Colorado Dairy Cow Tail Banding

Reasoning behind husbandry practices are thoughtful and are developed with the health and well-being of the animals, workers, and the environment top of mind.

Food & Drug Administration

Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance

(Revised 2007)

ITEM 13r. MILKING - FLANKS, UDDERS AND TEATS

"Milking shall be done in the milking barn, stable or parlor.... ***The flanks, udders, bellies and tails of all milking lactating animals shall be free from visible dirt.*** Cleanliness of the lactating animals is one of the most important factors affecting the bacterial count of the milk. Unless the udders and teats are clean and dry before milking, particles of filth or contaminated water are apt to drop or be drawn into the milk. Such contamination of the milk is particularly dangerous because manure may contain the organisms of brucellosis and tuberculosis, and polluted water may contain the organisms of typhoid fever and other intestinal diseases."

"...Flanks, bellies, tails and udders are clipped as often as necessary to facilitate cleaning of these areas and are free from dirt."

Tail Banding Protocol

- Elasticator band placed right above the switch

  switch-the longer, coarser hair at the end of the tail

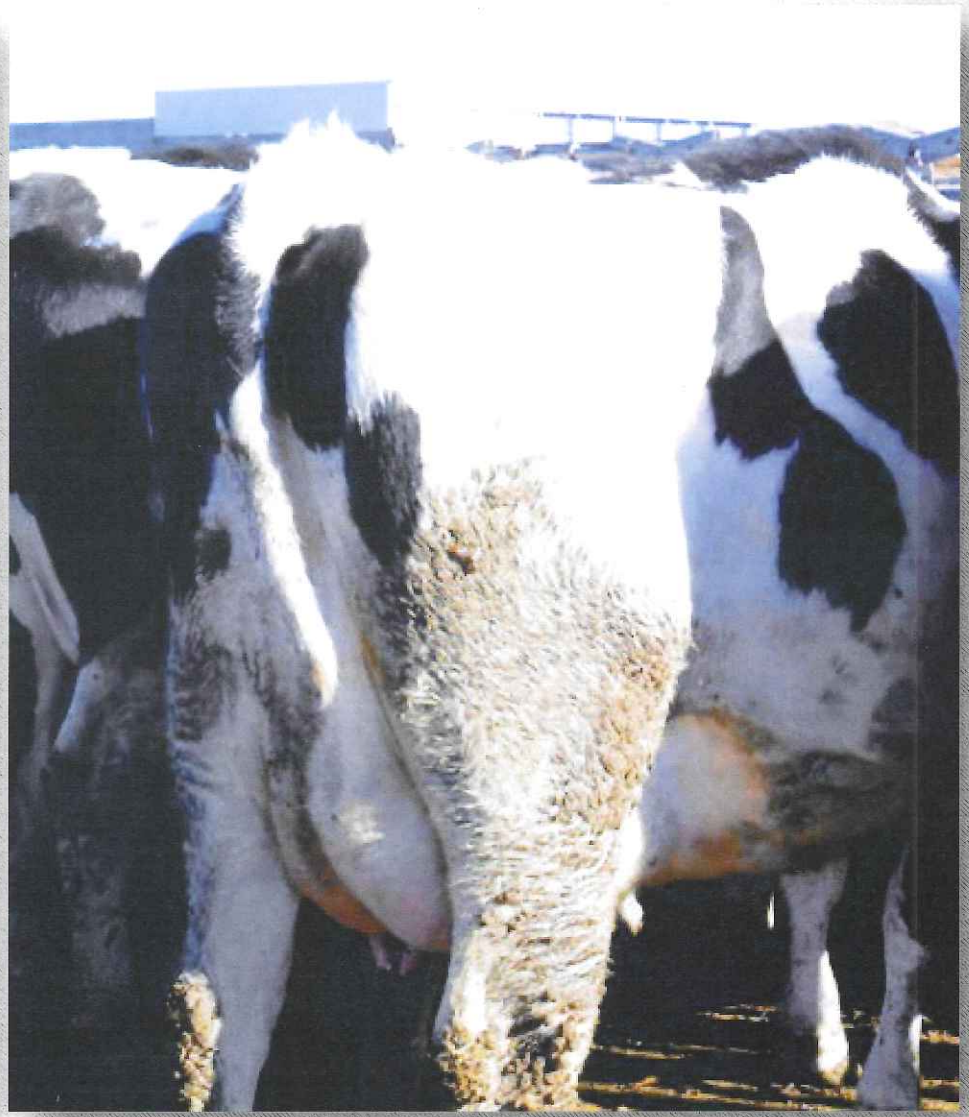
- Applied by an experienced caregiver trained by a licensed veterinarian
- Performed once in her lifetime at infancy

Effective switch trimming on non-banded tails must be performed a minimum of 4-5 times/year/cow

Banded vs. Trimmed

Trimmed Tail

In order to abide by federal health standards producers trim their cow's tails multiple times/year



Banded Tail

Banding is the safe and humane alternative to trimming.

