



### Safely Working With and Around Farm/Ranch Animals

Working in the agriculture industry presents many unique hazards. While most of the hazards can be easily controlled to limit the exposure (e.g., machine guarding, storing chemicals, ROPS, etc.), there are some that we have little to no control over. Animal agriculture is the largest sector of agriculture, and, unlike working with plants, they have a mind of their own.

The University of Minnesota completed a summary of farm related accidents and showed that animals were a factor in 1 of every 8 injuries reported, ranking second to farm machinery in total number of cases. According to their data there are a few observations worth noting:

A closer look at animal related injuries from farm accident survey data indicate that most of the victims were males when it came to cattle and hogs, but females approached males in the number of injuries involving horses and pets.

As to age of victim, youngsters (5- 14) were most often bitten by dogs, but cow-related accidents found more victims among the 45-64 age group. Horse-related injuries were suffered most often by youngsters (5-14) and young adults (15-24) while the mature folks (25-44, 45-64) were the target of most mishaps involving hogs.

Most of the cattle and hog-related injuries were suffered in farm buildings or adjacent lots. Most with horses happened outside in barnyards, fields, lanes, woods and along public roads. Dogs more often than not bit people in home yards.

Common things cows did to hurt people were to kick or step on them, and catch people or their limbs between themselves and hard objects or surfaces. Many falls also occurred while tending cows. Hogs bit, stepped on and knocked people down. Dog bites were a common source of injury. Accidents involving horses and bulls were more likely to result in serious injury than mishaps with other animals. (University of Minnesota)

No two animals are the same, and how each will react to different stimuli can vary. While animals can be dangerous, with proper handling techniques the risk can be lowered. The following article from AgSafe shares some of the safe techniques and what you can do to stay safe.

“Safely Working With and Around Farm/Ranch Animals.” *NASD*, AgSafe,  
<https://nasdonline.org/315/d000112/safely-working-with-and-around-farm-ranch-animals.html>

“Safety With Animals.” *NASD*, University of Minnesota,  
[https://nasdonline.org/static\\_content/documents/1621/d001502.pdf](https://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/1621/d001502.pdf).

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## Safely Working With and Around Farm/Ranch Animals: Script

AgSafe, Coalition for Health and Safety in Agriculture<sup>1</sup>

The following safety module is intended to be used as a refresher safety awareness session and is in no way to be used as a substitute for job training nor proper equipment use.

One in three injuries on the farm/ranch involve handling or contact with large animals. Animal movements are generally unpredictable, so learn to recognize the signs of fear, pain and stress in the animals with which you work.

The safety modules may be used by anyone with the understanding that credit be given to AgSafe.

### APPROACH ANIMAL SAFELY

The proper approach to large animals is critical to working with them safely. Most large animals can see at wide angles around them, but there is a blind spot directly behind their hind quarters which they cannot see. Any movement in this "blind spot" will make the animal uneasy and nervous. The safest approach is to "announce" your approach through a touch to the animal's front or side. (See Figure 1.) Most large animals will kick in an arch beginning toward the front and moving toward the back. Avoid this kicking region when approaching the animal.

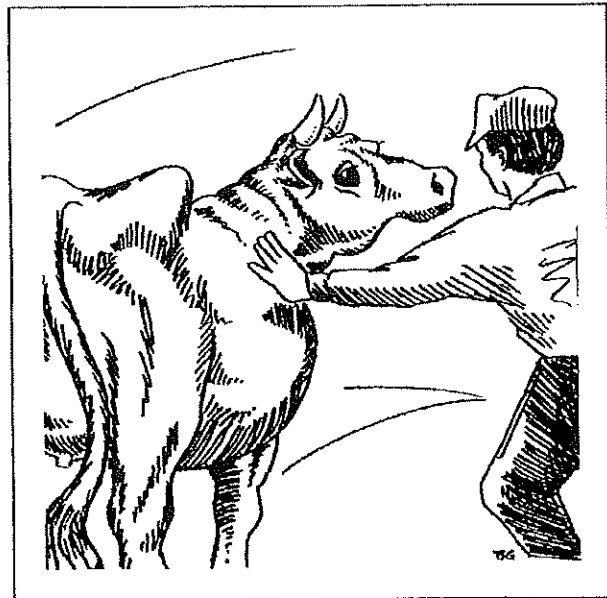


Figure 1. "Announce" your approach by touching the animal's front or side

### SEPARATE CATTLE SAFELY

As one large cow can weigh up to 1500 lbs, it is not a good idea to try to manually separate cows using gates or boards. A frightened cow or horse will plow right over you. It is safer to use proper handling facilities made specially for separating large animals. (See Figure 2.) Most animals will be more cooperative in moving through a chute that has minimal distractions.

1. 140 Warren Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

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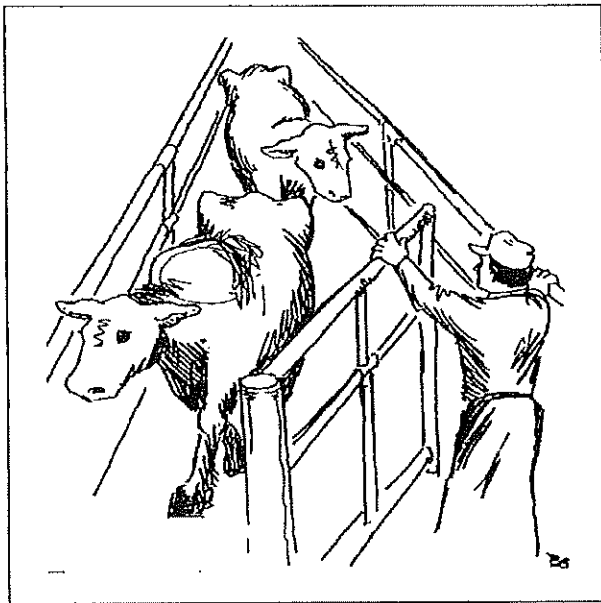


Figure 2. Use proper handling facilities to separate large animals

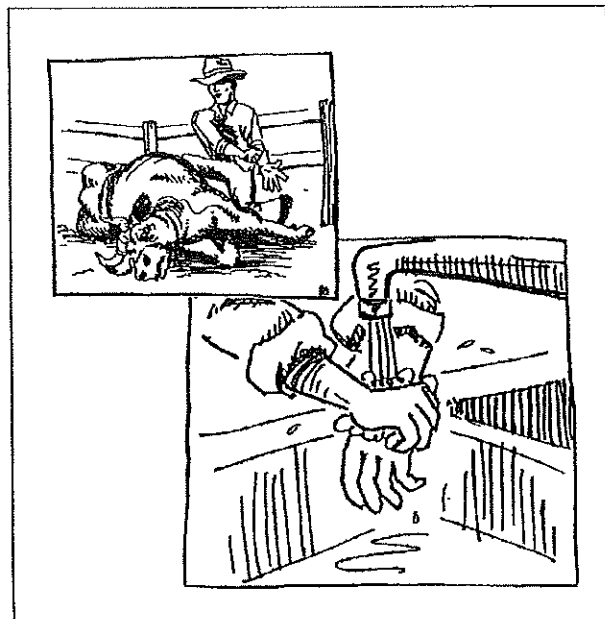


Figure 4. When working with sick animals, protect yourself by wearing gloves and, afterward, washing

