

Cattle handling and safety

- October 24



Hi all, we hope you are all doing well. The job of the newsletter has fallen to us this month and it seemed a good opportunity to introduce ourselves. We are Jess, Lucy and Hannah and we look forward to meeting you all over the coming months as we settle in. This month, we're diving into cattle handling and safety. With dehorning and castration season just around the corner, it's a perfect time to chat about making those routines smoother for everyone involved. An efficient and safe system makes both your lives and ours easier, as well as leading to much happier cattle!

Why it matters

In systems where cattle may not be handled regularly, events such as TB testing, dehorning, castrating or any reason why you may be bringing them in to inject can be stressful for them (and you!). Stress can lead to a whole host of problems such as: immune suppression, reduced weight gain or a drop in yield.

The 3 big reasons why we want to get it right

1. Health and safety

- Many farm injuries happen when moving cattle or using crushes.
- Quite often it can occur when the animals are stressed – keeping things calm will keep everyone safe.

2. Cattle health and welfare

-Reduce stress – stress has a negative impact on DLWG, milk production and leads to immune suppression. It can cause abortion, dystocia and injuries.

-Bruising, carcass damage and injury to animals. Improper use of handling aids can cause damage to the carcass quality, leading to a significant impact on animal welfare and simultaneously a loss of money.

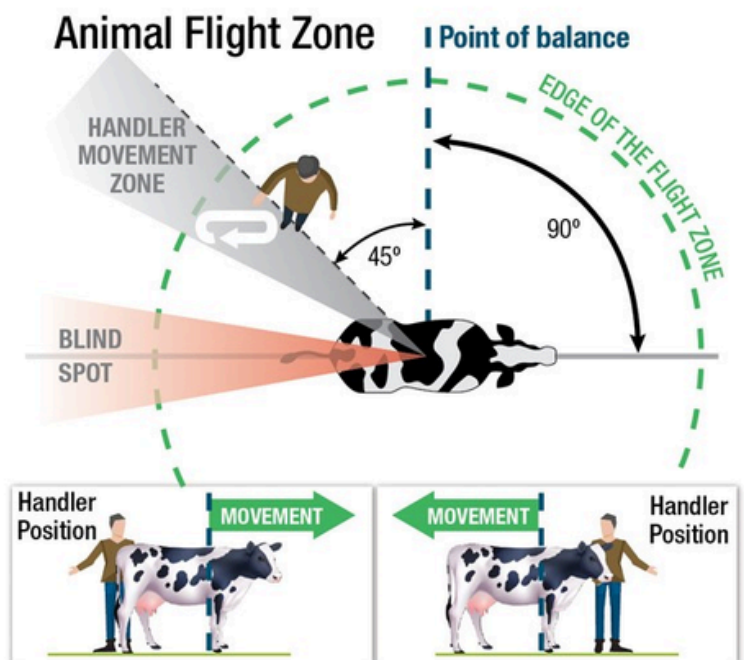
-Sudden sharp movements can increase the risk of a traumatic injuries and lameness.

-It is proven that cows with relatively minor injuries are shown to survive on average 1 year less than uninjured animals on the same farm.

3. Productivity and economics

-An efficient handling system cuts down on stress and speeds up the process, which means less labour and costs for you.

-Happy cattle are productive cattle!



The flight zone is something we should all be aware of so that when handling we avoid triggering their fight or flight response. Cattle's flight zone is their personal space. Depending on the tameness of the animal, they will have different sized zones. If you enter this zone it can result in a stressed animal. Signs of stress to watch for to then alter your handling include: tail swishing, restlessness, increased vocalisation, raising the head up, increased defecation.

To make handling cattle as stress free and safe as possible, consider using the following techniques

1. **Bucket training**

Before events such as a TB test, train your heifers to associate a bucket of feed with human interaction. This builds a positive association and makes them more comfortable around us.

2. **Using aids**

The use of stick should only be used for an extension of the arm and not for physical use on the animal. They can be used to quietly guide the animal - avoid waving the stick or becoming aggressive with it.

3. **Point of balance**

To get cattle to move forward remember the point of balance for a cow: stand behind their shoulder to move them forward or to move them back stand in front of the shoulder. This should be done slowly and quietly.

4. **Move in groups**

Moving animals as a group can utilise the leaders of the herd as the animals lower in the hierarchy will naturally follow. Avoid moving cattle alone.

Handling For Common Procedures



Castrates

-A squeeze crush is great – it allows just enough room for us to get in behind them, allows you to hold the tail from the outside and minimising sideways movement – keeping kicks to a minimum!

-If a squeeze crush isn't an option – we'll ask you to stand in between the animal and the crush, again minimizing sideways movement as much as possible

Dehorning

-A halter is essential for safely handling the cattle during dehorn – we all carry one!

-Each vet will have their own approach, however using a halter allows for secure restraint of the head when administering local and dehorning.

-It is best to run the animals through the crush and administer the local in small groups to allow it time to work. We require a minimum of 15 minutes between local administration and the actual dehorning. Ensuring this will result in much calmer animals when either wiring, lopping or burning.

Cows with calves at feet

-If you have to catch a calf, keep it between you and the mother. Try to keep a fence or vehicle between you and the cow.

-Avoid lifting calves if possible. If you have to lift a calf, use your legs and keep your back as straight as possible.

-Castrate cattle as early as possible.

Moving bulls

-Not a one-man job – make sure you have company, or a tractor, or a very well trained dog.

-If you think a bull is uneasy – move slowly and get out of its flight zone.

-If possible, move him with a group of steers or cows – this will likely keep him calm.



Hopefully we can all be as safe as possible on farm reducing injuries to yourselves, us and improving cattle welfare!

We look forward to meeting you all on farm over the next few months!



**Hannah
Alexander**



**Jesse
Chambers**



**Lucy
Gleave**

MEETINGS COMING UP

FIRST AID FOR FEET

THURSDAY 31ST OCTOBER

@ OLD SODBURY

£300 + Vat



INTERMEDIATE FOOT TRIMMING

**WEDNESDAY 20TH to
FRIDAY 22ND NOVEMBER**

@ OLD SODBURY

AND PEWSEY

£900 + Vat



CHARITY FARMERS SKITTLES EVENING

**@ The Golden Swan, Wilcot, SN9 5NN
On Thursday 10th October at 7pm**

**@ Old Royal Ship, Luckington, SN14 6PA
On Wednesday 16th October at 7pm**

**@ The Farmers Arms, Guiting Power, GL54 5TZ
On Wednesday 23rd October at 7pm**

**@ The Anchor Inn, Epney Saul, Glos GL2 7LN
On Wednesday 30th October at 7pm**



Charity calendar -£10 each -
all proceeds split between
FCN & DPJ Foundation.

If you would like to attend any of our meetings or buy our charity calendar, please contact us:
01666 823035 or farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk

T: 01666 823035 Option "1" for visits or enquiries, "2" for medicines, "3" for TB testing