# A screen shot of a computer  Description automatically generatedunderstanding cattle perception

Much of the public consider cattle to be stubborn or unruly, however the handler's actions are the main contributor to most handling incidents dealing with them. A cattle handling incident can result in injuries to the handler, cattle, damage to the facility and loss of productivity.

Cattle have a panoramic vision which allows them to see in all directions without moving their heads. Their only blind spot is directly behind them. Compared to a cow, human sight is about 180° with a more significant blind spot. Even though cattle have good field vision, they have reduced depth perception and a limited vertical view, especially when they are moving with their heads up. To see depth, they must stop and put their heads down. For this reason, unfamiliar objects and shadows on the ground are the primary reasons for cattle balking and delaying the herd behind them. Therefore, it is essential for handling and working facilities be constructed to minimize shadows.

Handlers should always control the movement of cattle through a gate and never let them run wild through a gate. Initial contact must be made smoothly to set the pace for a calm mood. Open the gate fully and never leave it partially open. Give the cattle plenty of room and never push them out of the gate. Cattle sorting must be done calmly and safely.

*Note the illustration:*

* While working in pens, yard handlers should note movement along the flight zone.
* Never overcrowd a pen. There should only be ten cows max per pen.
* Always leave room to escape.

