

## Chipotle: There Is NO Pork Shortage!

*It seems there is a pork shortage at Chipotle.* At least according to Chipotle. One of Chipotle's pork suppliers has violated their housing agreement for pigs. The company demands that its suppliers raise pigs in "humane conditions with access to the outdoors, rather than in cramped pens." Because the supplier violated the pig housing agreement (by bringing pigs inside to prevent them from the harsh weather), Chipotle will not purchase their pork. This decision resulted in a pork shortage in over 1700 locations in the U.S. Here is a picture of a pig pen in our barn. Do you think they look cramped? Does this look inhumane? And as you read on, you find out there is NO pork shortage.

In the past, Chipotle customers may have noticed signs stating when certain meats don't meet the company's "responsibly raised" standards, a substitution will take place. What is the substitution? Conventionally-raised animals. But this time there will be no substitution for the pork.

Now it's no secret that Chipotle is no friend to America's farmers. They repeatedly throw farmers under the bus. How? Because they believe they know better in how pigs should be raised. Let me just state - *Housing animals outdoors does not equate to better pork.* Better pork is **genetics, nutrition, health care and management.** Personally, we have experienced raising pigs outdoors. And during the winter we dealt with frozen waterers, frostbitten ears, broken legs (from slipping on ice and snow), and sick pigs from pneumonia. And this is the short list of difficulties.

*Why doesn't Chipotle want pigs housed indoors?* One reason I believe is our society's view of farming. And it can be summed up in one word - nostalgia. Consumers either remember or have seen pictures of the good ole' days. They also know most consumers are removed 3-4 generations from the farm. And Chipotle is capitalizing on that disconnect. Chipotle believes its customers think animals are better off living outdoors. When people think of animals living outdoors they envision gorgeous, sun shining 70-degree days with a warm breeze to the face, all while sitting under a shade tree. It just doesn't get better than that, right? And I can't disagree. Those days are wonderful.

But, we have like five days a year like that.

It's *not* the reality. In Minnesota, our winters can be outright brutal and terrible. No animal or human should be outside during those nasty winter days and nights. So, can anyone tell me where the logic of how that is "better?" *Is outdoor housing better for the pigs or just better for someone's ideological views?*

Another reason is many consumers believe that farm animals are raised in factory farms. Let me just say . . . .

### [Farmers raise pigs, not factories.](#)

Let me be perfectly clear on this issue. This isn't about the right or wrong way to raise pigs. The issue is the intentional marketing scheme by Chipotle to vilify the vast majority of America's pig farmers because of the way they raise their pigs. This helps exemplify Chipotle's brand of *integrity*. Chipotle wants consumers to believe that most pigs are raised in factory farms, which results in inhumane treatment. And because Chipotle is above that (the integrity part), they only buy pigs from farms who meet their ideology, which in reality does not always equate favorable treatment for pigs. This is precisely why the farmer who raised Chipotle's pork could not meet their animal welfare standards. He knew what his "welfare standards" were and they didn't match Chipotle's. Does this make him a bad farmer? Absolute not. Does that mean his pork is not good? Absolutely not. What it means is the ideology does not match the reality.

And that makes me sad. That's why I am speaking up.

It's *all* about marketing and making themselves look better by trying to show they are superior than their competition by using fear marketing. But it's also about choice. That's why I will never eat at Chipotle's. I will eat at establishments that respect hard-working farmers. I will not get caught up in the "fluff" of marketing.

And while I am somewhat saddened to see that Chipotle is not serving pork right now, I know there are many other Mexican restaurants that would *love* our business. Or wait a few months and you can grill your own. And there is *nothing* better than a grilled pork chop! And you want to know a secret? These pork chops came from animals that were housed *indoors*. And it is some of the best pork around.