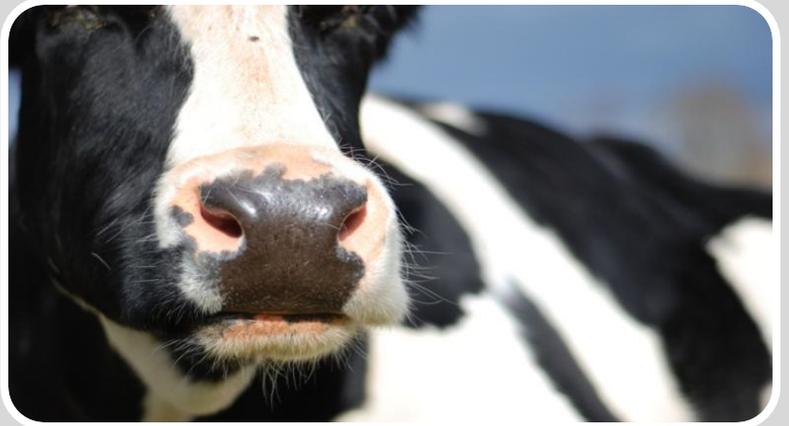


Tail Docking: A Painful & Unnecessary Practice

What is tail-docking?

Tail docking is the partial amputation—typically without anesthetic—of up to two-thirds of a cow's tail.

A 2001 USDA survey found that nearly 51% of U.S. dairy operations practiced tail docking; some tail-docked only a small percentage of their herd, but about one-in-six docked their entire herds' tails. 82.3% of 113 dairies surveyed in a 2005-06 national poll practiced tail docking.



The American Veterinary Medical Association, California Farm Bureau, California Cattlemen's Association and California Veterinary Medical Association all oppose routine cattle tail docking.

Tail docking causes pain and distress.

Scientific studies have shown that tail docking is a serious welfare problem, causing distress, pain, and increased fly attacks. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and industry representatives all oppose and criticize routine tail docking of dairy cows. The AVMA asserts that "Current scientific literature indicates that routine tail docking provides no benefit to the animal, and that tail docking can lead to distress during fly seasons." The CVMA states that "it has been shown that cows are unable to effectively keep flies away once the tail is docked."

Several European countries and California (the nation's largest dairy-producing state) have banned the practice.

Tail docking is unnecessary.

The California Dairy Quality Assurance program (CDQA) advises: "There is no benefit to tail docking normal, healthy tails in dairy cattle based on peer-reviewed scientific studies and governmental sponsored research."

The National Milk Producers Federation writes: "Tail docking of dairy calves is not recommended. A thorough review of the scientific literature does not support anecdotal reports of the benefits of tail docking."

"The cumulative body of research on tail docking speaks loudly. The early reported benefits do not exist, and tail docking is now more of a producer preference than a cow cleanliness/udder health issue. In light of this new research, and the public's heightened concerns regarding animal welfare, **the dairy industry should eliminate the routine practice of docking tails.**"

—Thomas Quaife, editor, *Dairy Herd Management*

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners concludes that no "sufficient scientific evidence" exists to support the procedure.