



HOW CLEAN ARE EUROPE'S FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS?

**THE MYTHS FUELLING THE MASSIVE GROWTH
OF SPAIN'S PORK INDUSTRY**

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Cover photo: Pigs in a pen at an industrial pig farm in La Portella, Spain, on January 19, 2016.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Giulia Laganà, Open Society European Policy Institute

Although citizens and governments are increasingly aware of the environmental and human rights impacts of food production, the agri-food system has thus far not been prioritised in efforts to address the climate crisis or to crack down on labour violations in supply and value chains. The European Union's new Farm to Fork Strategy¹ sets out to make Europe's food system more sustainable, but has not yet resulted in concrete actions. The next programming cycle of the bloc's flagship Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been labelled as inadequate to tackle these issues by environmental groups, partly because there is no legal obligation for the CAP to comply with the objectives of the European Green Deal. The European Union is also set to roll out new legislation on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence for businesses, but discussions on the harms to people and the planet due to food systems tend to focus on imports to Europe of goods such as soy, beef, and cacao.

This report, commissioned by the Open Society European Policy Institute, focuses on the Spanish pork industry as a case study to illustrate how internal European agri-food supply chains need cleaning up, both literally and figuratively. The practices employed to produce pork in Spain and the consequences for nature and the people who live near or work in pig farms and slaughterhouses are by no means unique to this country.

The publication addresses various links in the pork supply chain, but does not attempt to analyse all of them, nor does it provide examples of the sustainable, extensive and truly high-quality production which serves as an alternative to industrial, mass-produced pork.

Spain's pork sector has exploded. It now boasts the largest herd numbers in the European Union, producing 2.6 million tonnes of pig meat in the first six months of 2021, which is on track to be the eighth

consecutive year of runaway growth. This dramatic expansion is led by exports. In 2020, Spain sold pig meat worth almost €8 billion, nearly a 25 percent increase from the previous year. Almost half of

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/food/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy_en

that demand came from just one country, China, where pork production has been devastated by an outbreak of African Swine Fever. This has led to an explosion of pig farms and slaughterhouses in Spain, particularly in rural areas. It has also drawn admiring glances from across Europe, with countries searching for ways to repopulate their rural areas and boost export earnings.

However, the sector is far from a straightforward success story.

Beyond the industry narrative of an economic miracle—and the buy-in it largely receives from policymakers at national and European level—serious questions are being raised about the sector's financial and environmental sustainability. Meanwhile, local resistance movements are growing across the country in areas where communities face the consequences of the industry's unchecked growth.

This case study shows the profound gap between the dominant narratives and the reality of the industry. This dissonance is illustrated by unravelling four myths on pork production in Spain:

Myth 1: The pork industry in Spain provides decent, well-paid jobs.

Reality: Exploitation of workers is rampant, especially in slaughterhouses. Labourers are exposed to the risk of injuries or ill-health. They are underpaid and kept on contracts that allow them to be fired easily. Attempts to unionise are aggressively repressed.

Myth 2: The pork industry is based on small, artisanal firms, creates large numbers of quality jobs in rural areas and reverses population decline.

Reality: Large firms dominate the market and, due to automation, these industrial farms employ fewer workers than small-scale farming. Municipalities with greater numbers of pigs have lost more residents or had a lower income than those with similar characteristics but without this type of livestock, and

their ability to create new economic opportunities in other sectors like tourism is curtailed by the industry's pollution.

Myth 3: Spain's pork industry is a model of sustainable production.

Reality: Industry practices result in nitrate pollution of groundwater, ammonia in surface water and large emissions of methane, a very potent greenhouse gas. The water contamination has left many Spanish towns with undrinkable water. Animals are also subjected to dire living conditions.

Myth 4: Spain's pork industry is an economic success story.

Reality: The industry would not exist without public funding and political support. There is a revolving door between the highest echelons of public service and the agriculture sector, facilitating effective lobbying by the pork industry. This results in Spain and the European Union subsidising cheap pork for China while the externalities remain in Spain.

This report highlights how, despite efforts to present itself as a bastion of artisanal, small-scale production, the Spanish pork sector is heavily industrialised, extremely polluting, and based on violations of basic human rights such as the right to safe, dignified working conditions or to clean drinking water.

The enormous quantities of mass-produced food exports that are presented as a symbol of traditional Spain have a massive impact on people and planet, poisoning aquifers, contributing to rural depopulation, exposing low-paid, vulnerable workers to the risk of injuries or ill-health, emitting vast quantities of greenhouse gases, and treating animals like disposable objects. The industry's political clout has thus far enabled it to benefit from both EU and national public funding to produce low-cost, processed food and to squeeze small farms using sustainable extensive livestock rearing into a tiny market niche.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While local activists, unions, and environmental groups are pressing the Spanish authorities to address the pork sector's unsustainable practices—by banning sub-contracting in cutting plants and slaughterhouses, for instance, as Germany has done, or by respecting EU and national standards on emissions and pollution—there is much that can also be done at the EU level.

If the **EU institutions and the Spanish government want to truly uphold a more environmentally and socially sustainable model of food production and consumption—as laid out in the Farm to Fork Strategy**—they already have a series of tools at their disposal:

- **Environmental and social conditionalities under the new EU Common Agricultural Policy or CAP (2023-2027):** negotiations over the new National Strategic Plan² under the next CAP could already bring changes to the Spanish pork sector by cutting subsidies for the industry. To ensure that EU legislation on environmental standards and animal welfare are not routinely flouted³, better monitoring and enforcement are needed and this information must be efficiently shared with national CAP paying agencies (the entities handing out CAP subsidies), including in Spain. More transparency is also needed as reports show⁴ the current conditionality mechanism—which only covers some environmental standards—is so limited that it is impossible to ascertain the real impact of violations by pig farms and firms receiving CAP funds. The investigations that this report is based on found that farms linked to major companies in the pork industry are also not respecting the specific pieces

of EU legislation listed under the new CAP social conditionality mechanism around transparent working conditions and health and safety risks.⁵ It is therefore crucial that Spain implement social conditionality from 2023, rather than by 2025 (when it will become mandatory), and strengthen its labour inspection systems so that producers violating labour rights face cuts to CAP subsidies. Effective implementation of the mechanism in one member state could set the standard for others.

- **Ensuring coherence between the European Union's environmental and climate targets, and agri-food production:** better waste management and the use of renewables in pig farms and slaughterhouses—much-touted by the industry when it seeks to present itself as 'sustainable'—may have a marginally beneficial impact, but the sector's GHG emissions and pollution need to be tackled more aggressively. No recovery can be truly green if part of the funding underpinning it is used to prop up unsustainable industries.

Looking forward, the European Union can also:

- **Roll out strong new EU-wide mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence rules for businesses:** the upcoming proposal for a Directive on Sustainable Corporate Governance should not include loopholes for particular sectors and should ensure accountability and liability for all environmental, climate-related and human rights harms in companies' value chains, including internal European ones. Small- and medium-sized enterprises should not be exempted from due diligence requirements.

2 https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pac/post-2020/propuesta-de-ayudas-asociadas-a-la-produccion-julio-2021_tcm30-576133.pdf

3 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652044/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)652044_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652044/EPRS_BRI(2020)652044_EN.pdf)

4 https://www.fega.es/sites/default/files/INFORME_CONTROLES_CONDICIONALIDAD_2020%20.pdf?token=6UNIFr_4

5 Directive 2019/1152 on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1313>), Directive 89/391/EEC on Measures to encourage improvements in safety & health of workers: <https://osha.europa.eu/it/legislation/directives/the-osh-framework-directive/1> and Directive 2009/104/EC on Minimum safety and health requirements for use of work equipment by workers: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0104&from=en>

2. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

‘Del cerdo se aprovecha todo, hasta los andares’.

This is a popular saying in Spain, meaning ‘everything is used, even pig’s feet’, a reference to the animal’s nose-to-tail utility and a justification for the country’s obsession with pork.

In Spain, *Jamón Ibérico*—Iberian ham—is a national icon. Pig legs hang from the ceiling in almost every shop and restaurant selling traditional food. Christmas hampers are incomplete without processed or cured pork of some kind.

In the national psyche, eating pork has political and religious symbolism dating back to 711 A.D. when the Moors, whose religion forbade consuming pork, swept through Spain. It became a way of ‘affirming one’s Catholicism’, said former senator and cookbook author Ana Castaner Pamplona.⁶

Large agribusinesses and corporations have successfully capitalised on this long and deep history to portray⁷ the industry as a custodian of cultural heritage, a caring and responsible employer and an environmentally conscious and animal welfare-oriented corporate entity.

Unfortunately, reality bears little resemblance to this image.

The industrialised pork sector in Spain is in fact built on highly exploitative working conditions and heavily polluting practices that have kept employees silent and fearful, and left many rural communities with chronic water shortages. It pays scant consideration to animal welfare. It is pursuing short-term private profits at the expense of long-term social, economic, and environmental health.

The industry has so far managed to get away with its conduct thanks to a pork lobby that has successfully dominated the public narrative.