Humane Choices Available for Dairy Cattle Tail Banding

"Callicrate Banders: The Humane Choice."
-Mike Callicrate, Humane Society of the U.S. Agriculture Council for Colorado and owner of Callicrate Banders

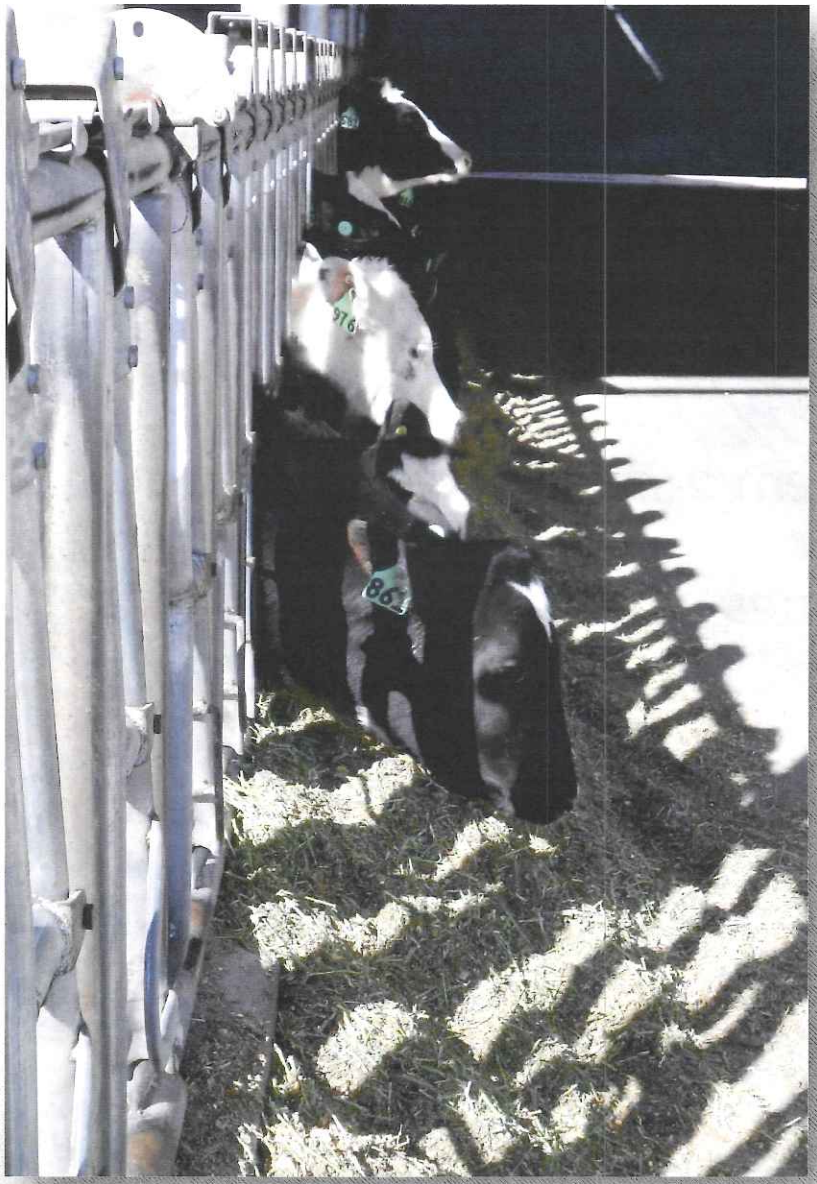
Callicrate BANDERS
THE HUMANE CHOICE. PERIOD.

