

Rodeos

Code of Welfare

31 October 2014

TITLE

Code of Welfare: Rodeos

COMMENCEMENT

This Code of Welfare comes into force on 31 October 2014.

REVOCATION

This Code of Welfare revokes and replaces the Animal Welfare (Rodeos) Code of Welfare 2003, dated 1 January 2004.

ISSUING AUTHORITY

This Code of Welfare: Rodeos was issued by the Minister for Primary Industries, by a notice published in the *Gazette*, under sections 75 and 76 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, after having complied with the matters specified in section 75(1) and 76(2).

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of the Code of Welfare, but is intended to indicate its general effect.

Purpose

The purpose of this code is to provide information to the owners and persons in charge of rodeo animals about the standards they must achieve in order to meet their obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

This code encourages all those responsible for the care of rodeo animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry, care and handling, and to equal or exceed the minimum standards.

Adequately maintaining the welfare of animals being used in rodeos requires experience, training and the observance of high standards.

Background

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 provides for the welfare of animals in New Zealand. It puts obligations on people who own or are in charge of animals to provide for the welfare of their animals.

The Act establishes the fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals and provides for the development and issue of codes of welfare.

Codes of welfare expand on the basic obligations of the Act by setting minimum standards and recommending best practice for the care and management of animals.

Who should read this Code of Welfare?

This code is intended for all persons responsible for the welfare of all animals being used in rodeos (although only cattle and horses may be used) and includes animals used in rodeo training, and animals used in rodeo schools.

Under the Act the “owner” and every “person in charge” of an animal are responsible for meeting the legal obligations for the welfare of animals under their care.

For many animals being used in rodeos, the owner of the animals places them in the care of others who become the persons in charge, but this does not derogate from their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of the Act are met.

Why is this important?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Act. A person who is charged with an offence against the Act can defend him or herself by showing that he or she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this code.

This code includes information and example indicators for each minimum standard. The list of indicators is not exhaustive but is given to provide guidance on ways in which a minimum standard may be met.

The recommendations for best practice in this code have no legal basis and are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare.

Legislative background

This code does not provide an exhaustive list of the Act's requirements, and owners and those in charge of animals should note that they must comply with the minimum standards in this code *and* in the general provisions of the Act. A copy of the Act is accessible at: www.legislation.govt.nz.

Other information

Other codes of welfare should be consulted where appropriate (see the Ministry for Primary Industries website). This code of welfare applies to all animals used in rodeos. However, further detail on the transport of livestock and species-specific requirements for animals are generally covered in relevant, species-specific, codes of welfare.

Part 1: General Requirements

1.1 Application

This code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of all animals being used in rodeos (although only cattle and horses may be used) and includes animals used in rodeo training, and animals used in rodeo schools.

1.2 Interpretation and definitions

Refer to Appendix I.

Part 2: Responsibilities and Stockmanship

2.1 Responsibilities

The welfare of animals during a rodeo often involves changing responsibilities because different parts of the rodeo event may be carried out by different people. Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, both the owner and the person (or persons) in charge of animals have responsibilities for meeting the animals' needs. While the animals used in rodeos may sometimes be under the responsibility of others, this does not derogate owners or persons in charge from their responsibilities under the Act. In addition, responsibility may be shared between several people, particularly during the handover of tasks or animals.

The rodeo organiser is the person who is responsible for the running of the rodeo. Responsibility for meeting minimum standards relating to the provision, design and maintenance of facilities and equipment, the allocation of operational responsibilities and the competence and supervision of employee performance generally lies with the rodeo organiser. The rodeo organiser also has overall responsibility for the welfare of the animals. Whilst all duties are not necessarily performed directly by the organiser, the organiser needs to ensure that the rodeo staff and stock handlers are adequately performing their responsibilities. Each contestant is personally responsible for the animals he or she uses during an event, and during that period of use is considered to be the person in charge.

An animal welfare officer needs to be appointed to each rodeo and have his or her responsibilities specified in writing. The animal welfare officer has direct responsibility for the welfare of the animals and will work in liaison with the rodeo organiser and the veterinarian. The animal welfare officer's role is to liaise with clubs, promoters, stock contractors, contestants and the veterinarian to co-ordinate and evaluate all steps taken to ensure the welfare of the animals.

The veterinarian is responsible for providing expert advice on the health, injury or disease status of an animal and its suitability for competition. Veterinarians need to be familiar with working with cattle and horses in order to deal effectively with, and provide expert advice on, the health and injury status of any animal used in the rodeo and any issues that may arise during the event.

At an operational level, those responsible for carrying out particular tasks during the rodeo event are likely to be considered the person(s) in charge for the purposes of the Animal Welfare Act and are responsible for ensuring that applicable minimum standards in this code of welfare are met.

2.2 Stockmanship

Introduction

The importance of competency and stockmanship in the maintenance of animals' welfare cannot be over-emphasised. All people involved in rodeos need to be competent in the care and handling of the animals and understand how their actions may affect the animals' welfare. The knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude of the stock handlers are integral to the standard of welfare experienced by animals used in rodeos.

Stockmanship includes the ability to identify an animal's needs and ensure that action is taken to address those needs in a way that demonstrates an affinity with and empathy for animals. Knowledge of the normal appearance and behaviour of animals being used is essential and those in charge of the rodeo animals need to be able to recognise injuries or early signs of distress so that prompt action is taken or advice sought.

