

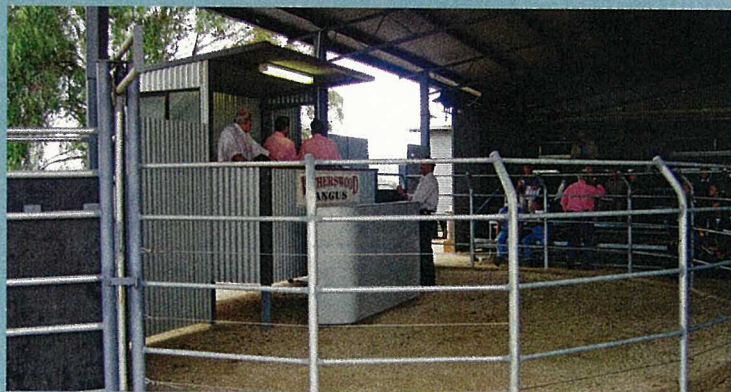
A practical safety guide

Beef cattle handling

Agriculture

This publication produced by Work Safe (Aus equivalent to OSH) provided expert advice on Cattle Handling and Yards. Various pages show TechniPharm or Kattle Gear Equipment. TechniPharm's Australian partner Kattle Gear Australia PTY principle Mr Bill Vowles is especially acknowledged for his Contribution to this publication.

Bill Vowles is recognized as an expert in yard design and handling systems. As a consultant he is often engaged by the courts in providing expert opinions around safety issues revolving in cattle yards and sale yards. TechniPharm has provided as a reference document an extract related to cattle handling and yard systems. The full publication is available on request or via the Work safe www site.



INTRODUCTION

The diverse farming systems producing beef cattle in Victoria range from specialised high volume, intensive feedlots and large grazing acreages to enterprises run by part-time and lifestyle farmers as well as cattle production as a sideline to other enterprises, such as dairying.

Such diversity requires a range of cattle-handling techniques and cattle handling facilities.

Beef Cattle Handling: A practical safety guide is a result of industry requests for a practical, relevant and plain English guide to health and safety on farms. It aims to provide health and safety guidance to all cattle producers, their families, employees and others who may be working with cattle. It not only provides practical solutions to controlling hazards in and around cattle yards but also acknowledges that cattle handling is a skill requiring education, training and experience.

Understanding cattle behaviour is important in reducing the risk of injury to the handler, the animal, and other people who may be in close proximity. This guide provides information on cattle handling that will be useful to people who are inexperienced or new to the industry. It also provides experienced operators with information to help them train others in safe cattle handling.

'Safe Design and Maintenance of Cattle Yards' and 'On-Farm Cattle Sales' explains the importance of having safe yards and handling facilities. These sections provide practical ideas to make existing yards safer and to ensure safety features are considered and included in the design of new facilities.

This guide does not cover public saleyards or feedlots; however, some of the ideas are easily transferred. It does include some reminders about health issues associated with zoonotic diseases and handling chemicals in yards.

An industry-based Beef Farm Safety Reference group was established to assist in the development of this guide. Membership included cattle producers and representatives of the Victorian Farmers Federation, Australian Veterinary Association, Australian Workers Union, WorkSafe Victoria and the Victorian Farm Safety Centre.

WorkSafe Victoria acknowledges the contribution of the members of the reference group and the many other beef farmers and service providers who contributed or provided valuable feedback.

The *Health and Safety Act 2004* requires that employees, other persons at work and members of the public be given the highest level of protection against risks to their health and safety that is reasonably practicable. All people associated with the cattle industry are encouraged to use this guide in conjunction with other advice to make farms healthier and safer places to work and live.

1

CATTLE HANDLING

If you handle cattle roughly, you can cause carcase damage and this can be costly. If a cattle handler is injured, it can be even costlier.

Experienced and competent cattle handlers know how their actions can affect cattle behaviour. They use that knowledge to get cattle to do what they want, quietly, efficiently and safely.

Working with cattle requires a certain amount of fitness, general health and agility. Bearing this in mind, ensure that you, or those under your supervision, are capable of undertaking the various cattle handling tasks.

