Advantages and Disadvantages of Bovine Castration

Castration of bull calves has significant advantages.

* Steers are much easier and safer to handle than entire bulls.
* There is no risk of unwanted sexual activity and accidental matings.
* Carcass quality may also be improved by castration. Bulls seem to be more prone to stress than steers, leading to an increased risk of dark-cutting - meat that does not brighten when it is cut and exposed to air. As consumers prefer to buy beef that is bright pinkish in colour, the presence of dark-coloured meat reduces carcass value. Other differences between meat from bulls and steers, such as texture and fat distribution, can also increase the value of a steer carcass compared to that from a bull.

There are some disadvantages to castration.

* Depending on the system used, bulls tend to have faster growth and a leaner carcass and have a higher food conversion efficiency.
* All castration methods have risks attached to them, such as infection or haemorrhage; not castrating avoids these risks.