

IPT 564: Animal Behavior with Temple Grandin – Part 1 Transcript

Begin visual description. The interviewer is walking in a ranch while speaking to the camera. End visual description.

[00:00:00] **INTERVIEWER:** Good morning. Welcome to Sunup.

[00:00:03] Today we celebrate our second year back on the air serving agriculture in Oklahoma.

[00:00:07] We do so with one of the more fascinating conversations we've had in those two years, our interview with Temple Grandin.

[00:00:15] In the world of animal agriculture, Temple Grandin is a rock star.

[00:00:19] Her research, her books, her work with both private industry and government committees, has changed the face of agriculture.

[00:00:30] She redesigned the facilities we use for working in slaughtering cattle.

[00:00:34] She changed the way this industry handles and interacts with livestock. And she redefined the concept of animal welfare, making that an integral part of a successful profitable animal industry.

[00:00:47] Recently, Grandin visited the Oklahoma State University campus.

[00:00:51] Though her schedule was as full as any visiting dignitary's, with student meetings, luncheons, and a public seminar before some 3,000 in Gallagher-Iba Arena, we made sure she left a little time for Sunup so that you too could hear what she has to say.

Begin visual description. Temple Grandin stands next to the interviewer while they speak. End visual description.

[00:01:06] **INTERVIEWER:** A lot of your work has been around this concept that we as humans communicate verbally.

[00:01:16] Animals use different senses to communicate.

[00:01:19] **TEMPLE GRANDIN:** That's right. Yeah.

[00:01:19] **INTERVIEWER:** How do we get inside the head of that livestock? **TEMPLE:** Well, try to imagine what something looks like, what something would smell like, what something would sound like.

[00:01:29] It's sensory-based.

[00:01:31] It's not word-based.

[00:01:33] Now, I'm a visual thinker, so that makes it easier for me because as I talk about working with animal behavior, I'm seeing example of the cow, the horse's ears move independently, like if you look at these steers, you can see how the ears move independently.

[00:01:52] They might have an ear on one thing and an ear on us and another ear on something else.

[00:01:56] Can you see that one right there? (*Temple motions toward a cow with a red tag in its ear.*) **INTERVIEWER:** Absolutely.

[00:01:58] **TEMPLE:** He just put his ear back towards his body there, the ear with the red tag, and now he's looking totally at us.

[00:02:07] **INTERVIEWER:** It's a matter of just spending some time and getting to know your animals? **TEMPLE:** Well, yeah. There's a lot of people that are very good at handling animals.

[00:02:14] They intuitively know these things, but they aren't able to explain it very well in language.

[00:02:22] But the thing is, think sensory. What does something look like? What does it smell like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like? Maybe just shut your eyes. And I remember one time talking to a horse trainer, and he was very frustrated because he couldn't tell his students how to tell when the horse was getting upset and getting ready maybe to buck or kick.

[00:02:46] I said, "I want you to shut your eyes.

[00:02:47] What does a horse do when he starts to get upset?" Well, its tail is swishing.

[00:02:52] His head's up. He's quivering.

[00:02:54] Maybe the whites of his eyes are showing.

[00:02:56] Now, you can train a student to look for tail swishing and the whites of the eye showing.

[00:03:01] I can't train a student on, well, feeling or in tune with the horse.

[00:03:06] Too often it was explained as being in tune with the horse, but there are definite behavioral signs that the horse or the steer is starting to get scared and upset. And we get animals all frightened and scared, they're less productive animals. Like cattle that run wildly out of a squeeze chute so they don't gain as much weight.

[00:03:23] They're more likely to have dark-cutting meat.

[00:03:26] There's a lot of good reasons for handling cattle quietly.

[00:03:28] Another thing is safety to people.

[00:03:30] When cattle get upset, they jump on top of people and they hurt people.

- [00:03:35] Also, be very wary of the lone animal.
- [00:03:38] You've got a lone animal off by itself, panicking and freaking out because it's separated from its herds mates, that's a place where you get in a confined space with that lone animal, he can really hurt you because he's in just a panic.
- [00:03:51] **INTERVIEWER:** The solutions to the problems that you see, though, it's not all about spending money and buying new equipment.
- [00:03:56] **TEMPLE:** No, and one of the things that we found, yes, and I designed a lot of fancy equipment.
- [00:04:00] You're building a big feed yard or big plant? Yes.
- [00:04:03] The amount of cattle you're handling, I'd recommend having some really nice equipment—silencer, squeeze, chute, some of the top-of-the-line stuff.
- [00:04:11] But on a lot of small ranches, you can work with some very basic equipment, but you've got to have non-slip flooring in your squeeze chute, your lowering ramps, your scales.
- [00:04:21] Non-slip flooring is essential. They panic if they start to slip.
- [00:04:25] I think you've got at least to have a head gate to put cattle in.
- [00:04:28] But one thing I was amazed with in some of the work that we did where we had to get people into cattle handling compliance was a lot of simple fixes would work. We'd add a solid side where they could see the trucks going by.
- [00:04:40] We'd change lighting, because you see (inaudible) inside, so you can do a lot of things to adding lights and changing lights.
- [00:04:47] In a building like that, see how that's kind of dark? (*Temple motions toward an open corral with columns and a sloping roof.*) **INTERVIEWER:** Absolutely.

[00:04:50] **TEMPLE:** If that's the entrance into your cattle handling facility, they may not go in there, so what you got to do is open up the wall on the other side so they can see light through the building. Then they'll go in.

[00:05:01] Another thing I want to say is measuring cattle handling.

