



Safety when walking in fields with livestock

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7 June 2012 Last updated at 17:29



Hiker trampled by cows in County Durham

A hiker is critically ill after being trampled by cows near Barnard Castle, County Durham.

The man, 46, suffered life-threatening injuries, a spokesperson from the Great North Air Ambulance said.

They attended the scene at 12:00 BST where they were told the man had been walking on a public footpath with his wife.

The man was flown to James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough where he is undergoing tests.

It is believed the man and his wife, from Halifax, West Yorkshire, were visiting the area on a day trip. His wife was not injured in the attack.

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A 63-year-old man has been killed and his wife, 67, was critically injured in an attack by a bull in Nottinghamshire.

The couple, wearing walking gear, were near the Leicestershire border when it happened at about 1630 GMT on Friday.



Police believe the bull attacked as darkness fell

It is unclear why the bull attacked the pair, who were walking on a footpath near the village of Stanford on Soar.

The man was pronounced dead at the scene, police said. His wife is said to be in a critical condition in the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham.

It is understood the woman had to crawl under a hedge and managed to get to the nearby road just after the attack.

She flagged down a passing female motorist who contacted emergency

David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is shown speaking at a podium. Behind him is a blue backdrop with the text "Britain and Europe" in white. He is wearing a dark suit and a purple tie.

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Page last updated at 14:27 GMT, Sunday, 5 July 2009 15:27 UK

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Cow attack sparks damages concern

Farmers have expressed disappointment and concern at a legal ruling in favour of a walker hurt when she was attacked by cows as she crossed a field.

Shirlie McKaskie was seriously hurt in Cumbria in 2003 and a judge has ruled the farmer was liable because he had not properly considered the risk.

Ms McKaskie is claiming £1m damages but farmer John Cameron is appealing.

Dairy farmers said so many fields were open to walkers that such incidents would occur from time to time.

The vice chairman of the Royal Association of Dairy Farmers, David Cotton, expressed his disappointment at the ruling.

"The number of footpaths we've got across this country - and more and more access is being made available to walkers - it's one of those



Several people with dogs have been injured in attacks by cows

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Bull kills walker and leaves wife critically injured

A man was killed and his wife critically injured when they were attacked by a bull during a walk in the countryside.



The couple had been in a livestock field when the bull attacked Photo: CORBIS

By David Harrison, Rebecca Lefort and Michael Howie

8:50PM GMT 13 Nov 2010

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- The United Kingdom is covered by a vast network of public rights of way and footpaths.
- 25 000 kilometres of roads
- Over 241 600 kilometres of off-road rights of way, country footpaths, bridleways and byways.
- 77 per cent of UK adults, say they walk for pleasure at least once a month.
- walking is three times more popular than swimming, the second most participated activity,
- 891 million day trips a year include a walk.





- Of the 1787 land based sector injuries reported to the Health and Safety Executive in the ten years to 2009, 307 were livestock related injuries and nearly half were members of the public injured by livestock.
- However the actual number of injuries caused by livestock is likely to be considerably higher as the reporting rate of incidents is less than 5%.
- It is estimated that over 4 000 members of the public are injured by livestock while walking in the countryside each year.



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- In the last ten years, injuries included 81 fatalities caused by livestock. Fourteen of these have been members of the public killed by cattle.
- There were thirteen fatalities caused by livestock in 2012, including two members of the public killed by cattle while walking in the countryside.

HSE Report *Fatal Injuries in Farm, Forestry and Horticulture* 2009/10

Personal Correspondence AJ Marshall Agricultural Consultants

Farmers Weekly *Complacent Livestock Handlers Risk Death* 13 July 2012



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*The modern bovine (*Bos taurus*) is a descendent of *Bos primigenius*, and is farmed in the UK for milk and beef. Although domesticated for centuries, there are many circumstances and situations where even the most placid of domesticated cattle may act in a threatening and dangerous manner*



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Cattle are large animals and can pose a risk to safety through their physical size and ability to move quickly. The likely bodyweights of some species of cattle :

- Beef cows – 750kg
- Beef Bull – 1200kg
- Calves (aged 5-7 months) – 200kg
- Young calves – 80kg
- Rams – 120kg



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Factors associated with potential aggressive behaviour

- Beef cattle
- Suckler cows
- Continental breeds
- Commercial cows ie less handled

