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STAY SAFE AROUND COWS AND CALVES THIS BANK HOLIDAY

As families head out for countryside walks this bank holiday, a farmer and personal injury lawyer is offering safety advice following several high-profile, including fatal, attacks by cattle on walkers last year.

Cows and calves graze together during the early summer months, so secretary of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) and farmer Stephen Lawson is fronting the association's campaign to warn walkers that the seemingly gentle creatures can be fiercely protective of their young.

"This isn't a doomsday message about cattle, but some people are simply unaware that these docile creatures can do a lot of damage if provoked at this time of year. My association is dedicated to preventing needless injury and we want to give out this information to reduce any risks posed to walkers," said Stephen.

Stephen's message comes following the publication of Natural England's report into its coastal access scheme, a project to build a footpath around the entire coast of England.

He said: "The path could run straight through fields containing cows and calves. Natural England has clearly recognised the problem and has said it will route the path as close to the sea as possible and away from grazing fields. Obviously there will be areas where this will not be possible, so walkers should take these precautions."

Stephen says:

- Locate a potential emergency exit route as you enter the field.
- Cows are curious. If they get too close and it's making you nervous, quickly and quietly walk away and out of the field. Running and shouting is likely to excite the cow and she will follow.
- Walking through a herd could lead you to come between a cow and her calf and appear as a threat. Try to avoid this.
- Keep dogs on a short lead but in the event of cattle showing signs of making chase, let go and let them follow the dog.
- If it's possible to stray off-route to avoid a field with cows and calves, then do so.



Stephen added: "A lot of the reports of people being trampled this time last year involved cows with calves or walkers with dogs. Usually, if a cow approaches you, she is probably just curious and wants a sniff. The British countryside is beautiful and should be enjoyed, and we want people to enjoy it safely this weekend."

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Note to editors

- For more information, contact Lisa Wardle, Press & PR Officer, APIL, t: 0115 9388715, or Jane Hartwell, Assistant press & PR Officer, t: 0115 9388702.
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation, whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
- Further information can also be found at the organisation's website - www.apil.org.uk.
- APIL responded to the Natural England Coastal Access Scheme. Visit <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>.