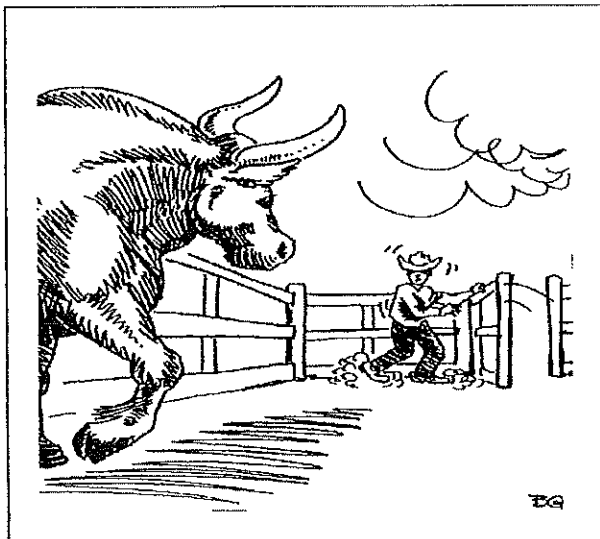


Figure 3. Leave yourself an "out"

### LEAVE YOURSELF AN "OUT"

When you are inside a handling facility or milking lane, always leave yourself a way to get out if it becomes necessary. (See Figure 3.) Try to avoid entering a small enclosed area with large animals unless it is equipped with a mangate that you can get to easily.

### BE CAREFUL AROUND SICK/HURT ANIMALS

When working with sick and hurt animals be sure to protect yourself from any animal-borne diseases such as undulant fever, tetanus, rabies, etc. Wear rubber gloves and other protective clothing for protection, and practice good hygiene by washing your hands and face after handling animals. (See Figure 4.)

### PRACTICE GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Keeping your work area clean and free of debris will help provide a safe working environment. (See Figure 5.) Check for and eliminate any sharp corners or protrusions in walkways. Check to ensure that all latches and levers can't fly open easily. Clean concrete ramps and floors regularly to prevent slips and trips. Keep pitch forks and other sharp tools stored properly out of walkways.

### MAINTAIN EVEN LIGHTING

Shadows mixed with light spots inside handling facilities will increase the animal's fear and tension. Try to keep the lighting in these moving areas dispersed evenly. (See Figure 6.)



