



# THE WAY FORWARD

A REPORT on the EXTREME CONFINEMENT of  
PREGNANT PIGS in OKLAHOMA

*Embracing a Humane Future*



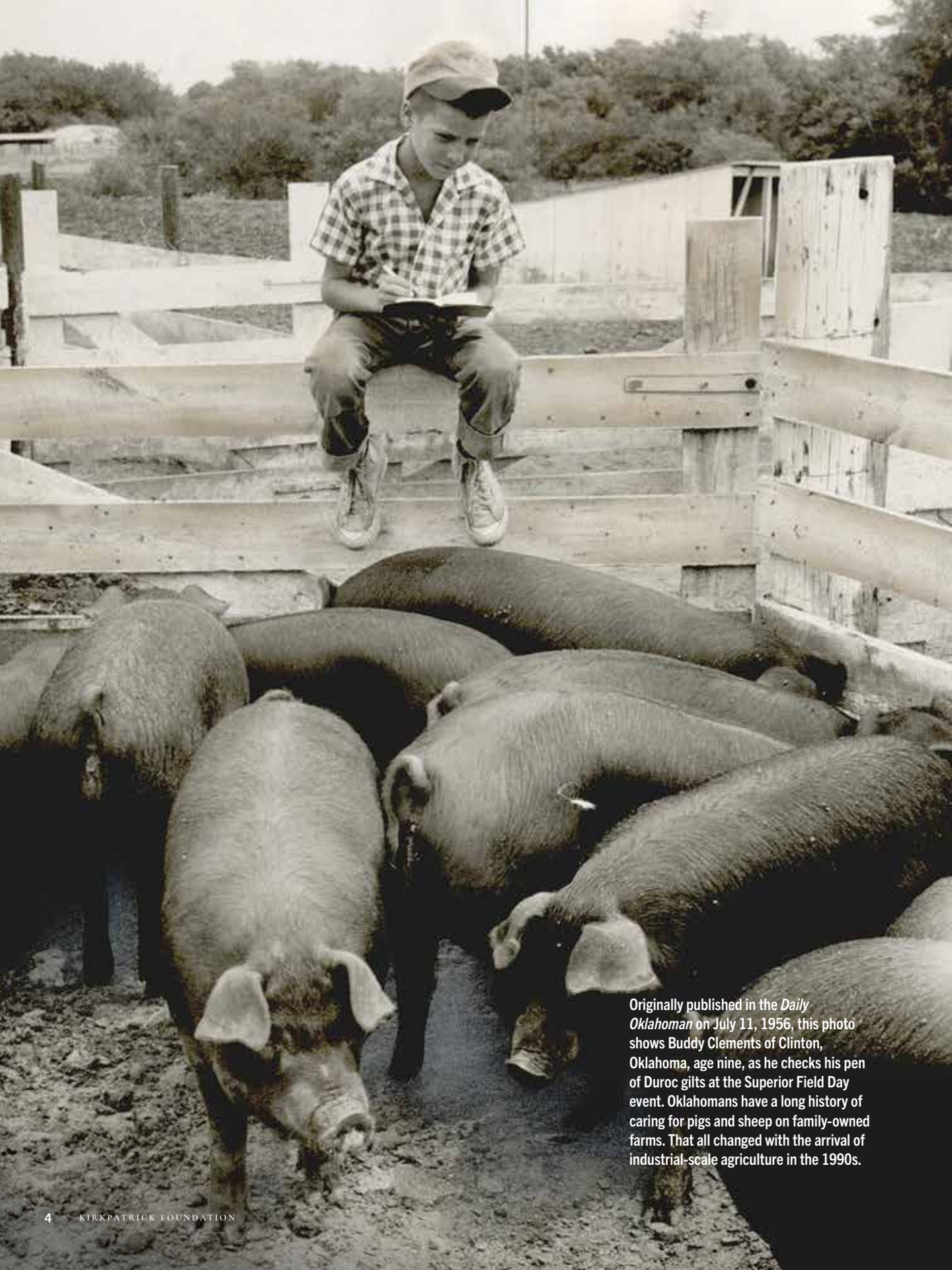


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“Factory farming, of course, does not cause all of the world’s problems, but it’s remarkable just how many of the m intersect there.”

— JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER





Originally published in the *Daily Oklahoman* on July 11, 1956, this photo shows Buddy Clements of Clinton, Oklahoma, age nine, as he checks his pen of Duroc gilts at the Superior Field Day event. Oklahomans have a long history of caring for pigs and sheep on family-owned farms. That all changed with the arrival of industrial-scale agriculture in the 1990s.

**OKLAHOMANS KNOW FARMING.** It's in our family histories, in our daily view, and in our bones. Although agriculture\* makes up just 1.2 percent of the state's GDP, its presence in our minds forms the basis of our identity. Caring for the land, air, water, and animals is written into our state constitution and embedded in our state song: "We know we belong to the land, and the land we belong to is grand."

Something happened, however, in the 1970s and '80s. The growing model of industrial-scale animal agriculture—with its political lobbyists, gigantic barns, and slick messaging—was perfected. Eventually, multinational corporate executives brought their promise of job growth to Oklahoma. Small towns could come alive again, if only Oklahoma legislators would exempt swine and poultry operations from the state's historic, populist, anti-corporate farming law. Lawmakers did exactly that on April 3, 1991. The result has been nothing short of controversial.

Oklahoma offered these new industrialists a different kind of land run—cheap acreage for corporate buyers far from organized opposition. What would they do? Double down on indoor hog and chicken farming, which meant the smell of money for a few and pollution for the many. In the thirty years since the industrial farms were fully built, roughly 6.5 billion Oklahoma farmed animals have been raised and slaughtered for food.

For four million Oklahoma mother pigs—480,000 annually—it has meant three to four years immobilized in a cage in service of eight to nine litters of piglets. Called "gestation crates," the devices for pregnant sow pigs in indoor barns are among the most controversial practices in industrial farm animal production. In 2017, 91 percent of Oklahomans were in favor of policies against the use of such crates for pregnant pigs. For many, it is a religious, moral, and ethical issue. At **Kirkpatrick Foundation**, we believe it is one of the most important animal welfare issues in Oklahoma today.

The decade of the 1990s, known as the "Hog Wars," saw a contentious battle between multinational industrial farm corporations and state government, which worked in earnest to protect rural Oklahomans. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of Oklahoma hired-farm workers fell 72 percent, from 49,681 to 13,721. During this time, the exponential rise of hogs in Oklahoma required a shift in Panhandle crops. Switching from wheat to sorghum and water-intensive corn crops, today we see the effects of over-irrigation in order to feed more than two million hogs a year—dry wells and a depleted aquifer.

Then—as now—the nexus of issues resulted in a public outcry from desperate farmers, ranchers, and landowners pleading for relief from water depletion and contamination, odor, and property devaluation.<sup>1</sup> In April 1997, **Governor Frank Keating** led a valiant effort to protect Oklahoma with the creation of the **Animal Waste and Water Quality Protection Task Force**, an attempt to solve the problem between Oklahomans and their new corporate neighbors. Animal welfare issues were largely ignored.

By June 2012, however, Oklahoma's **Sonic Corporation** made a historic attempt to address the peculiar brand of animal suffering occurring in these barns. Sonic publicly admonished the extreme confinement of pregnant sow pigs and announced a framework to eliminate crate-raised pork from its fast-food supply chain (achieved in 2022). But by 2019, there were other concerns, casually brushed aside by the Oklahoma corporate farm lobby: first, the state led the nation in the rise of farmer bankruptcies; and, second, the twenty-year radical rise of foreign ownership of agricultural land. By 2022, 1.8 million acres of land in Oklahoma were foreign-owned, up from 64,402 acres in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, animal-agriculture corporations made record profits.

Today, animal welfare advocates have successfully worked to expose the systemic horrors of factory farming and mitigate the suffering of animals impacted by industrial farm animal production. A strategic, cooperative effort among stakeholders of all kinds has emerged to eliminate gestation crates everywhere they exist. As a result, policies to end the extreme, immobilizing confinement of farm animals have prevailed everywhere the issue has been decided—at the **United States Supreme Court**, at the ballot box, and in the corporate board rooms.

