

Leading a group through a field of cows.

What are the sensible precautions to take when a group of walkers meet up with a field of cows? These are my thoughts, other published advice may differ.



A slippery concrete yard between two stiles

1 Never, never, walk between cows and calves. If the herd is split (with or without calves) and the path runs between them, go slowly round the side of the field and encourage the herd to get together. If necessary **WAIT** until they do and then proceed to the stile or gate whilst **remaining in a group**.

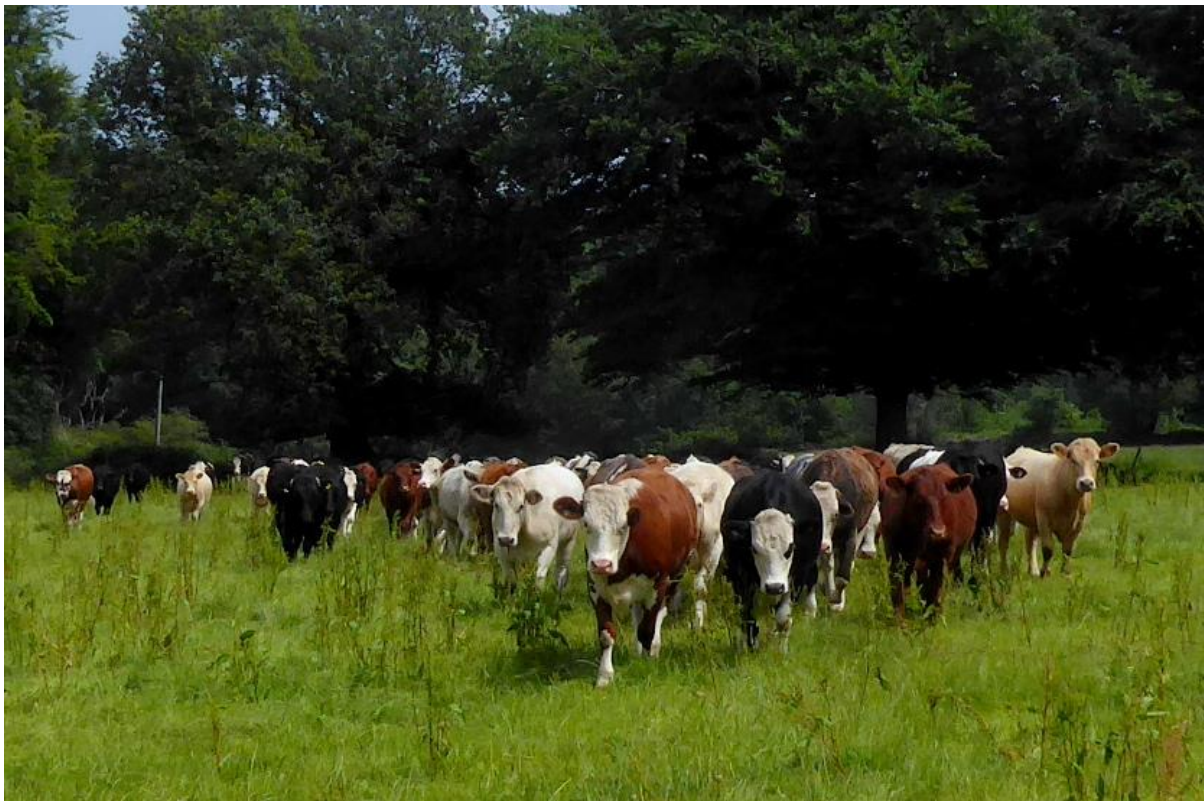
2 Frisky herds: Sometimes young livestock can be very interested in a group of walkers and will approach at speed. **Stay together**, let the leader wave her/his arms and shout, the herd will almost always temporarily move away. **Keep together** and steadily move to the exit. Repeat the shouting regularly as the curious beasts return time and again and calmly get the group to the far side of the field.

3 Dog problems: Most serious attacks in the last few years have been dog related. Keep any dogs on a short lead, but if an animal or a herd look as if they will attack

the dog, (and probably the walking group) encourage the owner to release it. The dog will be faster than the cows, who will chase it, and usually escape. **Keep together** and make your way calmly to the exit, meet the dog later and give it a biscuit..

4 Maintain the group: In all groups of walkers there will be some who are very nervous in these situations. It is important that they don't rush off, but stay with the group as close as current distancing rules allow. There may be some who show no fear and want to stride purposefully away from the group, they are of more help staying with the group and keeping everyone calm.

The group is a large body and can be intimidating to a curious animal which will be a deterrent, so **STAY TOGETHER**



An inquisitive herd approaching rapidly in the Wye Valley

5 I simply cant do this! : If you, as leader, really can't face-off the cows then ask for a volunteer. Somebody in the group will probably have the right amount of ability to do all of the above.

If all else fails, go back to the road or lane and look at the map. Find a new route around the field which avoids our bovine friends.