

Beef Cattle Code of Practice Pain Management Requirements

by Stacy Pritchard

Starting January 1, 2016 the way we manage pain in our livestock is going to see some changes. The latest edition of the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle* was published in 2013 by Agriculture Canada following the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) guidelines. The NFACC uses a Code development process when producing the Codes of Practice (other Codes have been produced for Dairy, Poultry, Sheep etc). All of the NFACC Codes of Practice are available on their website (www.nfacc.ca).

When developing these Codes of Practice, NFACC has several goals:

- ◆ Link Codes with science
- ◆ Ensure transparency in the process
- ◆ Include broad representation from stakeholders
- ◆ Contribute to improvements in farm animal care
- ◆ Identify research priorities and encourage work in these priority areas
- ◆ Write clearly to ensure ease of reading, understanding and implementation
- ◆ Provide a document that is useful for all stakeholders



Calf with horn buds

www.agcanada.com

The NFACC Codes of Practice were developed with the animal in mind, and is outcome-based whenever possible. The Code is intended to achieve a balance between the best interests of the cattle, producers and consumers. There 2 terms used in the Code that need to be understood in order for the Code to be interpreted appropriately:

Requirements

These are regulatory requirements or an expectation of industry that outline acceptable and unacceptable practices. Requirements are to be implemented by everyone responsible for farm animal care. Requirements may also be enforceable under federal and provincial regulation.

Recommended Practices

The Code Recommended Practices typically complement the Code's Requirements, as well as promote education and encourage adoption of practices for ongoing improvement of animal welfare. It is important to note that Recommended Practices are expected to enhance animal welfare, but if they are not being implemented, it doesn't mean that animal care standards are not being met.

The following are 2 examples of Requirements in the Beef Cattle Code of Practice

Disbudding & Dehorning

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 advisability of pain control for disbudding or dehorning beef cattle.

Disbud calves as early as practically possible, while horn development is still at the horn bud stage (typically 2-3 months).

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1st, 2016

Use pain control, in consultation with your veterinarian to mitigate pain associated with dehorning calves after horn bud attachment.

Castration

Dehorning must be performed only by competent personnel using proper, clean, well-maintained tools and accepted techniques.

Seek guidance from your veterinarian on the optimum method and timing of castration, as well as the availability and advisability of pain control for castrating beef cattle.

Castrate calves as young as practically possible.

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016

Use pain control, in consultation with your veterinarian, when castrating bulls older than 9 months of age.

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2018

Use pain control, in consultation with your veterinarian, when castrating bulls older than 6 months of age.

Pain Management Requirements Continued

As you can see, implementation of pain management and pain mitigation will become a requirement under the Code of Practice. This has several implications for beef producers, and below we will discuss some of the options available for pain mitigation during these procedures.

Dr. Cody Creelman from Veterinary Agri-Health says that the most effective and practical way to manage pain during surgical castration is to use a combination of local anesthetic (lidocaine) and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (meloxicam). An epidural will provide immediate pain relief of the scrotal skin, and a testicular block to desensitize the testicular cords, while the meloxicam will provide pain relief for 3 days afterwards.



Banding a bull upon entry at a feedlot. www.producer.com

Pain management when banding bulls is more difficult to manage, due to the nature of the procedure. The Band is applied, and approximately 3-6 weeks later, the scrotum sloughs off. Determining the best timing for the administering of pain control is difficult. However, the administration of meloxicam when the band is applied can help with pain control at the time of band application.

Meloxicam as an oral formulation from Solvet is the only product in Canada with a label claim for controlling castration pain. Meloxicam can also be found in an injectable form – Metacam. Injectable analgesics like ketoprofen (Anafen) and flunixin meglumine (Banamine) and meloxicam are longer-acting than

anesthetics, providing pain relief up to 3 days after castration. There are other analgesics on label for use in beef cattle, although few have claims for pain control following castration, but because of their ability to control pain and swelling for other conditions they may provide some relief following castration. When using an anesthetic, it should ideally be injected 5-20 min prior to the procedure, and can provide pain relief for several hours after the procedure.

Dehorning is becoming a practice that is performed less and less due to the inclusion of polled genetics. Veterinarians will often use a lidocaine block of the coronal nerve. Once the nerve block is performed, it should ideally be left for 10-15min before the dehorning is performed.

The best case scenario for controlling pain during these procedures is to perform them at as early an age as possible.

So what exactly does this mean for producers?

A valid Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) is a good place to start. This basically means that you have a working relationship with a practicing veterinarian, who is familiar with your herd and can diagnose and treat any medical conditions that may arise. An examination of your cattle or herd is required to establish a VCPR, this relationship is necessary for a veterinarian to ethically dispense or prescribe medications or recommend treatment.

With that said, to be in compliance with the Requirements of the Code of Practice, veterinarians do not need to do the castration or dehorning, so long as the procedure is completed by a properly trained person using accepted techniques. Dr. Creelman suggests that pain control be managed based on recommendation from each producer's vet. With an established VCPR, veterinarians are able to prescribe and dispense medication for pain control. Some veterinarians may make the choice to recommend and dispense lidocaine for pain management during these procedures, while others may not. This decision in the end comes down to individual veterinary practice's protocols as well as appropriate training and confidence in the producer.



Developing a VCPR with your local veterinarian is an important relationship for all producers. www.cattlenetwork.com

The changes to the requirements in the Beef Cattle Code of Practice will impact all Canadian Producers. The best resource for the best way to manage pain on your operation is your local veterinarian. They will be best equipped to answer all of the questions specific to your operation.

Thanks to Dr. Cody Creelman of Veterinary Agri-Health for your help with this article.