The meat industry is Spain’s fourth largest industrial sector and the biggest sub-sector under food and beverages, making up more than a fifth of the output.⁸ Pork is the dominant product—it accounted for 66 percent of total meat production in 2020.

Within the European Union, Spain is also now the largest pig producer, totalling 2.6 million tonnes during the first six months of this year, up 4.1 percent from the same period last year and on track for an eighth consecutive annual rise.⁹

6 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-10-13-wr-124-story.html>

7 <https://letstalkaboutepork.com/>

8 https://www.anice.es/industrias/area-de-prensa/el-sector-carnico-espanol_213_1_ap.html

9 <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/bratwurst-jamon-eu-pork-sector-crown-shifts-spain-2021-10-06/>

Around 110,000 workers are employed in the meat industry, a fifth of whom work for the top 10 companies, said Laurentino Dueñas, professor of Labour and Social Security Law at the University of Valladolid who has been working on labour issues for nearly three decades.

In 2020, Spain exported pig meat worth €7.63 billion,¹⁰ an increase of nearly 22 percent¹¹ from the previous year.

Nearly half of that demand came from a single country—China—whose production and supply have been devastated by the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in its pig farms. Disease or culling¹² cost China between a fifth and a third of its pigs in 2019 alone, according to officials.

With ASF appearing in the German wild boar population¹³ and causing China to ban products from Europe's largest economy, Spain has now overtaken Germany as Europe's top pork exporter to China—although how long this export-driven model will survive, given that other countries worldwide could start producing cheaper meat for the Chinese market than Spain, remains to be seen.

Spain's new position as Europe's top pork export has led to an explosion of pig farms and slaughterhouses in the country, particularly in rural areas. It has also brought admiring glances from neighbouring countries searching for ways to repopulate their rural areas and boost export income.

However, countries looking to the Spanish pork industry as a model to help boost their economies after nearly two years of COVID-19-related downturn would do well to see beyond the myths.

MYTH 1

The pork industry in Spain provides decent, well-paid jobs.

MYTH 2

The pork industry is based on small, artisanal firms, creates large numbers of quality jobs in rural areas and reverses population decline.

MYTH 3

Spain's pork industry is a model of sustainable production.

MYTH 4

Spain's pork industry is an economic success story.

10 <http://www.interempresas.net/Industria-Carnica/Articulos/353907-Espana-segundo-pais-exportador-de-porcino-del-mundo.html>

11 <https://interporc.com/2021/04/15/sector-porcino-record-exportaciones-3-millones-de-toneladas?cat=blog/el-ayer-y-hoy-del-cerdo>

12 <https://www.economist.com/china/2021/08/28/african-swine-fever-is-spreading-rapidly-in-china-again>

13 https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Livestock%20and%20Products%20Annual%20The%20Hague%20European%20Union_09-09-2021.pdf



The Museo del Jamon in Madrid, Spain. © Wendy Sue Lamm/Contrasto/Redux

This report, based on investigations carried out by Lighthouse Reports and supported by the Open Society European Policy Institute, dismantles the industry's myths.

The team behind the report spoke to more than 60 people in the industry, from slaughterhouse workers and pig farmers to veterinarians and academics. They scoured the internet to understand the major lobby narratives

on pork and analysed the industry's access to public funding. They used drones and night-time photography to document the unsafe and unsanitary conditions animals are forced to live in and uncover multiple environmental problems, including illegal slurry spills by pig farms. They obtained documents that had never been made public and interviewed officials, activists, and experts who echoed the concerns and frustrations held by many people across the country.

3. DISMANTLING THE MYTHS

MYTH 1—LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Myth: The pork industry in Spain provides decent, well-paid jobs.

Reality: Exploitation of workers is rampant

Kalidou endured nearly 15 years of racist insults, unsafe working conditions, and unpredictable hours at a slaughterhouse. A few months ago, he decided he had had enough and started organising workers to form a union.

That's when the backlash from his managers began.

First, he was sent to work on a polishing machine, which cleans and polishes the pig carcass after it has been singed (lightly burnt). Kalidou said that he did not receive the several weeks of training required to operate the dangerous equipment. Kalidou became frustrated after witnessing numerous accidents at work.

"I know four people who have lost a hand," said the 44-year-old from Senegal. "We have also seen many times [that] the managers took workers to the hospital themselves after an accident and refused to call an ambulance."

So he refused. He was then sent to another job that paid much less. He was earning €1,700. Now he earns €1,300, a 23 percent pay cut, despite working the same hours—from 4:00 a.m. until 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., sometimes longer, depending on the workload.

He was threatened with being sacked if he complained about working conditions and loudly addressed as "eh", rather than by his name.

The Mafriges slaughterhouse in Sant Vicenç de Torelló, Catalonia, where he has been working, employs about 240 workers. In 2019, the company had nearly €145 million in sales.

"Sometimes you get the feeling you're working for the mob," said Kalidou, adding that until a year ago, he received his overtime pay in a black envelope. "There is a regime of fear and silence that runs through the slaughterhouse."

That fear and silence have also put his union plans on hold.

"It is not possible to set up a union because people are afraid of being fired or because they are working with someone else's documentation," he said.

The Mafriges slaughterhouse did not respond to requests for comment.



Kalidou outside the slaughterhouse where he works in Sant Vicenç de Torelló, Spain, on October 13, 2021.
© Marc Sanye for Lighthouse Reports

Kalidou's experience is worryingly common in Spain's slaughterhouses and cutting plants, where most of the pork sector's employees are concentrated. A vast majority of workers are migrants from Africa. Many spoke of long hours, low pay, few rights, high rates of accidents, shared and cramped living conditions, verbal and physical abuse, and harassment.

Undocumented immigrants are particularly vulnerable because they are working without a formal contract and are terrified of arrest and deportation. Most workers are also the sole breadwinners for their families.

It is well known that "those of us who are here do not know our rights, we need the money and that many do not even have papers," said a worker¹⁴ at Le Porc Gourmet slaughterhouse, owned by Grupo Jorge, one of Spain's largest meat producers.¹⁵

These workers have little recourse when their rights are abused and anyone who speaks out, like Kalidou, faces demotion or worse.

JOB LOSS AND DEATH THREATS

When Catalonia's government passed a law in March 2017 to crack down on 'false cooperatives', Mohammed, a 20-year veteran of Spain's pork sector, tried to unionise with his colleagues.

Up until then, he was considered a 'self-employed' member of a cooperative, even though he had been working for eight years at Le Porc Gourmet and had little control over when and where he worked.

If the company needed him to do overtime, or work 20-hour shifts, he could not refuse. He was paid €1,300 per month without social security

¹⁴ Their identity is known by the report's author.

¹⁵ <https://www.jorgesl.com/en/jorge-pork-meat>



Mohammed photographed in Santa Eugenia de Berga, Spain, on March 6, 2018. ©Marc Sanye

contributions and did not have access to paid leave. He had to leave the company if he wanted to travel or stop working for a few days and was then rehired when he returned. He could be dismissed at any time without any compensation or unemployment benefits.

“All you can do is work, shut up and keep your head down,” said Mohammed, 55, from Morocco. “The only answer we got when we complained was that if we didn’t like it, we should go home, because there were 50 people outside the door who wanted to work.”

Under the Spanish Cooperatives Law of 1999, a cooperative is an independent association set up to meet people’s economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations. Members are free to join and to leave, there is a democratic governance structure, and the cooperative operates in accordance with the principles drawn up by the International Co-operative Alliance.¹⁶

Many of the cooperatives supplying employees to the meat industry do not meet these criteria but their presence has been widespread because they allow companies to side-step labour laws and regulations around working hours, salaries, and social security.

It was to halt such abuses that the regional government in Catalonia modified the law in 2017, regulating cooperatives with more than 25 members where 75 percent of members are contracted to a single business entity.

Instead of complying, Mohammed’s cooperative forced its members to switch to another one headquartered outside Catalonia so the law would not apply to them. It also threatened anyone who refused with dismissal.

He and 80 others refused, for which they paid a heavy price. When they showed up for work the next day, they were denied entry and told they had been fired. There was no explanation or compensation.

An official labour inspection report carried out at the time and obtained by this investigation confirms Mohammed’s account. It said the situation ‘violated the dignity of the workers and their most elementary labour and social security rights’ and the workers ‘were forced to accept the change of cooperative if they wanted to continue working and receiving a salary.’

When queried, the company did not address these charges but said changes were made in accordance with the updated law and ‘in order to preserve (the company’s) competitiveness.’

After losing his job, Mohammed survived by recycling cardboard on the streets of Catalonia for two years. He now works at a factory in the energy sector.

His family returned to Morocco after Mohammed received death threats.

“You’re going to end up in jail or worse,” a slaughterhouse manager once told him. “You and your family should be careful.”

16 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/principles-of-european-cooperative-law/spain/5A2CCD313E55CCC8EF4B75A780E19EADwww.lawyersspain.eu/set-up-a-cooperative-in-spain>

FROM SHAM COOPERATIVES TO MULTISERVICE COMPANIES

Workers, lawyers, union representatives, and employers interviewed for the report said working conditions in the Spanish pork sector have improved substantially over the past couple of years, mainly due to closures of ‘false cooperatives.’

