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HANDLE WITH CARE...

for the safety of you and your animals.

YOU CAN BE INJURED WHEN:

- animals are agitated due to fear;
- male animals show dominance or aggression;
- female animals protect their young;
- equipment is faulty.

Understand animal behavior to prevent injuries

FEAR

When animals become agitated during handling, it is usually due to fear. Fear-based behavior is likely to be the main cause of accidents; horses kicking, steers baulking in a chute. Horses detect danger through their sense of vision, smell, hearing and touch.

HERD INSTINCT

- Establish yourself as the *alpha* member, so your horse respects you and turns to you for guidance.
- Introduce a new horse to the herd gradually. They will need to adjust and sort out the pecking order.

SENSES

- A horse has wide angle vision. It has a blind spot directly behind and directly below its head.
- A horse must position its head to focus their vision. It must be able to lower its head to focus on low, close objects and to determine depth.
- A horse has an acute sense of hearing.
- A horse has an excellent sense of smell.
- A horse's ears are good indicators of behavior. Their ears generally point in the direction their attention is focused. Ears that are 'laid back' may be a warning that the horse is getting ready to kick or bite.
- A horse is very sensitive, it can sense the feelings of those nearby (hesitation, fear, confidence or anger).
- There is no such thing as a safe or 'bomb-proof' horse. Even a quiet animal can be spooked.



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GEAR

- ✓ Wear an equestrian helmet when riding.
- ✓ Wear boots with proper heels to prevent your feet from slipping through the stirrups. Riding in sneakers is dangerous.
- ✓ Check equipment regularly for correct fit and signs of wear and tear.
- ✓ Wear fitted clothing.
- ✓ Never wrap reins or a rope around your fingers or any part of your body.

HANDLING HORSES SAFELY

- ✓ Establish a relaxed and confident relationship with your horse.
- ✓ Always be alert when working with your horse.
- ✓ Talk to your horse so it knows where you are at all times. Speak with a calm, steady voice.
- ✓ Move slowly and calmly.
- ✓ Lead horses with some length and slack in the lead line. Horses need to pay attention to you. If the horse is attentive, it will be less reactive to other stimuli in the environment.
- ✓ Don't allow your horse to crowd you, keep the horse about three feet away from you.



- ✓ Turn your horse away from you to prevent being stepped on.
- ✓ Do not allow your horse to nibble you or your clothes, it may bite you.
- ✓ Provide light to a dark entrance. A horse is reluctant to enter dark enclosures.

DID YOU KNOW?

The more you handle your animals, the more comfortable they become with you. Animals read your body language and they respond to the way you handle them. You must remain calm and confident to build trust with your animals.