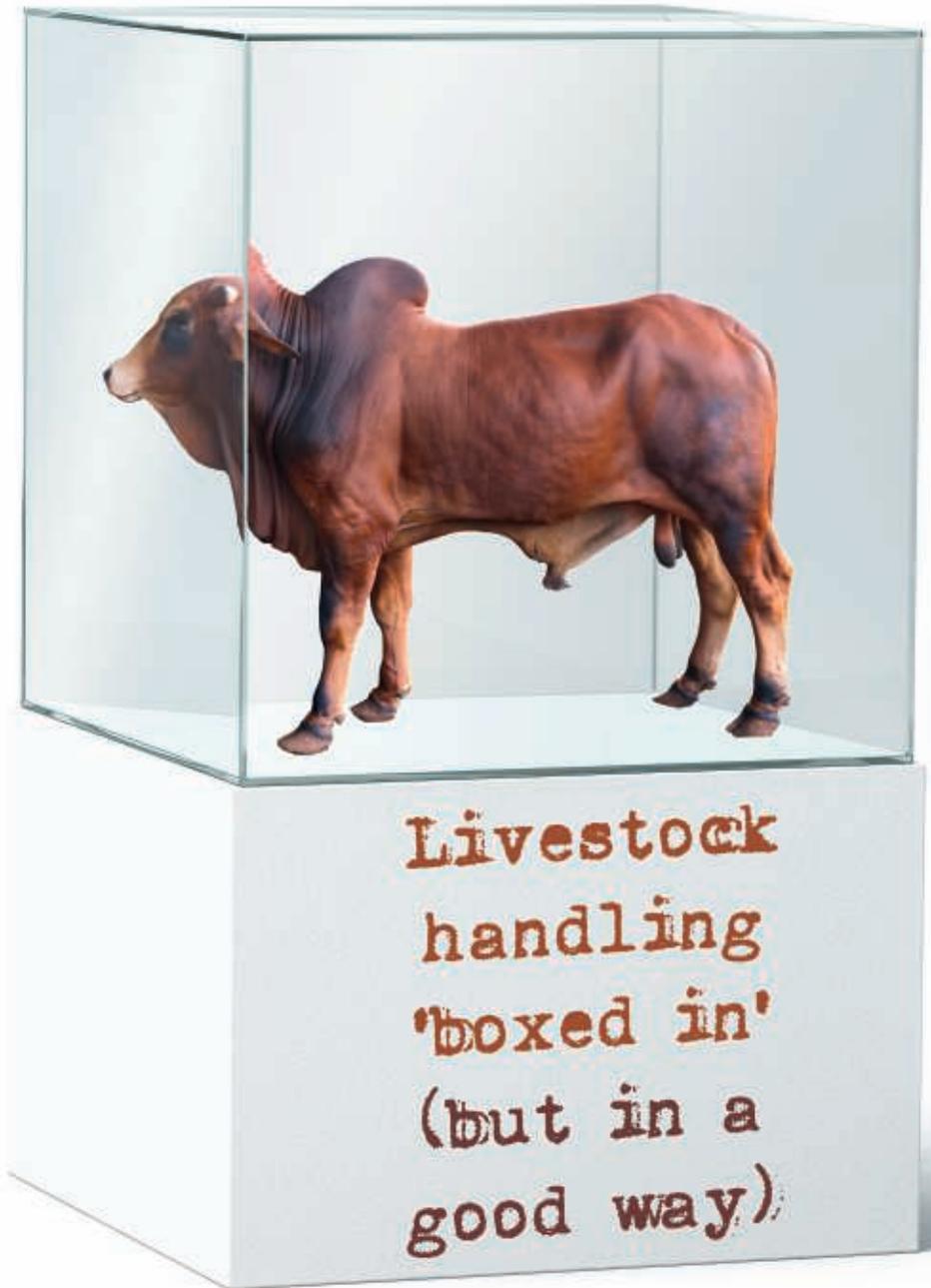




by Ashley Grimsell



The Bud Box concept is anything but new, but it has recently started trending among American beef producers again – and for good reason.

THE BUD BOX was developed and named after world-renowned stockman, Bud Williams, who taught low-stress livestock handling concepts all over America. The Bud Box makes use of the animal's instincts to get them going where you want to, with minimal stress.

How does the Bud Box work?

Firstly, we need to change the way we think. We need not declare in public the backflips our intestines make the moment someone says we must be inside the camp when trying to drive cattle into the crush. However, the mindshift we need to make for the Bud Box to work efficiently is to be present inside the box.

Secondly, it is important to remember that the Bud Box does not serve as a holding camp; it merely eases the flow of animals through a processing or loading facility. Thus, only allow the number of animals that the crush can hold to enter the Bud Box. For example, do not herd 20 cattle into the Bud Box if you can only fit 10 cattle into the crush section.

