



Canadian Pork Council
Conseil canadien du porc

Challenges for the Pig Code

October 2013
NFACC Conference

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The Pig Code

- Requested in 2009
- Initiated in 2010
- Public Comment Period in 2013
 - 4700 comments – most of all Codes
- Now - addressing the comments



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Code Development Committee – principles

- Good for animals
- Workable for producers
- Acceptable to society



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And a broader view of welfare



Biological Function

Affective States

Natural Living

Photos: Ontario Agriculture Photo Library



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The Challenges

1. One issue code
2. The complexities
3. Finding the right balance

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Challenge #1: the One-Issue Code

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Sow Housing

- Became the “critical issue” - lightning rod
- Focus on one animal and one freedom
- Minimizes the value of rest of Code

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The Proposal

- **As of July 1, 2024, mated gilts and sows must be housed in groups.**
 - Individual stalls may be used for up to 28 days after the date of last breeding, and an additional period for up to 7 days is permitted to manage grouping.
- **Applies to new holdings newly built or rebuilt or brought into use for the first time after July 1, 2014.**

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Proposal outlines:

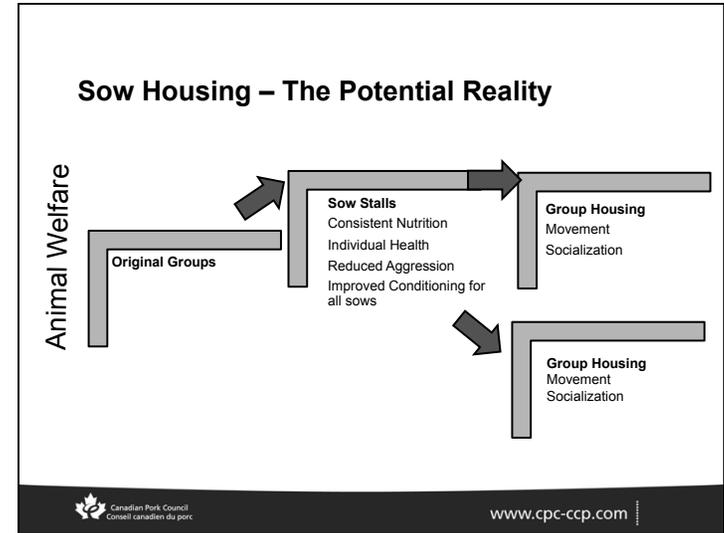
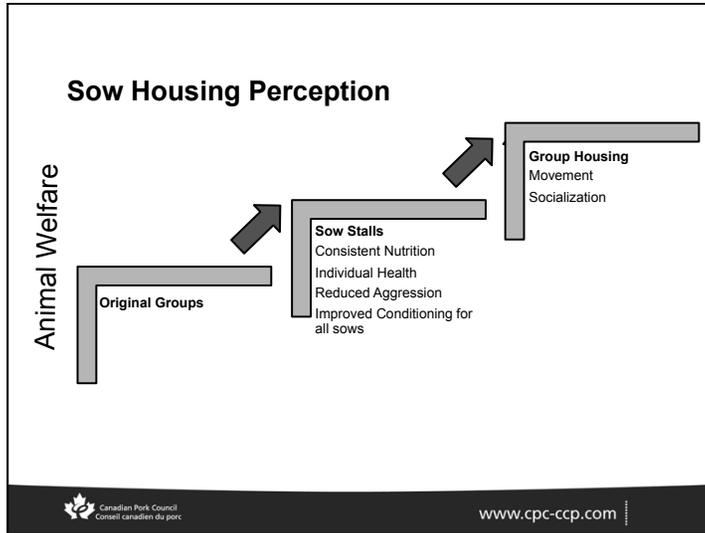
- **A clear definition of acceptable group housing**
- **A requirement for new facilities and conversions**

