



Slaughtering of non-castrated boars and application of boar taint detection methods in Belgium - 18241

Research questions:

How is boar taint currently detected in Belgian slaughterhouses?
What are the future perspectives of these slaughterhouses concerning the boar taint item?

Some background:

On the 1st of January 2018 there will be a European ban on surgical castration of male piglets. Consequently slaughterhouses may only slaughter immunocastrated piglets or intact boars. For the latter, adequate boar taint detection methods need to be present and applicable to the slaughterhouse routine. Belgian slaughterhouses mainly operate privately so different answers towards these questions may arise.

Materials and methods:

Selection of slaughterhouses was based on:

- The annual number of slaughtered pigs: at least 10 200. This criterion was fulfilled by 19 out of 38 pork slaughterhouses in Belgium
- The will to participate: 10 out of 19
- Fulfilled questionnaires: 8 out of 10

Questionnaire topics:

- Number of intact / immunocastrated boars slaughtered each week + reasons for this
- Presence of a boar taint detection system and its characteristics
- Requirements for a boar taint detection system if not present yet
- Destination of carcasses with boar taint

Results

- Intact or immunocastrated boars accepted in 6 slaughterhouses (180 to 3200 per week)
- Of all weekly slaughtered male pigs:
 - 3,3% were intact boars
 - 4,9% were immunocastrated boars
- Customers demand is the most important trigger in the decision making of the slaughterhouse
- The lack of a potential market blocks one slaughterhouse to slaughter any non-castrated male pig
- A boar taint detection system (sensory method) was currently only used in 2 slaughterhouses

There is a clear need for a boar taint detection system; some preferences are listed:

- scoring on a 2-point scale: presence or absence of boar taint
- located after veterinary inspection
- easy to adapt to changing boar taint parameters
- easy to clean and safe
- no interference with food safety
- full automatic
- acceptable for customers buying the intact boar meat
- results available immediately after analysis



Pictures adapted from boars2018.com



Conclusions

Slaughterhouses abilities to change over towards more weekly slaughtering of intact boars is mainly controlled by the consumers market. The absence of reliable boar taint detection systems at the slaughterhouse acts as a brake. Notwithstanding these limitations, Belgium has a unique position in Western-Europe as the only country marketing intact boars and immunocastrates.