

Cattle handling facilities: Common issues & simple fixes

What we learned from ranch visits & workshops

Presented by: Heidi Carroll, SDSU Extension Livestock Stewardship Field Specialist & Joe Darrington, DVM

Additional project team member: Julie Walker, SDSU Extension Beef Specialist

Project Overview

(Fall 2016-Spring 2017)

Working cattle is dangerous.

Focused on

- Cattle behavior
- Evaluating facilities
- Safety of cattle & people

Goals:

- Cattlemen will understand the impact of human interactions on cattle behavior, which impact animal health and performance, and its ties to ranch profitability.
- Cattlemen will learn and implement low-stress handling techniques and evaluate facilities to minimize the risk of injuries and costs associated with injuries for both human and cattle.

Grant Funding (<https://ncerme.org>)

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NORTH CENTRAL
**EXTENSION
RISK MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION**



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Material Development

- Checklist
 - Employee
 - Owner/Manager
- SOP examples
- Industry resources
- PowerPoint presentations
 - Cattle handling basics
 - Cattle facility evaluation
 - Avoiding discounts: carcass value

Workshops

- LATI, Watertown, SD
- Cottonwood, SD
- Beresford, SD
- Mission, SD

Low Stress for Safety and Success

Keeping cattle & handlers calm

Cattle Handling & Facility Evaluation Workshop

- Hands-on cattle handling
- Facility evaluations
- Impact cattle performance
- Handler & cattle safety

Agenda:

7:30am – Registration
8:00 – Cattle handling basics & its impacts
9:15 – Facility evaluations, SOPs & safety
11:00 – Activities (portable systems/tubs)
Lunch
1:15 – Conducting facility evaluations
2:30 – Cattle handling demos/activities
5:00 – Review of activities & summary
6:00 – Supper

When: October 27, 2016 8:00am – 7:00pm MT

Where: Cottonwood Range & Livestock Field Station (23738 Fairview Rd, Philip, SD)

Cost: Early Registration (by October 17th): \$45 per person (\$10 discount for additional individuals from same operation) – OR – \$50 after October 17th.

Register at <http://igrow.org/events/>.



"This is a great opportunity to learn tips on minimizing cattle stress to maximize performance, and experience a different facility design and see portable chutes available from suppliers." - Heidi Carroll

