

Grazing pastures are not petting zoos!

Your guide to correct behaviour when encountering grazing animals



Correctly assess the behaviour of grazing animals

Hikers are recommended to exercise caution when encountering grazing animals. In order to avoid potentially dangerous situations, certain guidelines should be followed and one should be aware of common behavioural patterns of grazing animals.

Herds of cattle can be divided into three categories:

Herds of suckler cows

These herds consist of dams (mother cows) and their calves. Young animals are inherently curious, but beware: dams will instinctively protect their young. Particular caution must be exercised if adult males (bulls) are amongst the herd.

Herds of young animals

These younger animals are especially high spirited, lively and inquisitive. Making contact can quickly lead to uncontrolled movements.

Herds of cows

These herds consist of cows that are milked regularly. They are, therefore, accustomed to regular contact with humans.

Threatening behaviour by cattle

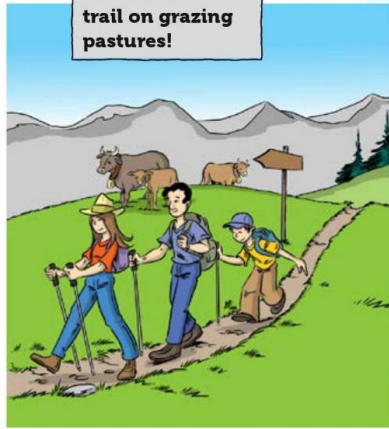
In the event of an encounter, most cows will initially stand still and focus on their objective.

They raise and lower their head, go down on bended knee and sniff (= smell intensely, as cattle have relatively poor eyesight). The animals then usually take a few, often slow, steps towards their goal, before setting off at a faster pace.

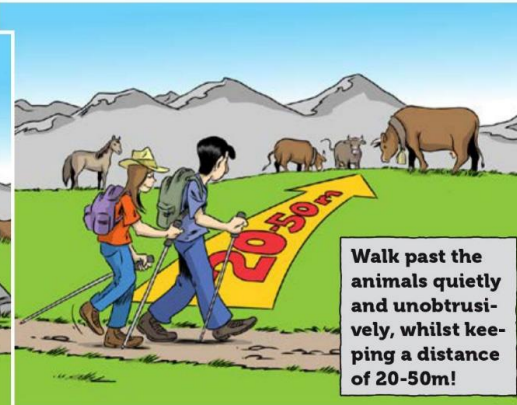
RECOMMENDATIONS on how best to avoid conflicts

- Unless it cannot be avoided, try not to get too close to grazing cattle. In particular, do not feed nor stroke young calves! Animals may feel irritated by hikers and misinterpret their actions, resulting in them feeling threatened.
- If a herd seems restless or becomes fixated on a hiker; keep your distance! In this situation, consider making a detour!
- Keep your dog on a leash and make sure it doesn't get too close to the herd or try to chase them. Dogs are considered to be potential enemies, especially for young animals, and are therefore often attacked by dams. Take your dog off the lead if it seems a cow is going to attack it. Unlike humans, dogs can run fast enough to evade confrontation. This will also divert the cow's attention from the dog owner, so he or she can leave the danger zone.
- If a dangerous situation nevertheless arises: Keep calm and do not run away! Only **in an absolute emergency** should you attempt to deliver a well aimed blow with your hiking pole to the cow's nose. Otherwise, you should slowly and steadily leave the danger zone, without turning your back on the animals. This is the only correct way to behave in the event of a dangerous encounter.

Do not leave the marked trail on grazing pastures!

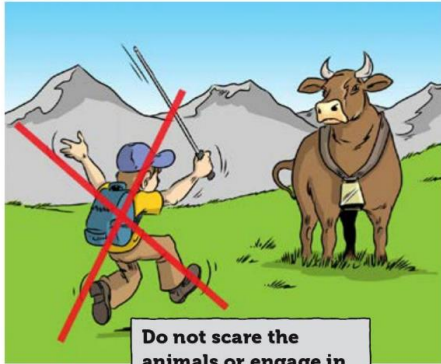


Keep dogs under control and on a leash.



Walk past the animals quietly and unobtrusively, whilst keeping a distance of 20-50m!

Keep an eye out for threatening behaviour by the animals: if they lower their head, paw the ground, roar or snort.



Do not scare the animals or engage in direct eye contact!

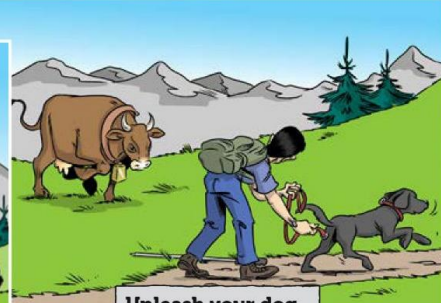
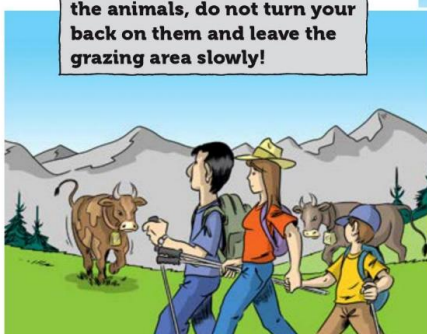


Leave the animals in peace and don't touch them. Under no circumstances should you stroke the calves!



Do not wiggle or wave your hiking poles. Only in an absolute emergency, should a well placed blow be delivered to the cow's nose!

Stay calm when approaching the animals, do not turn your back on them and leave the grazing area slowly!



Unleash your dog immediately if it seems an animal intends to attack!

