



February 2010

Member Information Note

Breeders are warned not to short dock tails.

The Society does not require tails to be docked within its breed standard. Breeders often choose to dock tails on welfare grounds due to prevention of fly strike etc; some type of Texels are not tail docked at all, again this is breeder choice.

Tail docking for cosmetic reasons cannot be justified, any Breed Society which encourages tail docking for appearance or cosmetic reasons should re-examine its standard in light of animal welfare considerations.

All sheep breeders should implement the Welfare Code, which requires careful consideration of the need for tail docking. The code of recommendations for the welfare of sheep can be obtained through Animal Health Offices; Breeders can find their nearest office by visiting the Animal Health website, www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth

When tail docking is necessary, lambs should be docked as early as practically possible after a secure maternal bond has been established, but not usually before they are 24 hours old. The Government agrees that this is good practice (FAWC recommendations to Government).

Practice of short docking can damage the nerves and muscles of sheep leading to serious welfare issue which can cause considerable suffering later in life.

End.