

Safety Around Livestock Fatality File

Dairy Farmer Dies from Crushing Injuries Sustained While Loading Cows

On July 6th, the victim, his brother, and a farm employee were loading cows onto a livestock trailer to ship them from the farm. They had selected a few cows out of the herd to sell for various reasons, with one cow in particular (Cow A) being sold because she had an unruly disposition. Most of the cows on the farm were said to be well-mannered with a calm disposition.

However, Cow A, who was approximately six years old, had reportedly had difficulty handling her entire life on the farm and had previously acted aggressively toward a farm employee in the free stall barn. This action did not result in injury; however, due to her disorderly nature, the owners decided to sell the cow. On the day of the incident, the livestock trailer was parked in an area outside of a free-stall barn with its back facing the barn gate by the right side of the barn. Two portable 16-foot-long metal gates were placed at the passenger side of the trailer to form a chute and guide the cows into the trailer door. The barn gate was a 16-foot steel gate with a five-inch protrusion at the open end.

The protrusion was part of the original design of the gate, enabling the gate to be latched in a closed position. At the time of the incident, the protrusion was not being used since the gate was fastened using a locking chain. The barn gate opened outward to demarcate the loading zone. The farmers loaded four cows and secured them in the front half of the trailer. They then attempted to load a few more cows, including Cow A, onto the back half of the trailer, when Cow A, a well-muscled animal weighing approximately 1700 pounds, resisted loading, turned around, and rushed back through the rear gate. She pushed through the gate,

opened it, and ran back into the barn area.

The three farmers guided her back into the loading area and began a second attempt to load her onto the trailer.