**DEHORNING AGE**

Dehorning 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 following dehorning of older calves
* decreased liveweight gains in the weeks following dehorning of older calves
* loss of productivity

Many producers choose to dehorn new-born calves because:

* techniques are easier for the operator
* dehorning is less stressful on newborn calves
* of concerns for animal welfare

Although there is no evidence that pain differs between young and older calves, there is less risk with dehorning of young (less than eight weeks) calves.

The cow/calf producer's decision to dehorn and the timing (age) will be influenced by his or her facility, available labour, expertise with the techniques, awareness of the impact of the procedure on calf health and productivity, and market for the calves. The feedlot purchaser is able to selectively purchase horned or dehorned (polled) cattle with price as well as some of the above factors influencing the decision. In general, dairy calves receive intensive care and producers have an opportunity to dehorn their calves at a young age. It is each owner's responsibility to ensure humane and safe completion of the dehorning procedure on the calves entrusted in their care.