

Farm Safety Tip – Livestock Safety

There are more injuries each year from farm animals than there are from tractors or machinery. Poor judgment and lack of understanding of animal behavior are the main causes of accidents. Livestock have unique vision characteristics, sensitivity to noise and strong territorial instincts that need to be understood before handling them. In addition to injuries from accidents, farm animals can also transmit diseases to humans such as leptospirosis, rabies, brucellosis, salmonellosis, and ringworm.

Here are some tips on working safely around livestock:

#1 Animals respond to routine; be calm and deliberate, avoid sudden movements.

#2 Avoid the animal's "blind spot". Approach from the front or side.

#3 Animals are very sensitive to noises. Avoid loud noises and do not yell.

#4 Many animals are colorblind, have poor depth perception, and are extremely sensitive to contrasts. Assess your lighting situation and avoid rapid changes from light to dark.

#5 Many injuries are caused by a startled animal pinning the handler against some surface. When working around livestock, always leave yourself a way out, especially when working in close quarters.

#6 While bulls account for only two percent of the cattle population, they are responsible for more than half of the fatalities. Always use extreme caution around all male farm animals.

#7 To help avoid territorial behavior, distribute feed in large, unpredictable patches.

#8 Plan ahead. Always wear the proper personal protective equipment for the job.

#9 Maintain equipment and facilities in good repair and keep things clean and in order.

For more information on livestock safety, see:

<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/~sschmidt/safety/>

For more information on animal behavior, see: <http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d001001-d001100/d001054/d001054.html> and <http://ohioline.osu.edu/aex-fact/0990.html>

For more information on transmittable diseases, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000701-d000800/d000752/d000752.html> and

<http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/Bio/Animal/achand.htm>