A thorough understanding of the behavioural traits of cattle is the first step to safe and efficient cattle handling.

It is recommended that all people likely to be involved with cattle handling are trained and assessed as competent by an experienced cattle handler.

If you are starting a career that involves cattle handling, or you are relatively new to the industry, study these guidelines thoroughly.

If you are a supervisor, manager or employer, make sure your employees get a copy of this guide and talk it through with them.

A. CATTLE CONTROL

Cattle have minds of their own, a huge weight advantage and the ability to move surprisingly fast. It takes skill and practice to handle them safely.

Many cattle handlers report some sort of injury each year, mostly as a result of being kicked or crushed. A number receive serious injuries such as broken bones, and there have been fatalities involving cattle.

Using tried and proven cattle handling skills will help you and the farming industry reduce these injuries. It will also help make your work less stressful.

Important tips for cattle control

Agitated cattle are a risk; make sure the whole cattle handling experience is a pleasant one for you and the cattle. The following tips will help you achieve this.

1. Know your cattle.
2. Keep cattle calm.
3. Assess the type of stock and their behaviour.
4. Keep an eye on what's going on around you.
5. Know when to use your voice or cane.
6. Check the yards for hazards before working cattle.



1. Know your cattle

Every mob has its docile, flighty, nervous and aggressive animals. Even those that are usually docile can behave unpredictably at different times of the year or if they are under stress.

Different breeds have different temperaments.

Cattle with sharp horns are dangerous; dehorning is recommended.

Get to know the individual cattle you're dealing with.

2. Keep cattle calm

Approach cattle quietly and make sure they are aware of your presence. Cattle can be dangerous when alarmed or over-excited.

Give cattle time to settle down after you have moved them into the yards or unloaded them from a truck (30 minutes or more depending on the distance they have travelled).

Cattle are often quieter to handle if they are familiar with the yards and facilities.

Cattle, especially weaners, fed in the yards and quietly moved through the yards a number of times will be easier to handle in the future.

3. Assess the type of stock and their behaviour

- Cattle are more unpredictable during cold, windy weather.
- Age, breed, sex, horn status, temperament, training and weight can affect behaviour.
- An isolated animal (often due to ill health) can be stressed and these animals may become aggressive.

Bulls

Bulls are more aggressive during mating season and extremely dangerous when fighting.

Remember:

- Never trust any bull – particularly the 'lonely bull' reared or kept in isolation.
- Never work bulls on your own.
- Never trust a quiet bull.
- Never turn your back on a bull.
- The older the bull, the more dangerous it can become.
- Avoid working bulls with other bulls around.

Cows with calves

Any cow, but particularly a beef cow, is often aggressive just after calving and is not to be trusted. Remember:

- The younger the calf, the more dangerous the mother.
- Avoid having a dog with you when doing any work involving cows with calves.
- Avoid situations where you come between a cow and her newborn calf without some form of barrier to protect yourself. This is especially important when weighing and applying identification to a newborn calf.
- A bellowing calf will agitate the mother; hold the calf's mouth shut to keep it quiet.

4. Keep an eye on what's going on around you

When you are fronting a difficult animal, it's easy to lose track of what the other cattle are doing. You need to keep looking around, so that you know what is going on at all times.

Plan a likely escape route or what may be used as a safe refuge; for example, behind a barrier or through an escape gap.

5. Know when to use your voice or cane

Cattle handling can be effective without the use of noise or voice; however some cattle handlers use their voices to soothe and calm, to show authority, and to let the cattle know where the handler is in relation to them.

Carrying a flapper or cane may give you more confidence and some protection, but should only be used to guide cattle not to flog them.

The cane or flapper can be useful for defence. For instance, if you are in a tight corner with a difficult animal, you may need to make louder noises and move the flapper in order to be seen.

Cattle have good memories. They learn quickly and soon work out who hits them and who treats them well. Beating them doesn't help. Cattle also learn where the unpleasant things such as castration and weaning happen. Gentle handling during traumatic times is important, especially for young cattle.

