

Campaigning Against Cruelty

Campaigning against cruelty was the intrepid team from Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary at Saturday's Churchill Island Farmers' Market. Having made the long trek down from Kilmore in Central Victoria, Belinda Davis and sanctuary founder and director, Pam Ahern, lost none of their enthusiasm along the way and were determined to remind consumers that their food choices do matter -to them and to animals.

"Many people, when they see our sign asking them to sign our petitions against animal cruelty, immediately think of cruel acts towards cats and dogs or animals in some far off land" said Pam Ahern. "But sadly many people do not realise that the majority of animals in human care, namely farm animals, who in their number far out way domestic pets, do not receive the same legal protection as our beloved cats and dogs. Yet neither their capacity to suffer nor our culpability for it is any different"

Singled out were sow stalls - the small metal crates used to immobilize individual pregnant pigs, battery cages - small wire cages in which four to six chickens have less space than an A4 sheet of paper, and the live export of animals to the Middle East. Sow stalls have been banned in the United Kingdom since 1999 and are being phased out across the European Union with several States in America also consigning them to the dustbin of history while battery cages will be phased out across the EU by 2012.

"People are shocked when they learn that such practices are routine and legal in Australia pledging not to support them when once informed. Farmers' Markets, such as this one, are a great way to talk to consumers who wish to make ethical choices about the way their food is produced. Gandhi really did put it well when he said "the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way it treats its animals" added Pam.

Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary, situated in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range just outside of Kilmore, provides life long sanctuary for over 150 rescued farm animals while their outreach centre aims to expand the public's circle of compassion to include all animals.

Photos attached for media use: large file photos available upon request

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Useful website: www.edgarsmission.org.au

*"If we could live happy and healthy lives without harming others...
why wouldn't we?"*