At **Kirkpatrick Foundation**, our commitment to the humane treatment of animals includes confined pigs and egg-laying hens, which suffer at the greatest scale and intensity in Oklahoma. We believe it is past time for industrial farm animal production in our state to embrace a decent and humane system, most immediately for pregnant sows. The time is now for the Oklahoma hog industry to do right by the animals in its care and embrace group sow housing. We aim to educate and to help. **HERE'S WHY.**

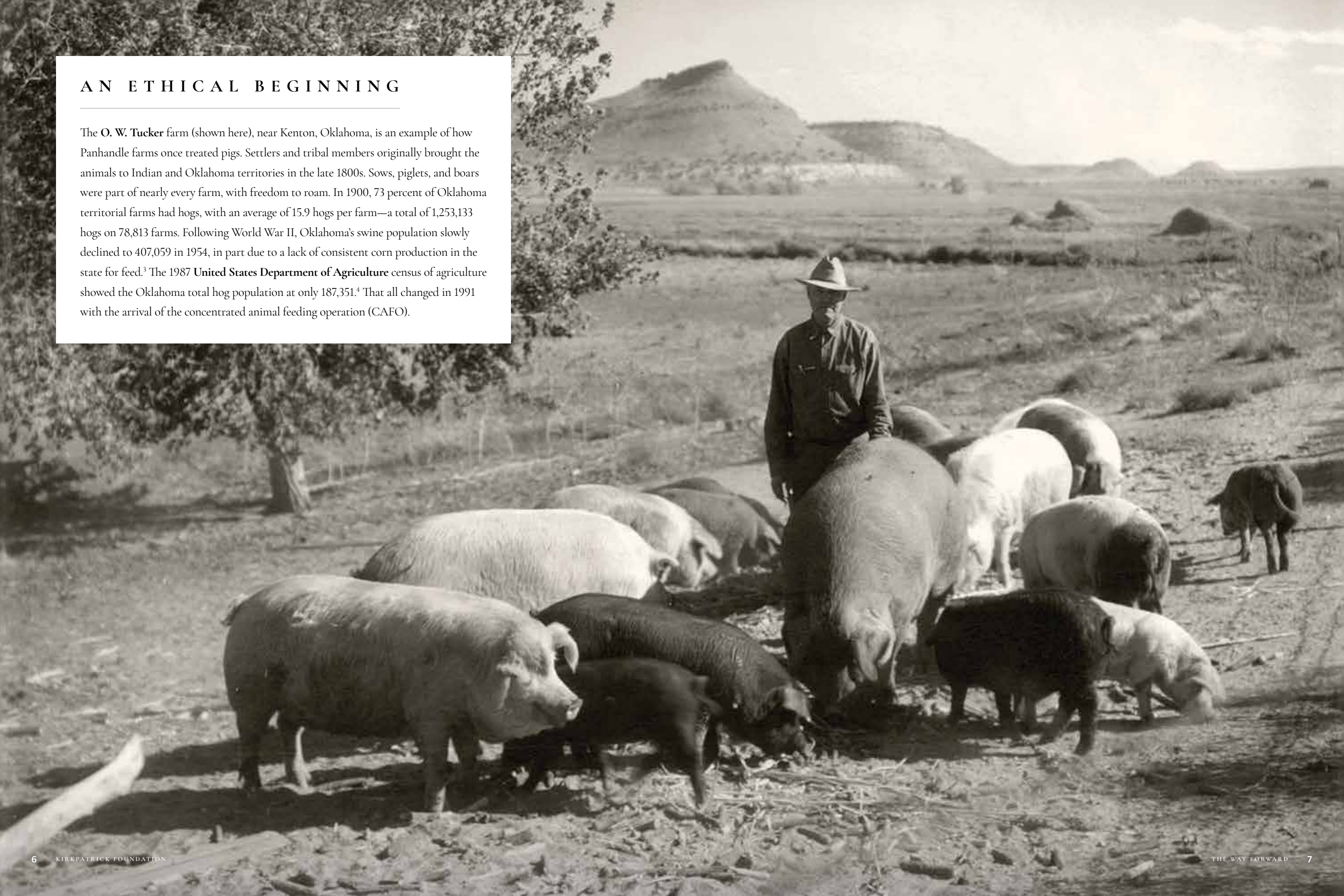
<sup>1</sup>In 2023, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting comprised 1.2 percent of Oklahoma's GDP.

**Regarding the Images:** Please note that certain photographs in this publication may be upsetting. They have been reviewed and deemed accurate and typical by an animal science professor. All sources, locations, and credits are on page 48.

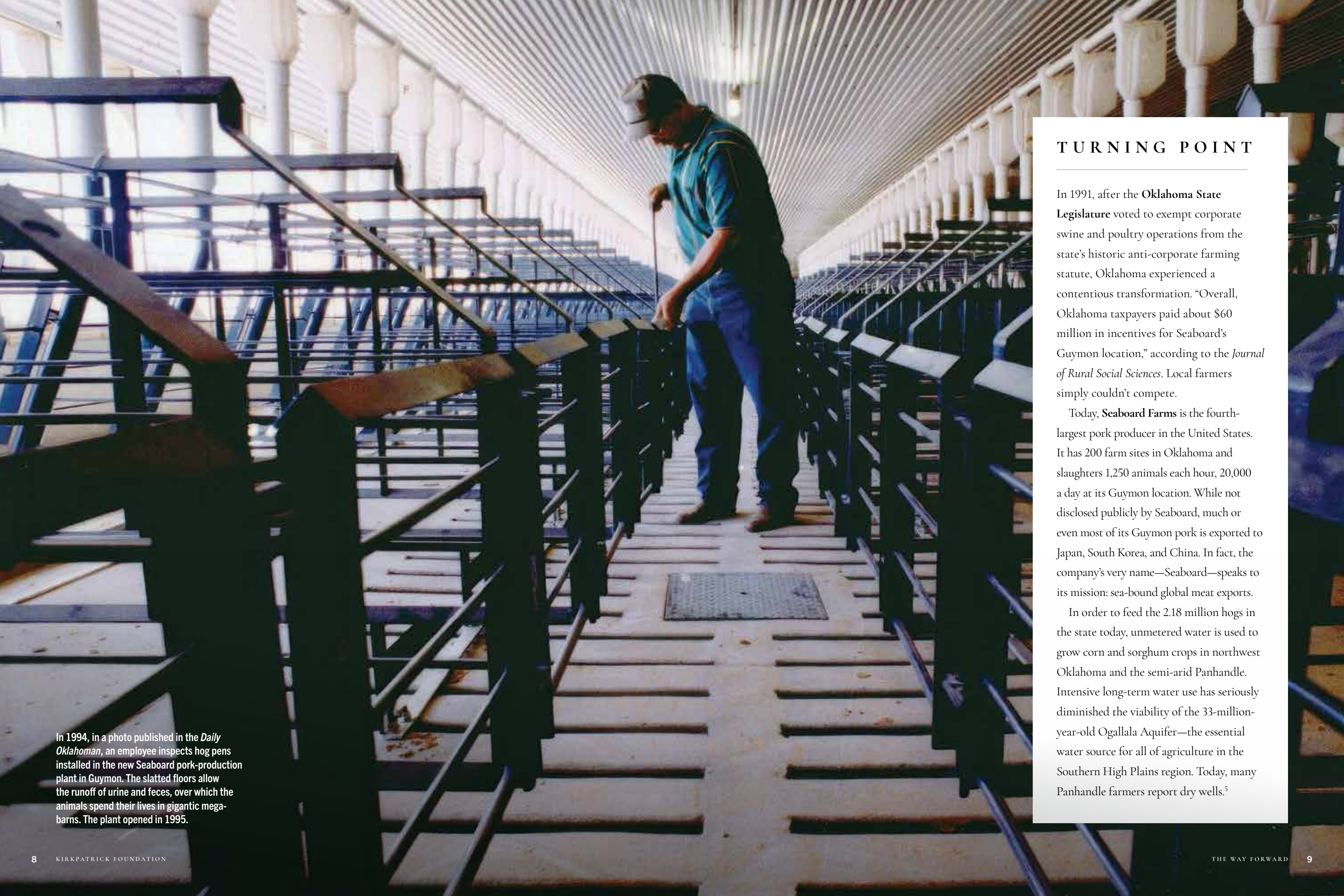


## AN ETHICAL BEGINNING

The **O. W. Tucker** farm (shown here), near Kenton, Oklahoma, is an example of how Panhandle farms once treated pigs. Settlers and tribal members originally brought the animals to Indian and Oklahoma territories in the late 1800s. Sows, piglets, and boars were part of nearly every farm, with freedom to roam. In 1900, 73 percent of Oklahoma territorial farms had hogs, with an average of 15.9 hogs per farm—a total of 1,253,133 hogs on 78,813 farms. Following World War II, Oklahoma's swine population slowly declined to 407,059 in 1954, in part due to a lack of consistent corn production in the state for feed.<sup>3</sup> The 1987 **United States Department of Agriculture** census of agriculture showed the Oklahoma total hog population at only 187,351.<sup>4</sup> That all changed in 1991 with the arrival of the concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO).







