**Electro-immobilisation**

In the event of a ban on the use of Electro-immobilisation, we believe that Veterinary Surgeons should have the facility to use Electro-immobilisation, in strict accordance with the approach set out below and in circumstances where – in their professional judgement – animal welfare and/or human health and safety are likely to be compromised.

1. Veterinary Surgeons when restraining and carrying out interventions on large animals are conscious of:
   
   a. their obligations in protecting the welfare of these animals under their care, and
   
   b. their obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1989 to protect employees and third parties from injuries.

2. Particular risks arise with dehorning which is carried out in order for farmers to meet the legal requirement that cattle must not be traded if they have horns.

3. Veterinary Ireland would propose that an awareness programme should commence to promote early disbudding of calves so as to avoid having to dehorn cattle at a later stage. Analgesia appropriate for the procedure should be used.

4. Where Electro-immobilisation is used for restraint, Veterinary Ireland reminds members also to ensure that analgesia appropriate for the procedure is used.

   - A local anaesthetic should always be used as soon as the animal is restrained.
   
   - In exceptionally fractious animals an intramuscular sedative/analgesic should be used, e.g. Xylazine 2%.
   
   - As both products referred to here are categorised as VSO (Veterinary Surgeon Only) they should only be used by a veterinary surgeon or by someone operating under the direct supervision of a veterinary surgeon.

10th November 2006