

Management

Facility Design and Low Stress Cattle Handling

By Jesse Fulton, Associate Director – Producer Education

At one point or another in an animal's lifetime, they will be handled by a producer, and generally this happens multiple times throughout the life cycle. Handling can be stressful to cattle, but by using best management practices this stress can be reduced. Proper cattle handling practices are not only important to reduce stress on the animals, but they are also important for animal and human safety.

Stress in cattle can cause a reduction in growth and performance that in turn decreases profit to your operation. Good stockmanship should be practiced on

every cattle operation to decrease any unnecessary stress the animals may feel. The checkoff-funded Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program advocates that all cattle producers practice good stockmanship when handling cattle to reduce this unnecessary stress. Checkoff-funded Stockmanship & Stewardship programs have been hosted across the country in order to help educate producers on best handling practices in order to reduce stress imposed on cattle when handling.

Two important basics to understand when handling cattle are flight zones and point of balance. The flight zone of an animal is the distance between the

handler and the animal before the animal begins to move away. Understanding the flight zone can reduce stress and help prevent accidents. The flight zone varies depending on how accustomed the cattle are to their current surroundings and people. When the handler enters the flight zone the animal will begin to move away, and when the handler is no longer in the flight zone, the animal will stop.

The second basic is understanding the animal's point of balance. The point of balance of an animal is the point on the animal where we can position ourselves to move the animal forward, backward, left and right.

Cattle producers who have not had the opportunity to attend any cattle stockmanship demonstrations can still learn more on best management practices to cattle handling by accessing the National BQA channel located on YouTube. By searching the keyword "handling" several informative videos narrated by industry leading stockmen can be found covering cattle handling. These videos show examples of the correct practices producers should follow when handling cattle.

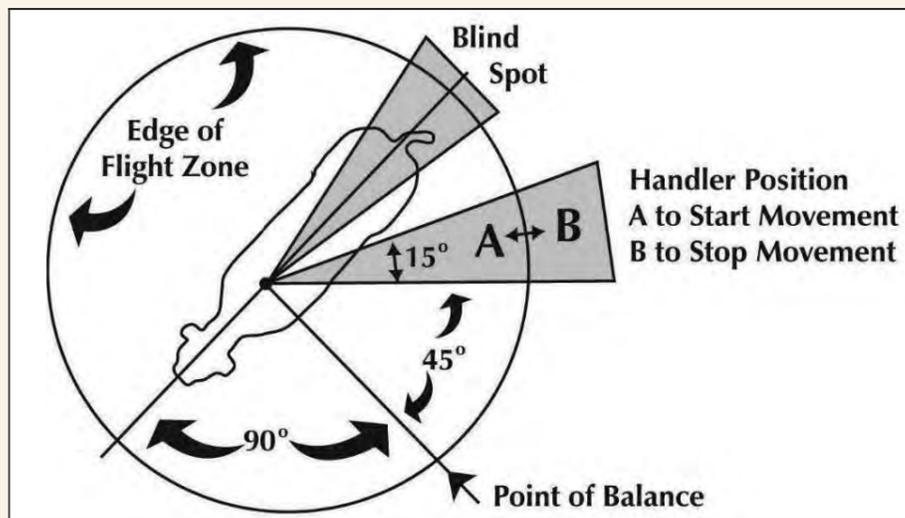
One important key to improve low stress handling is the design of the facilities in which the cattle will be handled. The first step to being successful when handling your cattle is good facility design. The design of your

facilities can either improve or decrease your success when handling your cattle. Cattle facilities do not need to be the latest and greatest thing on the market. However, they should be well thought out and functional facilities that allow multiple "escape" options in the event a problem arises and handlers need to release cattle from the handling facilities, preventing harm to the animal or personnel.

Cattle facilities where the alley leading to the chute is curved tend to work the best for cattle flow. Curved alleys utilize cattle's natural behavior of wanting to return from where they started. Although curved alleys in a cattle facility improve cattle flow, too sharp of turns can cause cattle to balk and reduce cattle flow.

To find more examples and tips on cattle handling facilities producers can access the National BQA channel located on YouTube. By searching the keyword "facilities" several informative videos covering cattle facility tips can be found. These videos show examples of correct facility design.

