



Stockmanship Training Drill

Teaching Outline & Talking Points

Employee learning objective: Employees will understand basic cow behavior and movement skills. Employees will understand dairy's specific animal handling practice policies. Employees will demonstrate quiet, low stress handling techniques.

Training session preparation: This session will use a combination of videos, class discussions and hands-on training methods. Prior to the training session, the trainer will need to review the training video options and identify the videos to be used for your dairy. A list of potentially useful videos is provided under the Resources section at the end of this document. The trainer will also need to identify and set-up the hands-on working area within the dairy (set gates, move demonstration cows/heifers, etc.).

Items needed for the session include:

- Computer/projector with internet access to show videos.
- Small pen or alleyway to be used for hands-on demonstration and practice – should be a medium-sized pen or alleyway located away from busy traffic flow areas within the dairy.
- 5-6 cows or larger heifers to be used for hands-on demonstration/working.
- Copies of your dairy's animal handling policy.
- Copies of your dairy's Employee Ethics Agreement.
- Training Sign-in sheet.

Tips: This training can be covered in a single session or broken up over several shorter sessions if needed. It is important to remember that when training adults (employees) it is critical to explain the “why’s” behind what they are being asked to do (why should I do it differently?) and that they are engaged in the group discussion by asking questions and validating past experiences.

Training Session

Part I: Introduction (10 minutes)

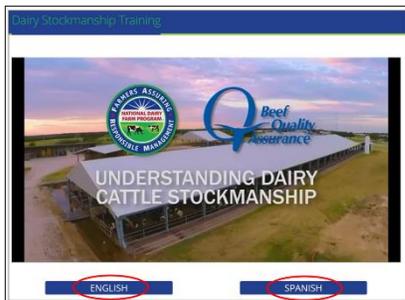
- Explain the reason for the training: Begin the session by explaining that cattle moved quietly with minimal stress actually give more milk, have more calves and cause fewer injuries to both themselves and caretakers. No one is “in trouble”; the goal is to review

good practices and why they are effective and important. Emphasize that you want employees to be safe and animals to be handled with as little stress as possible.

- Provide overview of what will be covered in the session: the session will last roughly one and a half hours, will watch some short videos, talk about animal handling practices and goals for our dairy and practice some basic hands-on skills.
- Review the dairy's animal handling policy: Read written policy if available. Explain that handling cattle in a low stress manner is the farm's policy and that cattle will be moved with a minimum of noise (no yelling or slamming gates) and using a minimum amount of physical contact and encouragement.
- Reinforce discipline policy for not following the animal handling policy: Example- "beating an animal (particularly with a stick or other object), twisting its tail or otherwise abusing it is grounds for discipline or dismissal. If an employee is having trouble moving an animal, they should get help from a supervisor."

Part II: Stockmanship Basics Overview (20-40 minutes, video length dependent)

- Employees watch one or more stockmanship videos in their native language. Basic options include viewing longer, broad-based videos such as the entire FARM video collection (about 30 minutes total) or the University of Minnesota video collection (about 12 minutes total) or only one or two select videos. Good short videos to start with are FARM's Handling Cattle in Alley's, Holding Areas and Milking Parlors (6 minutes) or UM's Moving Cows More Effectively video (2½ minutes). Refer to the References section for video option information.



- After viewing the videos, open a discussion to review and reinforce important animal movement concepts with employees:
 - ✓ Ask employees- what cow movement techniques did they see in the videos? Have they used any of them before? Were there any good reminders or tips they could take away from the videos? Do they have any questions on anything they saw? Comments?
 - ✓ Reinforce key concepts:
 - Cows will give more milk and cause fewer problems if handled quietly and gently.
 - Cows have very sensitive hearing. Yelling, whistling and slamming gates increase cow stress, reduce production and make cows unpredictable and more dangerous.
 - Cows walk more slowly than humans and become stressed when asked to hurry. Cows rarely need more than a gentle word or pat to move forward.
 - Cows prefer to be moved in groups and prefer to follow a lead cow.
 - Cows tend to move forward in the direction their nose is pointing, so getting her head pointed towards the path you want her to take is time well spent.

