# A screen shot of a computer Description automatically generatedpoint of balance safety talk

The point of balance is located at the animal’s shoulder. To move the cow forward, the handler should be positioned directly behind the shoulder. To move the cow backward, the handler should be positioned in front of the animal’s shoulders. Whether moving a cow forward or backward, stand at the edge of the cow’s flight zone at a 45-to-60-degree angle so that you stay within the animal’s field of vision.

*Remember...*

*Groups of livestock will often move forward without prodding. If the animals are moving in the desired direction, leave them alone. Keeping the cattle calm and allowing their natural instincts will make the job of moving them easier and safer*

Studies have shown that well-designed facilities will reduce stress of handlers and cattle. Reducing stress in livestock is critical to helping fight disease and lessening extreme weight changes.

*The amount of stress is determined by three key factors:*

1. The amount of contact with people
2. The handling of the animal (rough vs. gentle)
3. Genetics

If an animal has been handled roughly it will have more stress and be difficult to handle in the future. At the same time, animals that have been handled gently will have little stress when handled. Cattle can become excited in just a few seconds, but in a severely agitated it can take 20 to 30 minutes for their heart rate to return to normal.

*Suggestions to reduce excitement:*

* Avoid making loud noises when moving cattle.
* Avoid being in the blind spot behind the animal's rear.
* Don’t get too close to the “flight zone.” Animals become upset when a person is invading their personal space and they are unable to move away.
* Livestock respond better if they have two or more directions to go when pressured. Allow them to have options when moving them.
* Cattle prefer to go in the direction they are already facing or moving. Avoid spinning them around or jumping in front of them.
* An electric prod should NOT be a person's primary driving tool. It should only be used when absolutely required to move a stubborn animal and then put away.
* Handling cattle will be easier if a halter is used to hold the heads.
* If tail twisting must be used to move a cow up a chute, let go of the tail when the cow makes one step forward to reward their response.
* Breeding cattle will quickly learn to move when their tail is touched.
* If an animal is being taught to lead, one should let up and stop pulling when the animal takes one step forward. The principle is to give relief and to reward the animal when it does what you want.

*Remember...*

*While most cattle will respond to the suggestions above, there are always some cattle that*

*have different temperaments and may never calm down.*