# A screen shot of a computer  Description automatically generatedkeeping you and your livestock safe

Livestock safety applies to both the animal and the animal handler. It involves more than simply being "careful" around new litters and aggressive animals. In fact, many livestock accidents are not directly related to the animals themselves but are caused by improper use of equipment and poorly maintained or poorly built facilities.

People tend to give animals human qualities and forget how quickly they revert to primal instincts when threatened or under stress. Animals will fiercely defend their food, shelter, territory and their young. When frightened or in pain, animals may react in ways that threaten themselves and their handler. Injuries from working with livestock can range from sprains, strains to life changing injuries from being kicked, shoved or run over.

It’s critical that livestock handlers are aware of the different ways livestock and humans react to certain situations. Handlers must remain in control of potentially dangerous situations and avoid actions that would make them vulnerable to injury. The more predictable a person’s actions, the less likely they are to injure themselves or the livestock. Having a good understanding of the livestock they care for will lessen the risk of injury to the handler.

*One of the best ways a person can reduce risk of injury is to observe the animals. Important things to watch for include:*

* Raised or pinned ears
* Raised tail
* Hair standing up on the back
* Exposed teeth
* Pawing the ground
* Snorting

Males of some breeds are more aggressive than others, protective females, especially new mothers, can be just as dangerous. At the same time, injuries can occur from animals that do not exhibit aggression or fear. This reaction might be triggered by excitement, such as a person walking by. Typical work-related injuries from this type of situation are a result of being kicked, bitten, stepped on or squeezed between the animal and a solid structure.

*Another danger livestock pose to humans, is the potential for spreading diseases. Zoonosis are diseases that can be transmitted between humans and animals. Examples of such diseases are:*

* Rabies
* Brucellosis,
* Trichinosis
* Salmonellosis and
* Ring worm

Therefore, preventive measures such as, keeping animal facilities clean, testing, immunizing and sanitary practices in handling animals and their products will help to eliminate the danger of zoonosis.

Remember to treat livestock with respect. Always know where the animals are and never overlook warnings.