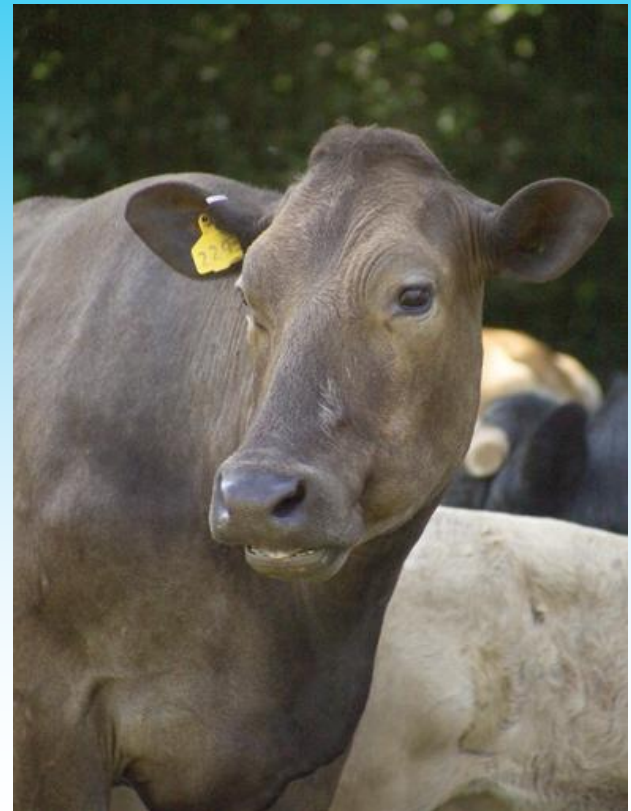


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Beef cattle

- Require infrequent handling,
- Breeding for placid temperament is less important (than for dairy cattle)
- Most beef farmers have management and handling systems (cattle crushes and races) that allow handling of more difficult and temperamental stock, therefore allowing them to keep and work safely with this type of animal.





Sucker cattle

- The function of the suckler cow is to produce and rear a calf for beef.
- To achieve this must possess good mothering characteristics.
- These include producing sufficient milk for the growing calf and an instinct that protects the calf from all outside threats.





Sucker cattle

- These threats include:
 - Other calves that may suckle her milk
 - Other cows that may try to adopt her calf
 - Predators that may try to harm or kill her calf





Continental Breeds

- Most of the continental beef breeds are noted for the increased risk of poor temperament compared to Native British Breeds.
- Continental cattle
 - Greater mature weights than traditional British breeds
 - Cattle have been specifically bred for their weight gain, carcase confirmation
 - Their ability to act as a good suckler cow.



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Commercial Breeds

- Unlike show cattle, it is only necessary to handle commercial suckler cattle for specific management tasks such as worming, vaccination and weaning.
- Unlike the frequent close contact that a dairy cow receives or the close attention to handling of pedigree show cattle, there is no reason for a commercial suckler cow to be as docile

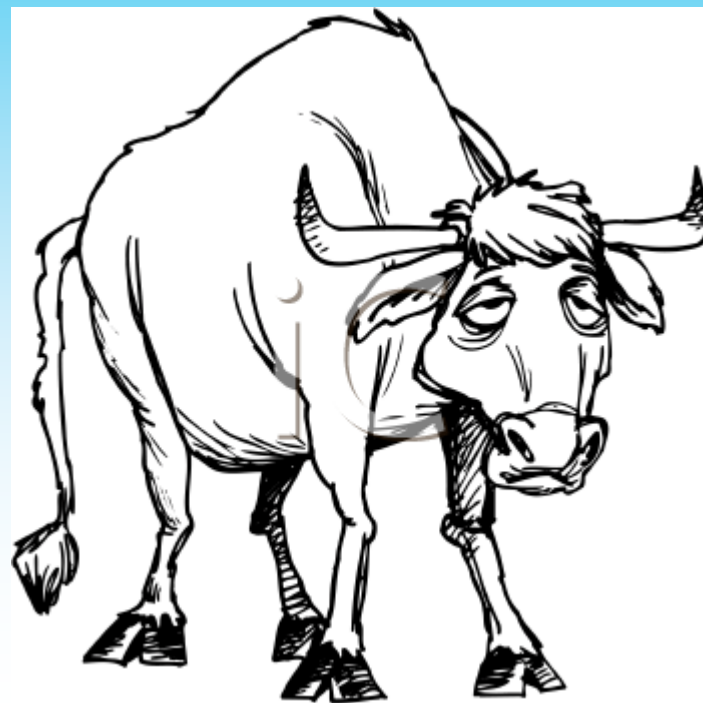




Factors that can provoke dangerous behaviour in all cattle

Ill health

When cattle are sick, it may be normal behaviour for them to act in a temperamental and aggressive manner



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Factors that can provoke dangerous behaviour in all cattle

When suckling offspring

With calves at foot **of any age**, it is in the nature of a suckler cow to protect their calf where a threat is perceived



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Factors that can provoke dangerous behaviour in all cattle

A new environment

When cattle are moved or exposed to a new environment, it is not unusual for them to act in a manner that is threatening or confrontational



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Factors that can provoke dangerous behaviour in all cattle

Proximity to dogs

The canine species is a natural opportunistic predator of cattle. It is an important survival mechanism for cattle to protect themselves from threats. In some circumstances this may mean the cattle taking evasive action (and the reason why some dogs may be used to herd cows). In other circumstances, where evasive action is not possible, such as when they have calves at foot, cows may exhibit direct aggression towards the dog.



