# **Special Issue**

# Pig Castration: Strategies, Animal Welfare and Pork Quality

# Message from the Guest Editors

In 2020, around 81 million piglets were surgically castrated in the EU, about 31.5% of all pigs slaughtered that year. This is usually done without anesthesia up to 7 days old, raising ethical concerns about pain and animal welfare. Several options have been studied, but three main alternatives are being considered: 1. Surgical castration with anesthesia, which reduces suffering but adds cost and complexity; 2. Raising non-castrated males, avoiding castration but requiring boar taint detection at slaughterhouses; 3. Immunocastration, a vaccine against boar taint, has concerns about effectiveness and consumer acceptance. The welfare of production animals is a strong concern for consumers and a major issue in pig industrial production systems. Further research is necessary to balance animal welfare and meat quality, avoiding compromises to animal welfare and the economic losses associated with meat that has undesirable organoleptic characteristics for consumers.

#### **Guest Editors**

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# Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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