

Lecture 6

Castration of animals

Castration of pigs

Castration, or the removal of the testicles, is carried out on the male pig which is not needed for breeding.

Why are pigs castrated?

Male pigs (boars) can fight causing injury to one another. Castrated pigs are quieter and easier to handle. Castrating the pig makes it put on more fat and the meat does not have a strong piggy smell. Young pigs should be castrated at 2 to 3 weeks of age.

Restraining the pig for castration

You will need someone to hold the piglet for castration. The pig should be held by the hind legs with its head down and its body should be firmly held between the handler's knees.

Castrating the pig

- You will need a very sharp, clean knife, scalpel or razor blade. Remove the sow from the litter and if possible put her where she cannot see or hear them.
- Clean the scrotum with warm water and soap and dry it.
- Move the testicle into the scrotum with your finger and then firmly grip the scrotum below the testicle between your thumb and index finger.
- Make a cut 1 - 2 cm long in the bottom of the scrotum. The testicle should pop out through the cut.
- Pull the testicle out of the scrotum and cut through the white cord leaving the red blood vessel uncut.
- Pull the testicle out slightly further and twist it around several times before cutting the twisted blood vessel by scraping up and down with the knife. This helps to reduce bleeding. Do not pull to break the vessel.

- Do not put your fingers in the scrotum. Apply either tincture of iodine, gentian violet, Detol or an antibiotic powder or a sulpha powder to the castration wound. Remove the second testicle in the same way.
- Put the piglets and their mother on clean bedding. Watch piglets for signs of infection in the wound for the next week. Infected castration wounds swell; piglets do not want to walk or are lame.

Castration of ruminants

Traditionally farmers or animal raisers do not castrate animals and both males and females are allowed to mix together. The result is that poor male are allowed to mate with the females and the young stock produced are not very good. Uncastrated males also fight so it is better to castrate the animals which are not the best for breeding.

The best time to castrate animals is when they are very young (a few days old). If castration is carried out then, the operation is easier and more successful and the wound heals (gets better) very quickly.

Holding and controlling animals for castration.

You will need another person to help you. It is best to put young lambs and kids on a table covered with sacks. Calves can be castrated when they are standing but the animal must be restrained very well.

Castration with a knife (blood)

- Use a very sharp knife, razor or scalpel.
- Check that the knife, razor or scalpel is very sharp and clean.
- Clean the blade with a disinfectant such as alcohol, iodine, Detol or gentian violet.
- Use warm water and soap to wipe the scrotum and wash your hands.
- Cut the bottom end of the scrotum. Squeeze the testicle above the cut end of the scrotum and it will come out.

- Pull each testicle out as far as possible, twist the testicular cord around several times. Cut the cord in cattle and buffalo by scraping the knife slowly up and down. Pull to sever the cord in lambs and kids.
- Do not put your fingers inside the open scrotum. Put either tincture of iodine, gentian violet, Dettol or antibiotic powder on the wound.

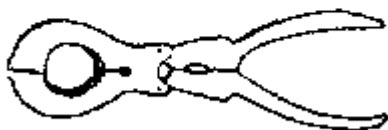
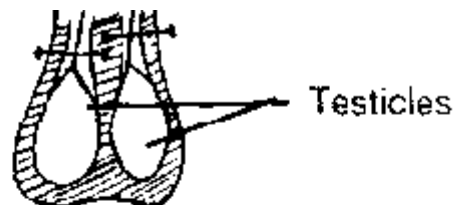
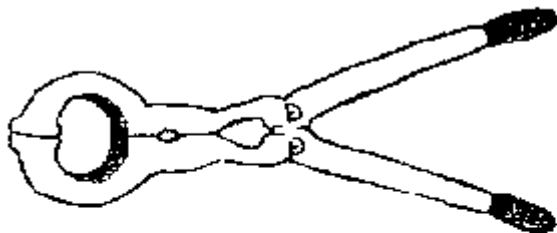
Castration with Burdizzo (no blood)

The Burdizzo should be used on the young animal. There are Burdizzos for animals of different sizes. You should always remember that the Burdizzo is a valuable instrument and keep it clean and oiled. Do not drop it.

To castrate with the Burdizzo:

- Feel the scrotum with your hand and you will feel the two rope-like testicular cords inside.
- Take the Burdizzo in your right hand and with your left hand push the cord to the side between the jaws of the Burdizzo and squeeze hard.
- Now take the Burdizzo in the left hand and crush the other cord.

Burdizzo for calf



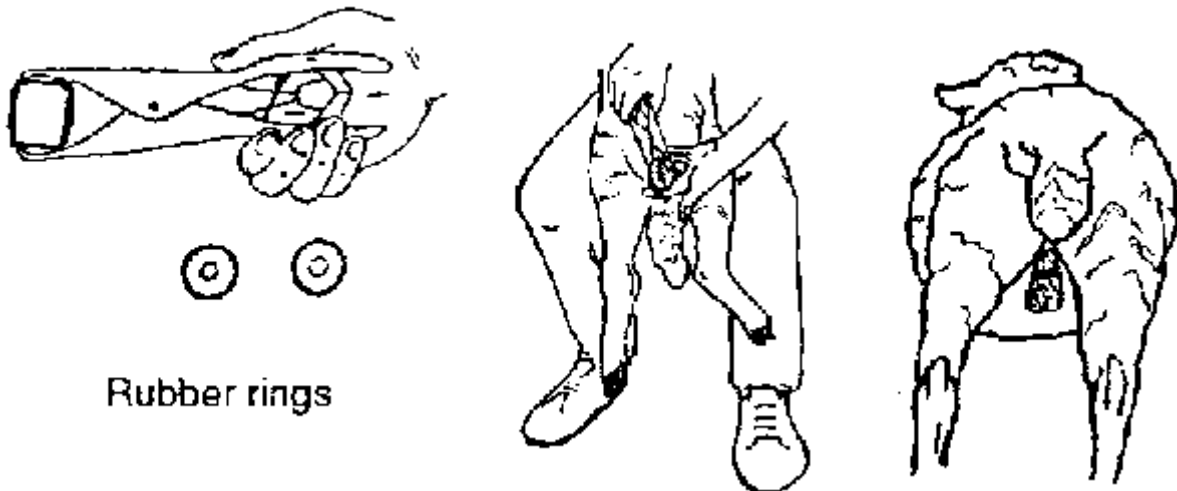
Burdizzo for sheep



Castration with rubber rings

- To castrate with rubber rings we use a tool called an elastrator. It can only be used to castrate ruminants which are a few days old.
- Put a rubber ring around the four teeth of the elastrator and squeeze the handle. The rubber ring will be stretched open.
- Pass the scrotum of the animal through the ring making sure that it goes over the two testicles.
- Release the elastrator and the rubber ring will tighten over the cords. After two weeks the scrotum will fall off.

Elastrator



Check all animals which have been recently castrated for signs of infection.

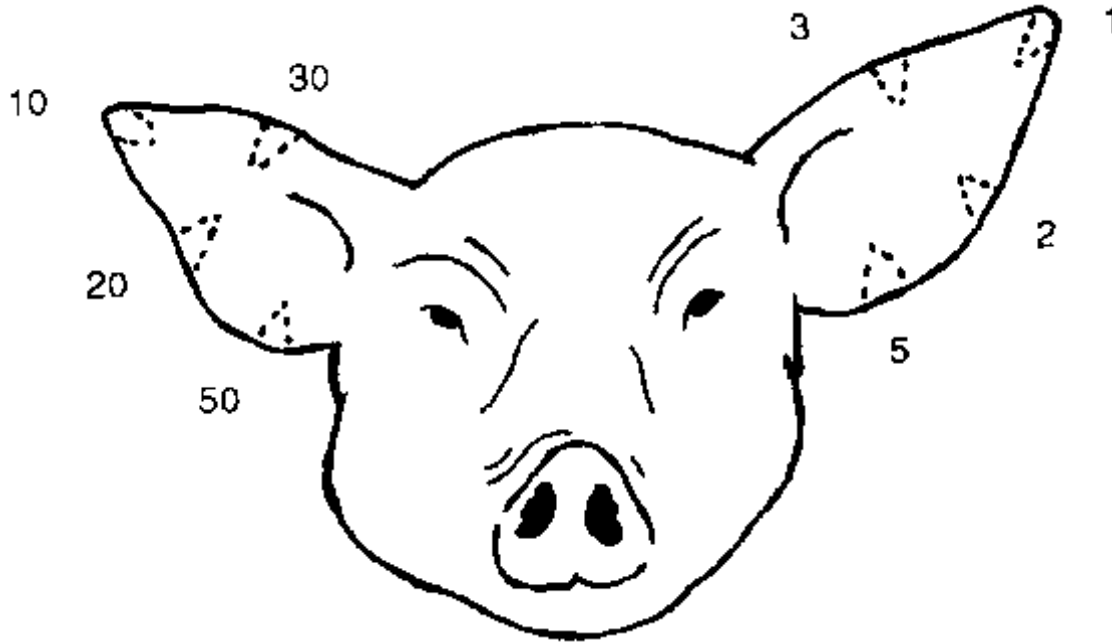
IDENTIFICATION OF LIVESTOCK

If you have a few pigs or other animals, identifying them is no problem. You will be able to identify them by sight and may well have given them a name. You will need some way to identify a large number of animals especially if you are going to keep records. There are many ways to identify animals including numbered collars, tattoos, and plastic tags. Notching the ear is easy and is the cheapest way.

Notching the ear

A V-shaped notch can be cut out of the edge of the ear using a pair of clean scissors. Make the notch a few centimetres deep so in future you will be able to read it from a distance.

The notches on the left ear are for single numbers and on the right ear the notches are for tens.

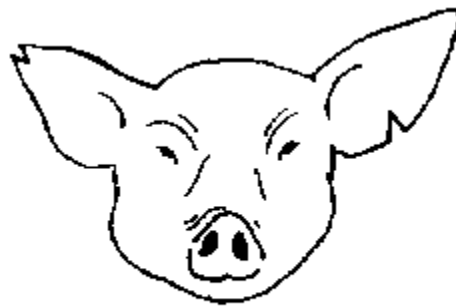


Recording the number of the pig

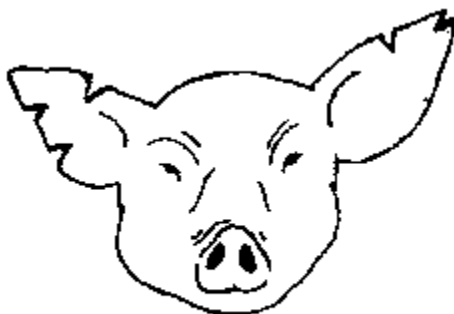
Look at the notches on the right and the left ears then add up the number on each ear to give the number of the animal.



Number 8



Number 15



Number 104



Number 50