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A CRUSH FOR TUBERCULIN TESTING OF CATTLE

By A. L. RIPPER, Stock Inspector

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 or any operation where restraint is necessary.

This design, reprinted from an earlier issue of the Journal of Agriculture, could be useful for many butterfat farmers whose herds are now being tuberculin tested for the first time. The crush can be easily constructed on the farm.

The main features of the 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 8 ft. between it and the bail. This will provide sufficient length to accommodate the largest beast, and 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 most farmers will have their own preferences and will make use of material already available on the property. Where sawn timber is not available, bush timber may be used.

The width of the crush and race is important; they should not be wider than 2 ft. 3 in. 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 2 ft. 3 in. 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 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 8 ft. 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 5 ft. high with 9 in. between the rails. The length of the race will vary with individual requirements but a length of about 20 ft. should be
suitable for the average dairy herd. Do not make the inside width greater than 2 ft. 3 in., 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.