



**Thunder
Mountain**
pro-rodeo

1900 7th Avenue
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Part of the Cowlitz County Events Center

Animal Welfare

In the sport of professional rodeo, cowboys share the limelight with the rodeo livestock. For a cowboy to compete at the highest level, the livestock also must be in peak condition. Both are athletes in their own right. The very nature of rodeo requires a working relationship, and in some events a partnership, between the cowboys and animal athletes.

Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) athletes value their animals, as do the PRCA stock contractors that provide the livestock for the rodeos. Like most people, PRCA members believe animals should be provided proper care and treatment. The PRCA and its members value their animals and staunchly protect them with specifically created rules.

Consistent proper treatment of animals by PRCA members – in and out of the arena – has been well documented by veterinarians who have witnessed the health and condition of the animals first hand.

Scottsdale, Arizona equine veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Schleining has this to say about the PRCA, “The PRCA upholds the standard of humane care of rodeo animal athletes, and in my professional opinion rodeo remains a healthy, humane, family oriented sport.”

Like a well-conditioned athlete, an animal can perform well only if it is healthy. Any cowboy will tell you he takes home a paycheck only when the animal is in top form. Stock contractors, the ranchers who raise and provide livestock to rodeos, also have an obvious financial interest in keeping the animals healthy. Simple logic dictates that no sensible businessperson would abuse an animal that is expected to perform in the future.

Many – if not most – of the PRCA’s approximately 10,000 members have more than an economic tie to animals. Nearly all have lived and worked around animals for most of their lives, and they possess a high degree of respect and fondness for the livestock.

Hundreds of veterinarians compete in professional rodeo.



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“I think they participate because they have a deep interest in animals,” said Doug Corey, a Pendleton, Ore., veterinarian. “If there was any mistreatment going on, they wouldn’t participate.”

Anyone who attends a PRCA rodeo can be assured that the greatest care has been taken to prevent injury to animals or contestants.

PRCA members are bound by the not-for-profit corporation’s bylaws and rules, which include a section that deals exclusively with the humane treatment of animals. The association’s rules and regulations include more than 60 rules dealing with the care and treatment of animals. Anyone who violates these rules may be disqualified and reported to the PRCA, which will levy fines.

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. Becoming a PRCA judge involves extensive training in the skills needed to evaluate livestock and testing of that knowledge and of the rodeo. PRCA rodeo judges undergo constant training and evaluation to ensure their skills are sharp and that they are enforcing PRCA rules, especially those regarding the care and handling of rodeo livestock.

Animal welfare is a major and ongoing initiative of the PRCA. Not only does the association have rules to ensure the proper care and treatment of rodeo livestock, but it also has several veterinary advisory panels and periodically hosts educational seminars for veterinarians and rodeo industry members. To coordinate its animal welfare efforts, the PRCA employs a full-time animal welfare coordinator to oversee internal and public education programs.

-Source: www.prorodeo.com