

PIGS IN FOCUS

**Brazilian Pig
Industry Monitor
3rd. Edition**

2024



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1 - ABOUT SINERGIA ANIMAL

Sinergia Animal is an international animal protection organization working towards ending the worst practices of industrial livestock farming. Our actions aim to reduce the suffering of animals in the food industry and promote more compassionate and healthy diets. Operating in countries across Latin America and Southeast Asia, Sinergia Animal has achieved more than 190 corporate commitments to animal welfare since its incorporation in 2017.



For the seventh consecutive year, we have been classified as a "Recommended Organization" by Animal Charity Evaluators (ACE)¹. This title indicates that Sinergia Animal has achieved some of the most significant advancements for animals in the global animal protection movement.



2- IMPACTS OF THE BRAZILIAN PIG INDUSTRY



Brazil is currently the **fourth largest producer and exporter of pork in the world**², accounting for 4% of global production.³ In recent years, Brazilian production has grown steadily and rapidly, jumping from 3.4 million tons in 2015 to 5.3 million tons in 2023⁴, which is an increase of 54%⁵. This surge in production is due to a number of factors, such as a 130%⁶ increase in exports and a 37%⁷ increase in domestic per capita consumption.

To produce this much pork, approximately 2.1 million⁸ sows are inseminated 2.5 times a year and kept in cages for all or part of their gestation period, which lasts an average of 114 days. Approximately 57 million⁹ pigs are subjected to mutilations, painful procedures performed without anesthesia or analgesia, and to the inappropriate use of antimicrobials,¹⁰ until they are slaughtered at approximately five months of age.

These practices are deployed by the pig industry to solve problems created and aggravated by the factory farming system itself.¹¹ Extreme confinement at high densities prevents pigs from expressing their natural behaviors and increases competition for space and food, thus resulting in aggressiveness and injuries. In these environments, animals are also more susceptible to contracting infectious diseases. The industry addresses these matters by following protocols that inflict even more pain and suffering on the animals.

In several countries, laws are being revised and certain practices—including the continuous confinement of sows in gestation crates, considered one of the worst practices in industrial farm animal production—have already been entirely prohibited in Norway¹², the United Kingdom¹³, Switzerland¹⁴, in the European Union¹⁵ and in various states in the USA.¹⁶

In Brazil, Normative Instruction No. 113, dated December 16, 2020 (IN 113/2020)¹⁷, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento, or MAPA), still allows for the continuous confinement of sows in gestation crates until 2045.

Industrial pork production also poses serious risks to human health. It is estimated that in 2019 alone 4.95 million people died due to diseases related to antimicrobial resistance.¹⁸ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the use of antibiotics in healthy animals in livestock farming is one of the main causes of antimicrobial resistance.¹⁹ In Brazil, the average use of antimicrobials is 358 mg/kg of pork produced,²⁰ more than twice the world average of 172 mg.²¹

Another impact of pig farming on public health is its contribution to global warming. Deforestation to grow livestock feed, such as soybeans, releases substantial amounts of carbon dioxide, while the manure produced by the animals releases methane, another powerful greenhouse gas.

According to the organization World Animal Protection, pork production in Brazil releases 15.8 million tons of greenhouse gases per year, equivalent to the emissions from 3.4 million cars.²²

Industrial pork production in Brazil raises ethical concerns related to animal health, public health, and the environment. Monitoring the industry's practices and expanding dissemination of such data is key to ensuring that the animals' living conditions meet minimum welfare standards and are in line with international standards on ethics and sustainability.



3 - PIGS IN FOCUS: BRAZILIAN PIG INDUSTRY MONITOR – 3RD EDITION

The annual Pigs in Focus: Brazilian Pig Industry Monitor report monitors industry practices in Brazil that are harmful to pig welfare and evaluates them according to public commitments undertaken by the industry. Based on animal welfare science and expertise, the report analyzes practices such as the use of gestation crates, painful procedures, and the misuse of antimicrobials, which inflict intense suffering and risks on pigs.