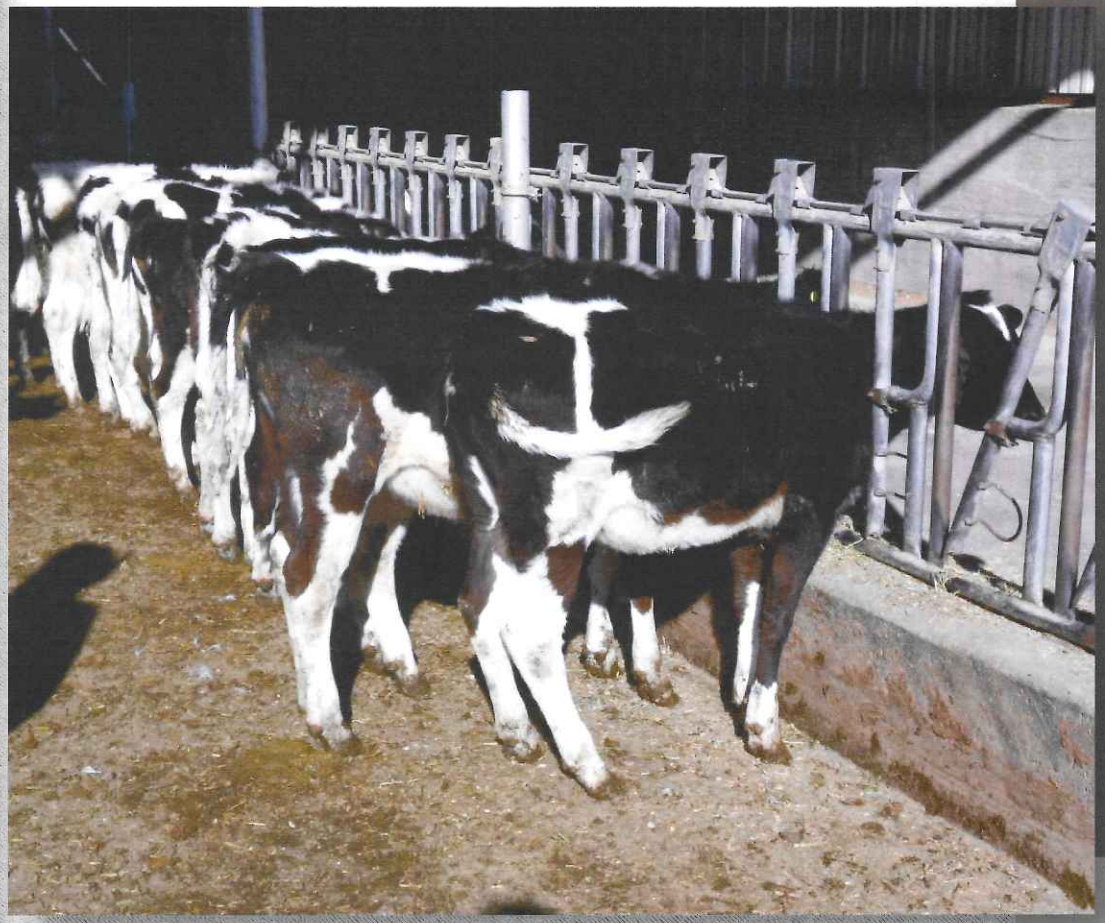
"Dairy cow tails present a sanitary issue in milking barns and parlors. To improve this situation, **the practice of docking tails is growing. Veterinarians and dairymen are using the *Callicrate Bander* to remove a portion of the tail."**

"Proper and consistent band tension negates blood flow, ***triggering a natural pain blocking effect***."

Image and Text Source:
http://www.nobull.net/bander/SBtailDocking.htm
http://www.humanesociety.org/about/state/agcouncils/colorado_agriculture_council.html

