

METHODS USED AND REASONS GIVEN FOR TAIL-DOCKING SHEEP IN THE STATE OF PARANA, BRAZIL

FO Stamm and CFM Molento

Animal Welfare Laboratory (LABEA), Federal University of Parana (UFPR), Agrarian Sciences Sector, Curitiba, Parana, Brazil
carlamolento@ufpr.br

Tail-docking is a common procedure carried out in sheep. There are different methods for tail-docking, but there is evidence that all of them cause pain in sheep when anesthesia and analgesia are waived. The objective of the present work was to identify which methods are used for docking and the reasons why farmers dock their sheep tails in the State of Parana, Brazil. The study was carried out through telephone interviews from October 2014 to March 2015 with 188 farmers associated to local sheep cooperatives. From the farmers contacted, 52 no longer breed sheep and two farmers, who had started the questionnaire, quit the interview before answering all the questions. Of the remaining 134 farmers, 116 (86.6%) were man. The majority of sheep was Texel, Santa Inês, Dorper and Ile de France. One hundred and six (79.1%) farmers docked tails; only six (5.7%) of them used anesthesia during the procedure. The most popular method of tail-docking was the rubber ring (81.1%), followed by rubber ring with surgical removing of the tail some hours after (5.7%), surgical removing with scalpel (4.7%), electrical pliers (3.8%), hot iron (2.8%) and rubber ring with cauterization some hours after (1.9%). The reasons given for tail docking in sheep were hygiene in general (31.2%), facilitated mating (22.5%), breed standard (16.1%), esthetics (11.9%), hygiene during the birth (8.3%), avoidance of dirt in ram's penis during the copulation (1.8%), differentiation between rams and ewes (1.4%), avoidance of myiasis and worms (1.4%), facilitated sucking by the lamb (0.9%), tradition (0.9%), higher fertility in ewes (0.9%), higher acceptance by buyers (0.9%), differentiation between purebred and crossbred animals (0.5%), facilitated health management (0.5%), facilitated parturition (0.5%) and because others farmers do it (0.5%). Sixty-nine (65.1%) farmers gave more than one reason for tail docking. The main reason given to tail-docking is hygiene in general which can be controlled with better flock management. The third and fourth most common reasons were breed standard and esthetics, evidencing the influence of culture in human attitudes towards animals. It is important to improve scientific knowledge regarding the other reasons given, to either discredit them in case they are not true or to produce painless alternatives, in case the procedure brings real benefits.

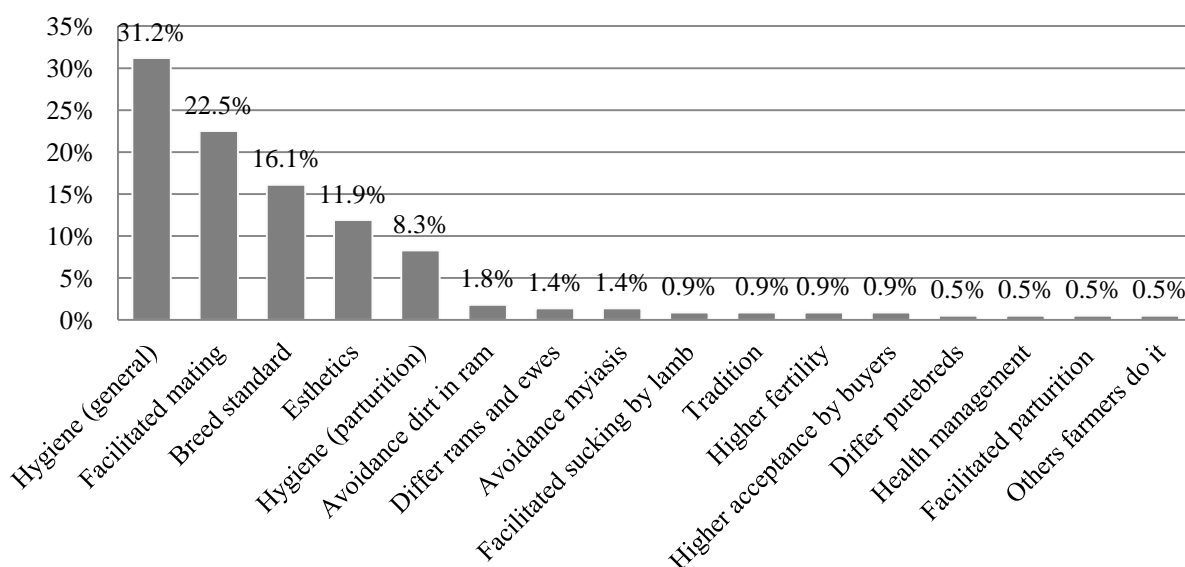


Figure 1. Reasons given, through telephone interviews from October 2014 to March 2015, for tail-docking sheep in the State of Parana, Brazil.

