

Sheep Rectal Prolapse Policy for 4-H and FFA Sponsored Exhibits

Youth as livestock producers, are in a unique position. While 4-H and FFA livestock projects are a small part of the livestock industry, as a whole, they often are the window through which the public sees animal agriculture. It is essential that the view seen by the public is a positive one. The ethical treatment of animals and the elimination of unethical practices are important to our youth programs and the entire livestock industry.

The West Virginia University 4-H Program and the West Virginia Agricultural Educators support the current American Veterinary Medicine Association official policy for tail docking of lambs below:

Lambs' tails are docked for cleanliness and to minimize fly strike, but cosmetic, excessively short tail docking can lead to an increased incidence of rectal prolapses and is unacceptable for the welfare of the lamb. We recommend that lambs' tails be docked at the level of the distal end of the caudal tail fold.

Beginning January 1, 2017 market lambs or breeding sheep entered in 4-H/FFA sponsored youth fair exhibits will be observed by Extension and/or FFA personnel for evidence of rectal prolapse. Any lamb exhibiting any signs of rectal prolapse will be disqualified from the event, any official tags removed, and the animal removed from the premises.