Figure 5. Practice good housekeeping

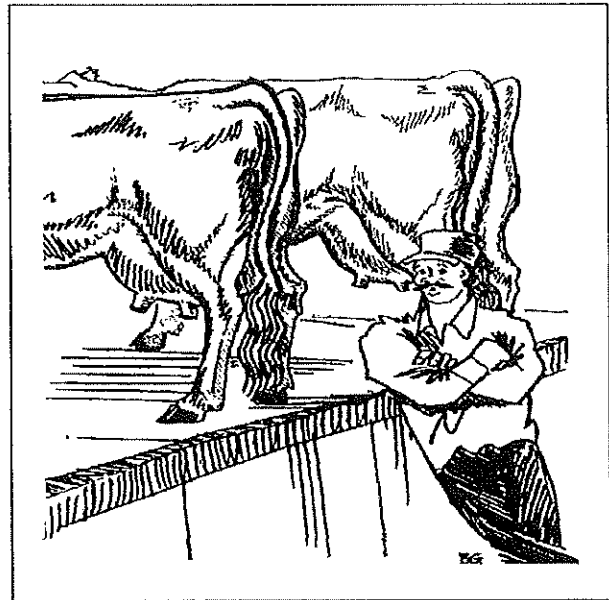


Figure 7. Give dairy cattle a chance to adapt to a new environment

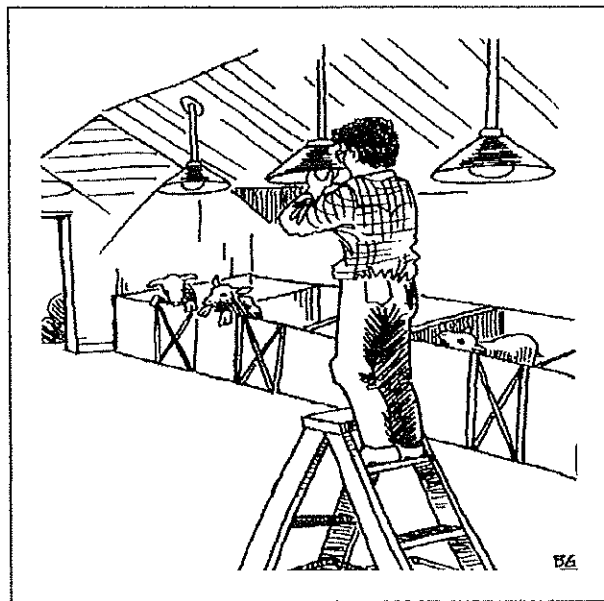


Figure 6. Maintain even lighting



Figure 8. Sows may become dangerous when protecting their young

### WORKING SAFELY WITH DAIRY CATTLE

Dairy cattle are generally more nervous than other animals, so it's important to approach these animals gently to avoid startling them. Once you have moved dairy cattle into the milking stalls, give them a moment to adapt to the new environment before beginning your operation. (See Figure 7.)

### SAFELY WORKING WITH SWINE

Though hogs are not normally aggressive animals, they can become dangerous animals if threatened, especially sows protecting their young. (See Figure 8.) The best method by which to move hogs is by guiding hogs combined with gates and/or panels. Announce your approach to hogs as you do with other animals. Do not walk up to them quietly and surprise them.



## Trabajando con Seguridad Alrededor de Animales en la Granja o Rancho: Manuscrito

AgSafe, Coalición Para la Salud y la Seguridad Agrícola<sup>1</sup>

El siguiente módulo de seguridad se presenta con la intención de que se utilice como una sesión de perfeccionamiento de lo que sabe sobre la seguridad y de ninguna manera se debe utilizar como un sustituto por el entrenamiento del trabajo ni por el uso de equipo adecuado.

Una de cada tres lesiones en la granja o el rancho involucran el manejo o contacto con animales grandes. Los movimientos de los animales son generalmente impredecibles, así que aprenda a reconocer las señas de temor, dolor y tensión en los animales con que Ud. trabaja.

### ACERCANDOSE AL ANIMAL CON SEGURIDAD

Para trabajar con un animal grande en una manera segura, es indispensable que se le acerque de manera apropiada. La mayoría de animales grandes pueden ver en ángulos anchos a su alrededor, pero hay un punto ciego directamente detrás de sus traseros que no pueden ver. Cualquier movimiento en este "punto ciego" hará que el animal se ponga intranquilo y nervioso. El aproximamiento más seguro es de "anunciar" su aproximación tocandolos de frente o de lado. (Mira a la Figura 1.) Los animales más grandes empezaran a patear hacia el frente y moviéndose hacia atrás. Evite esta región al acercarse al animal.

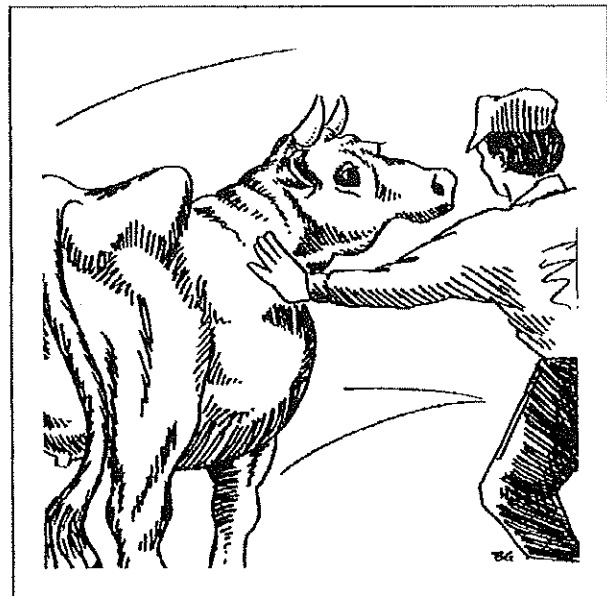


Figura 1. Acercandose al animal con seguridad

### SEPRE EL GANADO CON CUIDADO

Ya que una vaca grande puede pesar hasta 1500 libras, no es buena idea tratar de separar vacas manualmente utilizando puertas o tableros. Una vaca o caballo asustado se irá directamente sobre usted. Es más seguro utilizar facilidades manipuladoras adecuadas hechas especialmente para separar muchos animales. (Mira a la Figura 2.) La mayoría de los animales serán más cooperativos al moverlos a través de un corredor que tiene distracciones mínimas.

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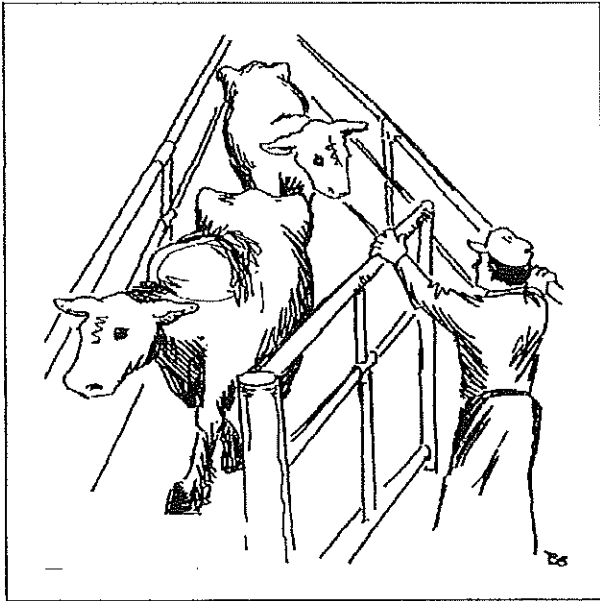


Figura 2. Separe el ganado con cuidado

### DEJESE UNA "SALIDA"

Cuando Ud. esté adentro de una instalación manipuladora o vía de ordeñar, siempre déje usted mismo un modo de salir si llega a ser necesario. (Mira a la Figura 3.) Trate de evitar entrar a una área pequeña cerrada con animales grandes a menos que esté equipada con una puerta que pueda alcanzar fácilmente.

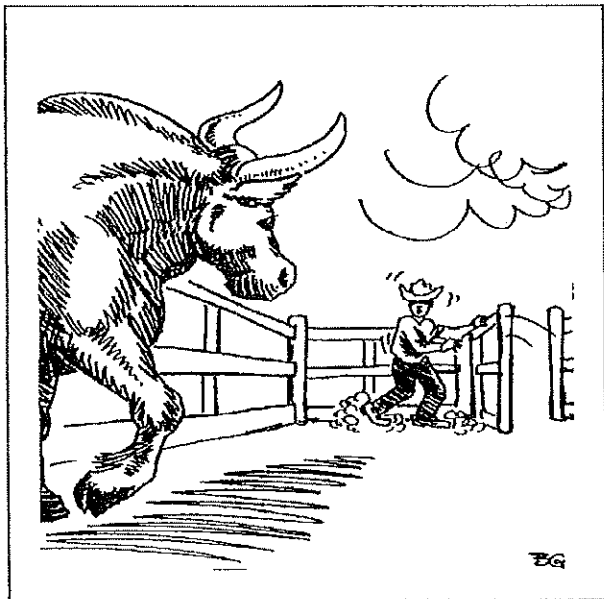


Figura 3. Deje una "salida"

