

Nip Pain in the Bud



"I don't think I've ever seen anyone so excited 'bout goin' to work!"

As most of us are aware, come Oct 2019 a clause to the welfare act comes into play which states that even calves under the age of 6 months need to be given a local block (anaesthetic) before the horn or horn bud is removed. Veterinarians with their techs have been providing this service along with sedation. Farmers doing their own disbudding can be trained up in the use of the local anaesthetic before disbudding. The short acting local anaesthetic used can then be placed on an RVM contract between you and your veterinarian at the vet's discretion. It is advisable that a proper discussion take place to determine who would be trained up to be

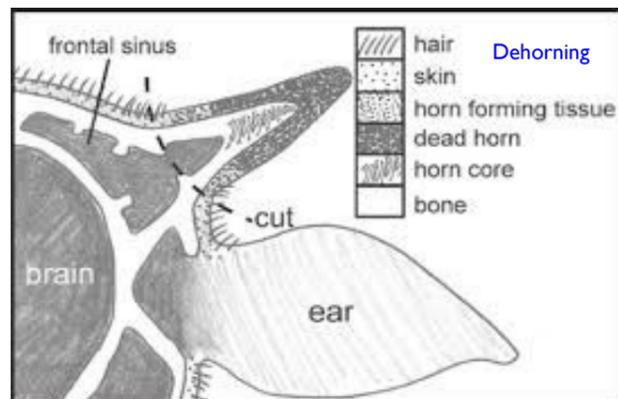
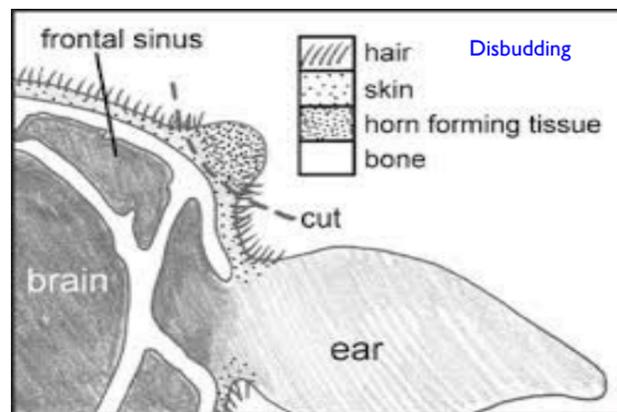
competent to use the product and that they are fully aware how to do the procedure and what the possible side effects and dangers are.

A recent study by Bayer revealed just how painful the disbudding procedure really is and how it affects the calves movement and behaviour and growth after the procedure. They compared crated vs. sedated animals as well as giving anti-inflammatory vs. no pain relief. All the calves were given the local block so that wasn't a factor tested. Combining sedation with the local block turned out to be superior to just local block with crate. But as expected adding a pain relief on top of sedation and local block received

the best results in reducing pain indicators and returning to normal behaviour and growth after the procedure.

There are currently two products on the market that are registered for calves for pain relief. One is an injectable long acting pain relief (Metacam) and another is a new product launched by Bayer called Tri Solfen which is a topical liquid that you place on the open wound after disbudding.

If you would like to know more or if you are interested in getting your calves disbudded by our vets with sedation, please ring your Vetco clinic to talk to one of our vets.



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We're on the web!

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Secret Language

Two west country yokels were on the train heading homewards when one of them noticed some cows. 'What a lovely bunch of cows,' he remarked. 'Not a bunch, herd,' his mate replied. 'Heard of what?' 'Herd of cows.' 'Of course I've heard of cows.' 'No, a cow herd.' 'What do I care what a cow heard. I have no secrets to keep from a cow.'

