SAFE AND SANE LARGE ANIMAL HANDLING
There can be many reasons that large animals need to be handled, moved or loaded for transport.

Many of these activities can take place in high risk environments.
Horses in urban areas
Horses on highways
Transportation Accidents
Some horses may not have been handled.

Making a halter using a rope and pole.
Or they want to avoid people.

Using a Rescue Clip when a horse won’t allow someone in its space.
Some may have to be herded.
No matter what the situation, calm energy and cooperative teamwork is what is most often successful.
The brand inspector Cutting the wire free
Horse with leg snared in wire fence
Containment followed by methodical disentanglement.
Ready to release
Incident security is important.
Bolting after a bystander entered our working space (from the previous slide)
CRITICAL SAFETY PRIORITIES

• #1 – You
• #2 – Your Team / Other Responders
• #3 – Citizens / Bystanders
• #4 – The animal(s)

YOU CAN’T BE A HERO IF YOU BECOME PART OF THE EMERGENCY!
Netting and panel containment. (Removing a horse from a residential area.)
Horse contained and released back onto the range
Secure containment is important.

Horse snared on a guy wire hanging from the roof
Contained and Brand Inspector removing the wire
Foals often need special handling.

NEVER just pick up a neo-natal foal. Use a blanket or Foal Glide.
Loading options.

Volunteers and owners need to practice loading under varied conditions.
Practicing with all trailer types
(A horse will tend to follow the point in the netting.)

Using construction netting to move horses. Proper shaping of netting helps direct focus.
Construction netting is also useful out in open spaces.
Practice makes perfect.
Work with your stakeholders to improve their skills.
Using chutes for loading.

Chutes can help contain and control horses that are difficult to load.
Injured range horse at large.

Setting up a long chute on the lane that empties into a small chute for loading.
"Taking away the corners." When pressured, horses tend to charge unprotected corners.
No time for opposition reflex.

Unhandled horse, lays down in the chute, so we position two trailers.
Outsmart the horse.

When we ask him to load in the trailer we don’t want, he jumps into the trailer that we do want.
Safe unloading approaches also have to be considered.

Horses can get excited when unloaded in unfamiliar places. Plan for containment during unloading.
The real world presents challenges.
Two inches of clearance on each side
Stock trailer accident – load of pregnant cows. Containment is the priority.
High water operations.
Extra caution is warranted. What is under the water? What is IN the water?
Safety inspections are important.

Annual inspection day. All credentialed trailers should be inspected.
Nighttime Operations

Manage the intensity and movement of lighting during night operations. Low intensity indirect lighting is best.
Keys to success.

• Size up the situation
• Develop a plan
• Secure the workspace (safety issues, distractions)
• Work as a team, communicate
• Work with purpose, but not like a predator
• Maintain a low level of energy
• Constantly evaluate the animals’ response / behavior
• Always maintain a “safe exit” strategy
• Use “work it or leave it” decision making
• Safety check everything once the load is completed
Tactical Key Points.

• Constantly “read” the animal and adjust your pressure / energy
• Too much energy can increase unpredictability in horses
• Remember that a “frozen” horse can be provoked to flight or fight
• Too much pull on a lead can produce an opposition reflex
• Lead from the front, but if necessary drive from the rear
• Most livestock have blind spots to the rear and can react if surprised
• When driving any large animal, stay clear of the kick zone
• Keeping a horse calm while loading can reduce reactivity inside the trailer
• Loading chutes can improve operational safety and efficiency
• Remember that most livestock are herd animals and will move better as a group
• Sometimes a frightened, balky horse will follow another horse that is familiar
• Manage the intensity and movement of lighting during night operations
ASSESS RISK-BENEFITS

Ask yourself, "Is the benefit worth the risk?"