
DAIRY NEWSLETTER



Kirkton Veterinary Clinic Dairy Producer Meeting

Calf Care for Health and Productivity
Mastitis Management for Dry and Fresh Cows



**Tuesday March 21st, 2017
10am - 3pm**

**Downie Optimist Community Centre
3185 Road 122 St.Pauls**

Lunch and refreshments provided

**Please RSVP to the Kirkton Veterinary Clinic
by March 10th
519-229-8911 - 1-888-443-4184**



ProAction Training Sessions

More ProAction training sessions have been planned for:

- Friday March 17th – 9:30am-12:30 ---**
- Friday March 31st – 12:30pm -3:30 ---**

Both sessions will be held at the St.Marys Veterinary Clinic. Refreshments will be provided. Please continue to park in the vacant parking lot adjacent to the clinic. If you would like to attend one of these sessions, please RSVP to the Kirkton Veterinary Clinic 519-229-8911 or 1-888-443-4184. Spaces are limited.

Like always, if we can be of further assistance as you start or continue to implement all of the requirements for ProAction Animal Care and Traceability, don't hesitate to contact us.



March 2017

Standard Operating Procedures for Calf Dehorning

Pro Action Animal Care module require all farms to have a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure for several animal health practices, including castrating, removal of extra teats, branding, and the most routine of all, dehorning. All of these procedures, if necessary to be performed, are very painful and can lead to set backs in growth, health and animal welfare. Thankfully there are simple, cost effective solutions available to alleviate pain and discomfort and if you are not currently employing these strategies on farm, now is a great time to start.

With respect to calf dehorning, ProAction and the Dairy Code of Practice requires producers to restrain the animal properly and administer pain control prior to performing the dehorning. Pain control can be the use of a local anaesthetic (Lidocaine) AND / OR an analgesic (NSAID such as Metacam, oral meloxicam, Banamine, Fluxinix or Anafen). Though the use of an NSAID product alone is considered acceptable under the code of practice, ***we highly recommend all calves receive both a Lidocaine nerve block and an NSAID to properly control pain and inflammation during and following the dehorning procedure.***

A properly administered corneal nerve block with 5-10mL Lidocaine per side will effectively eliminate pain and discomfort for approximately 2 hours after administration. The product begins to take effect immediately, but it is best if you wait a minimum of 5 minutes prior to starting the dehorning. If this is the only form of pain control used, studies have shown that the behavioural and physiological indicators of pain return once the product wears off. When an NSAID is administered at the same time as the Lidocaine nerve block, this protracted effect is virtually eliminated and the calves have fewer negative set backs following the procedure. ***It is our opinion that the use of an NSAID alone does not provide sufficient pain control to properly manage the calf's welfare at the time of the initial painful incident that is the burning of the horn bud.*** For best results, we recommend performing the corneal block on an entire group of calves first, and then dehorning the group so the freezing has time to take effect. If your set up requires calves to come through a chute one at a time and there are no other alternatives for restraining calves, there will still be positive effects seen when the Lidocaine block is administered and dehorning occurs immediately afterwards. Simply administer to side 1 then side 2, followed by dehorning side 1 then side 2. The calf may not be fully blocked, but there will be partial numbness of the area, leading to less overall pain.

If you use a caustic paste to dehorn calves, recognize that this method is not without significant long term pain, as the tissue damage occurs slower over a longer period of time, as compared to using a burner. Therefore we recommend that these calves also receive adequate pain control at the time of caustic paste application.

There are many excellent resources available to train producers on proper techniques for the safe and pain-free dehorning of calves. All individuals who are performing dehorning on your farm must be properly trained and competent to perform the task. Take time to review to webinar found at this website to ensure your protocols are correct: bit.ly/disbudding Alternately, we are always available and happy to train or retrain you on the technique or help you create solutions to better implement a pain control protocol for calf dehorning on your farm. A properly blocked calf at the time of dehorning, not only improves the calf's welfare, but it also makes your job as the animal handler easier and the process may be quicker.

We also recommend that calves are dehorned as early as possible. The earlier a calf is dehorned/disbudded, the tool used is less invasive and creates a smaller wound. There is direct evidence that proves less invasive methods of dehorning are less painful to the calf. There is no specific age that has been shown to be better for the calf, but a calf less than 3-4 weeks of age is an ideal candidate to use a small diameter tip butane or electric dehorner. Once again, the earlier the procedure is done, there will be fewer negative set backs because of the procedure. Therefore, we recommend as early as possible and a minimum of 2 weeks prior to weaning or group changes.

The use of a sedative in conjunction with the procedure is a personal choice for producers and we are happy to supply your farm with a mixture of Lidocaine and Xylazine (KVC Dehorning Solution) if you feel this is the best option for you. Speak with your herd health veterinarian for more information.
