**When should disbudding be done?**



It is believed that pain, stress, recovery time and complications are minimized when dehorning is performed early in life. Several methods can be used to[reduce the pain](http://www.beefresearch.ca/research-topic.cfm/pain-mitigation-81) of dehorning. The adoption of these methods depends on economics, producer perception of pain and proper training.

Disbudding should ideally be done when the animals are less than 2 months. This helps reduce the pain the animal is subjected to and reduces the occurrence of any complications. The methods that must also be done when animals are at an older age is also restricted and will cause more pain to the animal. The recovery post- procedure will also take longer e.g. returning to a proper body condition score and productivity. **Disbudding is then always better than dehorning and should always be recommended to the farmer.**

Below shows the level of cortisol released during dehorning. It shows that this procedure indicates the highest amount of cortisol being released. The infers that the animal is stressed and in pain during this time and type of procedure. Disbudding which can be done at an earlier age, should be preferred as this shows a lower level of cortisol released and quicker decreased compared to dehorning. Consequently, farmers should be advised that earlier is indeed better.

