

# Pain Relief (Cattle)

## Fact Sheet



### IMPORTANCE OF PAIN RELIEF

Pain relief is considered a necessary measure for the health and welfare of an animal while some animal husbandry practices are performed. While the purpose of pain relief is to relieve the animal of pain, it also allows animals to recover quicker and have less of a negative impact on both welfare and production. Though there is currently no legislation requiring the use of pain relief in cattle husbandry procedures, it is strongly encouraged that they be used, to improve welfare.

### HUSBANDRY ACTIVITIES THAT MAY REQUIRE PAIN RELIEF

There are several cattle husbandry procedures that may require administration of pain relief products. These may include:

- Castration
- Dehorning/Disbudding
- Spaying/Neutering
- Branding

Understanding the type of pain that may be associated with each husbandry practice is key to choosing the appropriate pain relief. For instance, castration may produce both immediate pain (nerve damage) and long-lasting pain (inflammatory or neuropathic). Therefore, using only one type of pain relief product may not be adequate.



## TYPES OF PAIN RELIEF PRODUCTS

There are two different types of pain relief:

- local anesthetic, or
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Anesthetics and analgesics (NSAIDs) provide pain relief in different ways. Anesthetics act almost immediately after application or administration, and will numb the affected area by blocking its sensory function. Analgesics on the other hand, act by reducing the physiological inflammatory pathways response to an activity, and aid in longer lasting pain relief by reducing triggers to pain at a cellular level.

A veterinarian will be able to best determine which type of pain relief is best suited to the animal and the procedure being carried out. While topical anesthetics can be purchased over the counter under the direction of a veterinarian, other anesthetics and analgesics will need to be prescribed by a veterinarian.

## PAIN RELIEF PRODUCTS

There are several products available for pain relief in cattle:

| PRODUCT                                    | TYPE OF PAIN RELIEF           |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Tri-solfen®                                | Local anesthetic (topical)    |
| Buccalgesic®                               | NSAID (oral)                  |
| Lignocaine                                 | Local anesthetic (injectable) |
| Meloxicam, Ketoprofen, Flunixin meglumine. | NSAID (injectable)            |

While this factsheet provides information to assist producers with pain relief and products, a veterinarian or professional should always be consulted, and use of this factsheet should be as an informative guide only.



## CHOOSING A PRODUCT

Several aspects that you may need to consider are:

- Husbandry procedure
- Size and age of animal
- Number of animals
- Multiple treatments required?
- Skill of technician
- Withholding period of product
- Shelf life of product
- Storage requirements

If you are unsure about which product would work best for you and for the activity you are undertaking, consult your veterinarian.

## BEFORE CONDUCTING ANIMAL HUSBANDRY ACTIVITIES

Before you perform any activities that require the use of pain relief, you should also consider implementing some of the following to minimise stress to the animals and handlers:

- Try to conduct husbandry procedures associated with pain on animals as young as possible.
- Have a technician that is adequately trained and skilled.
- Have good hygiene practices.
- Monitor animals in the coming days and weeks to identify any complications early.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AS A PRODUCER

As a producer, it is important to consider the animal health and welfare aspects of providing pain relief to cattle when carrying out animal husbandry activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the activities listed above. Ear notching/tagging and nose ringing also show benefits, when performed with pain relief.

It is worth considering the adoption of alternative practices for some husbandry practices that minimise pain, and in some cases, remove the need for these husbandry practices altogether. For instance, breeding for polled cattle can eliminate the need for dehorning practices.



## TAKE HOME MESSAGES

There are many factors to consider when choosing a pain relief product and conducting animal husbandry activities.

Pain relief products can be anesthetics (immediate relief) or NSAIDs (long lasting relief) and can be used separately or in conjunction.

If you are unsure about which product is best suited to your animal husbandry activity, you should consult your veterinarian.

## FURTHER LINKS

### ***Future Beef***

<https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/pain-relief/>

<https://futurebeef.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/201008-CCA-pain-relief-guide.pdf>

### ***Meat and Livestock Australia***

<https://publications.mla.com.au/login/eaccess?elink=ZASRUPSZcRs8sJRXTQSw>

### ***National Library of Medicine***

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8223984/>

For further information, please contact the VFF Livestock Group on 1300 882 833 or by email [stocksense@vff.org.au](mailto:stocksense@vff.org.au)

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