Owners and persons in charge of rodeo animals should ensure that their personnel have either the relevant knowledge and training, or appropriate supervision to ensure that the health and welfare needs of the animals in their care are met. Handling techniques can be included as written procedures in a welfare assurance system that is easily accessible to all personnel.

In order that the welfare of animals used in rodeo events is safeguarded, rodeo organisers, contractors, stock owners and contestants should clearly understand and accept their responsibilities. All people involved with and participating in rodeo events need to be familiar with this code.

It is important that the judges and the animal welfare officer are empowered to disqualify any official or contestant who compromises the welfare of an animal.

Minimum Standard No. 1 - Stockmanship

- (a) Persons in charge of rodeo events must ensure that animals are cared for by a sufficient number of personnel who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence to maintain the health and welfare of the animals in accordance with the minimum standards in this code.
- (b) Personnel involved in handling rodeo animals must be competent at recognising normal and abnormal behaviour that indicates distress or suffering due to injury, disease, physiological state or other abnormality.
- (c) At least one animal welfare officer must be appointed and present at each rodeo.
- (d) A veterinarian who is experienced in treating horses and cattle must be in attendance throughout the rodeo.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 1 - Stockmanship

- Stock health and welfare is in accordance with the minimum standards listed in this code
- The number of personnel is appropriate for the event (e.g. for the number and type of animals)
- Handlers are familiar with the minimum standards listed in this code and a copy of the minimum standards is available on site at all times
- Inexperienced handlers are supervised at all times while working with animals
- Job descriptions or other documentation related to the expectations of personnel duties include references to animal health and welfare
- Evidence of training / competence in the care and maintenance of stock and how the actions of staff may affect the animals' welfare can be demonstrated

Recommended Best Practice

- a) The veterinarian should complete a record of injuries and other signs of ill-health, which should be included as part of the incident report (see section 9 - Welfare Assurance System).
- b) If more than one animal welfare officer is appointed at a rodeo, a roster should be prepared prior to the event.

General Information

More than one animal welfare officer can be appointed at each rodeo event, thus allowing animal welfare officers to also compete if they should wish to do so.

Welfare Assurance Systems need to emphasise the importance of training of personnel.

The New Zealand Rodeo Association holds a number of training days for new contestants and for those wishing to learn more about rodeo events.

Part 3: Food and Water

Introduction

Animals used in rodeo events, training and rodeo schools need to have their food and water requirements met in accordance with the species-specific codes of welfare. Deprivation of food and water or changes in the volume or quality of food and water will compound the stress associated with rodeo events and can also result in metabolic disturbances and increase susceptibility to disease. Water is also important for regulation of body temperature.

Minimum Standard No. 2 – Food and Water
<p>(a) Animals must have access to water that is palatable and not harmful to health in a quantity sufficient to satisfy their thirst.</p> <p>(b) The provision of food and water must be appropriate to performance requirements as well as the species, age, physical state and condition of the animals to allow them to regulate body temperature and meet their health needs.</p>

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 2 – Food and Water

- Food and water is offered while the animals are penned
- Trough space and number of feeders is appropriate to the number and size of animals and competition at feeders is actively monitored and adjusted if required
- Dung/manure appearance is normal - i.e. no evidence of diarrhoea or constipation
- Water is provided at a temperature that does not inhibit drinking
- Water is clean and does not become muddied
- Animals are not dehydrated
- Food that animals are offered is of a type they are accustomed to
- Mature cattle are fed and watered at least every 12 hours
- Horses and immature cattle are fed and watered at least every 8 hours

Part 4: Selecting and Accepting Animals for Rodeo

4.1 Selecting Animals

Introduction

Selecting and accepting the appropriate animals to compete in a rodeo are key processes to ensure that only animals that are able to cope with participating in rodeo events are selected. The responsibility for this is shared between the rodeo organiser and the stock contractor. Contract stock are to be used where possible and the rodeo organiser(s) needs to select the stock contractor supplying animals for rodeo events well in advance of the date of the rodeo.

The stock contractor or the owners of non-contract stock (when used) are responsible for the appropriate husbandry and handling of their rodeo stock. They need to have knowledge of the minimum standards contained in this code and care for the animals that are to be used in rodeo events in accordance with their species-specific codes of welfare.

Animals suffering from disease, injury, or other abnormalities may experience pain or distress. For this reason, all animals need to be inspected prior to being used in the rodeo and those that are not fit for use are not transported to the rodeo site. Personnel who are inspecting animals need to be competent at recognising normal and abnormal behaviour in the different species of animal used in rodeo events.

NAWAC considers that sheep riding has the potential to cause harm to the sheep. For this reason, sheep may not be ridden in rodeos.

Minimum Standard No. 3 – Selecting Animals

- (a) Only horses and cattle must be used in rodeo events.
- (b) All animals to be used must be fit enough to withstand the event and inspected by the veterinarian prior to the commencement of the rodeo.
- (c) Animals must not be used in a rodeo if they display injuries, signs of disease, physical abnormalities, abnormal behaviour, signs of fatigue or are physiologically compromised in any other way that could compromise their welfare during the rodeo.
- (d) Horses used for bucking events must be at least 4 years of age.
- (e) Horses used for bucking events must not be used more than 3 times on any one day (including practice for the event and the event itself).
- (f) On each day, contract cattle and calves must not be used on more than 3 occasions and non-contract cattle and calves on no more than 2 occasions (including practice for the event and the event itself).
- (g) The same animal must not be used for both steer wrestling and roping events on any one day.
- (h) Animals must not be used if they are likely to injure themselves if placed into a chute.
- (i) Animals must not be used in the rodeo unless they meet the following minimum weights:
 - i) Calves (for rope and tie) - 100kg
 - ii) Calves (for calf riding with rider <40kg) - 150kg
 - iii) Calves (for calf riding with rider 40-50kg) - 200kg
 - iv) Bareback and saddle bronc horses - 350kg
 - v) Steers (riders under 15 years) - 275 kg
 - vi) Steers / bulls (riders of 15 years and above) - 400kg
 - vii) Time event cattle (steer wrestling, team roping) - 200kg

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 3 – Selecting Animals

- Animals are selected and used in accordance with this minimum standard
- All animals meet the minimum standards as stated in species-specific codes
- Animals that are likely to become distressed in the chute, go down in the chute or are likely to injure themselves by attempting to exit the chute prior to the gate being opened are not used
- Animals that are exhibiting poor body condition, obviously pregnant, lactating, have young at foot or have not yet been weaned are not selected for use

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Calves should not be used in rodeo events.
- b) Only contract stock should be used in rodeo events.

General Information

The animal welfare officer needs to take responsibility for the welfare of the animals used in rodeo events to ensure that all minimum standards in this code are met. The animal welfare officer is also responsible for monitoring how many times each animal is used during the rodeo.

NAWAC has concerns about the welfare implications of using non-contract stock in rodeo events as a result of the increased level of stress that these animals will experience when compared to contract stock. NAWAC encourages the industry to take steps to move forward towards the use of contract stock only in rodeo events.

4.2 Handling

Introduction

Rodeos involve situations where animals are subjected to a risk of injuries and distress, and proper consideration needs to be given to the health and welfare of the animals used in all events. Distress and risk to both the animals and handlers is decreased when good handling practices are followed. Loading animals into and subsequently releasing them from the chute for the rodeo events can cause them stress, and the use of good handling practices during this procedure is essential.

Minimum Standard No. 4 - Handling

- (a) Animals must be handled at all times in such a way as to minimise the risk of pain, injury or distress.
- (b) Animals of different species must not be penned together during yarding.
- (c) Animals that are likely to cause injury or distress to other animals (such as those that are aggressive or have horns) must be managed appropriately to avoid injury to other animals.
- (d) Animals in pens or yards must be kept at a stocking density that does not cause stress or injury.
- (e) Only the minimum force must be used when moving animals.
- (f) Any animal that becomes excessively excited, goes down in a chute, or attempts to jump out of the chute in a manner that may cause it to injure itself must be released.
- (g) Horses and cattle must not be prodded in the most sensitive areas, including the udder, eyes, nose, anus, vulva or testicles.
- (h) Goads, including electric prodders, must only be used where there is sufficient room for the animals to move away from the goad and where:
 - i) the safety of the handler or another person is at risk; or
 - ii) their use is essential to move difficult animals.
- (i) Electric prodders must not be used by inexperienced handlers or used on animals other than adult cattle.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 4 – Handling

- Animals are not injured while being loaded into the chute or during release into the arena
- Aggressive or horned cattle are penned separately if there is not enough space for other animals to move away
- Animals that become excessively stressed in the chute to the point that they may injure themselves are released immediately
- Loading into chute, race or for transport does not require undue force
- Prodders are only used to encourage an animal to move when it is able to respond by moving in the desired direction
- Use of stock-whips and other types of 'contact' goads is kept to a minimum
- Electric prodders are only used when necessary, and then only for less than one second at a time, on chute stalled stock
- Electric prodders are not used on animals performing in the arena
- Electric prods are of minimum amperage, powered only by battery or dynamo and deliver a single charge per application

Recommended Best Practice

- a) When encouraging animals to move, audible or visual measures (e.g. rattles, plastic bags, stones in a container) should be preferred to devices which rely on physical contact (e.g. waddys, alkathene hoses, stock whips, stock canes, and sticks).
- b) Pens should be positioned at a distance away from the arena so that the animals contained within them are not disturbed unduly by animals in the arena.
- c) Care should be taken not to induce sudden fear or panic in animals in confined spaces such as in pens, corners and gateways, where flight might increase the risk of injury.
- d) Tails should not be lifted, pulled or twisted.
- e) Animals that may be aggressive or cause injury to other animals should not be used or penned at rodeo events.
- f) Animals should be run through the arena prior to the event to familiarise them with the positioning of the exit gate(s).
- g) Sufficient pick-up riders should be present to enable rodeo animals to be guided out of the arena following use as quickly and as calmly as possible.

General Information

Consideration needs to be given to the different animals that are held together in pens and yards and the stocking density at which they are held. Crowding of animals is likely to contribute to stress and injury so animals need to be provided with sufficient space that they are able to move away from handlers or other animals.

