



Livestock Handling Safety Training Program



Goal

This program provides ideas and suggestions for reducing the number of accidents that occur while working with livestock.

Objective

Farm and ranch personnel working with livestock will be able to identify hazardous conditions and situations that could result in injury.

Background

The [National Ag Safety Database](#) shows that one in eight farm injuries involves animals, ranking second to farm machinery in the total number of cases. The most frequent types of injuries include being stepped on, knocked down, kicked, bitten, or pinned between an animal and a hard surface. Many of the hazards involved in working with farm animals can be reduced, and injuries prevented, by taking a few basic precautions and observing

safety rules. [Dr. Temple Grandin](#), of Colorado State University, has demonstrated that the use of safe and gentle livestock handling techniques results in a higher-quality final product. Agitated animals often become “[dark cutters](#)” resulting in lower-grade meat with bruises, which must be trimmed out during processing, decreasing the profitability of the animal.

Facts

According to the [Agricultural Safety and Health Extension Community of Practice](#), animals sense their surroundings very differently:

- Many animals see in black and white.
- Cows (and many other animals) have poor depth perception. If there is an object on the ground or a shadow in a cow's path, the cow will likely stop and put its head down before proceeding. When trying to move cows, check the

path of movement for any objects or shadows that may cause the cow to stop.

- Cattle have 300° panoramic vision and can be spooked by quick movements behind them (see Figure 1). When trying to move cows, stay within their field of vision.
- Due to their sensitive hearing, livestock can detect sounds that humans cannot hear. Loud noises easily frighten them. Dr. Grandin's research shows high-frequency sounds hurt animals' ears. This may explain why some animals are skittish or balky in unfamiliar surroundings.

The following signs may indicate aggression or fear in the animals you work with:

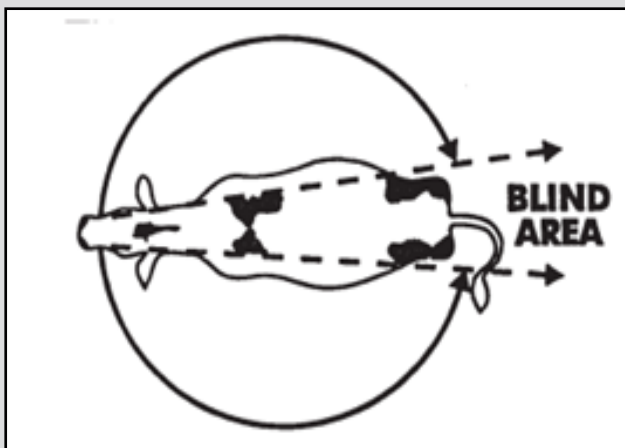


Figure 1

- Raised or pinned (flattened) ears.
- Raised tail or rapidly lashing tail.
- Raised hair on the back.
- Bared teeth.
- Pawing the ground.
- Stiff-legged gate or posture.
- Snorting.
- Growling.

Accident Prevention

Livestock handling methods may vary greatly, but there are some general rules for working with animals.

- Avoid quick movements or loud noises.
- Establish a routine.
- Move slowly and deliberately around livestock.
- Never prod an animal when it has nowhere to go.
- Touch animals gently rather than shoving or bumping them.
- Keep children away from animals and livestock handling areas.
- Respect animals. Their size and bulk make them potentially dangerous.
- Provide special facilities for male animals.
- Be cautious when working around male animals. They are more aggressive by nature.
- Animals have strong maternal instincts so take extra care around newborns.
- Show caution around animals that are frightened.
- Always have an escape route when working in close quarters with animals.

Facilities

Many injuries to livestock and farm personnel are related to poor facilities, housekeeping, or faulty equipment. Irregular surfaces and cluttered walkways present numerous opportunities for slip, trip, and fall accidents. Use the following to help reduce injuries:

- Concrete flooring with a rough finish to provide firmer footing.
- Good drainage and slatted floors help prevent slipping.

- Grooved walkways in high traffic areas provide better footing.
- Strong, durable fencing and gates securely contain livestock.
- Sharp, protruding objects must be removed to avoid puncture wounds.
- Lighting should be even because shadows cast by uneven lighting tend to frighten animals.
- Alleys and chutes should be wide enough for animals to pass through but not wide enough to turn around.
- Keep areas clean. Good housekeeping is essential for personal safety and the health and safety of your livestock.

- Maintain a clean, dry environment.
- Minimize dust with good ventilation.
- Check feed carefully for contamination before feeding. Various molds that cause respiratory and digestive problems may be present in feed. Deal with reputable feed dealers to reduce the chances of purchasing contaminated feed.
- Take preventive measures to limit the transmission of diseases like anthrax, leptospirosis, rabies, brucellosis, Q-fever, and tuberculosis from livestock to humans. These measures include:
 - Keep clean and well-ventilated animal facilities.
 - Test and immunize livestock.
 - Use sanitary practices to handle animals and animal by-products.

Health and Hygiene

Good hygiene is vital to livestock management, especially in confined areas where diseases spread quickly.



Review

- Which of the following behaviors may indicate that an animal is aggressive or frightened?
 - Failure to make eye contact, standing still with its eyes closed, and reaching out to sniff your hand.
 - Rapidly lashing tail, pawing the ground, and stiff-legged gait.
 - Standing with its back to you, watching the gate, and bobbing its head.
 - None of the above.
- Some general rules that apply to working with animals are:
 - Always have an escape route, establish a routine, and avoid quick movements and loud noises.
 - Work in dim lighting, always use an electric prod, and rush at animals to get them to move faster.
 - Show extra caution around mothers and newborns as well as mature male animals.
 - Both a and c.
- The flooring that is best suited to prevent injuries from livestock is:
 - Smooth finish concrete without grooved walkways.
 - Astroturf.
 - Rough-finished concrete with grooved walkways.
 - Rough cut planking.
- Even lighting in livestock facilities is beneficial because.
 - It prevents shadows which may frighten animals.
 - It's easier to see the animals' identification tags.
 - It saves energy and reduces utility costs.
 - There is no benefit.
- What problems are caused by a cow's almost panoramic vision?
 - You can't sneak up on them.
 - It may cause them to be spooked by quick movements behind them.
 - It causes them to see in three dimensions.
 - They often need corrective surgery on their eyes.
- When do animals tend to be most aggressive?
 - During the full moon, after they have eaten, and during the heat of the day.
 - When they have newborns, when they are mature, intact males, and when they are prodded with nowhere to go.
 - At sunset, when it is foggy, and when their mid-day feeding is late.
 - They are ALWAYS aggressive.
- What livestock diseases may be transmitted from livestock to humans?
 - Chickenpox, measles, bovine flu, and colic.
 - Parvo, blackleg, screwworms, and botts.
 - Founder, acidosis, milk fever, and thrush.
 - Tuberculosis, anthrax, leptospirosis, and rabies.
 - Hay lung, lumbago, wet brain, and ketosis.
- How can the transmission of disease between humans and animals be minimized?
 - Clean and well-ventilated animal facilities.
 - Testing and immunization of livestock.
 - Use of sanitary practices to handle animals.
 - All of the above.

Answers: 1. b 2. d 3. c 4. a 5. b 6. b 7. d 8. d



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