

## **Initiative to establish a food chain partnership on pig castration**

The practice of castration of piglets has been for a long time in the EU an issue for scientific, technical and ethical debate. Pig castration is an important animal welfare concern and it is a complex subject with different alternatives. There is no clear immediate and unique solution applicable to all Europe, but it is likely that the promotion of partnership through the different actors in the food chain would help to advance towards more welfare friendly practices. This has already been achieved in several Member States.

During the workshop on pig castration organised by DG SANCO in Brussels on 2 June 2010, it was agreed by the participants present to put together resources to develop a partnership between all relevant actors in the pig meat chain to promote alternatives to the castration of piglets without anaesthetics at EU level. The workshop highlighted that the issue of castration of pigs has affected the EU pig meat market and there is common agreement that a European approach could help to determine smart solutions. The majority of the participants to the workshop concluded that there is no need to propose further legislation in the EU to ban the practice.

DG SANCO has been invited to coordinate in the next months the elaboration of an EU work plan with representatives from pig producers, pig meat industry, retailers, animal welfare organisations, consumers, scientists and policy makers to assist in planning the next step towards a European partnership on pig castration. Therefore we have invited a pilot group to prepare a partnership declaration and to develop a set of future actions in order to be agreed and undersigned by the different stakeholders by the end of 2010.

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