SOP No: ATT 074

SUBJECT: Use of a veterinary cattle crush.

DATE ISSUED: 18.06.2014

POLICY: Minimum number of two operators required.
Demonstrator: experience in this procedure
Students: competence in handling cattle.

PRECAUTIONS: Wear sturdy footwear and sun protection
Cattle should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure
Understand the flight zone of the animal
Cattle should not be overcrowded in yards
Be aware that cattle may attempt to turn in the race leading to the crush, and may back away from the head stall.
Cattle which respond aggressively to yarding or restraint in a crush should not be used for teaching.
Wash hands and exposed body parts thoroughly with soap and water after handling animals

EQUIPMENT: yards, veterinary crush, load cells and readout device.

PROCEDURE:

(a) General use of the crush:

ensure that the front and side gates of the crush, and the head bail, are securely closed and that the sides of the crush are fully retracted (i.e. the “squeeze” is fully open). In crushes which have a hinged security gate in front of the head bail the head bail may be opened but make sure that the security gate is securely closed. The rear gates (the entry points of cattle into the crush) must be open.
Calmly move cattle into the forcing yard, then guide one into the crush and close the sliding gate behind it; in some crushes you will be able to secure a second animal in a space behind the first.
Encourage the front animal to put its head through the head bail.
Close the head bail quickly - allow room for some head movement but make sure that the bail is not so far open as to allow the animal to pull its head back (it may be necessary to have an assistant do this job). When the animal is secured, the front security gate can be opened to allow work on the animal’s head. If greater restraint is necessary, move the side and rear gates to reduce the space around the animal.

With the animal’s head secured in the head bail you can open the side gates to access parts of the animal’s body.
As you work with the animal, be careful to avoid levers and handles protruding from the crush. Some cattle will react adversely to confinement - be careful to not get your body trapped between the animal and the crush. If an animal goes down in the crush open the side and rear gates to their widest positions, close the front security gate, and open the head bail; allow the animal to regain its feet.
When the procedures are finished, close the side access gates, move the side and rear gates back to their starting positions, close the front security gate, and open the head bail. When the animal is calm, open the front gate and allows it to leave the crush (there is no need to open the security gate as this is attached to the front sliding gate and will move with that gate as it is opened). The animal
should move quickly forwards, but be aware that some cattle will jump out of the crush and may turn back towards the operator.

(b) Weighing an animal:

confine the animal in the section of the crush that contains the scale platform making sure that all four feet are on the platform and that the animal is not leaning against the sides of the crush. Wait until the animal is calm and relatively still, and record the weight. Note that most electronic scales have a weighing mode which integrates a series of measurements and allows you to get an accurate weight of a moving animal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

REVISED:

[Signature]
CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES