

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.

Please observe the following guidelines when passing through alpine grazing land:



„Grazing animals are generally inquisitive, but not aggressive. Cows should nevertheless be treated with respect and not approached!“

Ing. Josef Hechenberger,
PRESIDENT OF LK TIROL



„Dog owners are responsible for the behaviour of their pets. On encountering grazing animals, appropriate caution must be exercised!“

Dr. Josef Kössler, CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER



„Local people and visiting guests often seek peace and tranquillity on our alpine pastures. To prevent critical situations with grazing animals from occurring in the first place, please observe information signs and guidelines for appropriate behaviour.“

Josef Margreiter,
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TIROL WERBUNG

BYPASS OPEN GRAZING PASTURES WITH DOGS!

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