

Sows ears and silk purses: Packing more flavor into modern pork

December 2 2010

Perhaps you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but scientists are reporting progress in pulling off the same trick with the notoriously bland flavor of pork. They are reporting new insights into the biochemical differences in the meat of an Italian swine renowned for its good flavor since the ancient Roman Empire and the modern "Large White" or Yorkshire hog, whose roots date back barely 125 years. Their study appears in *ACS' Journal of Proteome Research*.

Lello Zolla and colleagues note that modern lean pork's reputation as bland and tasteless — "the other white meat" — has fostered new interest in heritage breeds. Among them are the Casertana, which produces more fat but has been heralded for its good flavor for thousands of years. One of the ultimate goals of that research is production of lean but more flavorful [pork](#).

In the new study, the scientists focused on the mechanism that converts genetic information in DNA into proteins and the actual proteins present in the longissimus lumborum muscle of Casertana and Large White pigs. That muscle appears in the supermarket as pork chops, pork tenderloin, and pork ribs. They identified biochemical mechanisms involved in the Large White's ability to produce more meat than fat, and the corresponding mechanisms that enable the Casertana to produce more fat.

The findings are a step toward developing new pig breeds with a more desirable combination of both leanness and flavor not seen in current

pork products, the study suggests.

More information: "A proteomics and transcriptomics investigation on longissimus muscles in Large White and Casertana pig breeds", *Journal of Proteome Research*.

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Sows ears and silk purses: Packing more flavor into modern pork (2010, December 2) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-12-ears-silk-purses-flavor-modern.html>

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