Pig' Castration – farmers perspective

4th meeting of the Subgroup on the welfare of pigs 05/07/2022

copa cogeca

european farmers european agri-cooperatives

Situation in Europe

- Chirurgical castration as the most frequently used method
- Most significant experience with immunocastration - Colruyt Belgium
- Portugal and Spain have a majority of castrated males

Why do we castrate?

- Avoid boar taint

- Important factor
  - Age at slaughter
  - Weight at slaughter
  - Genetics

Differences between countries

- Portugal and Spain slaughter with less weight, which implies younger age
- Central/Northern Europe want heavier carcasses
- To improve meat quality, the introduction of the terminalDuroc boar implies a greater need for castration

Used methods

- Surgical castration with anesthesia
- Surgical castration without anesthesia (up to 7 days of age)
- Whole males
- Immunocastration

Economic interest

	Castrated males	Females	Entire males
Entry weight (kg)	25	25	25
Exit weight (kg)	121	117,8	119
Feed (kg)	218,68	195,23	191,87
Feed (kg)/Pig (kg)	2,27	2,10	2,04
Feed cost (kg)	0,908	0,84	0,816
Feed cost for 120kg pig	86,26	79,8	77,52

Producer’s interest

- From an economic point of view - entire males
- Can't take risks of boar taint
- Need to investigate effective methods for detecting boar taint

Production’s proposal

- The pig farmer must be able to choose between the three solutions
  - Surgical castration with anaesthesia
  - Entire males
  - Immunocastration