

# Efficient Facilities for Handling Cattle

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It is well known to the seasoned practitioner that the livestock facilities you must use can make or break you. The practitioner is exposed to all types of restraining devices—all the way from the lariat to super effective, quietly operating hydraulic mechanisms. At any facility, design must be such to protect people and livestock from injury and to move animals smoothly. We all know that once you have been on a specific farm or ranch to work a considerable number of cattle, it is relatively easy to predict working time the next time you are called to that place. As human nature is, we know that only some operators will improve their facilities to enhance safety and working time.

Another facility concern that may arise is the close scrutiny we may be receiving from animal welfare groups on humane animal treatment and the potential for various legal implications, whether right or wrong.

Generally, once the client's facilities are known, the practitioner will build into his planning one of four options.

1. The present facility is satisfactory.
2. Encourage the client to bring animals into the clinic to use the veterinarian's facility.
3. Charge higher fees to poor facility clients as the danger and time to work cattle is increased.
4. Arrange to move equipment to client's premises to make the facilities work.

During my years in practice I learned that the many wasted hours, energy expended, and compromised safety did not have to occur.

The following tips are examples of practices that either I, or some of my colleagues utilize in Nebraska to curtail the dollars lost due to faulty equipment or poor facility design.

1. At the clinic a perimeter fence is one of the greatest ways to prevent an escaping animal from going "down town" or to the far reaches of the "wilderness".

2. Producer with a lariat—you know you're in trouble if

this is all that is available.

3. If no corrals are available it is feasible in some practices to take portable panels to the working area.

4. A portable calf table on wheels is handy and valuable in saving time and it is safe for man and animal.

5. A portable chute with easy let down wheels and ramp to attach to the back of chute prevents "dig out" behind chute.

6. Carry extra panels inside the chute to facilitate adapting to or narrowing owner's facilities.

7. A converted W.W. chute to hydraulic controls along with utilization of a Powder River head catch to serve as a tailgate makes a great chute out of a mediocre one. Hydraulic cylinders can be supplied from tractor hydraulics if coupling design is correct, or be driven by electric motor drives to the pump.

8. An electric generator (12,000 W) powered by tractor p.t.o. to supply power to electric motor that drives the pump on hydraulic chutes.

9. A gate control powered by a garage door opener is another time saving practical application in a sorting alley or to divert animals from one pen to another.

10. A full length power winch mounted at the top of a stationery cattle chute in the operating room is extremely handy to: 1) pull heads around for eye surgery; 2) help cast animals for abdominal or other surgery requiring recumbency; 3) elevate or lower various parts of the animal to aid in establishing better access to difficult surgical areas; 4) to allow a single technician to easily prep animals before surgery—but should be used with care.

11. A hydraulic operated tilting, modified Powder River equipment that makes foot trimming easier and safer regardless of size of the animal.

*NOTE: In addition to the speaker's ideas, recognition is credited to the veterinarians at the St. Paul and Aurora, Nebraska, Veterinary Clinics.*

## Sterilizing Calf Pens to Control Salmonellosis

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Salmonellosis can be one of the most difficult diseases to control on the dairy farm. In our practice the response to treatment with antibiotics has been disappointing especially when one considers the long term cure rate. Likewise the use of commercial autogenous bacterins have been of limited

value. In addition, the frequent and often fatal reactions in both calves and adults to the bacterins limits the value of these products.

With this in mind I have looked for other methods of controlling this disease. As in other fecal borne diseases