The third aspect is that only one well-trained handler should be working in the Bud Box so that the cattle focus on this person only. Individuals carrying out the processing or loading procedures should remain at the front (neck-clamp section) of the crush.

Design of the Bud Box

Cattle should move into the Bud Box with ease – so the sides of the box should not consist of solid panels. Having open sides allows for sufficient light and creates the perception that the box is open. Avoid using dead ends or curves in the design to prevent potential blockages.

Bud Williams recommends the following dimensions: The box should be between 3,7 m and 4,2 m wide, and between 6 m and 9 m long. The entry gate and the side directly opposite to the crush entrance (indicated in green on the diagram) could be solid.

Modifications

The actual measurements are not set in stone and will be influenced by the number of animals you wish to move and the capacity of the crush. However, the dimensions should remain relative to one another. A box that is too long for the cattle group size may mean that the handler will need to walk too deep into it before initiating movement or flow towards the crush. The width of the Bud Box can be slightly larger than the alley that leads into it, creating the perception of a bigger, more open space. This will result in faster movement of cattle. For example, having an alley that is about 3 m wide with a box width of around 4 m will work well.

Figure 1 The Bud Box system

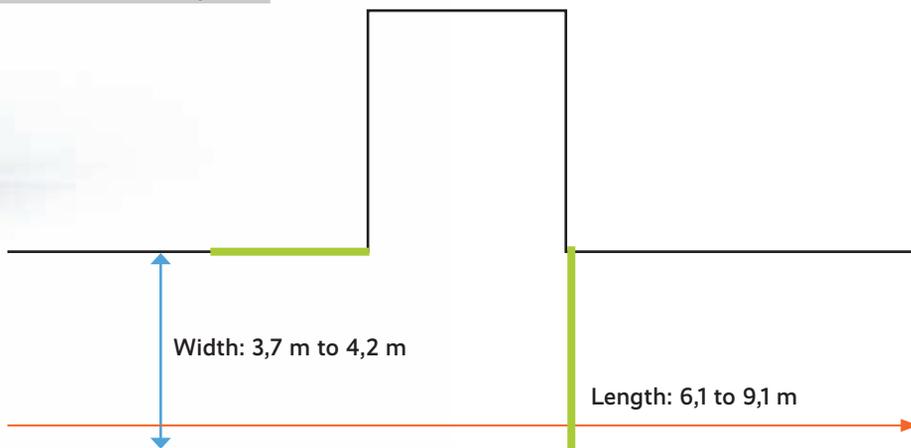
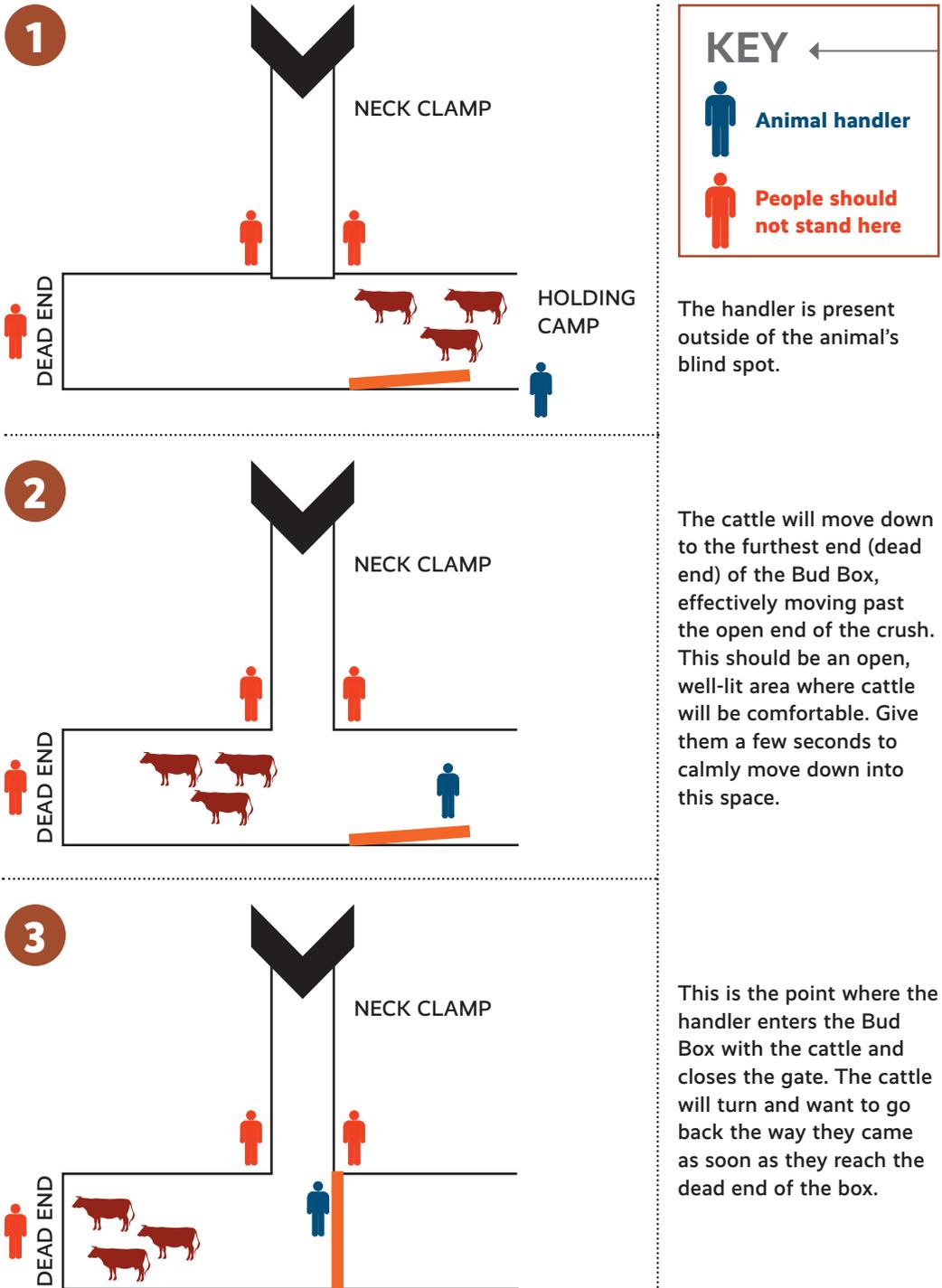
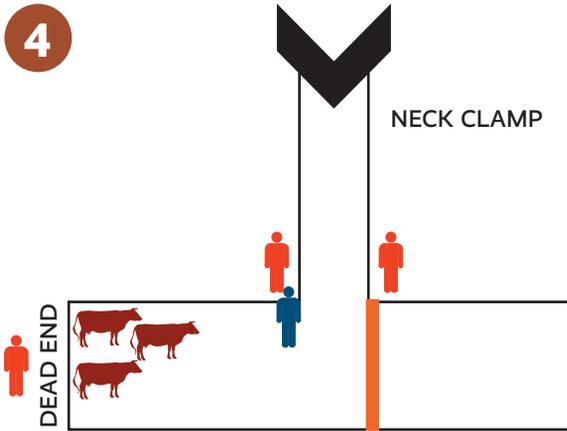




