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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*By UNMC, Central States Center for Agricultural  
Safety and Health, Omaha, NE*

#### **HANDLING LIVESTOCK**

**Be aware that beef and dairy bulls are  
considered the most dangerous animals on  
your farm.**

According to the U.S. Department of Labor  
Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and the  
Surveillance of Occupational Injuries and  
Illnesses databases, bulls caused 48% of cattle-  
related fatalities even though they account for  
only 2% of cattle nationwide. While dairy bulls  
are considered to be more aggressive and  
dangerous than beef bulls, both dairy and beef  
producers should take precautions to stay safe  
around bulls.

Due to their size, their adrenaline and  
testosterone, bulls can inflict serious injury in  
seconds, either intentionally or by accident.  
Because they are the most dangerous animals  
on the farm, it's worth considering keeping them

off the farm premises through the use of artificial insemination, which greatly reduces risk to people and cows. Leasing a bull could potentially pose a biosecurity risk. However, it would limit the number of days a bull is present at the farm.

If a bull is on the farm, strict safety practices will help reduce injury risks.

- Before entering a bull's pen or pasture, have an escape plan in mind.
- Calmly and quietly make sure the bull knows you are there. Surprising a bull is never a good idea.
- Take extra precautions to ensure bulls don't escape. Check fences often and/or consider reinforcing pens.
- Keep in mind that bulls are prey species.
- When startled or frightened, bulls can unintentionally injure nearby humans due to their immense size and strength.
- Because of their power, the casual toss of a bull's head could send a gate hurtling toward a handler.
- A running bull that brushes the handler can cause serious injury to that person.
- Know that, when multiple bulls are in the same area, especially if they're not familiar with one another, there is potential for a confrontation between them.
- When moving a bull, remain calm and implement livestock handling safety practices. Always have an escape plan in mind.
- Be constantly vigilant whenever a bull is around. Bulls may not have a history of aggression but are still capable of attacking anyone at any time. An attack doesn't necessarily have to be provoked.
- In the presence of a bull, pay attention to the animal's body language. Prior to charging, a bull will turn broadside to

present its size and power. Another sign of aggression is pawing at the ground.

- Never turn your back on a bull even if it seems to not be paying attention to you.
- Never completely trust that a bull won't attack.
- Never allow a child to work with a bull.

In moving bulls, paring the bull with a cow or other cattle can help keep them calmer, especially if the bull isn't used to the working facility, the people, or being handled.

Use of stockmanship principles is key to safely handling any animal. The main stockmanship points include remaining calm, quiet and avoiding quick movements. These practices will improve animal comfort and provide safety for people and animals.

Whether moving a bull or cattle, keep these basic principles in mind:

- The animal wants to see you.
- The animal wants to go around you.
- The animal wants to be around other animals.
- The animal can only think of one thing at a time.

When leading a bull or a cow, know that, even though you use a halter, the animal is in charge. Lead at a pace that is comfortable and normal for the animal.

Avoid pulling on the animal as it could result in hurting their neck and cause them to not cooperate. Avoid sudden movements or loud noises to prevent startling the animal. If you're halter-breaking an animal for the show ring, remember they get tired just as people do, so don't overdo it.

Calm animals are easier to move and it's safer for people and other animals when they aren't agitated or excited. Be conscious of the surface where you're walking as animals and people can slip, fall, and be injured when moving across wet or uneven surfaces. Always be aware of where you are in relation to the animal.

When transporting a bull or cows, take steps to ensure their safety during the trip.

- Before loading livestock, step into the trailer and inspect it for any hazards. These could include loose boards, protruding nails, garbage, etc.
- During inspection, look closely at the floor. It may be necessary to add bedding to avoid having the animal(s) slip.
- Whenever possible, cover the trailer during inclement weather conditions.
- Ensure that weight is evenly distributed along the sides of the trailer.
- Make sure the driver is well rested and physically prepared for the trip.
- While driving, be mindful of how livestock are shifting in the trailer to avoid causing the trailer to be off balance.
- Allow plenty of time for the trip since the heavy load will slow the driving pace.

Find additional information and resources at <https://extension.umn.edu/farm-safety/handling-bulls-safely#resources-2955160> and [http://gpvec.unl.edu/Elective\\_files/feedlot/NCBA\\_cchg2015\\_final.pdf](http://gpvec.unl.edu/Elective_files/feedlot/NCBA_cchg2015_final.pdf).

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