**Castration Age**

Castration at a young age minimizes hazards to the calf, the cow-calf producer and the feedlot owner. Hazards for calves and owners include:

* sickness or death of calves following castration at an older age
* decreased liveweight gains (productivity) in the weeks following castration of older calves

Many producers choose to castrate new-born calves because:

* techniques are easier for the operator
* castration is less stressful on newborn calves
* concerns for animal welfare related to castrating older calves

Although there is no evidence that pain differs between young and older calves, there is less risk with castration of young calves.

**Testosterone Effect**

Some producers delay castration to take advantage of the growth effects of the male hormone testosterone. Testosterone secretion commences between 3.5 and 5.5 months. The differences in liveweight gain of castrates and bulls are first apparent at four to five months.

**Best age for castration in other animals**

Species age

* pigs first weeks
* cattle 1-2 months
* sheep and goat 2 weeks
* horse 1-1.5 years