

## Pressure Point Pressure

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When you apply pressure in reference to Stockmanship, there are different responses. The direction of your applied movement as well as the specific *pressure point* that your movement is directed at. These both will determine the response. *Pressure Points* are NOT about physical contact, but rather your movement and position in relation to the stock. Your presence is the *pressure* that generates a response that creates a reaction of movement from the stock.

Will each reaction be responded to consistently? The answer is no. The response will be a reaction to the *perceived pressure*. The perception is from the animal who is receiving the pressure. The animal's perception weighs heavily on whether there is fear, or the speed in which the pressure is presented. Many who work on Stockmanship skills, believe that *slowing down* is low stress Stockmanship.

*Slowing down* doesn't always promote calmness. I believe, as with *stock dogs* that present their position or pressure with a lot of eye contact, the stock's perception is that they're being stalked. Untrained stock will move away from such pressure and, in actuality, it's the first step in the *chase sequence* from *predatory pressures*.

Stock that have already encountered a *predator's pressures*, will have been exposed to *fear* and will respond with *fear's* reaction of *flight or fight*, and often try to fight the *stock-dogs*. Moving forward through this established pre-conditioning from predators takes more effort, but a quick moving dog will help calm the unsettled stock, rather than a dog that moves stealthier.

This same perceived stalking pressure can also be connected to other things such as the stockmen themselves or ATV's or a horse and rider. This is from the stock's perspective a slow *perceived pressure*, such as a lot of eye contact and slow movement. A simple change of direction, going the other way is needed to help settle the stock. We often don't realize we present predatory pressures ourselves, but something as simple as a dark pair of sunglasses may present an illusion of predatory eye contact with the stock.

Slow indirect movement outside of the direct flight zone is also a predatory skill. *Predatory Desensitization* is one of the predator's skills to infiltrate the herd posture. This is the interaction that accounts for predators being seen walking through groups of cattle. This *desensitizing action* is a response to *indirect pressure* in which the stock accept the predators and the predators are allowed within the stock's instinctual flight zone. Understanding this predatory skill allows us as *Stockmen* to use it to settle *spooky* cattle or develop a herd in the open.

The predators achieve the results of the skill *predatory desensitization* by using *indirect pressure*. *Indirect pressure* is the practice of appearing not to be interested in the stock. Such as a coyote hunting for voles or squirrels as his attention seems to be other than the stock. The practice is random movement with occasional direction changes and stops, slowly settling the

stock to become accustomed to the coyotes presence. In a short time they're encroaching well within the stocks flight zone.

The coyotes are, as all predators, simply opportunists, seeking opportunity rather than having specific plans. Predators being allowed within the herd posture to inspect it for possible opportunity is not what I prefer. It's not at all unusual for stock that are not dog broke or accustomed to being worked with *stock dogs* to chase dogs, but allow coyotes to walk through them unchallenged.

If applied prior to working on any *pressure point* pressure, this desensitizing skill will help calm the stock's *perceived pressure* and make the stock's response more consistent. The action of *desensitizing* is also the method used to create the *Standing Solution*. *Desensitizing* removes movement. Although, in the case of *Predator Awareness*, we also encourage seeking the *Defensive Posture of the Herd Group*.

Granted that *slowing down* is often a good practice, but there are times such as working within a confined set of corrals that movement must be kept at a quick pace to accomplish the tasks at hand.

Understanding your actions of presenting pressure in relationship towards specific *pressure points* and the desired reactions, is the objective, whether its *developing the herd* or *creating movement* or training the response of the *Standing Solution* or simply benefiting daily management practices. Whatever the Stockmanship intention, an understanding of these *pressure points* makes the task at hand less challenging.

Another point is rear pressure. Movement created from pushing. I will just say to that point, isn't that just promoting the *chase sequence*?

I understand the question, then how do I move my stock? By developing a herd group and then creating movement and then simply following. By developing a herd posture you develop and promote a group that moves as one.

How often have you seen rear pressure applied and fail? An example would be trying to get reluctant cow's through a gate or into the corrals. The common response is to push or yell harder. This will often result in the cattle not moving, or trying to escape in the opposite direction they are being pushed. Loud rear pressure actually draws the stocks attention towards the rear, inviting the stock to break.

