

NSW Code of Practice for animals used in rodeo events

Introduction

It is expected that the operation of any rodeos in NSW will be conducted in accordance with the code of practice set out below. Compliance with code will ensure that no offence is committed in relation to sections 18 and 18A of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979. These sections refer particularly to the use of animals for fighting or baiting, but also include the use of cattle when part of an exhibition, spectacle or display where they could be cruelly treated or inflicted with pain and suffering.

The Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals Used in Rodeo Events, set out below, is as approved on 30 April 1988 by the NSW Animal Welfare Advisory Council and as referred to in clause 36(5) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012.

1. General principles

1.1 This Code of Practice is intended for people involved with, and participating in, rodeo events.

The Code is based on knowledge available at the time of publication and should be reviewed at intervals of no longer than 2 years to maintain the highest possible standards.

1.2 Animals participating in rodeo events, or being transported, yarded and handled for use in rodeo events, may be subjected to a number of stresses which may have cumulative effects. Stressful influences may include:

- yarding and handling
- deprivation of food and water
- changes in climatic conditions
- overcrowding or isolation
- unfamiliar surroundings, noises and sensations
- insufficient care during transportation
- use of rodeo equipment

Animals likely to be most affected are those which are not accustomed to rodeo events.

1.3 The welfare of animals used in rodeo events must be safeguarded. It is essential that there is a clear understanding and acceptance of responsibilities by the owner/agent, rodeo personnel and competitors.

1.4 The use of animals in rodeo events requires careful planning to reduce any adverse effects on them. The preparation of animals for use in rodeo events should be undertaken by competent stockpersons.

1.5 In general, the transport, care, handling and use of animals shall be in accordance with the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* and with the provisions of the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Road Transport of Livestock, as produced by the Australian Bureau of Animal Health in 1983.

1.6 Animals used for rodeo events should be handled by competent experienced personnel at all times. In particular, pick-up personnel must be experienced and competent.

1.7 The rodeo associations recognised under the Code of Practice are the:

Australian Professional Rodeo Association (APRA)

Australian Bushmen's Campdraft and Rodeo Association (ABCRA)

National Rodeo Association (NRA)

2. Selection of Stock

2.1 Only cattle or horses (bovine or equine species) may be used in rodeo events.

2.2 Animals for all events should be inspected on site on the day of the rodeo by a veterinarian when available or by an experienced stockperson. No animal which is sore, lame, sick or injured shall be permitted in the draw at any time.

2.3 Should an animal become sick or injured between the time it is drawn and the time it is scheduled to compete, that animal shall not be used in the competition and another animal drawn for the contestant.

2.4 All animals to be used in bucking events must be contract stock. Contractors must be approved by the APRA, ABCRA or NRA.

2.5 Where animals for use in bucking events cannot be supplied by an approved contractor, rodeo associations may accept as contract stock those animals which have, within the 21 days immediately preceding the event, been certified in writing as being fit and suitable for this purpose by an officer as defined under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

2.6 Horses used in rodeo rough stock riding events must be sound, in good condition and evidently mature. Age should not be the sole criterion for maturity and this should be defined by physical characteristics and growth; however, horses under the age of 3 years may not be generally sufficiently mature for rough stock events and must not be used.

The criterion for determination of the suitability of a rodeo bucking horse should be complete epiphyseal closure. This can best be determined by the presence of the central adult incisors in wear.

2.7 The minimum weight applying to cattle used in calf roping events is 100 kg.

The minimum weight applying to cattle used in poddy riding events is 200 kg with a maximum rider weight of 40 kg.

The minimum weight applying to cattle for all other events is 200 kg.

2.8 Cattle with excessive horn growth likely to cause injury to themselves, the competitor or other animals shall have their horns tipped by an experienced stockperson.

2.9 Overfat or obviously pregnant animals of either species (cattle and horses) must not be used.

2.10 Known chute fighting and unsuitable stock shall be banned from all rodeos.

3. Transport, Yarding and Handling of Animals

3.1 The owner/agent has a responsibility to select only fit and healthy animals for transport. Animals that are either ill or injured may be transported to and from a place for proper veterinary treatment. Transportation of a critically injured animal to a processing works or other place away from the rodeo site for destruction is not acceptable and such animals should be humanely destroyed on site.

3.2 Animals of different species, and certain classes of animals of the same species, e.g., calves and adult cattle, should be transported in separate vehicles or alternatively separated by partitioning.

3.3 Assembly of stock must be carried out in stock proof yards and all chutes and loading ramps are to be safe for animals.

3.4 Animals should be fed and watered at least once every 24 hours. More frequent feeding and watering may be necessary as determined by work levels and weather conditions.

3.5 No stock should be confined in a vehicle beyond a period of 24 hours, without being unloaded, properly fed, watered and rested. This shall not apply where the animals are carried in conveyances in which they do have proper food, water, space and an opportunity to rest. On hot days trucks should rest under shade if possible.

3.6 Vehicles transporting animals must be soundly constructed, with non-slip floors and free of protrusions which could injure animals.

3.7 Loading and unloading facilities, chutes and yards must be designed and constructed to prevent injury to stock.

3.8 Loading ramps must be wide enough to allow for the passage of mature animals but narrow enough to prevent animals turning around. The inner rails should be smooth with no sharp projections which may injure animals.

3.9 Loading should be supervised by experienced stockpersons. Supervisors should ensure that spectators do not interfere with the smooth loading or unloading of animals.

3.10 No animal shall be beaten or cruelly prodded. The use of sticks, metal piping, wood, heavy leather belts, wooden paddles and similar objects is not permitted. The use of flappers is encouraged.

3.11 Standard electric prods shall be used as little as possible and may be powered by battery or dynamo only. Prods must be in accordance with the regulations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and must not be used inside the arena.

Cattle may only be prodded in the shoulder or rump. A prod may only be used instantaneously on the shoulder of a bucking horse to clear it from the chute on opening of the gate, and may be used only by the contractor or his nominee. When non-contract bucking horses are used the prod may be used only by a person authorised by the chute boss.

3.12 Animals should not be lifted off the ground by head, horns or legs during loading, unloading or handling in yards or chutes.

3.13 All stock must be examined by an experienced and competent stockperson prior to loading of the stock for transport. Any unsound or injured stock not fit for travel shall be segregated and given appropriate care and veterinary treatment, where necessary.

3.14 Maintenance personnel and equipment must be stationed to assist in the removal of any animal should it become caught in chutes, yards and lanes, and to repair any damage which could be hazardous to animals or contestants.

4. Care and Treatment of Rodeo Animals

4.1 An official veterinarian should be in attendance continuously from at least 2 hours before the advertised starting time of the rodeo until at least one hour after the completion of the final event on each day, and should have ready access to an appropriate range of drugs and equipment.

Where a veterinarian is not in attendance, the rodeo organisers must appoint a competent person, with experience with livestock, to examine animals.

Preference should be given, whenever possible, to officers as defined under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Neither the official veterinarian nor the livestock examiner should be a competitor.

4.2 Rodeo organisers are to ensure that a veterinarian is either in attendance at the rodeo, or on call and available to attend within a reasonable period of time.

4.3 Rodeo associations are to maintain an updated list of registered veterinarians obtained from the NSW Board of Veterinary Surgeons, to advise rodeo committees of the locations of veterinarians.

4.4 The veterinarian in attendance, or the livestock examiner when a veterinarian is not in attendance, shall be the sole arbiter, following examination, of whether an animal is fit for use in an event.

4.5 The veterinarian in attendance, or the livestock examiner when a veterinarian is not in attendance, shall supervise and be responsible for the expeditious and humane destruction of an animal, if he or she deems it necessary.

4.6 An animal which becomes excessively excited and appears in any way in danger of injuring itself shall be released immediately.

4.7 An animal which goes down in the chutes in a manner which may cause it to injure itself shall be released immediately.

4.8 An animal which attempts to jump out of the chutes in a manner which may cause it to injure itself shall be released immediately.