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Highlights from Workshops



Highlights from workshops



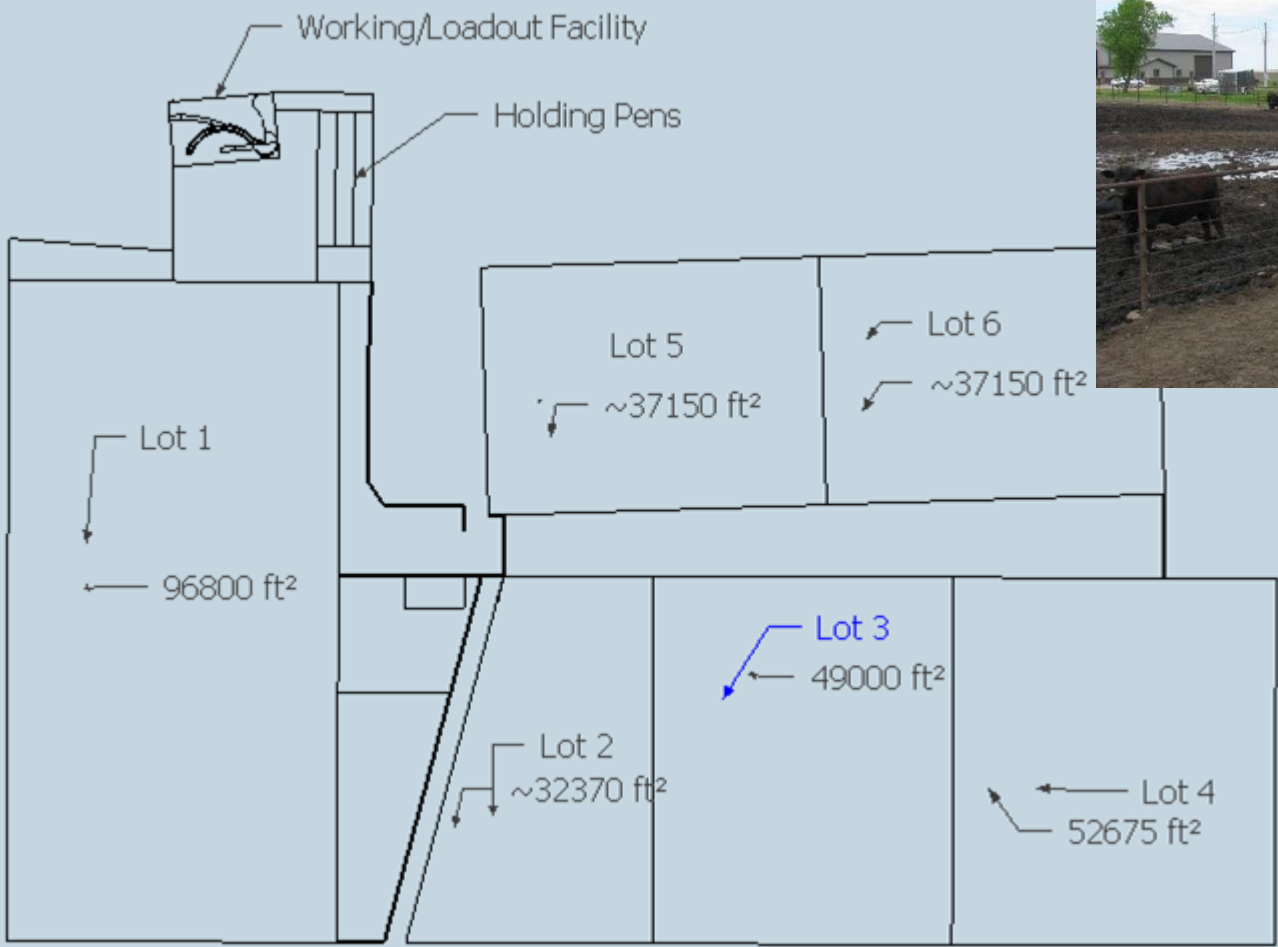
Ranch Visits

- Evaluate workshop impacts & provide consultation
- 5 visits
- Individualized ranch reports



