

Dairy Stockmanship

Reconnecting the People to the Cows

Paul Rapnicki, DVM MBA

Clinical Professor
Dairy Production Medicine
University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine



The Message of Stockmanship

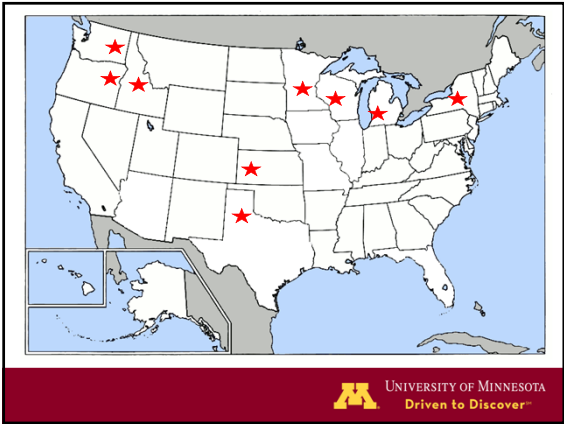
Bud & Eunice Williams
www.stockmanship.com



Dairy Stockmanship [Home](#) [Goals](#) [News](#) [Dairy Stockmanship](#) [About Us](#) [Resources](#) Reconnecting the people with the cows



- Our goal is to re-connect stockmanship to the dairy industry
 - Dairy Employees
 - Dairy Veterinarians
 - Dairy Professionals
 - Dairy Owners
- Includes all dairy production systems





General Observations

- Many excellent stockpeople on dairy operations
- An enthusiasm for learning about cow behavior



General Observations

- Poor techniques are very common
 - Lack of Awareness
 - Often facilitated by technology
 - Our human instincts are generally wrong about working livestock
 - Minimal formalized training in animal handling



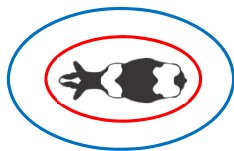
Components of a Low-Stress Cattle Handling System

- The design and maintenance of the facilities
- The cattle handling skills of the people



Stockmanship Principles

- Pressure area surrounds the flight zone

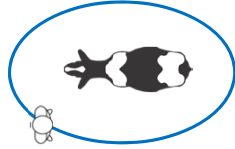


- Apply pressure to animals properly



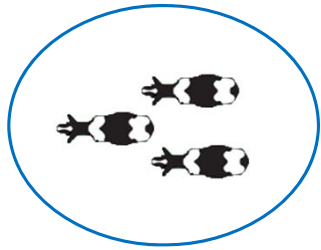
Apply Pressure Properly

- Position
- Timing
- Angle
- Speed



Apply Pressure Properly

- Position
- Timing
- Angle
- Speed



All behavior is a product of

- Biological variables
 - Species history
 - Biological evolution and genetic makeup
- Environmental variables
 - The present environment
 - Including the internal physiological environment
 - The past environment
 - What has happened to the individual in the past



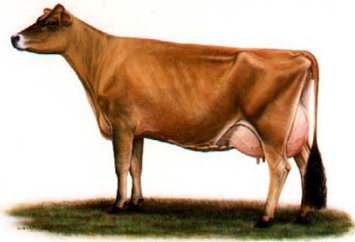
Life History Strategy

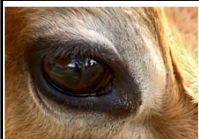
- Cattle are herbivores, a prey species that exhibits herding behaviors
- They do not communicate with language, but rather experience the world with the uniqueness of their 5



Communicate so the Cow Understands

1. Taste
2. Smell
3. Hearing
4. Sight
5. Touch





Key message

- We need to be honest with cattle and always let them see where we are
- Cattle will look (listen) to what is what is pressuring them
- Be aware of the which senses are being stimulated, and work to avoid startle

Additional Biological Influences on Cattle Behavior

- Cattle are herd animals
- Cattle usually lie down to ruminate
- Cattle are drowsy for 7-8 hour/day.
- Cattle REM sleep (true sleep) in short 2-8 minute periods

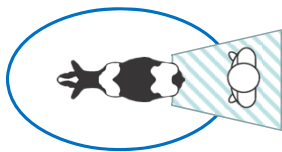
- Cows are “Crepuscular”





