

Using Paste to Disbud Calves

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Oregon State University has published a pictorial description of how to effectively use caustic paste to disbud young calves. This publication is written in both English and Spanish and is available online or can be printed for you at your local extension office.

To disbud calves using paste:

- 1) Locate the horn buds
- 2) Clip the hair around the horn buds
- 3) Outline the areas to apply the paste on the horn bud with a marker so that the application area is easily identified
- 4) Apply the paste as directed

The author offered these very practical suggestions:

1. Use gloves when applying paste.
2. Use good animal restraint techniques that minimize stress to the calf and person completing the procedure.
3. Apply paste before calves are 2 days of age. After 2 days of age, calves have learned how to scratch their heads and can rub the paste off.
4. Do not apply too much paste. The amount of paste should be about the size of a dime on each horn bud.
5. Do not let calves get wet for 24 hours after application so the paste does not run off and into the calf's eyes.
6. Apply paste just before feeding calves so their attention is diverted away from the brief burning sensation.