Challenge #2: Complexities

Proposed Approach	Issues
Move to group housing for sows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Existing barns were designed for stalls •Many factors must be considered in new systems - building design, feeding systems, flooring types, group size, group dynamics •New management approaches needed •Real risk of diminished welfare outcomes •Potential for aggression and resulting scratches, wounds and lesions •Trade-off between freedoms •Familiarity of sows, implications of genetics •Research and technology transfer still needed in Canadian settings •Mandatory approaches puts onus on producers •Tremendous financial burden •Financial burden – whose responsibility to pay •No incentives – just threats •Reduced competitiveness •Many farmers have indicated if forced to make the change, it will put them out of business

Good For the Pigs



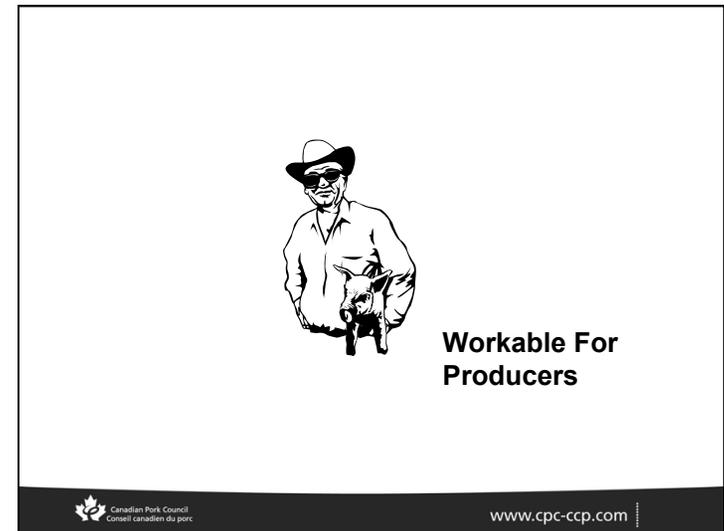


Trading Between Freedoms?

Freedom From:	Stalls	Groups
Hunger and Thirst (ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain full health and vigor)	★	★
Discomfort (appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area)	★	★
Pain, Injury or Disease (prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment)	★	
Express Normal Behaviour (sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind)		★
Fear and Distress (conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering)		

Freedoms as presented and defined by Farm Animal Welfare Council, UK

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What are producers facing?

- **Group housing is a new system**
 - Need new approaches to management
 - New feeding, flooring, group size and group dynamics combinations
 - Genetics may also play a role
- **Conversions as yet unclear**
 - Many combinations to consider
 - Each barn is unique
 - Limited experience in Canada



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And the costs

- **Significant cost implications**
 - Analysis: \$820-\$1155 per sow plus transition costs
 - Half a billion dollars for the industry
 - Risk of bank refusal – if mandatory
- **No indication of cost sharing**
 - Marketplace
 - Governments



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Severe impact

- **Many producers indicated they would exit**
 - A required change would force many producers out of business
- **Outcome**
 - Shift to imported product
 - Less - if any controls - on all production processes



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Meets Societal Expectations



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What does society expect?

- **Who speaks for society?**
 - Who informs society?
 - Who knows what society finds acceptable?
- **Options:**
 - Activists
 - Retailers-Foodservice
 - The market
 - Premiums
 - Product choice

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Challenge #3: Finding the right balance

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Risk of Further Polarization



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Learn from others – see potential for a new solution

E.U.	U.S.	Other major hog producing countries (China, Brazil, Russia, Vietnam, Japan, Mexico)	Canada
Legislated – forced compliance	State level actions and market announcements	No known actions	Code process
Limited producer involvement	Producer involvement in defense of industry		Active producer involvement
Full welfare outcomes as yet unknown			Ensure overall welfare is maintained and improved
Protected market	Open market		Open market
Negative impact on competitiveness			Maintain competitiveness

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Code remains the best alternative

- **Credible process**
 - Appropriate engagement
 - Various parties including producers
 - Goal of one national and consistent standard
- **Scientifically informed**
 - Working to common definitions and understanding
- **Benefits**
 - Prevent a proliferation of approaches
 - Solid base for welfare
 - Beacon for customers and society

But will also need strong commitment

- **Commitment to resolution**
 - All issues
 - Sow housing in particular
- **Commitment to the outcomes**
 - Full support of Code



Thank you.