

# Rodeo: Cruelty for a Buck

The following is a partial list of incidents since 1995 involving animals used in rodeos. Countless humans and animals have been injured or died because of rodeos during this period.

**March 20, 2010/Houston, Texas:** A bronc-rider broke his leg and a horse broke his leg and was euthanized at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

**August 5, 2009/Rawlins, Wyoming:** A horse broke his back during the saddle bronc event at the Carbon County Rodeo and was dragged out of the arena on a board before being euthanized.

**August 1, 2009/Lake County, Illinois:** A horse who was being used in a Barnes PRCA Rodeo Co. show was euthanized after sustaining a suspected neck injury.

**July 20, 2009/Cheyenne, Wyoming:** A horse died after suffering head and/or neck injuries in a fall during a bronc-riding event at the Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo. The horse reared up and fell over backward shortly after leaving the chutes.

**July 2009/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** Two horses died of heart attacks after the Calgary Stampede chuckwagon races, and a third suffered a broken leg and was euthanized. A steer was euthanized after sustaining a severe spinal injury as a result of being thrown to the ground in the steer-wrestling event.

**June 14, 2009/Casper, Wyoming:** A horse was euthanized after injuring her spinal column at the College National Finals Rodeo.

Two years earlier, a bull had broken his hind leg after catching his hoof in a chute and had later been euthanized. In 2005, a horse died behind the chutes.

**August 24, 2008/Kitsap, Washington:** A horse died of a heart attack at the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) Xtreme Bulls Tour. The horse's rider admitted that the horse had been agitated before entering the arena.

**August 9, 2008/Omak, Washington:** A horse was euthanized after breaking her foot during the Omak Stampede.

**August 2008/San Angelo, Texas:** A horse suffered a leg injury at the American Junior Rodeo Association and was euthanized after developing an infection.

**June 30, 2007/Prescott, Arizona:** A witness reported seeing a calf drop to the ground with an apparent broken neck after being roped during the Prescott Frontier Days rodeo. The calf was carried out of the arena, but no announcement was made about the animal's condition.

**April 13, 2007/Springfield, Illinois:** The Illinois Department of Agriculture determined that at least one bull had been electrically shocked, a man had slapped a bull, and bulls' tails had been pulled as the animals left the chutes at the 2006 National High School Finals Rodeo.

**August 26, 2006/Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada:** A horse who was being ridden in a bronc-riding event died after crashing into a fence at the Kamloops Outdoor Pro Rodeo.

**March 16, 2006/Houston, Texas:** A steer was euthanized after breaking his neck during a wrestling event at RodeoHouston. The man who wrestled the animal to the ground had the best time—3.8 seconds—on the run that killed

the steer. The steer was removed from the arena, and no announcement was made.

**August 14, 2005/Omak, Washington:** A horse was killed during the Omak rodeo after he broke his neck during the “Wild Horse Race” event.

**July 15, 2005/San Diego, California:** A witness reported that a horse was killed during a “Wild Horse Race” event at the Lakeside “Bulls Only” rodeo. Reportedly, the horse broke his leg after tripping and crashing into another horse.

**July 3, 2005/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** While being herded to the Calgary Stampede fairgrounds, at least nine horses died after being spooked and falling 33 feet off a city bridge into a river. Approximately 200 horses were on a six-day, 125-mile journey from the Stampede ranch near Hanna, Alberta, to the exhibition site near downtown Calgary. Some animals tumbled down a steep embankment, and others jumped or fell over the guardrail. Some horses died on impact, others drowned, and one had to be euthanized later.

**April 16, 2005/Auburn, California:** A horse was euthanized after breaking her leg at the PRCA Wild West Stampede. An 11-year-old girl who witnessed the incident said, “The leg was hanging loose, like it was not attached to the body, and blood was everywhere.”

**February 20, 2005/Cape Girardeau, Missouri:** A steer was killed at a PRCA rodeo after the animal tripped and fractured his neck as he was being wrestled to the ground.

