



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Cattle Processing in an Unusual Year: Recommendations to Prevent COVID-19 Transmission

In light of rapidly changing recent gathering restrictions due to COVID-19, we have compiled a cattle processing/ group work recommendations document. We recognize that beef cattle production is an essential business and have been working to ensure there are minimal disruptions to operations. During this pandemic, we encourage you to be a good neighbor and look for specific ways to operate your activities without transmitting human disease.

Immediate Considerations

- Can you accomplish your cattle processing/branding/group work within your immediate family/workforce?
- Can you delay cattle processing/branding/group work further into summer?
- Can you decrease the number of people it takes to accomplish the task? For example, switch to methods that require fewer people such as calf forks or a calf table.

Recommendations:

Pre-Planning

- Reduce the number that attend the event. Ask the elderly, children and high-risk individuals to stay at home.
- Set up multiple wash/sanitization stations and encourage frequent hand washing.
- Set up processing or work groups that are social contemporaries (already spending time together) and distance each group from each other. Don't allow the mixing of groups.
- Draw a plan of the work area and evaluate for efficiency and safety of workflow.
- Advise you workers beforehand about the way the activity will be conducted. Better for them to point out unintended flaws before the event.
- Remind workers to use Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE). This will vary with the task they are performing and include long sleeve shirts, leather gloves, face masks, plastic exam gloves, etc.
- Process smaller groups per day per ranch in order to utilize less help.
- Agree to limit the number of cattle processing/ /group activities each person should attend per week or 2-week period.

Day of the event:

- If anyone is not feeling well, develops any sort of cough or has an elevated temperature prior to or the day of the activity, **DO NOT COME** for the health of the community.
- Keep a list of people who attend the activity so that they can be contacted if anyone becomes sick.
- Limit social interaction following or preceding the branding.
- Assign someone to act as a bio-security lead, reminding workers about physical distance, hand wash, etc. Recognize that habit is powerful and it is difficult to institute these new protocols without reminders. Remember we are all in this together.
- Have extra gloves and perhaps masks on hand at the site.
- Meal preparation: Simplest for each person to pack their own lunch. If food is to be served, have servers wear plastic gloves, eat outside where possible and keep your distance

Follow up

- Share strategies that worked or didn't with neighbors.
- Anyone developing symptoms, within 5 days after the event, please let the organizer know so others can be informed.
- Plan a community party after all this is over and celebrate the efforts you made together to keep your community safe and your operations going.

Now is the time to think about and discuss the options you have to keep your families, neighbors, and communities safe. Cattlemen are creative and innovative in their own right. We encourage you to critically think about what you have always done and to also think about the bio-security needed, not for your herd, but to protect the valued assets of your family, friends, and neighbors.

