

The attitude of pig farmers from Vojvodina (Northern Serbia) regarding the alternative strategies for surgical castration of piglets

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Introduction

In order to prevent boar taint, unpleasant off-flavor induced by accumulation of androstenone and skatole in meat, male piglets are routinely surgically castrated without pain relief in most of the EU countries and Serbia, as well. This practice is unacceptable from the standpoint of animal welfare. Thus, main stakeholders of the pork chain in EU voluntarily decided to stop surgical castration of piglets and implement more human alternatives (Tuytens et al., 2012; Candek-Potokar et al. 2015). The objective of this study was to evaluate the Serbian farmers' attitude towards immunocastration (IC) and production of entire males (EM) as alternatives for surgical castration of male piglets without anesthesia (SC).

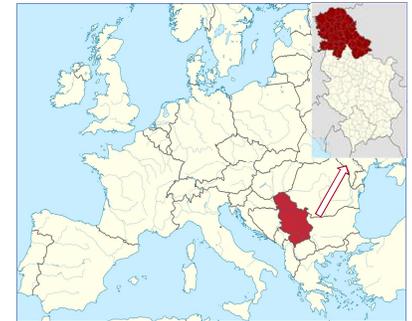


Fig. 1. Position of Vojvodina within Republic of Serbia.

Material and Methods

Survey was conducted among the group of 21 pig producer having in average 390 sows and 4400 fattening pigs per year. All the farms were located in Province of Vojvodina (Northern Serbia). The questionnaire created within EU PIGCAS project (Project No. 043969) was used with small modifications to investigate the opinion of farmers.



Results

About 80% of the farmers considered themselves to be uninformed or poorly informed about IC, while nearly 60% of them are well acquainted with the production of EM (data not shown). Producers' general preference was recorded as SC>IC>EM (Table 1).

Table 1 Farmers' ranking of alternative strategies regarding different aspects of pig production from most appropriate (1) to least appropriate (3) (n=12).

	General	Labour	Animal welfare	Effectiveness against boar taint	Performance	Profitability	Consumer acceptance
SC	1.33	2.17	2.83	1.17	2.17	1.50	1.42
IC	2.17	2.17	2.00	1.83	2.25	2.17	2.17
EM	2.50	1.67	1.17	3.00	1.58	2.33	2.42
χ^2	8.67	2.00	16.67	20.67	3.17	4.67	6.50
p	<0.05	0.37	<0.05	<0.00	0.21	0.10	<0.05

SC - surgical castration; IC - immunocastration; EM - production of entire males. Nonparametric Friedman ANOVA by Ranks test was used to compare differences in mean rankings within columns.

Conclusion

The farmers' attitude toward traditionally performed practice SC is very positive. Introduction of alternative strategies will be rather difficult without legal requirements and strong financial support.