

~Dairy Details~

Produced by Northern Valley Dairy Production Medicine Center

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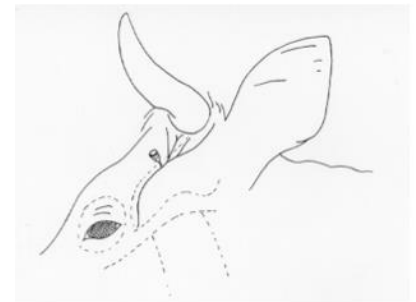
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Dirty Jobs: Dehorning- Part 3 Decreasing Dehorning Headaches

All dehorning methods have some level of pain for the animal, obviously with some methods being more painful than others. In today's world, pain control isn't optional when performing these procedures. The new FARM 3.0 Program that was launched this year has made it a requirement, meaning it should be done on every dairy farm. Five easy methods for pain control are discussed here:

1. **Polled Genetics:** Animals that have the polled gene do not grow horns. Not having to worry about dehorning cattle in the first place is a very easy way to avoid the pain that comes with dehorning. The beef industry is way ahead of the dairy industry, as far as utilizing the polled genetic trait. However, stud companies are making an effort to come out with higher quality polled bulls for dairy producers more recently. They are seeing the value of this gene and we should be seeing more polled dairy genetics available as time goes on.
2. **Dehorn at young age:** The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends dehorning at the earliest age possible. In calves less than two months of age, horn buds are free-floating. Eventually, the buds attach to the skull. The horns then acquire blood supply. Dehorning later in life after these things happen is more invasive, causes blood loss, exposes the sinus cavity and increases the risk of infection and prolonged wound healing. Dehorning younger animals is also easier on the humans performing the task since they are smaller and easier to handle.
3. **Lidocaine Corneal Nerve Block:** The corneal nerve runs from behind the eye to the base of the horn. By blocking this nerve with lidocaine, one can block sensation to the horn bud. This will limit the amount of pain that is felt during dehorning procedures. This is a relatively inexpensive product to use at only \$0.06 per cc (depending on the size of animals usually 1-10 cc's may be used). The picture to the left shows where a corneal nerve block is placed. This is a very simple skill to learn. Contact any of our veterinarians if you'd like to be trained in this technique.



4. **Meloxicam:** In addition to a local anesthetic, longer term pain relief should be provided. Meloxicam is an oral medication that can be used for pain control. Its effects last 48 hours in pre-ruminating calves and 24 animals in older cattle. Meloxicam costs around \$0.40 per 100 pounds.
5. **"Food Coma Remedy":** Dehorning during or after feeding colostrum or milk seems to reduce the stress of dehorning. As I'm sure you've observed, calves often like to go lay down after eating a big meal and sometimes even seem to be in a "food coma" similar to us humans after Thanksgiving Dinner.

New Smaller Tubes Available for Perfect Udder Bags

Do you ever have a small, pre-mature calf that is very hard to tube colostrum because the tube is too big? Try the new smaller tubes that recently became available for Perfect Udder bags! Contact your dealer for more information.



Dr. Thompson Licensed to Practice in Wisconsin

Dr. Thompson recently passed her exam allowing her to obtain a license to practice veterinary medicine in Wisconsin. Contact our office if you have any cattle veterinary needs across the border that we can help you with!

