SAFETY ALERT

Handling and yarding cattle

WHAT HAPPENED?

This Safety alert has been issued after a farm worker sustained a head injury, when a cow she was assisting her team to load into a transport truck, turned back, and ran her over, knocking her to the ground, and injuring her.
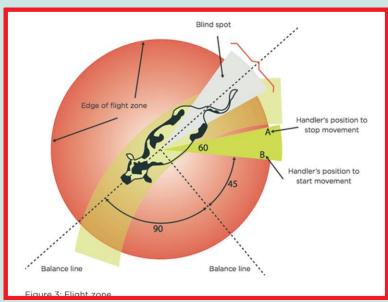
WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

A dairy team were loading 20 cull cows into a truck when one agitated cow broke free and knocked down an employee. The employee hit their head on the concrete and sustained a severe concussion.

The yards were not set up in the best way to reduce stress on stock and aid animal flow. Tight cornering compounded the issue. The staff were in the yard with the stock and used a 'human gate' to drive the stock along race.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Tips for cattle handling:

- Keep cattle calm and move cattle at a steady pace
- Reduce noise in the yards - if using dogs keep under tight control
- Where practicable, keep a physical barrier between the worker and the animal
- Handlers need to work on the edge of the flight zone– deep penetration of flight zone to be avoided as it can cause stock to turn back and run past handlers
- Point of balance is at an animals' shoulder – cattle will move forward if a handler stands slightly behind point of balance
- Ensure good, calm and quiet cattle flow
- Remove distractions and get stock used to being in the yard

Graphic: Worksafe

SAFE FARMING STARTS HERE: farmwithoutharm.org.nz/safety-alerts

FARM WITHOUT HARM

Handling and yarding cattle

CONVERSATIONS WORTH HAVING:

What animal behaviour, flight lines and balance points do we need to think about, to be able to move stock calmly and easily?

What's our yard layout? What's the best way of moving stock onto a loading ramp?

Walk the ground with the team - what could go wrong on our farm?