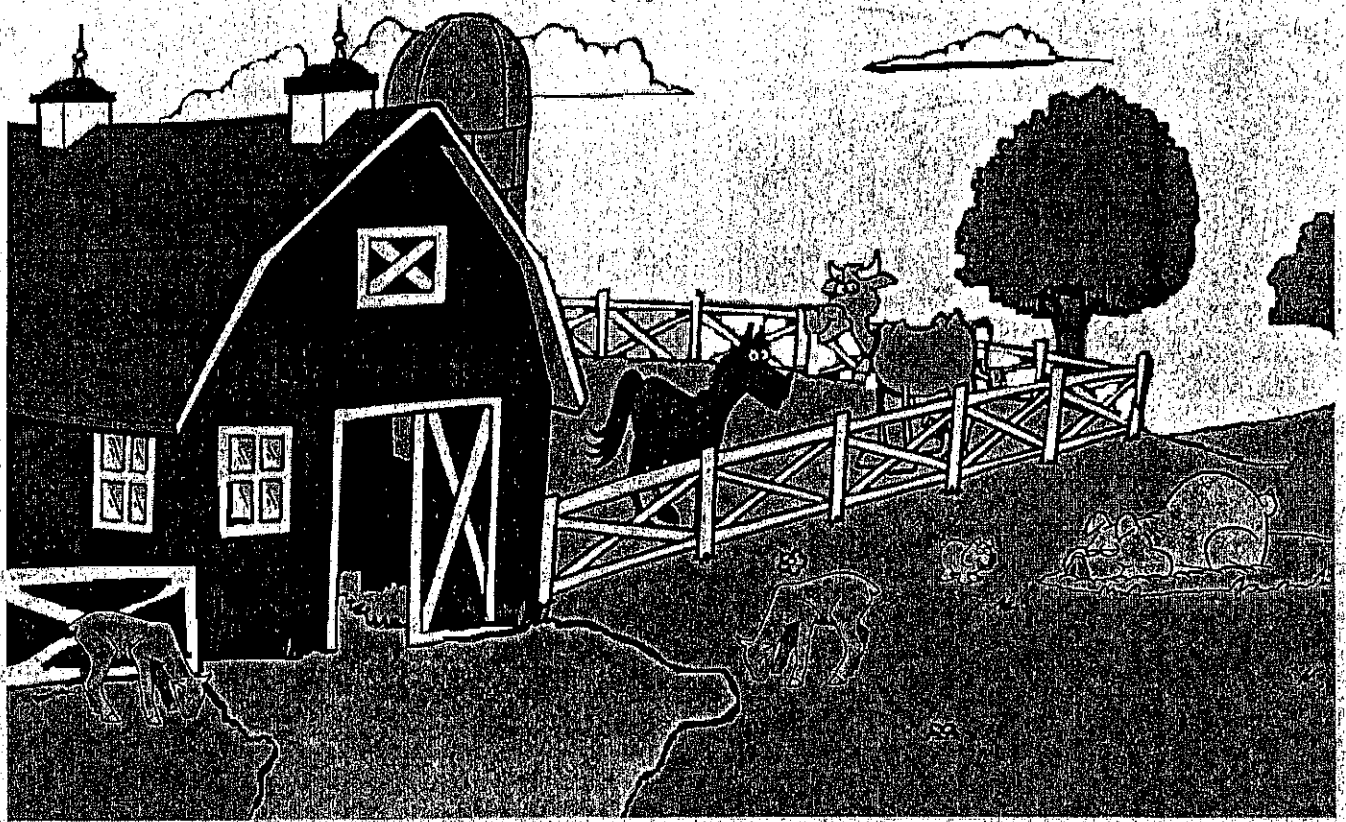
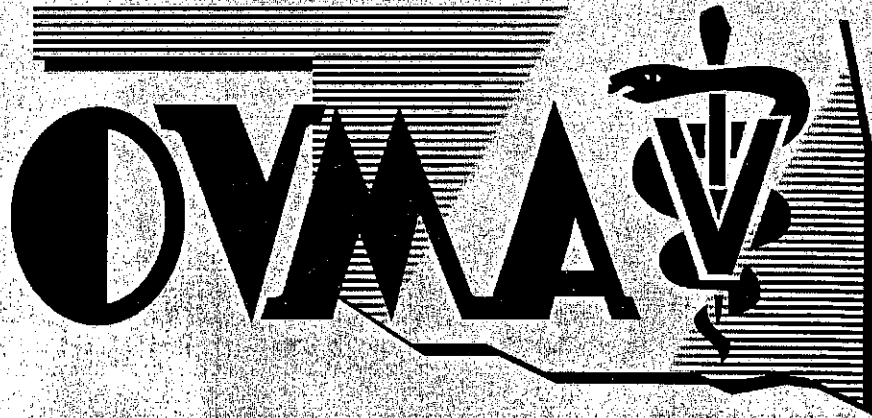


Livestock Safety for Kids



Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association
Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Foundation
"See A Veterinarian" Program

An Educational Program for School Students



The Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association is a non-profit trade organization which represents the interests of Oklahoma Veterinarians in providing continuing education to its members, and to the public about animal health care and related public health issues.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2000 Public Education Committee
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OVMA'S "SEE A VETERINARIAN"

Livestock Safety for Kids

The following approach is recommended for presenting the See A Veterinarian (SAV) program on Livestock Safety for Kids:



Review the Livestock Safety Teacher Fact Sheet and other inserts to familiarize yourself with the subject matter and the program.