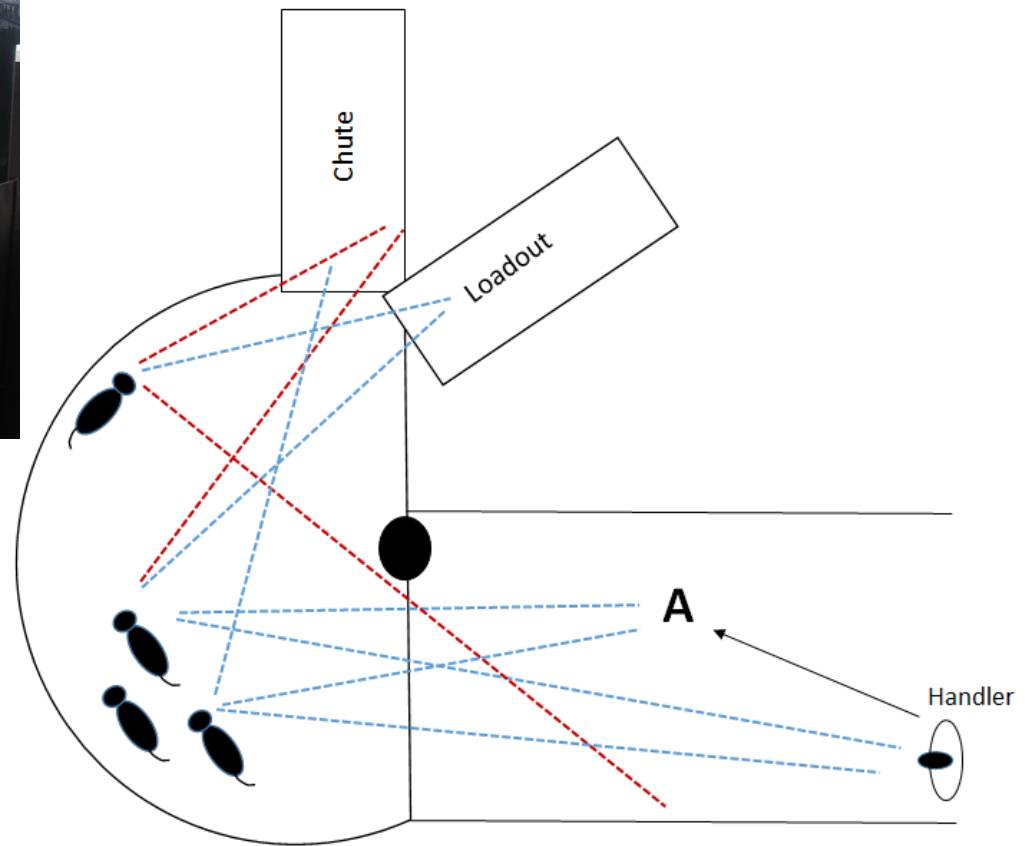
Commonly Discussed Topics

- New Construction
 - Siting
 - Slope and drainage
 - Equipment selection and use
 - Handler space vs cattle space
- Older Facilities
 - Shadow/light transitions
 - Short leadup alleys to chute
 - Drainage and footing
 - Man gates
 - Overall maintenance of materials