6. Check the yards for hazards before working with cattle

(See guidance note Safe Design and Maintenance of Cattle Yards)

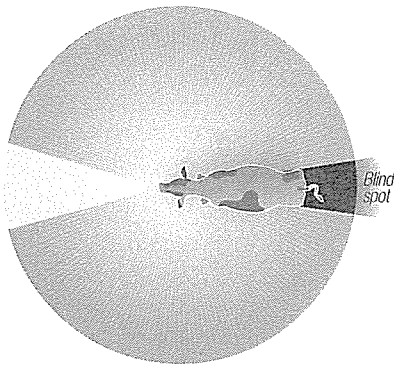
A lot of the injuries to cattle handlers happen in the yards. Good design and maintenance can help prevent those injuries.

If you are not used to the yards, check the layout and how things work before taking cattle in.

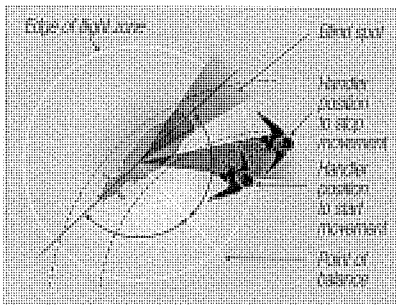
Remove stray posts, timbers, containers and large stones from pens and the race, to prevent tripping and minimise distractions.

Typical yard maintenance to reduce hazards include:

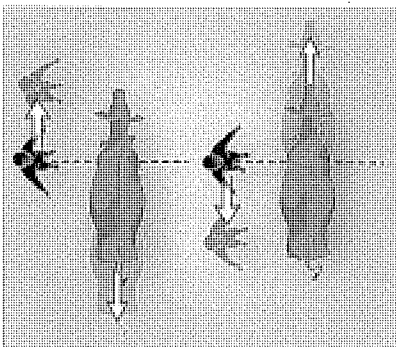
- Hammer nails home and flatten off, saw off bolts that are too long and remove wire.
- Fasten down or replace loose or rotten timbers on catwalks or rails.
- Keep gates well oiled and free-swinging or sliding.
- Keep gates and latching mechanisms well adjusted and aligned.
- Maintain the head bail and crush.
- Watch out for weld mesh projections (and think about replacing weld mesh with rails).
- Perform repairs immediately.
- Reduce dust with sprinklers or hosing down.



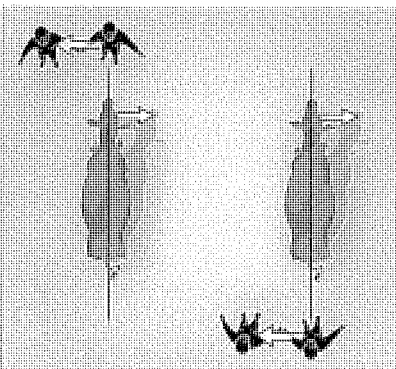
Cattle field of vision



Working flight distance



Shoulder balance points



Backbone balance point

B. CATTLE FIELD OF VISION AND FLIGHT ZONE

With eyes on the sides of their heads, cattle have a wide range of vision to the sides; however, they are seeing a view with one eye only and cannot judge distances well. To the rear, they have a blind area where they cannot see at all. If they detect movement to the side or rear, they are easily alarmed.

Using the 'flight distance'

'Flight distance' is how close cattle let you come before they take flight or move away.

It's different for every animal, but the flight distance is longer or further away for cattle who are handled less often. For instance, if you get within 100 metres of wild beef cattle they'll start moving, whereas dairy cattle will usually let you come within five metres or even less.

You can get cattle moving by entering their flight distance. The further in you go, the faster they move away. But don't move in too close or they may panic and scatter. You can get them to stop by moving out of their flight distance, i.e. by stepping back.

The ideal angle of approach to an animal is in the zone 45 to 60 degrees behind the line of the shoulder. (Handler or other movement within the flight zone, especially in front or beside races and crushes is likely to cause baulking.)

It is possible to get close to cattle without disturbing them by adopting a non-direct or zigzag type style of approach. Avoiding direct eye contact with cattle also helps.

When you're in close quarters with cattle, as in yards, move through the animal's 'balance lines' to get them moving.