Often this interaction of *calling to* the cattle, is a same skill used when separating the cow from her calf in the corrals, as in the task of *sorting*. In *sorting*, the gate man works on horseback in an open gate only allowing mother cows to pass, while blocking the calves. Done properly the accomplishment has the cows sorted from the calves in a stress free manner.

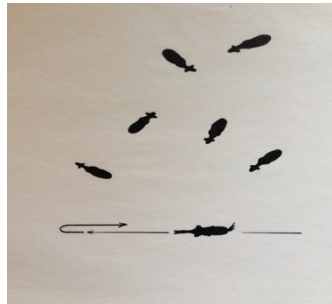
The gate man is working at the lead of the herd, only leaving calves back by blocking their exit and allowing the mother cows to pass.

The pressure for the reluctant cows is presented in the same manor as asking the cows to sort-up. Training cattle to *sort-up* is a low stress skill that if done correctly saves time. The solution of trying to create movement by using harder and louder rear pressure, is just directing the cows to come out as they have already been trained to do. This breaking away with rear pressure is an unintended training event that the cows will repeat, again and again, promoting a spoiled set of cows.

These rear pressure positions, with all the best intentions, promote the predator's interactions with their prey. Promoting a response of the rear pressure engaging flight, which predators will use to their advantage.

So as to the reluctant cows, I would settle the cows with lateral movement at the rear, send someone into the lead and apply a pinch point separation of a dozen or so cows, to develop a lead and create movement, then turn and apply the reverse parallel pressure to get the others to follow.

*Lateral movement to settle stock*



Cattle that are too sensitive, *spooky*, or cattle that are heavy, *gentle*, both set up in favor of a predator's pressure which has the intent of individualization and the *chase sequence*.

By using *predatory desensitization* you can settle *spooky* cattle, and if the cattle are too *gentle*, *pseudo predators* will help develop the *Defensive Posture of the Herd Group*. Both have been described in detail in previous papers.

The flight zone of stock varies from their breed and previous Stockmanship skills that have been applied. The shape and distance of the flight zone also varies in relation to speed and direction and the strength of the pressure being applied.

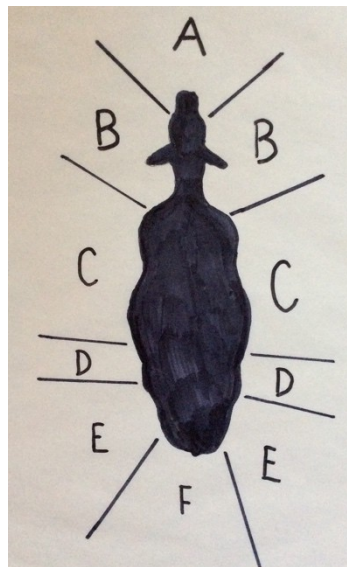
An example might be a content bred cow standing in a pasture. Her flight zone would be a 360 degree circle. When you approach you would generate movement away from your position. This would be the simplest of the flight zone explanations.



A simple flight zone

As you progress in understanding a flight zone you'll soon realize that the flight zone reshapes itself depending on the speed and direction of the pressure as well as the stock's perception. Adding *fear* into the encounter engages instinctual reactions rather than *pressure point pressure* responses.

Mapping out an animal's pressure points is an effort to understand applied pressure and its reaction to relative movement that the pressure will engage. The response is also about the direction, speed and the distance to the stock's flight zone. Each of those effect the end result, as well as the stock's perception of such pressures.



- A) This area of the face or the Lead is the area from the stock's eyes forward, when the directed pressure is applied here and you're outside or in open spaces, the response is a stop of forward movement. In the corrals, its response will also stop forward movement, but it can make cattle back up when no other direction is an option.

Often the stock's unintended perceptions will hinder their forward movement. Many times we are not aware of what's making the stock uncomfortable as we are processing

or working with the stock. We only know it's difficult for us as well as the stock. That perception is a *perceived pressure* to this eyes forward *pressure point* and it stops movement. Engagement may be someone ahead in the processing area moving, talking loudly, or it can also be simply a shadow or something blowing in the breeze or a dangling rope or pull chain. A solution may be changing your approach to your pressure, possibly simply loading the chute from the left side rather than the right. Simply redirecting the stocks attention to a new and more effective pressure.

