

Pain Relief for Greenham on-farm programs



The use of pain relief while conducting routine husbandry practices is increasingly considered an expectation among consumers and industry. As well as being an ethical responsibility, prioritising animal welfare is essential for profitable, productive farms.

The Greenham NEVER EVER (NE) Beef Program is underpinned by the Certified Humane (CH) program, which requires accredited producers to provide pain relief when carrying out routine husbandry practices, including medication and chemical interventions.

COST: BENEFIT OF PAIN RELIEF IN CATTLE

The benefit for producers in using pain relief is not only for peace of mind but also in meeting consumer expectations, and access to premium markets and financial incentives offered through the Greenham NE program.

Routine animal husbandry practices can induce various physiological responses that can be detrimental to the animal's overall health.

These responses include:

- stress
- inflammation
- suppression of immune function
- pain-associated behaviours such as delayed or reduced feeding
- growth rate effects.

The objectives of pain management include: alleviating pain and inflammatory responses, reducing stress and regaining normal bodily functions as soon as possible (including grazing, suckling).

REGISTERED PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR ROUTINE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY USE IN CATTLE

There are a number of products on the market that carry pain relief claims for cattle. Four common products are:

- **Tri-Solfen** (Bayer Australia) – local anaesthesia, post op
- **Illium Buccalgesic OTM** (Troy Laboratories, meloxicam) – NSAID
- **Metacam® 20** (Boehringer Ingelheim) – NSAID
- **Butec OTM** (Troy Laboratories, meloxicam) – NSAID

Additionally, there are more than 30 other injectable Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) that can be obtained from a veterinarian, including Flunixin, Ketoprofen, Tolfenamic acid and other Meloxicam registered products.

NSAIDs are analgesics that reduce pain by suppressing inflammation, however they do not totally block (anaesthetise) pain.

SCHEDULED DRUGS

There are 10 categories or 'schedules' of drugs in Australia, which control how medicines and poisons are made available to the public. A schedule 4 (S4) drug can only be purchased from a veterinarian. S5 and S6 drugs can be purchased over the counter at major distributors.

Tri-Solfen is suitable when **castrating with a blade** as it is topically applied to open wounds. It provides pain relief for at least 24 hours.

Tri-solfen is classified as an **S5 drug**.

Tri-Solfen dosages by procedure: calves*

Weight (kg)	Dose (ml)
30-100	6
>100	9

Tri-Solfen is not suitable for rubber ring castration as there is no open wound. The Greenham NE program does not require the use of pain relief where rings are applied to calves up to seven-days-old.

Buccalgesic and **Butech** are meloxicam (NSAID) gels that are administered orally in the buccal (cheek) pouch. They can provide pain relief for up to 48 hours and are available in 450ml packs.

They are classified as **S6 drugs**.

Butech 10mg/ml meloxicam dosages

Cattle (0.5ml/10kg)	
Weight (kg)	Dose (ml)
30	1.5
60	3.0
90	4.5
120	6.0

Metacam is a meloxicam (NSAID) subcutaneous or intravenous injectable. It is recommended the injection be administered at least 10 minutes prior to the procedure.

Metacam is classified as an **S4 drug**.

Metacam 20mg/ml meloxicam dosages

Cattle (0.25ml/10kg)	
Weight (kg)	Dose (ml)
30	0.75
60	1.5
90	2.25
120	3.0

IS PAIN RELIEF COMPULSORY?

The use of pain relief during castration and disbudding/ dehorning is mandatory for NE and Greenham Dairy Beef-accredited producers.

Animal Welfare standards for cattle are being regulated progressively by state and territory governments. Where regulated within a state or territory, the use of pain relief will be compulsory for castration and dehorning of animals above certain ages. For details, refer to the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle (Standards 6.2 and 6.4).

The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) states that industry “is committed to the pursuit of non-invasive replacements for on-farm surgical procedures as part of responsible management practices and in the interim, aspires to 100% use of pain relief for these procedures by 2030”.

The Australian Dairy Industry Sustainability Framework includes a 2030 target for all calves to be disbudded by two months of age with pain relief. This is also an Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) policy.

FURTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/husbandry/pain-relief/>
www.certifiedhumane.org/our-standards/
<https://vetpracticemag.com.au/breakthrough-in-oral-pain-relief-for-cattle/>
<https://animalprogress.com/analgesia-for-calves-and-lambs/>
<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/cattle/>
<https://futurebeef.com.au/knowledge-centre/pain-relief/>
<https://cattlecouncil.com.au/assets/files/201008%20-%20CCA%20pain%20relief%20guide.pdf>

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