

IMMUNO-CASTRATION OF PIGS

Surgical castration of livestock has inherent risks, no matter what precautions are taken. Therefore alternative methods that impose less risk may benefit the welfare of livestock. In pigs a system has been developed that renders males sterile by injection, which is less risky for pigs but carries risks for humans doing the injections.

A protein compound that uses the pig's immune system to provide the same effect as surgical castration is available for male pigs. By eliminating the need for surgical castration, the animal grows with all the inherent advantages of intact males. The vaccine is administered as a single dose at no earlier than nine weeks of age, followed by a second dose at least four weeks after the first dose. Pigs should be sent for slaughter no earlier than four weeks after the second dose of the vaccine. Special care should be taken to avoid accidental self injection during administration. Accidental self injection could negatively affect reproduction physiology of both men and women. Therefore extreme caution should be exercised when administering the product.