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# Effect of vaccination against gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) in heavy male pigs for Italian typical dry-cured ham production



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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to evaluate immunocastration (vaccination against GnRH using Improvac® vaccine), as an alternative to surgical castration in heavy male pigs (average live weight  $165 \pm 10$  kg), used in the production of Italian typical dry-cured ham. A total of 60 Landrace  $\times$  Large White male pigs were assigned to three groups of 20 units, including one group of surgically castrated (SC), and two of immunocastrated pigs, with two (IC2) or three (IC3) vaccine treatments, respectively. The groups were compared for green ham traits, processing weight losses, chemo-physical, and sensory properties of dry-cured hams. While IC3 were not different ( $P > 0.05$ ) from SC group, IC2 hams were found to differ ( $P < 0.05$ ) both from SC and IC3 groups in ham traits, final weight losses, texture and sensory boar taint in finished hams. Therefore, vaccination with three doses could be taken into account to control boar taint in the manufacturing of typical Italian dry-cured ham.

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