

## **LWCC STATEMENT (March 2018)**

### **DEHORNING CATTLE: ACCEPTED AND ILLEGAL METHODS**

All farmers must note that only the disbudding and then cauterisation of young calves is accepted as a dehorning practice for use by farmers. The dehorning of adult cattle by saws, hacksaws, axes, keystone instruments, embryotomy wires or other methods are forbidden, and any such practices will lead to prosecution under the Animals Protection Act. Adult horned cattle must be dehorned by a veterinarian, using adequate anesthesia.

Castration rings, also known as elastrators, were developed for castration and accepted for this purpose subject to strict limitations governing application and age of animal. These devices are not acceptable for dehorning cattle since they cause prolonged pain and result in the necrosis (death) of the horn, underlying tissues and bone. This in turn renders the animal susceptible to serious infections, including gangrene. If dehorning is to be done by farmers, it must be performed on young calves only and using methods approved by Industry Codes of Best Practice. It is rational and preferable to breed cattle without horns (Polled cattle), since the polled gene can readily be introduced into any breed and constitutes a permanent, painless way of obviating the need to practice dehorning.