

# SAFE LIVESTOCK HANDLING



AgHealth  
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Livestock can be the source of serious injuries on the farm. The large size of animals, limited vision, territorial instinct, skittish behavior, and poor depth perception can all be factors in causing livestock related injuries and fatalities. Even the most experienced farmers and ranchers can find themselves in trouble.

## ANIMAL BEHAVIOR THAT INFLUENCES INTERACTIONS

- Livestock become skittish when their ordinary routines or familiar surroundings change.
- Animals have a social order and the leader may react if threatened.
- Domestic livestock, especially cattle and sheep, are herd animals. They may become agitated when isolated, will try to return to the group, and push humans out of the way in the process.
- Livestock detect people by their movement, if the movements are sudden, animals may bolt.
- Many animals are color blind and have poor depth perception, causing them to balk or resist handling.
- Mothers with young are fiercely protective.

## POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF WORKING WITH LIVESTOCK

- Pinned against a wall or fence by large livestock
- Kicked by
- Knocked over and/or stepped on
- Bitten in the process of handling temperamental animals
- Those working with livestock have a greater risk of experiencing allergy symptoms, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

## WATCH FOR THESE SIGNS OF AGGRESSION:

- Raised or pinned ears
- Raised tail or hair on the back
- Bared teeth
- Snorting
- Pawing the ground
- Aggressive forward movement



## GET IN TOUCH

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# PREVENTING LIVESTOCK RELATED INJURIES

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## A farmer's behavior can lead to safer atmosphere working with livestock...

- Practice low stress animal handling. Be quiet but seen, move slowly and approach from the side so that livestock are not startled.
- Work in well-lit areas.
- Keep the livestock's routine similar so they don't balk at changes.
- Always have an escape route so you're not pinned by the animal.
- Take caution when around male livestock who are often territorial in nature.
- Allow young animals to stay close to their mother and take extra caution.

## Wearing proper clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) can help prevent injury...

- Sturdy and/or steel toed boots
- Non-skid soles
- Leather or work gloves
- Equestrian helmets
- Hearing protection in noisy environments
- Respiratory protection in dusty environments
- Goggles if debris is present
- Protect exposed skin against sun exposure, cover your ears, neck and arms

# MAINTAIN FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION

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- Falls account for a large number of livestock injuries. Keep floor surfaces clear of water, manure, and other slippery substances.
- Some diseases can be transmitted from animals to humans. Use gloves and respiratory protection around sick animals and when assisting with birthing.
- Drains and slotted floors allow for easy cleaning and elimination of chemicals and animal waste.
- Shoes can transmit diseases from one location to another. Wear shoe covers or clean shoes before going to another livestock operation.
- Working around animal waste which contains bacteria means fencing, walls, and panels should be maintained. This could prevent infection of both animals and humans.
- Trailers used to move livestock need secure hitches, latches, chains, and hooks.

**Farmer's family members are also at risk when around livestock.**

Children who are less experienced often do not have knowledge about safe behavior while working with animals. It is your responsibility to teach them safe behavior while around livestock.

# RESOURCES

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Scan the QR code with your smart phone's camera or click the text to access more information.



NASD:  
Working Safely  
with Livestock



CS-CASH:  
Safe Livestock  
Handling Checklist



CS-CASH:  
Feedyard Worker  
Safety