

Cattle Handling Options for Heifers

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Considerations

- How does your current cattle handling facility work?
- How convenient are supplies, water, and electricity?
- How well do cattle move through your facility?
- Are your animals comfortable?
- Are you comfortable?
- Is your veterinarian/breeder comfortable?



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Do you need to make changes?

- My animals are getting injured.
- My animals are frightened when I handle them.
- Cattle are balking at equipment and people.
- I/Veterinarian are uncomfortable.
- My work takes too much time!



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Cattle Behavior



Photo by John Chackun



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How cattle see

- Cattle can see 300° around them.
- Where can't they see you?
- That's why we get kicked!



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Limited Vision

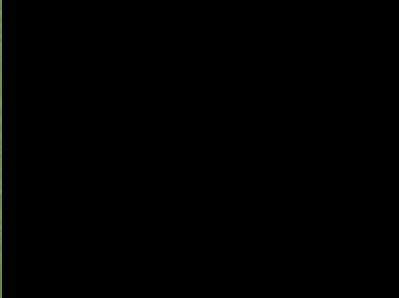
- Cattle have poor depth perception and only 60° vertical vision (humans have 140°) and must lower their heads to focus on something on the floor.
- Shadows, bright areas, foreign objects, and moving parts tend to catch cattle's attention and disrupt animal flow.



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Curiosity and Cattle Flow



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Flight Zones & Handling

- Heifers have much larger flight zones than cows and tend to become agitated quickly.
- Back out of an animal's flight zone to calm her down.
- If/When she turns to face you, you are out of her flight zone.



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Cattle Stress

- Stressed cattle are hard on equipment, and run the risk of harming themselves and you.
- Stressed cattle have lowered immunity, digestive functions, and fertility.
- Cattle have 8 times more sensitive hearing than people, but have a hard time deciphering where the sound is coming from.
- Calm, quiet handling benefits everyone.



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Stress Scoring



1- No stress animal has moved to another area on her own accord. No pressure has been applied.



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Stress Scoring



2- When pressure is applied animals move in a natural slow gait.



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Stress Scoring



3- When pressure is applied animals raise their heads and move in a strait determined manner but do not break out of a walk.



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Stress Scoring



4- When pressure is applied cattle move at a faster gait and raise tail and perk ears forward/up.



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Stress Scoring



5- When pressure is applied cattle move at a fast gait. Feet slip when turning, or at thresholds. Tail is raised and head is lowered.



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Handling Facilities



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Handling Facilities

- Can you work with existing facilities?
- Sturdy and safe
- Take advantage of natural cattle behavior
- Accessibility
- Convenience
- Cost



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Can you work with existing facilities?



- Do I have a place that will work for cattle handling?
- Will it require remodeling?
- Does it have water and electricity?
- Will I be comfortable working here?
- Will my animals be comfortable here?



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Sturdy and Safe

- Poorly constructed equipment is not safe for you or your animals.
- Well constructed equipment requires less maintenance.
- Well constructed equipment works better and saves you time.



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Facilities Options

- Headlocks
- Palpation rail
- Squeeze chute/self-locking head gate
- Combination of more than one option



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HEADLOCKS

- Sturdy and Safe? **YES**
- Take advantage of natural cattle behavior? **YES**
- Accessibility to animal? **YES/NO**
- Convenient? **YES**
- Cost? **YES/NO**



Palpation Rail

- Sturdy and Safe? **NO**
- Take advantage of natural cattle behavior? **YES**
- Accessibility to animal? **YES**
- Convenient? **YES**
- Cost? **YES**



Self-locking Head Gate/Squeeze Chute

- Sturdy and Safe? **YES**
- Take advantage of natural cattle behavior? **YES/NO**
- Accessibility to animal? **YES**
- Convenient? **YES/NO**
- Cost? **YES/NO**



Combination Option

← Headlocks

- Sturdy and Safe? **YES/NO**
- Take advantage of natural cattle behavior? **NO**
- Accessibility to animal? **YES**
- Convenient? **YES/NO**
- Cost? **YES**



Options for your farm...

