

Starting up and driving cows and calves



What do you **aim** to achieve?
Arriving at your destination with cows and calves 'mothered up' makes a huge difference to how they will go in the yard.
It begins at the very beginning.... In fact it begins with how you get out of bed that particular morning, with the **attitude you bring**, and while working animals always treat it as opportunity to teach them something good.

The goal is always to create good movement, moving off or starting the mob up is one of the most important times and can be done easily if done correctly.

First start by only riding flat angles, and it is important NOT make excessive noise in order to start the mob up, just keep ridding flat angles from side to side and in some time you will notice the mob start shifting off. This may take some time and depends on the size of the mob and age of calves.



It is important to keep riding from side to side, however now you can start to angle in more to keep up with and create movement.

In a short time from starting to move off you will notice cows start turning back to look for calves, don't run them off. If you notice a cow coming back looking for a calf you **MUST ride away or go on by**, to let her find her calf. It is very important to let the cow do this and give her the time to 'pick her calf up'.

It is better to take the time to get the mob mothered up close to where they were last mothered, otherwise they may start trying to beat you back to that place. It is very



important that the time is taken in the first instance to *teach* cows and calves to look for each other, and then they will learn to stay together if allowed.

If done **incorrectly** cows learn to accept that they can't walk with their calves. If you prevent a cow from picking up her calf any more than a few times by turning her away, its' more than likely that she will give up, head off up the front and not come back. Then the calves just keep building up at the back of the mob.

If you are moving longer distances, when you notice an excessive number of calves starting to accumulate at the back of the mob, it is important to block the mob up and let everything 'mother up', this may take a few minutes or even an hour depending on the circumstances and size of the herd.

When everything is going OK only have one or two people at the back of the mob, and those people **MUST** Zig-Zag from side to side in straight lines. Remember you can only go at the pace of the slowest animal, so pushing them at a pace faster than they can keep up for a long period of time will only make you go slower.

Paying attention when driving animals will teach you a lot about what they need. Watch them carefully and they will tell you where they want you to be.



Have fun.

Jim Lindsay.

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