Part 5: Equipment

5.1 Arena

Introduction

The size of the arena and the condition of holding facilities, including fencing, yards, chutes, gateways and ground surfaces, are critical in protecting stock from injury. Careful planning and construction of arenas will make the handling and removal of stock from the arenas easier and will improve stock and contestant safety. Arenas which are too small create a potential danger to stock, contestants and spectators.

In general, the standard arena should have a suitable, soil based surface, rotary-hoed or softened to a depth of approximately 5-10cm. Other surfaces may be used provided that they are well drained, provide a secure footing and be at least as safe for the animals as an appropriate soil based surface.

Minimum Standard No. 5 - Arena

- (a) The arena must be of a size suitable for the events to take place and to minimise the likelihood of injurious contact with the perimeter fence.
- (b) All fittings and internal surfaces, including fences, chutes, gateways and holding yards, must be constructed and maintained to ensure that there are no hazards that are likely to cause injury to the animals.
- (c) The fencing of the arena should be of a construction, height and appearance that is clearly visible and discourages animals from attempting to push through or jump over it.
- (d) The arena surface must provide traction and be free of hazards that may injure animals.
- (e) Fireworks, pyrotechnics and gas fired explosions of any type must not be used at rodeos.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 5 – Arena

- The arena is free of holes, rocks, obstacles and any other hazards that may injure stock
- No injuries to animals occur as a result of the surface materials used in the arena
- A soil based arena softened with a minimum of 5cm surface material is used
- The perimeter fence is a minimum of 180 cm in height
- The time event chute has a minimum of 76 cm clearance above the height of the animal in the chute and at the gate, when the gate is open
- Holding facilities such as yards, chutes etc are free of hazards that might cause injury

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Where it is thought that stock will pressure certain points of an arena more than others, care should be taken to ensure that the fencing is suitable.

5.2 Gear

Introduction

Rodeo events are high-paced activities and the use of well-fitting gear is important to protect the animals. It is important that the gear is correctly fitted to reduce rubbing or slipping and minimise discomfort. For reasons of comfort, hygiene and safety it is necessary that all leather and synthetic equipment is maintained in clean, supple condition, free from cracks, build up of dirt, sharp edges or other features likely to cause chafing, burns or abrasions.

Minimum Standard No. 6 - Gear

- (a) All gear and equipment to be used in a rodeo must be adequately inspected prior to commencing the rodeo, to ensure that it will not cause discomfort.
- (b) All gear and equipment must be of a suitable design, maintained in good condition and be fitted so that it will not cause injury or discomfort to the animal.
- (c) All competitors must present their gear and equipment for inspection at the request of the attending veterinarian, animal welfare officer or warranted inspector.
- (d) Spurs must not be used in a way that injures the animal.
- (e) Fully locked rowels, or rowels that are capable of being fully locked, must not be used.
- (f) Partially locked rowels, or rowels that are capable of being partially locked, must not be used in the saddle or bareback bronc riding events.
- (g) Flank straps/ropes must be of the quick release type and covered with a soft material that lies against the hide of the horse, steer or bull.
- (h) Ropes or straps must not be weighted with noise-making equipment.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 6 - Gear

- No sharp and cutting objects are placed or caught in or around the cinch, saddle, flank strap, bareback rigging, head-rein (plaited rein attached to the headstall) or headstall (halter)
- Every effort is made to ensure that equipment is fitted correctly for the individual animal on which it is being used
- Flank straps/ropes are placed on the animal in such a way that the lined portion evenly overlies both flanks and the abdomen
- Flank straps are covered with material such as sheepskin or neoprene
- No sand, grit or other abrasives have accumulated in the lining of the flank strap
- Pads used under bareback rigging are of adequate thickness to prevent rubbing or chafing and extend at least 5cm behind the rigging to protect the horse's back
- The pads are approved by the judges and the animal welfare officer prior to being used in competition
- When a saddle is used, there is sufficient clearance under the gullet of the saddle to prevent rubbing or injury to the wither
- The rowel of the spur must be dulled and not less than 3 mm in width at its narrowest part and there must be a minimum diameter of 2 cm to the point of the rowel
- No locked rowels are used
- The minimum width of the front girth in the saddle and bareback bronc riding classes is 200mm

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Equipment should be checked carefully for abrasive edges or wear prior to each rodeo event.
- b) Equipment should be regularly cleaned to remove traces of potential abrasives such as grit, sand, sweat or dirt.
- c) Bits should contain no rough or sharp surfaces which may cause damage to the mouth.
- d) Ropes used in rodeo events should be pliable and not be made of a material likely to cause burns or injuries to the hides of animals.

General Information

The type of gear and the way in which it is used can have a large effect on the health and welfare of the animals. The incorrect or severe use of any piece of equipment, including gear, bits, ropes and goods can have a potentially significantly harmful effect on animals. All personnel involved in rodeo need to be aware of this and have knowledge of how to use all gear correctly.

Part 6: Specific Events

There are a number of different events in rodeo, all of which can place different types of stress on the animals involved. Events and procedures in rodeos need to be specifically designed to prevent suffering and minimise the impacts of the welfare of the animals used.

NAWAC continues to hold welfare concerns for the use of animals in rodeos and in particular, events using calves. The committee is aware that rodeo events using calves have been banned in a number of countries due to the perceived physical and psychological stresses that they place on the animals. The general principles of the use of animals in rodeo events and the associated welfare issues will be reviewed by NAWAC in future and may result in changes and further restrictions to ensure that such activities remain ethically acceptable to New Zealanders.

