

CLIPFITTER VETERINARY GUIDANCE

INDICATIONS FOR USE

CASTRATION

ClipFitter is a modified burdizzo castration device that is simpler to use than a traditional burdizzo procedure. The device is designed to crush the blood and nervous supply simultaneously, leading to a painless (or significantly reduced pain) castration. Following successful application the scrotum and contents should have no functional nervous tissue and should undergo progressive avascular necrosis.

After castration the following observations are expected:

Younger lambs (<7d)

- No visible expression of pain behaviour (lambs behaving similarly to lambs that have had no device fitted)
- Scrotum and contents below the clip desensitised and then progressively cooling, drying and reducing in size (dry avascular necrosis)
- Shedding the necrotic tissue at 2-3 weeks (earlier than is typical following a rubber ring)
- No or minimum lesion at the clip-site at any time (similar skin lesion to those associated with rubber rings)

Older lambs

- Low frequency of mild to moderate pain behaviour for 30 – 60 minutes (shifting weight between limbs, restlessness, abnormal posture).
- Scrotum and contents below the clip desensitised and then progressively cooling, drying and reducing in size (dry avascular necrosis)
- Shedding the necrotic tissue at 2-3 weeks
- Some small lesions (superficial abrasion of skin surface) at the clip-site 2-3 weeks after application which should have fully resolved without any need for treatment by 4 weeks

TAILING

ClipFitter can also be used for tailing lambs. After tailing the following should be expected in all lambs:

- Frequent mild to moderate pain behaviour (shifting weight, tail wagging, head turning) for 30-60 minutes. These should be similar to what would be seen with a rubber ring being used WITH local anaesthetic and NSAID
- Shedding of the tail after 2-10 days which is sooner than would be expected with a rubber ring (typically 21 days approx.)
- Skin lesion at the clip site which may be slightly more obvious than that associated with a rubber ring, but healing quickly after shedding until similar to, or less than, lesions typically associated with a rubber ring

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR USE

Clips must be stored in a clean, dry place until use.

Fitters should be properly maintained, clean and dry. They should be cleaned and disinfected regularly during use and at the end of each clipping session.

The weight of the lamb should be accurately obtained and only the correct size of clip used. Lambs that are too heavy for the clip should be castrated using an alternative method.

Limited tissue trauma (crushing) is inevitable, and strict hygiene is required to minimise the risk of secondary infection. Lambs should be clean, dry and healthy. Young lambs must be at least 24hrs old and have received adequate quality colostrum. Lambs should be kept in clean, hygienic conditions until the clip site has fully healed.

Operators should be clean and dry and wearing clean disposable gloves. The clip +/- the skin where the clip will be applied can be disinfected immediately prior to application (as can be done with an ear tag).

If there is any risk of blow-fly activity in the month following application then appropriate preventative measures must be put in place to protect the clip site from fly larvae infestation.

Excessive engorgement of the scrotum and contents should be avoided prior to clipping as this may increase the risk of wet necrosis. Engorgement may occur if the venous drainage is occluded prior to clip application (e.g. by prolonged digital pressure onto the neck of the scrotum, partial closure of the clip or by closing the clip very slowly) or potentially if the lamb is restrained in a sitting position (tipped / rumped) for a prolonged period.

Placing the clip too high on the tail (i.e. to leave a very short tail) or directly onto a vertebral body (rather than at the inter-vertebral joint) may increase the risk of clip site reaction or instantaneous amputation.

FEEDBACK

User feedback is vital for ongoing monitoring and improvement of the ClipFitter system.

To report an adverse effect arising from use of a device for castration and/or tail docking in lambs in Scotland, please call SRUC Vet services on **0131 535 3130** and ask to make your report *and ideally sent a note to brian@lambkind.co.uk*

Users outside Scotland should report to directly at brian@lambkind.co.uk

Watch Tim speak in detail about ClipFitter, warts and all

Watch Tim explain how he fits clips to a young lamb