A participative training program to improve pain relief during hot iron-disbudding of calves

ACCEC PROJECT: CASDAR AAP2012 N° 1273

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A multi-partners project to support farmers for a better relief of animal pain during the disbudding of calves and the tail docking of piglets» (CASDAR AAP2012 n°1273)

Multi-stakeholder approach

- Farmers federations
- Farm vets Federations
- Competent authorities: animal protection and veterinary medicinal offices
- NGO

3 Exchange Committees
2x2 Focus groups

Key elements to be addressed*:
- Attitudes towards pain
- Gaps of knowledge
- Challenges of changing working routine
- Social environment

Disbudding
- Experimental WP: Pain alleviation
- Pain indicators
- Guidelines
- Training

Tail docking
- Experimental WP: Pain alleviation
- Pain indicators
- Guidelines


*Kling-Eveillard et al, 2014 - EAAP
One-day training: theoretical, practical and participative sessions to instigate individual reflection on the issue of pain, into the farm routine ... for long term broad improvement.

- Training duo: a technician and a veterinarian: demonstration, technical information, equipment, good practices, pain treatment, ...

- Several structured collective discussions: “sharing” to facilitate new knowledge appropriation, to initiate changes in attitudes and, later, in practices.

- 7 training objectives: “be able to explain” and “be able to do”

Short term impacts of the training on 40 farmers (30 dairy and 10 suckling) : face-to-face interviews and observations before training then 3 months after.
Dehorning: you’d better know what you do

French: Ébourgeonner
Disbudding

French: Écorner
Dehorning
AccEC Training: some insights

Pain isn't short

Cortisol (nmol/L)

Nociception

Anesthetic

Inflammation

NSAID

Handling without disbudding

Sedative

Hot disbudding

Pain: 7-9 h after disbudding

Heures

From Stafford and Mellor, 2005

I can feel pain...
Yes, you can!
After training:

- all were **very satisfied**
- **new knowledge**: horn anatomy and growing, disbudding equipment, handling facilities
- induced **a change in** working organization (dairy calves)
- **20% still disbud late**: couldn’t change working routine ... fear to fail disbudding?

> “I should disbud younger”

![Age of calves at disbudding](image)
After training:

- **Practical hits**: shearing to better locate, no need to tear off the bud, cool with spray...
- **20% have room for improvement**: keep the iron too long: fear to fail the procedure...

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**Disbudding procedure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>% Before training</th>
<th>% After training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locate horn bud</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shear</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron applied once only</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited burning area</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check cautery ring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiseptic spray</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I can improve my gesture"
After training:

- 40% find it difficult to implement, but 50% felt more sensitive to animal pain: further improvements to expect...
- But actually they did improve!
- Anesthetic? delayed drug action is a bottleneck... and a shot close to the eye!
- Too much novelty at once?

“Sorry, but I can’t improve pain relief...”
Any optimistic perspectives? Yes, we have!

- **Progress** has been instigated: evolution for further revolution...
  - Technical improvement contributes to pain relief
  - Awareness to animal pain and better understanding of pain, induced a better use of Sedative
  - Best practices: a matter of time....

- Need for further research on **medicinal treatment of pain**: easier, quicker...

- Need the **implication of all stakeholders**: farmers, veterinarians, technicians, to encourage progress, to include pain relief into routine discussion
Thank you for your attention.
Thanks to all contributors, partners and supporters of AccEC project.
Thanks to the farmers who contributed to the tests of the training.

We look forward to seeing you in 2016 for the final public meeting of the project.