This third edition includes changes regarding the timelines for implementation of new commitments. Up to the second edition, the acceptable deadline for fulfilling the commitments was 2026.

For this third edition, different timelines are being considered for each practice, as described below:

- Banning the continued use of gestation crates by 2031
- Banning painful procedures:
 - Surgical castration by 2026
 - Teeth clipping and disbudding by 2026
 - Ear notching by 2027
 - Tail docking by 2031
- Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials by 2031

PIGS IN FOCUS – 3RD EDITION – CHANGES:

- **New timelines for implementation of commitments**
- **Increase in the number of companies evaluated**
- **New sectors covered: independent meat packing and processing plants**



The scope of the report was also expanded to include other sectors of the pork production chain²³ and, in addition to the eight agribusiness companies²⁴ evaluated in the first and second editions, eight more companies were included in the report—including agribusinesses, meat packing plants, and meat processing plants. The 16 companies evaluated in this third edition account for approximately 70% of the country's pork production (fresh and processed).

Pig Agribusiness Companies are responsible for various stages of the production chain, including feed production, pig production on farms, livestock transportation, slaughter, processing of fresh and processed cuts, and distribution to retailers. Independent meat packing plants and meat processing plants are responsible for purchasing the raw material from agribusinesses and/or independent farmers and producing the final product for the consumer.

Including these two sectors of the production chain in the Pigs in Focus report arises from Sinergia Animal's aim to shed light on the ethical responsibility of the entire chain when it comes to the welfare of pigs.



4 - ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

For scoring, criteria have been selected to advance the elimination of the practices most detrimental to animal well-being, indicating viable alternatives to swine producers. The scoring scale indicates whether the criterion has been met, partially met, or not met, as shown in the table below:

• **Table 1: Methodology for scoring criteria.**

<div>Met</div> <div>3</div> <div>pontos</div>	The company already fully meets the criterion or has an official transition commitment published on its website or annual report, with clear and unequivocal language and an appropriate timeline for implementation.
<div>Partially met</div> <div>1</div> <div>ponto</div>	There is a public commitment on the company's website, but it only partially meets the criterion. For example, if the language used in the commitment is ambiguous or subjective, if the timeline is too extensive, or if pain management does not include the combined use of anesthesia and analgesia.
<div>Not met</div> <div>0</div> <div>pontos</div>	There is no commitment regarding the topic on the part of the company.

The points achieved indicate the category in which the company is classified, and the maximum score in the sum of all criteria is 24, as shown in the table below:

• **Table 2: Scoring and percentage per category.**

Category	Score	Percentage of the Score
Category A	From 20 to 24	From 81 to 100%
Category B	From 15 to 19	From 61 to 80%
Category C	From 11 to 14	From 46 to 60%
Category D	From 8 to 10	From 31 to 45%
Category E	From 4 to 7	From 16 to 30%
Category F	From 0 to 3	From 0 to 15%

Following the democratic principles of transparency and the right to reply, during the preparation of this report, all analyzed companies were contacted for clarification and informed about their position in the ranking.



5 - EVALUATED PRACTICES

Gestation crates

The confinement of sows in gestation crates is considered one of the worst practices in industrial animal production and is widely employed by the Brazilian swine industry. It involves keeping pregnant sows confined in individual crates throughout most of each gestation period, which lasts from three to four months, cycle after cycle, resulting in a lifetime of suffering.

The individual crate is approximately the same size as the sow's body, preventing them from turning or even lying comfortably on their side. This extreme confinement often leads to physical and mental issues,²⁵ such as impaired ability to walk, urinary infections, frustration, mental suffering due to lack of movement, and an inability to engage in their most basic natural behaviors, such as walking, rooting in the ground, and socializing with other animals.

Viable alternatives to gestation crates were considered in the evaluation based on the following criteria:

CRITERION 1

Completely banning the continuous use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units.



This practice consists of completely eliminating the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free group gestation system in all of the company's units and operations. In the crate-free system, sows are only confined to crates for up to seven days, during the insemination period, before being transferred to group housing systems immediately after confirmation of pregnancy. No producer in Brazil has committed to completely banning gestation crates from all their units at this time.

