

# **Progress report on the European Declaration on alternatives to surgical castration of pigs**

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castration of pigs

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# Setting the stage

- Castration important animal welfare issue
- Pig castration is practiced to avoid
  - undesirable sexual or aggressive behaviour
  - development of boar taint
- Societal sense of urgency varies across countries
- Solving boar taint condition for market acceptance
- Lack of information across whole pork supply chain
- Benefits and risk uneven distributed across chain segments

# European Declaration

- Signed in 2010
- Signatories represent business, policy, science, society
- States that castration of pigs is an animal welfare concern.
- Two steps,
  - castration of pigs with prolonged analgesia and/or anesthesia (2012)
  - castration of pigs should be abandoned (2018)
- Expert Group established to ensure implementation

# Expert Group

## Members

COPA-COGECA, national and regional farmers associations, UECBV, CLITRAVI, ADT, FESASS, IFAH-Europe, QS, EFFAB, FVE, DAFC, UGPVB, Cooperl, ANPROGAPOR, Eurogroup for Animals, Eurocommerce, scientific experts, and policy officers

- Ensure implementation in transparent and efficient manner
- Provide focus on actions to be taken
- Exchange information on barriers involved and directions for solutions

# Progress report 2014-2017



- Preventive measures (feed and genetics) to reduce boar taint prevalence implemented
- Slaughter plants have developed effective methods for detection of boar taint
- Still large differences between countries in producing non-castrated male pigs
  - Tradition of producing entire males (United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain and Portugal)
  - Market organisations shifted to entire males in 2010-2015 (Netherlands and Belgium)
  - Gradual increase in number of entire male pigs in 2015-2017 (France and Germany)
- Large pork supply chains in eight major producing countries established directions for solutions for ending castration (some countries already a tradition of not castrating)
- In most other countries still no sense of urgency to ending castration

# Reflection

Even though goal of ending castration 2018 will not be reached, the declaration is an innovative and positive step facilitating communication between all stakeholders

- Roadmap prepared in 2015: necessary actions and steps to be taken clearly defined
- Progress reports published in 2014 and in 2018
- Dissemination research results contributing to decreasing number of castrated pigs

We are not ready yet, we need:

- Further knowledge on methods to detect boar taint
- List of traditional products requiring heavier pigs to be covered by a derogation
- To look at distribution of costs and benefits along the value chain

# Concluding comments

Expert Group established strong and broad network bringing stakeholders to work together

- Different areas: Business, science, society, policy
- Diverging interests, but trying to find compromises acceptable to all

Declaration and establishment Expert Group good initiative

- Stimulating new way of trying to work together in several ways
- We recognize that it goes not as fast and as far as we want
- We simply don't have enough human and financial resources to go faster
- We also need to get the market and retailers ready

Harmonisation project important to describe and disseminate best practices

But we need more support for our work to help us to get to the next level



# Thank you for your attention!

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