



DR. MURRAY RUNSTEDLER DR. PAUL SOSTAR DR. ANDREW MACLEOD  
DR. JOHN TOKARZ DR. KELLY HAELZLE DR. AMANDA TOPP DR. DAVE LAM  
Linwood Veterinary Services  
3860 Manser Road, Linwood, ON N0B 2A0 (519) 698-2610  
& Hwy 89 Veterinary Services, 7434 Hwy 89 Mount Forest, ON N0G 2L0  
1-800-663-2941 Fax (519) 698-2081  
[linwoodvet@linwoodvet.ca](mailto:linwoodvet@linwoodvet.ca)

*We will provide industry-leading, reliable, knowledgeable service, in a friendly, courteous and timely manner, to benefit our clients and the communities we serve.*

**Linwood Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 7am – 5pm Sat 7am – 12pm**

**Hwy 89 Clinic: Mon-Sat 7am-1 pm**

**NOTE: BOTH CLINICS ARE CLOSED SUNDAY**

Orders for Delivery: **call by 9:30 am at the latest** for same day local delivery Monday to Friday

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## **JANUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

### **Assertively addressing on our top 5 welfare issues**

As veterinarians, we see things we could do to improve cow and calf welfare. We need to improve our practices relating to lameness, dehorning, tail docking, euthanasia and transportation. We need to work harder to care for the animals that take care of us. However, sometimes we can get desensitized on farms and view abnormal things as “normal” when it comes to animal welfare.

#### **Lameness**

Lameness is too common on dairy farms. What is your lameness rate? How many of your cows have sores or swollen hocks?

Lameness due to infectious diseases such as foot warts can be controlled with a properly constructed footbath and appropriate protocols. Lameness due to dirty moist conditions means better bedding management and scraping. Lameness due to poor facilities or stall design means we need to make cow comfort improvement decisions.

These conditions cannot be viewed as normal, and can be solved with appropriate facility design and cow comfort. Ask your veterinarian to do a facility consultation and evaluate what needs to be done in the long and short term to improve cow comfort.

#### **Dehorning**

There is also no reason for an animal to suffer pain when the horns are removed. Disbudding young calves is far less stressful to both the animal and the person doing the job by using local anesthesia in combination with pain medication.

Ask your veterinarian about your dehorning protocols, and evaluate using polled genetics in your herd.

### **Tail docking**

As an industry we need to move away from tail docking, PERIOD. The public considers it cruel, and it is an animal welfare issue.

Scientific evidence does not support tail docking as a means of improving cow cleanliness or udder health.

### **Down cows/euthanasia**

Perhaps the most frustrating case we see on dairy farms is the down cow that appears normal and yet cannot get up. We want to give her a chance, and we have hope she will survive. Since cows that are down suffer pain within hours, we must have solid reasons why she has to be given that chance.

Euthanasia is underutilized on many dairy farms today. If an animal is lame, sore, down, not fit to cull, or beyond reasonable hope for a recovery, humane euthanasia is the best choice to relieve her suffering. Ask your veterinarian to review your euthanasia protocols to ensure you are preventing undue suffering.

### **Shipping and transport**

Do not ship cows that are lame, thin or treated with medication that have not met an appropriate drug withdrawal period. Do not overload trailers. Load cows on trailers gently. Take care of that cow as she leaves your farm since she deserves it.

Your veterinarian is an excellent resource to review these welfare issues on your farm. It isn't just good business, it's the right thing to do.

## **Veterinarians can help you reduce the stress and pain associated with dehorning**

Research has shown that calves benefit from the mitigation of both the pain associated with the procedure itself and during the recovery and healing period. The administration of local anesthesia such as lidocaine, in combination with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as meloxicam, has been shown to provide effective pain control.

Use of xylazine as a sedative also can help mitigate distress associated with the handling and restraint required for dehorning.

We must consider the use of analgesics and anesthetics for the purpose of alleviating pain an acceptable justification for using approved drugs in an extra label manner with a conservative meat withdrawal interval of 21 days.