Leptospirosis Update - *L. tarrasovi*



Schistosome

Out in the springers
At first light
A calving cow pushes
With all of her might

She huffs and puffs
Heaves and strains
But through all of this
She makes no gains

Intestines dangle from
The cows back end
An issue like this
Is hard to mend

The guts are that
Of the calf not the cow
It can be difficult
To understand how

The calf has formed
In side out
Its skin on the inside
The guts on the out

The calf's spine is
Bent in a V
The only way out
Is to cut it in two

Having a cow like this
Shouldn't make you fret
Get on the phone
And call your vet

Humans are an accidental host of all strains. Unfortunately this means that the clinical syndrome is often significantly worse. The effect of leptospirosis in humans can vary. It can range from no apparent effect to flu-like symptoms including fever, headaches, chills, vomiting and sometimes a body rash. If the disease progresses to kidney failure, liver failure, or meningitis, then hospitalisation is required. If it is left untreated it is fatal.

Humans mainly contract *L. hardjo* and *L. pomona* (from cattle and pigs). The reason for this is that farm practices place people in direct contact with urine from cattle and pigs more often than other species. There is a new strain that is slowly creeping up in human and animal's cases reported called *L. tarrasovi*. Currently only the *L. hardjo* and *L. pomona* is in the vaccination that we give to

cattle while the *L. tarrasovi* is in the pig vaccination.

Vaccination is an essential part of a leptospirosis control program and it has been proven to work. Human cases are significantly reduced in vaccinated farm areas as opposed to areas containing high numbers of unvaccinated farms. There is work being done by vaccine manufacturers about getting a cattle vaccine against *L. tarrasovi* in place but unfortunately that would take time to do the proper research and investigation.

Thus the other important means of protection including wearing gloves, aprons, and gumboots at all times in the shed; covering open wounds with waterproof plasters; avoiding urine splashes into the eyes; a good rodent control programme especially around feed storage areas; not eating,

drinking, or smoking in the shed; and using disposable towels in the shed are all critical ways to prevent the spread of the disease.

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Alpaca/Llama Continued

Husbandry and Welfare

Alpacas and Llama are low maintenance but do still have some specific environmental, health and nutritional needs to keep them healthy and productive.

- Alpacas and Llamas are social animals so best to purchase at least two animals.

- Normal farm fencing is adequate, no need for electric fencing

- They can cope really well with the cold but the rain and chill factor can be a problem. Trees and shelter are needed from wind, rain and snow.

- Alpacas and Llama are ideal for people with small blocks of land as stocking rates can be higher compared to other farm species.

- Annual shearing is required, best done by someone with some experience.

- Toenails require trimming 3-4 times per year.

- Sometimes tooth trimming might be needed if they become overgrown

- Annual worming is recommended although they are not as prone to intestinal worm burden compared to other livestock

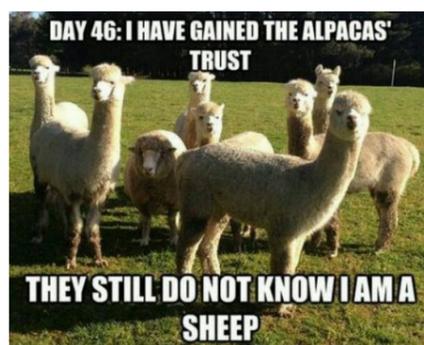
Nutritional Requirements

Alpacas and Llama are quite similar to other ruminants but do differ in some ways regarding the digestive tract. They only have three stomach compartments where other ruminants have four. They are highly evolved to consume high fibre feeds. Another difference compared with the other ruminants is that they have a split upper lip (similar to rabbits) which allows them to nibble and be more selective when grazing. Their mouth structure also differs with back teeth on the top of the mouth and an ability to chew in a figure eight motion. All this makes them a lot more adaptable to graze and utilize rough paddocks and they can do a lot better on poorer quality forage. Alpaca and Llama generally do not require a large amount of supplementary

feed but it can become more important during pregnancy when energy and protein demands increase or if an animal is in poor condition or if the pasture supply is limited due to overstocking.