CRITERION 2

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in new units.

- ✱ Under this system, the industry is allowed to keep pregnant sows on its existing farms in cages for up to 28 days, before they are moved to group housing, while, for new units, the company undertakes to adopt only the crate-free system.

CRITERION 3

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units allowing for a mixed system.

- ✱ In this practice, companies are allowed to keep sows confined in gestation crates for up to 28 days before transferring them to group housing. To date, this is the gestation commitment most adopted by Brazilian companies.

PAINFUL PROCEDURES

Removing a part of an animal's body without analgesia and anesthesia is a form of mutilation that causes pain, fear, and seriously compromises the animal's well-being. Surgical castration, ear notching, teeth clipping and disbudding, and tail docking are practices in the Brazilian swine industry commonly performed on piglets without any type of pain relief. For the assessment of painful procedures, the following criteria were considered:

CRITERION 4

Banning surgical castration.

- ✱ Instead of surgical castration, which involves cutting the scrotum and removing the testicles without the use of anesthesia or analgesia, companies can commit to adopting, for example, immunocastration, which involves the injection of a vaccine, thereby significantly reducing the pain and stress of the animals. If surgical castration is chosen, it must always be performed with proper pain management, meaning the use of anesthesia and analgesia.

CRITERION 5

Banning teeth clipping and disbudding.

- ✱ According to Normative Instruction 113/2020 (IN 113/2020),²⁶ teeth clipping is prohibited, and tooth disbudding can only be performed as an exception if sows present severe injuries to their udders during lactation.

CRITERION 6

Banning ear notching.

- ✱ Ear notching is a procedure in which parts of the animal's ear are removed for identification purposes. This procedure causes pain and can be easily replaced by methods that cause less stress and suffering to the animals—such as ear tags, for example.

CRITERION 7

Banning tail docking.

- ✱ Piglets' tails are docked to prevent cannibalism, a stereotypical behavior that often reflects the stress caused by the high density and poor environmental enrichment in which the animals live; i.e. tail docking is yet another procedure used by the industry to solve problems caused by the production system itself. Examples from factory farms in Finland²⁷ and Italy²⁸ have shown that it is possible to eliminate such practices through investment in better management conditions, though no Brazilian company has yet committed to banning tail docking.



USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS

Antimicrobials are medicines used to treat infections and diseases caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites, with antibiotics being the best known type.

In humans, the use of antibiotics is strictly controlled, but in industrial livestock farming they are used on a large scale and indiscriminately in healthy animals. About 75% of the antibiotics sold worldwide are used in livestock (mainly cattle, pigs, and chickens)²⁹ and more than 80% of such use is not for sick animals, but rather for preventive treatments or as growth promoters,³⁰ the sole purpose of which is to improve production performance. According to the World Health Organization (WHO),³¹ the use of antibiotics in healthy animals in livestock farming is one of the main causes of antimicrobial resistance, one of the greatest threats to global public health.

To assess the misuse of antimicrobials, the following criterion was considered:

CRITERION 8

Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials.

Brazil is one of the largest global consumers of antibiotics in animal production.³² In Brazilian pig farming, the average use is 358 mg/kg of pork produced,³³ twice the world average of 172 mg.³⁴

✱ The inappropriate use of antimicrobials jeopardizes the effectiveness of treating bacterial diseases, potentially rendering these medications ineffective even in human treatment. The inappropriate use of this class of medications should be abolished, and they should only be employed when animals have a genuine need; i.e., in the case of diseases. Banning the use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is an urgent measure.

6 - OVERALL RANKING

For this third edition of the report, 16 Brazilian pig farming companies were analyzed. Of these, eight had been evaluated in the first and second editions, namely BRF, JBS, Aurora, Frimesa, Pamplona, Master, Pif Paf, and Alibem; and eight are being evaluated for the first time, Palmali, Coopavel, Ecofrigo, Nutribras, Frivatti, Minerva, Marfrig, and Ceratti. We estimate that **these companies account for 70% of the total pork (fresh and processed) produced in Brazil** or approximately 3.7 million tons per year.