Prior to Banding





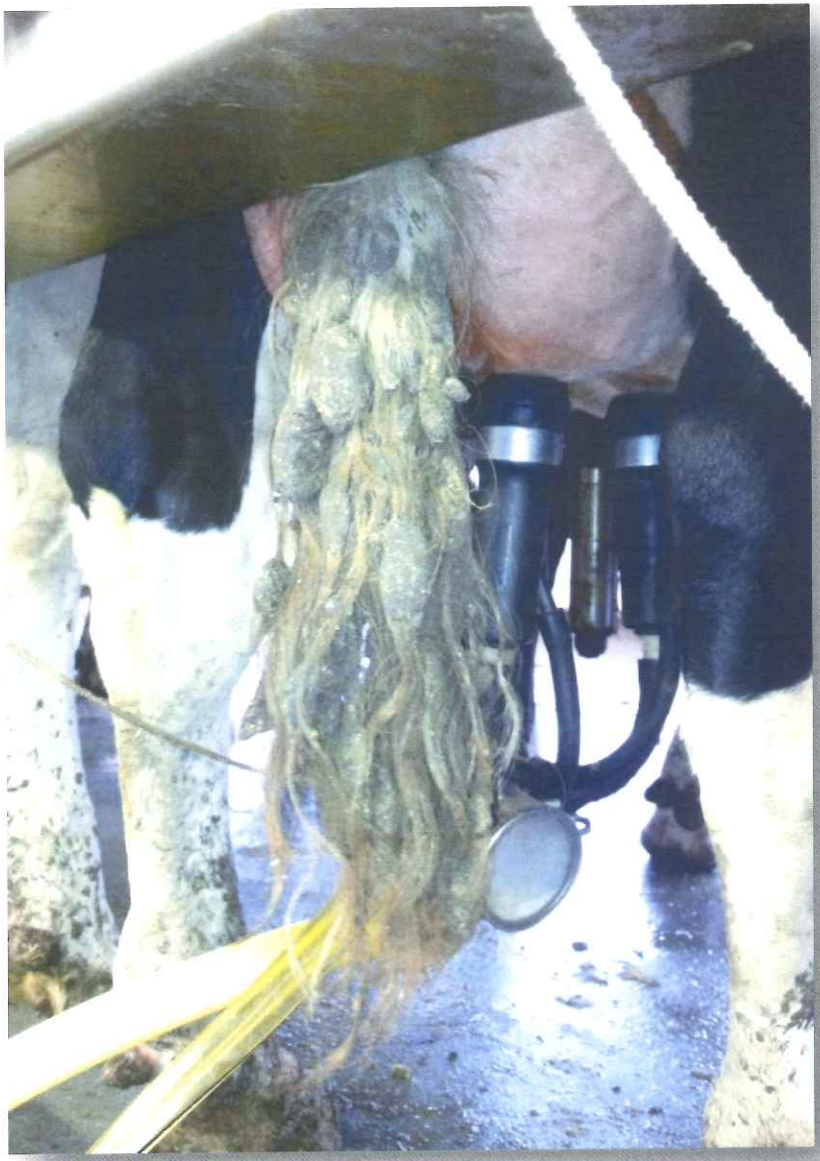
Tail Banding

Tail Banding

Two weeks post-banding

COWS WITH UN-TRIMMED TAILS:

In the Milking Parlor



COWS WITH TRIMMED TAILS

In the Milking Parlor

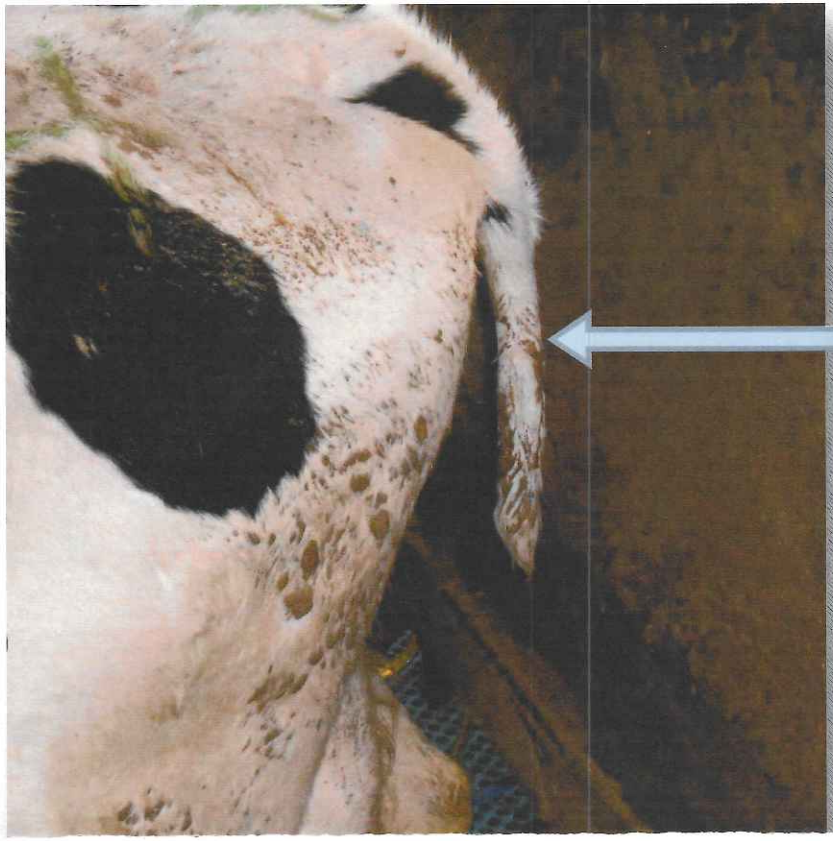
TAIL-BANDED COWS:

