First: Look at your own and the cows’ behaviour.
- Let the cows drift home.
- Don’t let the dog touch the cows.
- Shout, whistle, talk or even sing to your cows if they slow down, but don’t force them.
- Watch the rear group of cows and make sure their heads stay down (heads up – they are being pushed).
- Watch the rear group of cows and make sure they aren’t pushing each other (cows don’t like body contact).
- Don’t come out of the milking shed to get cows into the bails.
- Use the backing gate only to take up space, not to push cows.
- All staff use backing gate and top gate the same way (cows are creatures of habit). For larger farms with many staff members and with staff turn-over, it is impossible to train everyone to do it right every day, so the only answer I see for large herds is to install switching to force everyone to do it the same way:
  1. The backing gate is regulated to move no more than five seconds in any one movement by a timer on the switch.
  2. The backing gate speed is regulated at no more than 12 metres per minute in round yards or 6 metres per minute in rectangular yards.
  3. The top-gate is regulated to move for no more than two seconds in each forward movement with a button switch control. The top gate moves forward at a maximum speed of 12 metres per minute in round yards or 6 metres per minute in rectangular yards.

Second: Look at your milking shed area.
- Wide, straight, level, well drained track approaching shed.
- Nib wall to stop wash water flowing onto track.
- Entrance from race straight into yard or gentle curve.
- Wide entrance gate – at least as wide as the race.
- Plenty of space in the yard to congregate - a minimum of 1.3 square metres space for Jersey cows and 1.4 to 1.5 square metres space for Friesian cows (depending on their size and the design of the shed).
- Look for any other factors that would make cows fear the yard (slippery concrete, stray voltage, electrified backing gate).

Third: Look at your track.
The ideal race is:
- Well designed
  - firm, compacted base material.
  - crowned to keep water off.
  - non-damaging surfaces.
  - well-drained edges.
- Width sufficient for herd size (min 5 m).
- Even width – or even better, getting wider as it reaches the shed.
- Level – steep areas should be reduced, particularly close to the shed.
- No congestion points – avoid right angle bends, narrowing of race, mud holes, excess crowning.
- Always spend money on the tracks closest to the shed first (unless you are a millionaire!).

Fourth: “Fine Tuning”
- Use meal or licks etc to attract cows to the shed early in the season.
- Attend to any problem areas – eg. shaded areas of the track.
- Junction of concrete with metal (Ag lime, Nib wall).
- Footbath in exit race from shed – if infection between claws shows up (simple footrot), treat herd twice weekly, during problem times.
- Split the herd, particularly early in the season, if large herd.

(From “Lameness in Dairy Cattle: Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention in Pasture-fed Dairy Herds” (2009) by Neil Chesterton)