4-H Animal Science Lesson Plan
Quality Assurance
Level 1

Animal Welfare - Handling

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Goal (learning objective)

Youth will learn how to move livestock safely by using animal behaviors (blind spot, flight zone and point of balance).

Supplies

None

Pre-lesson preparation

- Study the flight zone diagram available at:
  - Understanding Flight Zone and Point of Balance for Low Stress Handling of Cattle, Sheep and Pigs available at: http://www.grandin.com/behaviour/principles/flight.zone.html

- Read/review lesson

Lesson directions and outline

Share the following information with the youth:

Understanding animal behavior can help prevent injury, undue stress, and physical exertion for both animals and their handlers.

Animals have natural instincts which may be used to one’s advantage when they need to be moved. A key to moving livestock safely is utilizing the animal’s blind spot, flight zone, and point of balance.

Flight zone is the distance you are from an animal before it moves away. It is similar to what humans refer to as “personal space”. If someone enters your personal space, you tend to move away far enough to feel comfortable again. If you enter a livestock's flight zone, it will move away until it feels comfortable again.

Conducting the activity (DO)

1. Divide the room into groups of two and have each person stand, facing each other approximately 15 feet apart.

2. Have each person take one step towards each other and stop.

3. Ask: Do they feel comfortable at this distance?

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until one of the pair feels uncomfortable.

5. When both participants have reached a point to where they both feel uncomfortable, have them discuss the variance in space between them.

6. Have each group report back:
   a. How much space is between them?
   b. How they feel about the distance?
   c. Do both members feel uncomfortable at the same distance?

What did we learn? (REFLECT)

- Ask: Why is it important to work with your animal?

- Ask: Do animals have larger flight zones if they are not use to people? What can you do at home to work with your animal?

- Ask: Are animal's flight zones the same? Why? Why not?

- Ask: How does stress impact an animal’s flight zone?

Why is that important? (APPLY)

- Ask: Why is animal safety important? How does this impact Quality Assurance?

- Ask: How can understanding an animal’s flight zone be helpful when moving livestock?
Resources


