

Are You in Compliance with the Sheep Code of Practices?

The National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practices for The Care and Handling of Sheep (Sheep Code) was released in 2013. Compliance with the Sheep Code needs to become a priority for our industry.

Two areas that producers should pay special attention to are the requirements for castration and tail docking. Warnings are currently being given and animals in noncompliance will be culled or removed from sheep events beginning 2018.

The Sheep Code says: Castration must be performed by or under the direct supervision of competent personnel using proper, clean, sanitized and well-maintained tools, and accepted techniques. All castration must meet the method, age range and pain control use requirements stipulated in the table below.

<i>Method</i>	<i>Age range</i>
<i>Rubber ring (confinement and semi-confinement systems)</i>	<i>24 hours – 10 days</i>
<i>Rubber ring (pasture lambing system*)</i>	<i>24 hours – 6 weeks</i>
<i>Surgical</i>	<i>24 hours – 4 weeks</i>
<i>Burdizzo (clamp)</i>	<i>1 week[^] – 6 weeks</i>
<i>Surgical</i>	<i>Older than 4 weeks, anesthesia and analgesia required</i>
<i>Burdizzo (clamp)</i>	<i>Older than 6 weeks, anesthesia and analgesia required</i>
	<i>Castration of rams beyond 10 weeks of age must be done by a veterinarian using anesthesia and perioperative analgesia</i>

Tail docking, the Sheep Code says: Tail docking must be performed by, or under the direct supervision of, competent personnel using proper, clean, sanitized, and well-maintained tools, and accepted techniques. Tail docking using a surgical technique (e.g using a blade alone) must be done by a licensed veterinarian with anesthesia and analgesia. Tail docking for lambs over six weeks of age must be done by a licensed veterinarian with anesthesia and analgesia. Rubber rings must not be applied beyond six weeks of age. ***Docked tails must cover the vulva in ewes and the equivalent length in rams. Tails must be docked no shorter than the distal end of the caudal fold***



For a copy of the National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practices for The Care and Handling of Sheep please contact the office or it can be viewed on line at www.nfacc.ca.

Please take the time to read through the Sheep Code and adjust your production practices if needed.