



Analgesia in calves

In the interests of animal welfare, the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) and BVA believe that calves should be routinely provided with appropriate analgesia to manage pain associated with

The BCVA and BVA position on analgesia in calves

We recognise that in the interests of animal welfare, human health and safety, and farm business viability that it will not be possible for replacement and reduction to eliminate the need for routine husbandry procedures in all calves.

where possible these procedures are replaced (for example by selecting polled sires to replace disbudding), reduced (for example by appropriate use of sexed semen to reduce the number of male calves requiring castration) or refined (for example with the use of analgesics).

We recognise that many of the routine procedures are carried out legally and competently by appropriately trained stock-keepers. We believe that existing legislation does not reflect a level of appropriate analgesia and fails to reflect changes in scientific understanding, pharmaceutical developments and societal opinions which have developed over time.

We believe that both a local anaesthetic and a NSAID should be used for all castration and disbudding of calves, whichever method is used, in accordance with data sheet recommendations.

Licensed local anaesthetics are available as POM-VPS, whilst licensed NSAIDs are POM-V. We would encourage stock-keepers and veterinary surgeons to discuss the analgesic regimes used and would urge veterinary surgeons to prescribe appropriately licensed NSAIDs and other analgesic medicines as required.