

# North Devon Conservatives

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Date: 4 February 2009

## **‘Inhumane’ farming techniques should be subject to EU-wide ban**

Philip Milton, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for North Devon, added his support today to the comments made by Neil Parish, Conservative MEP and President of the European Parliament’s Animal Welfare Group that an EU-wide ban on the use of ‘sow stalls’ should be brought forward to ensure a level playing field for pig farmers across the European market.

The farming practice by which pigs are kept in small spaces for the duration of their pregnancies was banned in Great Britain in 1999 but is not due to be banned in rest of the EU until 2013.

A campaign introduced last week by the TV chef, Jamie Oliver and the actress, Joanna Lumley, warns that the unfair commercial advantage gained by farmers in the EU who still use ‘sow stalls’ could cripple the British pork industry.

Philip says:

“I remember my Father’s pig rearing days and that his sow was in a lovely large shed with plenty of straw and an outside part for nuzzling-up the mud, etc. The only thing we had to watch was when the sow farrowed we had to make sure the piglets were not crushed when the sow lay down. To make sure all the piglets were safe when born and then placed under a heat lamp in a separate part of the pig’s house, we used to stay up all night when she was due to farrow, in the loft above the sty.

“My Father believed in appropriate conditions for his animals – and not small cages. If he could make simple alterations to protect the piglets when born, I am sure European farmers can as well – as have ours already.

“I wholly support Neil Parish’s comments that British farmers must not face a commercial disadvantage as a result of our progressive animal welfare laws.

“The standard of welfare on British pork farms is considerably higher than is found on farms in many other Countries where the practice is still legal and I would encourage people to ensure that when they buy meat, they buy British.

“Mr Oliver and Ms Lumley’s campaign is welcome and the sooner that the ban on ‘sow stalls’ is implemented, the better for British pig farmers and indeed all livestock throughout the EU.”

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