



LIVESTOCK WELFARE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Established 1978

Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee
463 Rodericks Road
Lynnwood
0081
Cell: 082 802 2526
Email: gfbath@gmail.com
or secretary@lwcc.org.za

POSITION STATEMENT

TAIL DOCKING (AMPUTATION) IN DAIRY COWS

Amputation of the lower part of the tail has been advocated in other countries for dairy cows to prevent tail flicking of faeces, which results in faecal contamination of equipment and milk. It is also favoured by some because it prevents 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 overcome by other means, including closed milking systems, good management, switch trimming and restraint of the tail in the parlour.

The tail switch of cattle is used to drive away flies and without it their comfort and welfare is compromised permanently if the tail is docked.

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

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