Disbudding training checklist

The list below serves as a checklist for a veterinarian in devising their own procedure for training non-veterinary staff to disbudd calves.

It is intended that the list below gives individual veterinarians and practices flexibility to structure training for individual preferences and situations whilst ensuring that appropriate standards are met.

A training procedure that covers each of the following headings should be comprehensive enough to ensure the procedure is correctly performed.

Alternatively a complete training guide example is provided for NZVA members on the NZVA website at https://www.nzva.org.nz/policydehorning.

Overview of procedure

• Familiarity with relevant statutes:
  • Animal Welfare Act 1999
  • Painful Husbandry Procedures – Animal Welfare Code of Welfare 2005
  • Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018
  • Agricultural and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997
  • Animal Products Act 1999
• Training (theoretical and practical) to ensure procedure is undertaken in such a way as to protect the welfare of the calves, and maintain personal safety:
  • Health and safety issues pertaining to the equipment
    • Needles
    • RVM handling and storage
    • Disbudding equipment
    • Local environment
  • Appropriate low stress handling
  • Analgesia is correctly administered; procedure is undertaken competently
  • Repeatability of task/skill to the required standard

Details of procedure

• Calf selection
  • Appropriate age
  • Health - which calves are fit to disbud?
  • Hygiene – calf and staff cleanliness
  • Procedure in relation to feeding times

• Facilities
  • Hygiene
  • Safety for operator(s)
  • Safety for calves
- **Restraint**
  - Equipment/method to be used
    - Local placement
    - Disbudding procedure
- **Administration of local**
  - Check - product name, active ingredient, expiry date
  - Method of application
    - Equipment used – including needle dimensions
    - Hygiene and suitability of equipment –
      - Clean, sharp needles are used
      - Old, burred, contaminated needles are discarded appropriately
      - Cleaning and disinfection between pens/sheds/properties
    - Landmarks and site of administration
  - Wait time for effective local anaesthesia
  - Recognition of calves in distress and remedial action
  - Adverse events
    - What might occur?
    - What to do?
    - Adverse event reporting

- **Bud removal**
  - Equipment
    - Fitness of equipment for the job
    - Hygiene and maintenance of equipment
    - Operation of equipment – including warm up times
  - Method and technique
    - Identifying the horn bud
    - Depth and duration of burn
  - Identify and immediately remedy failure of analgesia
  - Operator safety
    - Smoke inhalation
    - Burns
    - Injuries from calves
    - Injuries from other equipment

- **Immediate aftercare**
  - Post-procedure analgesia (e.g. NSAID)
  - Environmental considerations
  - Wound treatment (including recording such treatments)
  - Observation of calves
  - Possible adverse outcomes
    - What are they?
    - What to do?

- **Longer term aftercare**
  - Possible adverse outcomes
    - What are they?
    - What to do?
• Recording the specific procedure details
  • Date
  • Location
  • Number of calves treated
  • Name operators using the VOI
  • Volume of drug used
  • Withhold periods
• Recording the RVM/VOI details
  • Total volumes of product(s) used
  • Returns to veterinary clinic