

HORN DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1: during the first weeks following birth, the horn bud is floating in the skin.

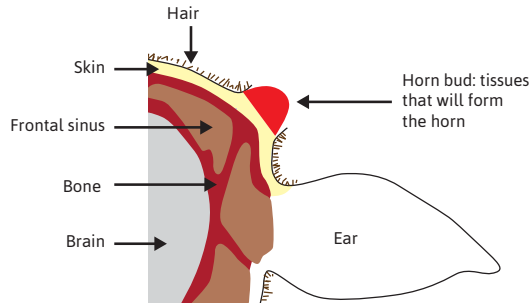
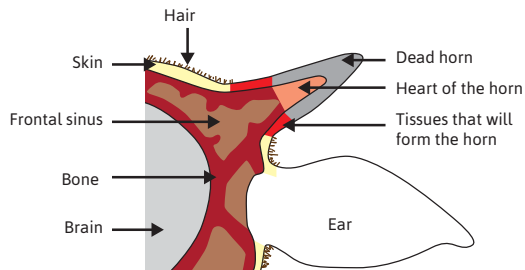


Figure 2: after 3 months of age, the developing horn is communicating with the frontal sinus.



Code of Practice Requirements

- Dehorning must be performed only by competent personnel using proper, well-maintained tools and accepted techniques.
- Seek guidance from your veterinarian on the availability and relevance of pain control for disbudding or dehorning beef cattle.

Suggestion

Obtain advice from your veterinarian on the use of pain killers or local anesthesia, particularly if disbudding is performed after the first month.

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Dehorning (disbudding)

Use of proper methods at the right time by competent staff and with proper equipment



555, Roland-Therrien Blvd., suite 305
Longueuil (Quebec) J4H 4G2
Phone: 450 679-0530
Fax: 450 442-9348
pbq@upa.qc.ca • bovin.qc.ca

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With the objective of promoting animal welfare The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle contains requirements and recommended practices that apply to dehorning. This commonly performed procedure is likely to cause pain and stress to cattle.

RECOMMENDED METHOD

Thermal disbudding

Equipment

Rhinehart X30 Dehorner, Portasol, Steribud, Horn Stop, Buddex, HORN-UP S (some are electric and others work with propane gas)


Method

Restrain the calf's head firmly.

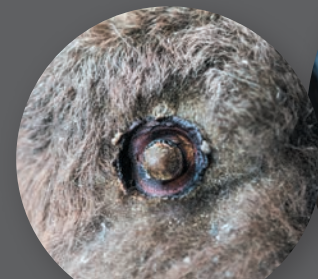
When disbudding young calves, clipping the hair around the bud will help to locate the bud and will prevent fouling of the iron.

Apply the iron only after it has reached its maximum temperature and do a quarter turn rotation both ways to obtain a uniform cauterization ring. The duration of application varies with the equipment and the calf's age, and should be between 10 and 20 seconds.

Verify proper cauterization



Continuous white cauterization ring obtained by a gas or electric dehorner on a very young calf.



Continuous copper ring obtained by the traditional electric dehorner.



OTHER METHODS

Chemical disbudding

Product

Caustic paste

Method

Apply on the horn bud only when the calf is very young, maximum 15 days old.

There are risks of improper disbudding and infection when performed during the summer. At any time, it is difficult to ensure that the full amount of paste will remain in place long enough to obtain the appropriated result.

Surgical disbudding

Equipment

Tube dehorner, scalpel

Method

Remove the horn bud along with the immediately surrounding skin at the base of the horn bud.

Should be performed before the attachment of the horn bud to the bone, ideally before 2 months of age.



ALTERNATIVE METHOD

Dehorning after 3 months of age

The Feeder Calf Specialized Auctions Circuit will return to the farm any animals that show signs of infection following dehorning. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to wait at least 30 days after dehorning to sell dehorned feeder calves older than three months of age.

Code of Practice Requirements

Use pain control, in consultation with your veterinarian, to mitigate pain associated with dehorning calves after horn bud attachment (calves 3 months of age or older).

All dehorning methods after bud attachment cause significant pain and stress, risk of infection (sinusitis) and hemorrhage as well as a prolonged loss of productivity.

When calves are dehorned after the age of 3 months, staff must be properly trained to use the right technique with the right equipment. Pain control is mandatory. In the absence of proper staff training, a veterinarian should be consulted to perform the procedure.

Reference

National Farm Animal Care Council. *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle*. 2013. www.nfacc.ca

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