UQ graduate's research provides relief for beef cattle

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University of Queensland PhD graduate Stephanie Sinclair's research into the effects of dehorning beef cattle has led to a greater understanding of how to best relieve pain and promote faster healing for all breeds of cattle.

Dr Sinclair's research discovered that the Bos indicus cattle experienced stress and pain both during and after dehorning in the northern Australian beef industry.

This finding was in agreement with previous studies conducted on calves from the Bos taurus breed.

"Where my research findings were different was that I found that methods of pain alleviation previously successful for Bos taurus calves was not successful at mitigating the stress and pain experienced in calves and weaners from the Bos indicus breed," Dr Sinclair said.

"This has implications for the implementation of local anaesthetics and analgesics as best practice for dehorning cattle of all breeds. Research into these issues is ongoing."

Her research contributes to improving the understanding of the impacts of dehorning and will ensure that industry can achieve best practice in managing the welfare of their animals to not only satisfy concerns from animal welfare groups and the wider community but also to get on with the demanding job of raising beef cattle.

“I chose this research because I am actively involved in the beef industry and I wanted to be involved in applied research that would improve animal welfare and also be useful at the farm level,” she said.

Dr Sinclair's doctorate was very successful with her research receiving a number of awards including Australian Agricultural Industries Young Innovators and Scientists Award and Australian Society of Animal Production Young Members Travel Award.

She received her PhD degree during a graduation ceremony at UQ St Lucia campus on Friday, 20 July.

Provided by University of Queensland

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