**Potential Complications – Disbudding and Dehorning**

**Hemorrhage**

* The risk of hemorrhage is greatly increased in older calves
* Observe calves closely for one hour following dehorning
* Wound powder may be applied to the surface of the horn bud after dehorning
* Note: avoid powder use if the sinus cavity is exposed

**Pain**

* Animals should be monitored during and after the procedure for signs of unnecessary pain, such as vocalization, reluctance to move, and failure to nurse. Such animals should be treated with a systemic analgesic such as flunixin meglumine. Severe pain warrants the attention of a veterinarian.

**Horn re-growth**

* Inadequate removal of the corium (horn-producing cells) will result in the re-growth of the horn, generally a partial growth that leads to scurs. Depending on the extent of the re-growth, the dehorning procedure may need to be repeated.

**Flystrike**

* Dehorning method that leave an open wound should NOT but used during fly season. Paste and hot dehorning are acceptable anytime of year.
* The use of a fly repellant may be warranted.

**Infection / Sinusitis**

* Animals should be monitored for signs of infection in the days following dehorning, such as redness, swelling, and discharge.
* Sinusitis is a particular risk in older calves, due to the fact that as the horn grows, the sinus grows into the center of the horn, and thus removal of the horn creates a defect in the skull that extends into the sinus, and thus an opportunity for infection.
* Avoid the use of elevated feeders immediately after the procedure to prevent entry of debris into the wound
* Minimize environment exposure, as dust and rain may increase the risk of sinusitis

**Potential decreased weight gain following dehorning of older calves due to pain and stress**

* Calves should be dehorned as young as possible to minimize stress.
* Use of local and systemic analgesics is recommended.

**Tetanus**

* The use of tetanus antitoxin should be considered, and calves should be vaccinated for tetanus.

**Bovine Papilloma Virus (warts)**

* Dehorning instruments can provide a fomite for transmission of the papilloma virus, and should be disinfected between calves. This can be achieved by maintaining a bucket of disinfectant for rinsing between animals.