6.1 Saddle and Bareback Bronc Riding

Introduction

This event involves releasing a horse from a chute into the arena, where it will buck in an attempt to dislodge the rider from its back. There are two types of event: saddle bronc riding where the horse is fitted with a saddle; and bareback bronc riding where the horse is fitted with bareback rigging only. In both events the horse will be fitted with a flank strap which runs around the body of the horse just in front of the back legs, which will encourage the horse to buck.

Minimum Standard No. 7 – Saddle and Bareback Bronc Riding
(a) The flank strap must not be so tight as to restrict the movement of the horse. (b) A minimum of two pick-up riders must be present in the arena during each ride. (c) The flank strap must be removed from the horse as soon as it is practicable to do so once the rider is off the horse.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 7 – Saddle and Bareback Bronc Riding

- Horses are able to move freely whilst in the arena
- Horses are directed from the arena calmly and efficiently following the completion of the ride
- Horses are fit and sustain no injuries as a result of being ridden in the arena

General Information

The pick-up riders operating in the arena remove the rider from the horse, remove the flank strap and direct the animals to the exit chute from the arena following the completion of the ride. A sufficient number of riders performing this role will enable the animals to be directed as calmly and efficiently from the arena as possible.

6.2 Bull and Steer Riding

Introduction

This event involves a bull or steer being released into the arena where it will buck to dislodge the rider from its back. The animal is fitted with a front 'bull rope' which wraps around its body and which the rider holds onto to maintain his seating. This bull rope needs to be a quick release type of rope that will fall away from the animal as soon as the rider is displaced or dismounts. The animal is also fitted with a flank strap to encourage bucking.

Minimum Standard No. 8 – Bull and Steer Riding

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Equipment used for bull and steer riding must be fitted so as to fall off the animal once the rider falls or dismounts, to prevent possible injury to animals. (b) The flank strap must not be so tight as to restrict the movement of the animal. (c) A minimum of two rodeo protection athletes must be present in the arena during each ride. |
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Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 8 – Bull and Steer Riding

- The bull rope quickly falls away once the rider is thrown or dismounts
- Bulls and steers are able to move freely whilst in the arena
- Skin is not wrinkled as a result of the flank strap being too tight
- Bulls and steers are directed calmly and efficiently from the arena following the completion of the ride

Recommended Best Practice

- a) The equipment used should be a loose rope with or without a handhold.
- b) There should be no knots or hitches preventing the rope from falling from the animal after the contestant has been thrown or dismounted.
- c) A contestant should not reset and re-pull the rope more than twice if the animal is standing quietly in the chute.

6.3 Rope and Tie

Introduction

Rope and tie, team roping and steer wrestling are time events that are performed at a fast pace over a set time period.

In the rope and tie event, a calf is released from the chute which then triggers the release of the horse and rider, who will rope the calf in the arena, dismount, put the roped calf on the ground and tie three of the calves' legs using a pigging string, while a well-trained horse will effectively maintain the tension on the rope. The calf needs to remain tied for six seconds for the tie to be considered successful. Calves used in these events can be subjected to physical stressors and need to be fit, healthy and without defects.

Minimum Standard No. 9 – Rope and Tie
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Calves must be handled using the minimum force and in a way that minimises pain and distress at all times during the event. (b) Calves must be habituated by being walked or run through the arena from the release chute to the exhaust pen prior to the event. (c) All reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure that calves are not busted, dragged or harmed in any other way during calf roping. (d) A neck rope must be fitted to horses used for roping and tying and the catch rope must pass through it before being tied to the saddle horn. (e) The calf must be tied for the minimum time to meet competition standards and released by experienced handlers immediately after the tie has been signalled. (f) The event must not exceed 30 seconds from the release of the calf from the chute. |
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Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 9 – Rope and Tie

- The rope and the reins are adjusted in a manner that will prevent the horse from dragging the calf
- Any contestant who drags, busts or causes a calf an unnecessary amount of pain or distress is disqualified
- Calves show no signs of rope burns
- The calf exits the arena alert and uninjured

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Calves that have not been used in an event on any day should be given priority for use over those that have already been used earlier in the day.
- b) The tails of calves should not be twisted, pulled or manipulated in any other way to encourage them to move.
- c) Calves being used in training or by novice contestants should be closely monitored for any signs of pain and/or distress during and following their use.
- d) Calves should not be used in rodeo events.

General Information

Following completion and signalling of the tie, the contestant will walk quickly to his horse to loosen the contact of the catch rope on the calf. Two other handlers will simultaneously untie the calf, ensuring that the catch rope is not attached at either end when the calf is released to regain its feet.

6.4 Team Roping

Team roping involves two ropers, the header and the heeler, both on horseback. The header will rope the steer around both horns, the head and one horn, or the neck, and the heeler then ropes the steer around the hind legs. The time recorded is that after the steer is stopped and there is no slack in both the header and heeler's ropes. The rope is slackened immediately upon completion of the event when the clock is stopped. This again is a fast paced event and the steer needs to be in good physical condition with no defects.