FUN FACT

Llama and Alpaca are known to spit when they feel threatened – but rarely spit at humans



Cover up (Rain Scald)

We are heading into winter here in Southland and that also means lots of rainy and windy days. All of us are bundled up against the cold and rain and we tend to treat our pets with the same courtesy. Horses are also susceptible to the cold and we can easily cover them up as well as stabling them but with that comes some common skin issues. The skin of all mammals contain bacteria, but it is only when the skin is constantly wet or a bit compromised that infection takes hold. One such bacteria called *Dermatophilus congolensis* causes what we commonly call rain scald or if it happens on the feet, mud fever. Most of the horse covers that are available are all waterproof but they also need to be breathable as warm moist areas are perfect for bacteria to grow

and damage skin.

The infection would usually start as pinpoint bumps but can easily grow larger and become crusty scabs covering moist and raw skin. Most commonly affected areas are the horses back and rump and depending on where they are grazing, the back of the fetlock and front of the cannon bone. For treatment to be effective, the scabs would need to be removed to get to the skin. Most horses would tolerate removal of scab but it can be painful sometimes. Wetting the scabs to get it looser would make removal easier. Affected skin can then be gently washed with chlorhexidine or iodine based disinfection or shampoo. Completely dry the area and a topical antibiotic powder or ointment can be placed on the affected skin. The skin would have

to be kept dry at all times to get proper healing so stabling is recommended. Only severe cases would need injectable antibiotics.

The bacteria can be spread to other horses through rubbing and contaminated equipment so consider separating affected animals and equipment. Please call the clinic and speak to a vet if you have any animals affected and require more information.



Horse with 'rain scald' over back and rump

Eat well to Work well

There are a wide range of attitudes towards our working dog population between individual owners. A working dog could be classified as a dog working on farm herding cattle or sheep to duck hunting to deer or pig hunting. Below is a summary of the minimal requirements for the welfare of any dog including pets. Best practice recommendations can be found in the animal welfare (dog) code of welfare act 2010 on the MAF/MPI website.

The "five freedoms" listed below apply to all livestock and companion animals and is the basis for our welfare codes in NZ.

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress

It is unlikely that anyone would overlook the daily feeding of dogs but water supply is something that can unfortunately be overlooked. As a guideline a dog drinks about 60ml/kg of body weight per day for maintenance. So a resting huntaway would probably drink about 2 litres per day. This requirement is increased considerably in work and heat. But that also counts for the food requirements. Cold water, running, jumping and swimming all add up to a massive energy demand. The type and quantity fed to each dog depends on how active the dog might be.

There is a huge range of dog foods on the market from raw meats to home formulated diets to dry biscuits and each product delivers different amounts of energy, protein, carbohydrates and vitamins. Most formulated dog biscuits have a working dog range that adjust for the higher energy requirements for working dogs.

They still have a balanced vitamin and mineral content that might be lacking in meat-based or home formulated diets. They also include feeding guidelines that would ensure you give the correct amount for your dog's age and weight and activity level.

Please feel free to contact us if you need more information or want to discuss your working dogs nutritional needs.



Product Spotlight—Copper Supplementation

Copper is involved in growth, lactation, immune function and fertility. It is most important during late lactation and early pregnancy. So pre winter is a perfect time to address any deficiencies.

Testing requirements: Copper is stored in the liver, therefore blood levels will only be low when liver stores have been depleted. Liver is usually a better test to give an indication of the current copper levels of a group.

This can be easily be done with liver biopsies on farm or from animals being sent to the works.

Checking your animals pre-winter is important as it allows you to:

Spend money appropriately on targeted supplementation programs. Mineral testing animals may determine that supplementation is not needed or less than currently used, therefore saving you money.

Maximise health and productivity of your stock

Without them in balance in your production system, disease and decreased productivity is inevitable.

Decrease work during spring. Spring is busy enough without the hassle of down cows and sick cows that could have been prevented if minerals were balanced during the winter.

Copper can be supplemented in lots of different ways. It can be dosed orally with liquid or bullet formulations. That can be either short to long acting. It can also be injected with different concentrations which would give you short or long acting duration.

