AL 304 / Squeeze Chute (for Corral) Practice Standard

PURPOSE - A cattle squeeze chute is a device used in cattle handling and veterinary care to securely restrain the head of a cow or bull. Its primary purposes include ensuring safety, facilitating medical treatment, enabling thorough inspection, increasing efficiency, and reducing stress. By minimizing the risk of injury, it protects both the animal and the handler. It also allows veterinarians and handlers to perform necessary procedures more easily and safely such as vaccinations, deworming, tagging, and other medical treatments. Furthermore, it aids in the close inspection of the animal for signs of illness, injury, or parasites, which is crucial for maintaining the health and well-being of the herd. Additionally, the squeeze chute speeds up the process of handling multiple animals, making routine tasks more efficient, which is important for large herds where time and labor are significant considerations. By providing a secure and controlled environment, it helps reduce stress on the animal during handling, benefiting the animal's overall health and well-being. Overall, a cattle squeeze chute is a vital tool in livestock management, contributing to safer, more efficient, and humane handling of cattle.

RESOURCE CONCERN – A cattle squeeze chute primarily revolves around efficient and humane handling of livestock. This involves designing and maintaining facilities that safely and effectively manage cattle during various husbandry activities such as sorting, branding, or veterinary care. Key considerations include ensuring the safety of both cattle and handlers, optimizing the flow of operations to minimize stress on animals, and maintaining the infrastructure to prevent injuries or escapes. Effective management of cattle squeeze chute facilities aims to promote animal welfare, operational efficiency, and environmental stewardship in livestock management practices.

Additionally, proper handling and containment can significantly reduce the runoff of contaminants such as manure and urine into nearby water sources, thereby improving water quality. By confining cattle within the squeeze chute during procedures, the concentration of waste in specific areas is reduced, which helps in managing and disposing of manure more effectively. This containment minimizes the risk of pathogens and nutrients from manure entering water bodies, which can lead to eutrophication and harmful algal blooms. Furthermore, reducing the stress on cattle decreases the likelihood of excessive defecation, which can also contribute to runoff. Implementing proper drainage and waste management systems within the facilities ensures that any potential contaminants are captured and treated before they can reach natural water systems. These measures collectively help in maintaining cleaner water sources, supporting healthier ecosystems, and providing safer water for agricultural and community use.

MANAGEMENT – To implement management practices, such as vaccinating, castrating, dehorning, and implanting, cattle must be safely and effectively restrained. Treating cattle for the control of external and internal parasites may also require limited confinement and restraint. Herd health practices, such as treating sick or injured animals or helping at calving, are also easier if adequate handling facilities are available.

REQUIREMENTS - The minimum number of single type head of livestock, regardless of sex or age, at one time during the last 12 months is 20 head. A cattle squeeze chute, used for handling cattle safely during procedures like vaccinations or examinations, typically has the following specifications:

1. **Construction:** Made from heavy-duty material to withstand the strength of cattle.
2. **Size:** Accommodates one animal at a time, designed to restrain and position the animal securely.
3. **Features:**
    - Headgate: Adjustable mechanism to secure the animal's head without harming it.
    - Sides: Adjustable or fixed sides to prevent the animal from moving sideways.
    - Rear Access: Often has a rear gate to control the animal's movement and allow access for procedures.
    - Flooring: Non-slip flooring to ensure the animal stays steady.
4. **Dimensions:** Can vary widely, but typically designed to comfortably hold adult cattle without causing stress or harm.
5. **All material must be New.**

Cost Estimate - The applicant will provide the District Administrative Coordinator with a detailed cost estimate for the proposed conservation practice.