

Out The In Gate

I would've thought that as animals became domesticated their brains would have become larger, figuring that some of the intelligence of the supposedly smarter people would have worn off on the animals. But scientists say it's the exact opposite: as animals became domesticated their brains actually shrank. A lot!

Horses' brains used to be 16 percent bigger than they are now, back when they were wild and had no human contact. The brains of domesticated dogs have shrunk 10-30 percent and hogs' brains have shriveled 34 percent. Just think how smart hogs would be if people hadn't dumbbed them down!

I had the opportunity to prove this theory at an all-breeds bull sale many years ago. It was back in the day when many of the bulls sold at all breed events were haltered, fitted, clipped, and I guess you could say... domesticated.

At this particular auction yard sale, both classifications of bulls were offered: show bulls and range ready. On Friday afternoon all the bulls were graded by a group of 20 cattlemen who sat in the seats and graded the bulls as they ran through the sale ring. The score they gave the bulls would be used to determine the sale order for the following day.

For some reason, and I don't recall why, the bulls on grading day came in through the out gate and left via the in gate, exactly opposite of what they would do on sale day. Even the show bulls that could have been led into the ring were run in and out of the ring.

On Saturday when the first bull (the Ideal Range Bull) ran into the ring to be sold, I knew right away we were in for a long day. Because the bull, which was a show bull, remembered leaving via the in gate on the preceding day—that's the way he tried to leave on sale day.

I swear, it must have taken five minutes to get that bull out of the ring. The guys inside the ring were as good as you'd find anywhere but all day long they risked their lives playing bull fighter trying to get the bulls to follow them to the exit. By the end of the day the guys were as beat up as a used pinata.

Now here's the interesting part: when the range ready bulls, which were still wild enough you might call them undomesticated, entered the ring, they saw daylight at the end of the wide, sweeping ring and promptly headed out the out gate just like they were supposed to.

The range bulls we could still sell at the usual clip of one every 30 seconds, but nearly every time a fitted bull—what you call domesticated—came into the ring he immediately turned around and tried to exit through the in gate which was now closed. This went on all day and usual snappy sale dragged on for hours as we all tried to shoo the bulls outside.

A friend of mine who had just recently been married to a cute gal was working ring with me and every time one of these show bulls delayed the sale he'd come over to me during the break in the sale and say, "Those stupid bulls. I'm never gonna get home."

This went on all day with my buddy's blood boiling every time there was a lengthy delay. "Those fitted bulls have to be dumber than a 15-year-old fifth grader," he remarked, as he was itching to leave and growing more frustrated with each hold up.

Finally, about two hours later than we had expected, my buddy and I were leaving the sale. My friend was still cussing the bulls as we walked down a long hall to the side door of the auction facility. My friend was in such a hurry to get home to his new wife that he hit that door like a Chicago linebacker. This result sounded like a watermelon being hit by a speeding train. The door did not budge.

My buddy sprained his wrist from hitting the stationary handle, the front of his hat crumpled against the glass and my friend got a big bump on his forehead he'd later have to explain to his

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new wife.

Realizing that my buddy had only recently been domesticated, I resisted the urge to point to the big sign on the door that read, "PULL." I also refrained from pointing out that, just like those dumb domesticated bulls, he'd tried to go out the in gate.