

JOB ROLE – ANIMAL HEALTH WORKER

Sector – Agriculture

(Qualification Pack Code: AGR/Q4804)

Class IX



PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education
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UNIT 1: RESTRAINING FARM ANIMALS

Session 2: Behavioral Considerations in Animal Handling

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Session Objectives

The student will be able to :

- Describe animal behavior relevant for handling the animal;
- Locate the “flight zone” and “point of balance” in animals; and
- Identify the signs of distress in farm animals.

Introduction

- Reaction of the animals to a stimulus is called their behaviour.
- Different farm animals react differently to the same stimulus.
- The behaviour of animals determines their ability to survive in nature.
- The study of animal behaviour is known as **Ethology**.

Introduction (Contd...)

The knowledge of behaviour of livestock is important to the producer and helps in:

1. Feeding and management of farm animals;
2. Efficient breeding in animal; and
3. Health and welfare of the animals.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling

Fundamental instincts of animals: The animal handler must always keep in mind the following fundamental instincts of animals, which are:

- Hunger and thirst
- Fear of surroundings
- Pain and discomfort due to sickness and injury
- Strong maternal instincts.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling (contd...)

Sensitivity to contrasts:

1. Cattle are sensitive to stark contrasts in colour.
2. Cattle are color-blind and have poor depth perception, which may cause them to stop or fall at shadows or when sudden changes in intensity of light happen.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling (contd...)

Kicking habit:

- Horses and mules commonly kick-out their hind-legs.
- Cows kick-in forward and then kick-out outwards.
- Cows also have a tendency to kick sideways in case of pain, inflammation or injuries.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling (contd...)

Maternal instinct:

1. Livestock with newly born offspring exhibit strong maternal instinct.
2. Wherever possible, the newly born calf is kept close to its mother at the time of handling.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling (contd...)

Aversion to unnecessary movements:

1. Moving or flapping objects can make the handling of animals difficult.
2. A swinging cloth in the wind can cause animals to stop abruptly.

Basics of Animal Behavior in Relation to Handling (contd...)

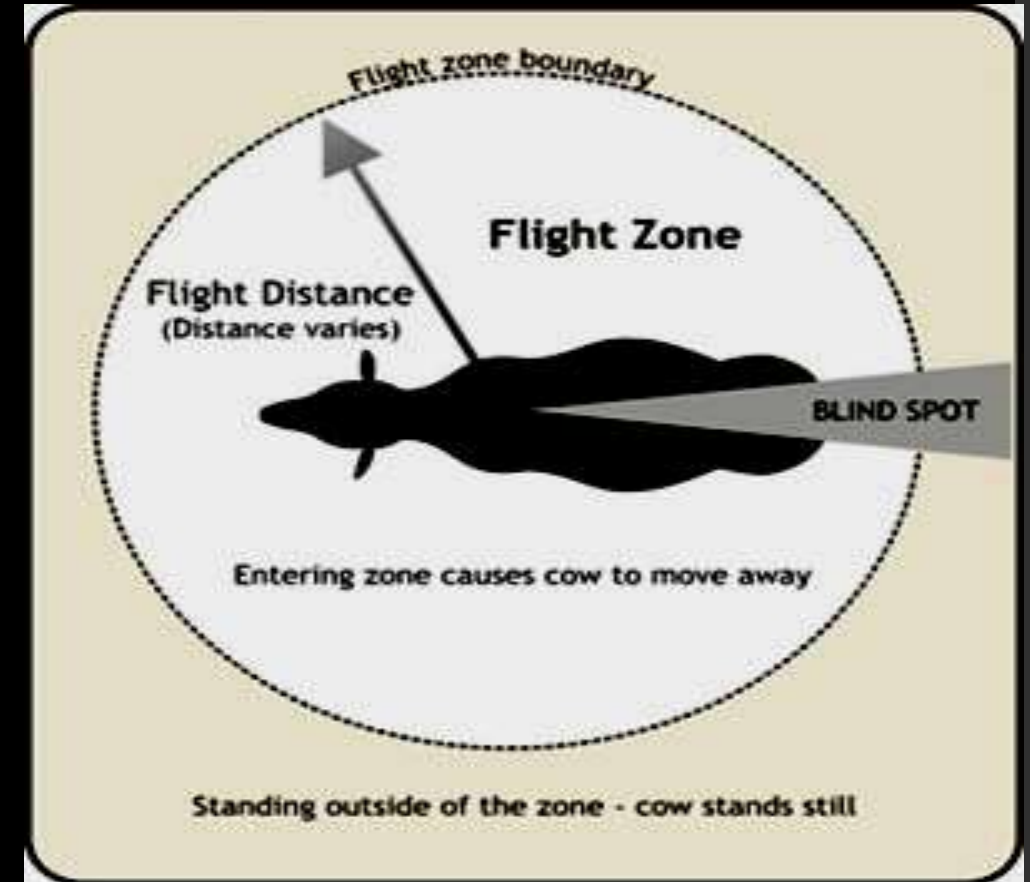
Other Considerations in animal handling:

1. When reacting to a situation, animals respond to the way they were treated in the past by drawing inferences from their past experiences.
2. Deaf or blind animals need to be dealt cautiously.