- A) Cattle follow the curve of the tub and it leads directly to the load out alley.
- B) Cattle on the outside curve of the tub do not see an obvious exit to the chute.
- C) Cattle on the inside center of the tub can see the exit leading to the chute.

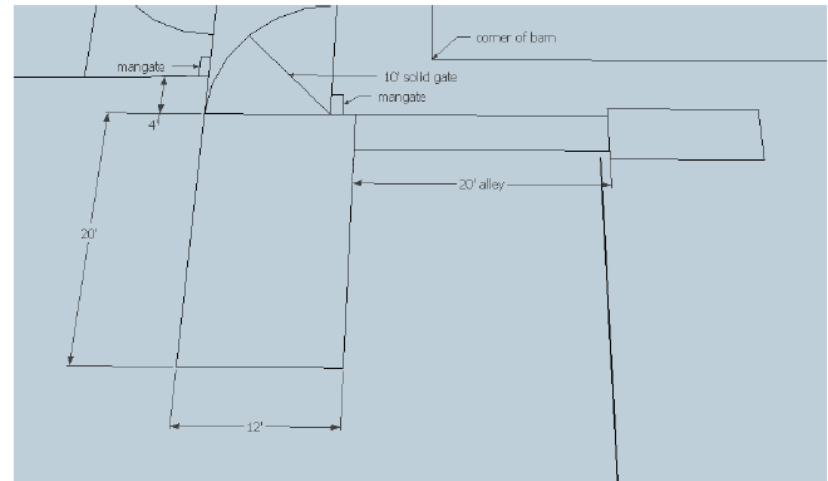
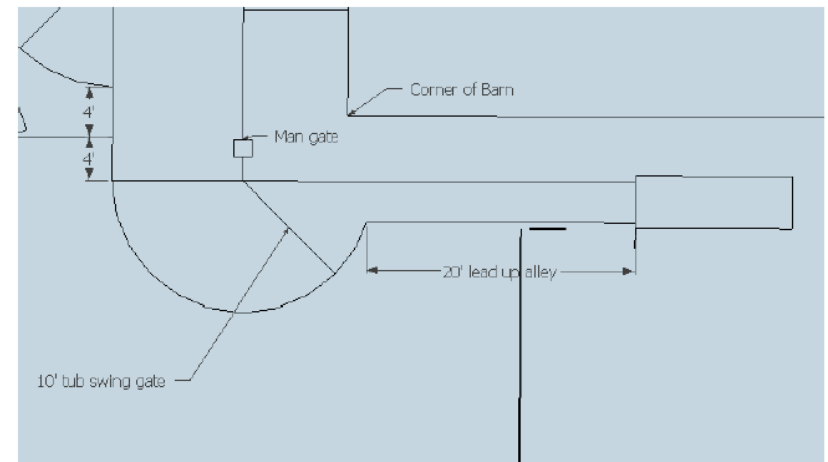
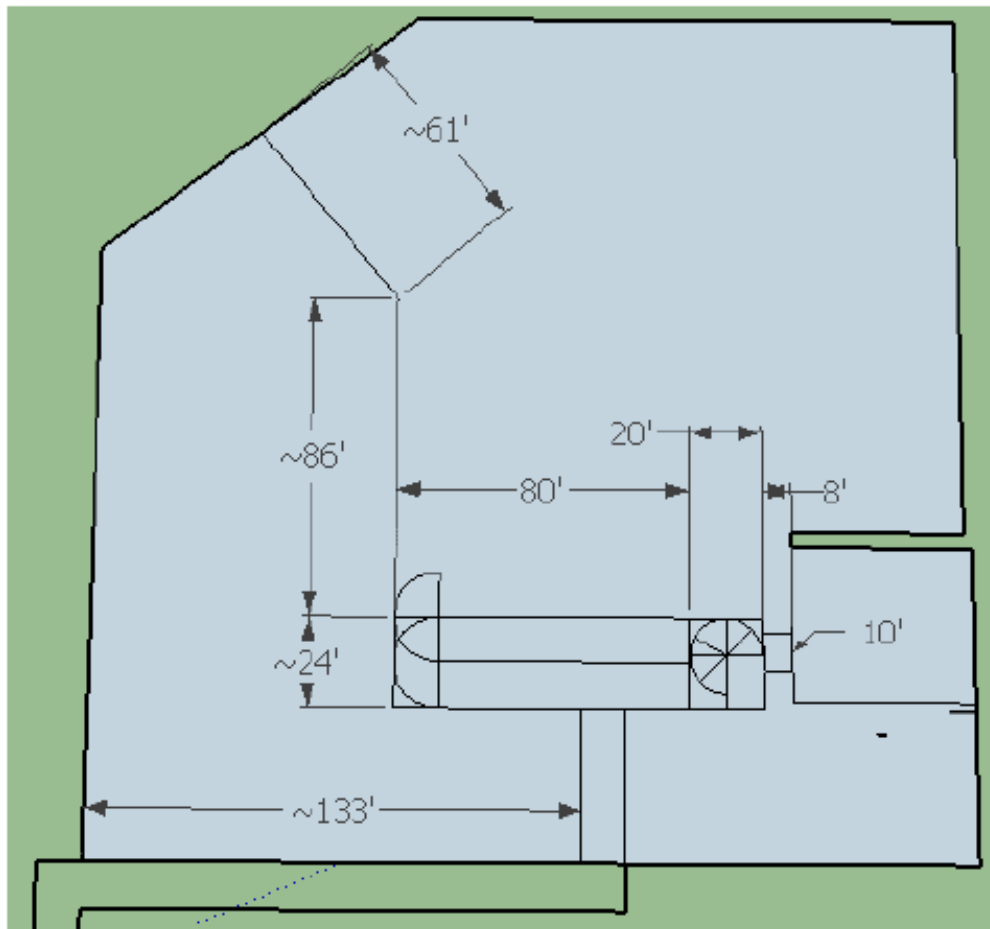