4.9 An animal released from the chutes under (6), (7) or (8) shall be examined by the attending veterinarian or livestock examiner, as appropriate, and if found unfit through injury, overexcitement or distress may not be used in any further events on that day.

4.10 If, in the opinion of the veterinarian or livestock examiner, as appropriate, the animal released under (6) (7), (8) or (9) is not considered suitable for future rodeo events, a written report will be made to the relevant Rodeo Association recommending that its executive ban the animal from participating in all rodeos under its control.

4.11 A vehicle must be available and be used to remove any injured animals from the chute or arena. Any injured or sick animal must be attended to as a matter of priority.

4.12 Animals must be removed from the arena after the completion of entry in contest, except in the case of bull-riding, where used animals may remain if the contractor or owner of the animals so requests and campdrafting, where animals may remain if the organising committee so decides.

4.13 No small animals or pets are to be allowed in the arena whilst events are in progress.

- 4.14 No stimulant, sedative or hypnotic drugs shall be given to any animal prior to use for contest purposes.
- 4.15 No person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs is permitted to take part in a rodeo.
- 4.16 Animals must be removed from the arena before fireworks are used there. The use of fireworks to frighten animals is prohibited.
- 4.17 The arena shall be free of holes, rocks, obstacles and any other hazards which may injure animals.
- 4.18 Locked rowels, or rowels that will lock on spurs, or sharp and sharpened spurs, shall not be used on horses or cattle under any circumstances. Semi-locked rowels may be used on cattle.
- 4.19 As with loading and unloading of animals, the only devices which may be used on animals to assist in their movement are electric prods of an approved type, "slappers" or polythene piping.
- 4.20 A neck rope on the contestant's horse must be used in roping and tying events, and rope and reins must be adjusted in such a way that the horse is prevented from dragging any animal. A contestant who drags an animal will be disqualified.
- 4.21 Jerking down refers to the 180° flipping over of a calf onto its back which may occur when it is roped. No animal may be jerked down, and a contestant who jerks down an animal will be disqualified.
- 4.22 After tying, ropes must be removed immediately after the judge determines tie.
- 4.23 Rodeo associations are to ensure that arrangements are made for the phasing out by 20 June 1989, of calf-roping in a form which permits the abrupt stopping of calves when roped.
- 4.24 No sharp or cutting object, or electrical device, or any object which protrudes into the skin of an animal, is permitted in the cinch, saddle, girth, flank strap, bareback rigging, headrein or headstall used on an animal.
- 4.25 Pads must be used under bareback rigging and must extend at least 5 cm past the back of the rigging. Pads of hair felt must be at least 2 cm thick, and if of rubber of an equivalent density, at least 2.5 cm thick.
- 4.26 Flank straps must be of the quick-release type and must be suitably lined. Flank straps must be placed on the animal in such a way that the lined portion overlies both flanks and the belly of the animal.
- 4.27 Contract cattle used for bulldogging may be used on no more than three occasions in each day. Non-contract cattle used for bulldogging may be used on no more than two occasions in each day. Cattle used for campdrafting may be used on no more than one occasion per day.
- 4.28 Bucking animals may not be used more than four times in one day, with the exception of re-rides.
- 4.29 All rodeo animals, other than riding horses used by contestants, pick-up personnel and rodeo officials, shall be numbered and drawn for to ensure that no unfit animal is included in the draw and that no animal is used more frequently than permitted. This shall not apply to cattle used for campdrafting.
- 4.30 Perceived mistreatment of animals will lead to disqualification by the judges from any event. Mistreatment of animals or failure to comply with the Code of Practice will also lead to disciplinary action against a contestant by rodeo associations, as deemed appropriate by the relevant association. The taking of disciplinary action by a rodeo association does not preclude the prosecution of offenders if an offence under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* or Regulations has occurred.

4.31 All rodeo personnel are advised that they should be conversant with the relevant legislation for the welfare of stock pertaining to each State. They are further advised that the Rules for individual rodeo events must not be inconsistent with the provisions of the Code of Practice or relevant legislation.

As approved on 30 April 1988 by the Animal Welfare Advisory Council.