Check with your school librarian for a copy of the "Livestock Safety for Kids" video to show in the classroom.



Enlist the help of a local veterinarian to assist in the presentation of livestock safety information to the students. If you would like help in finding an OVMA member veterinarian, please call the OVMA Office at (405) 478-1002.



Copy and distribute the activity sheets as needed. All may be reproduced in their entirety or selected items may be used as the teacher finds most appropriate for the group.



Give a copy of the Take Home Sheet to each student:



Complete and return the evaluation form to the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. Your thoughts and comments are appreciated. Thanks!

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

PH.D. THESIS

BY

DR. [Name]

IN

THE

PH.D. THESIS

Livestock Safety For Kids

Fact Sheet for Teachers

Carolynn MacAllister, DVM, Author

The purpose of the *Livestock Safety for Kids* educational kit is to review basic livestock behavior, safety precautions and injury prevention tips. Visiting farm animals like horses and cattle is an excellent learning experience for elementary students. To ensure that the learning experience is positive and safe, children should learn how to behave around these large animals.

Interaction with farm animals rarely cause fatalities but can be a significant source of injuries. According to the National Farm Safety for Children--Safety First Program, of the children that are injured each year on farms, over 50% do not live on farms. Another interesting statistic is that livestock or farm animals cause 40% of all farm related injuries of children that are treated in hospitals. The average urban child in our society has very little, if any, "real live" contact with livestock or farm animals. They are very unaware of what is considered normal livestock behavior and how to safely behave or react to these farm animals, therefore injuries can result.

All livestock can cause injuries if not treated with the proper respect and care. A child's lack of experience and knowledge; small body size and lack of strength; natural curiosity and the tendency to explore with their hands; places them at greater risk for injury than adults. Public school children are often exposed to livestock on school field trips

to petting zoos, livestock shows (both county and state level) and farm visits through the "Ag in the Classroom" curriculum. The best way to prevent injuries is for children to understand normal farm animal behavior and how to respond to and behave appropriately around these animals.

Livestock are an important part of our society. It is a lot of fun to learn about animals and their behavior by visiting a farm, zoo, county or state fair. When you take on the responsibility of interacting with livestock, it is important to learn about normal farm animal behavior and how to be safe. Close supervision and education are very important when children are first learning how to behave around livestock. When children are taught how to safely interact with farm animals, they will feel confident and learn so much more while visiting a farm, zoo or similar facility. In fact, the animals will even behave better so it is a fun learning event for all.

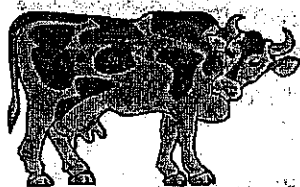
Contact your local veterinarian for more information about livestock safety or animal health concerns.



LIVESTOCK PERCEPTION

Vision

Livestock vision is very different from humans. Some livestock, like cattle, can see almost all the way around themselves (or have panoramic vision) because their eyes are located on either side of their heads. Even though they have an extensive field of vision, it is



important to realize that they have a blind spot and cannot see directly behind themselves.

Horses also have a fairly good field of vision but objects closer than 4 feet are out of focus and their blind spots are beneath their lower jaw and directly behind them. If you approach an animal from their blind spot, this will typically frighten the animal and they may kick to protect themselves.

Most farm animals especially cattle and swine have difficulty judging distance or have poor depth perception. This causes them to be very sensitive to contrasts; that is why they tend to be skittish of shadows. Farm animals also have a problem discerning details such as small openings (for example, a partially opened gate).

Hearing

Livestock have excellent hearing and can detect sounds people can't hear. Since their hearing is very sensitive, loud noises especially high pitched, squealing or screaming can hurt their ears and frighten them. When you approach a farm animal, it is important to be calm and speak quietly so the animal is aware of your presence. Approach the



animal at their shoulder, in a well-lit environment, so they can easily see you. Never approach a farm animal from the rear especially directly behind, that is their blind spot. Also, never grab for an animal's head, sudden movements will frighten them. If you need to hold or touch their head approach from their shoulder, speaking softly, gently stroking the shoulder and work slowly toward the head.



LIVESTOCK BEHAVIOR

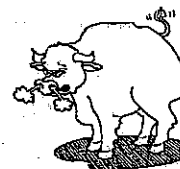
Characteristics, Behavior And Instinct

Livestock usually are larger and stronger than people and, because of their size, can easily cause injury. Children are at an even greater risk for crushing or trampling injuries because not only are they smaller but they often lack an understanding of normal livestock behavior and the presence of mind to react safely to these large animals.

