

# Consumer attitude and acceptance of boar taint

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## Abstract

From societal viewpoint, castration of pig meat is no longer acceptable in some countries in the EU. The goal of the ALCASDE project was to gain insight into (1) consumer attitude towards castration (2) consumer acceptance of meat with boar taint and (3) the potential impact of this acceptance on the behavioural intentions of pork.

The test was done in 6 countries: the Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain. In each country a representative sample of regular pork respondents was selected (n=130). Regular boar meat was used and qualified for the test as meat with boar taint if in melted fat: Androstenone > 1 µg/g, Skatole > 0.2 µg/g or Androstenone > 0.5 µg/g and skatole > 0.15 µg/g. Boar meat was qualified as meat without boar taint if in melted fat: Androstenone < 0.5 µg/g and skatole < 0.15 µg/g. Fat of all boars used was tested chemically before. For each country at least 20 boars in each group are used. Per boar the pork loin is used for the test.

Using a pre- and post-sensory questionnaire, the intrinsic quality cues of the meat (colour, odour, freshness and shelf life) were found to be the most important aspects for purchasing fresh pork meat while the hedonic or the extrinsic quality factors (brand, origin, package type and the type of the production) were not important. Respondents consider themselves not very well informed on pig welfare. Within welfare, castration is less important than most other factors as housing and feed.

An individually sensory test revealed that only in France, Italy and the Netherlands significant differences were found between the consumer perception of tainted boar pork loin and gilt pork loin. This result can be explained by relatively low androstenone and skatole levels in the regular meat used in Spain and United Kingdom.

To gain insights in odour perception during preparation, respondents were invited in the kitchen during preparation of boar meat. Afterwards they filled in a questionnaire on their behavioural intention. Despite perceived abnormal odour, still a large group of the respondents in Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, would serve the meat to family members. 50% of the respondents that smell an abnormal taste indicate to stop buying pork for a while. Around one third to three quarters of the respondents would not visit the store again, that sold this meat.