

Effect of immunocastration on performance and fresh ham quality of heavy giltsD. Martín¹, C. Carrasco¹, M. Hebrero², M. Nieto², A. Fuentetaja² and J. Peinado¹¹Imasde Agroalimentaria, S.L., C/ Nápoles, 3, 28224 Madrid, Spain, ²Comercial Pecuaria Segoviana, S.L. (Copese), Camino Moraleja, 5, 40480 Segovia, Spain; dmartin@e-imasde.com

Immunocastration can be used as an alternative to surgical castration of male piglets to avoid boar taint. However, it can also be interesting in heavy gilts destined to dry-cured products industry to increase fat deposition and provide primal cuts with a higher added value. A total of 110 crossbred gilts (Duroc × Landrace × Large White) of 31.5±1.0 kg of initial BW were randomly allotted into two treatments: entire gilts (E-GI) and immunocastrate gilts (IM-GI). The experimental unit was the box with 11 gilts housed together (5 replicates per treatment). Feeding program was common for all the gilts and consisted of five diets offered *ad libitum* (2.44, 2.36, 2.46, 2.44 and 2.58 Mcal NE/kg and 1.28, 1.14, 1.02, 0.86 and 0.67% lys from 20 to 30, 30 to 35, 35 to 60, 60 to 90 and 90 kg BW to slaughter, respectively). Gilts BW was measured at nine moments (85, 93, 114, 128, 149, 166, 187, 201 and 219 days of age) and feed intake was recorded daily. The IM-GI group received two injections (114 and 149 days of age) of Improvac® (Zoetis-Pfizer; GnRH analogue protein conjugate) subcutaneously behind the ear. Gilts were slaughtered at 130.0±2.0 kg in a commercial slaughterhouse. Carcass weight, carcass yield and fat thickness, pH and T 24 h *post-mortem* of hams were measured in all the carcasses. Data were analysed as a completely randomised design by GLM of SPSS, including treatment as main effect. Carcass weight was used as covariable. Although no differences were found for feed conversion ratio between groups, IM-GI tend to eat more (2.124 vs 2.310 kg/d; P=0.08) and reached higher average daily gain for all the experimental period (0.696 vs 0.742 kg/d; P<0.05). This greater growth could be motivated by the higher consumption observed in IM-GI from the application of the second vaccine to slaughter. It resulted in a shorter fattening period and higher fat thickness of ham (22.5 vs 26.5 mm; P<0.05) for IM-GI. However, E-GI had higher carcass yield (80.1 vs 79.4%; P<0.08). It is concluded that IM-GI grew faster and showed hams with higher fat content; therefore they could be preferred for dry-cured products industry.

Consumer's attitudes towards surgical castration of pigs in three Western Balkan countriesI. Tomasevic¹, S. Novakovic¹, I. Djekic¹, D. Nakov², L. Guerrero³ and M. Font-I-Furnols³¹University of Belgrade, Faculty of Agriculture, Nemanjina 6, 11080 Belgrade, Serbia, ²University St. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, blvd. Goce Delcev 9, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia, ³IRTA-Food Industries, Finca Camps I Armet, 17121 Monells, Girona, Spain; tbigor@agrif.bg.ac.rs

Surgical castration of male piglets without anaesthesia is performed routinely by farmers or veterinarians in Western Balkan countries to eliminate the risk of boar taint in pork meat. The aim of the study was to investigate consumers' attitudes towards surgical castration of piglets in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) and Macedonia. A representative consumer survey was carried out in these three countries in 2017. Over twelve hundred (1,287) questionnaires were answered by pork eaters. Likert scale data were considered as ordinal values and non-parametric statistical tests have been used since data were not normally distributed. Mann-Whitney U test has been performed to compare the statements between genders and age and Kruskal-Wallis H test between countries (P=0.05). Western Balkan consumers agree (5.2±1.2) that surgical castration produces pain to the animal. They are significantly more likely to agree in Macedonia that meat from castrated pigs is of better quality (4.8±1.5) than in Serbia (4.6±1.3) and B&H (4.5±1.1). Macedonians agree the least (3.9±1.3) followed by more ambiguous consumers from Serbia (4.4±1.1) and B&H (4.5±1.0) that meat from castrated pigs is more expensive. Macedonians are also significantly more likely to disagree (3.6±1.6) that castration is not necessary, compared to Serbian (4.7±1.1) and B&H (4.9±0.9) consumers. On average, Western Balkan consumers, slightly disagree that meat from castrated pigs is leaner (3.7±1.1) and they neither agree nor disagree that they prefer to eat meat from castrated pigs (4.0±1.3) or that pig castration with vaccines improves pork quality (4.0±1.5). There are differences in consumer's attitudes towards surgical castration by country of origin, but further work is needed to find segments of consumers according to their attitudes. The authors would like to acknowledge networking support by the COST Action IPEMA CA 15215 'Innovative approaches in pork production with entire males'.