Complications:

Swelling, stiffness and increased lying time are the most prevalent adverse events observed following castration. Calves need to be monitored for changes in gait indicating tetanus, and severe swelling in the area that may be a sign of severe infection.

Pain is a common complication of castration, especially in older cattle. For our calf at the field station there were residual tissue protruding from the surgical site. There were also slight swelling of the site as it seemed to be filled with information (for lack of a better word). It also had a slight fever of 40.5 (degrees Celsius).

Bleeding: Bleeding can occur after castration of a bull with a clotting abnormality or a bull with abnormally large testicular blood vessels. The testicular blood vessels enlarge as a bull ages. Thus, the younger the bull is when it is castrated, the less potential for postoperative bleeding. If a bull is over 2 years of age at the time of castration, control of bleeding is a greater concern and makes the surgery more time consuming.

Inguinal hernia: In some cattle, the opening in the abdominal wall (inguinal canal) through which the testicles descend into the scrotum is abnormally large or flexible. In these cattle, the intestines and other abdominal tissue can pass through the inguinal opening (herniate). Though inguinal hernias are uncommon, they are a serious complication and require transport to a surgical facility for correction.

Infection: After the testicles are removed, the scrotal incision is not sutured and is allowed to heal from the inside out. If the incision closes prematurely, infection can be sealed inside. If the scrotal area swells to approximately four times its pre-surgical size or if your cattle’s rectal temperature exceeds 102 F, infection should be suspected.

Pregnancy: A recently castrated bull can still get a heifer pregnant for some time after castration because of sperm remaining in the conducting system. Recently castrated cattles should be kept away from females for at least 60 days.