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IMPACT OF OESTRUS SUPPRESSION IN CARCASS QUALITY OF GILTS INTENDED FOR TERUEL DRY-CURED HAM PRODUCTION

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Introduction

Increasing fatness and avoiding puberty are desirable in gilts intended for Teruel dry-cured ham. This study was conducted to assess the impact of VacsincelR (Zoetis), vaccine indicated for temporary oestrus suppression, on gilt genital organs and carcass fat, relative to time of second dose before slaughter.

Material & Methods

A total of 48 Duroc x (Landrace x Large White) gilts (average 26.5 kg body weight-BW) were enrolled and randomly allocated to 4 treatment groups (n=12) according to time of second dose administration: intact females (controls) or vaccinated with 60, 75 or 90 kg BW. The first dose had been previously administered to the three vaccinated groups when gilts had approximately 30 kg BW, and all study animals were slaughtered with approximately 125 kg BW (study conducted from February to June). Weight and size of each part of the genital tract, number and size (<2, 2-4 or 4-6 mm) of the ovarian follicles and backfat depth (measured at *gluteus medius* muscle level) were evaluated. Data were analysed using the GLM procedure of SAS.

Results

Genital organs were more developed in intact than in vaccinated females; longer uterine horns (p<0.001) and heavier ovaries, uterine horns, uterus, cervix, vaginal neck and vagina (p<0.05). Intact and females revaccinated with 90 kg had more ovarian follicles than gilts revaccinated younger (p<0.05). More medium and big follicles were found in intact than in vaccinated gilts (p<0.05), and only small ones were detected in revaccinated with 75 kg. Carcass fat thickness

trended to increase in vaccinated gilts, and also with the advance of second dose (p=0.06).

Discussion & Conclusion

VacsincelR prevented the puberty resulting in increased carcass fatness. The administration of second dose around 75 kg BW (8 weeks before slaughter) provided optimal results for high quality dry-cured hams.