

Cornish farmer fined after cow attacks left walkers fearing for their lives

- A Cornish farmer has been fined for failing to take action after walkers were attacked by cattle with calves on a public footpath.
- A 75-year-old man suffered serious injuries and required surgery after being trampled while walking his dog.
- HSE found cattle with young calves, which are known to be protective and unpredictable, had been kept in a field with public access despite safer alternatives being available.

A 75-year-old man said he feared for his life after being attacked by cows while walking his dog on a public footpath in Cornwall.

The farmer responsible has been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as a result.

Brian Gregory, aged 75, was on a caravanning holiday at Porthcothan in June 2024. On 30 June 2024, Mr Gregory and his labrador, Molly, were walking along the South West Coast Path at Park Head when he was suddenly attacked by a herd of cattle with calves.



The herd of cows near the South West Coast Path at Park Head

He let go of Molly's lead and the cattle chased after his dog away from him, but not in time to prevent him being trampled and butted. Mr Gregory was assisted by passing walkers and made it back to his caravan with Molly. When his partner saw his injuries, she immediately called an ambulance and he spent five days in hospital.

He suffered multiple serious injuries including a severed artery, horn marks and gashes down to the bone, and required surgery.

The farmer responsible for the cattle, Beverley Chapman of Tembleath Farm, St Columb Major, was told about the cattle attack on the same day. However, rather than removing the cattle and calves from the South West Coast Path, she added more cattle and calves to the herd to increase its size. Some of the calves were as young as 42 days old.

A month later, two local residents were walking their dogs along the South West Coast Path in the same area of Park Head when they were also attacked by the same herd of cattle and calves. They only escaped serious injury by sheltering in an area of gorse bushes by the cliff edge, but one of their dogs was seriously injured and required surgery.

Again, Beverley Chapman was informed about the incident however only removed the cattle from the South West Coast Path four days later, when instructed to do so by a Cornwall Council public rights of way officer.

The HSE investigation found that cattle with young calves, which are known to be protective and unpredictable, were being kept in a field with a public right of way across it. This can pose a significant risk to walkers, particularly those with dogs. Mrs Chapman had other enclosed fields available which did not contain public rights of way and could have been used to house the cattle and calves.

When farmers are considering putting cattle into fields with public access, they should have regard to HSE guidance AIS17 '[Cattle and public access in England and Wales](#)'. This guidance sets out a range of controls which should be considered and, where reasonably practicable, implemented, including:

- Where possible avoid putting cattle, especially cows with calves, in fields with public access
- Do all that is reasonably practicable to keep animals and people separated, including erecting fencing (permanent or temporary), such as electric fencing
- Assess the temperament of cattle before placing them in fields with public access
- Any animal that has shown signs of aggression must not be kept in a field where they have access to the public
- Clearly signpost all public access routes across the farm and display signage at all field entrances stating what livestock are present, such as cows with calves or bulls.

Beverley Chapman of Tembleath Farm, St Columb Major, Cornwall, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. She was fined £5,260 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £4,650 and a court surcharge of £2,000 at Bristol Magistrates' Court on 16 December 2025.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Simon Jones, said:

"Cattle are extremely protective of their calves and even calm cattle can become aggressive if they think their calves may be threatened.

"Given the nature of the cattle attack, it is fortunate that the injuries sustained by Mr Gregory weren't fatal. On this occasion, Mr Gregory took all the right precautions while out walking.

"Despite being made aware of attacks on walkers on two separate occasions, Mrs Chapman failed to take action to remove the cattle or control risks by separating them from walkers on the South West Coast Path. It was only when

officially instructed by a public rights of way officer from the local council that she took action.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer, Rebecca Schwartz and Paralegal, Gabrielle O’Sullivan.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Advice for farmers, landowners and other livestock keepers on dealing with [Cattle and public access in England and Wales – HSE](#) is available.
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).