THE RIBATEJANO PIG – REBIRTH OF A LOCAL PIG POPULATION? FIRST RESULTS ON GROWTH, CARCASS AND MEAT PARAMETERS

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Abstract: A former cross between Alentejano (AL) and Bísaro (BI) breeds, called Ribatejano pig (RI), was quite spread in Ribatejo region until half of the last century and was raised in both borders of Tagus River. Besides the renewed interest of this cross nowadays, no performance data is available regarding the RI (ALxBI and BIxAL) animals or their products, which were studied in the frame of project TREASURE*. In order to assess the productive performance of the RI pig, castrated AL, BI, ALxBI and BIxAL pigs (10 from each genotype) raised in traditional free-range system and fed commercial diets *ad libitum*, were slaughtered at ~65kg LW. Preliminary data show that BI, ALxBI and BIxAL attained the slaughter weight faster ($P<0.001$) than AL. Overall, carcass length ($P<0.001$), carcass dressing ($P=0.06$), and lean cuts weight ($P<0.01$) were higher in BI than AL pigs, with ALxBI and BIxAL pigs presenting intermediate values. Conversely, fat cuts weight, ZP fat depth ($P<0.01$) and average backfat thickness ($P<0.001$) were higher in AL than in BI, and ALxBI and BIxAL pigs. *Longissimus lumborum* drip loss was higher in BI, as well as lightness and hue angle ($P<0.001$). Curiously, redness, yellowness, chroma and saturation values from ALxBI and BIxAL pigs were higher ($P<0.001$) than those of pure genotypes. Besides that, preliminary data indicate that at 65kg LW, RI crossed pigs presented intermediate characteristics between the fatter (AL) and the leaner (BI) genotypes. This cross could therefore be an alternative to the use of other breeds on commercial crosses, helping to increase the revenue of autochtonous pig producers, and also maintain or increase the pure breed populations, contributing to animal biodiversity.

Keywords: Ribatejano Pig, Productive Performance, Carcass parameters.

* This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 634476 (Project acronym: TREASURE). The content of this paper reflects only the author's view and the European Union Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

PO - 1436