BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF MEAT OF WILD BOARS SHOT DOWN IN PIEDMONT AND LIGURIA, ITALY

Decastelli L. * , Giaccone V. ** , Mignone W. * 
* Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale del Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d’Aosta, Sez. Cuneo, via Pertini 12, Cuneo, Italy.  
** Facoltà di Agraria, Università del Molise, via Tiberio 21/A - 86100 Campobasso, Italy.

Abstract: Muscle samples from 71 wild boars shot down were taken within 24 h post mortem for bacteriological determination. Total viable bacteria, Enterobacteriaceae, Enterococci, Staphylococci, Clostridia, Campylobacter and Salmonella were enumerated. In inner parts of meat the total bacterial count was slightly lower than that of surface samples, varying from $10^3$ to $10^6$ cfu/g.  
However, remarkable amounts of Enterobacteriaceae, Enterococci and coagulase-positive Staphylococci were found both on the surface and in inner parts of a large part of the meat samples.  
No Campylobacter was detected in any case, whereas strains of Salmonella were found on the surface and in inner parts of 3 samples.  
An improvement of sanitary inspection of such game wild boars intended to private consumption should be useful.  
Bleeding of animals as soon as possible after death can be effective means to avoid the presence of infection or toxification microorganisms in game meat.

Keywords: Wild boar, Sus scrofa, Suidae, Hunting, Microbiological analyses.

1. Introduction
It was calculated that in 1988 lived in Italy nearly 1.5 million wild boars and this number has increased in the following years. Therefore, for some years now, hunting boars has increased the numbers of animals shot down too. Once killed, in general the animals are bled, eviscerated and skinned in precarious hygienic conditions.

Their meat is used to prepare both fresh or cured meat products with possible health risks for consumers. Since wild boars have been examined by many Authors as reservoir of pathogenic bacteria in offals (Kniewallner, 1969; Bromel & Zettl, 1973; De Boer et al., 1983; Chiesa et al., 1987) and meat (Mignone et al., 1990), we performed microbiological analyses with the aim to control the microbiological quality of this kind of meat from boars shot down in Piedmont and Liguria.

2. Material and methods
Continuing a previous research (Mignone et al., 1990) we examined 71 samples of Wild boars muscles taken from the neck, determining their microflora on the surface and on the deep. Two different groups were considered: Group A: 41 samples from boars shot down and immediately bled, skinned and eviscerated in the open air; Group B: 30 muscle samples of animals shot down and bled outdoors, but skinned and eviscerated in a closed room with a good hygienic care. Microbiological analyses included the determination of Total viable count, Enterobacteria, Enterococci, enteropathogenic Staphylococci, sulphite-reducing Clostridia, Campylobacter spp. and Salmonella spp.

3. Results and discussion
The results obtained were summarized in Figures 1 and 2. No Campylobacter was detected in any case, whereas 3 strains of Salmonella were found on the surface and in the deep tissue of 3 different samples. That leads us to conclude that the bacteria diffused into the blood stream during the agony of the animals. High amounts of coliforms were found on the surface of the muscles examined as well as in their inner parts. In about one third of the samples examined in the deep (71% of the group A and 83% of the group B) charges of coagulase-positive Staphylococci ranging between $10^3$ and $10^6$ cfu/g were detected.  
It can be concluded that the environmental conditions in which the animals are eviscerated and skinned are not so important to affect unfavourably the wholesomeness of meat. On the contrary it is important that the animals are bled as soon as possible and then skinned and eviscerated at the latest within 6 hours after the death. It would be desiderable that this kind of meat might be regularly inspected by a special veterinary service like that is pre-

REFERENCES