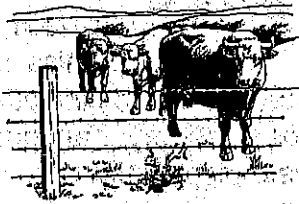


Territorial Instinct

Most animals including livestock have a strong territorial instinct. They can be protective of their "home" which may be a stall, pen, or pasture, especially male animals like bulls, stallions, boars and rams. These male animals are typically large and often unpredictable. Fences on a farm, livestock show, zoo or any type of facility containing livestock are there to protect both humans and animals. A



fenced area should not be entered without permission and supervision by an adult. Fences or pens are made out of a variety of materials depending on the type of animal it is confining. Two fencing materials commonly used are electric or sharp barbed wire-- both can cause significant injury to children.



Maternal Instinct

Baby animals are so cute, soft and cuddly. However, mother animals will often be overprotective of their young. This type of innate protective behavior is called a maternal instinct. This instinct becomes apparent in animals



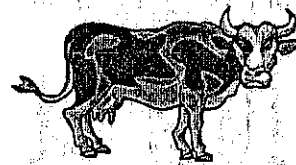
with the birth of babies. Because of this instinct, mothers are typically very protective of their young and view people as a threat. Consequently, their behavior can be unpredictable and aggressive. Some mothers will actually run or kick at people to protect their babies. Animals that are protective or upset often show warning behavior signs before being aggressive.



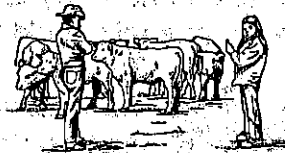
Warning signs they might show are: ears back, pawing, raised back, kicking, stomping, tail-tucking, bared teeth, snorting, growling, squealing or any other unusual noises.

Animal Routines and Flight Zones

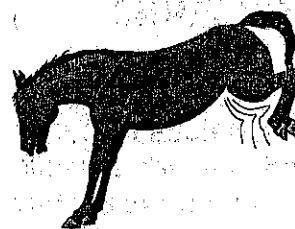
Livestock are "creatures of habit". These animals get very use to and comfortable with their routines. Routines are activities like the how, who, what,



where of handling, or feeding. An alteration to their routine or pattern can cause an animal to become agitated resulting in unpredictable behavior that may cause injury. People that interfere with a routine or get in the path of a farm animal that is being moved are at risk of being hurt or run over. Another circumstance that may cause livestock that are not tame to react unpredictably, is a person getting too close or moving too quickly into their comfort or "flight zone". The animal will become skittish or may run over the person. Also, farm animals that usually



live in a herd or flock, like cows or sheep, depend on their social relationships. These animals will become highly agitated and/or frightened when separated from other members of a herd or flock. If flock or herd animals can maintain some type of contact with each other, they often will remain calm while being handled. Therefore it is important not to rush at them or to come in between



these animals because a crushing or kicking injury may result. It is best to view a herd type animal behind a fence, or outside a pen. You should not stick your arm or

any type of object through the fence or into the pen to pet or scratch any animal. If the owner allows you to enter a pen with an animal (with adult supervision), always be alert, aware of the animal's behavior and watch for behavior warning signs. If you approach an animal that is part of a group, you should stay aware of the behavior of all the animals in the group, and keep yourself in a safe position. Be sure to never turn your back on an animal especially in a group situation.



Animal Feeding Behavior

Some farm animals become aggressive at feeding time so allow them space while they eat--no petting. Avoid hand feeding especially "treats". The livestock owners know the type and how much feed each animal should be given.



Treats or any food the animal isn't used to eating can cause gastrointestinal upset. A farm animal should not be hand-fed because these animals often can't tell what is food and what is a finger and a bite can result. If you are given permission by the owner to feed, do so with adult supervision and place feed into the appropriate container for that animal like a bucket or trough.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Zoonotic Diseases

Zoonoses are infectious diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans. There are approximately 200 zoonoses with 50 in the U.S. When



visiting an animal facility, never pet or touch an animal that appears sick.

Clinical signs of a sick animal may include a runny nose, scruffy haircoat or hair loss (especially with red scaly areas), watery eyes or loose stools. Animals that are sick often react to people in an unpredictable manner like biting or kicking because they aren't feeling well. A few examples of zoonotic diseases that can infect livestock are salmonella, leptospirosis, rabies, trichinosis, and ringworm. Even though zoonoses can be a potential health risk when handling animals, preventative measures such as keeping animal facilities clean, immunizing animals, and practicing good personal hygiene after handling animals and their facilities, can minimize the risk of exposure to humans. It is important when visiting a farm, zoo, livestock fair or any facility where livestock



are to wear protective clothing that you don't put in your hands



keep your hands out of your mouth and wash your hands after handling, feeding or petting livestock, especially before eating.