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Factors that can provoke dangerous behaviour in all cattle

When in a herd

When confronted by a threatening situation, if isolated, individual animals usually take actions to avoid human contact and make all attempts to avoid confrontation. However, when a herd is faced with a threatening confrontation, the perceived safety of the group often means the animals may attack the threat.



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Other Factors

Presence of a bull

Often has a calming influence

Signage legally required

Dairy bulls are not allowed in fields with public footpaths



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Other factors

Presence of dogs

- Dogs are an opportunistic predator of cattle.
- When confronted by a dog the survival mechanism of cattle is “fight or flight”.
- In situations where they are not suckling young, then the typical reaction of a cow is flight and to move away from the dog.
- However when young calves are at foot, then the typical reaction is “fight” and to attack the dog, protecting their offspring.
- When a herd is involved, then the “fight” reaction may be taken on by more than one of the herd

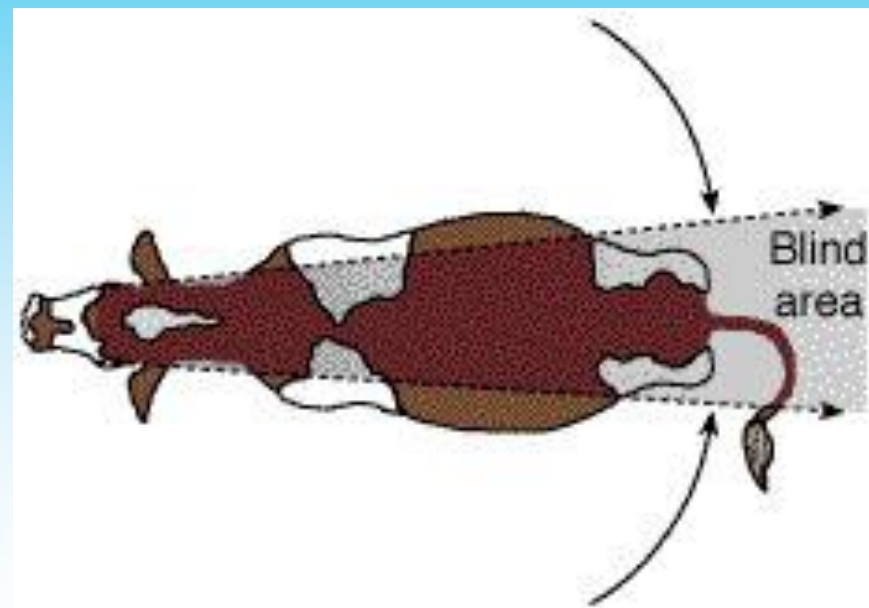




Other factors

Walking in an open part of a field

- Cattle have a wide field of vision and are able to spot predators and potential threats over a wide angle.
- Any danger, such as a dog entering the field, will be seen as a potential threat.





Other factors

Cow calf maternal bond

- The calf has a number of innate mechanisms that ensure that it maximises this association. These include vocalisation, so it can locate its mother, and the butting reflex, where the calf head butts the udder to stimulate milk flow when suckling, and the suckling process itself.
- The cow also possesses a number of characteristics to ensure a strong maternal bond exists. These include identifying her calf through smell, sight and vocalisation.



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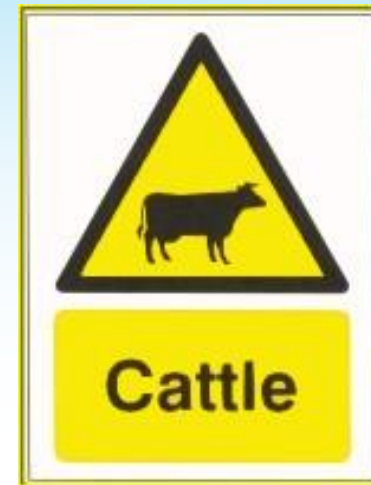
Other factors