There are two balance lines. One runs crossways through the animal's shoulders. The other is lengthways down the backbone.

Whichever way you move through these lines, the animal will go the other way.

If you're standing in front or behind, moving to one side encourages the animal to go the other way.

If you're standing alongside an animal, moving forward encourages it to reverse or turn and go back. Moving back encourages it to go forward.

C. SPECIFIC CATTLE HANDLING SITUATIONS

The following ideas and techniques will reduce the risk of injury to handlers and cattle when mustering and undertaking yard work. The relevance of some of these ideas and techniques will depend on the type of cattle, the cattle handling facilities available and the existing experience of the cattle handlers.

1. Mustering

- Mustering is best done early in the morning or towards nightfall, when temperatures are cooler and cattle have had a long grazing period.
- Prepare the route in advance. Open the gates and be on guard at the places where cattle are most likely to break away.
- All people involved in the muster should be familiar with the farm layout.
- Try to maintain visual, radio or routine contact with others involved in musters.
- Have safe working procedures in place for mustering, including an emergency response procedure.
- Use the flight distance to move cattle. Stay at the fringe so they don't scatter.
- Horses are effective; motorbikes annoy some cattle, particularly if they are not familiar with them.

CATTLE HANDLING

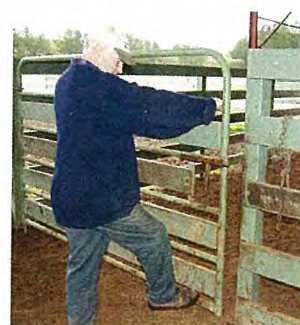
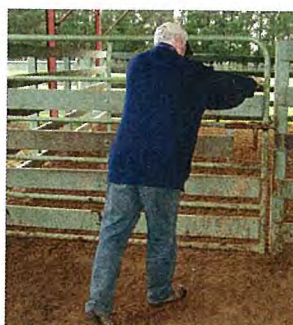
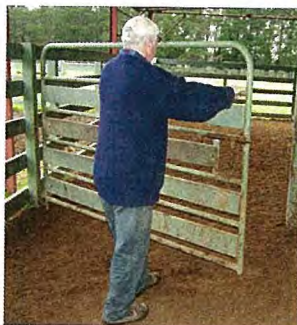


Pneumatic drafting gates in front of the crush.



Drafting 'pound' located at the exit to the crush.

- When closing a yard gate behind a mob of cattle, stand to the side where possible. If it is necessary to be behind the gate, hang on with both hands and use your boots to provide further support in case the gate is flung backwards.



Moving cows with calves

- Give the cows time to pick up their calves before moving.
- Use only trained or experienced staff. Work in pairs and communicate regularly.
- Dogs may be helpful but only if well trained; avoid trying to work cows and calves with dogs. Ensure untrained dogs are restrained or kept in an enclosure until cattle movement has been completed.
- Never trust cows at calving time.
- Cows and calves should be moved slowly. Beware of aggressive cows and avoid mustering beef cows with very young calves.
- If you have to catch a calf, keep it between you and the cow.
- If possible, put a fence or vehicle between you and the cow.

Moving bulls

- Move confidently – it is vital to demonstrate dominance.
- Don't try to move a dangerous bull on foot or alone; use a vehicle.
- Always have a long strong cane or stick.
- Keep bulls moving at a trot until they're well into the paddock and clear of the gate – keep them a good distance apart.
- Keep well clear of a fighting pair.
- Troublesome bulls can be moved by being included with a mob.

2. Yard work

Drafting

- Draft quiet cattle from more excitable stock, rather than the other way around, e.g. cows from bulls, cows from calves, and old from young.
- Draft cattle from small mobs of up to 50. The yard should be about half full.
- If you have to draft cattle through a gate, work ahead of the gate from one side to avoid being knocked down.
- Avoid using yard gate ends as a means of drafting cattle.
- Ideally, use a purpose designed and built drafting facility or pound.
- After drafting, make sure the two mobs can still see each other. Keep them next door to each other, separated by a good fence. They will eventually drift away and start to feed.
- A long cane can help draft individual stock from a mob, provided it is used gently to touch an animal on the back or tail.