Only Alegra stopped being evaluated separately, as in 2023 it became one of the brands owned by Aurora and, therefore, for the purposes of this report, it started being evaluated based on the evaluation of its owner.

The following diagram (page 15) reflects each company's commitments as updated in 2024.



Diagram 1: Overall Ranking of Companies in 2024.

Pigs in Focus 2024		Pamplona	BRF	JBS	Alibem	Frimesa	Pit Paf	Master	Marfrig	Aurora	Coopavel	Minerva	Ceratti	Ecofrigo	Palmali	Nutribras	Frivatti
Gestation crates																	
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units.		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units		3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Painful procedures																	
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching		3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials																	
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Score		15	15	15	12	12	12	12	10	7	4	2	1	0	0	0	0
Category		B	B	B	C	C	C	C	D	E	E	F	F	F	F	F	F

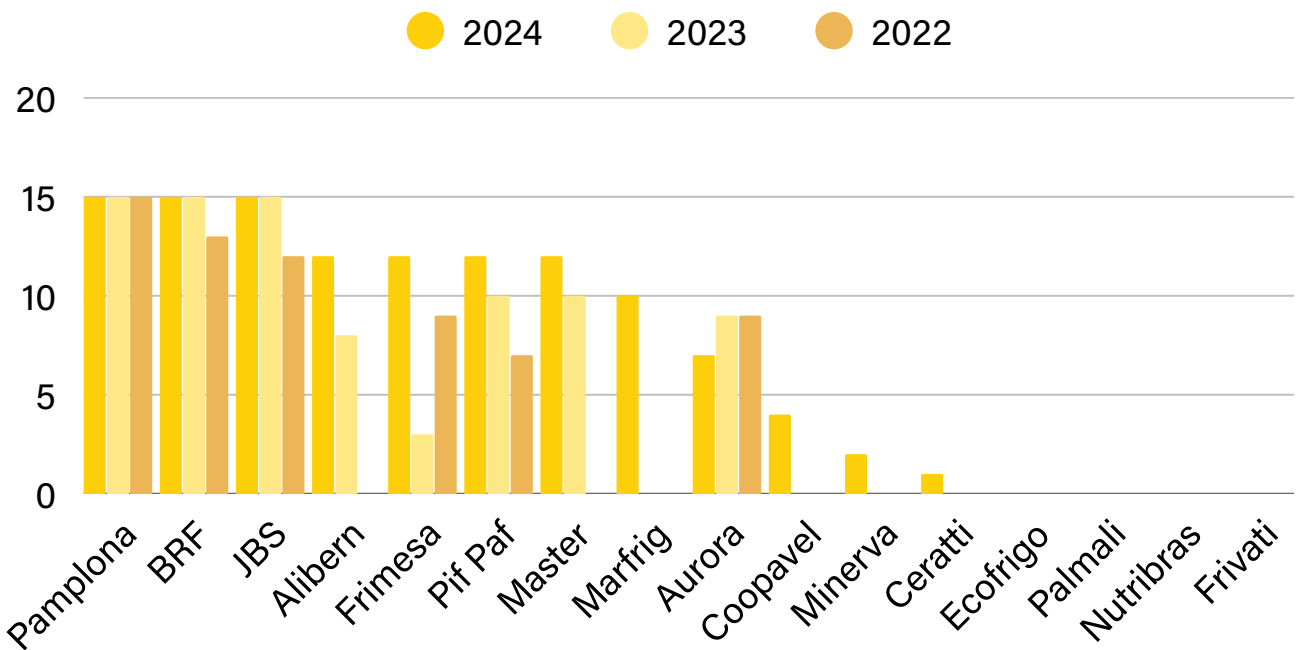
No company has yet committed to completely banning the use of gestation crates or adopting the crate-free system in its production chain. Two other practices continue to be neglected by Brazilian industry—banning tail docking and banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials—even though industries abroad have shown that it is possible to abolish such practices.

