

Farm Structures FACTSHEET



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Order No. 315.600-1

Agdex: 723

April 1982

CORRALS WITH CURVED LANES AND CHUTES

Cattle handling facilities are an essential part of any cattle operation regardless of the size or type of operation. Corrals should be carefully planned and designed on paper before any posts are placed.

The corral diagram in this leaflet represents a relatively new concept in cattle handling based on knowledge of cattle behavior. Curved lanes and chutes with solid sides work effectively because cattle cannot see ahead to the truck or squeeze, nor are they disturbed by distractions outside the confines of the lane or chute. All an animal can see is the animal ahead in the line and, since cattle follow each other naturally, the cattle move ahead smoothly.

The catwalk is on the inner radius of the chutes and, if the handler positions himself just behind an animal to be moved ahead, it will move forward around the curve in the same natural pattern as though the animal were circling the man.

The flow of cattle is important if the corral is to function properly. The cattle should follow each other through the corral and, ideally, there should be no sharp corners to inhibit the flow. It is more efficient to handle cattle in long, curved lanes and

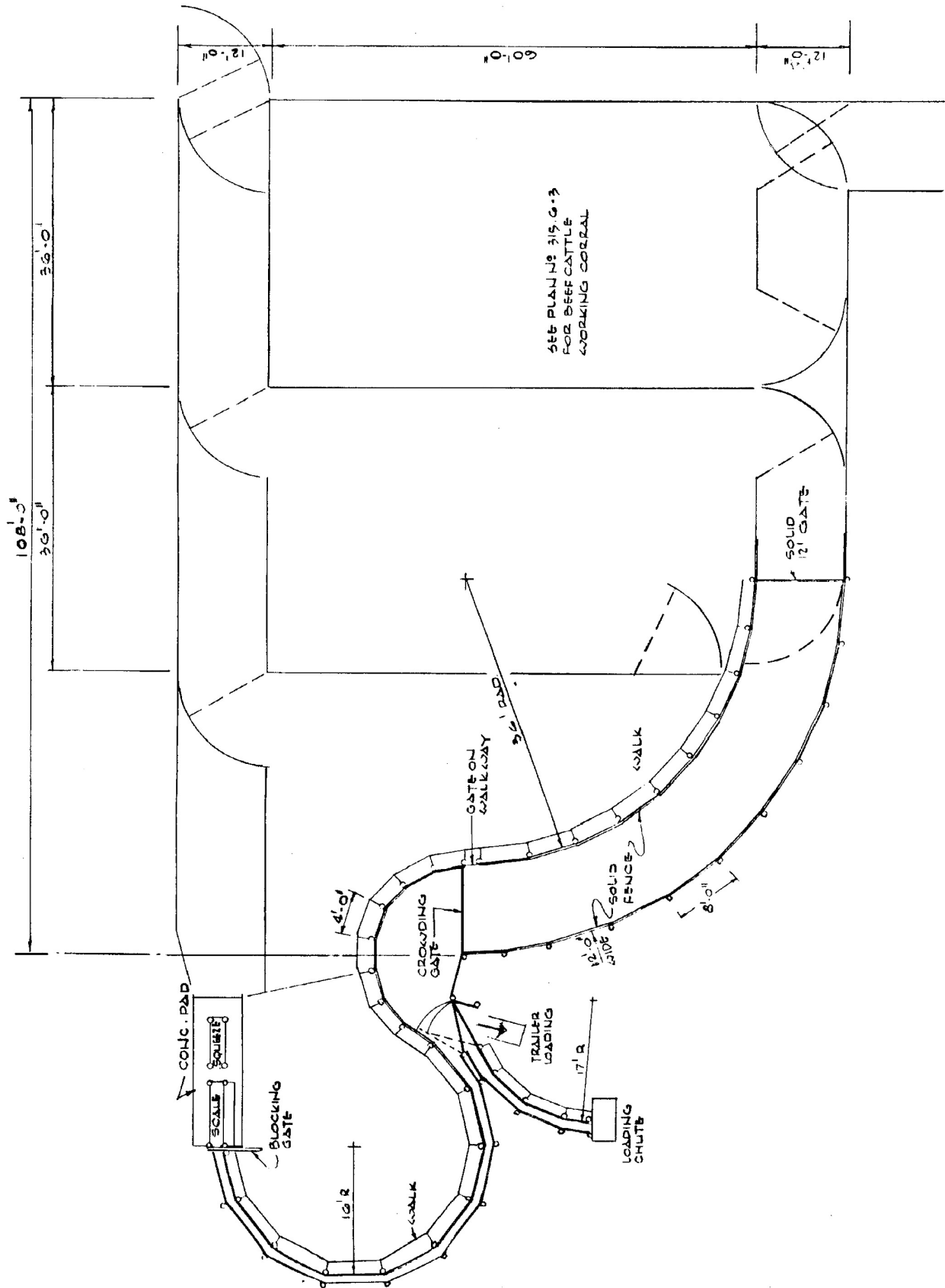
in long, narrow pens than in large square pens. Sorting pens can be oriented at a 60° angle with respect to the lanes to further improve flow.

For most corrals, where cattle are driven by a man on foot, the drive alley should be 10 to 12 feet wide. The long curved lane should have high, solid sides and the solid 12-foot gate at the entrance can be used as a blocking gate for sorting and working cattle in and out of the lane.

The circular crowding pen, for both loading and squeeze chutes, should have high, solid sides and a ratchet gate. Both chutes also require high, solid sides to ensure smooth flow of cattle.

The corral in this diagram has a capacity for 100 to 250 head and can be expanded by adding more holding pens. This layout shows one simple approach to attaching pens and drive alleys to the basic components of the curved lane, circular crowding pen and the curved chutes. Every cattleman's needs and preferences are different and this diagram can be modified to suit the farmstead layout and individual requirements.

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