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Does the castration method affect the sexual and aggressive behavior of confined young steers?

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The castration in the beef cattle is a technical used as a management strategy, beyond the expected benefits in the carcass of the animals, it is also expected a temperament improvement making the animals more docile and with less adverse behaviors. The objective was evaluate if the aggressive and sexual behavior of confined cattle is affected by the castration method and the non-castration. Taurine young bulls were reared in feedlot from weaning (± 7 months) to slaughter (± 15 months) divided into three experimental lots: surgically castrated (SC) with nine animals, immunocastrated (IC) and non-castrated (NC) animals, both with 10 animals. It was realized counts of behavioral events with nine repetitions of three hours for each group at 11 months of age and ± 370 kg, total evaluation period of 27 hours. The events analyzed were: sexual behavior (act of sexual mount), head-head (interaction that the author push the receiver, head with head, and results in the change position of one of the animals), head-body (interaction that the author push with a head some part of the recipient's body, resulting in change of receiver position), and simple recoil with approximation (interaction without physical contact of the author, with the result of change position of the receiver in the pen). The data collected were submitted to analysis of variance with a completely randomized design and the means compared by Tukey test with 5% significance. Statistical difference was observed for sexual behavior (P = 0,04). Surgically castrated animals showed lower frequency of this behavior (1,55a) in comparison to the non-castrated (18,66b), the lot immunocastrated had similar behavior to others two groups (6,11ab). About the event head-head, we also observed a relevant difference (P = 0,03), the groups were similar to the sexual behavior event, lot SC (2,00a), IC (3,44ab), NC (7,44b). The behaviors head-body (P = 0,301) and simple recoil with approximation (P = 0,059) not differ statistically. The castration realized in the traditional surgical method decrease sexual and aggressive behavior. The immunocastration was not completely efficient to reduce adverse behavior of young bulls reared in feedlot.

Keywords: beef cattle, buller steer syndrome, immunocastration

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