In 1994, in a photo published in the *Daily Oklahoman*, an employee inspects hog pens installed in the new Seaboard pork-production plant in Guymon. The slatted floors allow the runoff of urine and feces, over which the animals spend their lives in gigantic mega-barns. The plant opened in 1995.

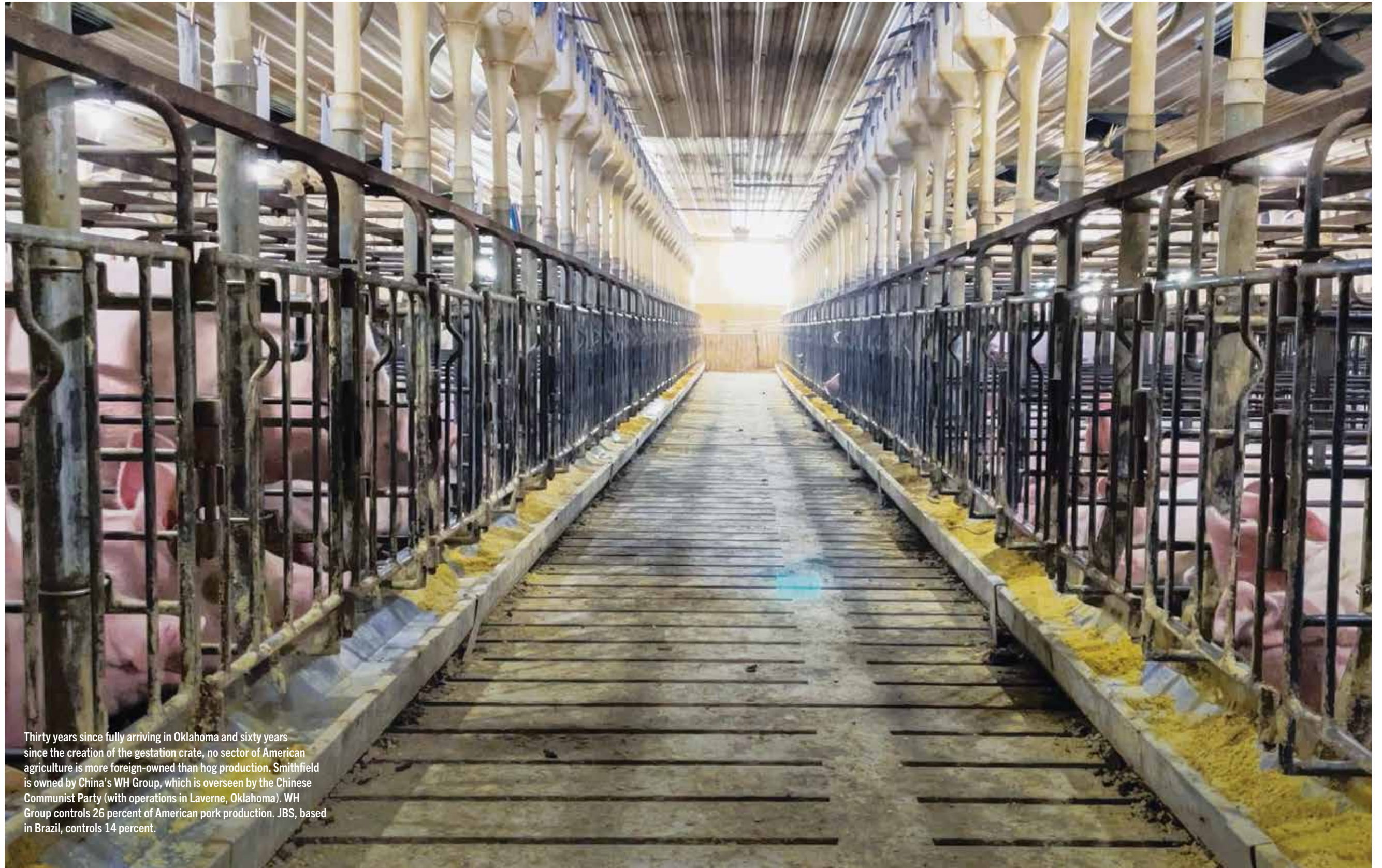
## TURNING POINT

In 1991, after the **Oklahoma State Legislature** voted to exempt corporate swine and poultry operations from the state's historic anti-corporate farming statute, Oklahoma experienced a contentious transformation. "Overall, Oklahoma taxpayers paid about \$60 million in incentives for Seaboard's Guymon location," according to the *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*. Local farmers simply couldn't compete.

Today, **Seaboard Farms** is the fourth-largest pork producer in the United States. It has 200 farm sites in Oklahoma and slaughters 1,250 animals each hour, 20,000 a day at its Guymon location. While not disclosed publicly by Seaboard, much or even most of its Guymon pork is exported to Japan, South Korea, and China. In fact, the company's very name—Seaboard—speaks to its mission: sea-bound global meat exports.

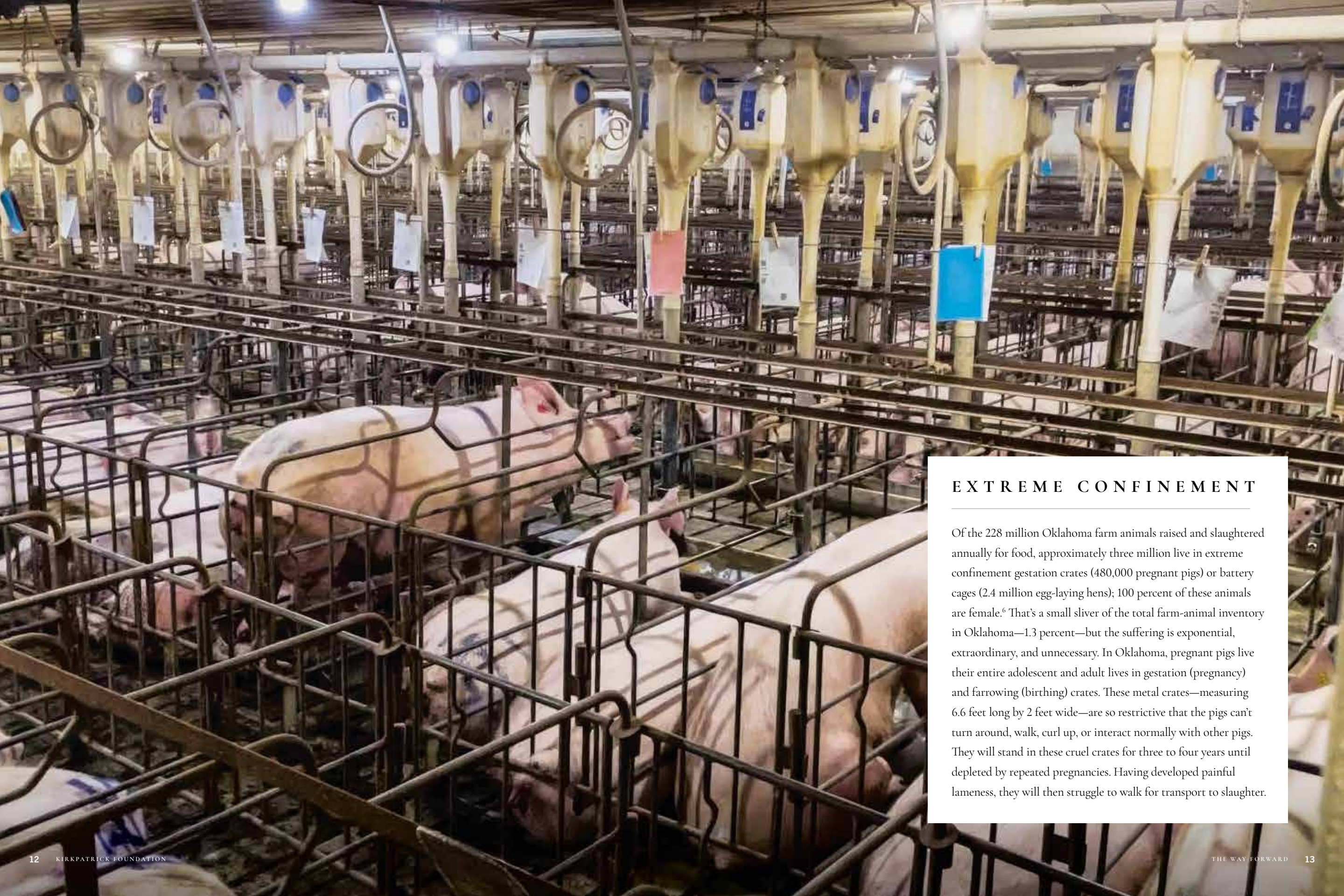
In order to feed the 2.18 million hogs in the state today, unmetered water is used to grow corn and sorghum crops in northwest Oklahoma and the semi-arid Panhandle. Intensive long-term water use has seriously diminished the viability of the 33-million-year-old Ogallala Aquifer—the essential water source for all of agriculture in the Southern High Plains region. Today, many Panhandle farmers report dry wells.<sup>5</sup>





