

## The truth about cattle...

### Cattle Behaviour

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The common perception of cattle is one of docile, unintelligent animals that exhibit only basic instinctual behaviour. This is far from the case.

Cattle are social animals and love the company of their herd. They are gentle animals who make and keep friends – and enemies – and show signs of intelligence far higher than most people have ever given them credit. They are naturally curious animals and will inquisitively investigate new things – like an old sack blown into their paddock - with a reserved curiosity.

Today's farmed cattle are far-removed from their wild cousins, having been bred to demonstrate specific traits for economic purposes, such as increased milk yield or greater muscle mass.

### Fear and pain in cattle

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Like any prey animal, cattle crave the comfort and security of their herd and bellow for their herd when they become separated. Despite weighing more than 250kg, cattle are easily spooked and become agitated. The smallest thing can place the animal in a state of fear – cattle being herded into feedlots or slaughterhouses are terrified of changes in light or texture, puddles of reflective water, even a polystyrene cup on the ground.

It is easy to identify fear and pain in cattle. An animal will show outward signs of pain, such as limping, when it is suffering. A frightened animal will often bellow, and the whites of the eyes become visible when an animal is terrified. Cattle also pant when stressed and defecate when placed in extremely stressful situations, such as those experienced prior to slaughter.

### Treatment of cattle in the Middle East

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Cattle that are exported from Australia will be subjected to a host of new and frightening environments. Unloading in overseas ports is stressful, with cattle forced to endure many new and/or frightening factors including; extremes of temperature, handling, noises, smells, and painful practices (e.g., tail-twisting, beating). Animals may be separated from their herd and will face these situations alone, often bellowing for their fellow herd members.

The slaughter of cattle in the Middle East causes great fear (even terror) and prolonged suffering. Animals Australia video footage shows acts of unimaginable cruelty being committed against these placid, gentle animals. These large animals are not easy to coerce, so slaughtermen use sheer brute force and pain to force the animals to move. These gentle animals have their tendons slashed, their eyes stabbed, and their tails twisted (sometimes broken) before slaughter. Our investigators filmed an instance of treatment so prolonged and brutal that the animal was visibly 'broken', and unable to struggle against the brutality any longer.

These beautiful animals then have their necks bent back and their throats cut whilst fully conscious, and very often take minutes to die.

## Cattle Intelligence

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### 'Eureka Moment' Study

Recent research conducted in the UK has dispelled the myth that cows are docile, unintelligent animals. In work led by Donald Broom, professor of animal welfare at Cambridge University, it was found that cows bear grudges, nurture friendships, and become excited over intellectual challenges.

In one study, researchers challenged cows with a task where they had to find how to open a door to get some food whilst an electroencephalograph measured their brainwaves. The results clearly showed increased excitement when the cows worked out the problem: "Their brainwaves showed their excitement; their heartbeat went up and some even jumped into the air. We called it their 'Eureka' moment," said Prof. Broom.

### Forming Friendships

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In another study, John Webster, professor of animal husbandry at Bristol University, and his colleagues documented how cows within a herd form smaller friendship groups of between two and four animals with whom they spend most of their time, often grooming and licking each other. They also dislike other cows and can bear grudges for months or years. Professor Webster has published a book on the topic, entitled *Animal Welfare: Limping Towards Eden*. Speaking of the intelligence and sentience he witnessed during his research, Professor Webster said, "People have assumed that intelligence is linked to the ability to suffer and that because animals have smaller brains they suffer less than humans. That is a pathetic piece of logic," he said.

The assumption that farm animals cannot suffer from conditions that would be considered intolerable for humans is partly based on the idea that they are less intelligent than people and have no "sense of self". Professor Webster dismisses this idea, saying, "Sentient animals have the capacity to experience pleasure and are motivated to seek it. You only have to watch how cows and lambs both seek and enjoy pleasure when they lie with their heads raised to the sun on a perfect English summer's day. Just like humans."

*Ref: The secret life of moody cows, Sunday Times, 27/02/2005*

**Cattle are intelligent, placid, gentle, animals, and to subject them to the brutality implicit in the live export trade is utterly abhorrent.**

**We would not condone such treatment in Australia;  
we should not condone such treatment in any other country.**