

PRCA's Commitment

For more than 60 years, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) has been formulating rules for the care and treatment of rodeo livestock. Today 70 rules govern all aspects of livestock care and handling at PRCA events, including the equipment used, the time allowed for competition and the condition of the facilities. These rules were born from a partnership with the competitors and stock contractors who own the animals and the desire to provide for those animals to ensure that only healthy, well-cared-for animals participate in PRCA rodeos. "The PRCA sets the standard for humane care of rodeo animal athletes," said Dr. Jennifer Schleininger, a Ames, IA, equine veterinarian, about the PRCA.

PRCA rules require a veterinarian to be on-site for all competition, which allows the PRCA to call on these experts to help report the condition of the livestock and be the basis for the livestock welfare program. The on-site veterinarians periodically participate in livestock surveys, which report detailed information on any livestock injury and condition of the livestock.

The results of these surveys continually show the rate of injury to rodeo livestock to be very low and the standards for care of the livestock at PRCA events very high. A recent survey, conducted at 148 PRCA rodeo performances and 70 sections of slack recorded 28 injuries occurring during 60,244 exposures. This calculates to an injury rate of .00046 or just under five-hundredths of one percent. Through the years, other studies have shown similar or lower rates of injury. The comments of the veterinarian at the PRCA rodeo in Pocatello, Idaho, mirrored those of the other vets participating, "Stock was in very good condition. No stress to the animals was evident." The comments from veterinarians who serve at PRCA rodeos are overwhelmingly positive.

The PRCA's Livestock Program Administrator oversees the extensive livestock welfare program that includes Livestock Welfare Committee. The Committee consists of large animal veterinarians, as well as rodeo committee, stock contractor and contestant representatives. Other livestock welfare programs include training of rodeo veterinarians, outreach to other rodeo associations, government relations, communication with veterinary and livestock associations and public education.

Rodeo Events

Rodeo events showcase the livestock of professional rodeo in different ways. From the talented, specially bred bucking stock to the incredibly quick and intelligent timed-event horses and the well-suited cattle used in timed events, all livestock is provided proper care and treatment.

Roughstock Events. The roughstock events rely on horses and bulls that kick high and buck powerfully. To prepare for a career in the roughstock events, bucking stock is familiarized with chutes, and many times trained using dummies which are electronically released after eight seconds. This allows the animals to learn to buck successfully and be familiar with the process leading up to participating in rodeos.

Timed Events. The cattle used in timed events in PRCA-sanctioned rodeos must meet a multitude of requirements formulated through the years to ensure the most well-suited livestock to each event is used. The roping events, which have origins in ranch life where cowboys on the range rope cattle in order to vaccinate or brand, require that the cattle meet minimum and maximum weight limits. The rules governing all timed events have been formulated to allow for the optimum weight and breed of participating livestock.

Attend a PRCA Rodeo Today!

Witness firsthand the healthy, well-cared-for livestock at PRCA-sanctioned rodeo near you. The PRCA sanctions more than 600 rodeo events across North America, for a schedule of rodeos, visit www.prorodeo.com.

With further questions or to request more printed information, contact:

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Published 2015

PRORODEO LIVESTOCK



Stock Contractors

Providing livestock for a PRCA rodeo is no small feat, and the 76 stock contractor members of the PRCA take pride in the health and welfare of their animals. Today's bucking horses and bulls come from specially created "born to buck" breeding programs, and the result is talented, athletic livestock.

"My reason for being in the business is not necessarily to make money. There are a lot of other things I could be doing," said Ike Sankey, PRCA stock contractor. "I enjoy being around these horses and bulls. That's why I am in the business." This is indicative of PRCA stock contractors who spend countless hours transporting, feeding, conditioning and providing veterinary care to the hundreds of animals it takes to produce a PRCA event. Managing the logistics of sorting, transporting, feeding and otherwise caring for bulls, horses, steers and calves is a labor of love for Professional Rodeos livestock providers.



PRCA PHOTO BY CINDY SCHONHOLTZ

The health of the livestock reflects the outstanding care provided, whether at home on the ranch, or at the facilities at different rodeos. Many bucking horses perform well into their 20's and bulls into their teens, so it seems working around five minutes a year allows for long careers.

"I have seen animal caretakers go hungry due to the time spent feeding and tending to stock following performances" said Dr. Jennifer Schleining. "Healthy, well-cared-for animals are the center of the a successful rodeo production."

PRCA Rules

The list of rules that govern the care and treatment of rodeo livestock is long, but here are a few examples.

•**Veterinarian.** A rodeo committee shall ensure that a veterinarian is present and on-site for every performance and/or section of slack. Any rodeo committee failing to do so shall be subject to a fine of \$500 per performance and/or section of slack per rodeo.



PHOTO BY CINDY SCHONHOLTZ

• **No Sharp Objects in Cinch, Saddle, Girth or Flank Straps.** No sharp or cutting objects in cinch, saddle girth, or flank straps shall be permitted. Flank straps used for horses must either be sheepskin-lined or neoprene-lined and shall be of the quick-release type. Sheepskin-lined or neoprene-lined flank straps shall be placed on the animal so the lined portion is over both flanks of the animal. In the bull riding, a soft cotton rope at least 5/8" in diameter is acceptable as a flank strap and does not require the sheepskin or neoprene lining.

• **Prods and Other Artificial Stimuli.** Standard electric prods shall be used only as specified in these Official Rodeo Rules and in the Bylaws. If a prod is used, the animal shall only be touched on the hip or shoulder area. No other artificial stimuli shall be used (with the exception of rodeo equipment and gear commonly used and accepted in connection with the respective events at PRCA-sanctioned rodeos).

• **No Sharp Spurs.** Riders shall not use sharp spurs. The rules are enforced by specially trained and qualified PRCA officials. PRCA judge George Gibbs stated, "I know I can speak for all of the judges. We take it seriously. One of our most important responsibilities is to make sure rodeo is done humanely."

Equipment

Equipment used in rodeo has specific purposes and is governed by PRCA rules. Veterinarians say rodeo gear, including the flank strap, dull spurs and cattle prod, is safe.

The flank strap that is used in the roughstock events are specifically utilized to enhance the kicking action of an animal that has the natural inclination to buck. PRCA rules stipulate that horse flank straps must be lined with neoprene or fleece. Veterinarian Dr. Doug Corey comments on the flank strap, "The flank strap produces mild pressure on the flanks, but not as to hurt the animal." It might be compared to a snug belt."



PRCA PHOTO

The cattle prod, powered by a flashlight battery, is a tool used to safely move large animals. Dr. Jim Furman, a livestock veterinarian, stated, "Sometimes it is necessary to touch an animal with an electric stock prod to get it to go where you want it to go. The prod is not a damaging stimulant, but rather an effective way to move the animals where they need to be in a humane fashion." The prod uses virtually no amperage, causing no burns. A horse's hide is nearly three times as thick as human skin and bulls hide is nearly seven times thicker—similar to the sole of a shoe allowing the safe use of a prod to move large animals.

Spurs used in rodeo's roughstock events are required to be dull and in the horse events must roll across the horse's. The loosely locked dull spurs used in the bull riding events allow the rider to grip the bull's thick hide while protecting the bull.



PHOTO BY KIRT STANKE