Thirty years since fully arriving in Oklahoma and sixty years since the creation of the gestation crate, no sector of American agriculture is more foreign-owned than hog production. Smithfield is owned by China's WH Group, which is overseen by the Chinese Communist Party (with operations in Laverne, Oklahoma). WH Group controls 26 percent of American pork production. JBS, based in Brazil, controls 14 percent.





## EXTREME CONFINEMENT

Of the 228 million Oklahoma farm animals raised and slaughtered annually for food, approximately three million live in extreme confinement gestation crates (480,000 pregnant pigs) or battery cages (2.4 million egg-laying hens); 100 percent of these animals are female.<sup>6</sup> That's a small sliver of the total farm-animal inventory in Oklahoma—1.3 percent—but the suffering is exponential, extraordinary, and unnecessary. In Oklahoma, pregnant pigs live their entire adolescent and adult lives in gestation (pregnancy) and farrowing (birthing) crates. These metal crates—measuring 6.6 feet long by 2 feet wide—are so restrictive that the pigs can't turn around, walk, curl up, or interact normally with other pigs. They will stand in these cruel crates for three to four years until depleted by repeated pregnancies. Having developed painful lameness, they will then struggle to walk for transport to slaughter.





## THE ARC OF DECLINE

Smart, social, and playful, sows will demonstrate resistance when first confined (screaming and bar chewing). Distress eventually gives way to despondency: a three-year-old pregnant sow rarely responds to a nudge or dousing of water.







## INTELLIGENT ANIMALS

Research has shown pigs to be capable of playing (and winning) video games,<sup>7</sup> solving mazes, and learning a symbolic language. Pigs build complex nests, sing to their young, and are considered to be one of the most intelligent animals on the planet. Oklahomans believe we can do better in their treatment: 91 percent support policies that require sufficient space for farm animals to stand up, turn around, and stretch their limbs in any cage, crate, or pen.<sup>8</sup>

Sentience is well-established regarding non-human animals. Intelligence, the capacity to suffer, and the ability to express emotion and feeling make the protection of animals—including animals raised for food—an essential part of civilized society.





## MATERNAL SUFFERING

Pigs are excellent mothers. In natural settings, they will always separate their sleeping area from their latrine. In today's mega-farms, pigs are forced to give birth in farrowing crates on hard, slatted floors just above a pit of their own waste. Once she's delivered her piglets, the mother sow must stick her legs through the bars in order to lay down and nurse the piglets. Even after many generations of pigs born this way, the pregnant sow will still make nesting motions with her snout on the hard empty floor before her piglets are born. Many experts liken the life of a pregnant sow to living and giving birth repeatedly in an airline seat—for years on end.<sup>9</sup>





## MANURE, PROPERTY VALUES, & PROFITS

Concentrated animal feeding operations can cause numerous environmental and public-health problems. In the mid-1970s, the **Environmental Protection Agency** began regulating animal-feeding operations (AFOs) and CAFOs. Depending on the type and number of animals, manure on one farm can range between 2,800 tons and 1.6 million tons a year, more waste than a city with 1.5 million residents.<sup>10</sup> Annually, it is estimated that U.S. farm animals generate somewhere between four and twenty times more manure than people. Manure from waste lagoons

can leach into groundwater or run off into streams and rivers near farms. Pathogens such as *E. coli*, growth hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals are found in the land, air, and water near CAFOs. Unsurprisingly, property values decline as much as 50 to 88 percent for nearby residences.<sup>11</sup> Over the last several decades, water sources from important aquifers, too, have been seriously depleted with little chance to recharge, due to over-irrigation for animal-feed crops. Meanwhile, corporate profits are returned to shareholders, who mostly live elsewhere.

A lagoon at a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) near Hennessey, Oklahoma, in 2023





## Animals as Machines: A 60-Year-Old Device

GESTATION CRATES FOR pregnant pigs were first devised in 1964, in the early years of animal agriculture vertical integration. They are widely condemned as the most cruel devices used for livestock because they entirely restrict the movement of the animals. Marketed in the name of “efficiency,” gestation crates became the standard in the commercial pork-production industry for individually confining pregnant sows.

These crates—6.6 feet by 2 feet—are just slightly larger than the pregnant sows, which weigh three

hundred to four hundred pounds at the peak of reproductive maturity. Pigs continue to grow as they spend their lives trapped within the tight bars. Farrowing crates, where sows will birth their piglets, are the same size for the mother but with space provided around her enclosure for piglets. In natural settings, piglets nurse for about eight weeks. In mega-farms, piglets are removed after three weeks, then sows are re-impregnated and returned to gestation crates.

In the years since the “innovation” of gestation crates, dozens of countries and states have restricted or banned the practice. Meanwhile, the genetics of commercial pigs have been altered to create heavier, wider animals for a higher volume of meat produced per pig. This has only worsened the plight of the pregnant sows in gestation crates. By any standard, this level of confinement would be considered torture and unacceptable for any other animal, even for the worst human criminals.

The human-health considerations are also vast, since these sows are subjected to prolific use of antibiotics to manage animal disease in confined spaces. Just as the United States government and vaccine manufacturers like **Pfizer** and **Moderna** are working toward the next vaccine for large-scale human-mortality viruses, many scientists and policy experts believe that industrial farm animal production in American concentrated animal feeding operations could well be ground zero for the next pandemic.<sup>12</sup>



# With the food sector moving away from intensive confinement operations, Oklahoma risks being left behind.

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**The way forward** is more simple than we might expect. The largest pork producers in America, including **Smithfield, JBS, Hormel and Clemons Group**, have successfully converted some or all of their facilities to group sow housing where pigs—at minimum—spend the majority of their time during pregnancy cycles outside of crates. Eleven U.S. states,\* including red states, and the **European Union** have banned or restricted extreme confinement. **McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Kroger, Target** and dozens more major food companies have policies to only source pork

from group sow housing operations. Hundreds of large-scale pig operations across the Midwest have successfully moved to group sow housing. Consumers, policymakers, voters, and the food industry are demanding it. It's no wonder why in 2023, according to the **National Pork Producers Council**, more than 40% of sows are now free from perpetual confinement in gestation crates. And that number is only going up. It's time for Oklahoma pork producers to do the same: eliminate cruel gestation crates for the betterment of pig health—and ours. **Here's how.**



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\*Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, and Rhode Island





## CRATE - FREE HOUSING

Retrofitting industrial-scale sow barns by removing gestation crates is a big step forward. **Dr. Temple Grandin, PhD**, writes that “loose housing,” where sows live in large groups, is by far a better method of animal husbandry for pregnant sows. Some farms place thirty to forty sows in each pen, whereas others farms have seen success with larger groups in one barn. Space planning is essential to minimize any dominance issues and provide access to food.<sup>13</sup> Breeding for specific genetic qualities is also important: aggressive pigs can be removed and calmer sows kept for breeding future generations of pigs. Finally, training stockpeople how to observe daily group dynamics is critical for the welfare of the animals.

Here, pregnant sow pigs clearly enjoy each other's company, are free to express normal behaviors, and co-exist peacefully with proper animal husbandry management.



## RETURN TO NATURE

Pasture-raised pigs remain the animal-welfare ideal within pork production. **Prairie Creek Farms** (pictured here), in Kellyville, Oklahoma, is a leader in providing humanely raised meat and egg products while employing—and mentoring—a new generation of young farmers who value animal husbandry. Using regenerative agriculture techniques, farmers rotate animals from one section of pasture to another, providing a fresh area to forage while allowing the other areas to regrow undisturbed. Combining no-till cover crops like clover with these grazing systems leads to a steady improvement in ecosystem health. Rich soil, full of microscopic life, is the secret to retaining nutrients and moisture, trapping atmospheric carbon in the roots of the plants that are left to regrow. What's good for the animals is also good for the soil and plants.

Pigs raised at Prairie Creek Farms in northeast Oklahoma enjoy sunshine, fresh air, all-natural diets, and the ability to engage in their instinctual rooting behaviors. On the following pages, the sustainable agriculture model at Prairie Creek values animal welfare for pigs, cattle, and chickens. Environmental responsibility and stewardship of the land are key tenets to this type of animal agriculture.









Born as a runt in an Oklahoma commercial hog barn in 2016, Willis survived being “pig slammed” or “thumped,” in which an unwanted piglet is killed by striking its head on concrete. This type of blunt-force-trauma killing is considered a practical form of euthanasia in the hog industry for young piglets, however the American Veterinary Medical

Association’s *Guidelines on Euthanasia* has weighed in on the controversial practice.

“Personnel who have to perform manually applied blunt force trauma to the head often find it displeasing and soon become fatigued,” the *Guidelines* say. “Fatigue can lead to inconsistency in application, creating humane concerns about its efficacious

application to large numbers of animals. For this reason, the AVMA encourages those using manually applied blunt force trauma to the head as a euthanasia method to actively search for alternate approaches.”<sup>15</sup>

After arriving at Oliver and Friends Farm Sanctuary, in Luther, Oklahoma, Willis faced a long and slow recovery from his head

injuries. Although he still has tremors when he gets excited, especially around food, sanctuary founders Jennie and Jason Hays say he has largely recovered. Gentle and shy, Willis “will do anything” for cookies and sweets, dislikes cabbage, and prefers sweet peppers and belly rubs. At last weight check, he tipped the scales at 724 pounds.

## SANCTUARY LIFE

Some pigs live a life of leisure and peace. At **Oliver and Friends Farm Sanctuary**, a charitable nonprofit in Luther, Oklahoma, advocates of cruelty-free living report an improved sense of wellbeing among the animals and a feeling of connectedness to the natural world for visitors. Even a modest reduction in meat-eating has demonstrable results for improved climate solutions and human health outcomes. Vegetarians choose a plant-based diet but may allow themselves to consume some animal products such as eggs, cheese, or even fish. Vegans choose a life without the consumption

of any animal-sourced products. Food science is advancing with plant-based options that mimic foods loved by consumers. Oklahoma grain farmers can benefit from the coming wave of financial opportunity presented by plant-based options, and the **Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry** could foster this innovation. Even cell-cultured meat, backed by \$2.8 billion in funding with 156 new companies on six continents (as of 2022), is a new reality; the **Food and Drug Administration** has deemed it safe to eat and the **USDA** approved its production and sale in 2023.<sup>14</sup>





## THE PUBLIC DEMAND

Consumers have power. Despite the public's intense opposition to the extreme confinement of farm animals, some corporations refuse to listen. In Oklahoma, the largest industrial pork companies have not yet made the transition to crate-free systems, despite modernization by competition. Even a **United States Supreme Court** ruling<sup>16</sup> in May 2023 (upholding a California ban on sales of whole pork produced from pigs in gestation crates) has yielded little progress. With 70 percent of the U.S. economy in the hands of the consumer, Oklahoma's pork mega-

producers must now confront a marketplace in which the biggest retail and wholesale customers have firm policies against gestation crates. School districts like **Putnam City** and universities like the **University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma** in Chickasha have opted for crate-free pork at no extra cost, thanks to their cafeteria contracts with Sodexo, which leads the way with its "free-to-roam" policies. In Oklahoma, all **McNellie's Group** restaurants (including **Fassler Hall**, pictured here) serve crate-free, pasture-raised pork from **Prairie Creek Farms**.





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# The Freedom to Move

In Oklahoma and across the nation, millions of people have come together for the end of the extreme confinement of farm animals. From widely diverse backgrounds, rural and urban, the fifty-four people on the following pages are a small fraction of the 91% of Oklahomans who believe farm animals should be able to move. “God gave them legs for a reason,”

said one. They represent the wide-open Panhandle of western Oklahoma, the rolling hills of the Tallgrass Prairie, two urban centers, college towns, and all points in between. Farmers, veterinarians, bankers, nonprofit executives, teachers, artists, a high-school student, pastors, volunteers, and politicians—each condemns the continued use of gestation crates in our state.



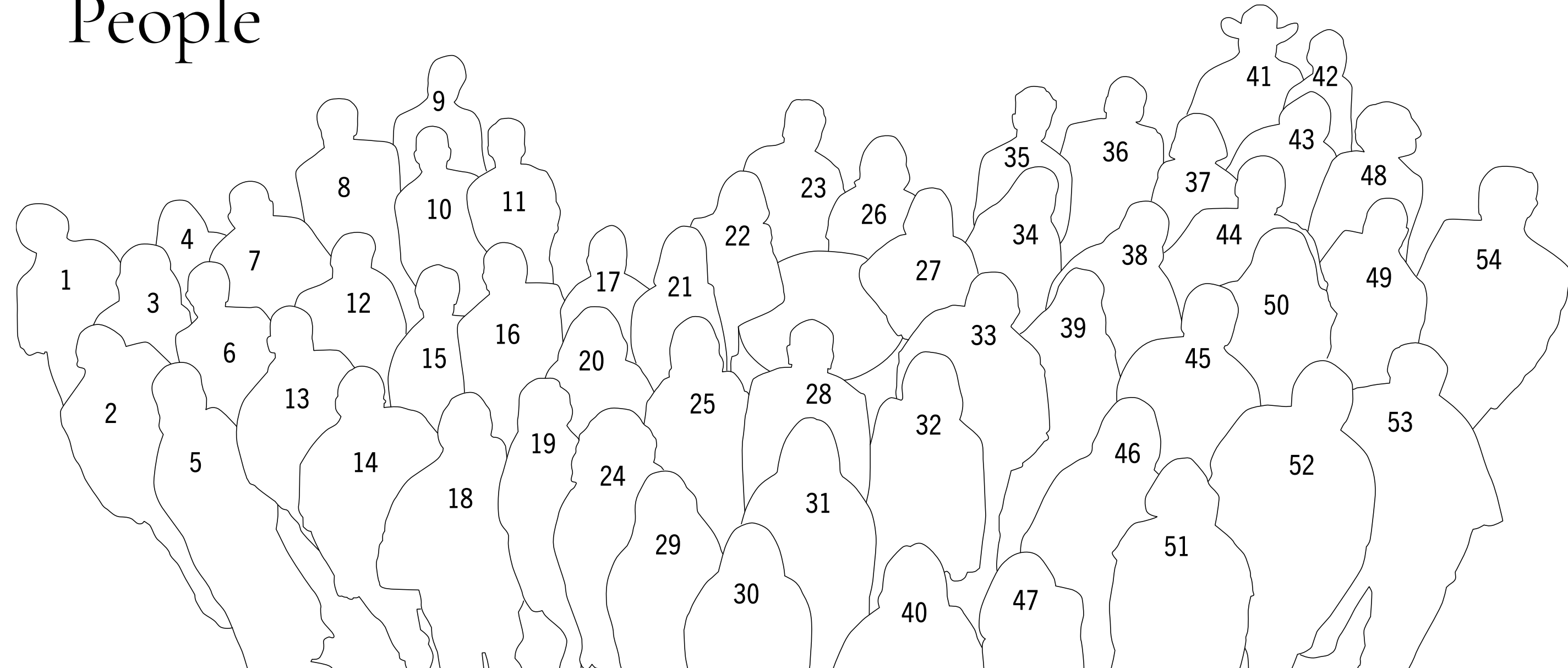




Farm-animal and humane advocates convened at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art on August 23, 2023. The fifty-four people here oppose the continued and perpetual use of gestation crates in Oklahoma for pregnant sow pigs. Based on 2017 polling research, they join nearly 3 million adults in Oklahoma who share this view. Please see the next page for identifications.



# People



1. Rev. Canon Susan Joplin, *Episcopal priest*
2. Max Weitzenhoffer, *theater producer*
3. Louisa McCune, *philanthropy executive*
4. Fran Derrick, *community volunteer*
5. Manda Overturf Shank, *program officer*
6. Rebecca McCubbin, *community volunteer*
7. Ed Fite, *river advocate*
8. Don Holladay, *attorney*
9. Rev. Dr. Robin Meyers, *pastor and professor*
10. Adam Peditto, *filmmaker*
11. José Elias, *filmmaker*
12. Becky Holladay, *writer*
13. Deacon Jones, *former hog farm employee*
14. W. W. Rucks Elmore, *high school student*
15. Linda Edmondson, *community advocate*
16. Drew Edmondson, *former attorney general*
17. Cynthia Armstrong, *humane society state director*
18. Jason Hays, *farm sanctuary operator*
19. Jennie Hays, *farm sanctuary founder*
20. Heather Hintz, *attorney*
21. Alana Ruiz de la Peña, *editor*
22. Susan Grossman, *program officer*
23. Mike Staubus, *art director*
24. Lisa Pitsiri, *development director*
25. Aimee Harlow, *community volunteer*
26. Brenda Masters, *professor*
27. Liz Wood, *volunteer firefighter*
28. Henry Hood, *attorney*
29. Laurie Anderson, *farm sanctuary founder*
30. Patricia Harmon, *veterinary technician*
31. Luisa Parra, *veterinarian*
32. Suzette Hatfield, *environmental advocate*
33. S. Kim Hatfield, *oil and gas chairman*
34. Lisa Loos, *nutritional health coach*
35. Chad Mount, *artist*
36. Larry Keigwin, *choreographer*
37. Nancy Anthony, *retired philanthropy executive*
38. Inger Giuffrida, *wildlife nonprofit executive*
39. Lesa Staubus, *veterinarian*
40. Pam Kingfisher, *environmental advocate*
41. Austin Puckett, *bison farm owner and operator*
42. Jessie Deardorf, *bison farm owner and operator*
43. Joy Reed Belt, *art gallery owner*
44. John Otto, *veterinarian*
45. Kyle Abbot, *veterinarian*
46. Denise Deason Toyne, *attorney*
47. Joan Korenblit, *nonprofit founder and executive*
48. Leslie Hudson, *philanthropist*
49. Elizabeth Eickman, *philanthropy executive*
50. Patti Otto, *university department director*
51. Nancy Garber, *environmental advocate*
52. Ed Brocksmith, *environmental advocate*
53. Michael Korenblit, *community advocate*
54. Christian Keesee, *banker and philanthropist*



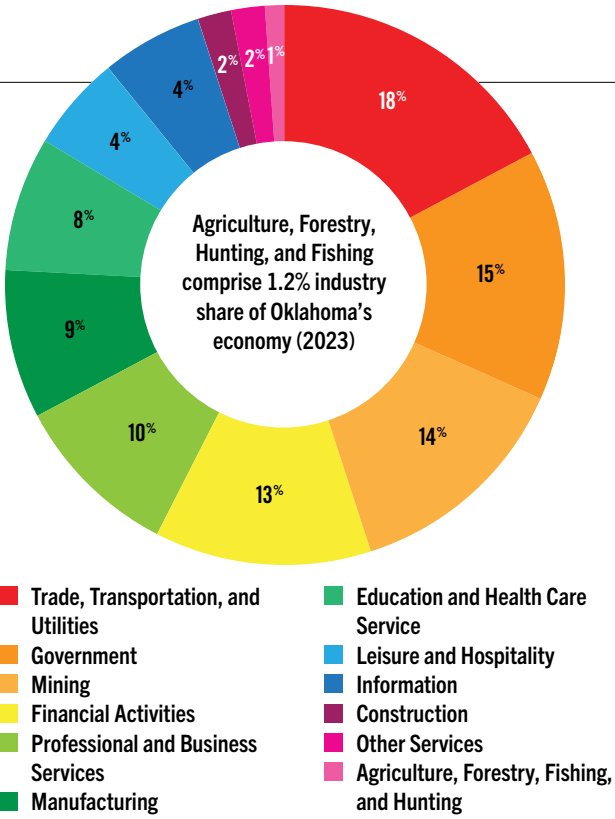
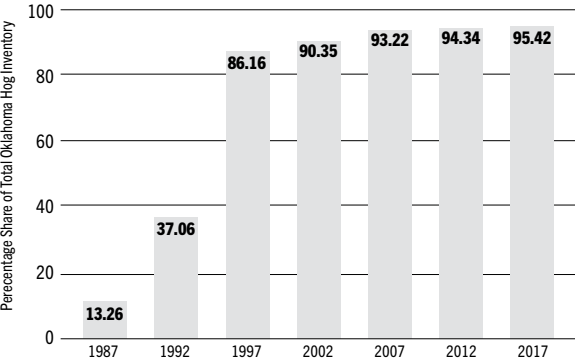
# By the Numbers

## CORPORATE CONTROL

In 1977, American conservationist and farmer **Wendell Berry** warned of the devastating changes coming to the American agricultural landscape, from pastoral to industrial. “It is impossible to mechanize production without mechanizing consumption, impossible to make machines of soil, plants, and animals without making machines also of people.”<sup>17</sup>

Since the arrival of industrial-scale hog farms in the 1990s, Oklahoma has experienced that change firsthand. The state moved from twenty-fifth nationwide in pig inventory in 1994 to sixth for sows and seventh for piglets today.<sup>18</sup> In the chart below, we see the dramatic increase in the inventory of hogs in Oklahoma. In fact, the size of the Oklahoma hog farm has so dramatically changed that the census did not have the category of 5,000+ hogs per farm until 1978. The sheer scale has been devastating for pigs, especially pregnant ones in extreme-confinement crates.

**Corporate Hog Ownership**  
FARMS IN OKLAHOMA WITH 5,000+ HOGS



Although agriculture's water usage, animal welfare, and statehouse policy impacts are significant in Oklahoma, **the industry represents the smallest share of actual Oklahoma GDP.**<sup>19</sup>



The Oklahoma hog market has become entirely monopolized, ending open sales for pigs in 2016. According to the USDA, **95.4% of all hogs live on 33 industrial-scale farms known as CAFOs**, each with 5,000+ hogs on site.<sup>20</sup>



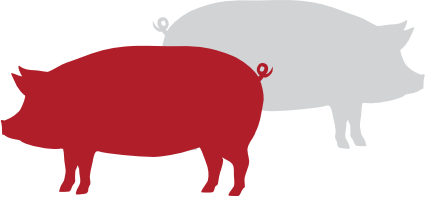
According to *National Hog Farmer*, since 2014, **sow death** in the United States has changed 76.7%. In 2023, the U.S. sow mortality rate (not slaughtered, but dying in their crates) was 15.9%. Now more than 15 of every 100 sows die each year while young and in the height of reproductive ability.<sup>21</sup>



After a 1991 law allowing corporate swine and poultry farming, **77% of farm and ranch jobs disappeared in Oklahoma from 1990 to 2014**—greater than the decline in subsistence farming during the Dust Bowl.<sup>22</sup>

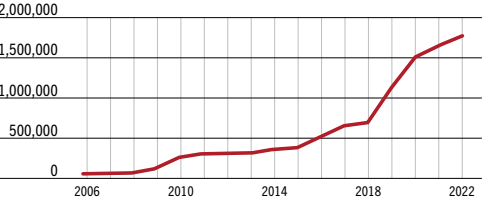


According to an October 2017 poll by Lake Research, **91% of Oklahomans** believe that farm animals should have enough room to stand up, stretch their limbs, and turn around in any crate, cage, or pen.



**Nearly 1 out of every 2 hogs** in the United States is owned by foreign corporations, either China's WH Group (a Chinese Communist Party-controlled corporation based in Hong Kong), or JBS, which is based in Sao Paulo, Brazil.<sup>23</sup>

**Foreign Ownership of Oklahoma Agriculture Land 2006-2022**



Oklahoma has led the nation in the rise of foreign-owned agricultural land. Since 2004, there has been a **2,793.7% rise in foreign ownership**, totaling 1,790,128 acres.<sup>24</sup>



## THE GEOGRAPHY OF INDUSTRIAL AG

To better understand the scale of factory farming, a helpful map of industrial agriculture operations can be found on **Project CounterGlow**. Since launching in 2020, the organization uses technology,

government reports, and information provided by citizens to create an interactive, open-to-the-public map of animal agriculture farms and processing facilities in the United States. [counterglow.org](https://counterglow.org)



# Glossary

**Animal Sentience:** The recognition that animals experience consciousness, awareness, pain, joy, tenderness, and even compassion.

**Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO):** The CAFO was first defined by the Environmental Protection Agency in the mid-1970s to regulate environmental pollution. CAFOs are large livestock and poultry operations that raise animals intensively in concentrated barns and pens. The EPA categorizes a farm as a large CAFO if it has 1,000 cattle, 2,500 pigs weighing more than 55 pounds, or 30,000 laying hens/broilers.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** The EPA, created in the 1970s, is an independent agency of the United States government tasked with environmental matters and public-health protection.

**Extreme Confinement:** A term used to describe cage conditions so small that the animal cannot turn around, fully extend its limbs, or interact with other animals naturally. Sow pigs in gestation crates, egg-laying hens in battery cages, and veal calves housed in small crates are examples of extreme confinement.

**Factory Farming:** A colloquial term used by animal advocates to reflect the psychological detachment regarding animal suffering in industrial farm animal production by large-scale animal agriculture corporations.

**Farrowing Crate or Birthing Box:** A restrictive cage that holds the pregnant sow as she delivers and nurses her piglets. Identical to the gestation crate, this crate has additional space for nursing piglets.

**Gestation Crate or Sow Stall:** A restrictive metal cage measuring 6.6 feet by 2 feet that is used to

hold sows during their almost four-month-long pregnancy. Slightly larger than the sow's body, the crate prevents the pig from turning around, walking, or stretching her limbs. Pending delivery of piglets, the sow is moved to a same-sized farrowing crate. Once piglets are weaned, the sow returns to the gestation crate.

**Gestation Cycle:** The time from conception to birth. This time is 112 to 115 days (3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days) for a sow. A crated sow will have approximately nine pregnancies and spend about four years in confinement.

**Monopoly:** A market structure that lacks competition and in which a specific person or enterprise is the only supplier of a particular good or service. Monopolies limit available products for the market and occur when barriers to entry impede a potential competitor from entering the market.

**Piglet:** A newborn or baby pig.

**Reducetarian:** The practice of eating less meat, less dairy, and fewer eggs, regardless of the degree or motivation.

**Sow:** A mature female pig who has had piglets.

**Vertical Integration:** The process within an industry in which all parts of the business are progressively purchased, and controlled, by one company to maximize profit and push out competition. Vertical integration in animal agriculture has led to single corporate ownership of animals, feed, transportation, processing, packaging, and distribution.

**Unit:** Agricultural term used to describe individual animals in farm operations which desensitizes corporate management from animal sentience.

## SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS

Oklahoma veterinarians **Dr. Lesa Staubus** and **Dr. Thomas Pool** are available to educate Oklahomans on the treatment of animals on industrial farms, concerns about extreme confinement, and veterinary science and ethics in general. They are available for civic groups, libraries, media inquiries, and more.



**Dr. Lesa Staubus, DVM**, of Stillwater, is a veterinarian and senior program officer at Kirkpatrick Foundation.  
[office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com](mailto:office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com)



**Dr. Thomas Pool, MPH, DVM**, of Lawton, is a retired U.S. Army colonel and the senior veterinarian at Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy.  
[info@animalwellnessaction.org](mailto:info@animalwellnessaction.org)

## TOGETHER FOR A HUMANE FUTURE

Recent convenings at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art and Oklahoma State University–Oklahoma City



On August 23, 2023, advocates for ending the extreme confinement of farm animals gathered at the **Oklahoma City Museum of Art** for a screening of *Common Enemy*, the premiere of a documentary by **The Humane League**. Earlier in 2023, on March 1, 2023, **National Pig Day**, Kirkpatrick Foundation hosted the **Oklahoma Conference on the Humane Treatment of Pigs at Oklahoma State University–Oklahoma City**, a day-long educational convening of lawyers, veterinarians, farmers, animal advocates, journalists, students, and philanthropists. A speaker's dinner was held the night before at **Cattlemen's Steakhouse**. Presenters included **Dr. Bailey Norwood PhD** of Oklahoma State University, rancher **Mike Callicrate** of Ranch Foods Direct, former attorney general **Drew Edmondson**, veterinarian **Dr. Thomas Pool DVM**, environmentalist **Ed Brocksmith**, **Dr. Lesa Staubus DVM**, **Louisa McCune**, **Dr. Mark Essig PhD**, **Dr. Tammy Gray-Steele PhD** of National Women in Agriculture Association, **Jennie Hays** of Oliver and Friends, **Asha Brundage-Moore** of Animal Legal Defense Fund, **Dr. Kimberly Reeds DVM**, **Dr. Greg Campbell DVM**, **Shawn Suriano RVT**, **Shawna Clanton RVT**, **Nate Beulac** of Prairie Creek Farms, and legendary farmer **Will Harris** of White Oak Farms.



# Credits

## Photography and Locations

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**Pages 6–7:** B. C. McLean, October 26, 1939, near Kenton, Oklahoma, via Oklahoma Historical Society.  
**Pages 8–9:** Jim Argo, September 16, 1994, in Guymon, Oklahoma, via the Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection  
**Pages 10–13:** Mercy for Animals, sows in sow stalls. The photo was taken in Maywood, Nebraska by Mercy for Animals as part of an undercover investigation in 2023.  
**Pages 14–15:** Humane Society of the United States, breeding sows in crates at a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods. The photo was taken in 2010 by the Humane Society as part of an undercover investigation in Waverly, Virginia.

**Pages 16–17:** Stock photo via Humane Society of the United States  
**Pages 18–19:** Mercy for Animals, sow in extreme confinement. The photo was taken in 2013 by Mercy for Animals as part of an undercover investigation in Pipestone County, Minnesota.  
**Pages 20–21:** Mercy for Animals, sow in extreme confinement. The photo was taken in 2013 by Mercy for Animals as part of an undercover investigation at West Coast Farms in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma.  
**Pages 22–23:** Adam Peditto and José Elias of The Humane League, 2023, in northwest Oklahoma  
**Pages 24–25:** Technical illustration by Brian Eyerman of Skyline Ink  
**Page 27:** Chirath Photo via Shutterstock  
**Pages 28–29:** Bert Jansen for *Pig Progress*, 2020, gestation area in farrow-to-finish at the Jansberg Farm in Castenray, Limburg, the Netherlands

**Pages 30–33:** Shane Bevel for Kirkpatrick Foundation, 2022, at Prairie Creek Farms in Kellyville, Oklahoma  
**Pages 34–35:** Paige Rains for Oliver and Friends Farm Sanctuary, Willis the pig in 2018, in Luther, Oklahoma  
**Pages 36–37:** Mel Willis for Kirkpatrick Foundation, January 5, 2024, interior of Fassler Hall in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
**Page 39:** Digital Zoo via Getty Images  
**Pages 40–41:** Shevaun Williams for Kirkpatrick Foundation, August 23, 2023, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
**Page 47:** Shevaun Williams and Associates for Kirkpatrick Foundation, March 1, 2023, and August 23, 2023, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
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## Additional Reading

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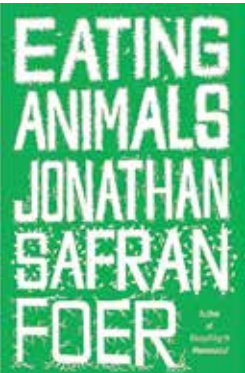
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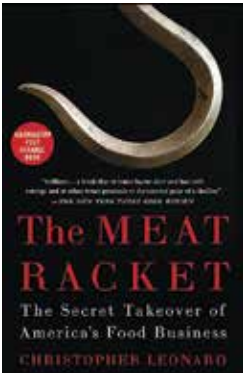
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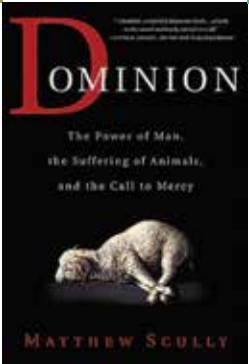


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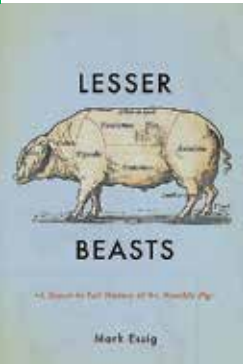


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## Editorial, Design, and Legal

Louisa McCune, *Editor*; Manda Overturf Shank, *Senior Editor*; Alana Ruiz de la Peña, *Senior Editor*; Dr. Lesa Staubus DVM, *Associate Editor*; Kristy Wicker, *Research Editor*; Steven Walker, *Walker Creative, Designer*; Jim Cholakis, *Copyeditor*; Brian Eyerman, *Skyline Ink, Illustrator*; Phillips Murrah Attorneys and Counselors at Law, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*, and Hall Estill Attorneys at Law, *Legal Reviewers*.

*Editor's Note:* USDA statistics and inventory numbers are updated quarterly. The editors have made every attempt to provide accurate, timely data as of publication date. If you have questions regarding the information presented in this publication, please email [office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com](mailto:office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com). Also, this report does not address the labor conditions for the people employed by these factory farms.

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# How You Can Help!

Ending the Extreme Confinement of Pregnant Pigs in Industrial Farm Animal Production



**DONATE:** Contribute to the many animal-welfare nonprofits who work in farm-animal protection and farm advocacy, including **Oliver and Friends Farm Sanctuary**, **Animal Wellness Action**, **The Humane League**, **Mercy for Animals**, **Animal Legal Defense Fund**, and **Farm Action**.

**ACT LOCAL:** Join efforts to end the era of cage confinement. Attend **The ANIMAL Conference** at the **Oklahoma City Zoo** on October 18 and 19, 2024, or email us to learn about ways to get involved: [office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com](mailto:office@kirkpatrickfoundation.com).

**EMBRACE COMPASSION:** Apply a philosophy of compassion to farm animals, in addition to companion animals, wildlife, aquatic life, and animals subjected to research.

**COMMIT TO "CRATE-FREE":** Only buy pork and eggs from farms that do not practice extreme confinement. Choose clearly labeled products, and do further research. Farms aren't always visited by the USDA to ensure organic, and "greenwashing"—the practice of misleading consumers—is common in food labeling.

**SUPPORT HUMANE PRODUCERS:** It's not just the animals that have suffered from industrial agriculture. Commit to purchasing from independent farmers and ranchers. The **Oklahoma Food Co-Op**, **Urban Agrarian**, and **Prairie Creek Farms** are great Oklahoma resources.

Meanwhile, **Oklahoma Certified Beef** products help Oklahoma ranchers.

**MAKE COMPROMISES:** Consider hybrid solutions that satisfy aesthetic desires and humane outcomes. Begin a **Meatless Monday** practice, and consider occasional substitutes. Reducetarians eat less meat and dairy, making a positive impact on the number of animals living in confinement.

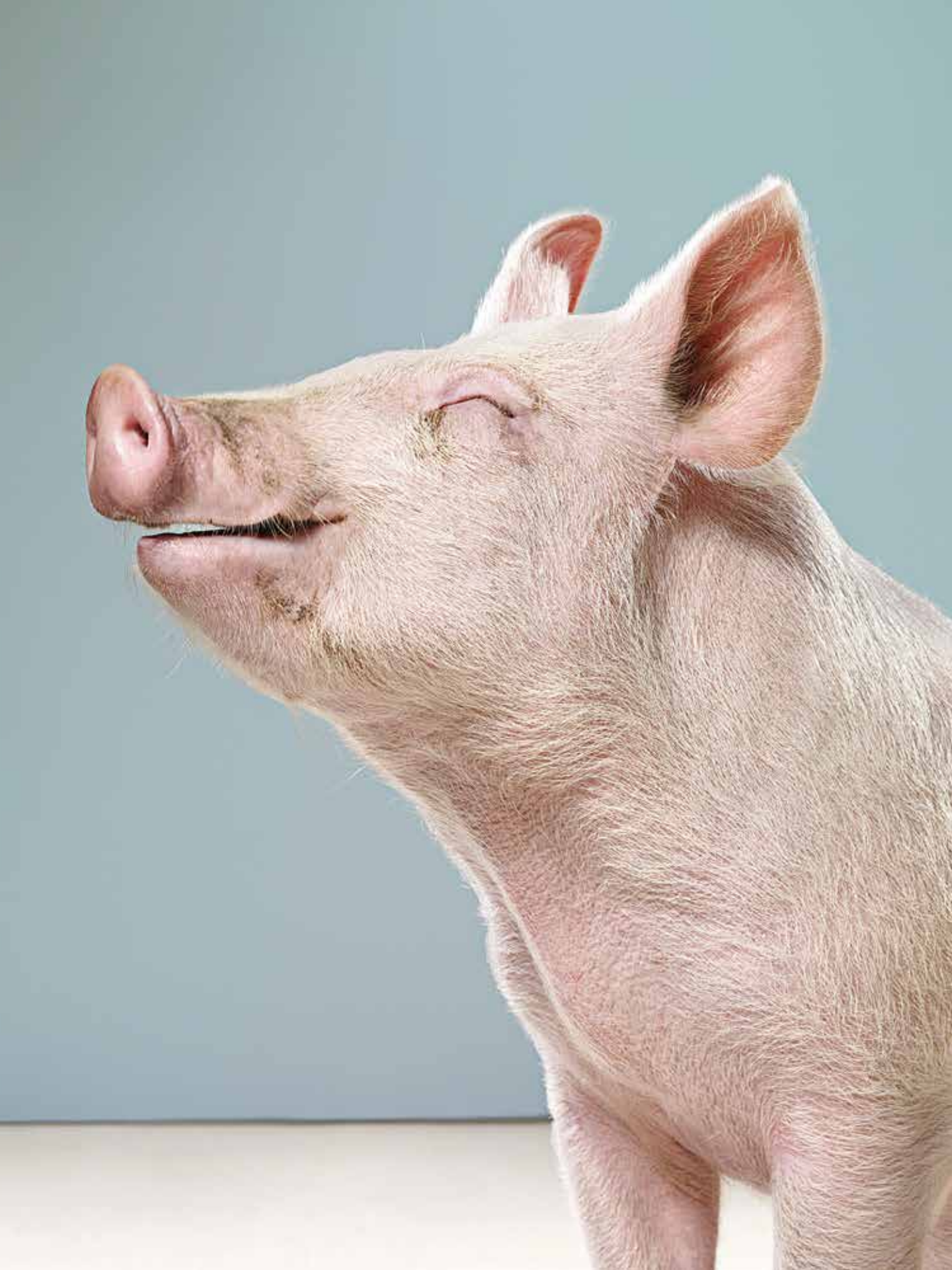
**BETTER BACON:** Opposition to extreme confinement systems is not a "ban on bacon." Ask restaurant managers and grocers which options are humane, and encourage them to purchase from crate-free suppliers.

**TALK TO GROCERY STORES:** Grocers have a major role to play. Send a letter or email to your store manager, requesting a focus on humane and locally produced options.

**HOLD CORPORATIONS ACCOUNTABLE:** Urge major food corporations to commit or honor their pledges to no longer purchase pork or eggs from animals kept in extreme confinement.



**On the Right Track:** Familiar names are paving the way for a better future for pigs. 91% of pork served at **McDonald's** in the U.S. comes from group-housed pigs and 100% of its eggs are cage-free. By 2025, 100% of the fresh pork on the shelves at **Kroger** will come from group housing. **Costco** reports that 100% of the fresh and private-brand frozen pork sold in stores comes from group housing. **Wendy's** serves 100% group-housed pork in the U.S. As of 2023, 100% of pork in **General Mills'** and **Campbell Soup Company** products comes from group housing. 65% of pork served at **Carl's Jr.** is group-housed pork, and 100% of the fresh pork stocked at **Sprouts** stores comes from group housing. The entire food retail sector is moving away from sourcing pork from intensive confinement operations. That's America—and these declarations are meaningful to the American people.







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SAFE & HUMANE

