



SUPPORT THE PIGS & PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

The Pigs and Public Health Act (PPHA) would safeguard public health, food safety, and animal welfare by removing nonambulatory or “downed” pigs — those who cannot stand or walk unassisted — from the U.S. food system.

KEY PROVISIONS



Humane Handling and Euthanasia

Requires USDA to promulgate regulations providing for humane treatment, including immediate euthanasia, as well as prohibiting the willful abuse of downed pigs.



Ban Processing and Sale

Prohibits the buying, selling, processing, and butchering of downed pigs, and the sale of meat from downed pigs to protect against zoonotic disease transmission.



Testing for Pathogens

Prevents contaminated meat from entering the food system by requiring testing of downed pigs for zoonotic diseases, such as swine flu and campylobacter.



Protections During Transport

Improves protections for pigs during transport, including shelter from the elements and a restriction on overcrowding.



Prohibit High-Risk Drugs

Prohibits the prophylactic use of beta-adrenergic agonist drugs, including ractopamine, in pigs, which increases the likelihood of painful injury, inhumane treatment, and extreme stress in pigs, and heart and respiratory issues in humans.



Interagency Coordination and Transparency

Requires USDA and CDC to produce a joint report on the threat of downed pigs in the food system, and requires OSHA to promulgate a standard for handling of downed pigs in addition to USDA.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Unregulated handling of downed pigs poses a serious public health threat. Downed pigs have higher rates of zoonotic pathogens like Salmonella and antibiotic-resistant Campylobacter, which can infect humans, and the CDC links contaminated pork to over 525,000 human infections and 82 deaths annually. Despite these concerning statistics, consumer transparency is virtually nonexistent; there is currently no way for consumers to tell whether the meat they've purchased has come from a downed pig. Zoonotic disease risk is further heightened by the ongoing avian flu outbreak and its spread to pigs. Pigs are the only species of animal that can be infected by both avian and human viruses at the same time, leading to gene reassortment – a main factor for new pandemic virus strains in humans.



REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

In 2007, FSIS prohibited the slaughter of downed cows due to concerns about the spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (mad cow disease), followed by a ban on the slaughter of downed calves raised for veal nine years later. FSIS noted that the primary reason for doing so was to protect food safety, noting that downed animals were “more likely to harbor and transmit food-borne diseases.” However, no regulatory action has been taken to prohibit downed pigs from slaughter, despite similar public safety risks. In 2014, a coalition of organizations submitted a petition for rulemaking asking that the USDA implement similar regulations for pigs, which was, unfortunately, denied.

Removing downed pigs from the food system has been a concern in Congress for decades; in 2002, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act directed USDA to investigate and report on downed pigs. Over 20 years later, Congress has never received such a report. Additionally, legislation designed to regulate downed animals was introduced in every Congress from 1991 through 2012 and again from 2021 through present. Due to years of regulatory inaction and increasing threat of zoonotic disease transmission, it is critical – now more than ever – that Congress takes action to pass the PPHA into law.

ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PIGS & PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

ALDF is proud to be joined by the following organizations and individuals in support of the Pigs & Public Health Act:

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)	GMO/Toxin Free USA
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)	Greenbaum Foundation
Animal Equality	Humane America Animal Foundation
Animal Partisan	Humane Society Legislative Fund
Animal Welfare Institute	Humane Society of the United States
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc	Ingar Krebs, DVM
Attorneys for Animals	Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc.
Avian Specialty Veterinary Services	Mercy for Animals
Cahab Riverkeeper	Nature Fresh Farm
Camille DeClementi, VMD	New Roots Institute
Center for Biological Diversity	NYCLASS (New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and Safe Streets)
Center for Food Safety	Our Honor
Chilis on Wheels	Pasado's Safe Haven
Church Women United in New York State	Poweshiek CARES
Climate Communications Coalition	Renee Tourdot
Climate Systems Solutions	Rural Coalition
Colorado State Representative Manny Rutinel	Slow Food USA
Compassion in World Farming, USA	Social Compassion in Legislation
Crate Free USA	Strategies for Ethical and Environmental Development (SEED)
Dharma Voices for Animals	Texas Humane Legislation Network
Dr. Monica K. H. Bando, Veterinarian	The Humane League
Fair Start Movement	Vegan Activist Alliance
Farm Sanctuary	Voters For Animal Rights
FOUR PAWS USA	Wisconsin House Rabbit Society