Essential Elements of Animal Handling

Three essential elements of animal handling and control are:

1. Flight zone
2. Blind spot
3. Point of balance



Essential Elements of Animal Handling (contd...)

Flight Zone :

1. The flight zone is an animal's "personal space" in which the animal feels comfortable.
2. The flight zone is the minimum distance the animal maintains between itself and any perceived threat.
3. The size of the flight zone varies depending on calmness or aggressiveness of the animal.
4. Therefore, while handling the animal proper consideration of its flight zone is kept in view.

Essential Elements of Animal Handling (contd...)

Blind Spot:

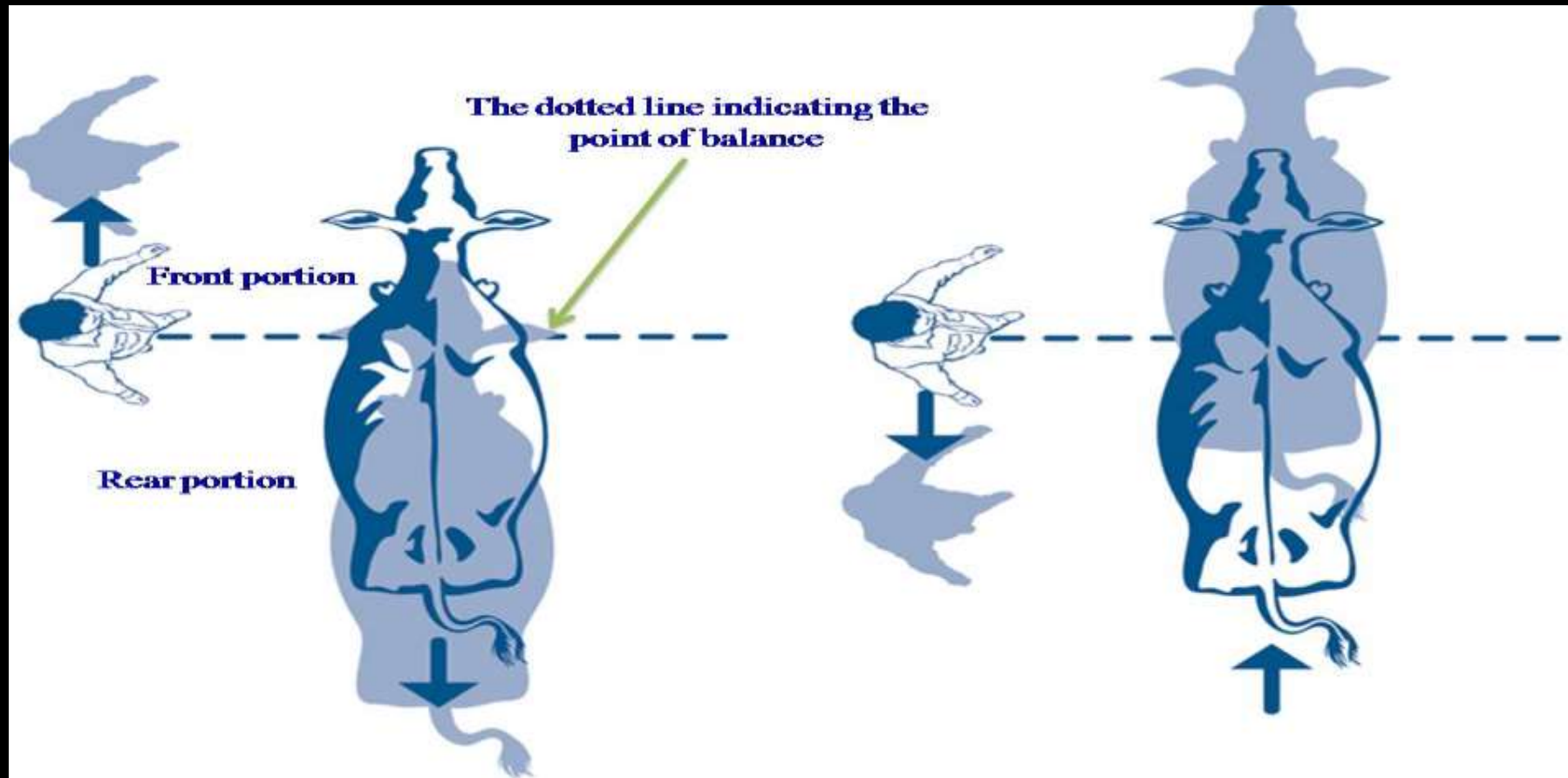
1. Blind spot is the area immediately behind the tail of the animals extending up to 15° on either side (i.e., total 30°) is treated as the “blind spot”, where the animal cannot perceive the handler.
2. An efficient handler never approaches the animal in the area of blind spot as it may get frightened and cause injury to the handler.

