

Every year thousands of farm workers are injured and too many die in avoidable farming accidents.

Although most animal accidents are not fatal, many people are needlessly injured every year due to unwise risk taking.

## Handling facilities

- Ensure there are proper handling facilities, including well maintained holding pens, race and crush. Make shift gates and hurdles are not sufficient.
- Plan an escape route in case an animal charges you.
- Consider tethering the cow you are checking. Always use suitable ropes, do not improvise with baler string.



## CHECKLIST

### THE RACE

- ✓ Can animals readily enter the race and is there enough room in the collecting pen for them to be funneled easily?
- ✓ Can animals clearly see the crush and beyond? Animals will be more prepared to move into the light areas than into the dark.
- ✓ Are the sides of the race high enough to prevent animals from jumping over? Are they properly secured to the ground and each other? Sheeting the sides helps to keep cattle moving by reducing visual disturbances.
- ✓ Can you lead the animal in the race while it waits its turn in the crush? No one should work on in the animal in the crush with an unsecured animal waiting in the race behind.

### THE CRUSH

- ✓ Does the crush have a self-locking front gate and yoke to allow the animal's head to be firmly held?
- ✓ Does it have a rump rail, chain or bar?
- ✓ Is it secured to the ground?
- ✓ Is it positioned to allow you to work safely around it?
- ✓ Do the gates open smoothly?
- ✓ Is the crush floor slip resistant, made of hardwood bolted in place, metal chequer-plate or with rubber matting?

## Before starting the job, stop and think...

Ensure only authorised persons are allowed to enter livestock specific areas.

Where possible ensure 2 people are present, especially if trying to separate animals from the rest of the herd or handling bulls.

Consider the risk to persons over 65 years or with reduce agility.

No children under 13 years if age should be allowed to enter cattle housing or handle cattle.

### TOP TIPS:

- ✓ **Take time to understand your stock's behaviours.**  
Make sure your stock are handled by trained and agile workers.
- ✓ **Make sure your working area is safe and has safety measures in place.**  
Good handling facilities will have adequate gates, a well maintained crush, fence heights appropriate for the animals being managed.
- ✓ **Always have an escape or refuge for emergencies.**
- ✓ **Wear correct PPE.**  
Stop disease passing from animals to humans by ensuring you have good hygiene and wear correct PPE.
- ✓ **Always be careful around cows and new-born calves.**  
**NEVER** turn your back on a cow following calving.

### Bulls

Take extra precaution when handling bulls:

- All bulls should be in a purpose built pen. Ensure gates lock and catches should be stock proof.
- Where possible feed from outside the pen.
- Where possible include an outside area for the bull to allow bedding/cleaning of the pen.
- Display safety warning signs at the entrance of any building a bull is kept in.
- Arrange your race, crush and loading areas so that no one ever needs to be in them with animals.
- Keep farm perimeter gates closed when loading bulls to contain any escapees.

### Remember...

Make sure everyone carries a mobile phone with them. Have relevant emergency information and contacts programmed in.

Discuss risks regularly with the whole team, and train everyone on safe working practices and emergency procedures.

