

Using equipment poorly suited to the job can result in injury to both man and animals—time and money wasted.

The squeeze chute is a case in point. There are many types available on the market. The problem lies in the selection of the best one suited for the individual operation.

#### Headgate type

One consideration in choosing a chute is the headgate type, with a choice between the self-catching headgate, the scissors stanchion, full-opening stanchion or positive type headgate.

The self-catching type has several advantages. It opens wide for easy exit of large cattle, and it will not normally choke an animal. One person can catch and handle cattle with the self-catcher, and its operation requires little physical strength. However, this type is not recommended for horned cattle. Also, careful maintenance and adjustment are extremely important.

Self-catchers work well for operators who handle cattle frequently and are good for use in A.I. work. They are not usually recommended for handling wild cattle, because cattle can injure themselves when they run into the headgate, hitting their shoulders on the self-catcher.

The scissors-type stanchion, where the headgate consists of two halves pivoted at the bottom, operates quickly. Cattle are less likely to balk while entering or leaving the chute. This type is less likely to choke the animal than a positive type headgate and it does work well with wild cattle. However, cattle can catch their front legs between the two halves of the gate and be injured. Extremely large cattle may have trouble exiting, and operation of the scissors stanchion does require strength. The scissors type works well in large commercial operations and is easily maintained.

#### Stanchion Types

Both self-catchers and scissors stanchion headgates are manufactured with different types of neck bars.

Straight bars almost never choke cattle and work well in chutes used for A.I. and pregnancy testing. However, cattle can move their heads up and down, so the straight bar is not recommended for dehorning or other procedures where greater head restraint is necessary.

The curved-bar stanchion forms an opening for the animal's head and works well for general cattle handling. It does restrict head movement more than the straight bar, but it is also more likely to choke.

The positive-type headgate locks around the animal's neck like a stock. It holds the head very still, works well with horned cattle and can control very wild cattle. However, it is more likely to choke an animal than either of the other types. Because of this, it is not recommended for chutes used for A.I. or pregnancy testing,

# Select Equipment With Care

*The use of well-designed equipment in any cattle operation is a matter of common sense.*

by Temple Grandin

since the cow may be choking while the handler is working at the back of the chute.

