

Canada: Olymel to phase out sow gestation crates

Major Canadian pork producer, Olymel, has stated that it will phase out gestation crates which are used for pregnant sows.



Olymel spokesman Richard Vigneault, said, "This was a culmination of a long time of reflection and thinking about this issue, and the issue of our clients worldwide." He added, "We wish others will follow this."

Olymel's move follows nine US states and the European Union banning the controversial gestation crates, which have also been phased out by almost 50 major food retailers, including Tim Hortons, McDonald's and Burger King, and other major pork producers like Maple Leaf and Smithfield Foods.

The company wrote in a statement on its new policy: "Olymel believes that a ban on the use of gestation crates is inevitable in the medium and long term. Canada, along with the US, must follow suit. Our company believes that the entire pork production sector will have to respond positively to the demands of an increasing number of domestic and international clients who favour pork products originating from facilities which do not use crates to house pregnant sows... Numerous world renowned experts are in favour of a ban on gestation crates in order to allow sows to better express natural behaviours, benefit from greater freedom of movement, better socialization and a higher level of welfare."

The company said that the phase out will happen in its breeding facilities by 2022.

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