

Walkers' Safety around Cattle & Ponies

Grazing Ashdown Forest is a sustainable way of managing the heathland for the benefit of biodiversity and our many users. Here are some tips to help you enjoy your walk:

Do not feed or touch cattle or ponies

- They are not pets - feeding and touching will encourage animals to come up to people and this can lead to problems.
- If you stop to see the animals don't open bags near to them; they make think that you are going to feed them.

Make sure that animals know that you are there

- If you come up behind and they have not noticed you, calmly talk to them to let them know that you are there.
- If cattle or ponies are blocking your path, clap your hands and they should move out of your way. If necessary leave the path and go around the animals.

Avoid getting between cows and their calves and/or splitting the herd

- Do not try and approach young animals no matter how cute and cuddly they may look; the mother may see you as a threat.
- Walk around a group of animals in case you get between a mother and her calf.

Keep small children close to you

- Children may not know how to behave around animals. Do not leave bags or pushchairs unattended.
- Animals are naturally inquisitive and may rummage in a bag or pushchair. There is a risk of an unattended push chair being knocked over.

Keep dogs under control

- The most common factor involved in incidents between livestock and members of the public is walkers with dogs.
- We advise that you do not walk your dog through groups of cattle or ponies.
- If you and your dog receive unwanted attention from the animals it is best to let your dog go to run away and re-join you later on; the animals will be more interested in your dog than you.
- Never allow you dog to chase livestock; this could cause serious accidents and injury to the dog, the livestock or other users of the Forest.
- Pick up after your dog – *Neospora* eggs (oocysts) are shed by infected dogs in their faeces and are a source of infection for cattle.