This was a result of years of campaigning—including strikes—against such practices by labour unions and of more aggressive sanctions by the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate.

Some regions have also enacted changes in legislation similar to Catalonia. The national government’s effort to crack down on labour exploitation through its National Plan for Decent Work 2018–2020¹⁷ also played a role.

Businesses, however, have found another inventive way to continue exploiting workers—subcontracting to ‘multiservice’ companies.

Under this scheme, companies outsource part of their core activities—usually slaughtering and cutting—to a main contractor, who then subcontracts them, often to multiservice companies.

‘The subcontracting system contributes to making the employment in the meat sector even more precarious, allowing the employer to evade and circumvent their liabilities,’ according to the European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT).¹⁸

Despite working daily at meat plants and carrying out slaughtering and processing activities, workers employed by multiservice companies are not

covered by the two national collective agreements for the Spanish meat sector, leading to ‘major differences in terms of wages, work hours, and social security coverage between workers employed by subcontractors and workers directly employed by the meat company,’ concluded an EFFAT report.

For companies though, this means cost savings. Unlike ‘false cooperatives,’ outsourcing is also not illegal, said labour law expert Dueñas.

It is little wonder then, that outsourcing has grown by 33 percent between 2008 and 2015, he added.

According to a recent article written by Dueñas, many cooperatives in the meat sector have now become intermediary companies.¹⁹

OPAQUE AND UNKNOWN

Shariff, 45, from Senegal, has been directly affected by outsourcing practices.

In June 2019, Shariff’s managers told him and his colleagues they would no longer be members of the ‘false cooperative’ they had been working for and would become part of a multiservice company hiring workers for a large Spanish meat processing company.

Shariff and 15 colleagues had been with the company in Catalonia for more than 10 years, so they demanded to keep their seniority under the new structure or receive corresponding severance pay. But the company pressured the workers individually to accept the change unconditionally, according to Shariff. After a few days, everyone had given in, except Shariff and three others.

17 <https://www.ciriec.uliege.be/repec/WP19-30.pdf>
https://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/plandirector/National_Plan_for_Decent_work.pdf

18 <https://effat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EFFAT-Report-COVID-19-outbreaks-in-slaughterhouses-and-meat-packing-plants-State-of-affairs-and-proposals-for-policy-action-at-EU-level-30.06.2020.pdf>

19 <https://www.net21.org/industrias-carnicas/>



Shariff photographed in Roda de Ter, Spain, on October 13, 2021. © Marc Sanyé for Lighthouse Reports

They filed a lawsuit alleging illegal transfer of workers. All were dismissed without severance pay or unemployment benefits. Shariff, who now works as a fruit picker, another sector where labour exploitation is rife and well-documented,²⁰ is reflective.

“I don’t have a stable job like I used to, but at least I don’t have to put up with harassment and racism every week of my life,” he said.

Shariff’s experience worries experts like Dueñas, but it is almost impossible to measure the scale of the problem because the Spanish meat industry is completely privatised and the subcontracts are considered commercial contracts that do not need to be made public.

“It’s very hard to know which meat companies are subcontracting. We had numbers from companies that used worker cooperatives... but I think they have the right to say they can’t give the economic and commercial terms of the private outsourcing contract to the Labour Inspectorate. It is practically impossible to get the statistics,” Dueñas said.

Experts estimate that there are currently between 15,000 and 20,000 slaughterhouse workers who are not employed directly by meat companies but through subcontractors. Most of these workers are migrants.

Interviews with at least a dozen workers and union representatives uncovered another common practice that remains largely unmentioned and unreported.

Under this scheme, undocumented migrants who lack valid paperwork pay a monthly fee of €200 to €300 to those with residence permits so they can use the latter’s documents to get jobs at the slaughterhouses. Employers turn a blind eye to this practice and few workers are willing to speak openly about it.

Yet illegally employing foreign workers is widespread in many EU countries and is particularly prevalent in the gig economy.

Part of the reason why such abuses go unpunished is because Spain’s 1,866 labour inspectors are overstretched. This number has remained largely unchanged over the past decade, according to a February 2021 report²¹ by the Italian environmental organisation Terra!.

Dueñas is hoping unions in Spain will succeed in pushing for legislation to prohibit subcontracting in the meat sector, like in Germany, where the Invisible Workers²² series, an investigation by Lighthouse Reports with *Der Spiegel*, Mediapart, and Euronews, contributed to raising awareness.

The German parliament passed the Occupational Safety and Health Inspection Act (*Arbeitsschutzkontrollgesetz*) in December 2020. It includes measures such as the electronic recording

20 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26007&LangID=E>

21 https://www.associazioneterra.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Euexploitation_ENG_WEB.pdf

22 <https://www.lighthousereports.nl/investigation/invisible-workers/>



Workers enter a slaughterhouse in Santa Eugènia de Berga, Spain, on January 25, 2019. ©Marc Sanye

of working hours and the introduction of a minimum workplace inspection rate, according to the European Trade Union Institute.²³

An alternative to an outright ban on subcontracting could be an agreement between company representatives, trade unions, and the government that could guarantee the labour rights of meat industry workers, similar to the process that led to the Riders Law,²⁴ which requires online delivery platforms such as Glovo and Uber Eats to classify their couriers in Spain as employees.

The Riders Law came into force in May 2021, but in this case as well, companies are said to be looking for ways to skirt the law or are openly threatening to leave the country.²⁵

NO END TO 'BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYED'

While the number of 'false cooperatives' has been reduced significantly, some still exist and continue to supply workers to meat companies, according to Dueñas.

23 https://www.etui.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/HM23_Change%20a%20long%20time%20coming%20for%20subcontracted%20slaughterhouse%20workers_2021_0.pdf

24 <https://www.politico.eu/article/spain-approved-a-law-protecting-delivery-workers-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

25 <https://socialeurope.eu/platforms-put-a-spoke-in-the-wheels-of-spains-riders-law>

Recent court judgements in Galicia,²⁶ Castilla y León,²⁷ and Castilla La Mancha²⁸ have sided with the workers, while judgements in Pamplona²⁹ and Zaragoza³⁰ have rejected the claims, thus highlighting the continuing struggle against the 'false cooperatives.'

All these judgements related to Servicarne³¹, the largest cooperative in the meat sector with some 5,000 'self-employed' members who work in

slaughterhouses owned by different companies. Servicarne is facing multiple lawsuits all over Spain, and has appealed a court ruling disqualifying it as a cooperative and denied any wrongdoing.

However, the 'false cooperatives' issue had not yet reached Spain's supreme court. The lack of a final, binding legal decision has allowed for the continued exploitation of workers.

TABLE 1

Most common list of violations according to the Spanish Labour and Social Security Inspectorate

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Worker carries out duties at slaughterhouses such as cutting, packing and boxing, freezing and dispatching, but maximum work hours stipulated under the collective agreement—40 to 45 hours per week or 1,770 hours per year—are not always respected by the employer. |
| 2. | Worker registered in the special regime for self-employed workers, contributes minimally to social security and almost nothing for work-related accidents or unemployment. |
| 3. | Not subject to regulation or corporate responsibility when dismissed or after suffering accidents at work. |
| 4. | Employees suffer temporary employment, low wages, and excessive hours of work in the name of cost savings for the company. |
| 5. | Non-application of labour regulations due to employees being hired as bogus 'self-employed.' |

26 <https://www.latribunadetoledo.es/noticia/ZAE02D176-E145-EBC5-D5AB80550C29FF8D/202108/Tres-trabajadoras-de-Servicarne-en-Lominchar-cobrarán-paro>

27 <https://industria.ccoo.es/f109cc9613c001b85bcf8d7bb268f488000060.pdf>

28 <https://www.economiaengalicia.com/articulo/empleo/sentencia-reconoce-relacion-laboral-frigolouro-250-falsos-autonomos-servicarne/20210917221726018523.html>

29 <https://www.noticiasdenavarra.com/economia/2021/09/16/rechazada-demanda-seguridad-social-uvesa/1181946.html>

30 <https://www.heraldo.es/noticias/economia/2021/04/27/una-sentencia-rechaza-la-relacion-laboral-de-189-trabajadores-con-carnicas-cinco-villas-1487753.html>

31 <https://www.servicarne.com/quienes-somos.html>

TABLE 2**Characteristics of a 'false cooperative' according to the Spanish Labour and Social Security Inspectorate**

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Cooperative lacks own organisational infrastructure or real economic activity. Subcontracting is simply a mechanism to make labour available to client meat companies. |
| 2. | Cooperative does not have its own business organisation. |
| 3. | The means of production (machines and installations) belong to the meat company. |
| 4. | Membership is mandatory to work in the meat company. |
| 5. | Only outputs of the cooperative are the labour and physical effort of its workers. |
| 6. | Cooperative does not provide technical knowledge or know-how. |
| 7. | Work equipment (for example, cutting knives) and work clothes are the property of the meat company and not the cooperative. |
| 8. | The cooperative's workers provide their services on a regular basis in the meat company's facilities. |
| 9. | The work schedule is imposed on workers based on the production requirements of the meat company. |
| 10. | Cooperative members cannot hold meetings or assemblies in the meat company's facilities, nor can they exercise the right to organise and take collective action. |

HIGH HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS

There is also a pervasive culture of neglect and carelessness in slaughterhouses and cutting plants when it comes to health and safety issues.

