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A SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE COW-BAIL

By L. C. SNOOK, D.Sc., B.Sc. (Agric.), Animal Nutrition Officer

While visiting the property of Mr. R. Burke, Cowaramup, I saw in use a type of cow-bail which made an immediate appeal because of its simplicity, effectiveness and ease of working. Mr. Burke is obviously skilled at setting up practical time-saving devices but there seems to be no reason why other dairy farmers should not make use of the principle he employed.

Construction is straightforward, and even in these days of material shortages, the timber required is available on most dairy farms. The bail is particularly adapted for use either in milking sheds or in a crush where it would be particularly useful to hold cattle for dehorning or other operations.

The diagram will explain the setup. The moving upright (A) is held in the open position (shown by dotted lines) by a rope passing through a hole in the top of the upright, thence over a suitably-placed pulley to a position in rear of the animal where it is hooked on a convenient bolt or peg. This rope is released when the cow enters the bail, permitting the upright to fall by its own weight to the position shown in the sketch. It falls in a flash and holds the animal without any need for the worker to move forward in order to remove and replace the pin generally used in the orthodox bail.

The animal cannot force the upright back because the crosspieces (F1) and (F2) are allowed to drop about one inch below the horizontal at the ends which are attached to the upright (A). The animal in the bail can only push sideways and no amount of lateral pressure will budge the bar. As soon as the worker pulls the rope, however, the bail opens easily and almost automatically. In no case did I see a cow lift the bar sufficiently to allow the bail to open. When dehorning, or handling unruly cattle a locking-pin could be used if desired by putting it through the hole in the top crossbar (B).

The important feature of the bail is the rubber-covered pin near the foot of the moveable upright. The position of this pin is vitally important as it determines the position of the crossbars (F1) and (F2) when they come to rest in the closed position. As previously mentioned, the ends of the crossbars which are attached to the moveable upright should be about an inch lower than the other ends. Old milking tube rubber was used to cover the pin at both sides in order to muffle the noise of the bail dropping into position.

The main advantage of this bail is that shutting and opening is all done from a position behind the animal. This brings about a saving in time and avoids all the annoyance which inevitably occurs when a cow withdraws its head just as the dairyman moves forward to adjust the commonly-used falling bar and pin.

The main uprights (H1) and (H2) may be constructed from bush timber or any suitable sawn timber which is available. The main crossbars (B) and (C) are checked into the uprights and are each duplicated by a similar bar at the back.
of the main upright. They also should be checked in to leave a space of about two inches between each set of bars so that the moveable upright (A) can slide up and down freely. A space of 19 inches is left between the main uprights, (H1) and (H2), and the crossbars (B) and (C) are 39 inches apart. With the moveable upright in the closed position there is a space of eight inches between it and (H2). The moveable crossbars (F1) and (F2) should have a space of 10 inches between the bolt-holes, and (F1) should be about 12 inches down from the crossbar (B) so that it does not foul the top bar when the upright is raised to the open position.

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