Public access

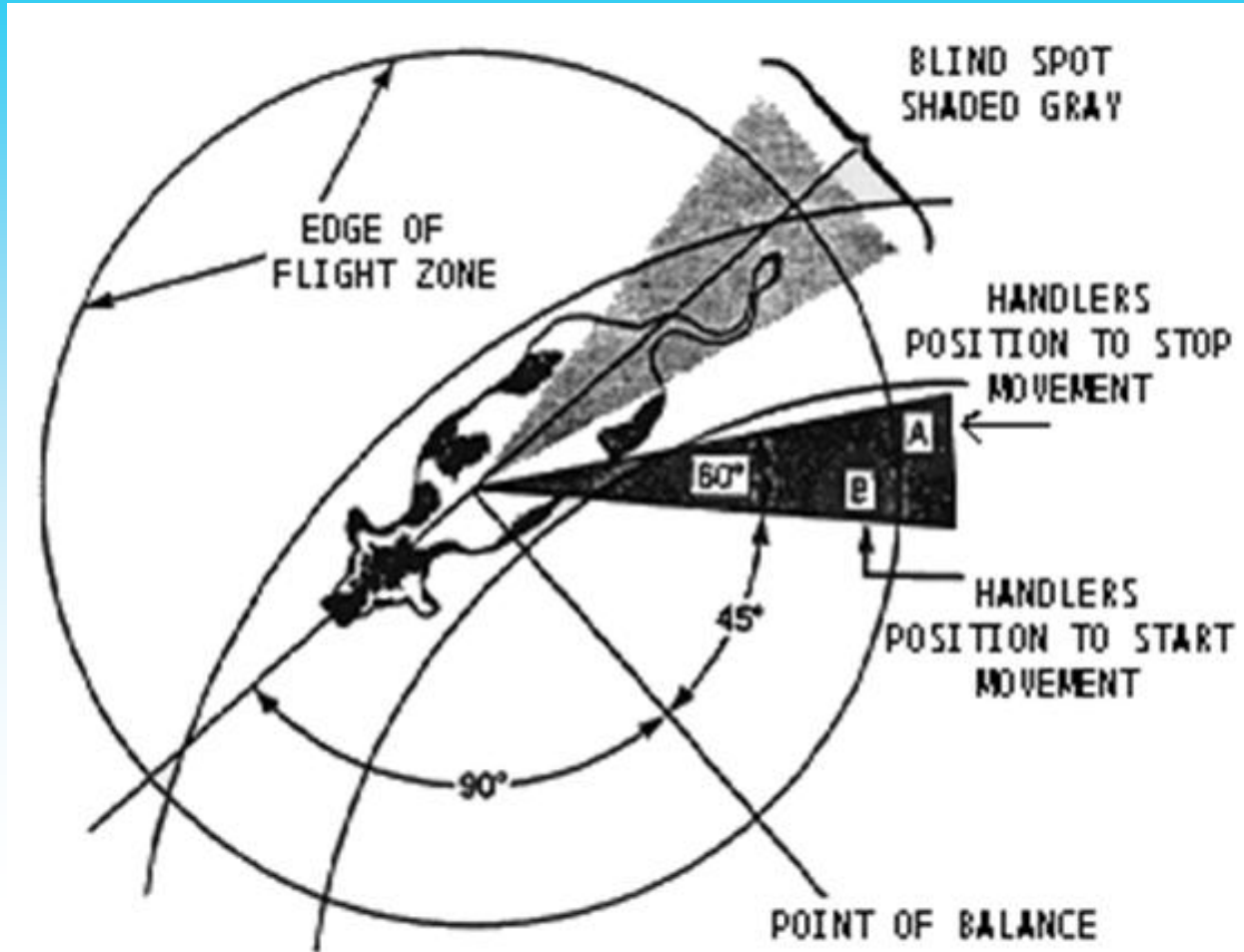
Care with fields where cows and calves

No legal requirement for signage but recommended

Key risk times are spring months (April onwards)



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Know the law!

Animals Act 1971

- The act imposes a strict liability for damage caused by an animal that belongs to a dangerous species
- The effect of section 2(2) is that domesticated livestock species can be classified as dangerous if the keeper has knowledge of a dangerous characteristic.





Know the law!

Common Law Negligence

- Since the seventeenth century there has been a common law duty to take reasonable care to prevent your animals from causing injury. This is in addition to any statutory obligation, such as under the Animals Act 1971.





Know the law!

s59 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

- Under the Act, an occupier of a field crossed by a right of way may not allow a bull to be at large. Exceptions are granted for bulls under the age of ten months and for bulls of breeds not recognised as dairy breeds which are kept with cows or heifers.



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Know the law!

Occupiers Liability Act 1957

- Where a claimant is injured by the defendant's animal while on the defendant's land as a lawful visitor, then the obligations of the occupier are governed by the Occupiers Liability Act 1957.
- The likely situations for application of the Act are injuries caused by non-dangerous species, such as livestock, where the occupier ought to have reasonable care for the safety of his lawful visitors and a foreseeable risk of harm, against which no preventative steps are taken.





Know the law!

Highways Act 1980

- It a criminal offence to allow horses, cattle, sheep, goats or swine to stray on the highway, however this criminal liability is unlikely to give rise to a civil liability claim.
- s155 Penalties in connection with straying animals,





***Providing everyone is aware of the risks,
and take appropriate precautions then
livestock, man and dogs can live
harmoniously!***



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