Figure 2 Take it step by step

(Source: Steps diagrams modified and adapted from Michelle Proctor, University of Missouri).

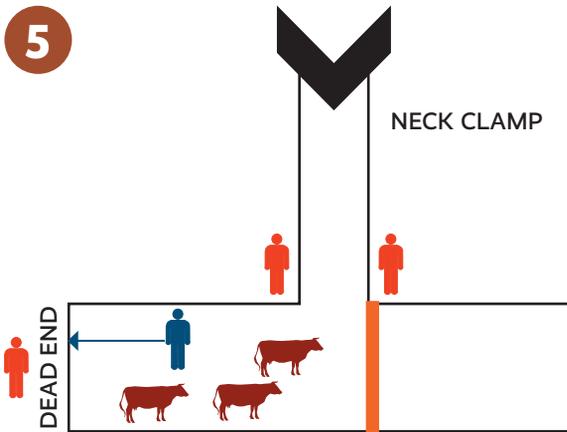




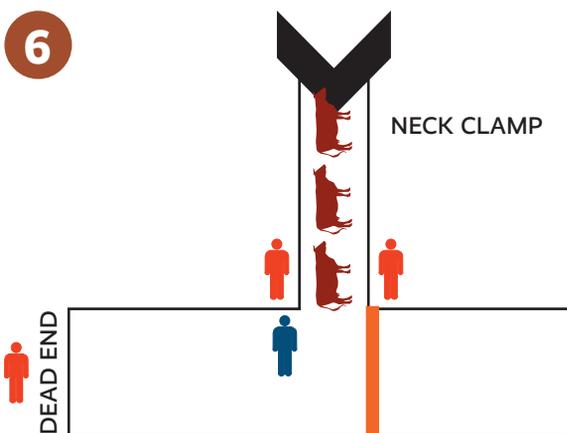
The handler moves calmly to the one open end of the crush, as indicated in the diagram.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Do not scream and shout.
- Do not make use of bags or other objects during the herding process.
- Avoid sudden movements.
- Do not have people standing at the entrance or around the crush section.



The handler moves toward the dead end of the Bud Box in a straight line, while keeping an eye on the cattle. Their instinct will drive them in the opposite direction of the handler and away from the dead end. As a result, the cattle move into a region where there is an 'escape route' (the crush). If one or more cattle turn and head back toward the dead-end point, take a step back, pause for a moment, and then move in the same direction again.



Animals will move into the crush.

A final note

This article has described the Bud Box concept in terms of cattle handling, but don't fret, this concept has been successfully implemented in sheep farming operations as well. Safe handling is happy handling! [®]