

# The MYSTERY CLUB

brought to you by **Captain Overalls**, the Safety Crusader



## CAPTAIN SEZ

Follow the directions to find Captain Overalls' secret message.

Write the word "animal."

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Change the last A to E.

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Take out the M.

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Change the I to G.

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Change the last letter to R.

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Put a D in front of the first letter.

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What does Captain say?

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## SAFETY WITH BIRDS, BEES AND OTHER BEASTS

### A western wildfire from days gone by

*A cloud of dust rolled across the prairie. The sound of thunder became louder every minute and the ground began to shake. Suddenly, they appeared on the horizon.*

*Buffalo! Hundreds of them! The air was filled with panic as they ran closer and thousands of hooves destroyed everything in their path.*

In 1870, 3,000 cattle stampeded as they were being driven on the Chisholm Trail from Texas. The animals were frightened by lightning.

Stampedes are rare today. The wide open spaces now have fences and other boundaries to contain livestock. But it is just as important for a farmer or rancher to understand the behavior and instincts of animals—both wild and domesticated — as it was 130 years ago.

Animals are linked to one of every five injuries on the farm. The most common injuries to kids involve animals. Animals can bite, kick, claw, peck, gore, chew, and step on people. They also can pin a person between a gate, farm building, implement, or another object.

### Animal dangers today

The difference in size often gives farm animals an advantage over humans. An average cow can weigh more than 1,000 pounds, as much as a small car. And when it comes to kids, animals definitely have the upper hand or hoof!

Animals also may have the advantage over humans in their ability to see, hear, and smell. For example, cows have nearly a 360-degree field of vision, meaning that they almost see behind them without turning their head. Quick movements that you don't think they can see may startle them. Chickens and turkeys, because of their good sense of hearing, also may be easily spooked.

Like people, animals have different temperaments. Some exotic species, such as emus, can be very mean and peck at things for no apparent reason. Even within the same species, some animals can be difficult to get along with. One hog may be stubborn or aggressive, and another hog generally is friendly.

Most of the time, animals run away or attack when they are surprised, scared, hungry, or sick. But, as in the case of stampedes, they can be very unpredictable!

## 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 BY THE NUMBERS

40 ..... Miles per hour speed of ostriches, the world's second-fastest animal.

1,000 ..... Average weight of a full-grown cow, in pounds, about 15 times the weight of most third graders.

3,000,000 ..... Number of Americans bitten by animals each year.

48 ..... The number of feet that a beaver's front teeth can grow during its lifetime.

# Animal habits... good or bad?

Animals are creatures of habit. Cows gather around the barn just before milking time. Your dog runs to the feeding dish when it hears the food sack being opened. Habits are a type of learned behavior that help animals adjust to their environment and stay comfortable. Understanding an animal's habits also can help people stay safe.

**Social animals.** These animals are used to living in a group. When they are alone they can become lonely, sad, frightened, or excited. An example would be dairy cattle, horses, or turkeys. When they are isolated, they are easily upset by sudden movements or things that normally would not upset them. The longer that they are alone, the more upset they become.

Social animals form relationships with caretakers, too. A horse that follows commands from an adult who takes care of it ignores the same words from someone else.

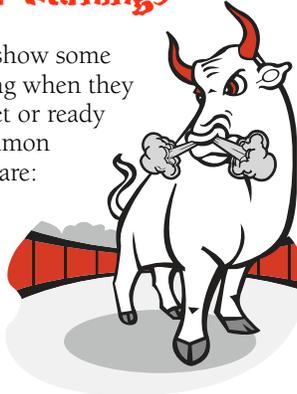
**Maternal instincts.** All domesticated animals have strong feelings for their young. This is a survival behavior because it helps them protect the most vulnerable members of their group. Often animals become aggressive just before and after they give birth.

**Territorial protection.** Domesticated animals try to protect the area where they live and eat. So do wild animals. This is why a dog growls at other animals, even its babies, while it is eating.

## Watch for warnings

Most animals show some kind of warning when they are angry, upset or ready to attack. Common warning signs are:

- a lowered head,
- laid-back ears,
- an arched back or raised fur,
- pawing the ground,
- showing its teeth, and
- growling or snorting.



Caretakers learn a particular animal's behavior, and notice signs of trouble. As you spend more time around animals, you will be able to see their signals, too.