With proper facility design and utilizing best management practices when working with cattle, producers can greatly reduce the stress handling may cause cattle. It is also important for the safety of the animals and personnel working with the animals. ❏



NCBA Update: A Proud Contractor to the Beef Checkoff

Did you know – as a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, your NCBA staff does a lot of work to promote your product? Here is an update on some of the programs they are working on.

Building Top-of-the-Class Beef

Voices – In October, the checkoff hosted five influencers and beef advocates during the fifth session of its "Top of the Class" program in Denver – the next step for Masters of Beef Advocacy grads who want to make a more profound impact for the beef community by reaching out directly to consumers. The program equips these select participants with the knowledge and confidence they need to be sources of information for national consumer media outlets, journalists and consumers looking for more information about beef and beef production. This session's Top of the Class participants were: Kita Roberts, freelance food writer, photographer and persona of *GirlCarnivore.com* and *PasstheSushi.com*; Michaela Gasseling, a rancher and fitness enthusiast from Nebraska, leader of a La Leche League in her home community, and co-creator of the *Heart of the Farm Planner* and blogs at *cowgirlbootsandrunningshoes.com*; Cassidy Johnston, a rancher from Silver Spur Ranches who also works with local extension to bring more ag education into schools and blogs at *cowcountryblog.com*; Lindsay Chichester, an extension educator in Reno, Nevada, where she helps youth get involved with livestock and posts recipes, farm/ranch stories and myth-busting posts at *agriculturalwithdrindsay.com*; and Vincent Todarello, a lawyer and passionate beef lover who uses his website *johannyprimesteaks.com* to develop and share resource material to explain beef cuts, bovine anatomy and cooking methods to his followers.

At the latest Top of the Class session, these MBA grads discussed media interviews, presentations, culinary demonstrations, online advocacy, food

photography, immersion experiences and how to monitor and respond to critical beef issues in their own communities. They will continue to touch base with checkoff staff for insight on response strategies, hot issues like antibiotics and beef nutrition, and to collaborate on consumer influencer promotions and amplifications.

Engaging FFA Members – In late October, representatives of the Masters of Beef Advocacy program once again were at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis to promote the checkoff's MBA program. The event hosted more than 64,000 agriculture students, teachers and guests who attended workshops, motivational sessions and strolled through the exhibition hall. The two-day event included an MBA booth for participant interaction, as well as two featured breakout sessions focused on "Becoming a Beef Advocate through Tough Questions and Confident Answers." The workshops were presented to equip and engage advocates, and develop spokespeople to tell their story about how they raise cattle. Participants role-played tough conversations about beef production, and used personal experience and beef checkoff resources to answer how and why beef fits into a healthy, sustainable diet. A combined 500 FFA participants attended the checkoff sessions. Checkoff participation at the event is part of an ongoing directive to recruit more young agriculture leaders to the MBA program.

Sharing Antibiotic Resource for Producers – As antibiotic-use regulations and information evolve, the checkoff's Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program remains a valuable resource for today's cattle producers. Most recently, the BQA program released a new resource, *Antibiotic Stewardship for Beef Producers*, available at bqa.org. The small "dashboard-ready" handbook highlights best practices and management tips for judicious use of antibiotics and brings that together with

various BQA guidelines and information in a handy tool that producers can use to review their own practices and implement new management techniques to develop their own judicious use

protocols. As always, of course, the checkoff recommends that producers work with their veterinarians to develop responsible antibiotic use protocols that best fit their operations. ❏

2017
**INTEGRATED
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

REDBOOK

For over thirty years cattlemen have used the IRM Redbook to enhance profitability by keeping better records, and to track the productivity of their cow-calf operations.

Features of the Redbook include:

- Guide for Judicious Use of Antimicrobials in Cattle
- Beef Quality Assurance Best Practices
- Injection Site Quality Control
- Calf Information
- Health Records
- AI Breeding Records

Customize your Redbook in quantities of 100 books or more.

Volume discounts available.

The non-customized Redbook will be \$7.00 each, plus shipping.

Visit www.beefusa.org

Please contact Grace Webb at
(800) 525-3085
or at gwebb@beef.org
for information on how to place a customized order.