Dairy Stockmanship

- The Cow cannot see behind her



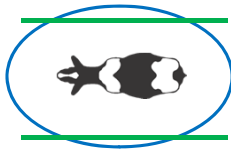
Dairy Stockmanship

- The Cow cannot see behind her



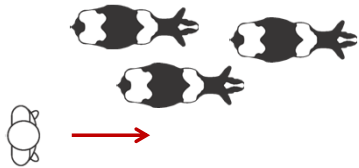
Dairy Stockmanship

- The best place to let the cow see you is from her side



Dairy Stockmanship

- Walking with animals will slow them down

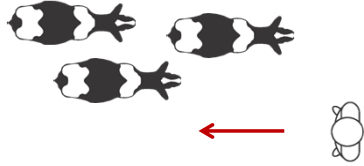


- Cows walk 2 mph, People walk 3-4 mph



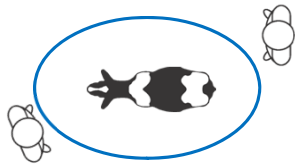
Dairy Stockmanship

- Walking opposite direction speeds animals up



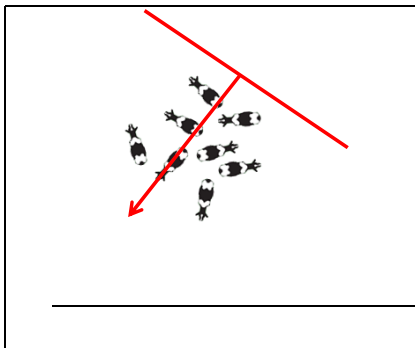
Dairy Stockmanship

- Pressure animals where they can see you

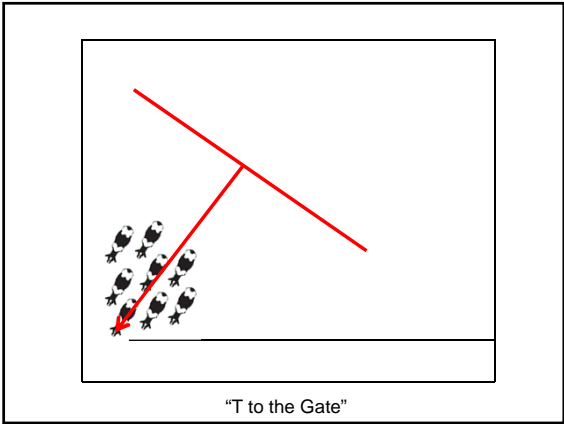


- Only 1 person should pressure at a time





"T to the Gate"



Every time we are with the cattle....
.....we are teaching them something

What do you teach your cattle?



Interactions with Youngstock

- The concept of "Brain Plasticity"
- Important periods in behavioral development
 - Pre and Post-natal periods
 - Adolescence
- Condition the appropriate behaviors for an adult lactating cow in your production system



Leadership

- Cattle respond positively to leadership
- People become leaders by creating honest communication with the cattle
- At arrival to a new facility – cattle are very susceptible to being worked properly



J. Dairy Sci. 91:1011–1016
doi:10.3168/jds.2007-0532
© American Dairy Science Association, 2008.

Acute Behavioral Effects of Regrouping Dairy Cows

M. A. G. von Keyserlingk,¹ D. Olenick, and D. M. Weary
Animal Welfare Program, University of British Columbia, 2357 Main Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia V8T 1Z4, Canada

“This study shows that regrouping can disrupt behavior and production in the hours and days following regrouping and suggests the need for **future research to identify management changes** that reduce these effects.”



