

Walkers warned after cow 'attack'

Country walkers in Cumbria have been warned of the dangers of straying close to farm livestock.

The warning, from the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), follows an incident in which a woman was trampled by a herd of cows.

Shirley McKaskie, from Greystoke Gill, near Penrith, underwent brain surgery following the incident at nearby Millrigg Farm.

It is thought the animals with young calves, reacted violently when she walked by with her dog.

The 45-year-old remains in a coma in Newcastle General Hospital.

Sue Harrison, deputy regional director of the CLA, said: "Livestock is the very reason that our countryside is so attractive to visitors.

"Cows and calves are an intrinsic part of the landscape, but can present dangers to the unwary and can be especially unpredictable if you are walking a dog.

Farmers take every precaution to avoid putting walkers in danger, and are devastated when accidents occur

Sue Harrison, CLA

"Our advice is to avoid walking through fields containing livestock wherever possible.

"Cows and calves present the greatest danger. Cows weigh the best part of a tonne and can easily outrun the average person.

"If they feel their calves are in danger from a strange dog, they will use their speed and strength to defend them.

"Young cattle are lively and naturally inquisitive, they will gallop up just to investigate but the results can be as critical.

"If people feel threatened by a herd of cattle, they should head for the nearest exit from the field, even if this means retracing your steps.

'Avoid future incidents'

"If the cattle go for your dog, release it from its lead.

"A dog will generally take care of itself, and the cattle will be far more interested in the dog than in their owners.

"Farmers take every precaution to avoid putting walkers in danger, and are devastated when accidents occur.

"This latest incident must serve as a reminder to help avoid future incidents."

The Health and Safety Executive says it is to investigate the incident, which happened on 10 May.

Police say Miss McKaskie suffered serious head injuries, broken ribs, and leg injuries during the attack.

She was taken to the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle and later transferred to Newcastle General Hospital, where she underwent brain surgery.

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