Minimum Standard No. 10 – Team Roping
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cattle horns must be wrapped with protective material to protect the ears and base of the horns from rope burns. (b) Event must not exceed 30 seconds from the release of the steer from the chute.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 10 – Team Roping

- Horns of cattle suffer no damage resulting from the rope

6.5 Steer Wrestling

Introduction

In the steer wrestling event, a mounted rider chases a steer, drops from the horse to the steer and wrestles the steer to the ground. The time is flagged when the steer has all four hooves off the ground and legs pointing out straight. The steer needs to be healthy and in good physical condition to withstand the physical stress during this event.

Minimum Standard No. 11 – Steer Wrestling

- (a) The steer must not be knocked down or thrown before it is brought to a stop, or the direction has changed, and the catch is made.
- (b) Pressure must not be placed on the eyes, lips or nose of the steers when wrestling them to the ground.
- (c) Manipulation of the tail must not be performed at any time during steer wrestling.
- (d) Event must not exceed 30 seconds from the release of the steer from the chute.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 11 – Steer Wrestling

- Steer is thrown using the recognised technique
- The steer leaves the arena alert and uninjured

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Animals that have not been caught and thrown in previous rounds should be given preference in subsequent rounds rather than reusing animals that have been successfully thrown.

6.6 Calf Riding

Introduction

The calf riding event is designed to enable younger and lighter competitors to participate in rodeo. The weight restrictions are designed to ensure that the animals involved in these events are not placed under undue stress, but animals also need to be fit, healthy and have no defects.

Minimum Standard No. 12 – Calf Riding

- (a) Calves must not be ridden more than once on any one day.
- (b) The rider's weight must be kept behind the shoulder of the calf.
- (c) Calves must not be ridden with the rider facing backwards.
- (d) Calves must be habituated by being walked or run through the arena from the release chute to the exhaust pen prior to the event.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 12 – Calf Riding

- Calves and riders meet weight requirements
- Calf does not buckle under the weight of the rider at any point
- Calf is immediately removed from the arena following the completion of the ride using the least amount of force possible
- Calf exits the arena alert and uninjured

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Calves should not be ridden.

General Information

Child contestants need to be supervised at all times when competing or when around the calves to ensure the welfare of the animals is not compromised.

It is important that the majority of the child's weight is kept behind the shoulder of the calf being ridden as placing too much weight in front of the animal's shoulder can cause its front legs to collapse. Riding a calf with

the rider facing backwards is likely to place more weight on the front on the calf and cause it unnecessary stress and so it is important that calves are not ridden in this way.

6.7 Barrel Racing

Introduction

Barrel racing is an event where the riders guide their horses around three barrels in a cloverleaf pattern in the least amount of time as possible. Horses are required to move at speed and turn quickly during this event and it is important that they are fit, healthy and appropriately trained to perform this event.

Minimum Standard No. 13 – Barrel Racing
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- | |
|---|
| (a) Horses must be ridden in a manner that minimises pain and distress during this event. |
|---|

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 13 - Barrel Racing

- Horses show no signs of injury following the race
- Horses do not fall during the race
- Bits do not cause injury to the horse's mouth or are used with such force that they snap in the horse's mouth
- Whips are not used in a manner to cause distress or injury
- Spurs do not leave marks on the hide of the horses

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Sufficient space should be provided past the finishing line of this event to allow horses to stop without risk of injury.

General Information

Horses need to be trained to turn quickly to perform in this event. Appropriate training will minimise the need for severe tack and harsh handling during the race as the horse will turn using less pressure on the bit and less pressure by the rider on the horse's sides. This needs to be taken into account when preparing for this event.

Provision of sufficient space past the finishing line of this event can prevent injury as a result of the horse being pulled up too suddenly or running into fencing or other horses waiting on the other side of the finishing line.

Part 7: Health, Injury and Disease

Introduction

Rodeos involve situations where animals may be subjected to a risk of injuries and distress and proper consideration needs to be given to the health and welfare of animals used in these events. Events and procedures need to be specifically designed to prevent any suffering and minimise the impacts on the welfare of animals used.

Minimum Standard No. 14 – Health, Injury and Disease

- (a) Signs of ill-health or injury must result in timely preventative or remedial action, as appropriate.
- (b) Where an animal is injured in the arena and is unable to move on its own accord, it must be immediately placed under the care of a veterinarian.
- (c) A conveyance capable of removing any rodeo animal from the arena for treatment must be kept on site at all times during the rodeo.
- (d) Animals must not be removed from the arena by being dragged in direct contact with the ground.
- (e) Medication must only be used in accordance with registration conditions and manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.
- (f) Non-therapeutic medicines must not be given to any animal used in any rodeo event.
- (g) All rodeo animals must be inspected by the veterinarian prior to the start and in the case of multiple events, also at the end of each day, to ensure that they are fit to compete on ensuing days.
- (h) All rodeo animals must be provided with the means to minimise the effects of heat or cold stress.
- (i) If either the animal welfare officer or the veterinarian considers that any individual animal is not fit to compete, then that animal must not be used in any event.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 14 – Health, Injury and Disease

- Any and all injuries to animals that have been sustained during rodeo events are treated immediately
- Stimulants, sedatives and hypnotic drugs are not given to any animal used in rodeo events, unless administered by a veterinarian for therapeutic purposes
- A conveyance is held on site for immediate use if required to remove an animal from the arena
- Rodeo animals are provided with access to water and to shelter to enable them to thermoregulate effectively in extreme climatic conditions

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Stock should be removed from the arena immediately after completion of an event.
- b) Animals (such as pets) that could cause disturbance to animals used in the rodeo should not be allowed in the arena or in the line of sight of animals used in the rodeo.

