

August 8, 2017

Ms. Cathy Oss
Chilliwack Agricultural Society
7590 Lickman Road
Chilliwack, BC V2R 4A7

Re: Chilliwack Fair: High-stress rodeo events

Dear Ms. Oss,

The Chilliwack Fair is an event many of our supporters are interested in attending. The concerts, home and garden building, energy zone, creation station, vendors and fun games zone, and especially the Kiwanis Mutt Show, are a great opportunity to come together as a community and celebrate our culture.

We recognize the value of the historical traditions of showcasing good husbandry and animal handling. The best rodeo events demonstrate the strong genetics and health of an animal, while also demonstrating the skill and training of an animal handler who provides good care through the Five Freedoms¹. The BC SPCA supports the showcasing of low-stress handling skills and horse riding events that do not cause fear, frustration, anxiety, pain or injury to an animal. These activities demonstrate the history of knowledge that we have developed as a culture about the strong bond between handlers and the animals we farm.

Some examples of this include:

- Demonstrating horse riding skills that are based on building relationships and considering the horse's perspective through cooperation. This includes working with horses based on the horse's natural instincts and methods of communication using the science-based approach of operant conditioning, with the understanding that handlers do not need to use fear or pain to motivate horses to perform.
- Showcasing cattle and sheep herding and handling techniques that minimize the stress on the animals. These include careful directional work, the use of flagging, and training leader animals.
- Demonstrations showing a farm animal's motivation to exhibit natural behaviours, such as a pig rooting or a chicken dust-bathing.

The BC SPCA opposes events that function by causing fear, frustration, anxiety, pain or injury to an animal, whether or not they are sanctioned by a professional rodeo association. Our supporters are frequently concerned after attending a rodeo and viewing inhumane activities that include:

- the jerking or twisting of the head or neck of any animal, as occurs in calf roping and steer wrestling;

¹ 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from pain, injury and disease;
3. Freedom from distress;
4. Freedom from discomfort;
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

- electric prodding, tail-twisting, kicking or other physical abuse;
- the use of flank straps, sharpened spurs and locked rowels (the mechanism that rotates the spur) to encourage bucking;
- the use of extra-thin or sharp bits; and
- the use of thin or angular-edged whips.

Given these concerns, the BC SPCA asks that the Chilliwack Fair remove Tie-Down Roping and Steer Wrestling from the activities permitted at the Fair. With these events, the potential for pain and fear experienced by the animals for the purpose of entertainment is not justified by low-stress handling the rest of the year.

In 2007, the Cloverdale Rodeo Association agreed to remove four events from its roster – calf roping, team-roping, steer wrestling and wild-cow milking – after considering serious concerns about animal welfare. We urge the Chilliwack Fair to follow in the Cloverdale Rodeo’s footsteps and consider removing these events.

Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. We would be happy to share the research that grounds our positions.

Sincerely,

Craig Daniell
Chief Executive Officer