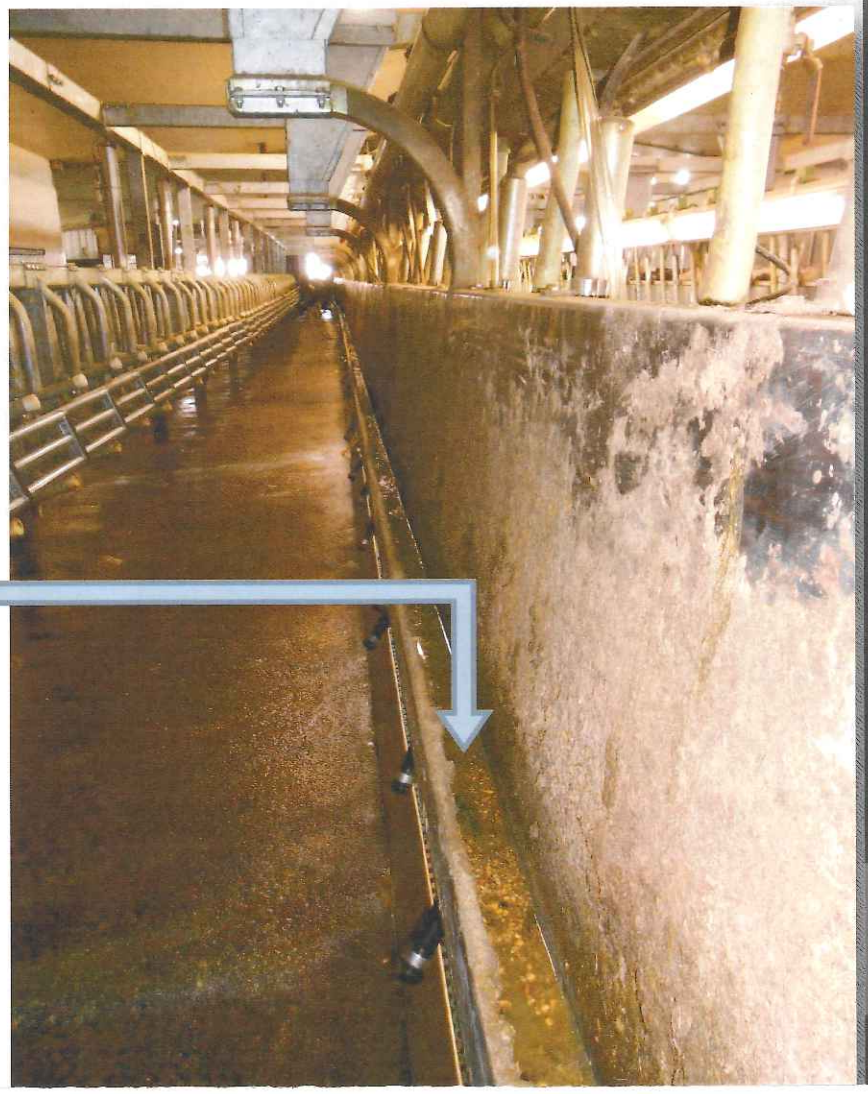
In the Milking Parlor

TAIL-BANDED COWS

In the Milking Stall

The proper banded tail length prevents the tail from coming into contact with the gutter/catch tray in the milk stall during milking.