- When approaching a cow, it's best to approach from her side, where she can see you, and talk to her gently to let her know you are there.
- If you see a cow's eye and ear pointed towards you, you know you have her attention and she's ready to start working with you.
- If you move into a cow's blind spot (behind her) she will tend to stop moving forward and turn her head to see you, slowing the process.
- Cows have good memories and will remember people that treated them roughly.
- Cows' memories are also why when introducing heifers to new places (milking parlor, chutes for vaccination, loading trailers) it's important to particularly gentle and patient.

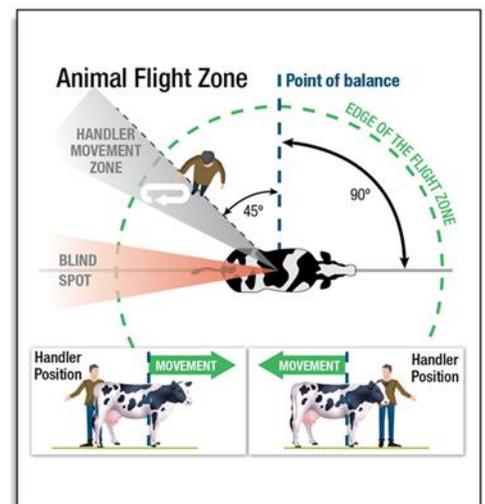
Part III: Trainer Modeling & Guided Practice (30 minutes)

Move the group to the chosen hands-on working area. The area should be pre-set with gates in place as needed and 4-6 cows/heifers to be used for trainer demonstration and employee practice.

- Demonstration or modeling of animal movement techniques: For new employees, the trainer demonstrates animal movement techniques. For refresher training, the trainer may have a seasoned employee demonstrate for others. Trainer or employee providing the demonstration explains what he is doing as he goes (techniques being used/desired movement he is looking for/cow response).

Demonstrations can include:

- *In a wide alleyway: move the animals as a group using a zig-zag pattern behind them and modeling the use of the flight zone & blind spot.*
- *In a narrow lane: move a line of cows by moving parallel in the opposite direction.*
- *Along a fence: move a single animal forward, starting and stopping using only body position.*
- *In a pen: move a cow out of a corner using only body position.*



- Employees practice the demonstrated animal movement techniques with trainer guidance: Each employee participates in the hands-on practice one at a time. Trainer/group watches from pen-side. Trainer provides guidance and reinforces good techniques. Corrections are

provided in a positive manner. Employee pride and confidence are important; no negative comments from the group are allowed.

Part IV: Group Discussion Summary & Training Documentation (10 minutes)

- Trainer leads summary discussion with employees:
 - ✓ Ask employees- any closing thoughts? What one movement practice discussed can they see themselves using right away? Any practices they feel they would like to work on further- either ones covered during the training or others from a “challenge” area within the dairy?
 - ✓ Final reinforcement of key concepts and why the practices are important – refer to technique/concept list used in classroom discussion in Part II. Bottom line: Employee safety is important and animals handled with minimal stress are more productive.
- Document the training: Employees sign training participation sheet and the dairy’s ethics agreement. Store the training records and ethics agreements in a place they can easily be retrieved during a FARM evaluation.

Session Resources:

Videos

Full subject matter videos:

- FARM video collection - <http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com/dairy-stockmanship-training>
- University of Minnesota video collection - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY7XQBihZRNubHTGO9P4neRDR8AHqcSjB>
- New Mexico State Dairy Safety Series - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY7XQBihZRNux6fNXaUbFMEfuvE7j89Rb>

Select short videos (to be used for shorter sessions or if short on time):

- FARM’s *Handling Cattle in Alley’s, Holding Areas and Milking Parlors* (6 minutes) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeRtUCygzXk>
- UM’s *Moving Cows More Effectively* (2½ minutes) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDm2Z225mkc&list=PLY7XQBihZRNubHTGO9P4neRDR8AHqcSjB&index=4>

Training documentation templates & dairy posters

- FARM Library record-keeping & template section - <http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com/resource-library>
- Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center - <http://umash.umn.edu/stockmanship/>