**Cattle Behaviour**

Animals sense their surroundings differently than humans and require special consideration when handling. Animal handlers can reduce the risk of injuries while working with farm animals by understanding animal behaviour, and the hazards of working with animals while implementing safe animal handling techniques.

**Vision**

1. Cattle have extreme sensitivity to contrasts, which may cause them to hesitate at sudden changes in lighting, shadows, colour or texture; cattle can be sensitive to distractions or sudden movement because of their wide angled vision; bovines can see nearly 360 degrees without moving their heads. Therefore, a quick movement behind is just as apt to "set them off" as one in front.

**Blind Spot**

1. Most large animals can see at wide angles around them, but there is a blind spot directly behind them where they cannot see. Movement in this "blind spot" will make the animal uneasy and nervous and may cause them to kick or run. The safest approach is to let the animal know you are there through touch to their front or side.

**Hearing**

Cattle have extremely sensitive hearing and can detect sounds that human ears cannot hear. Loud, abrupt noises can frighten animals and cause distress. Noise and yelling should be kept to a minimum when working with livestock to enable the animal to feel secure.

**Maternal Instincts**

Cows with calves exhibit a maternal instinct and are usually more defensive and difficult to handle. Cows that are normally gentle may become dangerous when defending calves. Cows with calves should be allowed to remain as close to their offspring as possible.

**Territorial Instincts**

Most animals develop an attachment to certain areas such as pastures, buildings, troughs and worn paths. Changes to their environment may cause them to react unexpectedly such as: forcing cattle away from their comfort zone, feed or the rest of the herd; being approached by an unfamiliar person; going through unfamiliar gates, barn doors, handling and loading chutes and moving or flapping objects such as a coat swinging in the wind at the end of a chute could disrupt cattle handling. Minimizing distractions and changes to the environment will help while moving cattle.

**Kick Zone**

Cattle tend to kick in an arch beginning toward the front and moving toward the back. Workers should be aware of and avoid an animal’s kicking region when approaching the animal. Some reasons animals kick includes: pain, injury or inflammation; when something is in their blind spot, and sudden noises.

**Incidents**

Incidents with cattle tend to occur while handling the livestock. Cattle are known for an even disposition, but can be startled, and inflict injury to anyone in their way.

**Ways an animal can hurt you**

Farm employers and workers handling large animals can be killed or injured in a number of ways such as being: stepped on, knocked down, kicked, bitten, and pinned against a hard surface.

**Control Measures**

People working with cattle can put measures in place to reduce the likelihood of an animal behaving in an unpredictable or aggressive way. Managing cattle with good facility and equipment measures will help such as:

1. good housekeeping practices; equipment, fencing and gates that are able to restrain animals safely for general maintenance or health care; even walking or working surfaces constructed to prevent slipping under wet conditions; even and diffused lighting; alleys and chutes that are wide enough for animals to pass but not to turn around; try to avoid entering a small area enclosed with large animals unless it is equipped with a man-gate that you can get to easily; and bulls used for breeding should have special facilities so the bull can be fed, watered, exercised and used for breeding without the handler coming into direct contact with him.

**Flight Zone**

The flight zone is similar to a comfort zone or the minimum acceptable distance between the animal and any perceived threat. Entering an animal’s flight zone could cause panic and confusion. The flight zone can vary from animal to animal and can be anywhere from 2 to 8 meters. Handlers can effectively move cattle and other animals by understanding and remaining at the edge of the flight zone. When approaching an animal, handlers should announce their presence by voice or by being clearly visible and gently touching the animal on the front or side. Never prod animals if they have no place to go. Ensure to plan an escape and know how to safely separate yourself from an animal while working in an enclosure occupied by animals.

1. **Cattle Behaviour – DISCUSSION RECORD**

**Agenda:**

* Discuss the hazards with the cattle on your farm.
* Identify cattle with risky behaviour or tendencies.
* Review control methods of handling cattle on your farm.

Comments or safety concerns as a result of the discussion or observed since the last rally?

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Follow-up to concerns raised at previous rally?  
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Action Items?  
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Near Miss/Incidents/Unsafe Acts/Conditions to Report?

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Topics recommended for future Rallies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank the rally members for their participation.**

**Quiz Answers:** 1. T, 2. T, 3. e, 4. T, 5. e

**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

1. Cattle have extreme sensitivity to contrasts and distractions which may startle them and cause them to react. True or False

2. Cattle may react unexpectedly moved from their comfort zone, feed or the rest of the herd; unfamiliar person; going through unfamiliar gates, barn doors, handling and loading chutes and moving or flapping objects.True or False

3. Reasons cattle kick may include:

1. pain
2. injury or inflammation
3. something is in their blind spot
4. sudden noises
5. all of the Above

4. Handlers can effectively move cattle and other animals by understanding and remaining at the edge of the flight zone. True or False

5.Farm employers and workers handling large animals can be killed or injured in a number of ways such as:

a. stepped on

b. knocked down

c. kicked, bitten

d. pinned against a hard surface

e. all of the above

**Attendance RECORD**

\*This is to acknowledge that I understand and agree to actively participate in the safety meeting.

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| **Print Name:** | **Signature:** |
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