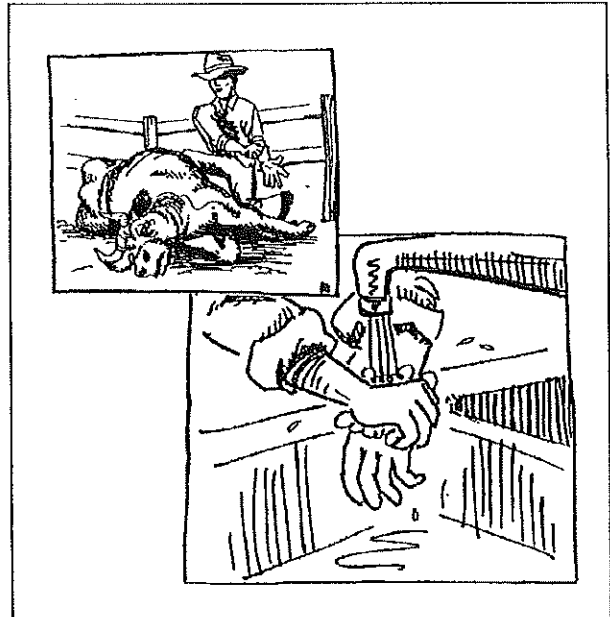


Figura 4. Tenga cuidado alrededor de animales enfermos o lesionados

### TENGA CUIDADO ALREDEDOR DE ANIMALES ENFERMOS O LESIONADOS

Cuando esté trabajando con animales enfermos o lesionados, asegúrese de protegerse de cualquier enfermedad transmitida de animales recién nacidos tales como fiebre ondulante, tétano, rabia, etc. Use guantes de hule y ropa protectora y practique buena higiene lavándose las manos y la cara después de haber tratado con los animales. (Mira a la Figura 4.)

### PRACTIQUE BUENA LIMPIEZA

Manteniendo su área de trabajo limpia y libre de basuras ayudará a proveer un ambiente laboral seguro. (Mira a la Figura 5.) Revise y elimine cualquier esquina aguda o objetos que obstruyen el pasillo. Revise para asegurar que todos los cerrojos y palancas no puedan safarse y abrirse fácilmente. Limpie las rampas de cemento y pisos regularmente para evitar resbalones y tropezones. Guarde las horquillas y otras herramientas agudas adecuadamente fuera de los pasillos.

### MANTENGA ILUMINACION IGUAL

Las sombras mezcladas con sombras de luz dentro de instalaciones manipuladoras aumentarán el temor y tensión del animal. Trate de mantener la iluminación en estas áreas de movimiento dispersadas uniformemente. (Mira a la Figura 6.)



