



Be Calm and Understand Cattle Before Getting in Corrals

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As part of this year's "Appealing to Adults" Canadian Agricultural Safety Week campaign, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association reminds farmers that cattle see the world differently. Having a better idea of what cattle see can prevent injury and even death.

When it comes to animal-related injuries, human error is often the cause. Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting has found that animal-related fatalities account for 8% of all agriculture-related deaths in Canada. Of that, 45% of these animal-related fatalities are due to cattle.

Injury prevention starts by using low stress handling techniques. In order to avoid exciting cattle, always keep calm while working with them. Not only does this mindset prove to be good for handlers, it's also good for the cattle. Calm cattle have higher daily weight gains on average. In fact, research shows high stress associated with handling contributes to lower female reproductive function, less milk production and higher rates of sickness. So keep movements slow and purposeful. Rough or aggressive handling is never acceptable.

When working with cattle, keep handling areas free of debris and well lit. Remove twine, feed bags, and other debris from the area and clear any ice or mud from concrete surfaces to prevent slips. Wear steel toed boots to improve footing and protect your toes from crush injuries. When choosing your clothes, remember snug-fitting pants and long sleeves are the best bet. Anything that might flap in the wind or catch the sunlight could startle cattle, so be sure to also tie back long hair and remove all jewelry.

Humans have a 140-degree field of vision but because of the shape and position of their eyes, cattle have up to 300 degrees of sight. But because of this incredible panoramic vision, cattle can see things in all directions without moving their heads (except for directly behind them.). Cattle have poor depth perception, making it difficult for them to interpret shadows or sudden motions. Remember to give cattle the opportunity to take a good look at the objects in their path from a distance before moving them towards those objects. Patience and understanding is key.

It's also important to use a soft voice. Cattle rely on their keen sense of hearing so any loud noise is disturbing. Be particularly mindful that cattle struggle to identify where sounds come from. Since loud noises can sometimes be unexpected and hard to control, it is always good to have an escape route in mind before you start working in any confined space with cattle.

Learn to watch for signs of agitation at all times. Consider loud bellowing, pawing at the ground, erratic movements, raised ears, and snorting as danger signs. A lowered head and raised tail usually





indicate a hostile animal. If you notice aggressive behaviour, remove yourself from the situation until the animal calms down. Even when cattle are calm, make every effort to stay out of kicking range.

Visit agsafetyweek.ca and check out the resources including toolbox talks on topics like operating portable augers, transporting oversized loads and more.

About Canadian Agricultural Safety Week:

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) is a public awareness campaign focusing on the importance of farm safety. CASW takes place every year during the third week of March. In 2017, CASW takes place March 12 to 18. CASW 2017 is presented by Farm Credit Canada. For more information visit agsafetyweek.ca.