Aurora, the third largest pork company in Brazil, has been performing well below expectations. Unlike its competitors, the company has not yet signaled its intention to ban ear notching or adopt the crate-free system for new units, practices already adopted by its main competitors.

The major advances noted in this edition concern commitments undertaken by Frimesa and Master. Frimesa was the company that announced the most commitments in 2024, advancing from Category F to D. Master undertook new commitments, jumping from Category D to C; however, it rescinded its commitment regarding the inappropriate use of antimicrobials. We believe that revoking a commitment is unacceptable and should be widely publicized, so that the company is pressured to reaffirm its commitment.

Since we started Pigs in Focus, in 2022, we have noted a steady evolution in the commitments announced by companies. The chart below provides a comparison of each company in all three editions of the report:

Chart 1: Comparative Ranking: 2022 vs. 2023 vs. 2024.



Below are the year-to-year comparisons for each company and the commitments they still need to undertake.

7- COMPANY-SPECIFIC MONITORING

Diagram 2			
BRF			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	0	3	3
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	3	3	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	3	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	3	3	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	3	3	3
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	1	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	13	15	15
Category	C	B	B

BRF, owner of the Perdigão and Sadia brands, did not announce any new commitments in 2024, remaining in category B. The company is the largest pork producer in Brazil and the ninth largest in the world. With a herd of 414,000 sows,³⁵ it accounts for approximately 20% of the total number of sows in Brazil.³⁶

Gestation crates

Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units is still lacking.

Painful procedures

Tail docking is yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The company has yet to abolish the misuse of antimicrobials. It has abolished their use as growth promoters, but still uses them in healthy animals. The company expects to abolish prophylactic use by 2026 and metaphylactic use by 2027.

Diagram 3			
Pamplona			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	3	3	3
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	3	3	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	3	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	3	3	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	3	3	3
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	15	15	15
Category	B	B	B

Remaining in category B, Pamplona continues to report its progress in implementing its commitments but did not announce any new commitments in 2024.

Gestation crates

Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units is still lacking.

Painful procedures

Tail docking is yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The company has yet to ban the misuse of antimicrobials. It has abolished their use as growth promoters, but continues to use them in healthy animals, with no plans to abolish such practice.

Diagram 4			
JBS			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	1	3	3
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	3	3	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	3	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	3	3	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	1	3	3
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	1	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	12	15	15
Category	C	B	B

JBS, which owns the companies Seara, Swift, Eder, and Marba, did not announce any new commitments in 2024, remaining in category B. The company is the second largest pork producer in Brazil and the sixteenth largest in the world, with a herd of 290,000 sows. However, if JBS USA’s production is also included, the company is the seventh largest pork producer in the world, with approximately 530,000 sows.³⁷ This is important to understand the impact of JBS on the global pork production chain.

Gestation crates
Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units is still lacking.

Painful procedures
Tail docking is yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials
The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned. The company has banned their use for prophylactic purposes and as growth promoters, but continues to use them for metaphylactic purposes, meaning they continue to be used in healthy animals.

Diagram 5			
Alibem			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	0	1	3
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	0	1	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	0	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	0	3	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	0	0	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	0	8	12
Category	F	D	C

Alibem did not present any new animal welfare commitments in 2024. However, it advanced four points in its score due to a change in this report in the timelines considered for implementation of certain practices (refer to page 7), rising from Category F to C.

Gestation crates

The crate-free system is yet to be adopted in all operations.

Painful procedures

Ear notching and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned. Despite mentioning that it does not use antibiotics as growth promoters, the company has not yet committed to using medication only in sick animals.

Diagram 6

Frimesa

Gestation crates

Criterion 1

Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units

0

0

0

Criterion 2

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units

1

0

0

Criterion 3

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system

3

3

3

Painful procedures

Criterion 4

Banning surgical castration

1

0

3

Criterion 5

Banning teeth clipping/disbudding

1

0

3

Criterion 6

Banning ear notching

1

0

3

Criterion 7

Banning tail docking

1

0

0

Use of antimicrobials

Criterion 8

Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials

1

0

0

Score

9

3

12

Category

D

F

C

Frimesa is the fourth largest producer of pork in Brazil and the twenty-fifth largest in the world, with a herd of 127,000 sows³⁸ and having slaughtered more than 3.8 million pigs in 2023. Despite losing points in the 2023 report, in 2024 the company sought to modernize its practices and announced a commitment to new procedures, jumping from three to 12 points and moving up from Category F to C.

