

FACT SHEET

SAFE HANDLING OF CATTLE ON FARMS



OVERVIEW OF TOPIC

The handling of cattle in yards and on farms presents a number of inherent risks, with the unpredictable nature of cattle being the most significant. Cattle handling occurs in a range of locations - in paddocks, laneways, yards, transportation, feedlots, abattoirs, saleyards and activities related to on-farm sales. Farmers and their workers are at risk of sustaining injuries from being kicked, crushed or trampled by cattle if the correct equipment is not in place, and procedures are not followed.

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

There are many ways farmers can keep themselves and their workers safe while working with cattle in yards:

- Know and understand the basics of cattle behaviour and handling, flight zones, herd behaviour and the different animal behaviours that signify when animals are stressed or flighty
- Know yard escape routes or refuge area/s in advance of working with cattle
- Check yards, gates and loading ramps before using them
- Where the crush is to be used, make sure they are in good conditions and workers are aware of how to use them
- Make sure the people handling cattle are competent and trained in safe cattle handling
- Be careful around cows that are calving or with newborn calves as they are more likely to be unfriendly
- Try to keep cattle calm when handling them
- Use a stick or paddle to assist in directing cattle
- Exercise caution when administering veterinary treatments
- Protect yourself against biohazards by conducting proper personal hygiene

- Wear suitable clothing and footwear
- Design your yards and facilities to ensure the best flow or movement of your animals
- Keep ground surfaces clean and free of trip hazards

ACTIONS

There are actions you can take right now to ensure you are as safe as possible when handling cattle on your farm:

- Train your workers both on cattle handling techniques and the way your yards work
- Prepare your yards and consider making any improvements to separate workers from animals, prior to using the yards
- Ensure you have an escape route or refuge locations where you would be handling cattle
- Ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear on hand for when handling cattle
- Ensure your yard has a good base surface, to minimise slip hazards and bogging
- Ensure your yards and facilities are designed to ensure the best flow or movement of your animals

KEY CONTACT

For further information please contact:

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