

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



For the week of  
August 19, 2001

By Kurt Knebusch  
(330) 263-3776  
knebusch.1@osu.edu

### Hey Editor!

Steve Loerch, professor,  
Department of Animal  
Sciences, Ohio State  
University, reviewed this  
column.

Dear Twig: The other day I went by a pasture and all of the cattle were grazing in the same direction. Do they do this all the time? Why do they do it?

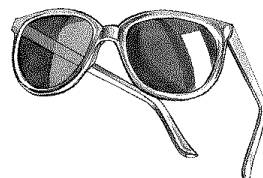
The answers are "No" and "We aren't really sure." Cattle don't always look like a school of fish, all of them pointing the same way. But sometimes they do, and it might be for a couple of reasons. For instance, in early morning or late evening, when the sun is low and bright, cattle turn away from the glare. They don't have any sunglasses.

Cattle also turn away from the wind, at least in the winter. It seems cattle, unlike buffalo, prefer cold rears to cold ears, which might be why they don't wear pants, although buffalo don't wear them either.

Finally, unless they're rushed — by the rancher, say, or by "SportsCenter" about to start — cattle graze as they go somewhere. And they usually go get water together. So it may be that the cattle you saw were going to get water and were eating as they went. (Like people on their way to the beach, except the ocean is a trough and the Ding Dongs are grass and the cows aren't talking on cell phones.)

Animal behavior is complicated. Sometimes we don't know why animals do what they do. But that's part of the fun of studying them. You never know what you'll learn!

Twig



### Section of Communications and Technology News and Media Relations

2021 Coffey Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1044  
(614) 292-2011

203 Research Services  
Building  
Wooster, OH 44691-4096  
(330) 263-3775

All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status.  
TDD# 1 (800) 589-8292 (Ohio only) or (614) 292-1868

The Ohio State  
University; College  
of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences