

# Veterinarians Oppose the EATS ACT



Confining mother pigs to gestation crates threatens public health:

**Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus**

2%

**MRSA has been found to contaminate 1% to 2% of retail pork sold in the U.S.**

Staphylococcus aureus bacteria—known as “staph”—is the most common cause of skin infections in humans and can lead to hospitalization and even death if it enters the bloodstream.

Stress in intensively confined sows increases the growth and virulence of the pathogens pigs commonly carry and stimulates the growth of pathogens such as Campylobacter, Salmonella, Yersinia, Listeria, and Staphylococcus aureus.

89%

**Percent of pork production facilities using medically-important antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs in feed --FDA, 2022**

Between 1995 and 2004, the percentage of all staph infections in the U.S. caused by MRSA nearly tripled from 22% to 63%

19,000

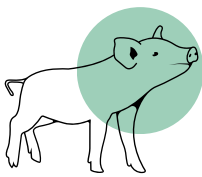
**Approximately 19,000 human deaths in U.S. are caused by methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (“MRSA”) annually.**

Mother pigs confined to gestation crates have significantly higher levels of the stress hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline than group-housed sows, making them more susceptible to infection.



**Once infected, piglets persistently test positive for MRSA. Pigs are considered a MRSA reservoir for the general human population.**

Pregnant sows randomly assigned to gestation crates for the duration of their pregnancies had consistently higher levels of stress hormones in their blood than group-housed sows, and so did their piglets.



**The piglets of group-housed sows “had better resistance and resilience, which showed that these piglets were healthier” and exposed to fewer pathogens than those of crated sows.**



“In 2020, the annual number of foodborne illnesses in the U.S. attributable to pork consumption had increased to **787,000**, with the largest share attributable to pork—even more than beef or chicken.”

- Robert L. Scharff, Food Attribution and Economic Cost Estimates for Meat- and Poultry-Related Illnesses, 83 J. FOOD PROTECTION 959, 964 (2020)

“...Confinement of sows in gestation crates weakens the immune function of the sows and their piglets destined for slaughter...Once infected, the piglets often do not show symptoms of illness...As a result, the intensive confinement of sows threatens the safety of pork products sold in U.S. grocery stores...”

—BRIEF OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, INFECTIOUS DISEASES SOCIETY OF AMERICA AND CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY ET AL.

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