General Information

The animal welfare officer at a rodeo has the ability to prevent animals from competing if he/she considers that an animal is not fit to compete in any rodeo event. The animal welfare officer cannot override a veterinary decision to put an animal out of an event, but he/she is able to override the veterinarian's decision to let the animal compete, if necessary.

Part 8: Emergency Humane Destruction

Introduction

Animals may become injured during a rodeo event and it may be necessary to humanely kill an animal in order to prevent it suffering further pain or distress. Humane killing requires that brain activity ceases as rapidly and as painlessly as possible, and that death ensues as soon as possible. In a rodeo event, this would usually be undertaken by the on-site veterinarian either by intravenous injection or by directly damaging the brain (a blow or shot to the head, with a firearm or captive bolt).

Minimum Standard No. 15 – Emergency Humane Destruction

- (a) Horses and cattle must be handled, restrained and killed in such a manner as to minimise unnecessary pain and distress prior to death.
- (b) Persons undertaking destruction must be competent in the handling and killing of horses and cattle.
- (c) Equipment kept for emergency humane destruction must be well maintained in order to operate efficiently.
- (d) Animals being killed must be rapidly rendered insensible and remain in that state, until death.
- (e) The spinal cord must not be severed or broken in any animal, until after death.
- (f) If either the veterinarian or the animal welfare officer considers that any sick or injured animal needs to undergo humane destruction, then the animal must be destroyed.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 15 – Emergency Humane Destruction

- Humane destruction protocols are documented
- Acceptable methods are used. These include:
 - Intravenous injection euthanasia by a veterinarian
 - Captive bolt
 - Firearms

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Captive bolt firearms, of a suitable design and calibre, should be used to render animals insensible.
- b) Free-bullet firearms should never be used at point blank range. Shotguns and rifles should be used between 5 and 25 cm from the head.
- c) Shotguns should only be used to destroy horses and calves; adult cattle should be destroyed by a rifle or captive bolt firearm only.

General Information

Whenever a firearm is used, it is very important that the operator is competent to use the gun and takes care to ensure their safety and that of other people and animals.

There are two types of captive bolt firearm – penetrating and non-penetrating. A penetrating captive bolt enters the skull and comes into contact with brain tissue; a non-penetrative captive bolt employs a “mushroom” percussive head. Both methods provide a concussive blow to the skull, resulting in insensibility because of brain tissue damage, although the damage caused by the penetrating captive bolt will result in less chance of the animal regaining sensibility.

The correct position and direction of aim are critical for the humane and effective killing of cattle and horses.

Cattle



The optimum position for cattle is at the intersection of two imaginary lines drawn from the rear of the eyes to the opposite horn buds.

Horses



The optimum position for horses is at right angles to the frontal surface, well above the point where imaginary lines from eye to ear cross.

Figure source: Based on Humane Slaughter Association (2005) Guidance Notes No. 3: Humane Killing of Livestock Using Firearms. Published by the Humane Slaughter Association, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK. www.hsa.org.uk

Part 9: Welfare Assurance System

Introduction

Welfare assurance or quality management schemes that provide for minimum standards and recommended best practices provide assurance to the public and to organisations responsible for auditing compliance that a strong emphasis is being placed on the welfare of animals.

To ensure that standards of animal welfare and husbandry are maintained, the organiser of each event or series of events should implement a welfare assurance system that provides for written procedures. The adoption of a generic (e.g. New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association) welfare assurance system will meet this recommendation.

Recommended Best Practice

- a) The elements of the welfare assurance system should provide for the minimum standards and the recommendations for best practice of this code.
- b) The welfare assurance system should provide for all incidents resulting in significant sickness, injury or death of animals to be investigated and documented. Where the results of an investigation may have implications for current management practices, a report outlining the incident and implications should be forwarded to the NZRCA or the event organising body (e.g. A&P society) for consideration.
- c) The welfare assurance system should require continual review of existing systems, procedures and training schedules that could enhance the welfare of animals during rodeos.
- d) The welfare assurance system should include a record of issues identified and the remedial action taken.
- e) The welfare assurance system should include a record of training for staff and competitors at the rodeo event.

General Information

While the welfare system should be based on the general principles of Standard AS/NZS ISO 9002 or similar, it is not essential that the quality system be certified under the JASANZ (Joint Accreditation Standards for Australia and New Zealand) certification scheme.

