



ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA

भारतीय जीव जन्तु कल्याण बोर्ड

(Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India)
(पर्यावरण एवं वन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)

MAJ. GEN. (Retd.) Dr. R. M. KHARB, AVSM
CHAIRMAN

4th April, 2012

To
The President,
Veterinary Council of India (VCI),
Wing, IInd Floor,
August Kranti Bhawan,
Bhikaji Cama Place,
New Delhi – 110066

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) is a statutory body established under an Act of Parliament – the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The mandate of AWBI, working under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, is to ensure the promotion of animal welfare and to protect animals from being subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering.

It has been brought to the notice of AWBI that in many veterinary polyclinics, hospitals and dispensaries in India, the castration procedure in large animals specially male cow calves is performed by casting the animal on the ground and then using a Burdizzo castrator crush the spermatic cord. This crude method of restraint and castration is often carried out without the use of sedatives, analgesics or anaesthetics and causes the animal to experience immense pain, fear and stress, which amounts to cruelty to animals as per the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and is therefore a punishable offence.

Statistics indicate that castration of Bull calves using Burdizzo castration is one of the most commonly practised animal- husbandry procedures in India. Animals exhibit acute pain responses both during and after castration, including struggling, kicking with the hind legs, tail swishing, foot stamping, head turning, restlessness, reduced activity, increased recumbency, abnormal standing posture and reduced grazing. The testes and scrotum are richly supplied with nerves, and any damage to them causes immediate and prolonged pain.

Findings suggest that pain persists for several weeks following castration. Castration as now commonly performed is, in fact, considered to be one of the most stressful livestock experiences. Blood cortisol concentrations have been studied as indicators of physiologic stress in animals, and these concentrations are found to increase following the current procedure of castration.

When used correctly, analgesics, sedatives and anaesthetics reduce or even eliminate fear and pain during castration. Options for anaesthesia and pain relief include short-acting local anaesthetics that will have an effect for approximately 45 to 90 minutes or longer-acting pain-relief drugs that will last for several hours. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can also aid in pain relief. Since castration causes not only severe pain but also highly elevated levels of fear, distress and anxiety, a combination of anaesthetics and analgesics is recommended for use for castration from an animal welfare point of view.

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In view of above all State Veterinary Councils and Director State Animal Husbandry be advised to direct all veterinary officers working in Govt. Veterinary Hospitals / Polyclinics to ensure that all castrations are performed by a registered veterinary practitioner using analgesics / sedations and anaesthetics to reduce pain and cruelty being caused to the male calves during castration.

The Veterinary Council of India is also advised to issue a circular / directive to all their registered veterinary practitioners (both government and private) and state veterinary councils that the requirement for analgesia, sedation or anaesthesia should be assessed in each individual animal's case, that adequate and appropriate analgesia must be given before and after castration procedure and that veterinary colleges and universities should include this in their curricula detailed procedure to administer field anaesthesia during castration procedures in male calves.

The Animal Husbandry Departments of all state governments are advised to delineate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for field castrations in large animals, which should include use of sedatives anaesthesia, and to create inventories of drugs, instruments and equipment to support the implementation of humane castration procedures. Failure to follow the SOP calls for strict corrective action by the State Animal Husbandry Departments / SPCAs and the State Veterinary Councils under PCA Act 1960.

An article on alleviating the pain caused by castration of cattle alongwith a table showing cost of drugs that are used for humane castration is attached for your kind information.

Best regards,

[Signature]
Yours sincerely,
Dr. R.M. Kharb,
Maj.Gen.(Retd.), AVSM
Chairman, AWBI

Copies to:

1. Director, Animal Husbandry, All States and UTs.
2. Member Secretary, State Animal Welfare Boards, All States and UTs.
3. All District SPCAs.
4. Federation of Indian Animals Protection organizations HQs.
5. All Gaushalas.