

Remodeling Cattle Handling Facilities

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Does your beef cattle handling facility work well? Could it work better? Now may be the time to remodel the facility to improve the functionality and also the safety with which it can be used.

Generally there are a few things that can be done to improve the way a cattle handling facility will work. The first component to look at is the chute. If the chute is wider than 26 inches, then a plan needs to be devised to make it more narrow. This can be anything from adding extra boards on the inside to complete replacement.

Always check the facility before use to determine if any components are broken. Broken boards or pieces of metal provide opportunities for animals and people to sustain injuries. Weaken components also need to be replaced.

Walk through the facility with your eyes at the same height as an animal to locate sharp edges, protruding nails or other items that might cause injury. While inside the chute observe if there are any shadows that might keep animals from moving through the chute. Consider lining the inside of the chute with plywood or similar materials to limit outside visibility to animals.

If light weight or bent metal gates are being used in the facility, give consideration to replacing them with heavy metal gates or heavy wooden gates. Consider constructing catwalks to make it easier to gain access to animals.

Observe the surface that animals walk on in the chute. Replace muddy or extremely rough surfaces with gravel or roughen concrete. Consider building a table that can be used to place all the tools and medication when working cattle.

Consider adding lighting if the working area is dark. Place lights so they do not shine directly into the eyes of animals. Having light available can be very handy if it is necessary to treat an animal at night.

In summary, remodeling a beef cattle handling facility can make working cattle much easier and much safer. For information on remodeling a handling facility, contact the local Extension office.