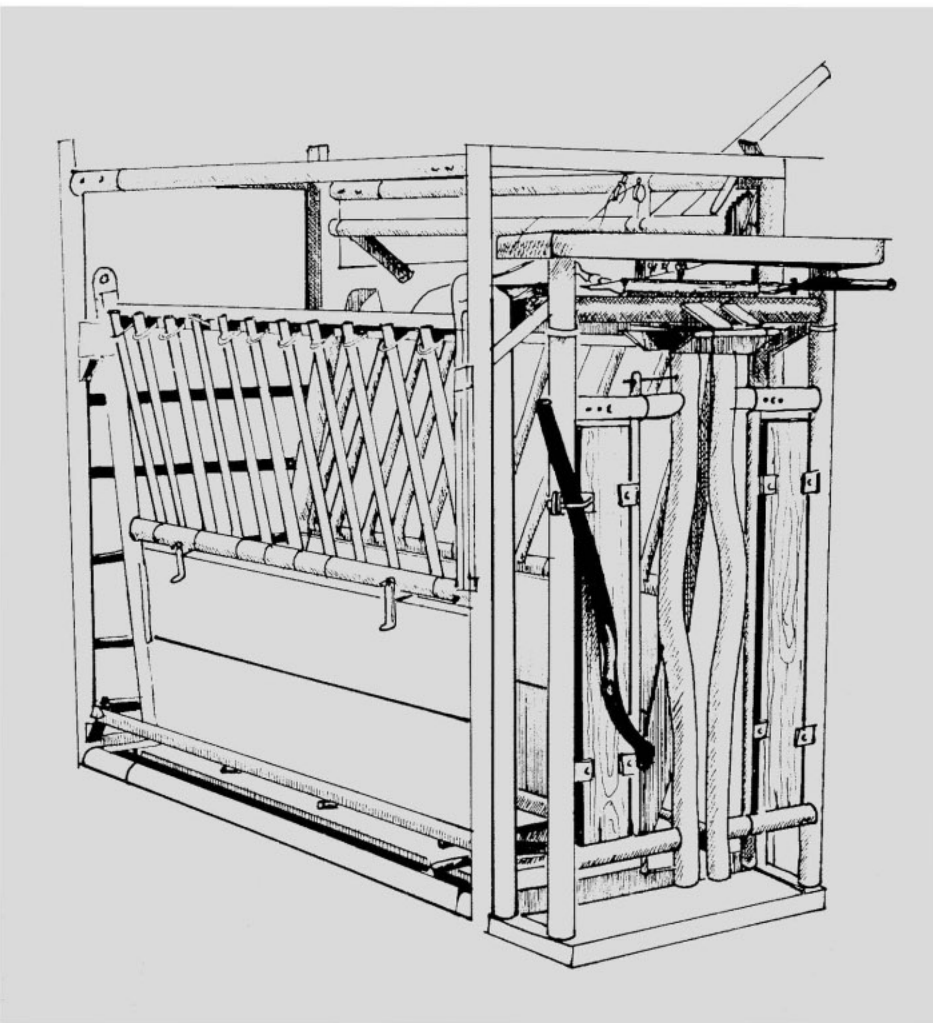
#### Squeeze Chutes

The best squeeze chutes are those that squeeze evenly from both sides, enabling the animal to stand balanced, supported by the V shape. Many manufacturers have chutes on which just one side moves. These are cheaper to build but not so desirable as chutes with two movable sides.

Any problems with choking in these chutes can be minimized with proper ad-

justment of the space at the bottom. The floor between the movable sides should measure 6 inches for calves weighing 250-400 lb., 8 inches for those weighing 600-800 lb., 12 inches for mother cows and fed steers, and 14-16 inches for larger bulls.

There are two types of latches used to hold the squeeze and the headgate. The safest type, although it is noisy, is the ratchet. This type locks firmly in a notch. The friction latch, consisting of a steel rod binding against a metal plate, is quiet but can be



very dangerous. Unless it is well maintained, the friction latch can slip and hit the handler or release the animal.

With these things in mind, the information below can be used as a guide for selecting the chute best suited to the needs of a particular operation.

**BIG VALLEY by Valley Sales Co., Lexington, Neb. 68850**

Headgate—Self-catcher with curved stanchion.

Squeeze—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

Operator Safety—Good. All overhead controls.

Animal Safety—Good except that square stanchion bars are more likely to hurt animals' shoulders.

Latches—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Medium and light duty models.

**FOR-MOST by For-Most, Inc., Box 332, Hawarden, Iowa 51023**

Headgate—Self-catcher or full-opening

stanchion. Full-opening stanchion slides all the way open at both top and bottom. Does not have pivot points at the bottom like the scissors stanchion. Stanchion opens up to the full width of the chute, making it easier for large cattle to exit. Must be kept clean and greased.

Squeeze—Has "body squeeze" consisting of a small panel that crowds the animal. Recommended for gentle cattle only. Front exit only.

Operator Safety—All overhead controls.

Animal Safety—Good except on the full-opening stanchion gate type. Animals have to step over a 6-inch step to exit. Has straight bar stanchion on both types of headgates.

Latches—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Light to medium duty.

**HANDI-KLASP by Handi-Klasp Co., 1600 West James St., Webster City, Iowa 50595**

Headgate—Full-opening type (see For-

Most), straight bars.

Squeeze—Both sides squeeze. Front and two side exits.

Operator Safety—All overhead controls.

Animal Safety—Good except that animal has to step over a 6-inch step when it exits.

Latch—Friction type.

\*Overall Construction—Light to medium duty.

**PEARSON by Pearson Livestock Equipment, 90 Court St., Thedford, Neb. 69166**

Headgate—Self-catcher with straight-bar stanchion.

Squeeze—Closes in on both sides but is not pivoted at the bottom. Squeeze opens up to the full width of the chute at both the top and the bottom. Front exit only.

Operator Safety—Good.

Animal Safety—Very good. Recommended for A.I. and pregnancy testing. Not recommended for wild cattle.

\*Overall Construction—Medium duty. Requires careful maintenance of the headgate cables.