Free Stall Barns

Free Stall Barns

Banded vs. Trimmed vs. Un-trimmed

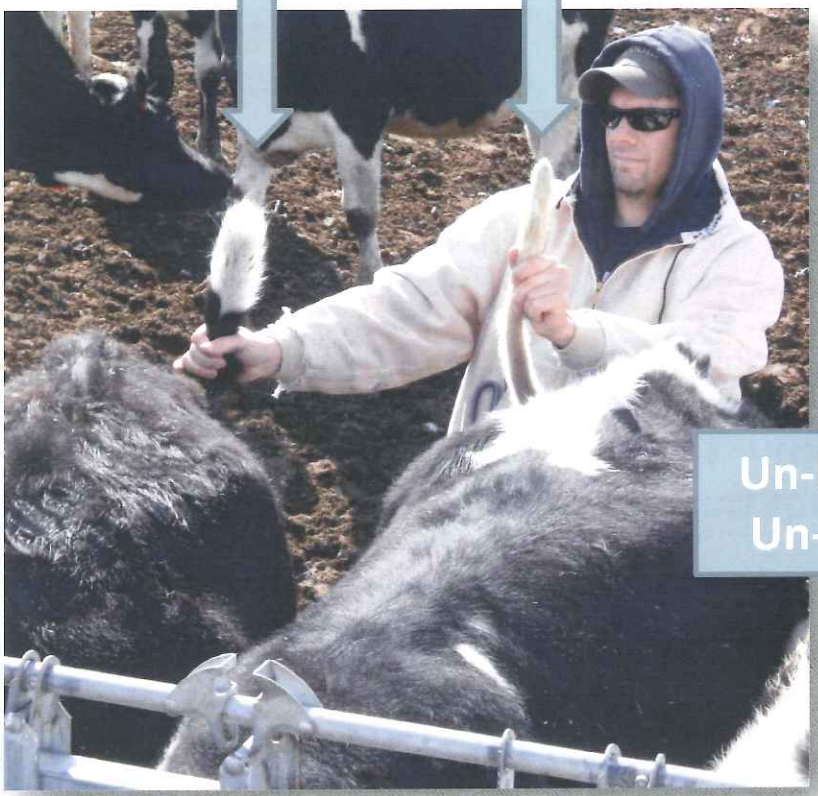
Banded tail hanging above the lane

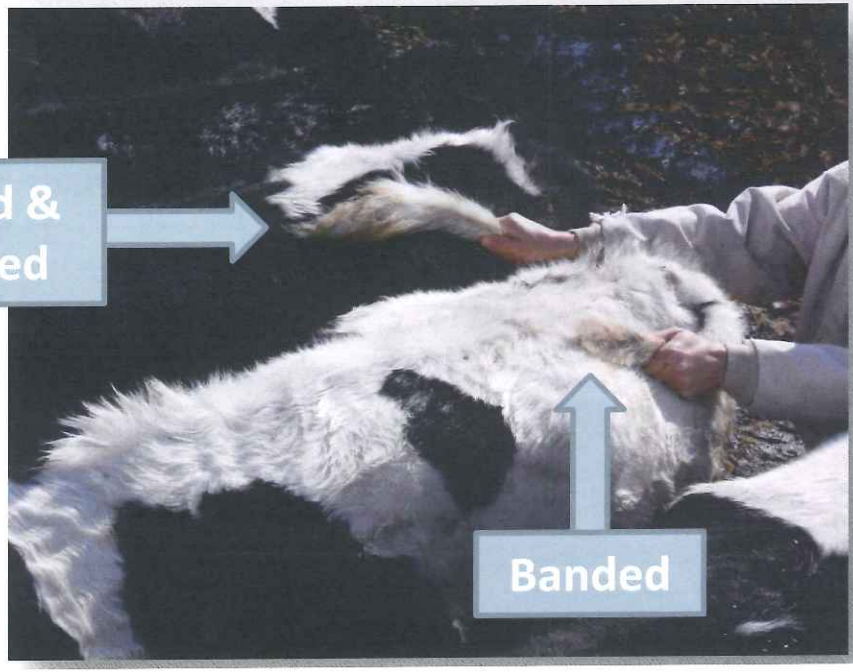
Trimmed tail lying in the lane

Un-trimmed tail lying

Banded vs. Trimmed and Un-banded

With or without the switch cow tails are not effective fly killers.





Workplace Safety

-Standing behind cows is dangerous due to the increased possibility of being kicked.

-Handling sharp objects while behind the cow increases the chance of injury substantially.

-Long tails have the potential to cause injury to caregivers.

Animal Well-being

- Fly Abatement Protocol during summer months
  - Colorado = Desert
    - Morgan County -13 inches rainfall/year
      (source: http://www.bestplaces.net/climate/county/colorado/morgan)
    - Weld County -13.3 inches rainfall/year
      (source: http://www.bestplaces.net/climate/county/colorado/weld)
  - Each cow walks under dust bags as she leaves the Milking Parlor 3x per day during fly season
  - Diligent maintenance and grooming of pens
  - Grading engineered so no pooling occurs in a rain event
  - Conduct routine aerial spraying and fogging
  - Use fly bait on building perimeters

Animal Well-being

- Tail swishing can create lesions in the eyes of other cows leading to viral infections (i.e. pinkeye)
- A build-up of frozen manure on the end of tail can lead to frostbite
- Long tails spread debris on cows backs which in turn attracts flies
- A cow resting in a close quarter, open lot is at a higher risk of having her tail stepped on and injured.