A non-slip concrete catwalk beside the race.



A race top rail supported from above to enable clear access through the rail for injecting.



Cow in crush with head restraint.



Loading ramp with catwalk attached to the ramp.

Working cattle through the race

- Give cattle 30 minutes to settle down in the yards.
- Avoid working in yards on your own. Work with a partner if you can.
- Don't overfill the forcing yard – keep it about three quarters full, so that cattle have room to turn towards the race mouth.
- Pack the race firmly to stop the cattle moving back and forth.
- Don't get in a race with large cattle; you could be crushed.
- Don't put your arms, head or legs through race walls – reversing cattle might not see you or be able to stop. Limbs may be caught between rail openings, resulting in serious injury.
- If there is a catwalk, use it.
- To get the cattle to move forward, walk along the catwalk or just inside the flight zone from the front of the race to the back.

In the crush

- Using a hock bar can be highly dangerous, as it can easily be knocked forward, back or up.
- Stand at the end of the bar, not at the side, and keep it at arm's length in case it jerks upwards.
- Preferably, stand at the rear of the crush when operating the bail mechanism; front operation of the head bail will make it difficult for an animal to walk up to you.
- When working with cattle in a crush to perform tasks such as vaccinations, beware of sudden movements that could crush your arms or hands.
- Restrain an animal in a head bail and use a head restraint if working on the head.
- Take care when using brands or knives when castrating or bang tailing.
- Beware when opening side gates on a crush, as an animal's weight can force the gate into you.

Loading and unloading

- Use all available gates and hock bars to stop cattle reversing.
- Prepare your pen sizes in the yards before loading.
- Do not get in behind cattle.
- Use backing gates.
- Remember that driving the mob from the rear won't speed up loading – dominant cattle in the middle won't be pushed along by tail-enders.
- Walk down the catwalk to encourage cattle to go up (and vice versa).
- Give cattle time to unload – they will follow each other.

See loading race and ramp design points in the 'Yard Design Guide' on pages 19 and 20.

D. CATTLE PROCEDURES

The following are hints to making cattle procedures safer.

1. Drenching

- With large cattle, consider using a pour-on drench. If you are oral drenching, secure the animal in a head bail and head restraint.
- If smaller cattle need to be drenched in the race, mind their hooves. (Wear boots with steel toe caps.)
- Pack the cattle in firm, work from back to front, and keep close to the animal being drenched.
- Try and make the experience as pleasant as possible or cattle will resist next time they come in.

CATTLE HANDLING

2. Injecting and vaccinating

- Make sure the animal is suitably restrained and that the needle is sharp.
- Don't push the vaccinator in from a distance.
- If you lay your hand with the vaccinator against the neck, then twist your hand 45° after inserting the needle through the skin and inject, the animal may not even react.
- Needles should be placed in a sharps container and correctly disposed of.

Safe vaccination procedure



Run back of hand along neck.



Choose point to inject.



Angle hand down to insert needle and vaccinate.

3. Dehorning

- Dehorn or debud when they are calves.
- Dehorning of calves should be done in a calf cradle or, for large calves, in a crush.
- If dehorning in a crush use a good head restraint, chin scoop or head lifter fitted to the head bail.
- Stand clear when the animal exits the head bail, as it may turn and attack.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when applying wound dressing.

E. MORE SAFETY TIPS FOR CATTLE HANDLERS

Stand well back or up close

To avoid being kicked, decide how you will do the task. Don't underestimate the speed, reach and accuracy of an animal's kick. Stand well back and out of range, unless you are working close to the animal, then you turn side-on and get right in against it. Space between you and the animal allows a kick to hit you.

Wear gear that's right for the job

Leather boots with steel toe caps are vital when working in the yards. Gumboots should also have toe caps to avoid toe crush injuries.

A good strong pair of trousers and leggings can reduce the severity of kicking injuries.

Take off your watch or loose jewellery if you're working in the yard. Roll your sleeves down in case you're rubbed against fences or timbers.

Wear PPE when using chemicals. (See Appendix 1: Chemical use in cattle yards.)

Wear sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat when exposed to UV radiation.

