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Cattle pain relief working at Cloncurry




 **INDUSTRY LEGACY:** Chick Olsson and MDH's Alistair McDonald seeing the continuation of pain relief trial work initiated by the late Zanda McDonald at Devoncourt, Cloncurry. - Photo Kelly Butterworth

It's a matter of seeing is believing. A squirt of the blue gel from the purpose made applicator onto the wounds left by the dehorning, branding or, in the case of bull calves, castration, and the job is done.

But it's the behaviour of those young calves almost immediately after leaping up from the branding cradle that is perhaps the most impressive. Despite having just undergone these invasive animal husbandry practices, only minutes later they stand with their mates appearing calm and relaxed.

There is no headshaking, no calves lying down, and no obvious distress. Most impressive is there is no visible bleeding. In fact, because of the barrier the blue gel creates across the entire wound, it is hard to even see the wound.



 Mount Isa-based vet Ed Butterworth, North West Veterinary Clinic.


For major pastoral company MDH, the use of the Bayer pain relief product Trisolfen on its Cloncurry property, Devoncourt, is as an integral part of its husbandry practices at branding. Partly because it reduces the stress imposed on the young animals, partly because it helps guard against infection, and partly because it is part of bigger picture of ensuring that on-farm animal husbandry practices are inline with consumers expectations.

Mount Isa-based vet Ed Butterworth, North West Veterinary Clinic, who helps oversee the 170,000 head MDH herd is clearly impressed with the effectiveness of the now commercially available pain relief product.

“It’s easy to use and obviously effective,” Dr Butterworth said.

“The behaviour of the calves suggests they are obviously under less stress once the pain relief has been applied.”



 Forward thinking Cloncurry-based pastoralist, the late Zanda McDonald.

Initially developed to provide pain relief for lambs after mulesing, Trisolfen is a pain relieving and wound healing formulation that has short term and long term analgesia, antiseptics, reduces blood loss and coats the wound. It costs between about a \$1 and \$1.50 to treat each animal. It is described as best suited to calves aged six to eight weeks and is designed to provide pain relief for 24 to 36 hours. Bayer, which manufactures Trisolfen under license from Animal Ethics, has formulated a thicker gel that has an 18 month shelf life.

“The benefits are obvious and significant”

- Alistair McDonald

Alistair McDonald said MDH was likely use Trisolfen on all of the more than 40,000 calves from next year, pending final registrations. “The benefits to the calves from Trisolfen are obvious and significant,” Mr McDonald said. “Since we started the trial work in 2012 we’ve been working out the best way to use the product. It really takes away the stress and the calves are looking for a drink within minutes.”

MDH uses Angus bulls as terminal sires over high grade Brahman females on Devoncourt. The majority of the cattle bred by MDH are fed through the company’s Wallumba Feedlot at Condamine.

- Mark Phelps flew with Pilatus Australia, in recognition of the late Zanda McDonald, who helped initiate the Trisolfen trial work.

<http://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/4835458/zandas-cattle-pain-relief-vision-on-show/?cs=4733>



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