Interpreting an Animal’s Body Language and Behavior

• Change in environment may cause behavior pattern to change
• Communication by the animal about how it feels toward other animals, people, and its environment
• Determines how easy or difficult an animal may be during handling and restraining
The Happy Animal

- Relaxed, alert, stand, sit or lie with a comfortable appearance, ears up and forward
- Easier to handle
- Veterinary assistant should be alert to change in behavior, depending on the procedures being performed
The Scared Animal

• Potential to be difficult to handle and become aggressive
• Stiff stance, shake or tremor from nervousness, avoid direct eye contact, lay their ears flat or back on the head, lower their body or tail to ground
• Submissive – give into humans due to instinct that makes them feel threatened
SCARED ANIMAL
The Angry Animal

- Aggressive
- Stiff stance, bearing teeth, head lowered to the ground, staring, and tail raised
The Angry Animal

• Dominance aggression – “pack” animal instinct and social status within a group
• Fear aggression – defense reaction to being harmed and the instinct for an animal to protect itself
• Territorial aggression – refers to an animal’s protective nature of its environment
• Redirected aggression – predator instinct where the animal turns its aggressive behaviors on the owner
  – Most serious situation
Restraint Considerations

- Restraint – hold back, check, or suppress an action and keep something under control using safety and some means of physical, chemical, or psychological action
- Used by veterinary staff to allow an animal to be controlled for procedures
  - Safety of animal and of the people
Restraint Considerations
Restraint Considerations

• Sedative/Tranquilizer – medication given to an animal to keep it calm during certain stressful procedures or circumstances
Animal Safety

• Those not accustomed to humans will become easily stressed when removed from territory
• Young animals – handle with care; small and brittle bones
• Older animals – handle with care; may be arthritic and painful
Animal Safety

• Safety of animal and staff must be considered every time restraint is necessary

• Never allow non-veterinary staff or animal owner to restrain any animal
  – Potential legal issue
Restraint Equipment

Muzzles, anti-kick bars, hobbles, or stanchions

Muzzles
- commonly for dogs, cats, and horses
- made of nylon, leather, wire, or basket materials
- can be made with gauze, tape, or leashes
Restraint Equipment

- **Towels**
  - used to restrain small animals
  - used to wrap and contain

- **Squeeze cages**
  - used with small animals
  - contains animal without placing a person’s hands directly on animal
Planning the Restraint Procedure

• Area with enough room, is clean, is dry, and is well lit

• Plan should be discussed
  – Move any costly equipment
  – Nonslip area
  – Temperature should be considered
  – What should be done if animal happens to get away from restrainer
  – Backup plan
Restraint Knots

• Knots are made from one to two pieces of rope material where one section of the rope prevents slipping of another
  – Allow animals to be tied and restrained for a temporary period of time
  – Ropes should be inspected
  – Ropes may be used to tie animals in position
Square Knot

• Commonly used to secure an animal
• Nonslip knot that doesn’t come untied
• Two ropes or a single rope can be used to make the square not
Reefer’s Knot

- Single bow knot that allows a nonslip, quick release tie
- Same as the square knot with the exception that the second throw is made upon itself, creating a hold that can easily be untied
- Common tie for large animals to prevent them from injuring their heads and necks during restraint
Half Hitch

• Tie that makes a loop around a stationary location such as a post or a fence
• Commonly used to secure an animal to a surgery table
Restraint Positions

- **Recumbency** – lying position
- **Standing restraint** – used to keep an animal standing for a procedure and to prevent it from sitting or lying down
- **Sitting restraint** – used to keep an animal in a sitting position for ease of completing a procedure
Restraint Positions

• Sternal recumbency – placing the animal on its chest for restraint

• Lateral recumbency – placing the animal on its side for restraint
  – May be done in left or right lateral recumbency
Restraint Positions

- Dorsal recumbency – used to place the animal on its back for restraint; is a common restraint during surgical procedures and radiology techniques
Restraint Positions

• Blood collection
  – Cephalic vein – located in the medial aspect of the front limbs known as cephalic venipuncture
  – Jugular vein – located on either side of neck in lower throat area
  – Saphenous vein – located on lateral surface of the rear limbs just proximal to the hock
Restraint for Blood Collection

• Cephalic venipuncture
• Jugular venipuncture
• Saphenous venipuncture
Restraint Procedures and Techniques

• Equipment is used to protect
• Removing animal from cage
  – head control device
Small Animal Restraint

• Animal is held in safe manner through body control
• Common injuries: bites and scratches
• Cats, dogs, rodents, rabbits, ferrets, reptiles, and birds
• Diversions: talking to animal, calm noises, lightly blowing in face, or lightly rubbing temple area
Small Animal Restraint

Rabbits can be restrained by turning the rabbit upside down and rubbing it’s belly

This sends the rabbit into a trance for a few seconds/minutes
Cats
Tend to be one of the most difficult during restraint when they become upset and aggressive from stress
Safely restrain and have control over the head
Cat bags: control the limbs and head
Cats

Squeeze cages: wire boxes with small slots that allow injections to be given

Anesthesia chamber: used to sedate

Scruff technique: gives control over head; may divert attention
Cats

Stretch technique: scruffing the cat with one hand while in lateral recumbency and using the free hand to hold the rear limbs and pull them dorsally.
Dogs

Rabies pole or snare pole

is long, has noose on end, and acts as leash captures and restrains dogs pulling can cause severe head and neck injuries
Large Animal Restraint

- Livestock: horses, cattle, goats, swine, and sheep
- Instincts of prey animals
- “Fight or flight” instinct as part of reaction to restraint
- Capable of: kicking, biting, rearing up into the air, or using their large bodies to injure
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

Longing the horse can allow restraint of the horse.

Moving their feet will allow them to eliminate excess energy.

This technique shows your dominance and control.
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

TAIL TYING:
Allows you to move the horse safely by restraining the tail and hind end of the animal
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

TWITCHING:
Used to create minor pain in order to distract the animal from the procedure
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

CHAIN SHANK:
Used to create slight pain to distract the animal from the procedure
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

TAIL JACKING FOR COWS:
Used to control the hind end of the animal to control their body movement
LARGE ANIMAL RESTRAINT

RESTRAINING A FOAL:
Used on baby horses for body control

Enables vet to perform procedures on baby horses