

## Animal Attitude Continuum

**Objective:** Identify attitudes in relation to safety while around animals.

**Concept:** This activity investigates and clarifies individual attitudes concerning children when they are around animals found within the rural environment. It also helps others see different views to sensitive issues in a non-threatening format. Statements are designed to be progressively more controversial to foster discussion. This activity is appropriate for adults, families and youth. If children participate with their families, parents may need to help them understand the concept of “level of agreement” and translate their answers into numerical values.

**Targeted Age:** Middle School and above (this activity works especially well with family groups where various age groups learn from each other)

Ask each participant to number from 1 to 8 on a piece of paper. Read the following statements. After each statement have each person place a numerical value from 1 to 10 as to their level of agreement. Ten equals 100% agreement and one equals 0% agreement.

Statements:

1. I like cats.
2. Pet ownership is a good way for children to learn responsibility.
3. Horse back riding is enjoyable.
4. Sheep are dumb animals.
5. Injections should be given only by a veterinarian.
6. Close proximity to wild animals is a positive factor for living in a rural area.
7. Riding helmets are useless in protecting a rider if they fall from a horse.
8. Hog confinement buildings should be banned.

Explain that one wall of the room is a continuum with 1 at the far left and 10 at the far right. All other numbers fall in between (taped numbers on the wall will help). With answers in hand, have participants walk to the number they answered for number 1. Do not read the statement until everyone is positioned. Encourage people to be honest and not go with the crowd. Move to the number for the second statement. Discuss after each statement.

This activity will spur good interaction and discussion about attitudes toward animal safety. Explain that no answer is right or wrong.

Ideas to be brought out during discussion

- ▶ Differences about ordinary things are less likely to be controversial.
- ▶ Interpretation of a statement can be diverse.
- ▶ Individual backgrounds and attitudes influence behavior.
- ▶ People may have different opinions and still have common goals.
- ▶ Openness can lead to change.

