

known as bloodless emasculators, or rubber rings may be used.

Whatever method is used, the lamb should be held as described in the section on docking, and castration should be the final operation of the three necessary for male lambs.

Use of Knife

Antiseptic should be applied freely to the site both before and after the operation.

The tip of the purse should be held in one hand and the lower third either cut off completely or slit by a free incision from front to back. Either method should give that free drainage from the site of the operation which is so essential to healthy healing. The testicles may now be forced out of the slit in the purse by gentle pressure from above. Many farmers still use the old-fashioned method of grasping the testicle with the teeth to pull it out. Specially designed forceps of several types are also available for this purpose and these can be kept with the knife in the methylated spirits basin placed beside the operator. The withdrawal of the testicles must be done gently and no risk must be taken of breaking the cord internally.

The knife may be used to scrape through the cord, but special emasculating pincers which cut and crush the cord and reduce haemorrhage are recommended. The pincers must also be kept in the methylated spirits basin when not in use.

Animals with only one testicle in the purse should be suitably marked for early disposal, as they are rigs and will develop male characteristics.

Emasculators or Bloodless Castrators

Several types of emasculators or bloodless castrators are available. They work on the principle that, owing to the difference in the structure and elasticity of the skin and the structures forming the cord, it is possible with the jaws of a very carefully constructed and adjusted pair of pincers to sever the cord without more than lightly crushing the skin within which it lies.

METHODS OF MARKING LAMBS



[National Publicity Studios photo.]
A lamb correctly held for docking.

All points mentioned about castration with the knife, including the use of antiseptics, apply to the use of emasculators. Users should note, however, that crushed skin is less resistant to infection than a clean wound with good drainage.

Points to remember are:—

1. See that the jaws close on the cord well away from the testicles; that is, up the neck of the purse toward the abdomen. If the testicle is crushed, then trouble will ensue, abscess formation or even death resulting.

2. See that the cord does not slip out of the jaws of the instrument as they close. The fingers and thumb of the free hand may be used for this. It is a good plan when the jaws are closed very gently to push the severed end of the cord up and away. The jaws of the instrument should be kept closed for the period advised by the makers.

If there is doubt about the operation being satisfactory or if lambs are older than the usual age for castration, the cord may be crushed a second time higher up.

Do not neglect to swab antiseptic solution on the crushed skin after completing the operation.

There may be some swelling of one or both testicles, but it soon subsides and the organs wither away.

Rubber Rings

Castration by ligation, that is a tight ligature or clam around the testicles, has been practised from very ancient times. The rubber ring placed around the neck of the lamb's scrotum or purse is a modern adaptation of this method.

General points are the same as for the two previous methods and the use of antiseptics to counter the crushing and irritation of the skin which ensue must not be neglected. The purse eventually drops off.

One drawback to this method is the extent to which lambs on which it is used rub the ligated part on the soil with resultant dirt contamination.

With both the bloodless emasculator and the rubber ring methods of castration there can be no doubt that more care should be taken, on some properties at least, than there is at present.

At one meat export works during the past season 8 per cent. of wether lambs were classed as stags; that is, as imperfectly castrated. When emasculators are used imperfect castration is due to one cord slipping and being imperfectly crushed. When rubber rings are used for castration care must be taken that both testicles are well below the rubber ring when it is closed. If one or both are not, then sufficient testicular tissue will be left functioning to create a "staggy" carcass, and very considerable unnecessary pain will be caused to the lamb.

The attention of all sheep farmers is drawn to the fact that complaints about the proportion of "staggy" New Zealand wether lamb carcasses have been received recently from the United Kingdom.



[National Publicity Studios photo.]
Lambs should be returned to their mothers as soon as possible after docking.