

Animal Handling: Cattle



Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. Find more Toolbox Talks on the Occupational Safety web page.

General Information

The majority of injuries on a cattle farm occur during human/animal interactions. It is important to pay close attention to the potential dangers of working with cattle, and always use correct animal handling techniques. Attention to these dangers is key to personal and animal safety. When handling cattle, remember to:

Preventive measures

- Know the characteristics of cattle
 - Unpredictable and capable of rapid movement
 - Have good memories and learn quickly



- o Balance lines if you move through the lines, the cattle will move the other way.
- Flight zone animal's personal space.
 - Approximately 5 to 25 feet around them.
 - Have a powerful kick as a defense mechanism.
- Calmly handle to prevent the animal from becoming stressed or causing injury to itself, other animals or the handler.
- Avoid lifting calves, if you must lift a calf, use your legs and keep your back upright.
- Be aware of the protective nature of a recently calved cow.
- Be aware of your surroundings and your body in relation to cattle.
- Have an escape route, if it becomes necessary to get out guickly.

Safety tips when working with cattle

- Do not turn your back on a bull.
- Do not expose cattle to loud noises or quick movements.
- Avoid leaving an animal alone, as cattle are herd animals.
- Avoid placing yourself between cattle and a wall or gate.
- Avoid working alone with cattle, at a minimum, work in pairs.
- Do not put arms or legs through fences or gates.
- Do not chase or beat cattle, and limit the use of prodders.

Supervisor:	
Participants:	
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Discussion Date: