

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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*Work Safely  
Around Large  
Animals*



Animals are handled daily on our research stations as they are on all cattle farms in Mississippi. According to a journal article from Cornell University, in that area of the USA animal handling accidents rank second in reported farm accidents.

Poor judgment, a lack of understanding, and sometimes just plain old carelessness contribute to accidents involving livestock.

Large animals (livestock) accidents could be avoided or at least reduced to a low level if we would take the time to:

- ~Evaluate employees' knowledge of animal behavior.
- ~Use these evaluations to work with them on practicing and handling livestock procedures.

Following are some tips and points that can help in working and handling large animals:

## ***Dangerous points involving large animals (Livestock-***

- ✓ Each year, numerous farmers, farmworkers and children are seriously hurt or killed by large animals.
- ✓ These accidents result in injuries ranging from deep bruises to broken bones to being crushed or trampled.
- ✓ They also result in lost work time and costly medical bills.
- ✓ Many folks feel comfortable around large animals because you've worked with them for a long time. Bu, even animals you think you know can be hard to predict.
- ✓ Following are some reasons why animal-related accidents occur:
  - animals are injured, sick or stressed by the heat
  - animals become startled or frightened.
  - workers are overtired, in a hurry or distracted
  - animals have been hit, neglected or otherwise abused in the past
  - workers are inexperienced in handling animals
  - lighting is uneven or poor
  - animal handling facilities are cluttered or overcrowded

## ***Facts Relating to Large Animals-***

- Male animals are very dangerous. Stay away from them unless you have been specially trained to handle them.
- Be extra cautious around newborn animals. Their mothers are likely to be very protective.
- Swine, beef and dairy cattle have poor depth perception, which means they have trouble judging distances.
- Most animals are color blind, but have very sensitive hearing. They can be startled by loud noises and by quick color shade changes.
- Cattle and horses cannot see what is directly behind them. Sudden movements are likely to frighten them.

**INVEST IN TOMORROW  
BY  
PRACTICING SAFETY TODAY**

**BE ALERT<><><>BE ALIVE**

- Animals may exhibit certain warning signs indicating aggression or fear. These warning signs include:
  - ~raised or pinned ears
  - ~raised tail or raised hair on the back
  - ~bared teeth
  - ~pawing the ground
  - ~snoring or growling sounds

**Don't try to handle an animal exhibiting one of these warning signs!**

## ***More Safety Tips-***

- Always dress appropriately when working with large animals. Wear sturdy shoes or boots and chore gloves or cowhide work gloves.
- Wear a dust/mist respirator if you are working in dusty conditions.
- Keep animal facilities as clean as possible. Don't let clutter accumulate. Also, check for protruding nails, sharp edges, and other potential dangers.
- Be sure that you have adequate lighting, and check to be sure that you have an even distribution. Animals may become frightened by bright lights or shadows.
- Always have an emergency escape route when working in close quarters with large animals.
- Be respectful of animals. Be patient and calm with them. Don't push or shove them. Never prod them if they have no place to go.
- Move slowly but deliberately around the animals. Avoid sudden movements and loud noises. Don't yell.
- Most large animals will kick in an arc starting toward the front and moving toward the back. Try to stay away from this kicking area.
- Avoid horseplay when working with large animals. Don't tease them and don't handle them when you are mad.

## ***DO-***

- *Keep innocent by-standers away from large animals.*
- *Be suspicious of large animals that appear sick, hurt or appear scared.*
- *Touch large animals gently. Don't shove them or injure them.*

## ***DON'T -***

- *Surprise a large animal. Let the animal know you are approaching by making a little noise.*
- *Be aggressive with animals, or try to show them that you're "superior."*
- *Hesitate to ask for help if you need it.*

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.  
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Excerpts: [www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com)

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