Avoid being distracted by a mobile phone when working cattle; turn it off and encourage others to do the same.



Mind your head, arms and legs

Never poke your head, arms or legs through the rails or boarding into the race as this becomes a trapping space that may result in serious injury.

This can be reinforced by a sign saying:

'DO NOT PUT HEAD OR ARMS THROUGH RACE RAILS'

Do not lean over an animal's head or bend down over it under a cross tie. If there is a catwalk, use it to keep yourself out of harm's way and to make you look bigger for better control.

Know what to do in an emergency

In dangerous situations, turn side-on to cattle. It makes you look smaller and less threatening and provides maximum protection for delicate body parts. Always plan your escape route in case of trouble, e.g. through an escape way, behind a barrier or by rolling under a fence.

If you get cornered by a bull, shout loudly and strike it repeatedly on the nose to make it close its eyes. To keep a bull away from an injured person, grab and pull the tail to one side to deflect attention away from the injured person.

Hitting cattle stirs them up

The really dominant animals stick to the middle of the mob and won't allow themselves to be pushed about by the inferiors behind them. They may even turn and attack them.

Electric prodders should be used sparingly, if at all. Overuse can badly stir up cattle.

Chasing cattle makes them see you as a predator and start fearing you, which does not help for future handling. Cattle should never be chased, particularly young cattle that are going to be handled a lot.

Unfamiliar gateways can become trouble spots and the use of a small amount of hay or feed to lure the animals through can help to achieve quieter handling.

Understand why cattle stop (or 'balk')

There are a number of things that make cattle baulk:

- dead ends in a race
- humans or dogs in the way
- flapping clothes or sacking
- moving into bright light, sun or shadows
- certain smells, such as blood on the ground from dehorning or castrating.

If they are agitated, cattle tend to raise their heads and then they can't see the ground with both eyes. As a result, a simple thing such as a shadow, a piece of pipe or a step can disturb them and they'll stop moving.

If they are too crowded in the race, they may put their heads down. Then they can't see anything clearly at the tips of their noses, so they may baulk at a change in texture in the flooring, at shadows, drains, water or steps.

Cattle are natural herders; they like to be with the mob and follow other cattle. If they see the mob or see cattle in front moving, they follow. If cattle see the mob beside them in a race or forcing yard they will stop. Covering panels in forcing yards or races can reduce this.



Escape routes provide access and exit during an emergency.

CATTLE HANDLING

What makes cattle flighty?

There are a number of things that make cattle flighty:

- hunger
- excessive noise, barking, shouting, motorbikes
- hitting
- electric prodders
- painful, new or strange objects
- invading their 'personal space', especially around the head
- being chased.

Remember, flighty cattle have unpredictable behaviour which increases risk during stock handling.

Practice good hygiene

Be aware of the possibility of contracting diseases from cattle, such as leptospirosis and Q Fever. These diseases are transmitted through contact with blood, saliva and urine.*

Practice good hygiene by washing hands and face after handling cattle.

Vaccinate cattle against leptospirosis.

A vaccine is also available to protect humans against contracting Q Fever. (See Appendix 2: Zoonoses.)

SUMMARY

The Cattle Handling section of this guide seeks to provide practical guidance to people engaged in or entering the beef cattle industry. The information in this section provides techniques for the handling of cattle that, where adopted, will greatly reduce the risk of personal injury while assisting the maintenance of beef quality.

The format and layout of this information lends itself to being suitable for conducting induction training for a new worker, family member or employee.

2

SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

Safe and trouble-free cattle handling is a big step towards producing better-quality beef and is more achievable with the help of a well-designed and constructed set of yards.

Attention to detail, along with good yard design and built-in safety features, makes cattle handling safe and a more pleasant experience for both cattle and cattle handlers. Also, good yard design and construction means good stock flow, less stress and better productivity.

This section draws on the experience of farmers throughout Victoria and the knowledge of industry recognised cattle-handling specialists.

The primary principles in cattle yard design are as follows:

- Have a clear understanding of animal behavioural traits that affect the way animals move in a yard. (This relates to the position of the handler in relation to the cattle.)
- Provide the appearance of clear space and minimise distractions to draw cattle through the yard.
- Build in features for the convenience and safety of the cattle handlers and, where practicable, separate humans from animals.
- Design race and stock pressure areas for livestock and operator comfort and safety.