Appendix I – Interpretation and definitions

Act

The Animal Welfare Act 1999.

animal

As defined in the Act:

- a) Means any live member of the animal kingdom that is –
 - i) A mammal; or
 - ii) A bird; or
 - iii) A reptile; or
 - iv) An amphibian; or
 - v) A fish (bony or cartilaginous); or
 - vi) Any octopus, squid, crab, lobster, or crayfish (including freshwater crayfish); or
 - vii) Any other member of the animal kingdom which is declared from time to time by the Governor-General, by Order in Council, to be an animal for the purposes of the Act; and
- b) Includes any mammalian foetus, or any avian or reptilian pre-hatched young, that is in the last half of its period of gestation or development; and
- c) Includes any marsupial pouch young; but
- d) Does not include –
 - i) A human being; or
 - ii) Except as provided in paragraph above, any animal in the pre-natal, pre-hatched, larval, or other such developmental stage.”

available technology

NAWAC takes to mean technologies which are used practically to care for and manage animals, for example, existing chemicals, drugs, instruments, devices and facilities.

animal welfare officer

an official appointed by the rodeo organiser(s) to be responsible for overseeing animal welfare at a rodeo in conjunction with the veterinarian.

bareback bronc riding

riding a horse using rigging and no saddle.

barrel racing

a timed event in which an individual horse and rider complete a clover-leaf pattern around three barrels.

bronc

a horse that is trained to buck in the rodeo arena.

bull or steer riding

riding a bull or steer using a girth rope.

bull

a male bovine of breeding age.

busted

throwing a calf so that it rotates 180°, landing on the broad of its back.

calf

bovine under one year of age.

chute

a stockade from which animals are released into the arena.

chute-stalled stock

animals that refuse to leave the chute when the gate is open.

cinch

a device (usually a strap or buckle) that connects the saddle or bareback rigging to the girth.

contract stock

stock trained and maintained for use in rodeo events.

flagged

when the flag judge drops his/her flag to signify the end of the event.

flank strap/rope

a rope or strap that is tied over the lower back and around the flanks of a horse or bull.

goad/prodder

an object used to stimulate or prod an animal to make it move.

good practice

NAWAC takes to mean a standard of care that has a general level of acceptance among knowledgeable practitioners and experts in the field; is based on good sense and sound judgement; is practical and thorough; has robust experiential or scientific foundations; and prevents unreasonable or unnecessary harm to, or promotes the interests of, the animals to which it is applied. Good practice also takes account of the evolution of attitudes about animals and their care.

gullet

the underside of the front of the saddle.

ill-treat

as defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, means causing the animal to suffer, by any act or omission, pain or distress that in its kind or degree, or in its object, or in the circumstances in which it is inflicted, is unreasonable or unnecessary.”

judge

a judge who has been appointed by a rodeo association to officiate at a rodeo.

minimum standards

minimum standards provide the details of specific actions people need to take in order to meet the obligations in the Act. They are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “must” or similar. They are highlighted in boxes within the text.

non-contract stock

stock not regularly used in rodeo events (also called club stock) and which are only used once at a particular rodeo.

owner

as defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who –

- a) Owns the animal; and
- b) Is a member of the parent’s or guardian’s household living with and dependent on the parent or guardian.”

pick-up rider

mounted persons in the ring who are responsible for collecting riders from bucking horses and guiding animals out of the arena following rodeo events.

pigging string

a short length of rope used to bind a calf’s legs after it has been lassoed.

person in charge

as defined in the Act: “in relation to an animal, includes a person who has an animal in that person’s possession or custody, or under that person’s care, control, or supervision.”

recommended best practice

NAWAC takes to mean the best practice agreed at a particular time, following consideration of scientific information, accumulated experience and public submissions on this code. It is usually a higher standard of practice than the minimum standard, except where the minimum standard is best practice. It is a practice that can be varied as new information comes to light. Recommendations for best practice will be particularly appropriate where it is desirable to promote or encourage better care for animals than is provided as a minimum standard.

Recommended best practices are identified in the text by a heading, and generally use the word “should”.

rigging

a girth strap and handle used in bareback riding.

rodeo

any public event which involves any of the following

- bareback bronc riding
- barrel racing
- bull or steer riding
- calf riding
- rope and tie
- saddle bronc riding
- steer wrestling
- team roping

or any event which calls itself a rodeo.

rodeo protection athlete

persons in the ring during bucking events who are responsible for distracting bulls away from the rider and/or freeing rider's hand if caught up, after the rider dismounts (also known as bull fighters).

rodeo organiser

an official of the organising association, and who is responsible for the running of the rodeo.

rodeo school

an officially organised event for the purpose of instructing students in correct techniques of various rodeo disciplines, training of time event horses and for teaching trainee judges.

rodeo training

any situation where people and/or animals are trained to participate in rodeos.

rope and tie

catching by lasso, throwing and tying a calf by the legs (previously known as calf roping).

roping event

a rope and tie or team roping event.

rowel

a spoked revolving disk at the end of a spur.

saddle bronc riding

riding a horse that bucks, using a saddle.

scientific knowledge

NAWAC takes to mean knowledge within animal-based scientific disciplines, especially those that deal with nutritional, environmental, health, behavioural and cognitive/neural functions, which are relevant to understanding the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals. Such knowledge is not haphazard or anecdotal; it is generated by rigorous and systematic application of the scientific method, and the results are objectively and critically reviewed before acceptance.

steer

castrated male bovine over a year of age.

steer wrestling

catching and throwing a horned steer by one rider with the use of a hazer (also may be known as bull dogging).

stock contractor

a person who provides stock for rodeo events.

team roping

a steer roping event involving two horse riders, one acting as a header (the person who ropes the horns or head) and the other as a heeler (who rides in and ropes the steer around the back legs) which results in the steer being brought to a standstill between the two riders.