- Takes preplanning
- Takes advantage of natural cattle behavior
- Low cost



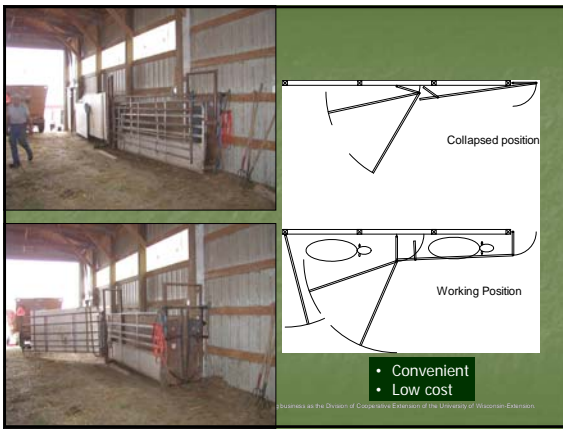


- Works well with large groups of animals
- Takes advantage of natural cattle behavior
- Restrains animal very well
- Can be moved (indoor and outdoor set up)
- High cost



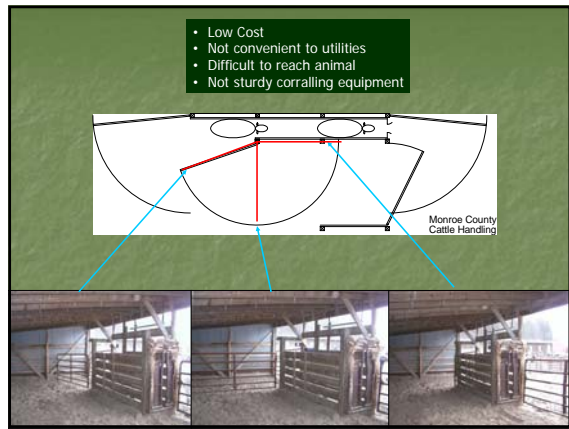
- Convenient to water, supplies, and electricity
- Can care for special needs animals
- Takes preplanning
- Does not take advantage of natural cattle behavior

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- Convenient
- Low cost

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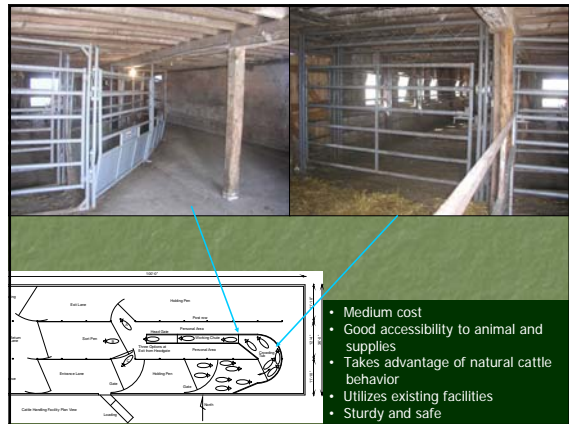
- Low Cost
- Not convenient to utilities
- Difficult to reach animal
- Not sturdy corraling equipment

Monroe County Cattle Handling



- Low cost
- Good cattle flow design (posts on outside of fence)
- Restraining animals may be difficult
- Exposed to weather conditions
- Not convenient to supplies

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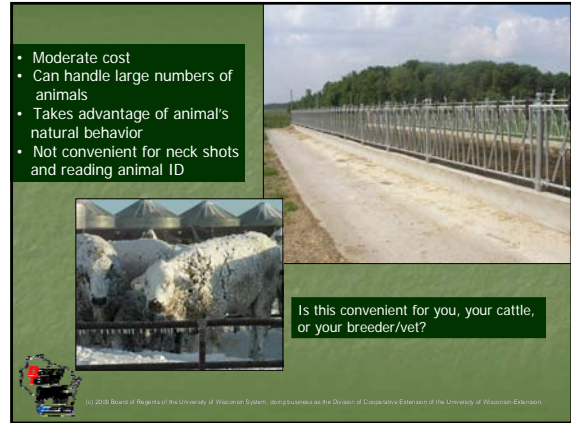


- Medium cost
- Good accessibility to animal and supplies
- Takes advantage of natural cattle behavior
- Utilizes existing facilities
- Sturdy and safe





- Uses recycled materials/low cost
- Very sturdy and safe for animals
- Low cost
- Takes advantage of natural cattle behavior
- Exposed to weather
- May not be convenient to utilities



- Moderate cost
- Can handle large numbers of animals
- Takes advantage of animal's natural behavior
- Not convenient for neck shots and reading animal ID

Is this convenient for you, your cattle, or your breeder/vet?

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