



ANIMAL WELFARE

THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF PROFESSIONAL RODEO LIVESTOCK

Anyone who attends a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) rodeo can be assured that the greatest care has been taken to prevent injury to animals or contestants. The very nature of rodeo requires a working relationship, and in some events a partnership, between the cowboys and animal athletes.

PRCA contestants possess a high degree of respect and fondness for their animals, as do the PRCA stock contractors, the ranchers who raise and provide livestock to rodeos. With the sport of rodeo as their livelihood, they also have an obvious financial interest in keeping the animals in peak condition.

Like a well-conditioned athlete, an animal can perform well only if it is healthy and thriving. Nearly all PRCA's approximately 10,000 members have lived and worked around animals for most of their lives, making them the ultimate stewards for humane treatment and animal care.

Because the PRCA and its members value their animals, they staunchly protect them with more than 60 specifically formulated rules and regulations that govern all aspects of animal care and handling at rodeos. Here are a few examples:

- Professional rodeo judges, who are responsible for the enforcement of all PRCA rules, believe in these humane regulations and do not hesitate to report violations.
- A veterinarian is required to be on-site for all rodeo performances to help ensure the healthy condition of the animals and oversee their welfare.
- No sharp objects in Cinch, Saddle, Girth, or Flank Straps.
- Flank straps must be lined with fleece or neoprene for horses and 5/8" soft cotton ropes for bulls.
- The flank strap enhances the kicking action of an animal that has the natural inclination to buck. It places mild pressure on the flanks compared to a snug belt not to hurt or injure the animal.
- No sharp spurs.
- No jerk down or dragging in tie down roping. Contestants are required to handle the slack in their ropes to prevent pulling calves over backward or dragging them on the ground.
- Horn wraps. Roping steers are required to wear protective wraps around their horns to prevent injury.

The on-site veterinarians report detailed information on any livestock injury and condition of the livestock. The results of these reports continually show the rate of injury very low at a rate of four hundredths of one percent (.0004) and the standards of care of the livestock at PRCA events very high.

Animal welfare is a major and ongoing initiative of the PRCA. They host several veterinary advisory panels and periodically conduct educational seminars for veterinarians and rodeo industry members. The PRCA also employs a full-time animal welfare coordinator to oversee internal and public education programs.