

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.

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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Animals is an on-line open access journal that was first published in 2011. *Animals* adheres to rigorous peerreview and editorial processes and publishes only high quality manuscripts that address important issues in the many varied disciplines that involve animals, with a focus on animal science, animal welfare and animal ethics. *Animals* is covered in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) in Web of Science, with the latest Impact Factor: 2.7 (2024, ranks 15/86 (Q1) in 'Agriculture, Dairy & Animal Science'; 21/170 (Q1) in 'Veterinary Sciences'), 5-Year Impact Factor: 3.2.

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