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Monthly Safety Blast

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

July 2016

Tagging Calves

Many people that work cattle on a daily basis become complacent and often forget that they are handling a 1,400 pound animal. Even the gentlest cows can become aggressive once their calves are born. Maternal instincts take over and the only objective for the mother cow is to protect her baby. The sweet cow that you've always been able to approach without incident can become as dangerous as a fighting bull in the blink of an eye. Thus, when tagging a newborn calf, the following safety precautions are recommended to reduce your risk of injury.

- Never work calves alone. One person should be responsible for grabbing or roping the calf while the other person closely watches the mother cow.
- If the mother cow acts aggressively, take the cow to a separate lot. If that is not possible, use portable panels to separate the babies from their mothers. Portable calf catcher pens are another good option for safely handling calves; see <http://www.safetyzonecalfcatchers.com/>.
- Ensure that all dogs are out of sight. The presence of a dog will make the cow agitated and even more aggressive.
- Use one hand to hold the calf's mouth shut to prevent it from bellowing. This will help the mother cow stay calm.

Calving season is a fun and joyful part of the year that brings new life. Safety precautions must be kept at the forefront of even the most experienced cattleman's mind so that this season of new beginnings doesn't become a season of sorrow and regret.



Photo Source: Texas Tribune, Callie Richmond

For more information, check out these videos:

- Tagging Calf: http://cattlehandling.net/Stockmanship_And_Cattle_Handling/Cattle_Handling_%26_Stockmanship_Blog/Entries/2011/5/12_Tagging_Baby_Calves.html
- Livestock Safety for Kids: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueJZr7XBZO4&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL
- Cattle Handling Safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffkLY6kYOoI>



Take the [Tagging Calves quiz](#) to test your knowledge!

Resources:

- <http://www.safetyzonecalfcatchers.com/>
- http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/12372/WSV1079_Beef_web.pdf
- <https://www.texastribune.org/2012/01/27/texas-ranchers-brace-new-cattle-id-rules/>

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!



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