**January 31, 2005/Omaha, Nebraska:** A horse who was being used in a stunt at the World’s Toughest Bulls and Broncs Rodeo was injured so badly that he had to be euthanized. In a show called the “One-Armed Bandit,” a group of horses is herded on top of a specially made trailer. A rider comes up behind them and

performs a series of turns as the truck and trailer drive forward. During the stunt, the horse fell from the trailer and had to be euthanized.

**December 9, 2004/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A calf had to be euthanized after suffering a spinal injury during a calf-roping event at the National Finals Rodeo.

**November 2, 2004/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** According to an article in the *Edmonton Journal*, the Calgary Stampede’s star attraction—a “virtually unrideable” bull named Outlaw—was euthanized after suffering injuries in a fight with another bull.

**August 21, 2004/Payson, Arizona:** A bull fractured his leg during the annual World’s Oldest Continuous Rodeo in Payson.

**August 14, 2004/Yakima, Washington:** Three horses died after being forced to race down a steep slope at the annual Omak Stampede in Washington.

**July 29, 2004/Edmonton, Alberta, Canada:** Four horses who were being used in a chuckwagon race suffered severe injuries when a pole that was being used to attach them to the wagon broke as the winning horses were being led from the race. They were euthanized as a result.

**July 27, 2004/Salinas, California:** A bull was shot and killed after escaping from a Mexican bull-riding rodeo by jumping a 7-foot gate and subsequently running 5 miles through town. The bull charged a man who was trying to corral him, kicking and goring him in the arm. The man was taken to a hospital.

**July 17, 2004/Salinas, California:** A spokesperson for the Monterey County SPCA confirmed that a horse who was being used in a racing exhibition at the Salinas Rodeo broke his leg and was euthanized.

**July 10, 2004/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** A horse who was being used in a wild horse competition at the Calgary Stampede was euthanized after he broke a leg as a result of colliding into another horse and being thrown into a rail.

**July 8, 2004/Morris, Illinois:** According to the Grundy County attorney's office, a rodeo contractor pleaded guilty to cruelty to animals for using an electric prod to shock bulls in the chute at the Big Bucks Rodeo in Morris, Illinois, in September 2003. He received six months of court supervision and was fined \$300.

**May 23, 2004/Surrey, British Columbia, Canada:** A steer who was being used in the Cloverdale Rodeo wrestling competition was slammed into the ground so hard that his neck was broken. While horrified spectators watched, the twitching animal was nearly run over by the removal truck before being hoisted onto a trailer and trucked away.

**February 27, 2004/Perry, Georgia:** A bull leaped over a fence and plowed through a group of spectators at the Georgia National Rodeo, injuring 10 people (including at least one child) and sending two to the hospital. A rodeo official stated, "He won't be back in the rodeo arena. If you eat McDonald's, you might run into him again."

**February 22, 2004/San Angelo, Texas:** A horse who was being used in a saddle-bronc competition suffered a broken neck and died in the ring. He was removed from the arena on a forklift.

**January 31, 2004/Topeka, Kansas:** A calf who was being used in roping events in the PRCA Championship Rodeo broke through a fence and wandered the streets for over an hour. It took about a dozen rodeo workers to catch the animal.

**January 20, 2004/Denver, Colorado:** A horse was killed after breaking his leg during a bucking event at the National Western Stock Show, Rodeo, and Horse Show.

**July 23, 2003/Salt Lake City, Utah:** A bull escaped from a holding pen at the Delta Center and bolted across the street to a shopping center, where he destroyed a table at an outdoor café before being captured.

**June 24, 2003/Reno, Nevada:** Two horses were seriously injured at the Reno Rodeo. One horse who was being used in a bareback riding event suffered a serious head injury after slamming into the arena gate. Another horse who was being used in a bucking event unexpectedly dropped to the ground. A veterinarian later reported that the latter horse had suffered a serious spinal injury.

**January 17, 2003/Johnson City, Tennessee:** Two bulls escaped from a gated area during a professional bull-riding event after one bull, according to a police official, "literally picked the fence up and threw it in the air." One of the bulls led police and rodeo officials on a chase through yards and busy streets, down railroad tracks, and through wooded areas.