Interviews with nearly a dozen employees, doctors, and former workers paint a picture that is far from that of a proud, traditional, family-centred Spanish business venture.

Interviewees told the investigation about either suffering or witnessing accidents at work. Invisible injuries like muscle and joint strains abound from performing repetitive motions hour after hour, day after day.

Occupational accident rates show workers who are members of cooperatives fare worse, underlining the discrimination they face. In 2016, there were 117.5 accidents per every 1,000 workers employed through cooperatives, nearly double the rate of 63 accidents per every 1,000 workers³² for those directly employed by meat companies.

Yet these numbers are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. The Labour Inspectorate estimated that real accident rates among cooperative workers could be three to five times higher.

Despite this, in many slaughterhouses, worker training is usually given only once a year and in Spanish, a language many employees do not

32 https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Securing%20workers%20rights_EN_LR.pdf

understand, in direct violation of European Union Directive 89/391/EEC³³ (the Occupational Health and Safety Framework Directive).

The directive states, 'It is the employer's obligation to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work and he may not impose financial costs to the workers to achieve this aim.'

Spanish law 31/1995 on occupational risk prevention³⁴ also stipulates that the employer 'shall adopt the necessary measures to ensure that only workers who have received sufficient and appropriate information can access areas of serious and specific risk.'

Mohammed, who works at Le Porc Gourmet, owned by Grupo Jorge, said most of his colleagues understand little of the training conducted in Spanish.

Grupo Jorge admitted training is conducted in Spanish and not in any other language, but added they use translators if necessary and post-training questionnaires to ensure workers understand what is explained.

"People pretend to understand everything, and then they get back in the assembly line and ask for help from colleagues of the same nationality," said Montse Castañé, 59, one of the few slaughterhouse workers interviewed by the investigation who is a Spanish national.

The assembly line refers to the mechanised driver of gutted pigs, which are hung up on hooks and move quickly down to different processing stations in the factory.

"The company knows this, but they think that by doing the class they have fulfilled their obligation," she added.

Labour inspections, designed to uncover unsafe working practices and conditions, can help, but interviewees said the company is often notified in advance, allowing it to deliberately slow down the work speed—usually by half—during inspections to give the impression of a safe environment.

"There are injuries I can't even tell you about," said Shariff, the slaughterhouse worker turned fruit picker.

A doctor who treats workers from one of the main slaughterhouses in Catalonia who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed this.

"I am constantly treating deep cuts in the hand and in the forearm and multiple bruises in different parts of the body," he said.

He also told the investigation he had examined workers with water in their tendons, a serious condition he has seen "only among slaughterhouse workers".

"These injuries are the result of overwork: they work long hours, at a very high pace and with very repetitive movements."

Yet whenever he prescribes sick leave for the workers, the insurance company almost always rejects it. He was later told the meat companies did not want workers to take leave unless they had suffered a major injury.

"Everyone is afraid of losing their job. [The workers] need to work no matter what and cannot afford to be absent," the doctor said.

The kind of sub-standard working and living conditions described by the doctor above have also led slaughterhouses to become major hotbeds of COVID-19 infection. Across Europe, meat sector

33 <https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/directives/the-osh-framework-directive/1>

34 <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/1995/BOE-A-1995-24292-consolidado.pdf>

workers have been disproportionately affected by the virus and Spain is no exception.

According to media reports³⁵ published³⁶ between May and July 2020, one in 10 employees at the Litera Meat slaughterhouse in Binéfar, Aragón, which employs about 1,100 people, initially tested positive for the virus at the end of April. This was partly because the speed and intensity of the work made it almost impossible to maintain social distancing.

Some workers were reportedly dismissed during sick leave and told to move out of company-provided accommodation.

When they reported the situation to the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate, they were told that it was a health problem, but the health authorities told them it was a work issue, according to *El Salto* newspaper.

It was only after workers insisted that inspections were scheduled. But these visits were limited and, according to a union representative, the company was given prior notice, which ensured that no violations of health and safety rules were observed or recorded while the inspectors were visiting.

Labour unions also said companies have not been providing protective gear during the pandemic or replacements if the gear wears out or breaks.

The European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)³⁷ had documented at least four outbreaks of the virus in Spain's slaughterhouses as of September 2020, but added, 'The lack of transparency of some meat companies doesn't allow for a reliable reporting of COVID-19 infections in [this sector in] Spain.'

FARM WORKERS ALSO SUFFER

The fact that agricultural workers across Europe face exploitation is well-documented. For the first time, the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which provides billions of euros in support to the bloc's farmers, will link funding to the basic social and labour rights of farm workers.

The new CAP framework, which is set to kick off in 2023, includes 'social conditionalities',³⁸ which aim to ensure transparent and predictable employment conditions, and on-farm safety and health standards.

The former set of rights includes informing farm workers of their employment conditions such as remuneration, paid leave and work patterns in writing, and the latter relates to the fact that employers must ensure safety and protection for workers when using farm machinery and equipment as well as dangerous substances.

The new rules will become mandatory in 2025 and, if violated, can lead to the suspension or withdrawal of CAP subsidies to producers who receive them.

Though slaughterhouses do not receive CAP subsidies, the meat companies own many farms. Interviews with nearly 20 farm workers, activists, union representatives, and veterinarians show that many farms owned by meat companies receiving CAP payments do not meet these standards.

A veterinarian with extensive experience³⁹ of working for Cefusa, which has received more than €330,000 in EU subsidies, said he has directly observed the living and working conditions of farm workers.

35 <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/coronavirus/Binefar-matadero-despidos-contagios-coaccion>

36 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/11/chaotic-and-crazy-meat-plants-around-the-world-struggle-with-virus-outbreaks>

37 <https://respect.international/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EFFAT-meat-sector-report-poor-conditions-to-blame-for-spread-of-COVID-19.pdf>

38 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/factsheet-newcap-environment-fairness_en.pdf

39 The author committed to not revealing the veterinarian's identity because they preferred to remain anonymous.

The accumulation of ammonia in the air due to animal waste causes workers to develop coughs, something he has personally experienced. Yet before COVID-19, few workers received personal protective equipment such as face masks to avoid inhaling these toxic fumes, he said.

Workers routinely handle chemical products, but according to the veterinarian only an estimated 20 percent receive proper training and the company often refuses to pay for employees to attend courses, he added.

“The company only cares about numbers. The managers force workers to produce more and verbally abuse employees. It is a very harsh work environment,” he said.

Spanish meat conglomerate Grupo Fuertes, which owns the Cefusa and El Pozo brands, told the investigation all its workers receive specific theoretical and practical training and all its staff who handle chemicals are qualified.

Some workers are victims of human trafficking, as police discovered in the spring of 2021 in Albacete, where two Spanish families were said to be exploiting 94 people, mostly Moroccans.

The full details of the ongoing case are not yet known, but the police said the victims were working mainly in pig farms, in conditions that were akin to modern-day slavery.

So far, only a Moroccan national who helped the workers come to Spain is in jail. The owners of the pig farm, meat factory, and supermarket selling the produce remain free.

Sebastian Serena, secretary of the Agrifood Sector for major trade union Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), said unions have little access to farms, where

employees live and work on-site and rarely venture out or are forbidden from doing so.

“It is very difficult for unions to know what is happening [on the farms]. We cannot access them and the people who work on the farms have difficulty reaching out to trade unions,” he said.

“As unions, we would like to report situations where workers have very poor conditions, but we need more resources to reach rural farms.”

The “lack of regular inspections” is one of the biggest challenges to curb abuses in Spain’s agriculture and livestock sector, Serena said.

MYTH 2—MARKET CONCENTRATION AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

Myth: The pork industry is based on small, artisanal firms, creates large numbers of quality jobs in rural areas and reverses population decline.

Reality: Large firms dominate the market and their industrial farms employ fewer workers than small artisanal farms.

All across Spain, communities boast local traditions⁴⁰ around the slaughter of pigs, some dating back centuries. Known locally as *la matanza*, the ancient ritual,⁴¹ pig slaughtering often involves killing the animals in the open air at the beginning of winter to ensure sufficient food over the coming months.

Nowadays, however, a vast majority of this is done in industrial slaughterhouses where tens of thousands of pigs are killed every day. Spain is home

40 <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/03/18/392177526/this-spanish-pig-slaughtering-tradition-is-rooted-in-sustainability>

41 <https://apnews.com/article/a9053921dd754d73aff1b0abd0bc0145>

to some 700 slaughterhouses, 20 percent of which are specifically for pork, and 2,400 cutting plants.⁴² More than half a century ago, in 1954, there were approximately nine refrigerated slaughterhouses in the entire country.⁴³

In 2020 alone, almost 56 million pigs⁴⁴ were slaughtered in Spain, a country with a population⁴⁵ of 47.4 million people.

