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A CRUSH FOR THE TUBERCULIN TESTING OF CATTLE

By A. RIPPER

ALWAYS a useful asset on any farm where livestock are kept, a strongly-constructed crush is essential where tuberculin testing makes it necessary to deal with dry stock, bulls and young animals that have not been previously handled. The crush described in this article was specially designed for tuberculin testing, but will serve equally well for vaccinating, branding, de-horning—in fact for any operation where restraint is necessary.

The main features of this crush are:

1. An end bail (E) in which the head of the beast is held firmly while the test is being applied.
2. An exit gate (D) through which the animal passes out of the crush after release from the bail.
3. A block-gate (B) which swings inwards, completely blocking the race against the oncoming cattle to allow sufficient space for the operator to enter the crush at the rear of the beast held in the bail, in order to make an injection of tuberculin into one of the skin folds at the base of the tail.

When the block gate is swung across the race, there should be a distance of not less than 8ft. between it and the bail. This will provide sufficient length to accommodate the largest beast, and at the same time leave adequate space behind the animal to enable the operator to carry out the test.

The structure need not be elaborate, but must be strongly constructed. Uprights should be of heavy timber sunk deeply into the ground and the rails should be strong enough to hold even a struggling animal safely. No details of timber sizes, hinges, catches or bail design have been included since it is expected that the majority of farmers will have their own ideas and preferences and will make use of material already available on the property. Where sawn timber is not available, bush timber may be used successfully.

The width of the crush and race is important and they should not be wider than 2ft. 3in. This measurement is sufficient to allow large dairy cows to pass through, but will prevent small stock from turning in the race when they are not tightly crushed. The 2ft. 3in. is the inside measurement, all rails being recessed into the inner portions of the uprights so that there are no projecting corners or protruding bolts which could injure the cattle.

The exit gate (D) can be from three to five feet wide according to preference and according to the material on hand. Its width will influence the width of the panel (C) which is designed to give the added length between the bail (E) and the block gate (B)—together they should give about 8ft. of standing room for the beast in the bail.

The end bail which actually holds the animal may be constructed to the owner's own design, but should preferably be a self-locking bail that is readily adjustable to animals of different sizes.

The gate-posts should be reinforced by tie-beams across the top (F) in order to prevent the gate from sagging and to guard against the race spreading under pressure from the stock.

The race (G) should be 5ft. in height with 9in. between the rails. The length of the race will vary with individual requirements but a length of about 20ft. will be found...
suitable for the average dairy herd. Do not make the inside width greater than 2ft. 3in., and make certain that there are no projecting bolts or rail corners.

The diagram of the general layout suggested shows a forcing-pen for filling the race. This is closed by a large gate (J) from the holding yard (K).