A. DESIGNING YARDS

Information in this section will assist you when you are designing or refitting yards to control risks while at the same time improving cattle processing efficiency.

Cattle yards should ideally be:

- Well drained to reduce slips, trips and falls.
- On level ground or slightly uphill (cattle resist going downhill).
- Oriented so that cattle in the race or on the loading ramp aren't moving into shadows and that the handler is not looking into the sun.
- Built strong enough for the type of cattle to be handled.
- Located so that livestock carriers do not reverse on or off properties onto a public road and if hard standing (parked) do not block or partially block traffic.

SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

Yards should ideally have:

- A firm dry base in the pens, with at least 3% of surface fall for effective drainage.
- A clear trafficable yard entrance.



- Strengthened yard gate posts with ties to reduce gate dropping or lifting.



- Gate catch handles and latch design with minimal obstruction or protrusions.
- Slam-shut catches in forcing areas.
- A sheltered spacious, barricaded working area to protect handlers and equipment, with a non-slip concrete base. (The concrete should be ramped under the surrounding yard surface on the edges to reduce tripping hazards.)



- A suitable, lockable storage facility to secure chemicals. Where vaccines and antibiotics are used these may be stored in a small lockable fridge. (Remember large fridges are capable of trapping children and should not be used.)
- Plenty of access ways and emergency escapes between and around yards (in large yards these could be highlighted in yellow so they are easily and quickly sighted).

SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- Race sides covered up to reduce distractions that may impede forward movement of cattle.



- A concreted race and forcing pen.
- Readily identifiable emergency escapes between the forcing yard and working area.
- Bottom rails of yard fence no less than 300mm above ground level to allow a handler to escape (drop and roll under the rail).
- Race and gate over head ties that are secure and at a safe working height – a minimum of 2.6 metres and up to 3.6 metres if a horse is used in the yards.
- A race side panel release system, to allow for the safe and easy escape of any livestock should they go down.



- If work is required between rails, a race designed to prevent cattle pushing handlers' arms against posts.

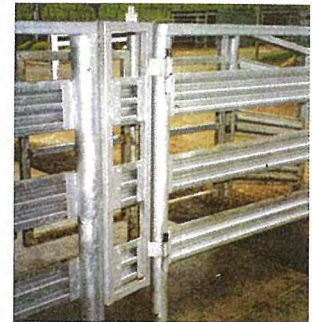


SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

B. MAINTAINING YARDS

You rarely have the opportunity to rebuild your yards from the ground up, but simple, low-cost changes can make a big difference. Here are a number of ideas that can make your existing yards safer.

- Build in access and escape points, especially between the forcing pen and the working area. Escapes with bat wing gates enable a larger exit space.



- Concrete the race and forcing areas to provide a non-slip surface for cattle and handlers. Ensure they are regularly cleaned.

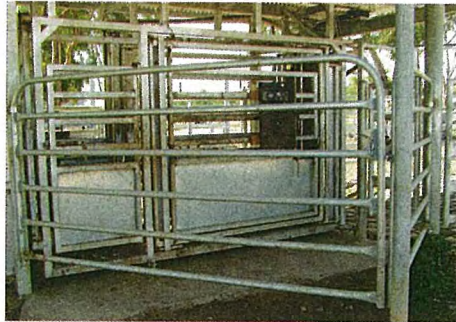


- Maintain yards and remove loose timbers, large stones, protruding wire, nails or bolts.
- Build non-slip pressed steel or concrete catwalks beside forcing pens, races and loading ramps.



SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- Construct barriers to protect work areas, such as around the crush.



- Close in the forcing pen and both sides of the race mouth to prevent baulking.



If closing in yards with panels or belting, ensure emergency escapes are fitted and identified. (Painting these yellow will assist.)

- Angle corners in pens to improve cattle flow.



- Locate water troughs in inactive areas of the yard.



SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- Provide sprinklers to reduce dust.



- Divide large, square pens into longer, narrower ones.
- Provide shelter over the working area.