These numbers belie another myth around Spain's agri-food sector and particularly the pork industry—that family farmers and artisanal methods are behind the nation's preferred meat. In fact, it is the big farms and big firms that dominate production, with the sector expanding rapidly while the numbers of small farms fell significantly.

According to Food & Water Action Europe,⁴⁶ the total number of pig farms in Spain has declined dramatically in recent years, with a 61.4 percent drop in the decade between 1999 and 2009, equivalent to the closure of more than 110,000 farms.

Yet the pig population jumped 12.3 percent during the same period. Of the farms that continue to operate, 80 percent are considered intensive and host some 90 percent of Spain's pigs, according to a 2017 Food & Water Action Europe report.⁴⁷

Industry consolidation has continued ever since. While another 18,000 pig farms disappeared between 2009 and 2013, the pig population kept increasing, quadrupling the number of animals per farm, the report said.

The number of pigs recently increased even further—by 22.3 percent between 2015 and 2020, to reach 56.13 million.⁴⁸

'Traditionally, almost all pigs sold in Spain were sold at auction or through direct negotiations between farmers and meat producers. Today, most pigs are controlled by the meat industry, supermarkets or meat processors well before the time of slaughter, either because these players own the pigs or because they have already contracted to buy them,' the report said.

Despite Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez's speech⁴⁹ at the first-ever United Nations Food Systems Summit on September 23, 2021, where he spoke of the importance of family farming and the need to support it, the trajectory of the country's pork sector has left power in the hands of a few, allowing big corporations to fix prices and reap even more profits.

An article⁵⁰ in a magazine published by German Agricultural Society DLG commented approvingly on this integration.

'A special role in this success story appears to be played by one characteristic of Spain's swine sector: the high degree of vertical integration,' it said.

'Some 65 percent of all pig meat is produced from the integrated chain. Cooperative societies supply a further 18 percent,' and independent farmers provide 'just a little more than 15 percent,' it added.

42 <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/12/18/Salgot-on-the-challenges-of-running-an-organic-pig-farm-in-Spain>

43 <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/12/18/Salgot-on-the-challenges-of-running-an-organic-pig-farm-in-Spain>

44 <https://www.thepigsite.com/news/2021/06/spains-pig-meat-exports-are-up-23>

45 <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=2852>

46 <https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FoodandWaterEuropeFactoryFarmPorkIndustryReportMarch2017English.pdf>

47 <https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FoodandWaterEuropeFactoryFarmPorkIndustryReportMarch2017English.pdf>

48 <https://www.publico.es/economia/burbuja-macrogranjas-pincha-dejar-intensa-huella-social-ambiental-china.html>

49 <https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/2657/2657161/> (his speech begins 9:36:35)

50 <https://www.dlg.org/en/agriculture/topics/dlg-agrifuture-magazine/knowledge-skills/pig-production-in-spain-high-integration-and-plenty-space>

Concentration is similar in the farming sector. COAG, the organisation representing farmers and livestock breeders, has noted that ⁵¹ 6.6 percent of agricultural companies own 42 percent of the value of the total produce.

REVERSING THE TREND TOWARD AN INCREASINGLY 'EMPTY SPAIN'?

The spectre of '*la España vacía*' or 'empty Spain' has been much talked about since journalist Sergio del Molino coined the term to describe the country's landlocked rural interior, which has lost 28 percent of its population over the past 50 years. Nowadays, the term which is preferred is '*vaciada*' ('emptied'), to signify that there are economic and social drivers behind rural depopulation.

Data from the National Statistics Office shows five rural regions that make up just over half of Spanish territory account for only 15 percent of the country's population.⁵²

The Spanish government has announced a €10 billion programme to combat rural depopulation.⁵³ The money, coming from the EU's COVID-19 recovery funds, will go toward broadband internet, a 5G mobile network, and sustainable energy projects.⁵⁴

As depopulation in rural areas has become a political hot potato, sparking protests⁵⁵ and calls for better infrastructure and public services, the pork industry has portrayed itself as a saviour to help reverse this trend.

At a July 2020 forum on food and the environment,⁵⁶ Alberto Herranz, director-general of industry association Interporc, said Spain's pork sector is "an employment engine" for rural areas, generating 21,000 jobs, half of which are for women, and providing opportunities for young people.

This narrative was reiterated at an event Interporc organised on May 19, 2021, ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit in September.

'More than 43 percent of our 80,000 farms are located in municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants and it is in these towns that we generate wealth and employment,' attendees said, according to Interporc's official event report.⁵⁷

'The environmental, social, and economic benefits of livestock-meat activity is vital for rural areas... It would be meaningless or unjustified to allow any approach to reducing or substituting, in whole or in part, the livestock-meat production,' the report stated.

Grupo Fuertes makes similar claims.

'With our activity, we promote access to work in the most scattered and unpopulated areas, thus helping to guarantee the sustainability of the rural environment. Ninety percent of the employment generated by Grupo Fuertes agri-food companies is located in areas with less than 20,000 inhabitants,' according to the company's Sustainability Report 2020.⁵⁸

51 <http://coag.chil.me/download-file/104758-323291>

52 https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_spain-battles-rural-depopulation/6203456.html

53 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/spain-set-to-allocate-e10-billion-to-combat-rural-exodus/>

54 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-recovery-spain-factbox-idUSKBN2C02CC>

55 <https://www.euronews.com/2019/03/31/the-revolt-of-empty-spain-why-is-spain-s-rural-world-protesting>

56 <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2020/07/28/Interporc-discusses-the-essential-role-of-the-pig-industry-in-rural-Spain>

57 <https://interporc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Monografia-dialogo-INGLES.pdf>

58 <https://www.elpozo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/grupo-fuertes-sostenibilidad-2020-eng-interactivo-2.pdf>

The industry also claims that the farms and companies bring life to small rural towns, municipalities, and counties.⁵⁹

MACHINES, NOT MEN

Yet the farm workers and union leaders who spoke to the investigation said that in reality these farms do not provide much work because they are heavily mechanised.

In fact, labour accounts for a mere 2.1 percent of pork production costs while feed accounts for up to 80 percent, according to a joint report⁶⁰ by Food and Water Action Europe and Friends of the Earth Europe.

For example, a large farm with nearly 2,000 pigs only requires two employees to manage it, as shown by Pol, a pig farmer in Salamanca⁶¹ who got into the business because it is more lucrative than growing crops.

All the pigs from his farm came from the ICEPOR-INCAROSA cooperative. On paper, he is self-employed, but his farm is part of the cooperative and he receives a monthly salary.

He lives, sleeps, and often eats at the farm, spending hours placing straw as bedding for the pigs or cleaning and clearing animal waste because the noxious gases can harm both animal and human health.

A lot of the tasks are automated, such as windows that open automatically for ventilation, which is why the farm only employs him and his wife.

“We are here all the time. We have a room here. We work every day including weekends,” he said.

In Cardenete, a small town of just under 500 inhabitants known for its natural beauty in the province of Cuenca, a new pig farm being planned by Porcaltollano SL will add to a pig population that is already multiple times bigger than the town’s human residents. The animals are expected to consume twice as much water as the people living there.

The number of new jobs that will be created? Two.⁶²

The environmental group Ecologistas en Acción has also documented^{63 64} that industrial livestock farming does not stop rural depopulation.

In its latest report published in October 2021, Ecologistas en Acción compared more than 300 municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants and found that in the past two decades, 74 percent of municipalities with greater numbers of pigs lost more residents or had a lower income than those with similar characteristics but without this type of livestock.

59 <https://www.europapress.es/economia/noticia-danone-nestle-campofrio-elpozo-reivindican-importancia-espana-vaciada-tejido-industrial-20201007162754.html>

60 https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Factoryfarms_110920_web.pdf

61 This is a pseudonym. The author committed to not revealing the farmer’s identity because they preferred to remain anonymous.

62 <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/consumo-que-suma/las-macrogranjas-pone-en-riesgo-la-vida-en-los-pueblos-y-agrarian-la-despoblacion>

63 <https://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/116161/despoblacion-y-desempleo-dos-de-las-principales-consecuencias-de-la-ganaderia-industrial-en-los-municipios-espanoles/>

64 <https://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/178433/>

For example, Castilléjar in Granada, which has a large farm run by Cefusa-El Pozo and a pig population of 585,800, saw its population drop by 25 percent. An earlier report from Ecologistas en Acción found that unemployment also jumped from 7.25 percent to 18 percent between 2006 and 2017.

In Balsa de Ves in Albacete, which has almost 100,000 pigs, the population dropped by 50 percent and unemployment rose to 26 percent from 10 percent over the same period.

In Castilla-La Mancha, 34 out of 50 municipalities—68 percent—with the highest pig density lost more population than those with little or no pig density.

In fact, it is the closure of small, family-run pig farms that is detrimental to rural areas, experts say.