Growing Forward 2 

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Alberta
Government

Canada

Find us online!

www.peacecountrybeef.ca



@pcbfa

@pcbfa_crops



www.facebook.com/peacecountrybeef

Biosecurity: The What, The Why and The How

By: Carly Shaw

Biosecurity, what is it and why does it matter to us in the Peace Country you ask? Alberta Agriculture refers to biosecurity as “practices designed to prevent, reduce or eliminate the introduction and incidental spread of disease among livestock and poultry.” From this definition alone you can begin to understand the importance of implementing biosecurity practices on your farm. When we take biosecurity into consideration, we start to minimize the risks of diseases spreading on our farms, between our farms and between species by a great extent. This prevents massive disease outbreaks from occurring nationally or internationally and destroying the cattle markets. Some of the key points biosecurity can accomplish are outlined in the



When we take Biosecurity into consideration, we start to minimize the risks of diseases spreading on our farms.
www.albertawheat.com

that fit your farm’s needs. The three pillars of biosecurity are Animal Health Management, Production Management and Access Management. Animal Health Management includes quarantining new stock, managing animal movement and vaccination programs. Production Management consists of controlling rodents, limiting exposure to wild birds/ wildlife, building and equipment maintenance. Access Management involves creating designated zones categorized by the amount of protection needed in them. There are 5 different zones which should be considered. The first is a controlled access zone which is limited to the producer and employees, typically a pasture or a barn and identified by a fence or sign. Second is a restricted access zone which should be identified at all entrances and exits with signage that could include “employees only”, “Biosecurity Standards in place” or “PPE required”. Third is a quarantine zone which is an area for new animals to reside in to check for diseases or for animals returning from an exhibition or show where it could have contracted a disease. Isolation is the fourth zone to be considered which is an area used for the separation of diseased animals. It is extremely important that post cleaning and disinfection protocols are strictly followed in this zone. Lastly the fifth zone is a public access zone which is an area that indicates that there are areas that are not for public access and generally have handwashing stations positioned strategically and frequently (The above information was collected from the AB.VMA’s *Biosecurity in practice* book).

So now you may be wondering how you would begin to create a Biosecurity plan. The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (AB.VMA) recommends in their book *Biosecurity in Practice* that you follow these 5 basic steps:

- ◆ Establish a Biosecurity team- What skills, knowledge and value each member bring
- ◆ Identify outcomes and goals- Why are we doing this? What will this program change?
- ◆ Perform a risk assessment- Identifying risks and the most practical and feasible ways to eliminate them
- ◆ Develop and implement protocols, best management practices and operations based on the three pillars of Biosecurity
- ◆ Measure, review, improve and train

If there is still more you would like to learn about Biosecurity feel free to contact one of our offices or talk to your local vet.

article *Biosecurity in Alberta* by Alberta Agriculture:

- ◆ prevent the introduction and spread of disease
- ◆ protect humans from zoonotic diseases (diseases found in animals that are transmissible to humans and vice versa)
- ◆ be indicators of commitment to the health of livestock and poultry industries
- ◆ provide confidence that risk managers are doing the 'right thing'
- ◆ elevate awareness of animal health and disease transmission
- ◆ be used as a recovery tool if disease incursions occur
- ◆ save money spent on disease recovery costs (disease costs producers, industry, government and marketers hundreds of millions of dollars each year – simple biosecurity steps can be implemented to reduce such costs)

Firstly it is important to understand how livestock diseases are typically spread (direct contact, indirect contact or airborne) and the pillars of biosecurity in order to implement the best biosecurity practices

Contact us for:

- Project Ideas
- Feed Testing

- Growing Forward 2 Assistance
- Ration Formulation Help

- Environmental Farm Plans
- Past Project Information

Upcoming Events!

**Thanks
to our
Sponsors!**



A proud member of



Event	Date & Time	Location
2015 Western Canadian Conference on Soil Health	Dec 8-10, 2015	Radisson Hotel Edmonton www.albertasoilhealth.ca
Peace Country Beef Congress	Jan 8-9, 2016	Dawson Creek
Peace Agronomy Update	Jan 12 or 13, 2016	Dunvegan Motor Inn Fairview
Holistic Management Course <i>with Don & Bev Campbell</i>	Jan 14, 15, 16 & Jan 21, 22, 23 Jan 28, 29, 30 & Feb 4, 5 6	Valleyview Ag Society Hall Demmitt Community Hall
Cost: \$1495 + tax per farm unit up to 4 people; \$500 Deposit due by Dec 4		
Winter Watering Systems Tour	Jan 30, 2016	Birch Hills County
Peace Country Beef Cattle Day	Feb 1, 2016	Dunvegan Motor Inn Fairview
Tactical Farming Conference	Feb 9 & 10, 2016	Deerfoot Casino Calgary
PCBFA AGM	Feb 26, 2016	Dunvegan Motor Inn Fairview
Peace Country Classic & Beef Market Outlook <i>with Anne Waskso</i>	March 11, 2016	Grande Prairie
Sprayer School <i>with Tom Wolf</i>	March 2016	County of Grande Prairie & MD of Peace
Succession Planning Workshop <i>with Merle Good</i>	March 30, 2016	TBA
PCBFA Tour to the Denver Stock Show!	January 2017	<i>More Details to Come!</i>

For more information, or to register for PCBFA events please call Stacy or Kaitlin at 780-835-6799!

Monika Benoit
Manager
High Prairie, AB
780-523-4033
780-536-7373

Akim Omokanye
Research Coordinator
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799

Stacy Pritchard
Extension & ASB Coordinator
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799

Kaitlin McLachlan
Crop Program Coordinator
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799

