

MICHIGAN



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: Prevention of work-related injuries & illnesses through research & investigation

SAFE ANIMAL HANDLING TO PREVENT FARM-RELATED INJURIES AND DEATHS

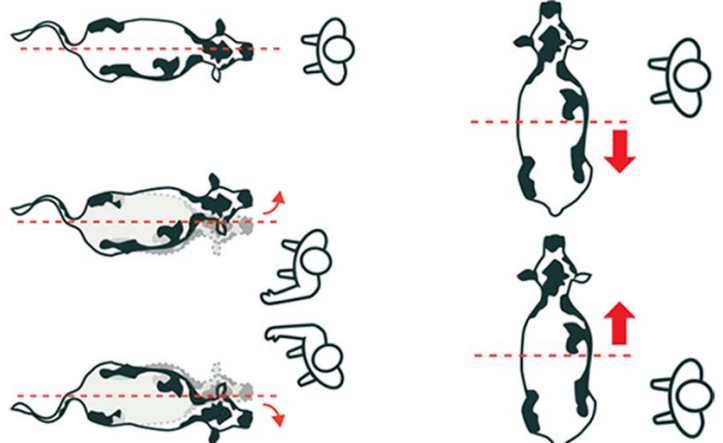
Farm animals and livestock are an essential part of the farming community and economy of Michigan. However, farm animals and livestock can also be dangerous – ever year, three farm owners or farmworkers are killed and 292 are hospitalized or treated in the emergency department after being bit, kicked, trampled, charged, or otherwise hurt by animals while working on the farm. Injury from an animal is the most common cause of farm injuries in Michigan that require hospitalization or treatment in the emergency room. This number of individuals injured at work by farm animals or livestock is likely an underestimate, as the additional number of injuries from animals treated in urgent care or personal physician offices or where the patient “toughed it out” is unknown. Keeping certain guidelines and rules-of-thumb in mind while working with animals can help prevent these injuries and deaths.

EXAMPLES OF MICHIGAN WORK-RELATED DEATHS AND INJURIES CAUSED BY FARM ANIMALS:

- A herdsman in his 60s died after he was struck multiple times in the chest by an agitated bull while he attempted to load it into a trailer.
- A farmworker in her 20s died after she was kicked and trampled by a dairy cow as she was trying to move it into the milking area.
- A worker in her 40s on a horse-breeding farm was knocked down by a horse, lost consciousness and sustained a head injury.
- A farmer in his 40s was trying to break up a fight between pigs when one gouged him in the leg with its tusk, breaking his femur.
- A farmworker in her teens was hit by a bull’s horn in her thigh, suffering a deep puncture wound.
- A farmer in his 50s broke his lower leg when the calf he was ear-marking fell onto him.
- A farmer in her 40s was trying to clean a newborn calf when the mother pinned her against a fence and the ground, causing back and neck injuries.

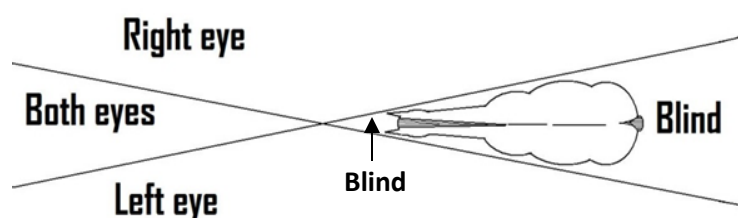
PREVENTING INJURIES AND DEATHS DUE TO ANIMALS ON THE FARM:

- **Understand animal behavior**
 - Always be alert, and move and act deliberately around farm animals.
 - Be aware of how an animal will likely move based on your position relative to its balance lines (red dotted line). The animal will usually move in the opposite direction from where you are in relation to one of these lines. Stand far enough away to avoid being kicked.

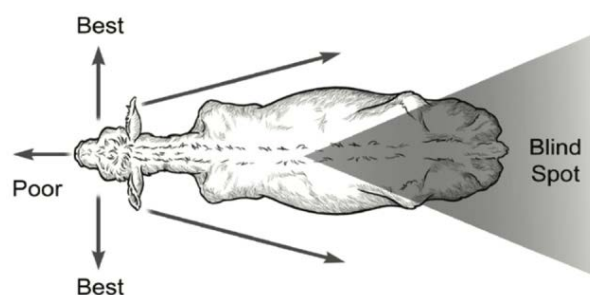


<http://www.saferfarms.org.nz/guides/safe-cattle-handling/#cattle-handling-principles>

- Cattle, sheep, swine, and horses have panoramic vision and limited depth perception. Avoid approaching from their blind spot directly behind them to keep from startling them (and being in range of a kick), or standing directly in front of their heads, as they also have poor vision here and may injure you with the swinging of their heads. A poorly or unevenly lit area may create shadows causing the animal to startle or perceive the shadow as a hole.



<http://myequestrianworld.blogspot.com.es/2011/12/horses-line-of-sight.html>



https://agcenter.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk261/files/inline-images/Fotonovela%20Diagram%20of%20Cow%20Blind%20Spot_3.jpg

- Recognize an animal's agitated, aggressive and/or fearful postures: raised or flattened ears; a raised tail or rapidly lashing tail; raised hair on the back; bared teeth; pawing the ground; stiff-legged gate or posture; snorting and/or growling.
- Always use extreme caution around bulls, boars, stallions and rams, whether or not they have a history of aggression.
- Female animals will likely be extremely protective of their young, so use extra caution when working around calves, piglets, lambs, and the like.
- **Create safe facilities**
 - Be aware of your surroundings to prevent being trapped by an animal (purposefully or accidentally) against fences, walls, or gates.
 - Always have an exit route planned when entering an area with farm animals.
 - Keep animal housing units (including barns) and pen/pasture fencing in good repair and clear of extra hazards, such as trip hazards on the ground.
 - Consider using some type of restraint, if possible, including stocks (for large animals) and halters, hobbles, or other restraints.
- **Use safe work practices**
 - Whenever possible, work with a partner or group when around animals.
 - Wear appropriate personal protective equipment for the task, such as gloves and substantial shoes or boots.

RESOURCES

[Michigan State University Extension: Animal Care and Well-Being](#)

[National Farmers Union: Livestock Handling](#)

[National Ag Safety Database: All Animal Topics](#)

[Missouri Farm Safety: Working With Livestock](#)

[Penn State University Extension: Animal Handling Tips](#)

[Auburn University: Livestock Safety](#)

[WorkSafe New Zealand: Safe Cattle Handling](#)

[Michigan AgrAbility](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Agriculture has the highest rate of work-related fatalities and one of the highest rates of work-related injuries (including injuries that require days off work) of all industries in Michigan.
- 30% of all farm-related injuries requiring hospitalization or emergency treatment in Michigan are from cows.