

Compassionate Handling Series

Livestock & Production



Why does Compassionate Handling matter?

Handling describes how humans work with, respond to, and interact with animals within their surroundings. It is unavoidable when living and working with animals and can have profound and lasting effects on both animals and humans.

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In dairy cows and goats, negative interactions with or fear of humans can lead to reduced milk production.¹



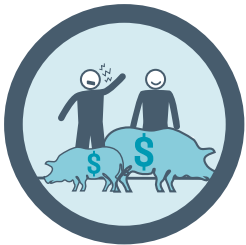
In poultry, fear of people can lead to lower egg production and poorer quality, slower growth, reduced sexual activity, immunosuppression, increased aggression and other handling difficulties.⁵



In pigs, negative handling increases stress, can lead to impaired growth and lower reproductive performance, and induces fear of humans.²



In cows, heifers, and calves that have had negative handling experience and show fear of humans, chronic and acute stress, traumatic incidents, injuries, death and poorer meat quality are more common.⁶ Regular gentle handling counteracts some of these effects.⁷



In pigs, poor pre-slaughter handling can lead to losses in carcass value, the presence of lesions and bacterial contamination, and meat quality defects.³



In lambs, gentle human contact reduces stress, which leads to better weight gain during weaning, and translates to higher farmer profits.⁴



Goats generally prefer to interact with happy faces, meaning handlers should be aware of the subtle emotional cues they may be giving out.⁸

Compassionate handling leads to better outcomes for livestock, people and for business! We commit to handling animals with compassion - wherever, whenever and with whomever it takes place - so that all animals experience a positive human-animal relationship throughout their lifetime.



Get in contact with us via email: handling@thebrooke.org or thebrooke.org/compassion to learn more.

References:

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- 3 Faucitano, (2018). Preslaughter handling practices and their effects on animal welfare and pork quality. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093%2Fjas%2Fskx064>
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- 5 Waiblinger et al., (2006). Assessing the human–animal relationship in farmed species: A critical review. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2006.02.001>
- 6 Lensink et al., (2000). The impact of gentle contacts on ease of handling, welfare, and growth of calves and on quality of veal meat. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2527/2000.7851219x>
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