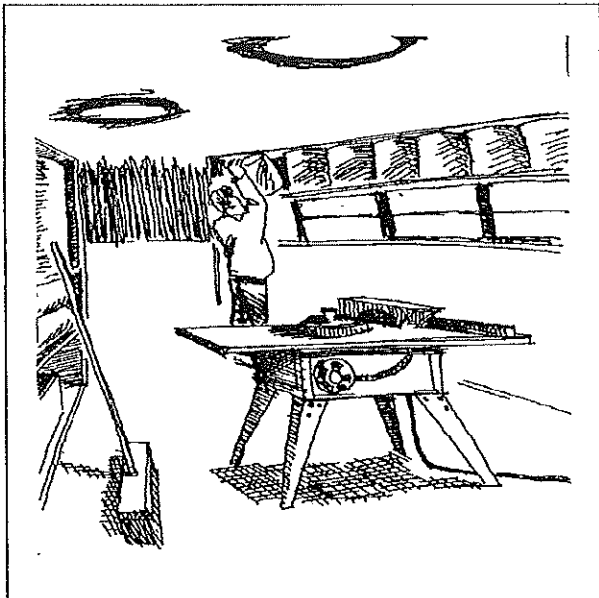


Figura 5. Practique buena limpieza

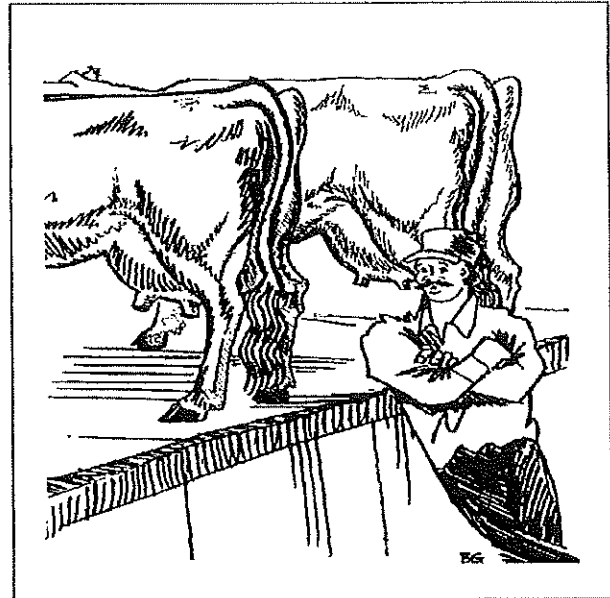


Figura 7. Trabajar con seguridad con ganados lechero

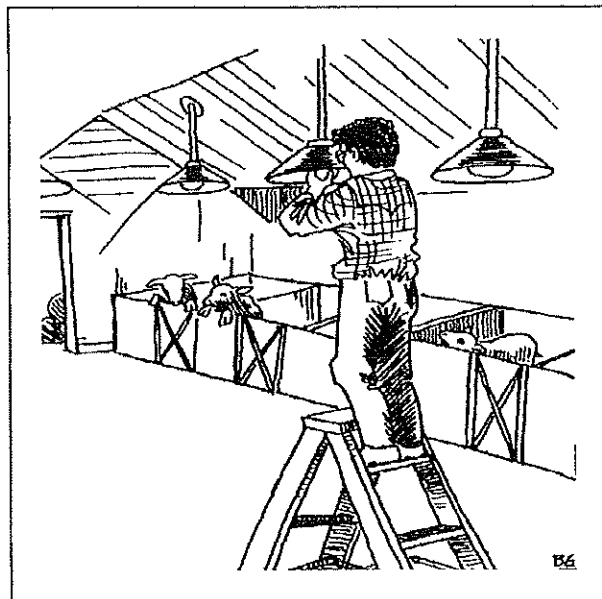


Figura 6. Mantenga iluminación igual

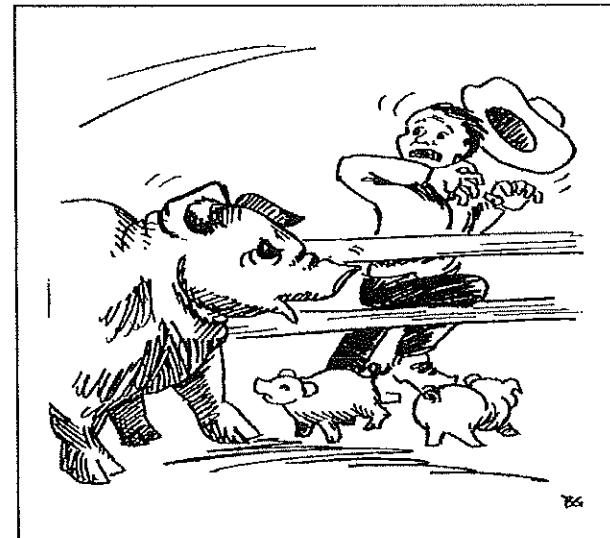


Figura 8. Trabajar con seguridad con puercos

### TRABAJANDO CON SEGURIDAD CON GANADO LECHERO

El ganado lechero es generalmente más nervioso que otros animales, así que es importante acercarse a estos animales gentilmente para evitar asustarlos. Una vez que usted haya movido el ganado lechero a los establos de ordeñar, deses un momento para que se adapten al nuevo ambiente antes de empezar su operación. (Mira a la Figura 7.)

### TRABAJANDO CON SEGURIDAD CON PUERCOS

Aunque los cerdos no son animales normalmente agresivos, pueden ser animales peligrosos si son amenazados, especialmente la hembra protegiendo a sus pequeños. (Mira a la Figura 8.) El mejor método para mover cerdos es de guiar los cerdos combinados con puertas y/o paneles. Anuncie su aproximación hacia los cerdos como lo hace con otros animales. No camine hacia ellos tranquilamente y los sorprenda. Si trata de llegar a ellos sin hacer ruido, los puede sorprender.