Disbudding Kid Goats

Texas Cooperative Extension

Why disbud?
• Marketability
  ✓ Show wethers
  □ Required by some shows
  ✓ Avoid getting head caught in fence
• Human safety
  • Older people
  • Children

Why NOT to disbud?
• Marketability
  – Loss of “handles”
  • Drenching
  • Handling (catching & holding)
• Breed character
  • Fullblood Boers
• Defense against predators

Equipment Required
• Disbudding box
  - Box on right too small
• Disbudding iron
• Leather gloves
• Wire brush
• Optional items
  - Hair clippers
  - Hoof shears
  - Tube dehorner
  - Topical antibiotic

Disbudding Box
• Headpiece
  - order from Caprine Supply
• Box
  - Inside dimensions
    • 27.5” long
    • 20” tall
    • 7.5” wide
  - Belly block
    • 9” back from front
    • 9” down from top
  - 3/8” plywood & 1”x8”
    • Avoid too heavy
  - Stout hinge on lid

Disbudding Iron
• Rhinehart X50
  - 216 watts
  - Retail $78 (+ freight)
• Lenk 200
  - 200 watts
  - Retail $81 (+ freight)
• L&H Dehorner
  - 240 watts
  - Use ¾” ID for larger horns
  - Retail $43
• Specify 8’ cord when ordering
What about the lower wattage, less expensive irons?

* Irons like the Lenk125 (125 watts) and the Rhinehart X30 (200 watts) generally:
  - take longer to heat
  - do not get as hot
  - do not retain heat as well

✓ If you're only doing a few goats at a time, and you are willing to be patient between goats, they are sufficient.

✓ They are suited to producers with lots of patience and time …

When should it be done?

- Horns grow differently
  - bucks > does
  - breed differences
    - Spanish
    - Soanen
- 1-3 weeks old
  - Ideal time is just as the horn is coming through the skin

Step #1a

- Hold goat’s head across the rigid part of the nose.
- Apply hot iron with medium pressure until a ring the color of new leather encircles the horn – usually not more than 15 seconds
- Clipping hair around horns (not required) will greatly reduce smoke and will facilitate monitoring of progress. Note: Clipping greatly increases the time required for disbudding.

Step #1b

- Apply hot iron to other horn until a ring the color of new leather encircles the horn – usually not more than 15 seconds

Step #2

- Using the disbudding iron or a 5/8” or 3/4” calf tube dehorner, remove the horns. Usually a scraping motion is most effective.
- If the horns are burned appropriately, the buds can be removed with very little effort.

Accessories

- Something to hold the iron (and other tools) when not in use is quite handy
- Conserves heat
- Reduces melting of cords
- Reduces risk of fire
- Reduces risk of burning someone

Step #2

- Using the disbudding iron or a 5/8” or 3/4” calf tube dehorner, remove the horns. Usually a scraping motion is most effective.
- If the horns are burned appropriately, the buds can be removed with very little effort.
**Step #3a**

- Reapply the hot iron until the exposed bone is slightly yellow in color. Typically, 4-6 seconds is sufficient.
- Horn bud on the right has been reheated.

**Step #3b**

- Repeat step #3a on the other horn bud.
- Use the edge of the iron to cauterize any small bleeders.
- **Optional**
  - Apply a topical antibiotic spray
  - Furox
  - Scarlet Oil
  - Blue Lotion
  - Repel flies
  - Prevent infection

**What then?**

- Scabs will form within 5-7 days
- Scabs will then shed
- Skin will grow over site where horns were
- Evaluate kids 3-4 weeks after disbudding for scur formation

**Equipment Suppliers**

- Caprine Supply  
  P.O. Box Y  
  De Soto, KS 66018  
  1.800.646.7736

- Nasco  
  901 Janesville Ave.  
  Fort Atkinson, WS 53538-0901  
  1.800.558.9595

- Jeffers  
  P.O. Box 948  
  West Plains, MO 65775-0948  
  1.800.533.9977

- Valley Vet Supply  
  1118 Pony Express Hwy.  
  Marysville, KS 66508  
  1.800.360.4838