“We would like the largest possible number of ranchers to remain, because that establishes the population and keeps the towns alive,” Jaume Bernis, head of the pig sector at farmers’ organisation COAG,⁶⁵ told a local newspaper.⁶⁶

“As farms are closed, the population falls.”

Labour law expert Laurentino Dueñas believes job creation comes from the highly integrated model of the Spanish pork sector, where farms rearing different phases of pigs are situated near other facilities such as slaughterhouses and processing plants.

“It is in these facilities that employment is generated,” he said.

MYTH 3—ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Myth: Spain’s pork industry is a model of sustainable production.

Reality: Industry practices are heavily polluting and animals live in substandard conditions.

The Let’s Talk about Pork website takes viewers to pages extolling the virtues of Spain’s pork production—how it is a benchmark of energy efficiency, how its operations are in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions⁶⁷ and how it has ‘the most complete and advanced Animal Welfare Certification System [in the world].’⁶⁸

This is the website⁶⁹ of a campaign aimed at encouraging millennials in Spain, France, and Portugal to eat more pork. It is coordinated by powerful industry lobby groups, including Spain’s Interporc,⁷⁰ and funded by the European Union⁷¹ to the tune of more than €6 million. It was launched in July 2020, ostensibly to combat the ‘fake news’—reports on the sector’s environmental and labour rights impact—surrounding the pork industry.

This is just one of the campaigns pork corporations have embarked on to construct their image as responsible business enterprises. Some of Spain’s largest pork producers, such as Campofrío, Grupo Fuertes, and Grupo Jorge, cite the environment as a priority, but prefer to talk about the sources of energy

⁶⁵ <http://www.coag.org/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.publico.es/sociedad/granjas-macrogranjas-arrasan-ganaderia-familiar.html>

⁶⁷ <https://letstalkaboutepork.com/medio-ambiente/>

⁶⁸ <https://letstalkaboutepork.com/bienestar-animal/>

⁶⁹ <https://letstalkaboutepork.com/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.interporcspain.org/>

⁷¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/agri/en/campaigns/letstalkaboutpork>

they use or their waste management systems instead of the key driver of environmental degradation they are responsible for—the sheer number of pigs in Spain and the unsustainable expansion of pig farming which causes air and water pollution.

Campofrío says it is ‘optimising energy consumption in our factories, improving the efficiency of our transport and logistics systems, and reducing packaging materials.’

El Pozo’s business is certified as ‘Zero Waste’ for its management of the resources it consumes.

Grupo Jorge, meanwhile, has created Jorge Energy to develop renewable energy in its facilities.

However, our research into the waste produced by pig farming demonstrates that the real environmental issues which pork companies need to focus on are the issues of slurry as well as methane and ammonia emissions.

SPAIN—WHAT A WASTE

Slurry—a mixture of faeces, urine, food waste and other discharges—is the biggest environmental problem from industrial pig farms because of the sheer numbers and concentration of the animals.

As noted above, between 2015 and 2020 the number of pigs in Spain increased by 22.3 percent,⁷² while the number of farms has decreased.

Spanish pig farms typically produce around two cubic metres—equivalent to 2,000 litres—of slurry per animal per year, with a nitrogen concentration 40 times higher than that of wastewater, according to research⁷³ carried out by the Fundación Nueva Cultura del Agua in 2019.

The impacts include nitrate pollution of groundwater, ammonia pollution of surface water, and methane emissions into the air. The resulting water contamination has left many Spanish towns with undrinkable water.

The European Commission opened an infringement procedure⁷⁴ against Spain in November 2018 under Directive 91/676/EEC (the EU nitrates directive)⁷⁵ because of ‘insufficient protection of waters against pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources.’

It is estimated that in 2020 more than 17.6 million cubic metres of manure⁷⁶ were produced in Aragon alone by the region’s nearly 8.2 million pigs—enough to fill more than 7,000 Olympic sized swimming pools.⁷⁷

When adjacent lands cannot absorb such huge amounts of slurry, the runoff ends up in surface and ground waters, contaminating them and making them unsuitable for human use and consumption. Leaks from storage ponds and illegal dumping add to the contamination.

72 <https://www.publico.es/economia/burbuja-macrogranjas-pincha-dejar-intensa-huella-social-ambiental-china.html>

73 https://fnca.eu/images/documentos/DOCUMENTOS/05_Memoria_proyecto4_Ganaderia_intensiva.pdf

74 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2021-003923-ASW_EN.html

75 Directive 91/676/EEC: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/factsheets/nitrates.pdf>

76 Calculation based on the figures provided by the *Heraldo de Aragón* in 2017. <https://www.heraldo.es/noticias/los-cerdos-generan-aragon-doce-veces-mas-excrementos-que-toda-poblacion-1166097-102.html?Autoref=true#>

77 <https://www.themeasureofthings.com/results.php?comp=volume&unit=cm&amt=42000000&sort=pr&p=2>

THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT MAR MENOR

As Europe's biggest saltwater lagoon, Mar Menor has welcomed tourists and locals all year around to enjoy its natural beauty. Then in August 2021, much of the fish population in the lagoon turned up dead.

A months-long investigation by Lighthouse Reports discovered that reckless and intensive pork farming, enabled by local authorities who turned a blind eye to widespread illegal practices that violated EU and Spanish law, contributed to the iconic lagoon's degradation.

Following field visits, drone photography, and freedom of information requests, the investigation concluded that in all likelihood the pig industry played an important role in the ecological disaster, even though local authorities and prosecutors blamed the heatwave and nearby farmland.

In March 2019, Spain's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) released a report⁷⁸ warning of the 'high concentration' of pigs in areas including Mar Menor and the subsequent problems around the management, storage, and disposal of waste. There was so much manure that there is 'currently no effective treatment and/or elimination,' according to the report.



A close-up view of a slurry pond on a pig farm in Fuente del Alamo, Spain, on September 18, 2021.
©Lighthouse Reports

The report calculated that the pig sector in the Mar Menor basin contributes a substantial proportion—approximately 17 percent—of the total nitrogen that ends up in the lagoon. It also identified about 500 slurry ponds in the Mar Menor lake basin. Experts who spoke to the investigation said it is likely the number of ponds have increased since then.

A technical team from the ministry that visited 10 percent of the slurry ponds found more than 90 percent did not comply with required construction standards, posing 'a great risk of infiltration, leaching and runoff.' The experts also said residues could contaminate both surface and underground waters and directly affect the state of Mar Menor.

Despite the warnings two years ago, there have been no subsequent attempts to control or limit the growth of the pig population in the region. In fact, the herd size increased by 220,000 in 2020 compared to the year before, when the report was published.

In response to a freedom of information request, the nature protection department of the Spanish police, the Guardia Civil, said only eight pig farms in the Mar Menor basin have been sanctioned for slurry violations.

The regional government said in an email that the ministry's 2019 report "does not correspond to the reality of the area" as it was based on a visual check of five storage ponds without any other verification. It said the ponds are "naturally waterproofed" and that this is recognised by national legislation.

It also pointed to research carried out by the Technical University of Cartagena (UPCT) which showed the soil has low permeability, with little risk of contaminating the aquifers. The director who oversaw the research, Professor Angel Faz Cano, is also the chair of an academic position at UPCT

78 https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/agua/temas/concesiones-y-autorizaciones/apendice_01_02_tcm30-489378.pdf



Slurry ponds on a pig farm in La Pinilla, Spain, on September 23, 2021.

funded by Cefusa, part of Grupo Fuertes⁷⁹. Professor Faz Cano denied any partiality to the pig industry.⁸⁰

Another 2019 report,⁸¹ from the General Directorate of Agricultural, Livestock and Marine Production of the Government of Murcia, also acknowledged that nitrate levels from livestock farms were not being controlled. In addition, it admitted that even after a regional decree on urgent measures to guarantee the environmental sustainability of Mar Menor became law in 2018, only two officers, neither of whom had relevant expertise, were working on the application of the standards and legislation on nitrates.

Murcia's regional law 3/2020 of July 27 explicitly noted the risks posed by poorly managed slurry in the Mar Menor area and prohibited the establishment of new pig farms. However, the number of pig farms has increased in the Mar Menor catchment area by 39 since 2018, regional government figures showed, with 35,000 more pigs producing 70,000 additional cubic meters of polluting slurry each year.

An earlier regional regulation, Decree-Law 2/2019 of December 26, also ordered the establishment of an electronic record of the movement of slurry. The record was not created until August 2021, just two weeks before tonnes of dead fish appeared.

Interporc Spain, which represents the white pig sector—the breed widely used in intensive farming—said the industry had been making “great efforts” to protect the environment.



A protest banner on the gate of a residential home in Mar Menor, Spain, on September 19, 2021.

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⁷⁹ <https://emfoca.upct.es/catedra-info/cefusa>

⁸⁰ <https://www.lamarea.com/2021/11/07/la-industria-de-la-carne-tambien-se-apunta-a-la-universidad/>

⁸¹ <https://www.ondacero.es/emisoras/murcia/murcia/audios-podcast/informativos/informe-desvela-que-consejeria-agricultura-controla-nitratos-1055-balsas-purines-area-influencia-mar-menor-pese-ser-importante-fuente-contaminacion-201910215dad80b60cf2e8e7ead93f19.html>



A view of slurry ponds on a pig farm in Fuente del Alamo, Spain, on September 22, 2021.

