

Position Statement of World Animal Protection on Multi-storey Pig Farming

As an international non-profit organization focusing on farm animal welfare and food system transformation, World Animal Protection has noticed the rise of multi-storey pig farming in recent years. This is an ultra-large scale farming mode where multi layers of flat farming systems are superimposed together. In such a high-density farming system with limited spaces, challenges from animal diseases, environmental pressure, antibiotic resistance, food safety, and faecal contamination are exacerbated. This is in no sense an innovation or advancement in farming technologies and concepts. Quite the opposite, as too many animals are raised in one space in a superimposed manner, any emergency arising, such as infectious disease outbreaks or natural disasters, will lead to serious consequences. Therefore, this farming system should be neither encouraged nor promoted.

In multi-storey buildings, an unnatural gathering of massive pigs, makes disease outbreaks be more likely to occur. Moreover, multi-storey farming needs much stricter environmental control. Variations in environmental factors such as air quality, temperature and relative humidity may place an additional, undesirable stress on animals and weaken their immune system. Consequently, the overuse and misuse of antibiotics are speeding up the development of resistance and putting us all at risk. In terms of environmental protection, mega-farms produce more animal waste, culling as well as harmful gases, increasing the difficulty of management and prone to cause environmental pollution.

In addition, due to the fixed growth cycles of animals, the livestock industry is less flexible and resilient to resist relevant risks. While encountering huge fluctuations in supply and demand or any supply chain risks from upstream or downstream sections, such as feed and slaughter, production adjustments can hardly be made for effective responses. As a result, plenty of animals are culled, causing huge losses to the producers. The popularization of ultra-large scale farming mode such as multi-storey pig farming will further impair the industry's ability to survive from market risks.

The scale of livestock farming should match the actual demands for food, while the latter should be measured on the basis of healthy diets and rational food consumption. According to the *Scientific Research Report on Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents (2021)* released by Chinese Nutrition Society, health benefits can be obtained only by following the balanced diet principle, that is, a bland, low-oil diet dominated by plant-based foods, with a lot of vegetables, fruits, aquatic products and dairies, and moderate amounts of meat, poultry, and eggs. Meanwhile, there are serious amount of food wastes in the current food consumption structure. Therefore, it is worth considering whether we really need to adopt the ultra large scale farming mode to meet the demands for meat consumption.

World Animal Protection has been actively encouraging the livestock industry to improving their way of farming, which means to respect the nature of animals and employ modern technologies for scientific high welfare farming. After reaching an extremely large scale of livestock farming in globe, we believe, today, the top priority should be shifted to concerns on animal welfare including the sustainable production of high-quality animal-sourced foods, environmental protection, carbon emission reduction, etc. Blindly pursuing the scale and output

by raising pigs in multi-storey buildings or any other means with extremely high construction and operating costs should not be encouraged. We also call on more consumers to think about where their food come from, choose humane and sustainable animal-sourced food, and maintain reasonable, healthy diets.