How does the consumer consider the achievement of pork meat obtained by physically castration and Immunocastration processes?

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Consumer perceptions and attitudes to meat are influenced by several factors, including availability, eating enjoyment and the animal welfare. Immunocastration is a new technology for livestock and obtained pork meat without boar taint. This work aimed to evaluate the knowledge of the immunocastration by the Brazilian consumer through opinions, attitudes, consumption habits and acceptance. Boar taint compounds, androstenone (A) and skatole (SK) were evaluated (HPLC) on backfat obtained from immunocastrated (IC) animals (0.19µg/g A; 0.09µg/g SK), female (FM) (0.10µg/g A; 0.08µg/g SK), physically castrated (PC) male (0.11µg/g A; 0.08µg/g SK), entire male (EM) (1.30µg/g A; 1.42µg/g SK). A Focus Group (two sessions, filmed and transcribed; 21 consumers, responsible for purchase and/or preparation of pork meat) was carried out; PC and IC odor did not affect consumer perceptions and attitudes during preparation and tasting of grilled fillet pork (Longissimus dorsi), without information about castration process. After explanation of castration/immunocastration processes, almost all the consumers considered the possibility to avoid PC, in spite of the sensory benefits. The acceptance test (30 consumers without gender/age/social class restriction) evaluated aroma, flavour, tenderness, juiciness and global value: hedonic scale of nine points, and purchase attitude of pork meat: five-point scale) quantified the consumer acceptance, that scored all characteristics as “like” (PC and IC) and “like moderately” (FM). This Brazilian survey was in accordance with others (Europe-USA) and provides a better understanding of consumer attitudes and valuable information. Pork meat IC achieved good sensory acceptance and consumers reported the importance of published studies on food safety involving this technology, as they demonstrated favorable of its application on pork production system.