



Canadian Association of Bovine Veterinarians /
Association Canadienne des Vétérinaires Bovins
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March 29, 2012

Warren Skippon, BSc, DVM
c/o Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
339, Rue Booth Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 7K1

Dear Warren:

Re: Position Statement on Castration of Cattle, Sheep and Goats

The CABV/ACVB appreciates the opportunity to comment on CVMA's draft position on castration of cattle, sheep and goats.

Our Executive is very supportive of the CVMA in producing this position statement as veterinarians need to be proactive on animal welfare issues and especially those associated with pain and surgical procedures.

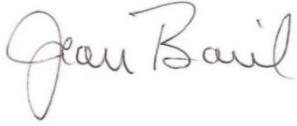
The only concern that members of the Board expressed was with the statement that all castrations should be carried out with analgesia and anaesthesia. The Board agreed with this statement in principle but comments were made that it is very difficult to provide a practical method of local anaesthesia when castrating large groups of beef calves that are being processed. The forms of local anaesthesia that can be used here all require significant lengths of time to be effective and this can be very difficult in large commercial settings where processing speed is an issue. In addition, in beef calves the stress associated with restraint may be an important factor. Perhaps a broader term such as "pain control" should be recommended in that it gives the veterinarian more flexibility in applying a method which will provide some means of pain relief. The use of NSAIDS is certainly a practical alternative and the board was very supportive of those references in the document.

In statement 4, the term "local analgesia" should be replaced with "local anaesthesia". Once again the board expressed concerns that there were not practical time efficient ways to utilize local anaesthesia in some settings in the field.

Statement 7 which encourages the use of the Burdizzo technique over rubber rings may be true from a welfare perspective. However, one Canadian research study has shown that 10% of calves castrated by the Burdizzo technique may still have testicular tissue present at the time of weaning. (Bateman KG, and Duffield TF: A comparison of methods of early castration and dehorning for beef calves. Available at: http://cgilnt.aps.uoguelph.ca/beefupdate/Summaries95/s-a_comparison_of_methods_of_early.htm. Accessed 1998.) We do not feel that the welfare benefits are large enough in this circumstance to warrant recommending a technique that may not be fully effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this position statement. Our Association feels strongly that it is very important that the CVMA should provide leadership on important animal welfare issues such as this.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Baril". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Jean Baril
President, CABV/ACVB

JC:pmm