


[Tweet](#) [inShare](#)
[Share this Page:](#)
[powered by iContact](#)


# Monthly Safety Blast

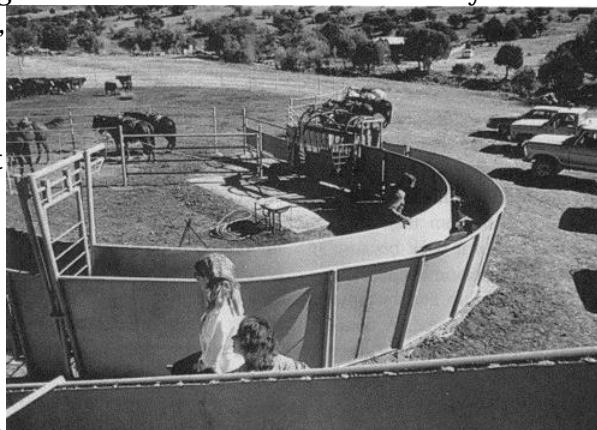
*Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education*

**August 2016**

## Cattle Pen Safety

When building a new set of pens or redesigning an older set of pens, there are many factors that must be considered. A well-designed set of pens will help prevent stress to the cattle. Cattle that have been subjected to stress have significantly reduced weight gains and shrinkage. Having good facilities not only reduces bruising and carcass damage to the cattle, but it also prevents injury to the cattleman.

- **The cattle handling facility should be designed with cattle characteristics in mind.** Cattle are sensitive to harsh light and dark spots. To keep cattle moving, all light should be evenly distributed throughout the pens. Any type of shadow can spook the cattle and cause them to stall and not cross over it. Cattle will also balk at puddles of water and bright spots of sunlight. The floor of the facility should be smooth with no sudden changes in light or texture.
- **The siding of the single file race, loading ramp, and crowd pen should be solid.** The crowd gate should also be solid to keep cattle from trying to go backward instead of forward. Solid walls keep the cattle focused on the task at hand. Solid panels are also advantageous for the cattleman because they can prevent cattle from seeing handlers, as well as other distractions, such as farm and ranch vehicles.
- **Having a curved race is more efficient than having a straight one.** The curvature prevents the cattle from seeing the working chute and/or the loading trailer. It also simulates the curved path cattle naturally take around a handler while being worked. A well-designed curved race will have a walk-way for the handler to use to push the cattle. This walk-way keeps people from having to be inside the pen with the cattle, thus greatly reducing the risk of injury. A solid walled, curved race keeps the cattle focused on the handler and prevents them from balking.



**Please take these recommendations into consideration when building a new pen or redesigning an old pen to reduce stress on cattle and prevent injury to the cattleman.**



Take the [Cattle Pen Safety quiz](#) to test your knowledge!

### **Resources:**

- <http://www.grandin.com/references/design.construction.facilities.handling.cattle.html>

**Disclaimer:** The facts and information listed above are merely suggestions for your safety, but are in no way a comprehensive and exhausted list of all actions needed to insure your safety.

*Monthly Blast written by Larimey Curtis, 2016 Noble Foundation/SW Ag Center Summer Intern.*

*Sharing is caring!*



*Do you like what you're reading?*

*Check out past Monthly Blasts on*  
<http://www.swagcenter.org/resourcesmonthlyblasts.asp>

Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education. For more information, contact us at 903-877-5998 or by email to [agcenter@uthct.edu](mailto:agcenter@uthct.edu).

Copyright 2016