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Southwest Center

FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION, AND EDUCATION

Monthly Safety Blast

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

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Small Hooves, Big Hurt

You probably know that Texas is the leading national producer of cattle and calves, but did you know that the lone state ranks second in the nation for sheep and lamb production? In fact, pig, sheep and goat farms are common across the southern United States. Smaller livestock species are frequently chosen as 4-H projects because they are easier to keep in a suburban backyard and easier for children to handle. It's true that hogs and sheep are considerably smaller than cattle and horses; however, they can still harm their handlers. Common injuries include being stepped on, kicked, pinned, charged and hit with the animal's head. As fair season approaches, follow these safety tips to avoid unnecessary injury. *Make sure to check out the links at the end of the article for videos and classroom resources.*

- Always wear closed-toed shoes. No flip flops in the barn!
- Speak and move calmly.
- Put your phone in your pocket and pay attention to the task at hand.
- Establish a routine with livestock. Animals will behave more calmly if they get into a routine.
- Keep your handling area clean. Your momma doesn't work there.
- Speaking of mothers...be extra careful around mothers with their babies. It doesn't matter how long the mom has known you. You still pose a threat to her baby and she may treat you like an enemy.
- Animals can carry disease. Wash your hands after handling animals and do not eat in the animal handling area. I see you with your takis and candy in the stall. Take it outside!
- Wear gloves to prevent rope burn and to improve grip.
- Always have an escape route when handling livestock. Don't back yourself into a corner.
- Do not approach an animal from a blind spot. Make sure the animal knows you are there by talking softly or placing a hand on the animal.
- Livestock handling is a team sport! Work in groups of 2 or more people to ensure you receive help quickly in the event of an emergency.



I bet you have heard all of this before; but it doesn't hurt to be reminded. Small hooves can cause BIG hurt. Don't take your work for granted. Animals of any size can be unpredictable and dangerous. Be especially careful if you see any of these warning signs.

- Raised or pinned ears
- Raised tail or hair on the back
- Bared teeth
- Snorting
- Pawing at the ground

For more great tips, check out [Right from the Start](#)-a livestock handling video series produced by the SW Ag Center. [Supplemental classroom materials](#) are also available for each video, including quizzes, notes pages, outlines and PowerPoints. They are the perfect addition to your vocational agriculture lesson plan.

We hope all our producers, young and young-at-heart, have a successful, injury-free season.

Sharing is caring!



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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.

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