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## **Study investigating the attitudes and opinions of cattle farmers and veterinarians in the UK on the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for post-disbudding analgesia of calves**

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### **Abstract**

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The study examined cattle farmers' and veterinarians' opinions of pain-induced distress associated with disbudding and attitudes towards non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). An emphasis was placed on investigating pain perception, veterinary-client communication and factors influencing analgesic use. Data were collected from an online questionnaire, links to which were published in professional periodicals, promoted by industry organisations and distributed on private practice mailing lists. A total of 110 veterinarians and 116 farmers who regularly disbud calves completed the questionnaires. Of the respondents, 56% of veterinarians and 14% of farmers routinely use NSAIDs for disbudding. Respondents perceived disbudding to be severely painful without medication and 82% of veterinarians and 43% of farmers perceived post-procedural pain to persist beyond 24 h. There was a significant difference between female and male veterinarians' pain scores for disbudding without medication. Veterinarians underestimate the influences of welfare and analgesic duration and effectiveness on farmers' decisions and overrated cost impact. The study highlights that improvements in veterinarian-farmer communication regarding calf disbudding analgesia are required; both in terms of refining veterinarians' understanding of farmers' priorities and guiding clients on methods to improve calf welfare.

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**Keywords:** analgesia, animal welfare, calves, disbudding, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), veterinarian and farmer