

Dehorning in cattle

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Horns of animals serve as weapons of defense against predators. Basically horns are hardened corneal projections of several types and there is a need to remove these projections to gain benefits for animal as well as for farmer. Process of removal of such projections is called dehorning which can be either physical or chemical. In this review we can discuss about dehorning; its methods advantage and disadvantages.

Why there is a need of dehorning?

There are various reasons for dehorning. It reduces the chances of injury to other animals along with handler. Dehorned animal covered less space as compared to horned animals. During auction dehorned animals sell at good price as compared to horned animals.. Dehorned animals are easy to handle and become docile.

age of Dehorning

Dehorning is done at early stage of life of calves because it is easier for the operator to perform dehorning and less stressful as compared to adult one. Normally the ideal time for dehorning is 2 to 6 week of age. according to Canadian Veterinary Medical association (CVMA) dehorning can be performed at 1 week of age of calf.

Timing of Operations

Best time for dehorning is winter as well as spring season. In case of summer and autumn season there are more chances of infection that's why in these seasons dehorning is avoid to perform. In every dairy farm, the timing of the dehorning will depend on an effective management system. Dehorning at early age should go hand in hand with many management plans.

Points of concern during and after dehorning.

1. animals showed pain and discomfort in all types of dehorning method.
2. Young calves recover faster and have fewer problems than adults one.
3. Local anesthesia before dehorning eliminates severe pain within short duration after 4.
4. Local anesthesia, along with analgesic can be serves as good pain relief.
5. Without uses of anesthesia, Dehorning is impersonal and wrong.

6. The use of painkillers is extra expense for manufacturers. Pain relief can be reduced by the availability of medicines for farmers to use.
7. The use of polled bulls is a more environmentally friendly method of dehorning. Canadian cattle producers increase their use of polled bulls.

Methods of Dehorning

1. Chemical Dehorning

Chemicals like sodium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide are properly applied to the horn bud of calves it will retard raising of horn. The horn secreting cells are destroyed by these chemicals. Chemical are readily available in market in the form paste and sticks. Operator protect from these chemical by wearing gloves, to avoid the chemical placed near to the calves eyes or nose. When the rainy season, chemical dehorning will not use.

Techniques

Injected local anesthesia, analgesia along with sedatives. Examine horn buds (about five percent) by pressing the hair back. Placed a thin layer chemical on horn buds with the use of wooden applicator / stick. Re-place the hair on top of the attachment & horn bud - that is, close the horned bud. Moreover, packaging may instruct operators to reduce hair loss at horn buds, experienced operators have shown that hair is best, as hair retains its natural value, alter the chances of irritation in cow's breasts and sides & low irritation of face of calf skin. Protect calf and cow from accidental burns. One way is to put a tape measure on each horn buds. Duct tape usually falls in a few days. For milk calves, store in individual pens. In some countries, the procedure is only allowed for calves less than eight days of age.

advantages and Disadvantages

- It is done at early age under less pressure than other methods
- Without blood
- For use in any period
- Pain without anesthesia
- avoid eye contact; the operator must wear gloves
- When it is rainy weather, then don't used
- it is not allowed in few countries
- Horns or scurs follow the wrong procedure
- requires pain management

Hot Iron Dehorning

Hot iron dehorner are available in types that are heated by a furnace or fireplace, 12-volt battery, 120-volt electric, electric packs. The head of the metal is an empty circle and penetrates over the horn buds.

Proper use of hot metal will eliminate horn secreting cells. This method works best for calves' age up to 12 weeks of age. There are different size dehorner metals. The optimum size is when the burner makes a complete ring around the base of the horn. For electrical equipment, use a short extension cord as the voltage drops through the long cable, reducing the amount of heat generated by the dehorner.

Techniques

Injected local anaesthesia with analgesia. Preheat dehorning iron to a red color. Both electric and electric appliances work best when they are "red" hot. Operators or workers wear gloves to protect own hands. Hold the calf's ear off the away so that it does not burn. Placed the tip of the dehorner rods on the horn bud and apply a little pressure. When burning hair begins to smoke, slowly circulate the scent of the iron rod by twisting your wrist. Continue to use heat for 10-15 seconds. Do not leave the dehorner in place for too long, especially for calves. Dehorning is complete when there is a copper ring all around the base of the horn. The horn bud will shrink in about 4 to 6 weeks.

Benefits and Limitations:

Without blood

- It can be used at any time of the year
- Young calves up to 12 weeks old
- Dishonesty when done wrong, leads to scurs (small horn growth)
- Requires expertise - pain management and techniques

Dehorning Spoon or Tube

Dehorning spoons or tubes provide a quick and efficient technique for removing horn buds in calves less than eight weeks of age. With this method, a sharpened metal tube cuts through and removes the horn-producing skin at the base of the horn bud. Use the proper size tube to remove the horn plus about 1/8 inch of skin around the entire horn bud. Dehorning spoons or tubes provides a quick and effective procedure to remove horn bud from calves less than eight weeks old.

In this way, a sharpened steel tube cuts and removes the horn-producing skin at the base of the horn. Use a suitable size tube to remove the horn and 1/8 inch of skin around the entire horn bud.

Techniques

administer local anaesthesia with analgesia. Select the correct size tube (4 sizes available) to fit over the horn buds, and cover about 1/8 inch of skin around the base of the horn. Place the cutting edge straight down on the horn. Press the tube; press and twist the tube until the skin is cut. Cut under the horn bud and remove it, using movement. apply antiseptic to the wound. Other bleeding may occur. Clean and disinfect the cutting edge of the tube between calves.

advantage & disadvantages

- Not without blood
- Useful for young calves
- More prone to infection due to open wounds
- avoid use during flies
- Dishonesty when done wrong, leads to scurs
- requires expertise - pain control, techniques, bleeding control

aftercare

Dehorning and disbudding are surgical procedures. Calves need post-surgery care and

attention.

- Carefully monitor bleeding for 30-60 minutes after soaking.
- If bleeding is occurs, go to cauterize the blood vessel with the help of iron rod to stop bleeding.
- Wounds heal without treatment.
- Proper dressing and fly repellent are done at site of wound.
- 10 to 14 days after the dehorning, see any abnormality and given treatment if necessary.
- Get veterinarians opinion for calves that show severe pain or infection.

Désinfección of Equipment

Diseases can spread from animal to animal into blood-borne pathogens contaminate the dehorning equipment. Enzootic bovine leucosis and wart virus are two examples. It is important to eliminate virus from the tube type dehorner after every use.

Techniques

Rinse the blood with chilled water after every calf has its horns removed. apply the disinfectant after the calf has been dehorned. Change antiseptic lotion regularly to preserve its strength. Prepare an antiseptic lotion by adding four ounces of creosol to one liter of water. all equipment which is used kept in store room after proper cleaning and disinfection. The heat from the electric horns kills the germs effectively in each calf. Occasionally hot iron dehorner need to be cleaned with a wire saw.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the dehorning is an important managemental tools in dairy farm. The main aim of dehorning is prevent the injury to other animals as well as handler and also required less space as compared horn animals. Dehorning will be done at early age of animals. Dehorning is done with suitable method which is creating less painful and discomfort to animals.

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