Essential Elements of Animal Handling (contd...)

Point of balance:

1. Point of balance is the imaginary point located on the animal's shoulder which divides the animal's body into two portions, i.e., front portion and rear portion.
2. If the handler crosses this hypothetical point in the direction of front portion, the animal generally moves backwards. But if the handler stays in the rear portion, the animal moves in the forward direction.

Diagram showing point of balance in the animal



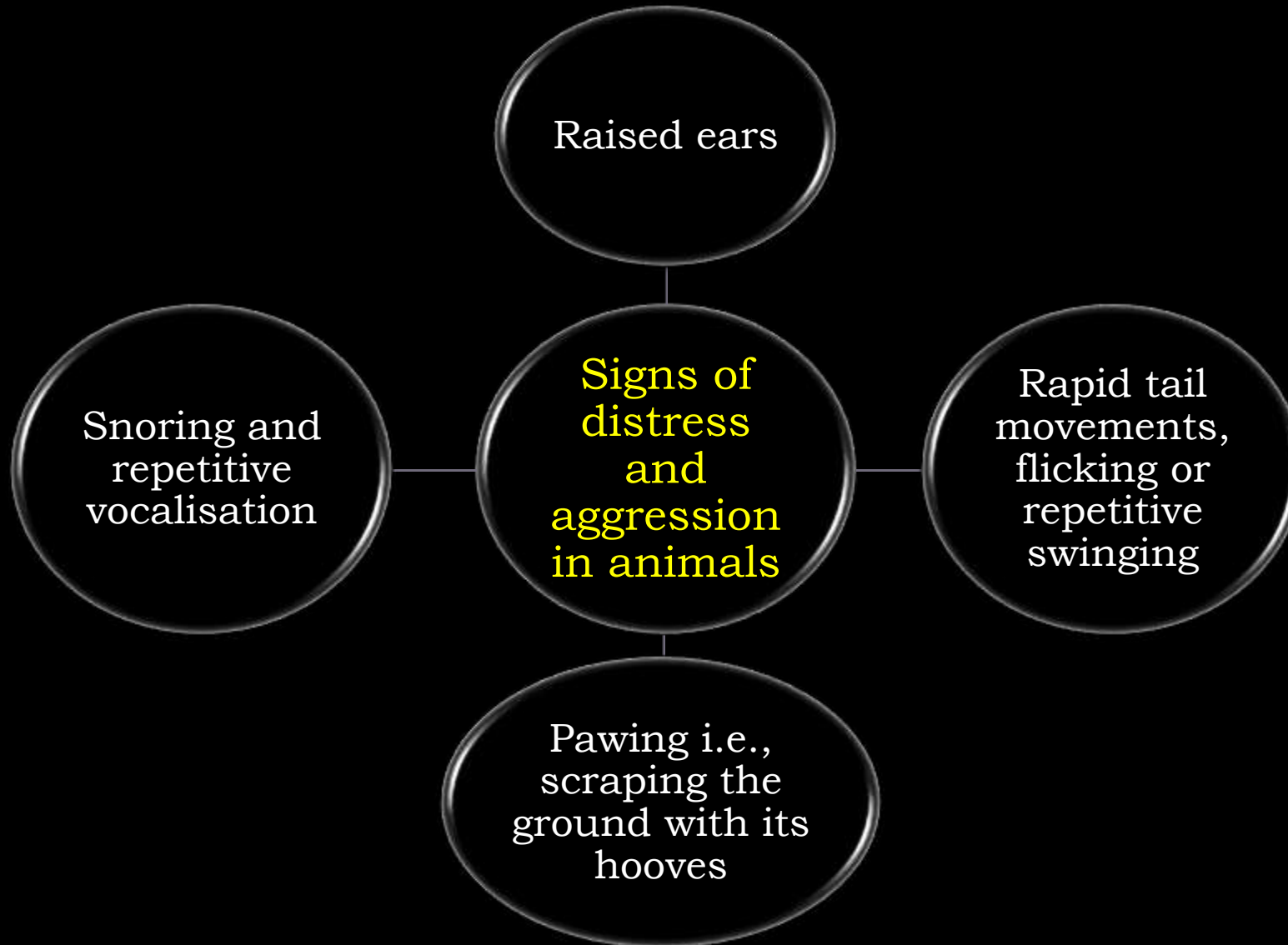
Important Aspects of Livestock Handling

1. Animals during stress condition express fear or alarm through their behavioural symptoms.
2. Never handle nervous or excited animals.
3. Cattle are sensitive to contrast.
4. Animals are frightened by high pitched noises.

Important Aspects of Livestock Handling (contd...)

5. Cattle remember "bad" experiences and create associations from fearful memories.
6. The animal health worker must be aware of the kicking habit of animal to reduce the risk of injury.
7. Proper handling techniques should be used.

Signs of Distress in Farm Animals



Summary

In this session you have learnt about the basics of animal behaviour in relation to handling, important aspects of animal handling and signs of distress in farm animals.

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