SOP No: ATT 078

SUBJECT: Putting a halter on a calf or cow

DATE ISSUED: 16.07.2014

POLICY: Two people may be needed for this procedure
Demonstrator: experience in this procedure
Students: competence in handling animals.

PRECAUTIONS: Wear sturdy footwear, and use sun protection if required
Animals should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure
Understand the flight zone of animals
Wash hands and exposed body parts thoroughly with soap and water after handling animals.

EQUIPMENT: halter, lead rope, and pen or crush.

PROCEDURE: Check that the halter you are using is the correct size for the animal; if possible adjust the lengths of the nose and cheek straps as necessary.

1. Restrain the animal:

When a high degree of restraint is needed: put the animal in the crush, close the rear gate and restrain the animal’s head with the head bail (see SOP ATT 074 “Use of a veterinary crush”).
When only a low degree of restraint is needed (e.g. a calf): put the animal in a small pen, quietly enter the pen and hold the calf in a corner by putting your leg against its flank.

2. Hold the halter in its correct orientation along the animal's head.
   Refer to the figures to identify the parts of a halter.

Using a rope halter: there are two short doubled straps – one goes over the nose (A) and the other (which has a loop to which the lead rope is secured) runs lengthwise underneath the jaw (E). Hold the halter by strap A in your left hand, and the end of strap B in your right; a single strap which has a loop (D) knotted in its middle will be on the left, and the long free end (F) will hang to the right of the halter as you are holding it.

Using a strap halter: hold the nose strap (A) in your left hand (this strap may be attached to square metal rings at each end) and strap E in your right. The free end of strap F will hang to the right of the halter.

3. Fit the halter: where possible, stand at the animal’s left hand side facing the same way as the animal:

Using a rope halter: fit the nose and side straps (A and B) over the animal’s muzzle, pass the long end of the halter (F) behind the ears and through the loop (D) on the left side of the halter; pull the slack through the loop and tie with a simple overhand knot. Be prepared for the animal to lift its head as you try to place the straps over the muzzle.

Using a strap halter: fit the nose and side straps (A and B) around the muzzle, pass strap F behind the ears and secure it with the buckle (D).
Be prepared for the animal to lift its head as you try to place the straps over the muzzle.

6. Check that the halter fits firmly, but is not over-tight. You should be able to put two fingers flat between strap F and the animal’s skin.
7. Clip the lead rope to its ring or loop (C).

8. Animals that are not trained to wear a halter may try to prevent you from fitting the halter being and may try to escape from restraint. Be prepared for this. After a halter has been fitted for the first time, let the animal become accustomed to it by letting the animal wear the halter without being tied up. As the animal becomes accustomed to the halter, attach a hand-held lead rope. Try leading the animal with the lead rope attached, and when the animal appears calm, tie the rope to a restraint with a slip knot that can be easily released if necessary. Patience and perseverance are needed to train animals to wear a halter and to accept restraint.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

REVISED:

CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES