

General News | Legal / Regulatory | Pork News

'We Know We'll Be Paid A Premium': Prop 12 Supporters



October 8, 2025
By Frank Fuhrig



Brent Hershey of Hershey Ag explains the history of gestation stalls during a Responsible Meat Coalition event at the National Press Club.

A political split among hog farmers is playing out this week in Washington, D.C., as hundreds of pork producers urge Congress not to override state legislation banning the use of gestation stalls.

True Story Foods, Niman Ranch and ButcherBox, which work with networks of farmers complying with standards for humanely raised meat, participated in the event, which was organized by the Responsible Meat Coalition. It followed an effort last month by the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), which brought 100 farmers from 20 states to Capitol Hill.

NPPC argues that California and Massachusetts referendum-passed laws, which require pork sold in those states to be raised without gestation stalls, disrupt interstate commerce and drive up costs for both producers and consumers. Since a 2023 Supreme Court decision leaving the state measures in place, the group has urged Congress to pass superseding federal legislation blocking such bans.



- Advertisement -

In a packed ballroom at the National Press Club, two blocks east of the White House, Minnesota farmer Trisha Zachman of Feathered Acres Learning Farm & Inn in Belgrade, Minnesota, described how her family values raising hogs in compliance with California's Proposition 12 and Massachusetts' Question 3.

"Selling to Niman Ranch gives us something that's rare in modern agriculture: stability and a fair price," she said. "We know we'll be paid a premium for being crate free, and the added care and time we put into raising our animals right. That stability allows us to reinvest in our farm, plan for the future and keep farming full time."

Zachman said that their humane practices, and the processors and consumers who value them, put weight on transparency and care for their livestock.

"It gives young families a path forward without having to own thousands of acres and thousands of animals," she said. "And that's how we keep rural communities alive and vibrant by helping small farms stay in business and young people on the land. Proposition 12 plays a key role in that."

The Responsible Meat Coalition said at least 200 farmers from 30 states were at the event. The group gathered later Wednesday on Capitol Hill and planned to return Thursday to visit Congressional offices and drive tractors in the capital to draw attention to their cause.

Pennsylvania farmer Brent Hershey of Hershey Ag discussed the history of gestation stalls. Without them, he conceded, hog confinements require more buildings, a step his business took two years ago.

"That costs more money. But when we spread that out over the 20 years these buildings last, we're looking at 1% to 2% impact," he said. "And we're excited to see where we are three years from now, at the five-year mark, 'cause the production levels we've seen go up. We believe

there's more [gains], and it's possible we will erase that [cost differential] completely. The jury's out on that."