“In Spain, more than 90 percent of pig slurry is reused to replace fertilisers, but it can also be treated and transformed into electrical energy,” it said in a written statement.

Elsewhere, vast swathes of Aragon, Catalonia, and Castilla y León have been identified as vulnerable to nitrate pollution. They amount to 45 percent of all Catalan municipalities and 15 percent of Castilla y León, the largest region in terms of surface area in Spain.

In Segovia in Castilla y León, where 1.2 million pigs share the space with 150,000 residents, several towns in the south have not been able to drink tap water for years. Despite this, 16 new factory farms housing around 100,000 pigs are in the pipeline. Residents, activists, and public officials are protesting against these plans.

The pig companies say there is enough water, but we are consuming contaminated water and they know it. Putting tens of thousands more pigs here is unsustainable,” said Pedro Cebrián, a member of Ecologistas en Acción in Segovia.

“We have been without drinking water for six years. In Balisa, it’s been 25 years,” said Isabel de Castro, an opposition councillor in Ochando.

In both towns, it was only through the installation of filter plants using public funds that the water’s nitrate levels dropped below the recommended maximum limit. Yet many do not trust the process and rely on bottled water.

The investigation sent a request to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development of Castilla y León, enquiring if pig farms in the region have been sanctioned. The ministry rejected the application, saying this was ‘personal data.’

The Duero Hydrographic Confederation (CHD), which manages the Spanish side of the Duero River basin, the largest in the Iberian Peninsula, responded. It said they have initiated 50 disciplinary proceedings within the CHD demarcation since 2017 for the dumping of livestock waste, although they do not break down by type of animal.

POTENT GASES

Pig excrement also generates ammonia,⁸² which contributes to air pollution and affects both human and environmental health. Figures from 2017 show factory farming was responsible for 92 percent of ammonia emissions in Spain,⁸³ which exceeds the maximum level set for this sector.

In Catalonia, a region with a high concentration of industrial farms, air pollution from slurry emissions doubled in the six years between 2012 and 2018, according to the State Register of Pollutant Emissions and Sources (PRTR).⁸⁴

The data also showed farms in Aragon and Catalonia with 2,000 fattening pigs weighing more than 30 kg each emitted 5,817 tons and 5,553 tons of ammonia respectively in 2019. In Extremadura, where farm sizes are smaller and pigs roam free, emissions for the same period were 347 tons.

Pig production can also be a source of greenhouse gas emissions from enteric fermentation and manure management, both of which emit methane and nitrous oxide, whose impact on the planet's climate are multiple times greater than carbon dioxide.

While cattle remain the main contributor to emissions from the global livestock sector, emissions from pigs account for between 7 percent and 11 percent, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).⁸⁵

‘Although these emissions are comparatively low, the scale of the sector and its rate of growth mean that reductions in emission intensity are needed,’ the FAO has said.⁸⁶ The level of methane emissions may also fall foul of the EU’s 2020 Methane Strategy.⁸⁷

Feed production and land-use change caused by crop expansion to grow food for the animals also account for more than half of the emissions⁸⁸ from pigs and Spain’s highly integrated factory farming model relies heavily on importing cheap soy from South America as pig feed,⁸⁹ according to David Sánchez Carpio, director of EU Affairs at Food & Water Action Europe.

The soybean industry in South America has been accused of causing widespread deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water pollution.⁹⁰

ANIMALS PAY A HIGH PRICE

The Let’s Talk about Pork website boasts that Spain’s pork industry follows the Farm Animal Welfare Council’s ‘Five Freedoms’ for animals⁹¹—freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and anguish; freedom from physical or thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury or illness; and freedom to express their own natural behaviour.

The investigation visited 10 randomly selected farms in the region of Castilla y Leon, a major centre of industrial pork farming in Spain, where hundreds of industrial farms raise 1.2 million pigs. The aim was

82 <https://www.agroberichtenbuitenland.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/08/04/spain-updates-its-regulation-for-pig-farm-management>

83 <https://es.greenpeace.org/es/noticias/cuanto-contamina-la-carne-industrial/#:~:text=La%20ganader%C3%ADa%20es%20la%20responsable,trenes%20barcos%20y%20aviones%20juntos.>

84 https://elpais.com/ccaa/2020/02/29/catalunya/1583009654_981758.html

85 <http://www.fao.org/gleam/results/en/n>

86 <http://www.fao.org/partnerships/leap/news-and-events/news/detail/en/c/1276273/>

87 https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/eu_methane_strategy.pdf

88 <http://www.fao.org/3/i3460e/i3460e.pdf>

89 <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/uploaded/2020/05/IDH-European-Soy-Monitor-v2.pdf>

90 <https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/soy>

91 <https://letstalkaboutepork.com/bienestar-animal/>

to document if evidence on the ground supports the industry's claims on the 'Five Freedoms'. The investigation was able to enter six of these farms. In all of them physical discomfort was evident. In five of the six farms the investigation found animals with illnesses, tumours, ears bitten off or open wounds.

The findings reinforce previous investigations into farms and slaughterhouses by animal welfare groups and journalists which showed that animals are paying a high price for being a profitable commodity.

In February 2018, Salvados, an investigative TV show, aired⁹² images of sick and deformed pigs at a farm that supplied to El Pozo.

That same year, the Superior Court of Justice in Castilla-La Mancha ruled against⁹³ the regional government and meat company Incarlopsa for removing two public employees from their posts two years earlier after they found a company slaughterhouse in Cuenca did not comply with animal welfare regulations.

The investigation spoke to one of the public health inspectors who took legal action after being removed from his job.⁹⁴ The case is ongoing at the regional court.

The inspector said the European Food Safety Agency recommends⁹⁵ killing the animals after stunning them for between two-and-a-half or three minutes, but in the slaughterhouse he regularly visited, the animals were stunned for only a minute, which meant they were still conscious when they were killed.

He also said he witnessed animal abuse on every visit during the three years he worked in that factory.

"As inspectors we have very clear rules and protocols to follow and very clear measures that must be complied with at national and European levels. However...when we reported the situation and suggested some changes, the company wanted to get rid of the inspectors instead," he said.

The animals' quality of life is also compromised regardless of farm size or structure, a report by animal rights project Tras los Muros⁹⁶ showed. They are housed on concrete floors in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and females selected for their reproductive capacity spend part of their lives trapped in iron cages. Temperatures in intensive farms can be very high and since pigs have few functional sweat glands, they often have to wallow in their own excrement to stay cool.

Pol, the farmer in Salamanca, said piglets were often in terrible health when they reached him because they were exposed to toxins from the slurry.

"The last time they brought me more small pigs... 70 died within a few weeks," he said.

The truck driver who brought them told him the animals had been swimming in mud and slurry in the farm where they were raised. The driver lost his job soon after—which he believes was due to talking about the bad conditions on the farm.

Much of these practices go against Directive 2008/120/EC (the EU Pig Directive)⁹⁷ which lays down minimum standards for the protection of pigs and applies to all categories of pigs.

92 https://www.lasexta.com/programas/salvados/mejores-momentos/cerdos-comiendose-entre-ellos-las-imagenes-de-canibalismo-que-muestran-las-cruelles-practicas-de-una-granja_201802045a7770d70cf20e2c8b558677.html

93 <https://www.publico.es/sociedad/maltrato-animal-condena-junta-castilla-mancha-apatar-veterinarios-denunciaron-irregularidades-matadero.html>

94 Sts 362/2017 TSJ CLM /Castilla y la Mancha- regional court case / Sentencia del tribunal superior de justicia de Castilla la Mancha- 362 sentencia

95 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:ES:PDF>

96 <https://traslosmuros.com/en/pig-factory-farm-investigation>

97 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:sa0009>



An injured pig in the fattening area of a farm in Spain. ©Aitor Garmendia/Lighthouse Reports

In addition, despite EU rules prohibiting routine mutilation such as tail docking, done to prevent tail biting (an abnormal behaviour resulting from, among other factors, the lack of a stimulating environment), European Commission audits in Spain between 2016 and 2018 indicated that 95 to 100 percent of pigs are still being tail docked, according to a briefing paper⁹⁸ for the European Parliament.

Indiscriminate use of antimicrobials—drugs, including antibiotics, that destroy dangerous pathogens, many of which are created and proliferate precisely because of the conditions in which industrial livestock are kept—is another concern. Abuse of the drugs could create drug-resistant bacteria that could spread to humans.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is responsible for an estimated 33,000 human deaths per year in the European Union.⁹⁹

A national plan to tackle AMR has led to a significant reduction in the overall consumption of these drugs between 2014 and 2018, from 418.8 milligrams of antibiotics per kilo of meat produced to 219.2 milligrams.¹⁰⁰

However, Spain still outstripped 30 other countries in Europe in 2018 when it came to buying antimicrobials for veterinary use, figures from the European Medicines Agency showed.¹⁰¹ Spain accounts for more than a quarter of the total purchases and nearly twice the quantity in Italy, its closest competitor on the list.

