



*Christian County  
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## **Post Processing Guidelines for Cattle**

Processing cattle through the chute commonly involves the performing of routine procedures such as vaccination, administration of parasite control products, pregnancy exams, castration and dehorning among other procedures. Because these procedures are generally simple in nature and frequently performed it is easy to forget that complications can arise. CCVS takes pride in providing a professional level of excellence when it comes to these seemingly simple procedures. Every effort is made to minimize and prevent complications and therefore maximize the efficiency and efficacy of processing your cattle thereby improving the performance of the animals. Even still, producers should be aware of possible complications and are advised to observe cattle closely after processing for anything that may necessitate the need for follow-up care.

### **Vaccination:**

The most common complication from vaccination is some form of injection site reaction. Swelling at the injection site indicates a reaction. This can occur in the form of a granuloma or 'shot knot' that requires no treatment and often resolves slowly over a period of weeks to months, or an injection site abscess. An abscess may require drainage and antibiotic treatment. Less commonly, animals may have allergic reactions to vaccination. Most often this occurs very quickly post vaccination and can be treated by the veterinarian with epinephrine as an antidote.

Rarely, an allergic reaction may occur up to 18 hours post vaccination and can result in death of the animal. For this reason, it is recommended to process cattle in the morning when possible and observe cattle through the day for any evidence of an allergic reaction to vaccination. This would be evidenced by lethargy and labored breathing in most cases. Vaccination with any vaccine or combination of vaccines does also result in some stress to the animal's immune system. It is normal for animals to seem slightly lethargic for a day or two after vaccination. However, if an animal appears more severely affected than its herdmates you should contact the veterinarian.

### **Castration:**

The two biggest concerns with castration are hemorrhage and infection. If excessive hemorrhage is to occur this generally happens in the first 12-24 hours after the procedure is performed. Cattle should be observed and the veterinarian contacted if excessive hemorrhage is a concern. Infection may take 5-7 days to become apparent. Swelling, soreness and discharge at the scrotal incision indicates possible infection. Often the calf is running a fever and not feeling well and may be off feed and isolating itself from the herd. Appropriate antibiotic therapy typically resolves this issue if treated early.

**Dehorning:**

Similar to castration, dehorning may lead to concerns with hemorrhage and infection. Observe animals for hemorrhage for the first 12-24 hours. Open wounds are commonly left to heal by second intention and may take 2-4 weeks to heal depending on the size of the horn removed. If infection occurs, discharge is often present at the dehorning site and may also occur as nasal discharge. Antibiotic therapy may be required to resolve the infection. Ideally, cattle should not be fed from round bales or overhanging hay feeders in an effort to prevent contamination of open sinus cavities post dehorning. Furthermore, fly control is imperative in warmer months to prevent fly strike.

If you have further questions or concerns please contact us.

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