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**(Neb.)-ConAgra Foods Supports Eliminating Hog Crates**



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 09/24/2012 11:37 AM

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - ConAgra Foods is asking suppliers to eliminate the use of hog confinement crates over the next decade.

The Omaha-based maker of Banquet, Healthy Choice and Chef Boyardee products joins several other food companies in calling on pork suppliers to stop confining pregnant sows.

ConAgra said Monday it wants suppliers to develop a plan to eliminate confinement crates by 2017.

Leading pork producers Smithfield Foods and Hormel Foods have already said they would stop using the crates at company-owned farms by 2017. Cargill says it mostly uses group housing for pregnant sows.

The pork industry's move away from gestation crates may contribute to higher prices because more workers are needed to manage sows that aren't confined because they tend to fight.

The Humane Society of the United States praised ConAgra's announcement.