



Study establishing best practices on the production, the processing and the marketing of meat from uncastrated pigs or pigs vaccinated against boar taint (immunocastrated) -

Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed

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The views expressed are purely those of the writer and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.



Background

- *Pig castration is legal but remains a welfare issue*
- *Pilot project in the 2017 Budget:*
“Establishment of a harmonised internal market for pigmeat obtained from pigs that have not been surgically castrated”



Background (2)

- *Project split in 2 phases*
 - **200,000 EUR for best practices (phase 1)**
 - **400,000 EUR for dissemination activities (phase 2)**
- *Phase 1 from March to December 2018*



Scope and general objectives

- *Meat from entire (uncastrated) or vaccinated pigs*
- *Collect information on best practices used to produce, process and market meat from such pigs*
- *Propose best practices at different level of the food chain*



Specific objectives

- *For entire pigs (uncastrated):*
 - How to reduce boar taint at farm level (Q1)
 - How to detect boar taint at slaughterhouse (Q4)
 - How to deal with meat with detectable boar taint (Q6)
 - How to increase market value of meat from uncastrated pigs (Q7)



Specific objectives (2)

- *For vaccinated pigs (immunocastrated):*
 - How to vaccinate pigs (Q2)
 - How to ensure at farm level that vaccinated pigs will not have boar taint (Q3)
 - How to trust farmers that vaccinated pigs will not have boar taint (Q5)
 - How to increase acceptance of meat from vaccinated pigs (Q8)

Methodology

- *Desk and field research in 7 Member States (BE, DK, FR, DE, NL, ES and UK)*
- *Only practices used under commercial conditions*
- *Online consultation platform of stakeholders*
- *Presentation to two advisory board meetings*

State of play

- *Transition to entire males or vaccination depends on the whole supply chain*
- *Farmers' costs vs others' costs (slaughterhouses, food processors, retailers)*
- *Transition is ultimately based on market demand*
- *Retailers and food services are essential in the process*



Best practices

- *Farmers /entire pigs*
 - Management of flooring, housing, sex separation
 - Breeding
 - Feed (chicory root, amino-acids, proteins reduced diet, etc.)
 - Reducing slaughter age/weight



Best practices (2)

- *Farmers / vaccinated pigs*
 - **Vaccination principle**
 - **Vaccination protocols (2 shots – heavier pigs)**
 - **Feeding vaccinated pigs**
 - **Checking effects of vaccination (pig behaviour)**



Best practices (3)

- *Slaughterhouses / entire pigs*
 - **Detecting boar taint (human nose)**
 - **Detailed protocols and quality controls**
 - **Cut off weight**
 - **Financial penalties**
 - **Audits on farm**
- *Slaughterhouses / vaccinated pigs*
 - **Detecting boar taint**
 - **Chemical testing on fat**
 - **Bonuses**



Best practices (4)

- *Food processors / entire pigs*
 - **Dealing with meat with boar taint (cooking, mixing, dry curing, fermentation, etc.)**
- *Retailers / entire pigs*
 - **Promoting meat from entire pigs**
- *Retailers / vaccinated pigs*
 - **Promoting meat from vaccinated pigs**

Case studies

- *COOPERL's transition to entire males (> 2013)*
- *Vaccination protocol to produce cure hams in ES (> 2010)*
- *Vaccination protocol in a PL farm (>2009)*
- *Human nose scoring system in a major NL slaughterhouse*



Case studies (2)

- *Harmonisation of standards for HNS by QS (DE) and IKB (NL)*
- *Delhaize's marketing of meat from entire pigs (BE)*
- *Lidl Belgium's marketing of meat from entire pigs (BE)*
- *Colruyt's transition to vaccinated pigs*





Conclusions

- *Production of meat from entire or vaccinated pigs is still limited in the EU*
- *Transition is possible and economically viable if the whole supply chain is involved*
- *Various approaches have been used (case studies)*



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Where to find the study?

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/farm/pigs/castration_alter_natives_en





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Thank you for your attention!

ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/index_en.htm

