



Heads up on tail-docking!

Tail-docking can be done for cleanliness and to reduce the risk of flystrike. It's important to use the right equipment and leave enough length to ensure the welfare of your sheep.

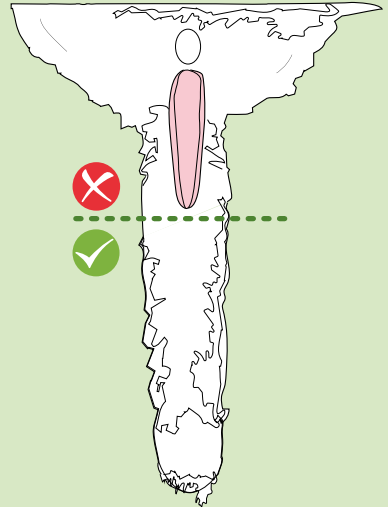


Sheep under 6 months old

You must use a hot iron or rubber ring.
Otherwise you can be fined \$500.

Leave enough tail on so that it covers the vulva in ewes and a similar length in rams.

If you dock any shorter than the distal end of the caudal fold, you can be fined \$500 (or \$1500 for the business).



Why this length?

Leaving enough tail to cover the vulva in ewes, and a similar length in rams, has been a recommended best practice since 2005 when the Painful Husbandry Procedures code of welfare was issued. It is also a requirement in many industry assurance programmes.

It's good for the sheep because:

- Tails deter insects from their rear end and help prevent dagging by allowing the sheep to flick faecal matter away.
- The risk of flystrike is increased by having a tail either too long or too short.
- Tails provide a muscle anchor, which helps regulate the proper function of the rectum.
- It reduces sun damage and may help prevent prolapses.
- The shorter a tail is docked, the more painful it is for the sheep.

Sheep over 6 months old

Tail-docking must be done by a veterinarian, using pain relief. Otherwise you could face a criminal conviction and fine of up to \$3000 (or \$15,000 for the business).

For more information on regulations and the codes of welfare please visit www.mpi.govt.nz/animalregs