

Posters

A Survey of Bovine Castration Methods and Management Practices Associated with Castration in the United States

J.F. Coetzee¹, *BVSc, PhD, DACVCP*; **A. Nutsch**², *PhD*; **R.M. Bradburn**², *BS*; **D.G. Renter**³, *DVM, PhD*; **D.U. Thomson**⁴, *DVM, PhD*; **M.D. Apley**¹, *DVM, PhD, DACVCP*

¹*Department of Veterinary Clinical Science, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS*

²*Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS*

³*Department of Diagnostic Medicine and Pathobiology, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS*

⁴*Beef Cattle Institute, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS*

Introduction

Bovine castration is performed on approximately 15 million cattle in the United States annually. Despite the frequency of this procedure, little has been published on which castration methods are most commonly used in the US.

Materials and Methods

In this web-based survey, members of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) and Academy of Veterinary Consultants (AVC) were asked to provide information about castration methods, adverse events and husbandry procedures conducted at the time of castration. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to email addresses belonging to 1,669 AABP members and 303 AVC members. After partially completed surveys and missing data were omitted, 189 responses were included in the analysis.

Results

Surgical castration with a scalpel followed by testicular removal using manual twisting (cattle < 200 lb [$<$

90 kg]) or an emasculator (cattle > 200 lb [$>$ 90 kg]) were the most common methods of castration. The potential risk of injury to the operator, size of the animal, handling facilities and experience with the technique were the most important considerations used to determine the castration method. Swelling, stiffness and increased lying time were the most prevalent adverse events observed following castration. One in five practitioners reported using an analgesic or local anesthetic at the time of castration. Approximately 90% of respondents said they also vaccinate and dehorn cattle at the time of castration. Equipment disinfection, prophylactic antimicrobials and tetanus toxoid are commonly used to minimize complications following castration.

Significance

The results of this survey provide insight into current bovine castration and management practices in the US.