

Affiliative Herd Behaviors

Community Science Project on Cow Social Bonds

Affiliative behaviors

The friendly or peaceful ways in which cows interact with one another

Behaviors	Definitions
Approach	A cow purposefully walks up to another cow, stopping one body length or less away from them
Allogroom	A cow licks the body or head of another cow
Social rub	A cow rubs their body gently on another cow's body without making them take three or more steps away
Social sniff	A cow sniffs a body part of another cow, excluding their genital area; nostril flare or a deep inhale should be seen
Head/muzzle touch	A cow touches their head/muzzle to the head/muzzle of another cow
Touch other body part	A cow touches their head/muzzle to a body part of another cow that isn't their head/muzzle
Contact stand	A cow stands next to another cow with part of their body (other than horns and legs) touching
Contact lie down	A cow lies next to another cow with part of their body (other than horns and legs) touching
Social play	A cow hops/skips near another cow, which does not end in one of the cows walking away
Travel together	A cow walks side-by-side with another cow while remaining within three body lengths distance from one another
Follow	A cow walks behind another cow in the same direction while remaining within at least five body lengths distance from one another

Agonistic Herd Behaviors

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Behaviors Definitions

Displace

One cow (the "winner") approaches another cow (the "loser") in a way that causes them to take three steps or more away without making any physical contact; the "loser" may walk or run away

Freeze

One cow (the "loser") is completely still, without even moving their ears or tail, while another cow (the "winner") passes by, approaches, or interacts with them

Fight

A highly intense altercation that leads to one cow (the "winner") forcing another cow (the "loser") to take three or more steps away; typically includes head swinging, butting, and ramming with both cows make physical contact with one another

Push

A cow (the "winner") uses their body, often their head, to intentionally force another cow (the "loser") to walk away; only one cow makes physical contact with the other

Head butt

A cow (the "winner") swings or rams their head into another cow (the "loser"), with no clear intention of making them move; only one cow makes physical contact with the other

Agonistic behaviors

The way cows interact when they're in conflict with one another, including both "attacking" behaviors (e.g. fighting or threatening) and "backing down" behaviors (e.g. walking away)