ANIMAL WELL-BEING
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INTRODUCTION

As a sport, rodeo dates back more than a century. A lot of lore – some of it true, some not – has been built up about this sport and lifestyle, which has left its mark throughout America.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the extent to which rodeo has changed over time. Cowboy legends still exist, but so do, unfortunately, some misconceptions. That’s why the NomadFest Urban Rodeo, in cooperation with the Festival Western St-Tite, is dedicated to ensuring the health and well-being of the animals that perform at its events and to making their welfare a priority for our festival.

Knowing that we would need to establish our own procedures and rules to preserve the legacy of the sport in North America, we committed ourselves to keeping our rodeo livestock in top physical condition. The equine and bovine athletes are owed the same respect as we give to the human competitors. It is important to emphasize that rodeo horses and bulls are bred and trained for this sport and that owners have chosen only the finest of their lineage for several generations.

A team of veterinarians is always on duty during each event to inspect the animals on the competition site. Some 30 employees are responsible for the maintenance, transport, care and handling of the livestock.
At NomadFest Urban Rodeo, we want our animals to enjoy an appropriate, well-maintained environment that is as stress-free and comfortable as possible. We willingly comply with all federal Canadian and American regulations with regard to the care and transport of our rodeo livestock.

The livestock suppliers we deal with are experts in their field and take animal welfare seriously. They own and raise herds, often as many as hundreds of heads strong, and take pride in their animals’ health.

They believe that, like human athletes, animal athletes must be in peak physical condition if they are to perform to the best of their abilities in rodeo events. The livestock enjoy a diet of top-quality hay and grain that help ensure balanced growth and health.

Usually, by the age of about three, the horses or bulls are tested to ascertain their abilities as rodeo competitors. Not being physically mature at this point, they are then returned to the fields, where their muscle and bone growth will continue until age five.
After this, they are ready to perform on the rodeo circuit for the duration of their adult lives. It is important to note that rodeo livestock have long stretches of time off between performances; this gives them time to recover and to maintain their remarkable physical condition. They perform, on average, 10 to 15 times each year.

To be sure the animals have sufficient time to recover between performances, rodeo horses are brought out at the most twice during an event and bulls, a maximum of three times. Rodeo bulls have greater physical endurance than their equine counterparts.

NomadFest Urban Rodeo, in cooperation with the Festival Western de St-Tite, will be dealing with four different livestock suppliers, for the most part from operations within Quebec. When transporting the animals to the destination, any supplier located more than a 12-hour drive away from the rodeo venue must make mandatory stops to feed and water the animals and allow them to rest.

To further protect their charges from sport-related risks, and to give them the best possible living conditions, the festival organizers have set up a highly secure and safe arena. Rodeo employees work constantly to keep the arena in optimal condition before, during, and after the competitions.
During the event, the Festival organizers keep an emergency team of veterinarians on duty to handle any injuries that might be sustained in a competition. The vets are animal care experts, qualified to conduct the mandatory examinations and oversee the well-being of every animal on the site.

on hand and will perform an examination of each animal to check their overall condition in the riding arena.

The vet team keeps a close eye on the animals as the rodeo events progress. If a problem or emergency arises, they are ready to intervene immediately. An emergency vehicle equipped with everything required for emergency care also stands at the ready.

The vets are authorized to disqualify an animal from competition if certain criteria, pre-established by the team itself, are not met before an event, or if a rider is deemed to be mishandling an animal.
RODEO ASSOCIATIONS
(SANCTIONS)

It is worthwhile pointing out that rodeos are sanctioned by a number of associations. In our particular case, we have the approval of the International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA), based in Oklahoma City, OK, an organization that sanctions more than 300 rodeos each year, has over 3,500 members, and keeps a regulations manual governing the overall conduct of rodeos as well as the care and treatment of animals. The IPRA lists more than 40 regulations covering animal welfare.

The Festival Western de St-Tite also produces, through Wild Time Productions, some 15 other rodeos in Quebec and New Brunswick, promoting rodeo and enabling competitors to qualify for the St-Tite event. Those rodeos are also sanctioned by the IPRA, as are some 10 others within Quebec.
It is crucial that the livestock be well fed and watered and at the peak of their capacities in order to perform in a rodeo. A balanced and controlled diet and a specific schedule are key to keeping them healthy. Our staff is qualified and knowledgeable and maintains a consistently calm demeanour so as not to stress the animals in their care. In fact, the keywords for our employees are vigilance and calm.

Care procedures:

01 The animals have unlimited access to water at all times.

02 The animals are fed hay and grain every morning. A visual examination is also done at this time.

03 Each evening, the animals are given another meal of hay as well as a second visual inspection.

N.B. All livestock that participate in competitions involving bucking are chosen by the rodeo director. Their performance is crucial to the quality of the show. Competitors must have equal chances of winning an event, as half the points are awarded to the rider and half to the animal.
Aim: How animals are transported to an event is of utmost importance and it must be done with their safety and well-being in mind. Stringent procedures are followed to guide and control suppliers who drive long distances to events.

Transport procedures:

For all animals required to spend 12 or more hours on the road between their home and the venue:

01 The vehicle must stop every 12 hours to allow the animals to rest, eat, and drink

Upon arrival:

01 Each animal is examined and assessed by a qualified staffer

02 Should any issues be detected, the animal will be separated from the group and evaluated by a veterinarian

03 The animals are kept in enclosures during the event, with their respective herds, and observed several times daily
Aim: If an injury is detected or suspected in an animal inside the arena, the arena team, along with the vets, must be ready to act quickly. The teams are thoroughly knowledgeable about the procedures involved in these types of interventions.

Procedures in the event of animal injury:

01 Immobilize the animal as soon as possible to reduce the risk of further injury

02 Rapid examination by the veterinarian and decision on measures to be taken

03 If the animal needs to be removed from the arena, a trailer stands ready on the premises at all times

04 If required, a special stretcher will be used to remove the animal from the arena for transfer to the appropriate venue for treatment
CONCLUSION

Rodeo is a part of a unique lifestyle, a tradition handed down to us from our pioneering forefathers who developed the various events from the daily work done on ranches.

The tradition, although more regulated today, continues to be enjoyed by spectators, just like the sports of hockey, baseball, football and basketball. We accept the growing responsibility that goes with our chosen lifestyle and continue to be proactive in regard to the care and handling of our rodeo livestock.

The sport has evolved, society has evolved, and so have we. We have always been proactive in ensuring the professional management of our rodeo productions. The well-being of rodeo livestock is one of our fundamental values, and we strongly believe that the use of animals for entertainment, industry and sport must be regulated and monitored.

We believe that our reputation, pristine track record and professional demeanour back up our belief that our methods can be a benchmark in the world of entertainment using animals.

We work actively to promote rodeo sports and believe strongly in public awareness and education. We also strive to create an environment that favours the well-being of rodeo livestock even as we continue to improve our practices and methods in regard to their care.

We hope that existing and future rules and regulations allow us to continue to respect our roots, our economy, and our animals.

Pascal Lafrenière,
General manager, Festival Western de St-Tite

Dr. Pierre Gauthier,
Veterinarian

Sylvain Bourgeois,
Rodeo director, Festival Western de St-Tite and NomadFest Urban Rodeo

In partnership with
Maxime Lefebvre, TKNL Productions
For the NomadFest Urban Rodeo