

SURGICAL CASTRATION OF PIGLETS AND ITS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A VETERINARIAN

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Castration of male piglets is a routine and one of the most common procedures performed on piglets in production farms. Therefore, it is constantly the subject of much attention, both in relation to animal welfare and to improving the work management of farm staff and veterinarians. The procedure itself may be carried out by a veterinarian, a veterinary technician, or a professionally qualified person. Up to their 7th day of age, according to the legislative standards applicable in the Czech Republic, this procedure can be performed without the use of any kind of anaesthesia or analgesia; however, as of 2018, we, along with other EU member states, have committed not to perform it without the use of anaesthesia. Conversely, some countries, especially in South America, use boar taint vaccination (the product available in the Czech Republic is called Improvac) as a possible alternative to the surgical castration of piglets. Nevertheless, this method is relatively expensive and time-consuming. Considerate methods of piglet castration using anaesthetics, analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs are supported by the Ministry of Agriculture in a special subsidy programme where breeders can receive a contribution of up to CZK 23 per piglet up to 7 days of age.

Key Words: Piglet; castration; anaesthesia