

Catching ropes for cattle

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Sometimes you need to restrain a staggery cow in a yard to get close enough to examine or treat her. You can't run her up the race in case she goes down and gets stuck. This is where catching ropes are handy. They're designed to be thrown over the head of the cow, run a couple of turns around a rail, pull her up, swing the rope back around the body, a hitch to the rail, and you've got her (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Cow being pulled up to yard rail with catching rope



Figure 2: Cow restrained against stockyard rail with catching rope



The thimble allows the noose to tighten quickly until its travel is stopped by the stopper knot - thus the noose is prevented from over tightening (Figure 3) should she throw herself on the ground. If the noose is balanced correctly in the hand, with the thimble hanging down on one side and the stopper knot the other (Figure 4), the centrifugal force when its thrown causes a nice open loop to be formed when flying through the air and over the cows head. The stopper knot is adjustable to cater for the different neck sizes that may be encountered.

Figure 3: The thimble and stopper knot of a catching rope



Figure 4: A catching rope ready for throwing. Centrifugal force on the thimble and stopper knot on opposite sides of the noose keep the noose open when thrown through the air toward the cow's head.



Instead of lassoing with the catching rope, use a catching pole to drop the noose over the animal's head. This is best set-up by threading a pole through the thimble then winding the loop around the end of the pole to hold it in place. The loop can then be easily dropped over the animals head. *Tip – lightweight but strong aluminium telescopic poles used for painting or cleaning ceilings make ideal catching poles.*

The catching rope can become an improvised halter by placing a half hitch around the animal's muzzle, then threading the lead rope through the neck noose.

Catching ropes come in two lengths. The 6m version is a convenient length for straight cow catching and pulling her up against the rails. The 10m version is for those veterinarians that want a bit of extra length to also be able to pull cows down. Visit www.livestockhealthsystems.com if you want more information on catching ropes including where to get one.