



# Why Rodeos are so Cruel

**"You don't have to see blood gushing and bones snapping in order to deem rodeos cruel.**

**Internal bleeding, deep bruising, and muscle and tendon tears are all part and parcel of the rodeo."**

**Jennifer O'Connor**

**A**nimals used in rodeos are physically provoked into displays of "wild" behavior. Electric prods, sharp sticks, caustic ointments, and other devices are used on them, and the flank or bucking strap is tightly cinched around their abdomen or made to pinch their groin and genitals.

In calf-roping, young animals, running up to 27 miles per hour, often sustain severe bruising, broken bones, and internal bleeding; some have become paralyzed from spinal cord injuries. Calves are usually only used in one rodeo before they are destroyed because of their injuries.

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## So, what happens at the rodeo?



**"I keep 30 head of cattle around for practice, at \$200 a head. You can cripple three or four in an afternoon ... it gets to be a pretty expensive hobby."**

Dr. J.K. Hardy, a Texas veterinarian and sometime steer-roper, on his "practice" sessions

Animals used in rodeos are usually "expendable" because they are on their way to slaughter. At one Salinas, Calif., rodeo, a horse died after his neck was broken when he was run into a

wall, another horse suffered a broken leg and had to be euthanized, and a calf's back was broken by the jerk of a rope. A few years earlier, when another calf was killed at the same rodeo, spectator Deyanne Sylliaasen told the *San Jose News*, "They snapped the calf's neck back, and the little girl I was with was just hysterical."

Few laws protect animals exploited and abused in rodeos. However, in Rhode Island, calf-roping is banned and a veterinarian is required to be at every performance. In Pittsburgh, Pa., a law prohibiting the use of electric prods and flank straps effectively bans rodeos, since most rodeos currently use these devices.

Veterinarian D.C. Haber, a slaughterhouse meat inspector for more than 30 years, described animals discarded from rodeos as so extensively bruised that the only areas in which the skin was attached to the flesh were the head, neck, legs, and belly. The rodeo circuit is just a cruel detour for cattle on the road to the slaughterhouse.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

■ Don't support animal cruelty! Patronize only non-animal events like festivals, concerts, and museums.

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