



OABP Position Statement:

Support for Elimination of Tail Docking by September 2017

The Dairy Processors Association of Canada (DPAC/ATLC) has approached the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners (OABP) as well as the Canadian Association of Bovine Veterinarians (CABV) to express concern over the practice of tail docking on Canadian dairy farms. It is the intent of the Dairy Code of Practice, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, DPAC, Dairy Farmers of Canada through ProAction and the OABP, that tail docking of cattle be done only when medically necessary and that the use of this procedure as a management tool on Canadian dairy operations be eliminated by September 2017.

The CVMA position statement is available at the following link.

<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/tail-docking-of-dairy-cattle>

Improved cow cleanliness reduced incidence of clinical mastitis and ease of milking in parallel parlours are frequently cited reasons for the support of tail docking, however, there is overwhelming scientific evidence to refute these claims. This research is summarized on the Journal of Dairy Science website.

(<https://www.journalofdairyscience.org/taildocking>).

In addition to not significantly improving cow hygiene, tail docking reduces the cow's ability to switch away biting insects, and results in altered behaviors including increased standing time, which is hazardous to cow foot and leg health.

Switch trimming, improved handling procedures and housing management can be implemented to significantly improve udder hygiene and milker safety.

Although the proportion of cows in Canada that are tail docked is small, as an industry we must actively promote the discontinuation of this practice.

Impact on Hygiene Score and Milk Quality

Lombard J.E., Tucker C.B., von Keyserlingk M.A.G., Koprak C.A. Association between cow hygiene, hock injuries, and free stall usage on dairy farms. 93:4668-4676

Schreiner DA, Ruegg PL, 2010, Effects of Tail Docking on Milk Quality and Cow Cleanliness. Journal of Dairy Science 85:2503-2511

Tucker C.B. Fraser D, Weary DM. Tail Docking Dairy Cattle: Effects on Cow Cleanliness and Udder Health. Journal of Dairy Science; 84:84-87

Public Point of View

Weary DM¹, Schuppli CA, von Keyserlingk MA. Tail docking dairy cattle: response from an online engagement. J Anim Sci. 2011 Nov;89(11):3831-7

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