



# Animal Handling Guides for Dairies

## Part 2: How a Cow Uses Her Senses

Link to resources: <http://umash.umn.edu/training-guides-dairy>



### Learning Objectives

- ◆ Identify the importance of a cow's senses.
- ◆ What to do and what not to do when working with cows, given their acute senses.
- ◆ What handler behaviors or circumstances might startle a cow and how does a stressed cow affect other cattle?
- ◆ What farmers can do to positively use touch when promoting a cow's well-being?



### Watch Video

- ◆ View (3:21 minutes) Stockmanship Part 2 - How a Cow Uses Her Senses:

**English:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvjUnw-oKEc&feature=youtu.be>

**Spanish:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aRU0Y9c9ok>



### Discuss

- ◆ What are the most acute senses of a cow? Discuss each sense (sight, sound, smell, touch) and how you would recommend working with a cow knowing how they act/react to each sense.
- ◆ How can you positively use touch to promote an animal's well-being? What should you avoid using/doing to move cattle? What should you do in order to keep interactions positive?
- ◆ Other warning signs that a cow is distressed or threatened can include frequent urination, rapid heart rate, trembling, open-mouthed breathing and slobbering. Discuss how to both notice these signs and how to alleviate threats to avoid distressing a cow.



### Take the Quiz (online or pdf download)

- ◆ Each person taking the training should take the quiz.



### Additional Resources (optional)

- ◆ Watch (3:52 minutes) Using the Senses in Handling Cattle - A video to help learn a cattle's senses and best practices for handling them accordingly; Includes interactive questions to test your knowledge.
- ◆ Watch (1:26 minutes ) Cow Senses - This (audio-free) presentation shows how cows experience the world through their senses and how to handle them effectively.
- ◆ Read Cattle Senses (1-page) - An article that summarizes cow's senses and ideas for helping cows feel at ease.
- ◆ Read We Must Communicate to Cattle's Senses in Hoards Dairyman (1-page) - An article that describes how cows interpret their environment using the five senses and what handlers do to stimulate these senses.

Access the quiz answer keys online under each Additional Resources accordion menu.