**December 12, 2002/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A bull who was being used for bucking events fell and fractured his spine moments after leaving the chute. His injuries were so severe that he had to be euthanized.

**August 19, 2002/Brookhaven, Massachusetts:** A 20-year-old woman died from head injuries she had suffered when she jumped from her horse during a barrel-racing event and struck a steel arena gate. The woman was unable to stop the horse as the animal ran out of the arena.

**July 15, 2002/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** By the conclusion of the nine-day Calgary Stampede, a calf had suffered a broken leg

during a roping event and had been euthanized; a horse who had been used in the chuckwagon event had suffered a heart attack-induced aneurism and died; five more horses had been injured and later euthanized during chuckwagon events; and three horses had suffered broken legs, one a broken shoulder, and another a broken back.

**May 24, 2002/San Diego County, California:**

A bucking bull appeared to have broken a leg during the Western Days Valley Center Rodeo. He reportedly hobbled across the arena dragging one leg behind him. Rodeo officials subsequently issued conflicting stories, on the one hand that the bull was being sent to Colorado for breeding, and on the other that he had been treated and was back home and healthy. Riverside County Animal Control confirmed that the bull had been sent to slaughter.

**December 9, 2001/Las Vegas, Nevada:** At the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, a horse flipped over and broke his back. The horse was removed from the arena and had to be euthanized. An article in *Extra!* magazine stated, “[T]he TV audience had no clue about what happened: The camera cut just before the horse flipped over, and none of the announcers said one word about the incident.”

**November 7, 2001/Edmonton, Alberta,**

**Canada:** A 27-year-old man fell into a coma after he was repeatedly stomped, trampled, and rammed by a bull he was riding at the Canadian Finals Rodeo. The bull continued to attack him as he lay unconscious on the ground. Two years earlier, the man had been blinded in one eye when the horn of a bull he was riding slammed into his face, shattering it from jawbone to forehead.

**November 7, 2001/Beauregard, Alabama:**

A 19-year-old man died after having been trampled and kicked by a bull during a bull-riding event on a private farm.

**July 2, 2001/Salinas, California:** A horse had to be euthanized after falling and breaking a leg during a racing event at the California Rodeo Salinas.

**May 1, 2001/Rockford, Illinois:** A bull who had escaped from a farm that trains animals for rodeos was found roaming around a soccer field where children were playing. Police fatally shot the bull. The county animal control agency had cited the bull’s owner for previous escapes.

**April 27, 2001/Gonzales, Louisiana:** A 22-year-old man died after being trampled by a bull he had been riding in a rodeo at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center.

**January 22, 2001/Millville, Ohio:** A 16-year-old was killed while riding a bull when he lost his grip and was struck in the head by one of the bull’s horns. The boy was preparing for a local weekly rodeo bull-riding event.

**December 9, 2000/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A calf was removed from a National Finals Rodeo calf-roping event on a stretcher after being roped around the neck and thrown to the ground.

**November 4, 2000/San Francisco, California:** A bull broke his neck at the Grand National Rodeo after crashing into the metal base of a seesaw that was being ridden by four cowboys.

**July 2000/Rainier, Canada:** A 29-year-old man was killed when a bull he was riding at the Medicine Hat Stampede stepped on him.

**May 1, 2000/Spokane, Washington:** A bull escaped from a bull-riding contest and ran down the interstate before being hit by a car. Police shot at the bull, but he disappeared into the woods before being recaptured three days later.

**March 24, 2000/Albuquerque, New Mexico:** A 30-year-old man was thrown and then stomped on by the bull he was riding at an Albuquerque rodeo. He was immediately taken to a nearby hospital, where he died of massive internal injuries. Several years before, the man's brother had sustained traumatic head injuries that led to a coma after having been thrown from a bull during a rodeo in Idaho.

**February 4, 2000/San Antonio, Texas:** A horse snapped his spine during a bareback bronco-riding event at the San Antonio rodeo. Paralyzed, the horse dragged himself by his front legs across the stadium before collapsing. The horse was euthanized. Rodeo officials said that this incident and "a couple of calves with fractured legs [at last year's rodeo]" were "freak accidents."