Weaning Calves



Dairy Stockmanship

- Every interaction between people and their livestock is important
 - Positive experiences/conditioning
 - Negative experiences/conditioning
- Be aware of the behaviors you are training your animals to perform
- Condition appropriate behaviors



Loading Cattle into Chutes or Trucks



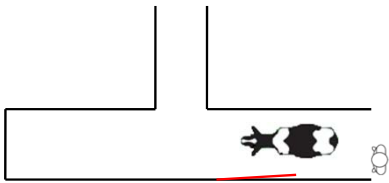
Bud Box Technique for Moving Cattle Safely and Efficiently



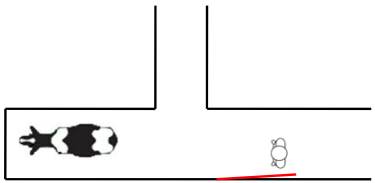
All behavior is a product of

- Biological variables
 - Species history
 - Biological evolution and genetic makeup
- Environmental variables
 - The present environment
 - Including the internal physiological environment
 - The past environment
 - What has happened to the individual in the past

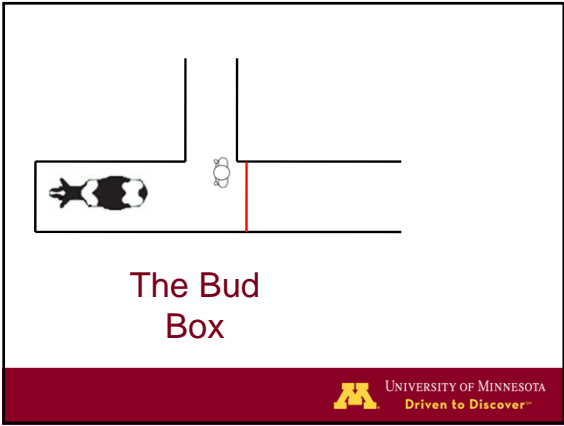


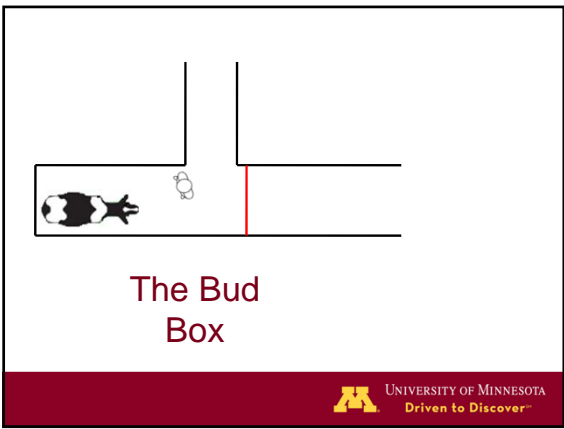


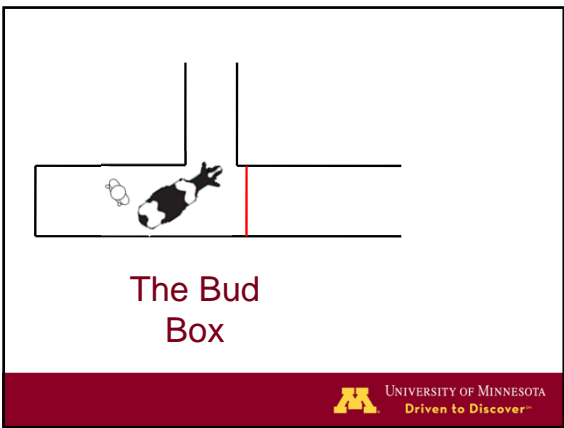
The Bud
Box

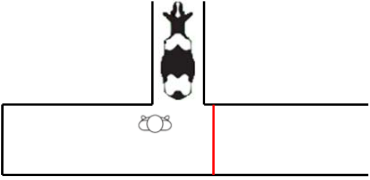


The Bud
Box











The Bud
Box



Bud Box Design




- 14 x 20 to load a chute
- 14 x 30 to load a truck
- Same size
 - Regardless of the animal size
 - Regardless of the number of animals
- Exit opening wide enough for 1 animal



Francis Bacon

Novum Organum 1620

“Nature, to be commanded,
must be obeyed”

Stockmanship Training

- See One
 - Understand the cow
 - Learn some basic rules
 - Watch video examples
- Do One
 - Practice in your job
- Teach One
 - Explain to others



Dairy Stockmanship Home Goals News Dairy Stockmanship About Us Resources Reconnecting the people with the cows



“Reconnecting the people with the cows”




UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
College of Veterinary Medicine
Driven to Discover™

Paul Rapnicki, DVM MBA
rapnicki@umn.edu
