

Position Statement on Tail Docking and Ear Cropping

WHEREAS the OMVQ's mission is to ensure the protection of the public and to this end, the OMVQ oversees and monitors the profession's practices and ensures the professional development of veterinarians in order to fully contribute to public health and the health and welfare of animals;

WHEREAS all surgical procedures carry medical risks of complications such as those arising from anesthesia, postsurgical infections and acute pain or chronic pain, and should only be performed if the benefits to the animal or population are justified;

WHEREAS tail docking and ear cropping for cosmetic reasons or breed standard purposes or according to husbandry practices in the species mentioned herein are surgical procedures, the benefits and purpose of which are insufficiently supported by current scientific evidence and ethically unjustified;

WHEREAS tail docking and ear cropping for non-medical reasons has been banned in many countries and provinces;

WHEREAS the National Farm Animal Care Council opposes the practice of tail docking in its Codes of Practice for the care and handling of dairy cattle, beef cattle and horses;

WHEREAS procedures performed for aesthetic purposes may affect the behaviour of the animal and its ability to communicate effectively;

WHEREAS tail docking and ear cropping are surgical procedures that can only be performed by veterinarians, and this in accordance with current legislation, more specifically section 7 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act;

WHEREAS docking and cropping carried out using any procedure other than surgery (such as the use of constricting bands) in the species mentioned herein may violate fundamental principles of animal welfare and good practices;

WHEREAS the OMVQ has carried out, for over twenty years, awareness campaigns among the public and breeders regarding the practice of tail docking and ear cropping and done so even more actively in last ten years, through various position statements;

The OMVQ disapproves the practice of the following surgical procedures for aesthetic, competitive or breeding purposes by whosoever:

- Tail docking and ear cropping in dogs and cats;
- Tail docking in cattle
- Tail docking in horses.

The OMVQ approves the practice of these surgical procedures by veterinarians for medical reasons only.

Persons other than veterinarians who perform these surgical procedures in Quebec will be charged with the illegal practice of veterinary medicine and subjected to penalties under the law.

In effect April 2, 2020