[00:05:05] Too oftentimes I have gone out to a place, I've got the cattle handling really nice, I come back a year later, the hot shots are out, the screaming and yelling is out.

[00:05:12] The first thing in cattle handling is get your mouth shut and calm down and stop flapping your arms because scared cattle are going to be a lot harder to handle because they're all stuck together and frightened.

[00:05:23] Calm down, and then we need to measure handling.

[00:05:26] **INTERVIEWER:** To specifically measure? **TEMPLE:** We need to specifically measure handling because we got to make sure we don't go back into bad practices.

[00:05:35] **INTERVIEWER:** You don't want to use general terms, you want specific counts.

[00:05:36] **TEMPLE:** I want a measure. How many cattle fell down during handling? That should be no more than one or two percent.

[00:05:44] How many cattle did you use the hot shot on? NCBI guidelines, it should be 10 percent or less.

[00:05:51] How many cattle move right when you catch them or right when you put them in the squeeze chute? Obviously, they're going to moo if you brand them, but you should be able to catch their head and squeeze up their body without having mooing in direct response to that squeeze chute.

[00:06:05] If they're mooing in direct response to that squeeze chute, you're hurting them with the squeeze chute.

[00:06:08] Also, how many cattle race out of the squeeze chute? I want cattle walking and trotting out, not running out.

[00:06:16] Then how many cattle hit stuff? I want no cattle hit and gates and fences.

[00:06:20] **INTERVIEWER:** The shoot itself should be something of a calming to the cow.

[00:06:22] **TEMPLE:** That's right. Got to have a non-slip floor.

[00:06:24] I like a squeeze chute with both sides squeezing.

[00:06:27] Some of the single-sized squeeze chute tend to throw the cow off balance, and that tends to make the animal panic.

[00:06:32] Fear of falling is a primal fear.

[00:06:34] I'm amazed at the number of scales and lead up shoots and loading ramps that I have fixed with putting a non-slip flooring.

[00:06:41] **INTERVIEWER:** You're not talking about anything fancy with that; you're putting in a few rods on it.

[00:06:44] **TEMPLE:** I'm talking about putting some rods down on the floor.

[00:06:46] Now, if you use a steel rod to make grading, you need heavy rod, three-quarter-inch or one-inch rod, you must weld the squares like this.

Begin visual description. Temple holds her left pointer finger facing away from her and puts the very tip of her right pointer finger perpendicular with the second knuckle of her left hand. Her fingers are making a sideways T, and neither finger is on top of the other. End visual description.

[00:06:53] Never put the rod like that.

Begin visual description. Temple keeps her left pointer finger extended away from her, but she places her right pointer finger so that it is still perpendicular to her left, but this time her right finger is on top of her left finger so that her right fingernail is covering her left finger's second knuckle. End visual description.

[00:06:55] **INTERVIEWER:** Keep it very level.

[00:06:56] **TEMPLE:** If you put the rods on top of each other, they rip their feet off.

[00:06:59] You've got to weld the grid flat.

[00:07:01] You can go 12-inch squares.

[00:07:03] Also, you can buy these woven tire mats. It looks like a giant kids' pot holder made out of tire treads. There's a company up in Kansas it makes those.

[00:07:12] They're really super nice.

[00:07:14] You can rent grooving machines.

[00:07:17] Also when you build floors, let's make sure we make some grooves this deep in front of a squeeze chute on scales, places where it's a really high handling, because you got slippery floor, and the cattle start jiggling like this, they just start to panic because they feel like they're going to fall.

[00:07:37] I'm amazed at the stuff—restraining facilities, same thing with horses, same thing with dogs.

[00:07:43] You bring a dog into the vet, take a bath mat with a rubber backing and put it on that table so your dog's not sliding around.

[00:07:49] **INTERVIEWER:** That slippery slidey. Absolutely.

[00:07:49] **TEMPLE:** He's going to be a lot happier because he's not going to feel like he's going to fall.

[00:07:54] **INTERVIEWER:** So much of these problems, just a little bit of consideration, a little bit of spending time, thinking about the animal.

[00:07:58] **TEMPLE:** Then you need to understand flight zone.

[00:08:01] I walk up to this animal. (*Temple starts walking toward a nearby cow.*)

[00:08:04] Let's just walked up here.

[00:08:06] There's going to be a point where he's going to back off.

[00:08:08] He's looking at me there. (*As Temple gets closer, the cow turns and runs away.*)
You see that? I just went in his flight zone.

[00:08:14] Let's say I have him, but you see how he's turning.

[00:08:18] He always wants to know where we're at. He's turning and looking at us.

[00:08:20] **INTERVIEWER:** And keeping that ear on us the whole time.

[00:08:21] **TEMPLE:** He's got ears on us.

[00:08:22] But let's say he was standing in line in a squeeze chute and I stood right up there next to him, he'd be jumping all around, freaking out because I'd be in his flight zone.

[00:08:32] I got two choices there: I can over up the side of the shoot so he don't see you standing there, or I've got to back up and I've got to get far away from it because he's not going to be happy if I'm standing next to him in the lead up shoot.

[00:08:48] Obviously, I have to stand next to him when we're working on him in the squeeze chute.

[00:08:51] We don't have any choice there.

[00:08:53] **INTERVIEWER:** Right.

[00:08:53] But while he's standing in line, he shouldn't have to have people in his flight zone.

[00:08:56] **INTERVIEWER:** He's going to feel like he's pressured there.

[00:08:58] **TEMPLE:** That's right.