Gestation crates

The crate-free system is yet to be adopted in new units.

Painful procedures

Tail docking is yet to be banned. In 2024, Frimesa committed to banning surgical castration, ear notching, and teeth clipping and disbudding.

Inappropriate use of antibiotics

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned.

Diagram 7			
Pif Paf			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	0	0	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	1	1	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	3	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	0	3	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	3	3	3
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	7	10	12
Category	E	D	C

Pif Paf did not present any new animal welfare commitment in 2024. However, it advanced two points in its score due to a change in this report in the timelines considered for implementation of certain practices (refer to page 7), rising from Category D to C.

Gestation crates

The crate-free system is yet to be adopted in new units.

Painful procedures

Tail docking is yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned. Pif Paf stated that it continues to use this class of medicines as growth promoters, in contrast with the progress already made by its competitors that have already abolished their use as growth promoters and are considering abolishing their use for prophylactic and metaphylactic purposes.

Diagram 8			
Master			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	0	0	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	0	0	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	0	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	0	1	3
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	0	3	3
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	3	0
Score	0	10	12
Category	F	D	C

Master, owner of the Sulita brand, made a commitment in 2024 to ban the continued use of gestation crates in all its units by 2031. The company also adjusted the wording of the commitments published on its website, making them clearer, more objective, and unambiguous. This enabled the company to achieve 12 points, rising from Category D to C.

Gestation crates

Master has committed to migrating 100% of its facilities to the mixed group gestation system by 2031. It is yet to adopt the crate-free system for new units.

Painful procedures

Master adjusted the wording of the commitment to banning teeth clipping and disbudding, scoring points in this category. Tail docking is yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The company pulled back on its commitment to ban the misuse of antimicrobials. Until 2023, Master stated that it used antimicrobials exclusively in sick animals for therapeutic purposes. In 2024, it reversed its position, declaring that it used them in healthy animals for preventive purposes and that it had only abolished their use as growth promoters.

Marfrig

Marfrig, a world leader in the production of hamburgers and other animal protein-based foods and the controlling shareholder of BRF, published in 2021 an animal welfare commitment for the supply chain of pork used in the company's processed food products.³⁹ The commitment, which covers all operations of Marfrig and its affiliates throughout the world, is still insufficient to guarantee the welfare of pigs.

The company is yet to commit to purchasing pork only from producers that adopt exclusively the crate-free system.

Teeth clipping and disbudding and tail docking are yet to be banned from its supply chain.

The company has yet to ban the misuse of antimicrobials in its supply chain.

Diagram 10			
Aurora			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	0	0	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	1	0	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	3	3	3
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	1	3	3
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	3	3	1
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	1	0	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	0	0	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	0	0	0
Score	9	9	7
Category	D	D	E

Aurora Coop is the third largest pork producer in Brazil and the fifteenth largest in the world. In 2023, the company took over Alegra’s operations, increasing its production capacity by 12%. At the moment, as the owner of the Aurora, Nobre, Peperi, and Alegra brands, the company houses more than 300,000 sows and slaughters 32,000 pigs per day, which represents more than 7 million per year.⁴⁰ In contrast with its competitors, by changing the wording of the commitment to banning teeth clipping and disbudding and not undertaking any new commitment in 2024, Aurora fell back two points, falling to Category E.

Gestation crates

The crate-free system is yet to be adopted in new units.

Painful procedures

Ear notching, teeth clipping and disbudding, and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned.

