



Slow down when approaching cows being moved, and pay attention to the riders.

How to behave when you encounter

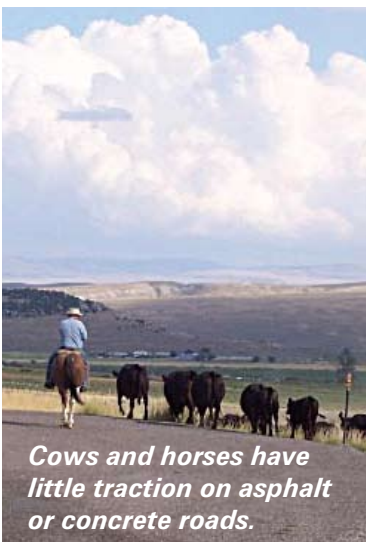


A CATTLE DRIVE

By Barton Stam

Encountering cattle crossing or traveling the roads and highways shouldn't be a surprise when driving around Wyoming.

Many roads in Wyoming pass through land used for cattle ranching. To move cattle to different pastures, ranchers often must cross roads or even travel down rights of way. There are things that can be done to ensure a safe trip for a motorist and the cattle.



Cows and horses have little traction on asphalt or concrete roads.

First, and most importantly, slow down. And by slowing down, I don't mean down to 60 miles per hour on highways having a posted limit of 65. When cattle are on the road, 10 mph may be too

fast. Stopping and letting stock get all the way across the road may be the best course of action. Turning on emergency flashers may help other motorists slow down, too.

Going slow will help avoid vehicle-cattle collisions. Pay attention to the riders. They may direct you to drive through or around the herd. They know motorists would like to be on their way and are usually helpful in getting them through safely and quickly. Don't honk a horn or otherwise harass the cattle. See the "Handling Livestock Effectively" article on page 16 to understand how your actions can affect livestock.

Cows and horses have little traction on asphalt and concrete roads. Moving quickly to dodge a vehicle could cause them to slip and fall. The most efficient way to work through cattle is slowly. Many times herds will be strung out along a road with the faster cows ahead of the slower-moving animals. Be sure to get through the entire herd before accelerating to cruising speed.

Look out not only for cattle and riders but cow dogs. Cow dogs are often so focused on their job working the cattle they may not be paying attention to cars zipping

down the road. Good cow dogs are often the best hands ranchers have. Running over one would be a real tragedy.

Please don't get out of the vehicle to help or take photographs. The livestock handlers usually have enough to worry about – cows, dogs, horses, and vehicles. A passing motorist getting out on foot is going to add to their worries and likely will be more harm than help. It's also safer in the vehicle.

When cowherds need to cross busy roads, ranchers will often post someone on both sides of the herd to flag down traffic. This could look like anything from a ranch worker in a beat-up pickup with an orange flag to a peace officer in a patrol car with flashing lights.

So, if happening across a cattle drive on a road, slow way down and you should be back on your way in a few minutes. It might even be a good time to have a passenger break out a camera and get a few pictures (from inside the car) of real Western life.



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