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ANIMAL WELFARE COMPLAINT FILED WITH OHIO DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Fairfield Pork subsidiary of Kalmbach Feeds, Inc., using banned “gestation crates”

Advocates: “You wouldn’t treat a dog like this.”

News conference 9:30am, Thursday, March 10, Point Place Library, 117th St., off Summit

TOLEDO – An environmental group that has campaigned against factory “farm” pollution of Lake Erie for six years, sent a formal complaint today by overnight mail to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) Animal Health Division over what it claims are illegal holding crates for thousands of confined, pregnant pigs.

[Lake Erie Advocates](#) (LEA) will also send the [32-page complaint](#), with [14 appendices](#), directly to the Livestock Care Standards Board (LCSB), the official 13-member panel charged with developing rules to protect livestock welfare, in time for its upcoming March 15 meeting, in Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

The complaint alleges that in 2016, Fairfield Pork Inc. in Wood County, a subsidiary of Kalmbach Feeds, Inc., of Upper Sandusky, installed and is using banned “gestation crates” that were outlawed for new construction after the creation of the LCSB in 2010.

Since then, ten states have banned the crates because they crowd 600-pound pregnant sows into spaces so small they cannot turn around or even lay down normally. Fairfield’s 2,200 sows are impregnated every five months until they produce about eight litters and are then slaughtered.

LEA senior researcher, Peggy Daly-Masternak, wrote the complaint after seeing an Ohio Pork Council video featuring Fairfield’s operation that was streamed to middle and high school students across the state. The prohibited enclosures were seen at what was portrayed as a model factory “farm.”

“We’ve opposed these animal factories because of what they do to the lake, but when you see the inhumane conditions the animals endure their entire lives, you just have to do something,” Daly-Masternak said. “You wouldn’t treat a dog like this. Pigs are at least as smart and sociable as dogs, with instinctual behaviors that are completely obstructed living inside such confined spaces their entire lives.”

“After digging into the regulations, I found that animal factory operators only have to provide a space about the size of a standard home refrigerator for a 600-pound animal. That’s like cramming three extra-large people into a refrigerator – for life. You literally wouldn’t treat a dog that way.”

The complaint demands the ODA:

- Shut down the illegally built facility in Wood County and any others owned by Kalmbach Feeds.
- Assess civil penalties on Kalmbach Feeds, Inc., as required by Ohio law, as this was a flagrant violation that went unnoticed for over five years.
- Both in ODA regulations and Ohio law, require annual livestock inspections and licensing which is equal to what is required of high-volume dog breeders housing merely six animals. Licensing and inspection is required of hundreds of other professions and businesses in the state. Factory “farms” should be held to the same requirements.

A related issue Daly-Masternak discovered while researching the complaint was what she termed “an astonishing level of corruption and conflict of interest. Membership on the LCSB is weighted overwhelmingly in favor of animal factory operators and the Ohio Farm Bureau. Recommendations made by animal welfare organizations are routinely ignored. The Board has met at least 30 times in the last 10 years without making any substantial regulatory changes.”

Lindsay M. Vick, attorney with a special interest in animal welfare, whose work is featured in the complaint, said, "The extensive amount of evidence and research in this complaint unfortunately confirms my conclusions in 2011, that the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board seeks primarily to maintain the status quo on Ohio’s factory farms. Change will only happen when the public is outraged enough by this kind of information to *demand* change.”

After the March 15 LCSB meeting in Reynoldsburg, LEA will send a separate communication to Ohio legislative leaders recommending changes in the law to require higher standards and annual inspections.

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Sows in typical gestation crates



Sows in typical gestation crates

