

Livestock Handling

AgSafe Safe Work Procedure

Livestock will retain fear memories until they are conditioned not to fear an event or object. It is easier to prevent the fear than recondition the animal.

1. All animals have a capacity to be unpredictable
2. Animals experience the same feelings people do
 - a. Fear, anger, nervousness etc.

Move slowly and deliberately around livestock

1. Touch them to make them aware of your presence
 - a. Don't bump and shove
 - b. Animals that have frequent gentle touch with people will handle better than animals with minimal or abusive handling
2. Livestock have a strong herd instinct
3. Frightened animals are unpredictable and will react with fight or flight, allow them to calm down before handling them

THIS WILL TAKE 30 MINUTES

Calm animals will let you know what they are afraid of. Excited animals will not. Animals remember...

Proper Livestock Handling

- Livestock handling jobs should only be entrusted to people with adequate strength and experience...
 1. Caretaker must be dominant, not abusive
 2. Slow is fast...be patient
 3. Stay alert you may have to move quickly
 4. Never turn your back on animals especially injured or frightened.....
 5. Animals have sensitive hearing; keep noise to a minimum
 6. Livestock like to follow the leader \they are motivated to keep continual visual contact with each other
- The three most common mistakes made by handlers are:
 1. Rough Handling
 2. Excessive prodding
 3. Overcrowding

Flight Zone

When you enter the flight zone 4 things can happen...

1. Animal is happy to see you
2. Animal will move away
3. Animal will run away and pressure the facilities damaging or destroying them

4. Animal will remove you from its flight zone

Cattle

1. Cattle calm quicker in a herd
2. Cattle can change when frightened or threatened
3. Cattle have a 300 degree range of vision
4. Their blind spots are...
 - a. Directly in front
 - b. Directly behind them
5. When twisting the tail, let go! As soon as cow moves
6. Dairy bulls are understood to be the most dangerous of farm animals

Horses

Horses can be excitable and unusual. Unexpected circumstances can frighten them.

1. Horses handled a lot tend to respond well to human contact
2. Horses are monocular; both eyes can be used separately. Which allows for almost a full 350 degree view
3. Their blind spots are directly behind them
4. Know your horse, the breed will influence the behavior
 - a. Hot bloods
 - b. Warm bloods
 - c. Cold bloods

Make sure you have the right horse for you. Match rider ability to the horse, not the horse to the rider.

Pigs

Pigs can be dangerous, they should be handled with a great deal of caution, their size can be deceiving.

1. When working with pigs be patient
2. Utilize hog panels (boards to block you from them) at all times
3. Hogs can be moved backward by placing a basket or box over their head as they will try to back out of it
4. Hogs can hurt you by biting, or running over you
5. Pigs will squeal for no reason at all
 - a. A squealing pig is not necessarily a distressed pig
6. Pigs cannot be chased
 - a. They need to be guided rather than driven
7. Hogs are sensitive to change, if you are having trouble loading or moving them consider the lighting and the temperature
8. Pigs have a greater circle of vision than cows, about 310 degrees
9. Do not scare sleeping pigs

Sheep & Goats

1. Sheep & goats are usually passive and can be herded
2. Do not handle them roughly or loudly and they will cooperate with you
3. Sheep & goats will pile up or bunch when frightened
4. If sheep & goats charge they will jump into your chest
5. Sheep & goats are very sensitive to light

Livestock Stress Points

1. Isolation
2. Processing
3. Illness & Treatment
4. Loading/ Unloading
5. Transport
6. Maternal Instinct & Breeding
7. Change/ Weather
8. Predators

When dealing with animals, use your common sense!

No animal, no matter how gentle, can be completely trusted

Be deliberate when working with them, and always leave yourself an out when working in close quarters

Keep working facilities in good repair

Poorly maintained chutes, fences, stalls and ramps make animals think escape is possible, and this makes them more active

Do's and Don't's of Working with Animals

DO's

1. Do talk to animals softly
2. Do approach animals from the side
3. Do be aware of their blind spots
4. Do wear gloves and safety shoes or boots
5. Do be patient

DON'T

1. Don't tie yourself to animals
2. Don't make loud noises
3. Don't make quick movements

Please use the following **Safe Work Procedures** as a guideline to building your own safe work procedures.