

## Training Module: Safety in Livestock Facilities

**Objective:** To apply safe working practices when in and around livestock facilities.

**Trainer's Note:** Present this module at the corrals or pens. Focus on working safely in the facility and identifying escape routes. Ask staff to suggest ways to update current facilities for optimal safe working conditions.

### Background

Corrals confine cattle for observation and to perform routine health and management procedures. To accomplish these goals, the corral and working facility design must match the needs of the producer. It should be labor efficient, reduce animal stress and minimize the risk of injury to workers and cattle.

Animal psychology is used in designing new systems and accounts for many of the improvements in modern corral plans. After the lot gate has been closed on a set of cattle, their first and strongest desire is to find their way out of confinement. Modern corral designs take advantage of natural instinct by offering the animal a false escape route through curved, solid-enclosed crowding areas and chutes.

To be able to safely work in these facilities, workers and ranchers must know certain patterns of cattle behavior. (Refer to the module: Understanding Livestock Behavior) When working with livestock keep these safety procedures in mind. Proper gates and corrals makes working with livestock more manageable. Knowing how to escape from facilities and corrals when animals become excited may prevent a serious accident.

**Site Selection:** For easy movement of cattle, corrals should be accessible to most pastures and by trucks and trailers, even under adverse weather conditions. Because of their physical layout, some operations may need more than one set of working facilities. Good drainage is also important. It prohibits mud build up and promotes sanitation. Hauling in gravel or other fill materials may be necessary.

To help prevent accidents, keep walk and work surfaces properly lighted and clear of any debris or obstructions that could cause a fall. Provide slip-resistant footing, such as roughened concrete. Keep work areas manure-free.

Properly designed treatment stalls and appropriate animal-restraint equipment and facilities can reduce accidents and injuries. All pens, chutes, gates, fences, and loading ramps should be strong and work properly. Fences and gates should be strong enough to withstand crowded conditions. Livestock areas should be free of sharp projections such as broken boards, nails or wire. Worker passes should be provided for emergency exit.

Ventilation is extremely important for the health and safety of workers and livestock. Inadequate ventilation can cause dangerous buildups of toxic gases, including ammonia, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and methane.

### **Review The Following Points**

- Well constructed and designed corrals and pens are the first defense against accidents.
- Remember to keep animal psychology in mind when working with livestock.
- Keep areas well-lighted for safety and free of debris and manure.
- Good drainage is a must to prevent falls. Add gravel or other filler if needed.
- Provide slip-resistant footing in all areas. Roughen concrete when appropriate.

**True and False Answer Key**

1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T

## **Safety in Livestock Facilities Quiz**

**True or False**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowing Livestock psychology is important for safely working in corrals and barns.               | T | F |
| 2. All pens, chutes, gates, fences and loading ramps should be strong and work properly.            | T | F |
| 3. Walks and work surfaces should be properly lighted and clear of any debris to prevent accidents. | T | F |
| 4. Worker passes are not needed if the employee can jump over fences and gates.                     | T | F |
| 5. Drainage is an important part of corral design.  | T | F |