Leader animal looking for opening at loadout and sees panel of chute instead of opening. Handler position as shown, or if move to A, doesn't maintain eye contact with leader to keep pressuring them forward to chute opening. Rear animals see handler, but they typically are following leader and not always looking for opening.





Figure 2: Pens of main working facility; current flow of cattle through the facility shown in red.



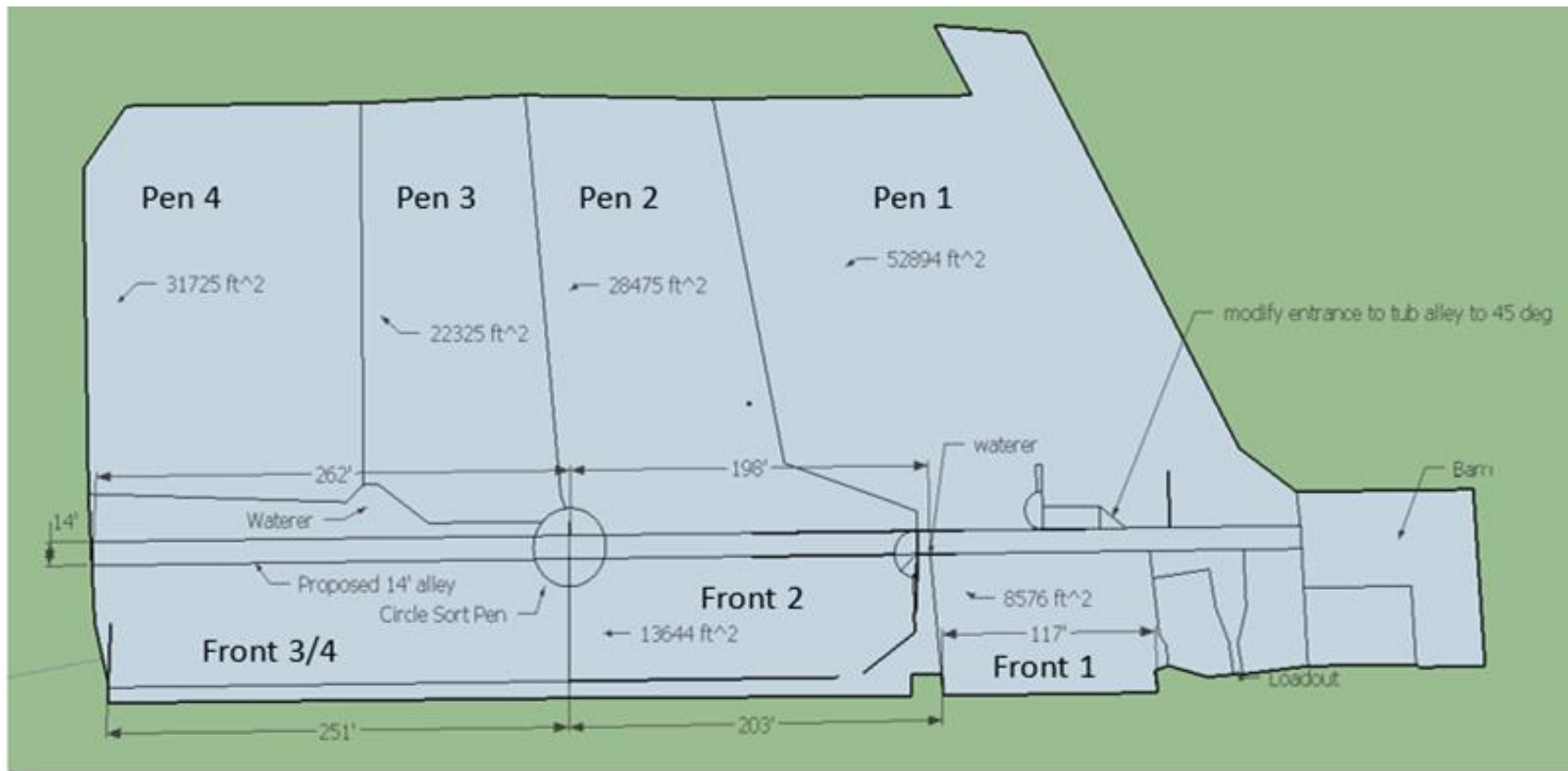
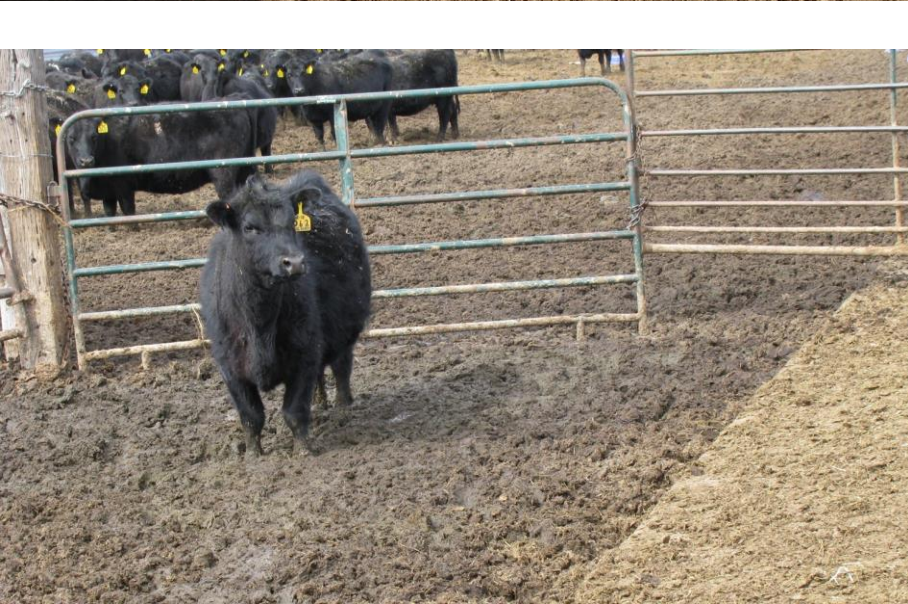


Figure 1: Overview of facilities and proposed modifications.









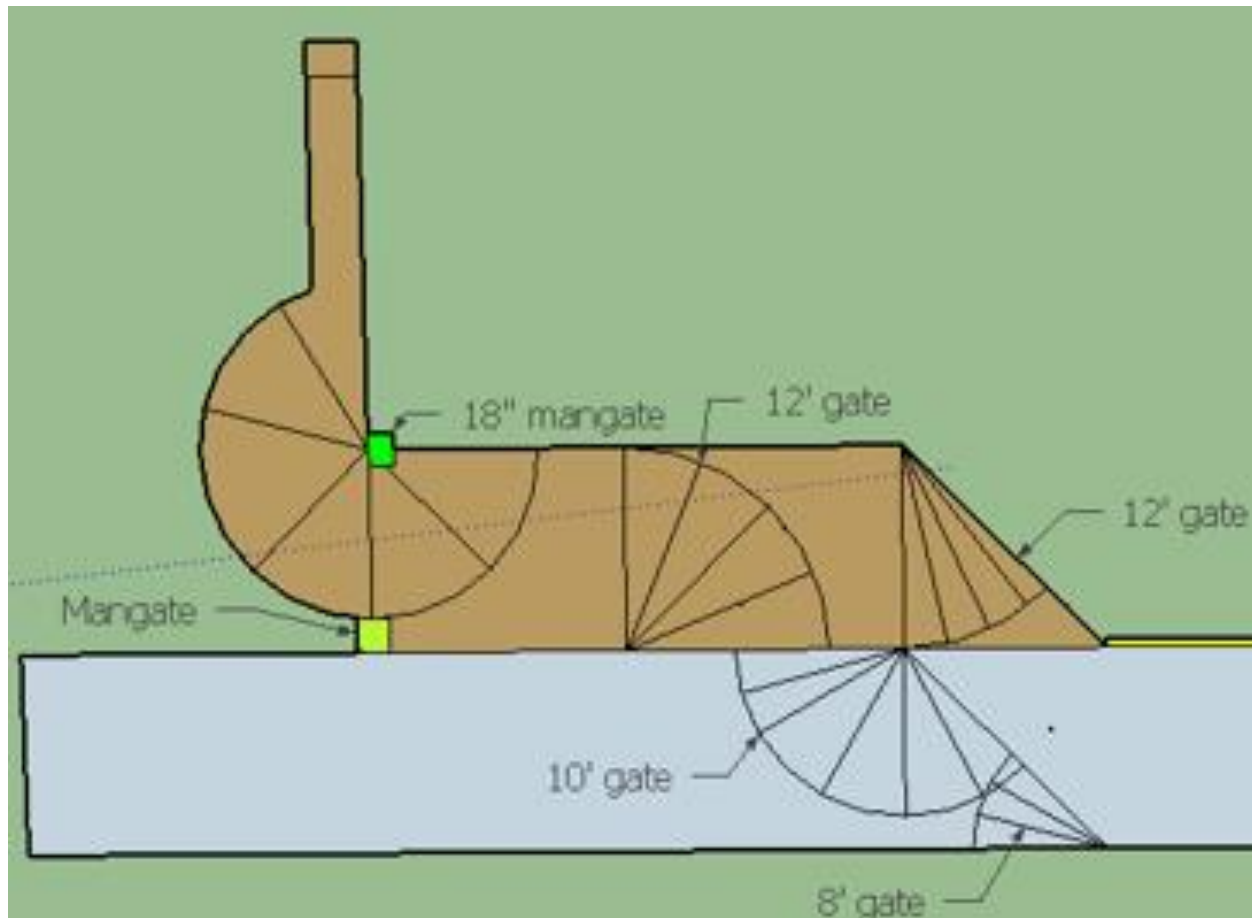




Spring or bungee cord mangate that opens toward you so when cattle push on it, it stays shut. It could be hinged on either side to your preference. Instead of making it perpendicular to the tub/fence (as in picture), angle it to the north to guide cattle into the tub – 24" north of the tub along the fence.

