

Could genetic modification save male pigs from castration?

Each year, about 100 million little piggies go to market in the U.S. Half of those oinkers, unsurprisingly, are boars, male pigs with the potential to grow a pair by the time they reach sexual maturity. Those testicles can be massive, and depending on who you talk to, massively problematic for consumers.

Uncastrated male pigs can develop meat that releases an offensive odor when cooked, commonly known as “boar taint.” Many relate the smell to human urine. Dr. John J. McGlone, an animal scientist at Texas Tech University, [describes the smell](#) as akin to “gym socks or bad human body odor.”

Since few enjoy cooking in kitchens that smell like a middle school boy’s bathroom, meat producers across the world go to great lengths to prevent boar taint. In the U.S., that means castrating almost every boar at just a few weeks old.

In the U.S., scientists have raised the specter of another option: genetic modification.

An [unfunded cooperative agreement](#) between the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and an unnamed corporate partner offers the boar taint problem as a sample project for exploring possibilities of manipulating livestock embryos. Unlike other GMO products, the scientist believe they can create a taint-free boar through a process that edits a pig’s genome rather than introducing any DNA foreign to the species.

Read full, original article: [Is the GMO Debate Aimed at Pig Testicles?](#)