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Dehorning Cattle.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE"

The last few years has seen a big increase in the practice of dehorning cattle, and as far as the West is concerned, most of the steers that now come on the market and many of the heifers are of the horn-less variety. There are several advantages gained by dehorning. After the operation the nature of a "hooker" will often alter altogether, and cows or steers that were long-horned and wild become quieter and more placid after their horns are re-moved. Wherever the cattle are fed in troughs in the feed lot the removal of their horns insures each animal an equal chance. Wherever cattle are shipped by rail the removal of their horns removes much of the danger of injury while in transit, as it prevents them from goring one another, causing a shrinkage in weight, an injury to the hide and a bruised condition to the meat when butchered. Also a bunch of dehorned cattle look much more uniform in appearance, and this in turn increases their

In dehorning two methods may be used. One consists in treating with caustic the undeveloped horns of the young calves, so preventing the future growth the horn. The other is the removal of the entire horn from a mature animal. In treating the calves with caustic the chief drawback seems to be the lack of time to catch them at the proper time. To obtain the best results the caustic must be applied when the calves are from four to ten days old. At this age the knob, or horn bud is only loosely attached to the skull, and appears more as part of the skin. If the growth of horn has actually started the caustic will merely check the growth, and the result will be an unsightly malformed horn that will have to be removed later with the

We have found that there are two times to dehorn, that is when the calf is around ten days old, or again when the animal is mature. To take a young animal around a year old and remove the horns with a clipper means, in many cases, that the horn will grow again. In using caustic on the calves, care should



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be taken that it does not touch anywhere except on the horn bud. Any drug store can supply caustic, either soda or potash. It usually comes in sticks the size of a lead pencil. The hair must be clipped away from the horns before the caustic is applied, and the edges of the hair should be well smeared with vaseline. This prevents the caustic from spreading to the rest of the head and forming a sore. The stick of caustic should be well wrapped in paper, with one end exposed, else the operator's hands will get burned. The end of the stick is then moistened and rubbed on each horn bud three or four times alternately, allowing it to dry each time before applying it again. Extreme care must be taken during the operation. The stick must not be so wet that the caustic will run down the side of the calf's face, or severe burns will result, with a probable loss of sight should the eyes be touched. If the weather is wet or if there is any danger of rain the calves must be kept under shelter. When properly done a scab will form over the horn bud, which will dropoff within a few days. When successful this method makes a better job than removing the mature horns, as there is no unsightly stump left.

When the calves have not been treated with caustic and the horns are full grown it is necessary to use either a saw or a pair of patent dehorners. For young cows and heifers, where the horns are thin and soft, the dehorners fill the bill in every respect. With older animals or bulls, where the horns are keavy and brittle, a saw will usually make a better job, as the crushing of the horns in an older animal causes the bones to splinter, which makes a wound that is hard to heal. We have found, in dehorning a bunch of cattle, that we need three men to handle the job. The cattle are kept in the barn, and are taken outside, one at a time as required, and are snubbed to a post, as tightly as possible, with a rope around the neck and a pair of pincers in the noce. One man is thus able to hold them. For the dehorners, which are like a pair of big tree pruners with long handles, we have found we need one man on each handle. The cutting knife is slipped ever the horn and the handles are passed

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Ave., Toronto

1950 Gerrard St.

EGHORNS, LAST

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