

September 2023

Handouts for Los Angeles City Council.

Please see attached:

Letters from two different animal cruelty investigators who have filmed for SHARK (SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness).

They have attended and filmed at hundreds of rodeos all over the USA, with many right here in California.

While animal abuse takes place out in the open at rodeos; filming is often prohibited.

The third letter is from Castleton Ranch Horse Rescue in Lancaster. They provide sanctuary for horses, including injured rodeo horses.

All three letters come from individuals with extensive, first-hand experience with animal abuse, injuries and fatalities that are directly attributed to rodeo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Heather Wilson, CD1

Matt Rossell, Animal Legal Defense Fund

Lisa Beal, Last Chance for Animals

Kimberly Jett, Animal Defenders International

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SEP 15 2023

BY: CR

Adam
September 8, 2023

Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear ladies and gentlemen of the Los Angeles City Council. I am writing to support the proposed rodeo ordinance and encourage you to do the same. I spent 14 years from 2007 to 2021 working as an Animal Cruelty Investigator for Illinois based Showing Animals Respect and Kindness. We always approach our investigations with an open mind and without a set agenda. We simply go, conduct our operations, and see what we get or don't get as far as evidence goes. In order to prevent the truth from getting out, many rodeos, including California rodeos ban video cameras.

Over my years conducting investigations at rodeos around the country, including California, I have personally witnessed dozens of animal injuries and deaths ranging from calves to horses. At the 2019 Red Bluff Round-Up, I witnessed a steer wrestling steer suffer a broken leg and limp out of the arena and a Wild Horse Race horse die. Additionally, a team roping horse ran over a steer during a run. During the first California rodeo I ever investigated in 2012, which was the California Rodeo Salinas, a bucking horse suffered a broken right rear leg. At the 2019 Rowell Ranch Rodeo, I watched at least one bucking horse rear up coming out of the chute, then collapse and lie on the ground for an extended period of time.

One commonly used technique causing increased injuries to calves is the jerk down in which the rope is flipped, causing the knot of the loop to go directly to the back of the neck of the calf. This caused the calf to be jerked high into the air, flipped over backwards, often landing on the back of their head and/or neck. Rule R10.6.5 found on page 217 of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association 2023 Rule Book specifies no jerk-downs are allowed and that a fine will be imposed from violations of this rule. However, I have seen it used many, many times without penalty and even watched contestants become a rodeo's tie down roping champion by using a jerk-down.

One of the common arguments heard repeatedly from rodeo announcers is that the “animal athletes” in the arena have an easy life, and love what they do. They also claim that if a bull or horse doesn’t want to buck, you can’t make them buck. I have witnessed way too many times a Power-Mite Hot Shot being used on horses and bulls to shock them into bucking. This is in complete opposition to the manufactures recommendations that this object never be used on horses. I have witnessed the Hot-Shot being used on horses at the 2019 Red Bluff Round-Up, 2019 Redding Rodeo, and the 2019 Rowell Ranch Rodeo.

Another tool of torture is the flank strap which is tightened around the lower abdomen of bareback horses, saddle bronc horses, and bulls. This strap causes discomfort and causes animals to buck blind, sometimes running into walls and fences. Once the flank strap is loosened, the animals always seem to calm down and relax. Tools of torture are not the only things causing undue stress and terror to normally calm animals but specific rodeo events events themselves can cause the aforementioned stress.

One such event is the wild cow milking contests of ranch rodeos, including the Rowell Ranch Rodeo. I have seen the look of sheer terror on the faces of cows as they are pursued around the arena and gang manhandled, just to try and obtain a bit of milk. Despite repeated efforts to downplay what happens in rodeos, there is no denying that preventable injuries and deaths to rodeo animals happen every year, including California rodeos. Additionally, rules governing animal welfare as specified in the official PRCA rulebook are often ignored, leading to animals being shocked, kicked, run over, and injured. Rodeos have no place in a city like Los Angeles, and I am writing this to request that you vote yes on the proposed rodeo ban in Los Angeles. Thank you for your time.

September, 2023

Dear Honorable Los Angeles City Councilmember,

I am writing to support Councilmember Blumenfield's proposed prohibition on rodeos and rodeo-type activities in the City of Los Angeles.

I have over 20 years' experience in undercover investigations, in particular, documenting animal cruelty. I've worked with several well-known national animal welfare organizations so I must remain anonymous. I was raised in Los Angeles and Southern California. I've lived most of my life in CA. Los Angeles is near and dear to my heart. I've been to and filmed hundreds of rodeos all over the U.S. From CA to NY, WY to FL. Rodeos are built on a foundation of animal abuse. I've been to PRCA, APRA, PBR, College, and National Little Britches Rodeo Association (for kids 5-18) rodeos to name a few. Regardless of which rodeo association or what level of competition, animals are maimed and killed. I've seen calves, horses, steers, goats and bulls injured and killed at all of them.