**August 9, 1999/Ottawa, Ontario, Canada:** A horse was killed when he slammed into a fence during a bucking event at the Can-Am rodeo in Ottawa. Spectators watched the horse go into death shudders after breaking his neck.

**August 6, 1999/Santa Barbara, California:** A horse was killed during the bucking-bronco event at the Santa Barbara Fiesta rodeo. This marked the 10<sup>th</sup> known animal death at a California rodeo since 1995.

**July 23, 1999/Columbus, Ohio:** A bull was shot and killed by police after breaking free of a rodeo near Columbus.

**July 22, 1999/Ford City, Pennsylvania:** A bull who was being used in a rodeo had an "anxiety attack" and jumped an 8-foot fence to escape.

**July 9, 1999/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** A horse was killed during the chuckwagon event at the Calgary Stampede after crashing during the "Half Mile of Hell" event.

**June 21, 1999/New York, New York:** Police fired 40 shots at a bull who escaped an illegal rodeo in Long Island City; it took 15 minutes for the animal to bleed to death.

**June 5, 1999/Santa Maria, California:** Three horses escaped serious injury after falling at a full run at a rodeo in Santa Maria. One was able to walk away, but two were limping as they left the arena.

**January 25, 1999/Fort Worth, Texas:** A bull escaped from his pen at a rodeo in Fort Worth, tearing through the concourse, bumping into several people, and knocking over a beer stand before being roped by cowboys on horseback. A spokesperson said, "The bull was just as shaken up as the people."

**January 16, 1999/Denver, Colorado:** A horse who was being used in the bronc-riding event at the National Western Stock Show crashed headfirst into a wall, breaking his neck. In a second incident during the same rodeo, a horse who was being used in the saddle-bronc event bucked so hard that he broke his back and was euthanized.

**June 2, 1998/Connecticut:** During a "dash for cash" contest during a rodeo fundraiser for the Connecticut Make-A-Wish Foundation, a steer was tackled and thrown to the ground. His neck was broken. Organizers of the rodeo called in a clown to distract the stricken audience. The steer died, and the Make-A-Wish foundation later announced that it would no longer be associated with rodeos.

**March 2, 1998/Houston, Texas:** One steer died and two calves were injured at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The steer suffered a broken neck during the steer-wrestling competition, and the calves suffered broken legs during the calf-roping events.

**July 15, 1997/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** A bull who was being ridden in the bucking

event at the Calgary Stampede kicked so high that his leg became wedged in the chute gate. His leg was completely fractured above his fetlock, exposing the bone. The bull was euthanized.

**April 24, 1997/California:** A horse fell and died during a bucking event at a rodeo at Cal Poly University in California. The announcer told the crowd that the horse was “OK.” Only after word spread was it was revealed that the horse had actually suffered fatal injuries.

**September 30, 1996/Pomona, California:** A horse died of a broken neck at a Pomona rodeo after crashing into another horse.

**July 11, 1996/Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** Three horses were killed during the chuckwagon event at the Calgary Stampede. Two horses died instantly and the third was later euthanized after crashing on the “Half-Mile of Hell” event.

**April 18, 1996/Laramie, Wyoming:** A Laramie County Community College rodeo coach was charged with cruelty to animals after four rodeo steers froze to death in Wyoming.

**February 12, 1996/Anaheim, California:** A bronco crashed headlong into a heavy metal gate and died at an Anaheim rodeo. Spectators reported that wranglers were “prodding the horses and hyping them up.” The rodeo foreman admitted that his staff used 4-foot-long wooden prods to keep the handlers out of kicking range.

**August 8, 1995/Santa Barbara, California:** A horse was gored to death after being improperly housed with a bull in a holding pen. Three missed shots were fired at the dying animal in front of a large crowd that included children.

**July 23, 1995/Salinas, California:** A horse ran full-speed into a fence and died, another horse

broke his leg, and a calf snapped his back at a rodeo in Salinas. The latter two animals were both euthanized. In all, five animals paid with their lives at this specific rodeo. Since records started being kept in 1983, 11 other animals have died at the California rodeo in Salinas.