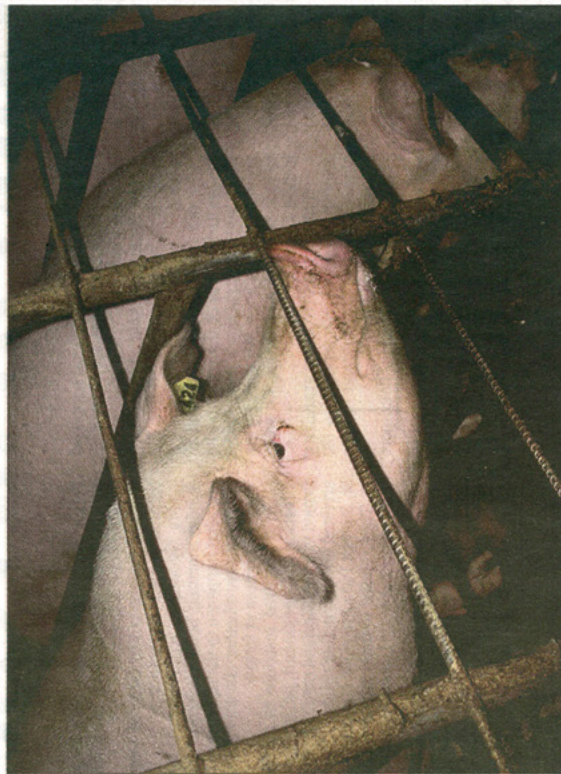
Minister says mood of public is for change before 2015 deadline

The pork industry should address consumer concerns about animal welfare and reductions to the length of time sows can be kept in dry stalls need to kick in sooner, Agriculture Minister David Carter says.

The pork industry recently came under the spotlight when TVNZ's *Sunday* programme broadcast footage taken in April of animal rights organisation Open Rescue escorting comedian Mike King around a Horowhenua intensive pig farm, belonging to former New Zealand Pork Industry Board chairman Colin Kay.

King, a long-standing front man for a campaign advertising pork, said some pigs were unable to move and obviously in distress, chewing at the cage bars and frothing at the mouth. However a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry investigator found animal welfare laws were not broken at the well managed piggery.

Mr Carter, in a speech to the New Zealand pork industry board conference, said the investigation raised questions around lactics used in the



SNIFF OF TROUBLE: Pictures like these stirred up debate and affected sales.

PICTURE / NZ OPEN RESCUE

ination of dry sow crates. "I am not going to pre-empt this review, but I have made it clear that I personally feel that the 2015 date needs to come forward significantly."

Mr Carter said the industry could treat welfare issues as opportunities rather than just problems.

Consumers had genuine concerns that affected their purchasing decisions. "This is their right and as an industry you ignore them at your peril ...". Another consideration had to be animal rights activists.

"Rightly or wrongly these groups will utilise all manner of means to sell their message, both legal and illegal. If you think they are not planning further attempts to discredit you, then you're dreaming.

"The challenge for you is how you are going to respond."

Mr Carter said the New Zealand industry should promote positives such as grazing pigs outdoors or raising them in an organic method.

Also "unlike overseas competitors, your industry makes very little use of antibiotics, if any at all, and you certainly don't use growth hormones. This is something that we should all be proud of."

"In the past your industry has been great marketers. Do it again, but this time I suggest you use the merits of your product, not the words of a celebrity."

— NZPA

programme. But the animal welfare concerns mattered and affected sales.

"As I see it, you have a real opportunity here to take the initiative, to take the high ground," he said.

"Some of you have taken that message on board, but as an industry you haven't done well enough."

"It is my belief that the Nawac code delivered to you such a long lead-in — 2015 — that a degree of complacency crept in."

Mr Carter said he was not criticising Nawac, but the mood of the public was for faster change leading to elim-

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