

# Higher Welfare *Charcuterie Pork*

M&S  
— FOOD —

**Introducing its 100% higher welfare, free farrowing standards for pork reared in Europe for M&S charcuterie products has been a long-term project, but its completion represents huge progress in animal welfare.**

Sourcing the best quality charcuterie products while also assuring the welfare of the animals used to produce it is a balancing act, explains Olivia Nicholson, Agriculture Manager for M&S.

Customer favourites such as salami, chorizo and speciality hams are traditionally made and processed in France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. Some products such as Serrano and Palma ham are protected by laws that specify they must be made in their appropriate region from locally raised pork. And while those regions have the expertise and tradition to produce these world beating products that M&S customers enjoy, the farming practices traditionally used in those areas differ from M&S standards for UK pork, which is confinement free, Outdoor Bred pork.

The main aim of the project was to improve animal welfare. M&S was determined to make appropriate improvements and – working alongside its suppliers and Select Farms – has created its 100% higher welfare, free farrowing standards.

“These include prohibiting the use of farrowing crates explains Olivia. “Instead, we have redesigned pens that are now being used. That give sows more space to nest before farrowing.” Sloping walls help ensure the welfare of the piglets is maintained, and offer protection for when she decides to lay down. Growing pigs are also given access to straw to allow them to root and play and display natural behaviour, she adds.

“Our producers were on board with the idea from the start so the main challenge was working out how to make it happen and giving farmers the confidence to make the investment. These original systems have been used for generations so there was some relearning to do but we have been pleased by everyone’s commitment to making it work. Since January 2023 the new standards have been in place across all farms producing for us.

“Like all M&S commitments to welfare these new standards cover all charcuterie products including those used as ingredients, served in our cafes or made by third party manufacturers. When M&S makes a commitment to improvements we believe it should apply to everything with no exceptions. We are very proud of this initiative and believe it is a huge step forward.”

