

Right From The Start | Outline

Dairy Cattle

Characteristics

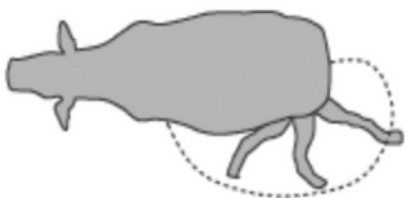
- Very sensitive hearing
- Poor vision clarity
- Poor depth perception
- Panoramic vision
- Good memory



Danger Points

- Body Mass
 - The animal's size presents a crushing risk. Handlers can be crushed between an animal and a stationary object like a fence, building or trailer.
- Head
 - Some cattle have a tendency to head butt their handlers.
- Feet
 - Cattle can step on a person's feet.
 - Cattle are exceptional kickers. They can kick directly behind their bodies and to the side.
 - Maintain 1 calf's length between exhibitors in the show ring to minimize kicking and stepping-on risks.
 - Kicking risks increase when a handler works near the back end of the animal.
 - Kicking risks decrease when the animal is aware of the handler's presence, the handler stays close to the animal with a hand on the animal's body at all times, and the handler remains calm.

Older Animal



Young Calves



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Flight Zone

- Distance that animals like to keep between themselves and a threat of danger
- Animal's safety zone
- Varies among animals
 - Tame cattle: 0-25 feet
 - Wild cattle: up to 300 feet
- Increases when an animal is excited or approached from the front
- Decreases when an animal is in a single file chute

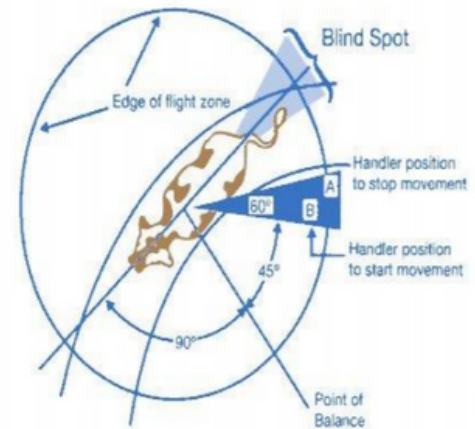


Diagram courtesy of Dr. Temple Grandin

Point of Balance

- Located at the animal's shoulder
- Determined by the animal's wide angle vision (See diagram above.)
- Used to move animals
 - To move an animal forward, stand behind the point of balance.
 - To move an animal backward, stand in front of the point of balance.
 - To move an animal to the left, approach the animal from the front and walk past the point of balance on the right side.
 - To move an animal to the right, approach the animal from the front and walk past the point of balance on the left side.



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Equipment

- Rope halter
- Show halter
- Lead rope
- Show stick
- Grooming tools
- Trim chute or squeeze chute (grooming and performing health procedures)
- Trailer (transporting animals to and from the show)

Safety

- Approach an animal slowly and calming toward the shoulder.
- Be aware of the blind spot directly behind the animal.
- Handlers should always have adult supervision.
- Ensure an appropriate match between the animal and handler.
- Abandon the project if it becomes unsafe for the handler or animal.

Halter Breaking

- Approach the animal slowly and calmly.
- Ensure that the animal is aware of your presence.
- Do not linger in danger zones, i.e. behind the animal.
- Do not get wrapped up in the halter.
- Each animal will train at its own pace.
- Be patient. Halter breaking can be a slow process.
- Plan frequent short training sessions, rather than a few long training sessions.



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Halter Breaking Cont.

- It is important to make each training exercise a positive experience.
- Consider the flight zone and the point of balance while handling cattle.
- Use washing, rinsing and grooming to get the animal used to touch.
- Remember to adjust the animal to new facilities, including show facilities.
- Use the lead rope to secure the calf during haltering.
- Apply appropriate discipline to prevent bad habits from forming early, i.e. licking.
- Move the calf from side to side to upset its balance and regain control.
- Let go of the lead rope if you are off balance and falling forward.

Acclimatization

- Acclimation and exposure to different people, places, sounds and images will help desensitize an animal and make it less likely to spook.
- Acclimatize animals to people of different ages, sizes and genders. Children have faster, sharper motions than adults and can be perceived as predators, like wolves and coyotes, due to their size.
- Expose animals to different environments, i.e. barns, pastures, pens, wash racks, etc.
- Play music around the animal to acclimate it to different sounds. There will be many different sounds at a fair that could frighten the animal if it is un-acclimatized.
- Take animals to small shows first.
- Variable lighting can be disturbing to cattle. Expose the animal to areas of bright and dim lighting. Use flash photography around the animal.

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Footing

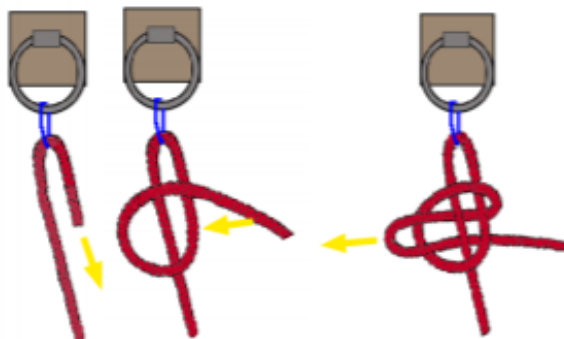
- Good footing helps the animal feel secure.
- Footing also impacts the handler's level of control.
- Footing is important for the handler's and the animal's stability.
- Dirt or shaving can be used to establish a good footing.
- Pavement does not provide an appropriate footing.
- Move animals slowly when good footing is not available.
- Handlers should wear non-slip shoes that completely cover their feet.

Grooming

- Grooming is helpful in the gentling process.
- The animal may need to be tied for grooming.
- All handlers should work from the same side of the animal to maintain an escape route for the animal.

Tying

- Always tie animals to a sturdy, stable object.
- Tie animals high so they do not get their feet tangled in the rope.
- Use a slip knot so you can untie the animal quickly in case of an emergency.



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Escape Route

- Identify an escape route in every environment where you handle an animal.
- Do not enter small enclosed areas with livestock.
- Tie and untie animals from the opposite side of a fence if necessary.

Exhibitor-Animal Match

- When selecting an animal, consider the size, age and experience of the handler.
- Younger handlers should be matched with smaller, more docile animals.
- Young or inexperienced handlers should never interact with bulls.

Animal Health

- Routine health procedures can present needle stick risks.
- Due to the animal's long term memory, health procedures may need to be performed by someone other than the handler.

Dairy Bulls

- Dairy bulls are particularly dangerous due to their aggressive and unpredictable behavior.
- Some dairies no longer keep bulls on the premises because of the injury risk.
- Only experienced producers should handle bulls.
- An escape route should always be identified prior to entering a space with a bull.



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