

# Understanding Cattle Body Language

## Happy/relaxed cattle body language



Relaxed



Lying/ruminating



Neutral head position



Neutral tail position



### Clues to look for:

- Tail down/relaxed when standing.
- Eyes relaxed or half closed.
- Ears relaxed or held backwards.
- Lying comfortably and ruminating.
- Engaging in natural cattle behaviours such as grazing, chewing grass, relaxing, and spending time with other cattle.

## Excited/playful cattle body language



Excited/  
interested



Playful tail  
position



Excited or galloping  
tail position

### Clues to look for:

- Tail raised when playing, wagging, or held away from body.
- Ears back or asymmetric.
- Calves engaging in natural play behaviours such as jumping, kicking, galloping, and running.

## Angry/unhappy cattle body language



Bellowing



Unhappy



Cold/ill/scared  
tail position

### Clues to look for:

- Eyes wide, lots of white showing.
- Standing with back arched, head low.
- Ears alert, facing towards approaching threat.
- Bellowing (could mean hunger or pain).
- Tail hanging straight or tucked under body between legs.
- Cattle standing separate from the rest of the herd.