

Talk Lead By: _____

Date: _____

Site/Location: _____

Time: _____

Weather Report/Conditions:

High: _____ °C
Low: _____ °C

Wind Speed: _____ km/hr
Wind Gusts: _____ km/hr

Safer Animal Handling for People and Livestock

When working with livestock, taking both human and animal health and safety into consideration will make the task more efficient and safer overall. Consider the following points:

- **Non-slip flooring in holding and handling facilities keeps everyone on their feet.** Grooved patterns in concrete floors are better than rough broom finishes as this will be worn smooth over time.
- **Gates, fences, and chutes should be checked for any sharp edges, weaknesses, and damage.** A worker or animal who gets cut by a protruding nail on a board will not be happy or calm... they will be thinking about and protecting the injury. A gate that cannot close when needed can also have severe consequences.
- **Calm animals are safer animals.** It does not take long for an animal to become excited and at least 20 to 30 minutes for it to calm back down. While every effort to keep animals quiet during handling should be made, we can recognize things do not always go as intended. If necessary, take an early lunch break so that both two and four legged parties get a chance to destress and calm down. Remember that trying to push through it for the sake of the clock can be dangerous, ineffective, and frustrating.
- **Only allow trained individuals familiar with livestock behaviour to work with the animals.** While an untrained person might mean well, their actions could be dangerous for them, others, and the animals.
- **Stay out of an animal's blind spot.** The animal may kick you... and kicks can not only be painful but potentially fatal.
- **Do not chase an escaped cow.** While it is tempting, unless a person or the animal may be in danger, let the animal return on its own. If you do have to go after it, a calm approach is key.
- **Heat stress and cold stress are bad for everyone.** Schedule handling events for when the conditions will be favourable... this may mean early mornings in the summer, but that is nothing new for a farmer.
- **Keep lighting in mind.** Animals will move from a darker place to a brighter place, but not if the light is too bright. Cattle, hogs, and sheep can see behind themselves without turning their heads which is why they will refuse to move forward when there are shadows.
- **Keep noise levels as low as possible.** Animals are more sensitive to high-pitched noises than we are. Yelling is stressful and unpleasant for everyone involved.



Did You Know?

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