## Ways to Stay Safe Around Animals

1. Stay out of the way when the animal is eating.
2. Never get between babies and their mama.
3. Use a soft, quiet voice that will not startle the animal.
4. Keep your hands out of the animal's mouth — Duh!
5. Know where you are going, and move slowly to get there.
6. Do not let animals see you "sweat" (try to stay calm even if you are not).
7. Remember that animals do not like surprises.
8. Be alert for animal danger signals.
9. Do not run with the bulls.
10. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes or boots.



When you are upset or frightened, you might holler or scream. Animals bite. Unfortunately, people sometimes are on the receiving end of an animal's choppers. It is estimated that between one and three million Americans each year are bitten by animals, most often dogs. About one-third of all animal bites happen to kids.

Although animals use their teeth for self-defense, teeth are most important for eating. You can tell a lot about an animal's diet by its teeth.

Animals that eat meat are called **carnivores**. Their teeth are very large and include four long, pointed teeth, called canines. Animals that eat insects are called **insectivores**. They have square-shaped teeth with unique edges to crack an insect's hard exoskeleton. Animals that eat plants are called **herbivores**. They have sharp incisors, located in the front of the mouth, to pick leaves. Molars in the back of the mouth grind the leaves for better digestion. Animals, such as snakes, swallow their food whole and are called **piscoivores**. Their teeth are cone-shaped, very sharp, and point backwards in the mouth. They're used to hold food in place until it is eaten. Animals that eat both plants and meat are called **omnivores**. Like you, they have a variety of teeth including canines, incisors, and molars.

Follow these rules around animals:

- Do not approach or reach to pet an unfamiliar animal. If an unfamiliar dog comes up to you, stay still. Do not run away or scream.
- Avoid animals that are not tame or are wild.
- Do not disturb a cat or dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for young.
- If bitten, immediately tell an adult.

# Wacky Science



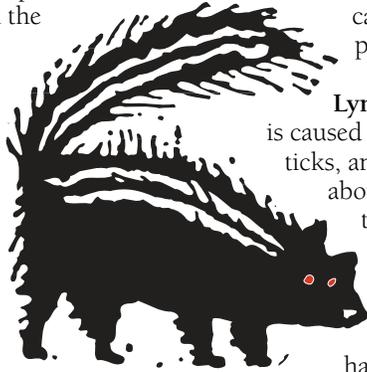
Since we share a world with animals, it should not surprise us that we also share some diseases. This may be especially true in rural areas and on farms. Diseases that can be transmitted between humans and other animals are called zoonotic diseases.

## A place in history

Zoonotic diseases have shaped our history. Black Death, also called the Plague, swept through Europe and Asia from the 1300s to the 1600s. It killed one-fourth to one-third of all the people. The disease was caused by bacteria carried by fleas from rats to humans.

During World War I, the Spanish Flu killed more soldiers than the war. An estimated 40 million people died, which helped end the war. It was renamed the Swine Flu when scientists discovered that it was caused by a virus carried by hogs.

In 1996, several people in Great Britain died from a variation of "mad cow disease" (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). It is believed that brains of infected animals were in beef eaten by these people. No deaths have been reported in the United States.



## On the farm

**Rabies.** This is probably the most familiar and most feared zoonotic disease. People who have been exposed to rabies can be treated, but the disease is always fatal once

symptoms begin. The chance of getting rabies is lower in the United States than it used to be because more people know about the disease and laws require pets to be vaccinated. It still is important to beware of wild animals that show strange behavior.

Today rabies often is associated with cat and skunk bites, and when farmers and veterinarians check cattle who are salivating. It is estimated that as many as 18,000 people need rabies treatment each year in this country.

**Giardiasis.** This disease is caused by tiny, one-celled animals in the gut of both animals and humans. The organisms are found in poop and can be carried in streams or floodwater. Giardiasis can cause fever, nausea, and stomach pain for several days.

**Lyme disease.** Lyme disease is caused by bacteria carried by deer ticks, and much has been written about it. In wooded areas where ticks may be present, people are advised to wear a long-sleeved shirt and pant legs tucked into socks. It also is a good idea to use tick repellent and have someone check for ticks after leaving a wooded area.

## Rub-a-dub

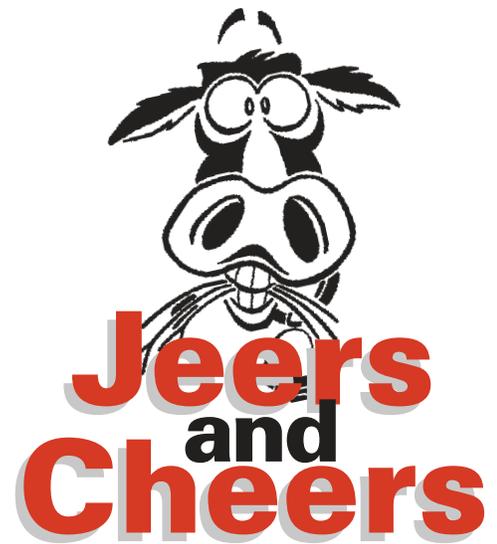
A good way to prevent many diseases is to wash your hands after touching any animal. Here is a no-fail method:

1) Sing an entire verse of "Row Your Boat" while you soap your hands. 2) Be sure to wash the back of your hands and your fingernails. 3) Rinse hands with clean water and dry with a clean towel.

**Knock, Knock Who's there? • Donut Donut who? Donut tease the animals!**

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**Cheers** – to the rider who wears an approved equestrian helmet even when her friends call her a wimp.



**Jeers** – to the 12-year-old who walks between a sow and her piglets.



**Cheers** – to the farm visitors who wash their hands after touching calves, piglets, puppies, and kittens.



**Jeers** – to the 4-Her who wears sandals to bottle-feed her baby calf.

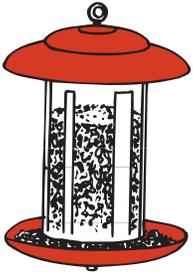


**Cheers** – to the family that keeps pets vaccinated and closely watches them for health problems.



**Jeers** – to the 10-year-old who sees a skunk wandering around during the daytime and does not tell an adult.

# The **MYSTERY** of "The Mad Raccoon"



Maria hid behind the honeysuckle bushes in the backyard. Today she would catch the thief red-handed! Maria had filled the bird feeder three times already this week.

No one in her family had seen any birds. But the sunflower seeds mysteriously disappeared each day. The bandit left nothing but a messy pile of hulls.

Just then she heard a rustle of grass. Something furry, about the size of a large cat, lumbered up to the feeder, stood on its hind legs and started eating the seeds. It was a raccoon!

Maria grabbed for a rock and was ready to throw it. Then she remembered that the only time she had ever seen a raccoon was in the evening and realized they were nocturnal. They mostly stayed by the barn. Maria put down the rock and quickly went inside to find her dad.

"Maria, you are a good detective," her dad said as he looked out at the stray raccoon. "It is not right to see raccoons at this hour of the day. I've been watching for strange animals ever since I heard on the news there had been an outbreak of rabies in our area. I'm going to call the county animal control officer to check it out."

## Your Challenge:

What dangers did Maria avoid by not throwing the rock at the raccoon?

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What did she do instead?

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What other stray animals might show signs of strange behavior?

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## Word Code



Can you help Captain Overalls decode these key words?

Each of the following words or phrases is a danger signal a farm animal may show. Write the letter of the alphabet that comes before each letter shown to decode the words or phrases.

M P X F S F E    I F B E

B S D I F E    C B D L

M B J E    C B D L

F B S T

Q B X J O H    U I F

H S P V O E

T O P S U J O H

T I P X    U F F U T

## USE YOUR



## NOGGIN

Cesar, Eva, and Tony are members of the Mystery Club. Each had a city cousin visit their farm, and each had to rescue the cousin who went into a livestock area without permission. Cesar, Eva, and Tony recognized the animal's warning signs and luckily, no one was hurt. Using the chart below, can you figure out who saw which animal's warning sign? (Each farm kid only saw one warning sign, and each farm had a different animal.)

HINT: When you put a \* in a box, put a "0" in the other boxes in that column and row.

- Neither Eva nor Tony saw the animal pawing the ground. (Put a zero under "ground" across from Tony and Eva.)
- Cesar's family does not raise goats. (Put a zero under "goat" across from Cesar.)
- Eva knows all the danger signals for horses because her family keeps them. (Put a star under "horse" across from Eva.)
- Tony saw the animal lowering its head. (Put a star under "head" across from Tony.)

Who?	What animal was involved?			What danger signal did they see?		
	Bull	Goat	Horse	Ears	Head	Ground
Cesar						
Tony						
Eva						

ANSWERS: Cesar saw the bull paw the ground. Tony saw the goat lower its head. Eva saw the horse pin back its ears.