From the biggest and most prestigious rodeos like Cheyenne Frontier Days, and Reno to little rodeos held at a church in Tyler TX, animals are hit and shocked, tails are yanked and twisted. From coast to coast, I've seen horses, calves, steers and bulls break legs and necks and die right in front of me.

Rodeo supporters say they care about and love their animal athletes. The animals being terrorized and forced to perform for them wouldn't agree. Their actions in the arena speak louder than their words at City Hall and tell an entirely different story. For example, I filmed a pregnant mare shocked in the chute and forced to buck. The announcer said, "That's a mama, she's got a bucking horse baby in her belly isn't that cool?" Of course he never said she was shocked in the chute a second before the chute was opened by a cowboy who was trying to conceal the electric prod in his hand. This didn't happen at some little rodeo in the middle of nowhere, this happened in your backyard in Los Angeles County in San Dimas. I've seen horses illegally shocked all over CA and the country.

It's true that not every horse, calf, steer or bull is injured at the rodeo. Not every person in an abusive relationship is physically hurt every time they interact with their abuser either. Rodeo supporters say the animals only work 8 seconds a day. They don't include the time the animals are in the chute sometimes being shocked, jabbed, stabbed and twisted. Or the time they spend crammed into crowded livestock trailers. Or all of the times the injured animal is in pain after they leave the arena.

Rodeo supporters claim injuries are very rare. How many injuries and deaths are acceptable to them? How many are acceptable to you? Injuries are much more common than rodeo supporters want you or the public to believe. When an animal is severely injured or dies on the

arena floor in front of everyone, without fail the announcer says. "We take the best care of our animal athletes..." and as quickly as possible they try to deflect and distract the crowd with a clown act or some commentary about another subject. They will often say, "We will let you know what happened to the injured animal..." but they never do. Even when there is video of *an animal with a severely broken leg, like what happened to a bull at George Mason University last year*, they will not tell you the bull's name when you ask later, despite them announcing the bulls name prior to the injury. They cover everything up.

It's not until one goes back and looks at video of the animals as they are leaving the arena that you often notice the calf, steer, bull or horse is injured and limping. And those are just the visible injuries. There are no doubt countless painful unseen injuries to limbs and organs that are never known except to the suffering animal. There's so much going on so quickly during the run, often no one notices what happened in the moment, even those trained to do so. Once the animal is out of the arena they are out of sight out of mind of the public forever.

Rodeo supporters claim these events, like calf roping, are normal activities that occur on the ranch. Nothing could be further from the truth. If a rancher caught one of his cowboys running down a calf as fast as he could, throwing a rope around his neck and jerking the calf to the ground simply for fun, the cowboy would be fired for potentially harming or killing the rancher's livestock. That calf is how he makes a living. Nobody in their right mind would toss away money like that.

Another claim you often hear from rodeo supporters is that horses and bulls are bred to buck. In the hundreds of hours I've spent behind the scenes next to the pens where they keep the bucking bulls and horses I've never once seen one buck out of the blue at any time of the day or night. I'm not saying in the history of all rodeos no horse or bull has ever bucked in their pen but it would be an extremely rare event. Horses and bulls are put into a bucking chute, have flank straps cinched around them, their tails are pulled and they are sometimes hit, jabbed or shocked to buck.

The decision to support or oppose rodeos is an easy one. There's no moral ambiguity. Either you support abusing animals for superfluous reasons or you don't. Banning rodeos in LA is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your time and your thoughtful consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A concerned citizen.



Castleton Ranch Horse Rescue, Inc.



Lifetime Sanctuary

Los Angeles City Council.

Councilmember Blumenfield's Rodeo Ordinance.

August 28th, 2023

Castleton Ranch Horse Rescue Inc is entering our 20th year of rescuing horses from many different life-threatening situations. We have achieved Guidestar's highest star rating, the Platinum Star for the past eight years, which acknowledges our complete transparency in all aspects of our work and of our commitment to our mission. We are a three star charity on Charity Navigator and we were voted top rated non profit for years 2020 and 2021 by Great Non Profits. Until recently, we operated a horse sanctuary in Lancaster for 19 years.

We write to you today to voice our complete support of Council Member Blumenfield's Rodeo Ordinance.

We have had many years of first hand experience of the horrendous injuries suffered by many horses which are **forced** to take part in the so called sport of Rodeo. Many of these horses when they can no longer please the Rodeo cowboys due to the injuries sustained by them, are sent to auction where they will most likely be purchased by killer buyers before the **poor** animals are shipped south of the border for the most horrific end to their life.

One of the most barbaric events at a rodeo is horse tripping. This barbaric act has been banned in a number of states, including California. In 1994, the then Governor, Pete Wilson, signed a bill into law banning horse tripping. This ban is still in effect however horse tripping it is still very much a part of today's rodeo.

We urge you to pass this ordinance and be the voice of compassion for so many at risk horses.

Sincerely,
Castleton Ranch Horse Rescue Inc.

Board of Directors.

Valley Center Ranch

Office / Correspondence
28581 Old Ranch Drive
Valley Center
California 92082
Telephone: 760-913-5606