 <b>University of British Columbia Centre for Dairy Education and Research</b>	<b>Document Number</b>	<b>SOP-Cow-006</b>
	<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>000</b>
	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>June 24, 2020</b>
<b>MOVING &amp; CHASING CATTLE</b>		

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) instructs farm workers and students on the safe method of moving cattle between pens in the barn, and to the milking parlour.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1 The intent of this SOP is to provide students and employees required to move cattle between pens and/or to the milking parlour, with the techniques required to do so safely, thus preventing injury to themselves and the animals. This document will also provide a general overview of important points to remember, which impact the welfare of the animal.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1. The Operations Manager is responsible for reviewing and updating this procedure as required
- 3.2. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff required to move or chase animals are trained in these procedures.
- 3.3. Personnel are responsible for learning how to safely move animals, and following those methods at all times.

## 4. TRAINING

Training on how to safely move animals is needed prior to carrying out this SOP. Two in-house training video modules are located in Rm 205 of the office/lab building. See SOP on Student Training.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Flight zone:** the area surrounding an animal that if encroached upon by a potential predator or threat, including humans, will cause alarm and [escape behavior](#) (Wikipedia)

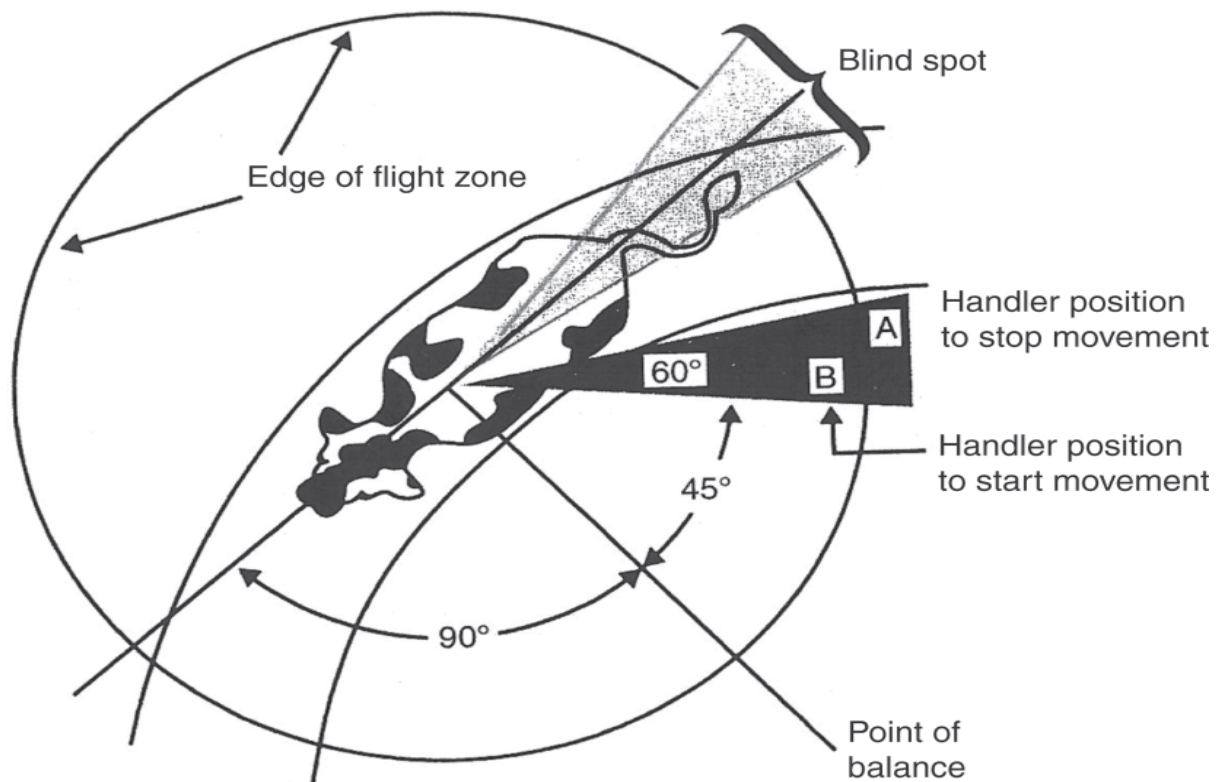
Herd animals usually turn and face a potential threat when it **is** outside of their **flight zone**, but when it enters the **flight zone**, the animal turns and moves away (Science Direct). An approximation of the flight zone can be made by approaching the animal and noting at what distance the animal moves away. The size of the flight zone will gradually diminish if they are handled calmly and have frequent contact with people (ADSA).




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- 5.2. **Point of balance:** is a factor related to flight zone, and working with an animal's point of balance will also help you move cattle more safely. The point of balance is located at the **animal's shoulder**. To move an animal forward, you should be positioned behind its shoulder. See Fig 1. To cause cattle to stop or back up, handlers should be positioned ahead of the point of balance.
- 5.3. **Chasing cattle:** a term to describe moving lactating cattle from their pens to the milking parlour.

Figure 1. Flight zone diagram showing the most effective handle positions for moving an animal forward




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## 6. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS


- 6.1. All personnel entering the animal facilities will wear personal protective equipment -coveralls, and dedicated facility footwear.
- 6.2. Clean boots with hot water (available in pasteurization room of calf barn) before and after entering the calf or heifer barn to prevent transmission of disease.
- 6.3. Wear latex gloves to protect against contamination with biological fluids, and ringworm. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water when finished in barn.
- 6.4. Stay within the animal's field of vision, and at the edge of the flight zone. Position yourself relative to its point of balance to move the animal in the desired direction.
- 6.5. Create a flight path for cattle. Do not stand in their way, or too close to them as they may move quickly.
- 6.6. Make note of the exit points from each pen. These are openings in the corners of the pens that a person, but not a cow, can get through.
- 6.7. Work in pairs, or within sight of another person.
- 6.8. Move slowly and quietly around the cattle, and give them plenty of room. Avoid making loud noises to frighten them into moving.

## 7. PROCEDURE – MOVING CATTLE BETWEEN PENS

- 7.1. Create pathway for cattle to follow. This is done by walking the route from the pen to the destination, opening gates. Some gates need to be lifted or lowered to complete the pathway through the barn. Ensure paths are free of potential causes of injury or lameness (e.g. sharp protrusions, slippery floors).
- 7.2. Return to the pen holding the animals of interest, and 'cut' them out of the group. In order to move the required animals out of the pen, 2 persons may be required – one person moving the animal towards the open gate while the other prevents unwanted animals from leaving.
- 7.3. Once the animals are out of the pen, lock the gate and follow them along the pathway to their destination.
  - 7.3.1. While doing so, observe the cow's gait and look for any obvious signs of health problems (ex. lethargy, vaginal discharge, open wounds). Write any observations and the cow's number down in the day book. See SOP on gait scoring.

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- 7.3.2. Watch for cows in heat; mark down the number of both cows (mounting and being mounted), the date and time of the mount. Place information on TOP of the day book.
- 7.4. Return cattle to their pen along the previously created pathway. Follow the animals along the alley to the pen, and open the gate to pen, blocking animals still in the pen from leaving while allowing the cattle to reenter the pen. Lock the gate once the cattle are all in the pen.
- 7.5. Return along the pathway reopening/closing/lifting gates to close the pathway.
- 7.6. Wash boots before leaving the barn, remove protective clothing, and wash hands thoroughly using soap and hot water.
- 8. PROCEDURE – CHASING COWS TO THE MILKING PARLOUR**
- 8.1. Before beginning, **check the latest chasing order** on the communication board in the vet room.
- 8.2. **When chasing up each pen complete the following steps before moving cows to ensure maximum cow welfare:**
- 8.2.1. Scrape alleyways with a metal shovel
- 8.2.2. Rake wet sand and manure out of stalls, cover with dry sand from back of stall
- 8.2.3. Empty dirty water troughs (pull up handle and dump)
- 8.3. Animal Preparation
- 8.3.1. Verify the pen # you are opening.
- 8.3.2. Create a pathway by walking and opening gates along the route to the holding area in the milking parlour.
- 8.3.3. If other animals are being moved around at the same time, you may need to wait until they've passed so as to not mix up the cows.
- 8.3.4. Open the pen gate and move to the back of the pen so cows will move out into the alleyway.
- 8.3.5. Walk slowly behind them to the milking parlour.
- 8.3.6. While doing so, observe the cow's gait and look for any obvious signs of health problems. Write any observations and the cow's number down in the day book. See SOP on Lameness and Gait Scoring.

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8.3.7. Watch for cows in heat; mark down the number of both cows (mounting and being mounted), the date and time of the mount. Place information on TOP of the day book.

8.3.8. While cows are being milked (See SOP on Milking Procedures), if you have time, you can help the milker by:

8.3.8.1. Encouraging cows to move into the parlour

8.3.8.2. Dipping teats of the cows that have finished milking with the post teat dip

8.3.8.3. If you would like to help further, ask the milker to show you proper milking procedure.

8.4. When moving cows back to their pens, open/close gates along the path. Make sure the gates are locked when closed. Ensure cows go back to the correct pen!

8.5. When chasing is finished, scrape alleyways between pens, open gates for the morning or afternoon chasers and tractors.

8.6. If any cow or pen of cows got mixed up, ask one of the Farm Worker II's how to check where the cows belong and make sure that the cows go back to their pen.

## 9. SOPs

9.1. SOP-General-001 Student Training


9.2. SOP-Cow-002 Lameness, Gait Scoring and Hoof Health

9.3. SOP-Cow-016 Milking Procedures

## 10. REFERENCES

10.1. CCAC Guidelines on the Care and Use of Farm Animals in Research, Teaching and Testing. CCAC. 2009

10.2. Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Dairy Cattle. National Farm Animal Care Council. 2009.

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## 11. APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

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