



Work Smarter Not Harder

Livestock Handling Resource Guide for 4-H and Youth

“Understanding the behaviors of animals helps prevent injuries to both people and animals.”

Dr. Temple Grandin



Livestock Handling Resource Guide for 4-H and Youth

Livestock can sometimes be difficult to move and handle. Aggressive, stubborn, frightened or stressed animals can all add their own unique challenges.

This meeting topic is suitable for beef, dairy, swine and sheep clubs.

This resource was produced as a proud partnership of the Canadian Farm Animal Councils. Our groups represent Canada's livestock farmers and associated businesses and one of our primary objectives is to advance responsible farm animal care. We feel reaching the next generation of farmers and ranchers with new and improved methods for low stress handling is an excellent investment.

For more information, contact any of the groups listed below:



www.afac.ab.ca
(403) 932-8052



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

www.facs.sk.ca
(306) 249-3227



www.mbfac.ca



www.ofac.org
(519) 837-1326

For technical information on farm animal welfare visit www.livestockwelfare.com.

For general information on farm animals and agriculture as well as Virtual Farm Tours visit www.farmissues.com.



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Objectives

In this meeting, members will learn about handling techniques that can be applied to cattle, sheep or pigs. Members will examine their own handling practices with their projects and develop methods for handling livestock more humanely and safely.

All Members

Learn about handling techniques and proper handling aids for moving livestock. The focus should be on injury prevention and less stress on the animals.

Junior Members

Learn about safe handling techniques when working with your project animal. Junior members should understand animal blind spots and where the best position is to work with animals (i.e. not head on, but from the hip).

Senior Members

Understand how facility design can improve handling of livestock. Senior members should also be able to understand flight zones and points of balance and how to implement these techniques when moving livestock.

Safe Livestock Handling

ROLL CALL SUGGESTIONS:

What tools/methods do you use to handle livestock?

Possible Answers:

- Pig boards
- Witches' capes
- Construction flags
- Nylon flags
- Small plastic bags
- Plastic ribbons tied to the end of a stick
- Pig or Cattle paddles
- Gates
- Chutes
- Horses
- Dogs

Name something you shouldn't do when handling animals.

Possible Answers:

- Use a prod
- Yell
- Aggressive movements
- Move very fast
- Stand in the animal's blind spot
- Hit them
- Make loud noises (i.e. banging gates)

What are some signs an animal is frightened or uncomfortable?

Possible Answers:

- Its ears are up
- Its head is up
- The animal moves away from you
- The animal gets aggressive
- The animals' eyes are big
- The animal kicks, paws and/or charges
- The animal makes distressed noises

Burt Smith's Universal Laws of Herding

1. If the flight zone is penetrated, the animal will move.
2. There is no such thing as one best position or manoeuvre for all circumstances nor for all times.
3. Whatever you are doing you are doing it too fast.
4. It's never the animal's fault.
5. When attempting to move animals through a gate, they must first see that the gate is open.
6. For every task, there is a corresponding degree of patience required to complete it in a minimum amount of time.
7. Step forward to make them go faster and step back to make them slow down.
8. If you want an animal to go somewhere, it must have room to go there.

Calm controlled handling doesn't make you a wimp, but rather it proves you are smarter than the cattle and want to make them turn the most profit for you.

Source: Change Your Handling and Herding Hang-Ups Factsheet by Nancy Noecker, Cow-Calf Specialist - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



ACTIVITIES

1. Choose segments to watch from the accompanying videos.
Low Stress Cattle Handling: Tina Williams and Richard McConnell demonstrate how to use an animal's flight zone and point of balance to invoke movement.
Safe Animal Handling: This BC 4-H video covers safety issues that could arise with a variety of farm animals. It explains the right way to approach and handle animals in various situations around the farm.
Low Stress Handling of Pigs On-Farm: Dr. Temple Grandin shows what a pig sees, and what causes stress in pigs. The video also highlights a pig's flight zone, discusses the benefits of good animal welfare and facility design.
Cattle Handling to Reduce Stress: Dr. Temple Grandin discusses the benefits of good cattle handling, reducing stress on cattle and how to design your cattle handling facility.
2. Have participants blow up balloons. Once the balloon is tied, have participants apply pressure to make the balloon either move or change its shape. Have participants continue to apply pressure to the balloons until the balloon bursts or shoots out of their hands. This illustrates how an animal is likely to react if too much pressure is applied when handling.
3. Give each participant a disposable glove or have them trace and cut out their own hand. You can also have a youth leader do this in advance. There are five key points to handling livestock:
 - 1) Like company
 - 2) Move to light
 - 3) Hate noise
 - 4) See differently
 - 5) Flight zoneHave participants write these five key points on the cut out and use it as a reminder of these points when working with livestock.
4. Have participants create their own handling tool. This could be linked to the roll call. Ideas for handling tools include: broom handles, broken hockey stick, sorting stick etc. Attach a plastic bag or a piece of fabric of similar size to the end of these objects. Let participants try their new handling tools on livestock. Ask members to bring in handling tools from home or a neighbouring farm.
5. Try to move an animal in a pen using the point of balance method.
6. Have participants move through a handling facility at the same level as an animal. If possible, have them video tape their trip through the handling facility. Have participants identify any objects, noises or design flaws that might make handling livestock in the facility more difficult.
7. Have participants try and move a quiet group of animals from one pen to the other using any of the low stress handling methods demonstrated and discussed. Contact your local agriculture government office or 4-H representative to help find farmers or ranchers who have taken handling courses and/or have animals accustomed to being handled for assistance.
8. Have participants go online and try herding sheep into pens and around a course at: <http://www.sheepgame.co.uk/launch.php>. See how the movement of the mouse can move the sheep with minimal pressure.
9. Have participants cut out and review Burt Smith's Universal Laws of Herding.

Understanding Flight Zones and Points of Balance

Adapted from www.grandin.com and *Cattle Handling: In the Zone* (Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.)

Handlers who understand the concepts of point of balance and flight zones will have a much easier time moving animals.

Points of Balance and Movement:

The point of balance on an animal is located at the animal's shoulder. Animals will move forward when the handler stands behind the point of balance. Animals will move backwards when the handler stands in front of the point of balance. Groups of animals will move forward in a chute system when the handler walks past the point of balance in the opposite direction of the animals in the chute.

Flight Zones and Movement:

A flight zone is described as an animal's personal space. If someone stands too close to you, you feel uncomfortable and will move away. The same principle can be applied to animals. The size of an animal's flight zone is determined by the wildness or tameness of the animal.

If the handler moves too quickly and deeply into an animal's flight zone, the animal will turn away from the handler and try to get away. The handler is on the edge of the flight zone of an animal when the animal turns around and walks away. If the handler is outside the animal's flight zone, the animal will be facing the handler.

Handlers should remove themselves from the flight zone if the animal becomes aggressive.

Beef, Dairy and Sheep Clubs: Watch the FACS Low Stress Handling Video Part I - *Zones of Influence* to see how to use points of balance and flight zones to move cattle.

Swine Clubs: Watch the *Handling of Pigs On Farm* Video

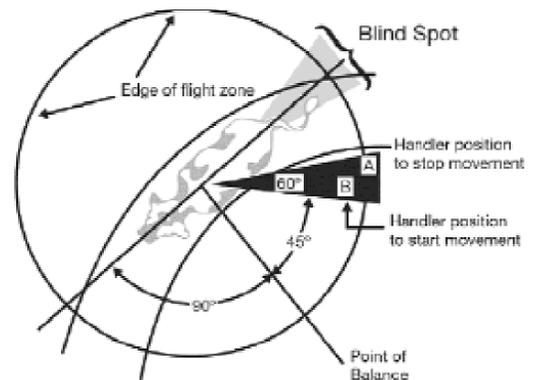


Diagram courtesy of Dr. Temple Grandin

This diagram illustrates the general flight zone of cattle and indicates where the point of balance is on the animal.

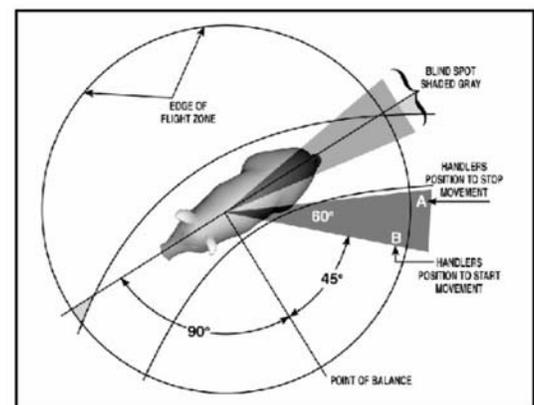


Diagram Courtesy of National Pork Board

The diagram illustrates the general flight zone of pigs and indicates where the point of balance is on the animal.

Did you know?

- A tame animal, like a 4-H project, is likely to have no flight zone at all. Animals that have no flight zone can be touched by the handler and often have to be led when being moved.
- The flight zone of an animal will get bigger when the animal becomes excited. The flight zone also becomes larger when you approach the animal head on.
- If animals become excited, it can take between 20 and 30 minutes for them to calm down.
- Sheep herding dogs use the flight move and point of balance instinctively.

Moving Animals in Large, Open Areas

Alternating between penetrating the flight zones of animals and withdrawing from flight zones can help move livestock in a large, open area. By moving in a zig zag pattern, the handler penetrates the flight zone when walking in the opposite direction of the desired direction of movement and then retreating from the flight zone by walking in the same direction of the desired movement.

Beef, Dairy and Sheep Clubs: Watch the FACS Low Stress Handling Video, Part II - *Using the "T" to the Gate* to see how to move cattle in large groups on open fields and in large areas.

Tips to Remember When Moving Animals

- Avoid yelling!
- Always approach animals slowly and never chase them.
- Use electric prods sparingly and never on breeding animals.
- Deep penetration of an animal's flight zone causes panic and escape attempts.
- Cattle have a large flight zone when approached head on due to their wide angle vision.

Tips to Improve Handling

- Have an even distribution of lighting where you are moving the animals. Shadows, bright spots and light glaring in the animals' eyes will distract the animals when moving them and cause them to stop.
- Provide level flooring with no bumps, dips or puddles.
- All handling facilities - loading ramps, single file chutes and crowding pens, should have solid sides to prevent animals from seeing distractions.
- Take advantage of cattle and sheeps' natural tendency to turn and construct curved chutes. This type of system places the handler on the edge of the animals' flight zones.
- Work smarter to get the lead animal moving. Pressuring the animals at the back of a large group does nothing to help move the animals forward.

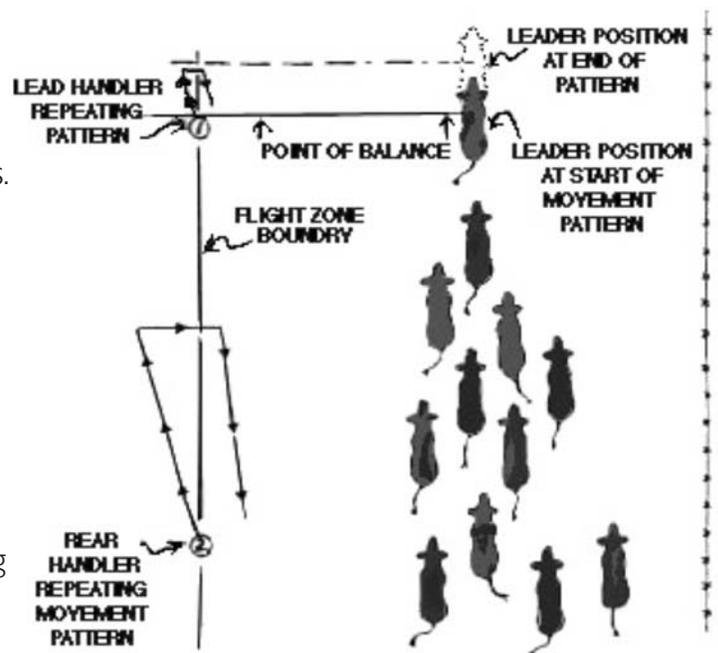


Diagram Courtesy of www.grandin.com

Resources:

Links:

Ontario Farm Animal Council - www.ofac.org

The Ontario Farm Animal Council represents the livestock and poultry farmers and associated businesses in Ontario on issues such as farm animal care, food safety and the environment.

Manitoba Farm Animal Council - www.mbfac.ca

MFAC is a non-profit organization supported by the agriculture industry which partners with government, educators and researchers to provide information, resources and training to producers and promote information to consumers.

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan - www.facs.sk.ca

FACS is the voice of animal agriculture, representing Saskatchewan's livestock and poultry industries, working together to advance responsible farm animal care.

Alberta Farm Animal Care Association - www.afac.ab.ca

AFAC is the Alberta livestock industry working together for responsible animal care.

National Farm Animal Care Council - www.nfacc.ca

NFACC is an organization with a mandate to provide a national, coordinated approach, promoting responsible farm animal care. This website hosts all of the

Recommended Codes of Practice for all species of livestock and poultry.

Dr. Temple Grandin - www.grandin.com

Dr. Temple Grandin is a livestock handling specialist and Associate Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She designs handling facilities and works with livestock producers and meat processors to use behavioural principles to reduce stress on animals during handling.

Livestock Welfare.com - www.livestockwelfare.com

This site provides technical information on farm animal welfare, including a searchable database of research.

Farm Issues.com - www.farmissues.com

This site features lots of information about livestock, poultry and crop farming and includes photo and video libraries. Take a virtual tour of 17 different farms.

Farms Food Fun - www.farmsfoodfun.com

A website for kids, featuring farm trivia, games and arts and crafts.

Check out the “Learning About Animal Welfare” (L.A.W.) Meeting topic. Go to livestockwelfare.com to download a copy.

Resources on the enclosed CD/DVDs:

- 1) Videos:
 - *Cattle Handling to Reduce Stress* - Temple Grandin video
 - *Low Stress Handling of Pigs On-Farm* - Temple Grandin video
 - *Low Stress Cattle Handling* - Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan video
- 2) Written Resources:
 - *Burt Smith's Universal Laws of Herding*
 - *Handling Cattle- Work Smarter, Not Harder*
 - *Handling Pigs - Work Smarter, Not Harder*
 - *Guidelines for Transporting Pigs*
 - *Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep and Goats*
 - *Work Smarter, Not Harder Livestock Handling Resource Guide for 4-H and Youth*
- 3) BC 4-H Safe Animal Handling Video and Quiz

Work Smarter

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