

F15 | CASTRATION AND TAIL DOCKING

WHY DO WE CASTRATE?

- To control “boar taint”.
- To reduce aggression and handling challenges associated with intact males.
- To decrease the risk of injuries to personnel and other pigs.

WHY DO WE CUT PIGLETS' TAILS?

- To prevent tail-biting outbreaks.
- Tail-biting can result in serious wounds and bleeding, and more severe consequences such as infection, spinal abscesses, paralysis and, in extreme cases, death.



Tail-biting can be triggered by a wide range or combination of factors, including : overstocking, feed deficiencies, incorrect temperature levels, inadequate ventilation, drafts, high levels of dust and noxious gases such as ammonia, and lack of enrichment.

WHY DO WE USE ANALGESIC (PAIN CONTROL) AND ANESTHETIC?

- Castration of pigs is painful regardless of age.
- Tail docking is known to cause acute stress, as indicated by physiological and behavioural responses.

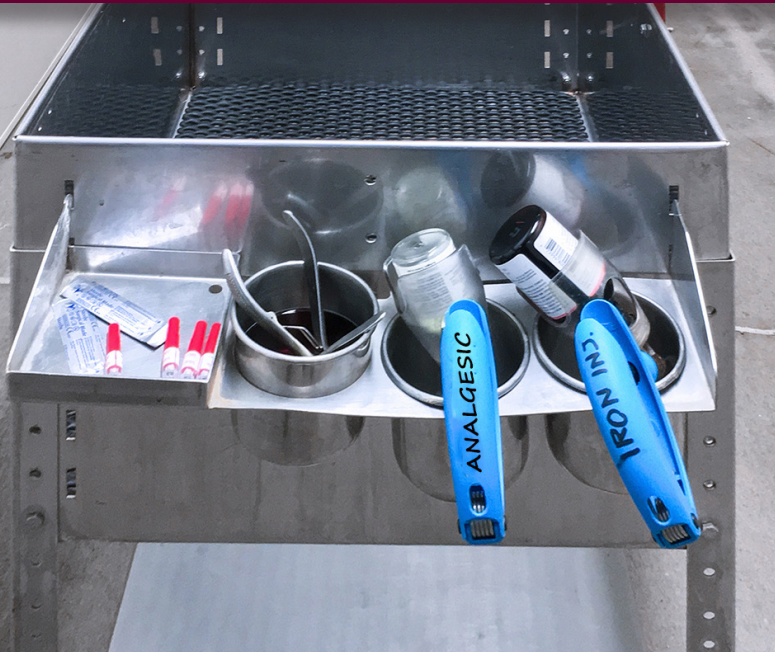
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANALGESIC AND LOCAL ANESTHETIC?

- Analgesic: beneficial in controlling post-procedure pain
- Local anesthetic: desensitizes a body part and suppresses pain during surgery, but does not relieve post-operative pain

CASTRATION | PROCEDURE

- **Training:** Castration and tail docking procedures are only carried out by trained stockpersons.
- **Hygiene:** Keep processing instruments clean to prevent infections (e.g., *Salmonella*, *Circovirus*, *Strep. suis*).
- **Equipment:** Replace or repair dull equipment when identified.

An analgesic must be given at castration (to pigs of any age) for control of post-castration pain. For castration performed past 10 days of age, an anesthetic must also be used prior to castration.



TAIL DOCKING | PROCEDURE

- An analgesic must be given to all pigs at any age when tail docking. Tail docking should be performed within a few days of birth.
- Use a clean, sharp set of clippers (or a cauterizer) to cut the tail of the piglet about 1/3 of the way up the tail from its base (aiming to cut between vertebrae).
- Be careful: docking tails too short may lead to infections or prolapses.

- Pick up and hold male piglet upside-down with back legs held together, ensuring its scrotum is fully exposed and you are pushing the testicles upwards towards the scrotum with your finger(s).
- Use a clean, sharp scalpel to make a 1-cm incision on one side of the scrotum, exposing the testicle. Either pull the testicle upwards towards the tail in a quick, straight motion to break the spermatic cord, or pull the testicle out 3-4 inches and slice through the spermatic cord with the scalpel. Repeat for the other testicle.
- Place scalpel into container of disinfectant between piglets.
- Repeat the process for all male piglets in the litter.
- Use a new scalpel blade for every litter.