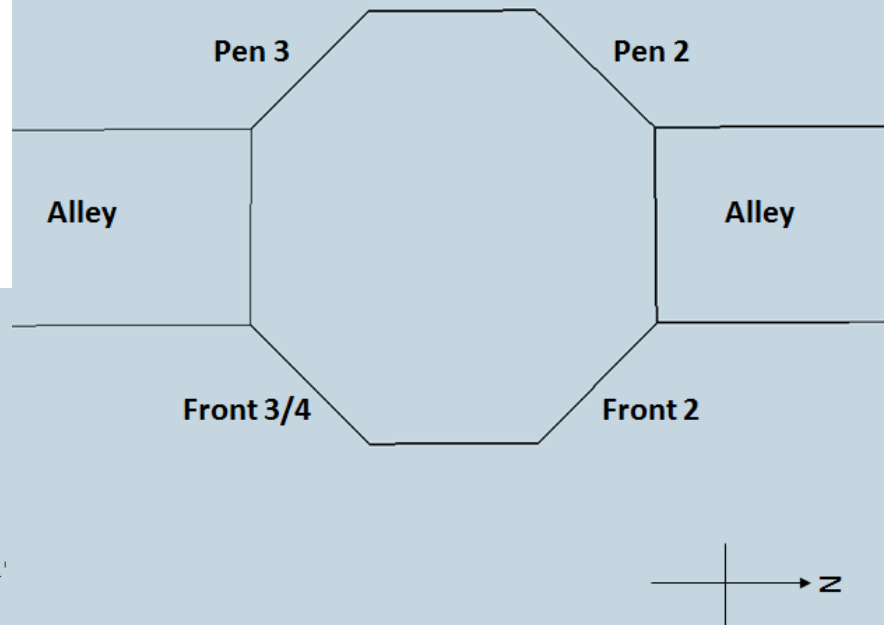
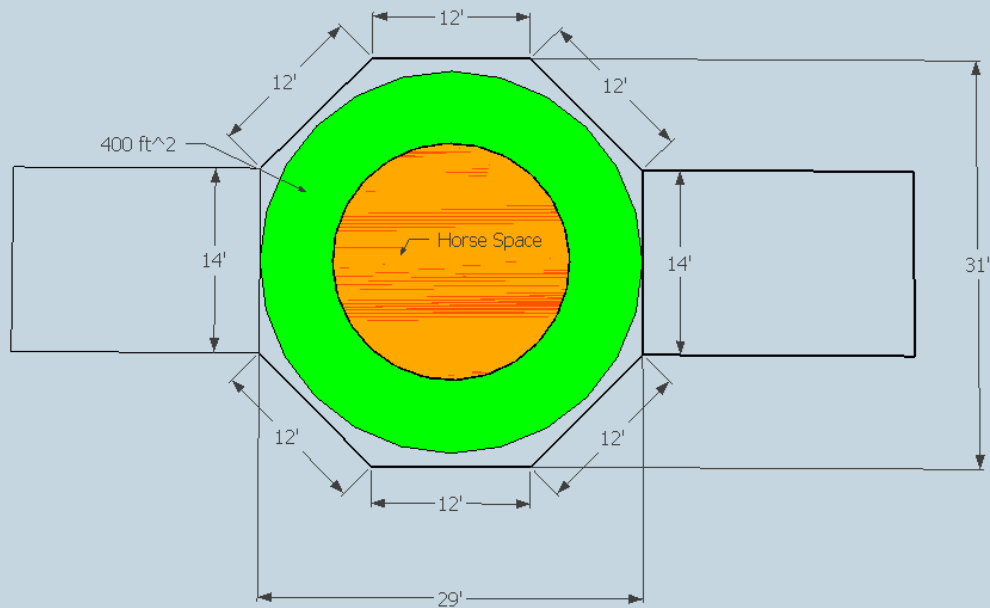
Dimensions: 30" wide x 4' high

Figure 5: Location and description of the mangate on the east side of the tub.