**PLAINSMAN by Plains Mfg. Co., Box 611, Sidney, Neb. 69162**

Headgate—Self-catcher with a curved-bar stanchion.

Squeeze—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

Operator Safety—Very good. All overhead controls.

Animal Safety—Good.

Latches—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Heavy duty.

**POWDER RIVER by Powder River, Box 300, 388 East, 900 South, Provo, Utah 84601**

Headgate—Scissors stanchion, curved-bar stanchion.

Squeeze—Both sides squeeze. Front exit only.

Operator Safety—Poor. If a ratchet slips, the operator can be severely injured by the protruding lever arms. Requires strength to operate.

Animal Safety—Good. Entire side can be released to save a downed animal.

Latches—Ratchet type.

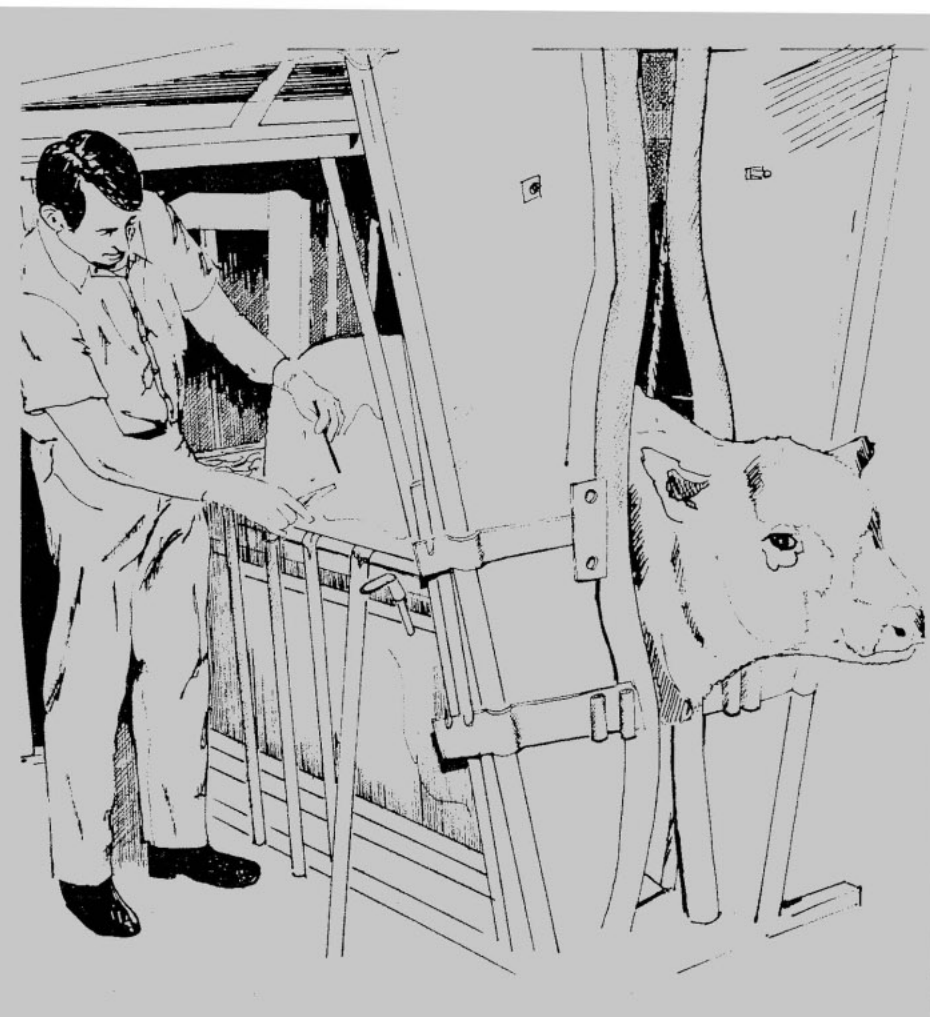
\*Overall Construction—Heavy duty and light duty models. Ratchet latches must be carefully maintained for safety. Will work well with wild cattle.

**PREIFERT by Preifert Mfg. Co., Pittsburg Hwy., Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455**

Headgate—Full-opening stanchion. Straight stanchion bars.

Squeeze—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

Operator Safety—No protruding levers,



but headgate control could be hazardous if released accidentally.

**Animal Safety**—Good. Preifert has eliminated the big step that For-Most and Handi-Klasp have at the bottom of their full-opening stanchions.

**Latches**—Friction type.

\*Overall Construction—Light to medium duty.

**SILVER KING** by Heldenbrand & Son Mfg. Co., Box 82367, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73108

**Headgate**—Combination positive and stanchion type. Very complex, difficult to operate. Plain positive type also available.

**Squeeze**—Both sides squeeze. Front and side exit.

**Operator Safety**—One protruding lever arm from the headgate. Reasonably safe if maintained.

**Animal Safety**—Silver King is the only positive headgate chute with a quick release feature to save a choking animal. Recommended for wild cattle or horned cattle. Plain positive headgate rather than the combination stanchion recommended.

**Latches**—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Medium to heavy duty.

**TECO** by Thompson & Gill, Inc., Box 720, Madera, Calif. 93637

**Headgate**—Positive type.

**Squeeze**—Both sides squeeze. Front exit only.

**Operator Safety**—One protruding lever arm from the headgate. Reasonably safe if latches are maintained and safety chain is always attached. Can be operated easily by a small person.

**Animal Safety**—Animal must be carefully watched for choking.

**Latches**—Ratchet type, very sturdy.

\*Overall Construction—Heavy duty. Recommended for heavy commercial use. Works well with wild or horned cattle.

**A.E. THORSON & SONS** by A.E. Thorson & Sons Mfg., 1685 Northeast East Side Hwy., Corvallis, Mont. 59828

**Headgate**—Scissors stanchion or self-catcher. Both have straight stanchion bars.

**Squeeze**—Both sides squeeze. Front and side exit.

**Operator Safety**—Very good. All overhead controls.

**Animal Safety**—Very good.

**Latches**—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Medium and heavy duty models.

**WESTGUARD** by Westguard Products, P.O. Box 1809, Ft. Collins, Colo. 80522

**Headgate**—Self-catcher with straight-bar stanchion.

**Squeeze**—Both sides squeeze. Front and two side exits. Squeeze difficult to operate.

**Operator Safety**—Good. All overhead controls.

\*Overall Construction—Light to medium duty.

**W&W** by W&W Mfg. Co., Box 728, Dodge City, Kan. 67801

**Headgate**—Self-catcher or positive type.

**Squeeze**—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

**Operator Safety**—One protruding lever to operate squeeze, but it is located so it is unlikely to hit the operator if suddenly released.

**Animal Safety**—Self-catcher type has large gap between headgate and squeeze where animal can stick head or feet out. Straight-bar stanchion. Positive type can choke. More likely to do so than a Teco or a Silver King.

**Latches**—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Heavy duty.

Farnam Catalog, Omaha, Neb., features two chutes:

**FILSON MFG.**, 102-108 South Broadway, Protection, Kan. 67127

**Headgate**—Positive or self-catcher.

**Squeeze**—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

**Operator Safety**—One protruding lever to operate headgate.

**Animal Safety**—Must be carefully watched for choking in the positive type headgate.

**Latches**—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Light and medium duty.

**MY-D-HAND-D**, 106 Cottonwood, Dodge City, Kan. 67801

**Headgate**—Self-catcher or positive type.

**Squeeze**—One-sided squeeze. Front and side exit.

**Operator Safety**—Good on chutes equipped with self-catcher. One protruding lever on positive headgate chutes. Squeeze control overhead.

**Animal Safety**—Self-catcher can choke. Positive type, watch for choking. Has headgate like Teco.

**Latches**—Ratchet type.

\*Overall Construction—Light and medium duty.

\*Light Duty—Suitable for an operation where a chute is used just a few times each year.

\*Medium Duty—Suitable for most ranch operations unless wild cattle are handled.

\*Heavy Duty—Wild cattle, auctions, feedlots and commercial use.

Temple Grandin of Grandin Livestock Handling Systems, Tempe, Ariz., is a consultant and designer of livestock facilities.

