



# Docking and Castration

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Docking and castration are often done at the same time on animals that are just a few days old. Docking is the process of removing the tail to prevent problems from fly strike. Castration is the process of removing the testicles to prevent the development of aggressive behaviors.



Several methods can be used for docking or castration. Be sure to perform these operations carefully and use good sanitation to prevent any sickness or death. Be careful of performing either task in warm weather when flies can lay eggs in the tail or the area that is healing. Always give a tetanus shot to lambs when they are docked or castrated. Some of the tools that can be used are listed below:

## Burdizzo

The burdizzo is used for castration. It is a metal instrument that severs or crushes the cords and associated blood vessels leading to the testicles. This stops the blood circulation to the testicles so that they degenerate within the scrotum. This is also a bloodless method of castration. When using this method, be sure that both cords are severed or crushed. The cords are located above the testicles.





## Emasculator

The emasculator is used for docking. It is a metal instrument that crushes the tail as it is cut off. The crushing helps to seal the wound and thus decrease the amount of bleeding. Some emasculators also include heat, which cauterizes the tail stump as the tail is cut off. However, the wound from an emasculator typically takes longer to heal than other methods.



## Elastrator

An elastrator uses a tool that stretches a heavy-duty rubber band (elastrator band) over the tail or over the scrotum and testicles. It takes approximately two weeks for the tail or scrotum to dry up and fall off. When using an elastrator band for castrating, be sure to check that both testicles are in the scrotum below the band.

Once the elastrator band is applied, the lamb will show signs that he is in pain for 10 to 15 minutes, however, this is an effective and bloodless method of docking and castrating lambs. This method also does not leave an open wound thereby decreasing the chance of infection.

## Knife

A knife can be used for both docking and castration. When used for docking, place the blade of the knife on the underside of the tail and cut the tail off in one slice. The tail will bleed, so be prepared to treat with blood stop powder. To castrate with a knife, cut the bottom of the scrotum off and pull each testicle out. Allow the cord to tear to prevent excessive bleeding. Do not cut the cord with the knife. The bottom of the scrotum should remain open to allow for drainage after castration. Before using a knife to dock or castrate, be sure to disinfect your hands and the knife.

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