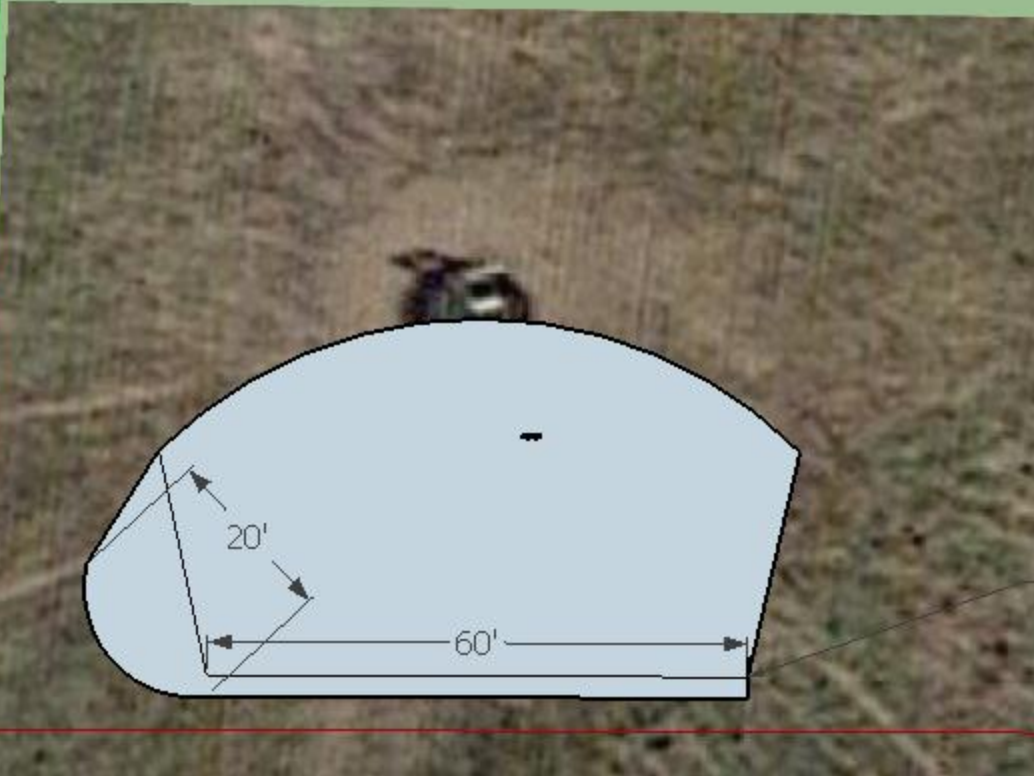












Restraint chute could be placed here, or the system could be flipped east to west

Questions & Comments



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Handling Facility Checklist

Location: _____ Date completed: _____ Initials: _____

Restraint Equipment	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is the headgate tested and set for the cattle you need to handle (e.g. calves, cows, horned)?				
Are sharp edges covered and broken pieces replaced (e.g. nails, bolts, wire, wood)?				
Is there proper footing at the exit of the headgate (e.g. secure rubber mat, deep sand, level and dry ground)?				
Is there a surface designated near the headgate for recordkeeping and supplies?				
If you have a scale, is it clean and functional?				
Lead-up Alley and Crowd Area	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
If the working alley width is adjustable, is it set to fit the cattle you need to handle (e.g. calves, cows, horned)?				
Are backstops functional and adjusted properly for the height of cattle?				
Are sharp edges covered and broken pieces replaced (e.g. nails, bolts, wire, wood)?				
Is there footing that provides sufficient traction in all weather conditions (e.g. grooved concrete, sand, level and dry ground)?				
Has material been applied to improve traction for cattle if footing is slick?				
Are clips/chains/pins/wires secure to hold panels if using portable paneling?				
Holding Pens	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are gates and latches operational and in good condition?				
Are fences in the holding pens secure?				
Is water available in holding and/or sick pens (if desired by manager)?				
Miscellaneous	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Has material been applied to cover any wet or slick areas people could slip and fall?				
Is there any section of the footing that needs improving or repair (filling holes, leveling uneven areas, patching concrete, etc.)? Answer for each section of the facility.				
Has manure or mud been removed or minimized throughout the facility?				
Have shadows or sunspots been adjusted to maintain smooth cattle flow?				
Are all lights functional and/or skylights clean?				
Are the garbage and sharps disposal containers available with enough capacity for the day's tasks?				
Is a first aid kit available and easily accessible during an emergency?				
Can all workers use low-stress handling techniques to move cattle calmly?				
Do all workers understand the safety risks associated with gates?				
Can all workers safely use backstops and chute/headgate?				

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Can all workers safely use backstops and chute/headgate?				
Do workers giving injections understand how to do so safely and in the correct area (following BQA guidelines)?				
Are emergency contact numbers clearly posted?				

Lighting/Footing
Safety

Restraint/chute
Lead-up alley
Crowding area
Holding pens
Person areas