

Animal Behaviour Signs

Objective

Learn how to recognise the different signs and physical behaviours used by animals.

Getting Started

Ask the children to name animals typical to a farm. Write the answers down on the board and put a line under the following ones: **Bull / Horse / Dog / Cat/**

We are going to discuss these animals in greater detail!

The Bull

Bulls are territorial animals. This means they guard the area they consider belongs to them, eg. their field or pen. You should never enter a field with a bull. At about 10 months old a bull will have a ring fitted in their nose so they can be led & handled using a rope or chain.

Bulls will show signs when planning to attack or 'charge'.

- They will stop grazing & watch you
- Bellow - make a grunting sound
- Start pawing the ground with their hoof
- Shake their head from side to side

If a farmer is cornered and there is no refuge point, the advice is to side step out its line of vision to confuse the bull and to give the farmer more time.

Of course some farmers will have to but they make sure to follow the following safety measures:

- Have an escape route
- Never turn their back
- Enter with a suitable farm vehicle, eg. Jeep
- Ensure there is a sign on the gate warning people that there is a bull in the field.
- Farmers always make sure that their bull associates them with nice things, such as feeding, grooming and gentle treatment.



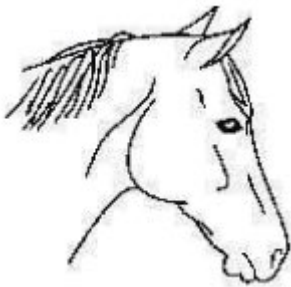
Did you know...

*a bull is **not** the most dangerous animal on a farm!
Cows protecting their young calves cause more accidents!*

The Horse

A. The Signs:

A great way to learn how a horse feels is by look at their ears. Ask the class to put their hands on either side of their heads as if they were 'horses' ears & ask them to mimic the following actions.



'Happy Horse'

Ears pricked forward and alert



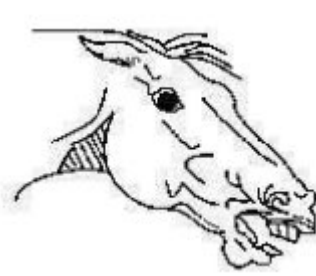
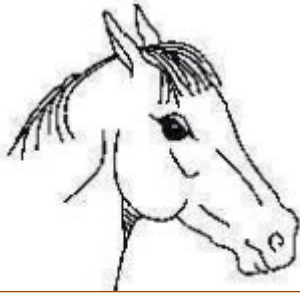
'Listening Horse'

Ears pivot and twist from side to side.
The horse has been alerted to something



'Sleepy Horse'

Ears out to the side show the horse is relaxed, sleepy but in some cases unwell. Normally the hind leg will be resting and the eyelids will be droopy



'Cross or Scared Horse'

Ears flattened back is a warning sign. The horse is feeling aggressive or scared and you may be in danger of being bitten or kicked.

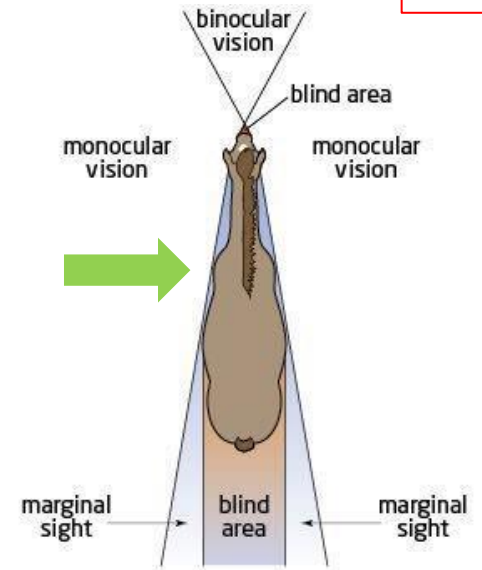
B. Blind spots and Hand feeding:

1. Blind spots:

A horse has two blind spots! Directly in front and directly behind them. A horse cannot see the ground near their front feet, and they cannot see their knees and chest.

Never stand directly behind a horse or approach them from the front as you are at risk of startling them and getting yourself hurt.

Always approach the horse at their shoulder area. (Green arrow)



2. Hand feeding:

When hand feeding a horse there are some simple rules to always follow:




- Keep your hand below their muzzle
- They will bring their head to your hand
- They may sniff at the food before they take it
- Never curl your hand so your fingers are facing upwards, if you do so you are at risk of getting bitten.



Dogs and Cats

Many farms will have dogs and cats who also do important work as well as being household pets.

1. Ask the children to name some jobs a dog or cat might do around a farm, here are the most common ones: eg. Herding sheep, hunting rodents, etc.
2. Ask the children the signs a dog or cat might display to show a good mood or bad mood!

Dog		Cat	
Good	Bad	Good	Bad
			
Fast wagging tail	Growling	Purring	Hissing
Bringing you a toy	Showing teeth	Rubbing off your legs	Striking their paw
Ears up	Tail tucked in	Gentle meowing	Arched back
Relaxed eyes	Snapping	'Kneading' their paws	Ears lying flat
Relaxed body	Ears tucked back	Tail up high	Tail flicking back and forth

Remember

Never to touch a dog or cat if you don't know its name or if you haven't asked the owner first. With all animals - it's very important to wash your hands after touching any animal

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