

LWCC STATEMENT – FEBRUARY 2014

TAIL DOCKING (AMPUTATION) IN DAIRY COWS

Tail docking (for the amputation of the bulk of the tail) is carried out in some countries with the stated purpose of decreasing faecal contamination of milk, thus improving milk quality. It is also favoured by some because it prevents tail flicking and the consequent soiling of workers.

An intact tail including the switch (hairy tip) is however essential for cows to deal with fly worry, which is a prevalent and often severe problem in South Africa. Faecal contamination from tails in the dairy can be largely overdue by other means, including switch trimming and restraint of the tail in the parlour.

Consequently the practice of tail docking in dairy cows is regarded as unacceptable in South Africa and should be discouraged in the strongest terms.

