

On the alpine pasture, we are the guests in the animals' home

Putting livestock to pasture during summer is a popular tradition in South Tyrol. It keeps the animals healthy and allows the land to be used and maintained. Horses, sheep, goats, cows, and calves can be found grazing on alpine pastures.

Large shepherd dogs typically guard sheep and goats. These dogs are trained to protect their flock or herd against danger. This primarily includes large predators but may also include humans, especially when they have a dog with them.

Cows, particularly those with calves, are also protective of their herd. Therefore, the following always applies: grazing animals are not cuddly toys to be played with. The alpine pasture is not a petting zoo or a selfie hotspot. Dogs must be kept on a lead. Always maintain a safe distance from the animals!

The Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol's Department of Agriculture, the Farmers' Association (Südtiroler Bauernbund), the Hotelier and Restaurants' Association (HGV), and the Tourist Organisations' Association (LTS) have compiled some information and tips to ensure that an excursion to the alpine pasture remains a safe and, in a positive sense, unforgettable experience for everyone, whether on foot, with your dog, or on a bike.

First, some background information on cows.

1. Not all cattle have horns, some are genetically hornless, others have been de-horned. Horn development is independent of sex, so cows and bulls can have horns.
2. The animals can run off uncontrollably if panic breaks out in the herd.
3. Both male and female cows will protect themselves if they feel threatened or their herd is in danger.

Herds of suckler cows

Cows keep their calves close, protecting and defending against any perceived danger. A bull in the herd adds particular risk, as it sees the cows as its own and will protect them against external threats.

Young cattle herds

Young cattle are high-spirited, curious, and eager to move. They are not aggressive, but their uncontrolled behaviour can sometimes lead to dangerous situations.

Dairy cow herds

Dairy cows do not have calves with them. They are typically milked twice a day during lactation and accustomed to human contact. Generally, they are peaceful but can also become tired and irritable, so it is always best to leave them alone.

10 rules to keep the peace



The danger signals IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

1. The animal fixes its eyes on you.
2. The animal lowers its head. This is an indication that it is ready to face you. Quickly move away.