

EFFECT OF IMMUNOCASTRATION ON PERFORMANCE AND FRESH HAM QUALITY OF HEAVY GILTS

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OBJECTIVES

To assess the effect of immunocastration (Improvac[®] Zoetis-Pfizer; GnRH analogue protein conjugate) on performance and fresh ham quality of heavy gilts.

INTRODUCTION

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.

METHODS

Design: A total of 110 crossbred gilts (Duroc x 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). **Diets:** Feeding program was common for all the gilts and offered *ad libitum*. **Measures and Procedure:** Gilts BW was measured at nine moments from 85 to 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[®] 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 24h post-mortem of hams were measured in all the carcasses.



Statistical Analysis: Data were analysed as a completely randomised design by GLM of SPSS, including treatment as main effect. Carcass weight was used as covariable.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that IM-GI grew faster and showed hams with higher subcutaneous fat content; therefore they could be preferred for dry-cured product industry.

RESULTS

