



## **DESENHO FUNCIONAL E UTILIZAÇÃO DE CERCAS E INSTALAÇÕES DE MANEIO EM EXPLORAÇÕES DE BOVINOS DE CARNE**

*Ron Gill, Texas A&M University, EUA*

Designing facilities or fences that improve the function and utility of these investments require an understanding of the behavioral principles of cattle. Handling facilities should be designed in a manner that cattle can understand what is being asked of them and also the layout should facilitate handlers being positioned in the correct place and able to move around the animals as needed to establish and maintain flow through the handling facility.

Construction of facilities that are ideal may not always be feasible and adjustments on handler position may be required to facilitate fluid movement through the facility. Handlers need to remember that cattle want and need to see them, which requires modifications in the way stock are handled. Working more from the front of the animal to draw their attention and focus to the area you want them to go and pressuring from the side to establish movement and flow.

When constructing handling facilities it is important to remember that cattle will move much easier toward what they perceive to be an opening or at least a well-lit area. Many designs have incorporated solid sides through out the facility to eliminate distractions. This has lead to cattle balking as they are moved toward a covered fence where they do not easily see a way out.

Solid sides can be valuable but should be used strategically within the design of handling facilities. As important is the use of natural or artificial light to improve cattle's ability to determine a way out or through the handling facility.

The greatest impediment to establishing and maintaining flow through a facility is usually people. Standing in the wrong place or pressuring from the wrong angle or simply not moving far enough away to release pressure. The best designed handling facilities will not work if used incorrectly.

Fence design is normally dictated by the amount of pressure cattle and or handlers will put on the fences. Fences in paddock areas can be constructed out of many different materials. The key component of any fence design is the construction of the corners that serve as the anchor. Without properly designed corners no fence material will yield satisfactory results.

As the stock density within a paddock or corral increases the materials needed for safely constructing fences will change. Also affecting type of material needed is the handling skills of the people working the cattle. The quieter cattle are handled the less rigid facilities are required to be. However, cattle have a large body mass and construction materials in more confined areas need to be able to withstand significant pressure without breaking.

Facilities and fences are the safety barrier between people and cattle. As such they need to be constructed with care and skill to prevent injuries to people or cattle regardless of how they are handled in the process.