



August 4, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Chilliwack Agricultural Society
info@chilliwackfair.com

City of Chilliwack
info@chilliwack.com

To whom it may concern:

Re: Steer wrestling and calf roping at the Chilliwack Fair

I am writing on behalf of Animal Justice, a national non-profit organization comprised with lawyers and other legal professionals with special expertise in laws that impact animals.

We urge Chilliwack Fair to end the rodeo portion of its festivities, and at minimum, to ban steer wrestling and calf roping as it is considering doing.

Steer wrestling involves chasing a frightened animal and wrestling him to the ground—with his legs flipped into the air—as quickly as possible. It is stressful for the animals and can cause torn tendons, sprains, bruises, broken bones, and even death.

Calf roping involves slamming baby animals to the ground and tying their legs together as quickly as possible. It is so violent that our national broadcaster, the CBC, won't even broadcast portions of it. The calves sometimes defecate from fear and stress. They may suffer from broken or fractured bones; throat, neck and spinal cord injuries; paralysis; and even death.

Veterinarian, lawyer, and former farmer and rodeo participant Peggy Larson says: "Based upon my extensive large animal experience, I have concluded that **rodeo events are inherently cruel.**"¹

Globally, almost all animal welfare organizations oppose rodeo. The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies—which represents 51 Canadian humane societies—states that it is "opposed in principle to rodeo and is working towards

¹ Peggy Larson, DVM, MS, JD, "Rodeos: Inherent Cruelty to Animals," online: http://www.hsvma.org/rodeos_inherent_cruelty_to_animals.

the ultimate abolition of this activity.”²

Many jurisdictions in Canada and around the world—including Vancouver and North Vancouver—have banned rodeo outright or have banned some of the crueller aspects of rodeo.

Moreover, it is the position of Animal Justice that rodeo competitions, and especially steer wrestling and calf roping, violate provincial animal protection laws.

B.C.’s *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* states: “A person responsible for an animal must not cause or permit the animal to be, or to continue to be, in distress.”³ It is hard to credibly dispute that rodeo events cause animals to be in distress.

An exemption is provided for this prohibition but **only** if “the distress results from an activity that is carried out in accordance with **reasonable** and generally accepted practices of animal management.”⁴ Thus, it is only permitted to cause animals to be in distress within reason. Surely, gratuitous cruelty that serves no purpose is unreasonable.

Rodeo is inherently cruel and should be banned. At the very least, steer wrestling and calf roping should not continue. We urge Chilliwack Fair and the City of Chilliwack to host family friendly events that do not endorse and encourage gratuitous cruelty to animals.

Yours truly,



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² CFHS, “CFHS condemns horse death at Calgary Stampede,” http://www.cfhs.ca/cfhs_condemns_horse_death_at_calgary_stampede

³ [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 372, section 9.1(2).

⁴ [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 372, section 24.02(c).