- Install rubber conveyer belting or similar on panels to reduce baulking due to outside influences.



- Install sliding gates in race ways, loading races and ramps with no head-high projections. This type of gate needs to be strong enough for the largest cattle.



SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- Install slam-shut gates in entrances to races, forcing areas and other pressure areas.



- Engineer smooth surfaces on gate latches and catches.



- Grease and maintain slides, catches and hinges in yards and crush.
- Remove or modify head-high projections such as gate slides, crush handles and low gate ties.



- Provide lockable storage for chemicals remaining at yards. (This may include a lockable bar type fridge for vaccines and antibiotics – but not food or drinks.)

SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

C. CATTLE HANDLING EQUIPMENT

Choose a cattle crush with these features:

- Access gates on both sides.



- Slam-shut gates or catches.
- No overhead protrusions such as those on sliding gates or bail closing mechanisms.
- Rear bail head operation, (preferred).



- Safety locks on the bail release.
- Easy, quick and quiet operation.
- A positive head bail locking system capable of being operated with one hand only.
- No sharp edges, protruding catches, bolts or wire.
- A slide-through hock bar or backing bar.



SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- A side squeeze facility for safer cattle control.



- Split side opening access gates, preferably with catch at rear.



- Lower side panels closed in to avoid kicks and animal legs getting caught between rails.
- Ease of maintenance with greasing points.
- A crush exit designed to allow processed animals to be separated from the work area.
- Crush gates, bail and latches free of nip or crush points.
- A design allowing for a safe and easy release operation should an animal go down.
- Solid and secure anchorage points (preference to be set in concrete).
- Gates and head bails that operate effectively in capturing and securing stock, and do not fly open when kicked or struck.
- Equipment that has the proven ability to effectively restrain the classes of cattle being handled.

Choose a loading race and ramp that includes:

- Solid construction and anchorage to prevent movement from trucks or cattle.
- No projections, slipping, tripping or falling hazards.
- Elimination of blind spots or areas where stock flow is restricted or cattle may baulk.
- Sliding ramp gates that are secure when open or shut, and that slide easily with no hand pinch points.
- Handles and guards on sliding gates, to help stop operators' hands entering any gaps between the slide gates and support posts.
- A race and ramp height and width that is suitable for the type of stock being handled.
- Race and ramp sides covered in to reduce baulking.
- An apron on the ramp to allow for the safe opening and closing of truck sliding gates including an access gate at the top of ramp.

SAFE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE YARDS

- A catwalk (620 minimum width) with a non-slip surface and handrail that complies with *Australian Standard AS 1657* on any ramp higher than 300mm.



- Secure race ties above head height.

When siting a loading ramp consider the following:

1. Truck loading race entry that is well clear of power lines and is capable of receiving the largest truck likely to attend the property.



2. Positioning bollards to protect any power installations, equipment or sheds.
3. Lighting if loading or working at night.
4. A loading race and truck entry to the ramp even from one side to the other.
(Truck reversing to the ramp is easier if the ground level is made slightly down hill to the ramp.)
5. Loading ramp location is best for truck drivers if they:
 - do not have to reverse with the sun in their mirrors.
 - are free of shadows and not facing south so the sun will not shine in truck drivers' mirrors when reversing.

Note: VicRoads prohibit the reversing on or off properties onto a public road.

If property entrances with gates are located near a public road ensure a hard stand area is provided for trucks clear of the road. (This area needs to cater for the largest truck used.)

Loading ramps should not intrude onto the road or outside the property fence line and the loading position of the vehicle should be inside the property.

For more detailed information on property access for trucks contact VicRoads.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This guide acknowledges the participation and contribution of the Beef Farm Safety Reference Group.

The contribution, assistance and co-operation of many farmers, their employees and farm service providers who participated in workshops or allowed visits to their farm and facilities for photos for this publication is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks go to Bill Vowles (Kattle Gear) who provided valuable feedback and support throughout the project

The New Zealand Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation are acknowledged for providing a number of publications and resource materials that were helpful in providing information for this guide.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

FURTHER INFORMATION

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WorkSafe Victoria

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