

Safety Around Livestock Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Safety around livestock refers to taking appropriate precautions and following guidelines to ensure well-being and minimize the risks associated with handling and interacting with farm animals and other livestock. Livestock can include cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and other domesticated animals raised for various purposes.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH SAFETY AROUND LIVESTOCK

- **Physical Injuries:** Handlers may be at risk of getting kicked, trampled, or crushed by livestock if they are not careful during handling or when close to the animals.
- **Bites and Scratches:** Livestock may bite or scratch handlers or other animals during moments of stress.
- **Aggressive Behavior:** Some animals can display aggressive behavior when feeling threatened, cornered, or during the breeding season.
- **Zoonotic Diseases:** Certain livestock diseases can be transmitted to humans, posing health risks to workers and those who come into contact with infected animals.
- **Chemical Hazards:** The use of medications, disinfectants, and other chemicals during animal care can pose risks if not handled properly or if protective gear is not used.
- **Slips, Trips, and Falls:** Livestock areas can be uneven, slippery, or cluttered, increasing the risk of slips, trips, and falls for handlers and workers.
- **Handling and Transport Injuries:** Loading and unloading livestock onto trailers or transport vehicles can be hazardous if not done correctly, potentially causing

injuries to both animals and handlers.

- **Escape or Stampede Situations:** If animals get spooked or escape from their enclosures, they can run amok, creating dangerous stampede situations.
- **Pregnant and Protective Animals:** Pregnant or animals who have recently given birth can be protective and may display aggressive behavior to defend their offspring.
- **Working in Close Quarters:** Working in confined spaces or close quarters with livestock can be risky, especially if there's limited escape space for handlers.
- **Heat Stress:** Livestock can experience heat stress in hot weather conditions, and handlers may also be at risk of heat-related illnesses during outdoor activities.
- **Allergies and Respiratory Hazards:** Handling hay, straw, or other materials related to livestock can expose workers to allergens and respiratory hazards.
- **Equipment Malfunctions:** Faulty or improperly used equipment, with chutes or handling systems.
- **Lack of Training and Experience:** Workers who are not properly trained or experienced in handling livestock may be more vulnerable to accidents.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST SAFETY PRACTICES AROUND LIVESTOCK

- **Education and Training:** If you work with livestock, ensure that you and anyone else involved in handling them receive proper education and training. Understand the behavior and body language of the specific type of livestock you are dealing with.
- **Caution Around Mothers and Calves:** Female livestock can be particularly protective of their young. Approach them with caution and maintain a safe distance.
- **Quiet and Calm Handling:** Loud noises, sudden movements, and aggressive behavior can startle and agitate livestock. Handle them calmly and quietly to keep stress levels down.
- **Stay Visible to Livestock:** Make sure livestock can see you when you are approaching them, especially in areas with

blind spots or corners where surprising them might lead to unwanted reactions.

- **Avoid Sudden Movements:** Sudden movements can trigger the “flight” response in livestock, making them run or react unpredictably. Move slowly and deliberately around them.
- **Don’t Startle Sleeping Livestock:** If you need to wake up a resting animal, use a calm voice.
- **Respect Personal Space:** Avoid crowding livestock, especially if they seem uncomfortable or stressed.
- **Use Proper Handling Equipment:** If you need to move or restrain livestock, use appropriate equipment designed for the task. This can include gates, chutes, halters, and ropes.
- **Watch for Aggressive Behavior:** Some animals may display aggressive behavior. Be cautious and stay alert for warning signs, such as raised tails, ears pinned back, or pawing the ground.
- **Be Cautious with Bulls and Rams:** Male livestock can be more aggressive, especially during breeding season. Extra care should be taken when handling bulls and rams.
- **Know Escape Routes:** When working with livestock, have a clear escape route in case of an emergency.
- **Wear Appropriate Clothing and Gear:** Dress in comfortable clothing that allows for easy movement. Use appropriate safety gear like gloves, boots, and helmets when necessary.
- **Keep Children and Untrained Individuals Safe:** Supervise children around livestock and ensure they understand the importance of safety. Non-trained individuals should avoid interacting with unfamiliar animals.
- **Keep Dogs Under Control:** If you have dogs around livestock, make sure they are well-trained.
- **Handle Medications with Care:** If you need to administer medications or vaccinations, follow the instructions carefully to avoid accidental exposure or contamination.
- **Brooms and Sorting Paddles:** Tools used to gently guide livestock in the desired direction.
- **Cattle Prods or Stock Prods:** Tools emit mild electric shocks and are used as a last resort to encourage livestock to move.

in the desired direction when other methods fail.

FINAL WORD

By following safety guidelines, farmers and workers can create a safer and more productive environment for both them and the animals they care for.