

LWCC STATEMENTS AUGUST 2018

HOBBLING OF LIVESTOCK

The practice of restraining equines, especially horses, by this method is not acceptable as it can lead to injuries. The animal's head is tied to a foreleg rendering it unable to run, and leaves it defenceless against attacks by dogs. Hobbled animals cannot lift their head and this causes additional stress.

USE OF UNREGISTERED "DRUG" PRODUCTS IN LIVESTOCK

All livestock owners must take note that it is illegal to advertise, recommend, advise or sell any product intended to cure, treat, prevent or diagnose any animal disease unless the product has been thoroughly tested and registered for specific use in terms of Act 36 of 1947. This Act is there to protect farmers against bogus claims and products. All registered products must display a "G number" indicating that it is registered and thus effective and safe to use in livestock.

RELIEF OF COWS WITH CALVING DIFFICULTIES

Calves should only be delivered by persons with the proper training and expertise. The first thing to find out if it is a normal (head first) presentation and if both forelegs are in the birth canal, then that the calf is small enough for normal delivery, and finally if there is enough lubrication for delivery. Only then can ropes be attached and pulled by the power of two men. On no account should there be excessive force, never using mechanical power. This is cruel, dangerous and illegal, and will lead to prosecution under the Animals Protection Act. If a calving case is difficult or protracted it is better and cost-effective to leave delivery to a trained expert (a veterinarian) who can save both cow and calf if called to assist early enough. Humane euthanasia must be considered if the calf cannot be delivered.

FARMER REMEDIES

Unregistered "remedies" that are advocated by unqualified people like farmers and other laypersons are illegal, and may be either useless or dangerous as well. "Recipes" can be found on many websites and chatrooms but are without any scientific basis. Both the supplier and user of this "advice" are liable to prosecution for transgressing Act 36 of 1947 or Act 62 of 1962. Some of the "prescriptions" are downright barbaric, like injecting carbolic acid (Jeyes Fluid), or applying petrol or diesel to wound, or putting copper sulphate into eyes. Farmers should ask: "Would I apply this to myself, or my family?" Remedies that work and are safe for humans are usually also suitable for livestock, although in different formulation and prices. However this "extra-label" use is not legal in the hands of farmers. Making up safe and effective drug formulations is a task for experts and subject to vigorous testing. Home-made

formulations by a “farmer-cologist” are risky, dangerous and illegal. Use only registered products.

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.

CALF REARING ON RESIDUAL MILK

Some farmers milk their cows and only allow young calves access to residual milk from the udder after milking. This can leave young calves deprived of the quality and quantity that they need to grow and thrive. Farmers must ensure that calves get enough milk or calf milk replacement especially in the crucial first 2 – 3 months.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

All livestock farmers must note that all antibiotics must be used with discretion for sick animals, following a correct diagnosis, and not used as preventatives or to cover up the consequences of bad management.