This is also the area our *pseudo predators* will go to when stopping flight.



- B) This point is from the stock's eyes and runs to the point of the shoulder. It is the *pressure point* that has a directional response. Most often when applying pressure here, if you are approaching from A, you will create forward motion in the opposite direction of your applied pressure. If your approaching from C you will begin a slowing of forward movement. Both are effected by speed and distance from the flight zone.

This area of B is a prime spot to generate movement. In an alley way or crowding area, pressure here will engage movement. When using the skill of the *reverse parallel* this is

Diagram 3: REVERSE PARALLEL PRESSURE  
 Reverse parallel pressure creates movement in the opposite direction the pressure is applied. The speed created is the proximity to the flight zone. The closer to the flight zone, the quicker the pace; the further out, the slower the pace.

3. Reverse Parallel Pressure



the area that the pressure leads to movement, and proceeding to the rear creates a follow from the rest of the herd.

C) This side, or ribs, is the area that has the strongest area effected by your direction. Think of this area as a giant question mark for the stock, it is an area where the stock are measuring your applied pressure. If you are going forward from D the stock will gauge your forward speed and closeness to their flight zone and begin to slow.

Outside of the perimeter of this *flight zone* is the *passing area*. Your direction becomes of no concern to the stock's movement.

If your direction is from B, your closeness will dictate the response of speed. The closer you are to the stock, will generate a quicker pace.

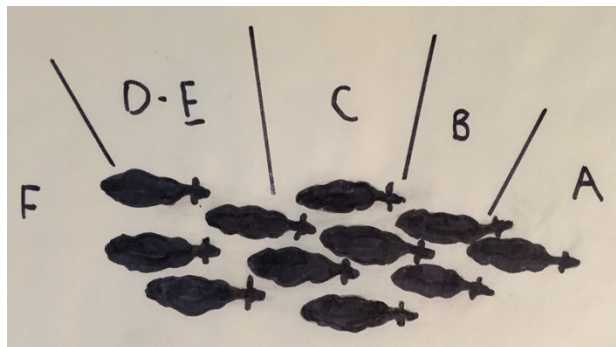
This rib area also effects lateral movement when an angle pressure is applied. This area will turn or create a shift in direction upon a *direct perceived pressure*.

D) This is the flank area, possibly the most sensitive area. This area engages forward movement and elevates the *perceived pressure of fear*, engaging *fear's instinctual reactions* rather than a reaction to a *pressure point pressure*.

E) Is the hip area, probably the most used *pressure point*. It's movement is forward.

F) This area is a panic area, the response to *fear* is *fight or flight*. When pressure is applied with fear, it promotes *flight*. Elevate the level of *fear* and the animal turns to *fight*.

The previous map of *pressure points* (A) threw (F) is based on an individual animal, but the herd group has the same *pressure points* when you have developed an effective herd posture. These *pressure points* will have a response much like moving the individual stock, but you'll be moving the herd as one giant individual.



The *pressure point* of (F) functions better as a follow rather than a *pressure point movement* in respect to the herd posture.

Reading the stock is also an important part of achieving proactive results. Settling the stock prior to working them is a good hedge against undesirable responses.

Nervous postures and actions from the stock, may present signals to the stockman that the stock are not ready to work calmly. Rather than *cowboying up and getting western*, a better response would be creating a herd posture. The objective of *Predator Awareness* is instilling the *Defensive Posture of the Herd Group* and interrupting the *chase sequence* and its *individualization* that the predators require.

Some postures may be ears forward or an elevated head, urinating or excretions, or simply walking or trotting away from the herd. These actions of individualization lend themselves to benefit the predators rather than promote the safety of the stock.

Nervous postures to the *pseudo predators* is also a sign that the stock require more settling to canine presence. If the stock are unaccustomed to the use of *stock-dogs*, then *stock-dogs* will be the required initial effort. A basic concept of being calm with *dog presence*, that will be required to achieve the *Standing Solution*, in which the *pseudo predators* can then instill the response of the *standing solution*.

By understanding our actions of applied *pressure point pressures* we can help our stock have a more effective defense to a *predators presence* and possible *predatory pressures*. The effort to better our handling skills will not only help in everyday chores, but help mitigate the *predatory risks* that our stock may encounter.

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