



To get bulls to buck wildly a flank strap is tightened around the bull's sensitive mid-section as the bull leaves the chute.

# Rodeo Round Up!

Are rodeos just harmless entertainment or do they involve animal cruelty?

Each year more than 1,000 rodeos take place across Canada and the United States. The events include bull riding, bareback bronc riding, steer wrestling, team steer roping, calf roping, horse barrel racing, chuckwagon races and several

others. There is even an event in which kids ride sheep. Some people suggest that the only real danger in rodeos is to the cowboys who can get hurt falling from bulls or get their fingers caught in ropes, etc. But what about the animals?

other cruel techniques, at some rodeos handlers use small electric prods that shock the animals so they buck harder, or so that the calves run terrified out of chutes. Other techniques include twisting the calves' tails to make them run out of the chute quicker, putting fingers up a calf's nose to control the animal, and using spurs to jab horses' flanks (below) to get them to run faster.



## BC SPCA'S POSITION ON RODEOS

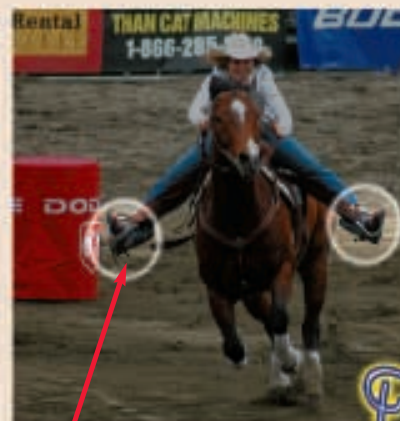
The SPCA does not support events where animals may suffer from pain, injury or distress just for entertainment. Rodeos pose a high risk of animals getting injured or even killed. The SPCA recognizes the long tradition of rodeos and would like to see a phasing out of events that cause the greatest distress to animals.

Visit our website for more background information on rodeos – [www.sPCA.bc.ca/kids](http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/kids).

**Rodeos rely on cattle acting stressed and afraid.** The harder the animals buck and the faster they run to escape the cowboys, the more exciting the event is to the audience. Cattle are one of the most docile creatures on earth and so rodeo handlers use some special techniques to get them to “perform.”

**Devices that hurt and irritate the animals are used to make bulls and horses buck wildly.** Look closely at the bull riding and you will see a flank strap around the waist of the bull. This strap is tightened as the bull leaves the stall causing him to buck wildly to try to get it off. They do the same to get the horses to buck as well.

While many rodeo association rules restrict the use of shock devices and



The Barrel Racing is all about speed, and the women riders urge their horses on by jabbing them in the side with their spurred boots.

Do rod

But do rodeo animals really get hurt? Yes, the worst injuries happen to young animals such as calves (about 2-3 months old) and steers (older calves still with their mothers) in the roping events. **Every year hundreds of animals get broken limbs and necks and suffer sprains and bruises.** Over the last four years 23 rodeo animals have died in Canada. The most recent in BC was in 2004 when **a steer was killed in a roping event at the Cloverdale Rodeo** – the largest BC rodeo – when his neck was broken.

No matter how you look at it, rodeos cause animals pain and suffering. In recent years some rodeos have made an effort to modify or exclude some events to limit the pain and injuries suffered by the animals. Despite these changes, animals continue to get hurt, and fear and anxiety are still a big part of the show.



### CALVES ON THE RANGE

Normally calves are born in the early spring and spend seven to nine months nursing from their mothers and feeding on grass. Cattle are gentle, social animals that form tight bonds within their herd. It is within the herd that cattle feel safe; when separated from the group they feel anxious, often vocalizing to find each other.



Kids as young as five ride in the Mutton (sheep) event.



In the Wild Milking event, teams of two cowboys charge a herd of cows. As the frantic cows scatter, one cowboy lassos a cow. He then jumps down and grabs the cow's head – twisting it to stop the cow, while his partner milks the animal.



The first team to fill their cup wins.

In the Team Steer Roping event steers are chased and are lassoused by two cowboys. One lassos the head and the other the two back feet. The intent is to stop the animal by pulling in opposite directions stretching out the steer.

Do rodeos promote animal cruelty?  
What do you think?

# Take Action!

The topic of whether rodeos are good or bad is controversial. Some people argue that rodeos are a long-time tradition and that there are rules in place that prevent harm to animals. **Others say that tormenting animals for entertainment is wrong and unnecessary, and that there is hidden cruelty as well.** Rodeo cowboys need to do a lot of practice long before they do public performances. **Who monitors this?** Do your own research on rodeos and ask lots of questions before making up your mind.

If you don't like the way animals are treated at rodeos, you can take action:

- ✓ **Don't attend the rodeo in your community.** Rodeos will end if people stop going.
- ✓ **Tell your friends and classmates about why you think rodeos suck!** The topic of rodeos would make a great class speech or debate.
- ✓ **Write a letter.** Help your city/municipality follow in the paws of other communities, such as Vancouver, Victoria and the District of North Vancouver, that have banned rodeos by sending a letter to your local Mayor and Council to tell them what you think about rodeos!

If you need some help writing your letter, check out this sample letter.

Schedule of some of BC's rodeos: May: Vernon, Princeton, Cloverdale, Luxton, Falkland June/July: Williams Lake, Quesnel August: Abbotsford, Cranbrook, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Armstrong September: Golden, Merritt October: Prince George

## Writing an Effective Letter

August 1, 2006  
Terry N.  
1111 Sample Road  
Sampleton, BC V1V 1V1  
contact@email.ca

Mayor of City/Town  
9999 Sample Road  
Sampleton, BC V1V 1V1

salutation: use proper title

Dear Mayor & Council:

My name is Terry. I am nine years old. I am writing to ask that you consider creating a by-law banning rodeo events in Sampleton. Rodeos are filled with violence and cruelty to animals. For example, flank straps are used to make animals buck; animals are teased to make them run from their chutes; cowboys rope and neck-jerk calves running at full speed – these are all methods employing fear and pain to make animals perform. In the last five years more than 20 animals involved in rodeos have been killed.

I don't want to see animals frightened, hurt or killed for entertainment. I'd rather attend a community fair, have a picnic with my family or go swimming on a hot summer day. I will tell my friends, peers and family about the cruelty behind rodeos and encourage them not to attend either.

Sincerely,  
Terry N.

cc: BC SPCA Kids Club

date, your name & address

recipient address: name of organization, contact name & their position and full mailing address

body: introduce yourself and state why you are writing. Give reasons why you disagree with rodeos. Be brief & to the point.

cc: send a copy to the Kids Club so we know you're out there!

## Stamp out animal cruelty at the rodeo and receive your very own End Animal Cruelty band!

If you are one of the first 10 kids to send us your letter to Mayor and Council, we'll send you an End Animal Cruelty band! If you live in a community that has banned rodeos, send your letter to a neighbouring community, such as Surrey, that hosts the annual Cloverdale Rodeo.