98 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652044/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)652044_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652044/EPRS_BRI(2020)652044_EN.pdf)

99 https://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial-resistance/eu-action-on-antimicrobial-resistance_en

100 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/spain-trends-sales-veterinary-antibiotics-between-2010-2018_en.pdf

101 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/sales-veterinary-antimicrobial-agents-31-european-countries-2018-trends-2010-2018-tenth-esvac-report_en.pdf

MYTH 4—PUBLIC FUNDING

Myth 4: Spain's pork industry is a financial success story.

Reality: The industry as it is would not exist without public funding and political support.

At a July 2020 forum on food and environment,¹⁰² Interporc's director-general Alberto Herranz touted the industry's money-making credentials, saying, 'We are economically sustainable, because we generate annual revenue of more than €17 billion and we support 300,000 jobs directly and more than 1 million indirectly.'

But the sector's growth and the low price of pork, which has fluctuated between €0.94/kg and €1.55/kg in the last 10 years,¹⁰³ would have been impossible without a huge public capital injection through direct and indirect funding.

According to advocacy group Justicia Alimentaria,¹⁰⁴ 55 percent of the price of a kilogram of pork meat in Spain is financed by national public funds. These include subsidies for crops grown as pig feed, most of which are cereals as well as a tiny amount of locally grown soya.

Meanwhile, Ecologistas en Acción has warned¹⁰⁵ that the COVID-19 recovery funds will finance projects by large meat companies that offer 'false solutions'

such as building large-scale biogas plants which could 'increase the serious social, environmental and climatic impacts associated with the industrial livestock model.'

The European Union has also financed¹⁰⁶ campaigns to encourage the consumption of pork in Spain, spending more than €8 million between 2010-2021. This includes Let's Talk about Pork and direct funding of Interporc, Spain's biggest pork lobby.

Most of the public funding is from the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which the *New York Times* has called 'one of the world's largest subsidy schemes.' It is the EU's largest budget item, currently accounting for more than a third of the total, at a cost of around €54 billion a year.¹⁰⁷

Since Spain entered the European Union and became eligible for CAP funding, the pork sector has received an average of around €160 million a year.¹⁰⁸ In 2020 alone, the 24 companies this investigation focused on received more than €32 million in CAP subsidies,¹⁰⁹ documents showed.

A detailed breakdown¹¹⁰ also showed the average amount of subsidies each pig and poultry farm received in 2019: a total of €7,385, which includes €151 in support for food crops, €363 in subsidies specifically aimed at the livestock sector, €586 in rural development funds, €119 for intermediate consumption, €5,206 for the basic payment scheme, other subsidies worth €27, and investment aid worth €933.

¹⁰² <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2020/07/28/Interporc-discusses-the-essential-role-of-the-pig-industry-in-rural-Spain>

¹⁰³ https://www.3tres3.com/cotizaciones-de-porcino/espana_2/

¹⁰⁴ https://justiciaalimentaria.org/sites/default/files/docs/carn_de_cano_web_cat.pdf

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/165536/solicitan-que-los-fondos-de-recuperacion-europeos-apoyen-una-transicion-justa-y-sostenible-del-sistema-agroalimentario/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/agri/en/campaigns/map-and-statistics-target-countries>

¹⁰⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/cap-expenditure-graph1_en.pdf

¹⁰⁸ https://justiciaalimentaria.org/sites/default/files/docs/carn_de_cano_web_cat.pdf

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.fega.es/es/datos-abiertos/consulta-de-beneficiarios-pac/descripcion-de-medidas>

¹¹⁰ <https://agridata.ec.europa.eu/extensions/DashboardFarmEconomyFocusLivestock/DashboardFarmEconomyFocusLivestock.html>

Some of the richest companies are the biggest beneficiaries. A list of companies that received the most money from CAP payments in Spain in 2020 reads like a who's who of the meat industry.

The list includes¹¹¹ nearly €38 million for companies under Grupo Fuertes, which owns El Pozo and Cefusa, and more than €106 million for multiple companies under Grupo Jorge.

The research for this report has linked these companies to violations of health and safety and/or of environmental regulations.

Spain's relentless expansion of pig production is not aligned with the European Green Deal,¹¹² which seeks to combat climate change and environmental degradation and includes strategies on sustainable food production and consumption (the Farm to Fork Strategy or F2F), biodiversity, and a circular economy, all of which will address issues relevant to agriculture and rural areas.

But green groups are concerned that Spain's meat industry, a majority of which is the pork sector, is lobbying to receive part of the recovery funds that are supposed to help Spain recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

They say the industry's plan to build new biogas production plants¹¹³ where slurry will be treated to produce renewable fuel is greenwashing.

Meat industry associations including Interporc, Asici, and Interovic have also set up the G-21 Tractor group¹¹⁴ to digitise the livestock value chain. The group is hoping half of the money for the €3.5 million project will come from the recovery funds.

The project is being coordinated and promoted by Fernando Moraleda,¹¹⁵ former secretary of state for agriculture from 2004 to 2005 and for communication from 2005 to 2008. He now works as an adviser for the public affairs consultancy LLYC. The involvement of Moraleda underlines a key component of the industry's continued prosperity—close relationship with lawmakers.

There is a revolving door between the highest echelons of public service and the agriculture sector. For example, after Isabel García Tejerina left her job as General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 2000 she joined Fertiberia, a fertiliser company, as a strategic planning director. She returned to the ministry to lead it as a member of the government in 2014.

The pork industry has also co-opted elements of the scientific and academic community. This has been done through sponsorship of programmes like creating academic chairs such as the Chair of Meat and Health position at the University of Barcelona,¹¹⁶ the Cefusa Chair at the Polytechnic University of Cartagena,¹¹⁷ and the El Pozo Chair of Food Safety and Sustainability at the University of Murcia.¹¹⁸ Both Cefusa and El Pozo are part of Grupo Fuertes.

111 <https://www.fega.es/es/datos-abiertos/consulta-de-beneficiarios-pac/descarga-de-ficheros>

112 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

113 <https://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/165536/solicitan-que-los-fondos-de-recuperacion-europeos-apoyen-una-transicion-justa-y-sostenible-del-sistema-agroalimentario/>

114 <https://www.efeagro.com/noticia/espana-carnicos-economia-digitalizacion-sostenibilidad/>

115 <https://www.llorenteycuenca.com/en/equipo/fernando-moraleda/>

116 http://www.ub.edu/campusalimentacio/carnisalut/es/index_es.html

117 <https://emfoca.upct.es/catedra-info/cefusa>

118 <https://www.um.es/web/catedra-elpozo/>

4. RISING RESISTANCE

As communities across Spain discover the environmental, social, and health costs of industrial pig farms, they are becoming increasingly vocal about their opposition to the unchecked and unsustainable growth of the nation's pork sector.

Many have demonstrated in front of town halls, farms, and city centres, launched social media campaigns, and drummed up support from residents in urban areas. They have also set up citizen platforms to organise protests, expose illegal practices, and share information.

The map shows some of the local resistance groups working to combat labour exploitation, animal abuse, and environmental destruction from pig farms.

Some workers are also starting to increase resistance to the industry's heavy-handed and exploitative model—workers like Moses from Nigeria, a former employee at a slaughterhouse in Zaragoza.

During the months of the pandemic-fuelled lockdown in Spain in 2020, he and his colleagues, all of whom are foreigners, put in 16-hour work days.

He had been working 10- to 12-hour days regularly even before COVID-19 without extra payment.

He and his colleagues had to use tools and strong chemicals with little or no training. But no one dared to complain, he said, because “everyone is afraid of losing their jobs.”

Then Moses got called into work on his day off. A day when his pregnant wife had to go to the hospital for an appointment and there was no one else to look after their young daughter. He said “no” to his employers.

‘It was not my turn to work that day so I thought I have the right to say I couldn’t go,’ he said.

He was wrong. When he showed up at work the next day, the secretary told him he had been fired.

‘Everyone there is a migrant, everyone is willing to work as many hours as they ask because we are afraid of losing our jobs and we need the money,’ he said.

This time, he decided to fight back.

Moses is suing his former employers.



AREAS WHERE LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN OPPOSING INDUSTRIAL PIG FARMS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ❶ Pozuelo de Rabara-zamora | ❶❶ Torrejoncillo del Rey |
| ❷ Zamora | ❶❷ Cuenca Gascueña y Tinajas |
| ❸ Espinosa de Villagonzalo- zamora | ❶❸ Daimiel-Albacete |
| ❹ Llano de Bureba | ❶❹ Albacete |
| ❺ Sabinanigo | ❶❺ Jaen |
| ❻ Sietamo-aragon | ❶❻ Yecla |
| ❼ Graus | ❶❼ Granada |
| ❽ Torres del Obispo | ❶❽ Murcia |
| ❾ Guadalajara | ❶❾ Taberanas-Albacete |
| ❿ Toledo | |

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