Diagram 11 Coopavel			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	n/a	n/a	1
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	n/a	n/a	1
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	n/a	n/a	1
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	n/a	n/a	1
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	n/a	n/a	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	n/a	n/a	0
Score	n/a	n/a	4
Category	n/a	n/a	E

Coopavel is one of the eight new companies included in the Pigs in Focus report in 2024. It is one of the 20 largest pork producers in Brazil, with approximately 20,000 sows and an annual slaughter of 720,000 pigs. Despite reporting in the 2021 edition of Coopavel Magazine⁴¹ that it had implemented animal welfare practices on its farms, the company failed to confirm the information officially, nor did it commit to implementing these practices at all units of the cooperative. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, animal welfare practices were considered to be only partially met.

Gestation crates

The commitment to ban the continued use of gestation crates in all units is yet to be officially published on the website.

Painful procedures

The commitment to ban ear notching, surgical castration, and teeth clipping is yet to be officially published on the website.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned.

Diagram 12			
Minerva			
Gestation crates			
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	2022 n/a	2023 n/a	2024 0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	n/a	n/a	1
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	n/a	n/a	1
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	n/a	n/a	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	n/a	n/a	0
Score	n/a	n/a	2
Category	n/a	n/a	F

A leader in South America in the production and sale of fresh meat and meat derivatives, Minerva Foods has published commitments applicable to its pork supply chain, but these are however still insufficient in terms of deadlines and scope to guarantee the welfare of pigs.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates in its supply chain is yet to be banned. Minerva has presented an excessively long deadline for this commitment (2035), scoring only partially on this criterion.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, ear notching, tooth clipping and disbudding, and tail docking are yet to be banned from its supply chain. Minerva has made insufficient commitments to banning painful procedures, with excessively long deadlines and that are not applicable to all suppliers.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The misuse of antimicrobials is yet to be banned. Minerva has made an insufficient commitment to ban this practice, restricting it to only 80% of suppliers and with an excessively long deadline (2040).

Diagram 13

Ceratti**Gestation crates****Criterion 1**

Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units

2022

n/a

2023

n/a

2024

0

Criterion 2

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 3

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system

n/a

n/a

1

Painful procedures**Criterion 4**

Banning surgical castration

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 5

Banning teeth clipping/disbudding

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 6

Banning ear notching

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 7

Banning tail docking

n/a

n/a

0

Use of antimicrobials**Criterion 8**

Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials

n/a

n/a

0

Score

n/a

n/a

1

Category

n/a

n/a

F

Ceratti is one of the oldest and best-known prepared meat (sausage) producers in Brazil, producing 20 tons of mortadella per day. It was acquired by Hormel Foods in 2017, a transaction that marked the US corporation's debut in Latin America. Although the multinational corporation is committed to the welfare of pigs in the USA, the company refuses to take its responsibility for pigs in Brazil.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates is yet to be banned from its supply chain. Ceratti has made an insufficient commitment, containing vague and imprecise language, in which it does not take full responsibility for the origin of the pork it purchases, assigning such responsibility to the suppliers in the market.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, teeth clipping and disbudding, ear notching and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is yet to be banned.

Diagram 14

Ecofrigo

Gestation crates

Criterion 1

Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units

2022

n/a

2023

n/a

2024

0

Criterion 2

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 3

Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system

n/a

n/a

0

Painful procedures

Criterion 4

Banning surgical castration

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 5

Banning teeth clipping/disbudding

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 6

Banning ear notching

n/a

n/a

0

Criterion 7

Banning tail docking

n/a

n/a

0

Use of antimicrobials

Criterion 8

Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials

n/a

n/a

0

Score

n/a

n/a

0

Category

n/a

n/a

F

Ecofrigo, a company that is part of the Bugio group, is a producer and one of the largest meat packers in Brazil, slaughtering 1.3 million pigs per year and with a production capacity of approximately 120,000 tons per year. Despite its size, the company does not make any commitment to pig welfare on its website.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates is yet to be banned from its operations.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, teeth clipping and disbudding, ear notching, and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is yet to be banned.

Diagram 15			
Palmali			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	n/a	n/a	0
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	n/a	n/a	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	n/a	n/a	0
Score	n/a	n/a	0
Category	n/a	n/a	F

Palmali is one of the new companies included in the Pigs in Focus report in 2024. It is responsible for one of the plants that slaughters the most pigs in Brazil, approximately 1.1 million animals per year.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates is yet to be banned from its operations.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, teeth clipping and disbudding, ear notching, and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is yet to be banned.

Diagram 16			
Nutribras			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	n/a	n/a	0
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	n/a	n/a	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	n/a	n/a	0
Score	n/a	n/a	0
Category	n/a	n/a	F

First included in the Pigs in Focus report in 2024, Nutribras says on its website that it is the first brand certified in animal welfare for pigs. However, the company fails to state which animal welfare practices are adopted or which certifiers attest to the compliance of the practices.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates is yet to be banned from its operations.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, teeth clipping and disbudding, ear notching, and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is yet to be banned.

Diagram 17 Frivatti			
Gestation crates	2022	2023	2024
Criterion 1 Completely banning the use of gestation crates and adopting the crate-free system in all units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 2 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and adopting the crate-free system in all new units	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 3 Banning the continuous use of gestation crates in all units and allowing the mixed system	n/a	n/a	0
Painful procedures			
Criterion 4 Banning surgical castration	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 5 Banning teeth clipping/disbudding	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 6 Banning ear notching	n/a	n/a	0
Criterion 7 Banning tail docking	n/a	n/a	0
Use of antimicrobials			
Criterion 8 Banning the inappropriate use of antimicrobials	n/a	n/a	0
Score	n/a	n/a	0
Category	n/a	n/a	F

Frivatti says on its website that it is committed to animal welfare throughout the entire production process, but it fails to disclose the practices adopted to ensure the welfare of pigs. The company is one of the largest producers in the state of Paraná and one of the companies that were added to Pigs in Focus in 2024.

Gestation crates

The continued use of gestation crates is yet to be banned from its operations.

Painful procedures

Surgical castration, teeth clipping and disbudding, ear notching, and tail docking are yet to be banned.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials in healthy animals is yet to be banned.

8 – FINAL REMARKS

Although Brazilian pig farming has made progress in some animal welfare practices, the industry continues to perform practices that cause intense suffering to animals, which reveals the lack of consistent ethical commitments.

It is urgent to advance animal welfare in Brazil, considering the country's significant volume of exports and domestic consumption that make it a world leader in pork production. More than 57 million animals are slaughtered each year. The Brazilian pig industry has the opportunity to lead by example, but it still lags behind other countries in meeting international animal welfare standards.

Unfortunately, in this edition of Pigs in Focus: Brazilian Pig Industry Monitor, we note that gestation crates for sows are still widely used in the country, indicating that productive efficiency continues to be prioritized over animal welfare. Cage-free systems have been widely implemented abroad, in countries including the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, and the EU, where legal and market advances encourage more ethical and sustainable practices.



Likewise, tail docking in piglets is a widespread practice in Brazil to mitigate tail biting, a behavior resulting from the inadequate and stressful environments in which the animals are kept. However, this approach disregards preventive solutions, such as appropriate density and environmental enrichment, already implemented by the industry in countries such as Finland and Italy. These examples prove that it is possible to abolish such a painful procedure without compromising productivity, as long as improvements in the animals' environment are implemented.

One of the most alarming matters highlighted by the report is the use of antimicrobials in pig farming in Brazil. The widespread and inappropriate use of antimicrobials in healthy animals contributes significantly to the global crisis of antimicrobial resistance and represents a serious threat to global public health. This matter requires a more careful and controlled approach.

Pigs in Focus: Brazilian Pig Industry Monitor seeks not only to encourage companies to adopt better animal welfare practices, but also to adopt a more transparent stance with society and to listen to the demands of increasingly conscious consumers. The pig industry has an ethical duty to take responsibility towards animals and public health, to commit to more ethical production standards, and to implement significant changes on an ongoing basis. Sinergia Animal believes that a more compassionate industry is possible and that the improvement of animal welfare policies is a moral and social duty.



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