
**CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL
NATIONAL SPECIALTY SERVICES PANEL**

Outdoor Life Network re Calgary Stampede 2005

(CBSC Decision 04/05-1764)

Decided January 20, 2006

R. Cohen (Chair), E. Duffy-MacLean, M. Harris, M. Hogarth, V. Houle, P. O'Neill

THE FACTS

Outdoor Life Network (OLN), a specialty service that broadcasts programming on outdoor recreation, exploration and adventure, also airs sports programming that is related to those categories. In July 2005, OLN covered the annual Calgary Stampede, which has existed since 1912 and whose activities centre on a variety of rodeo competitions. The specialty service's coverage of the 2005 Stampede included most of the major rodeo events, as well as information segments and interviews with the competitors.

The Initial Complaint

The CBSC received a complaint from the Humane Society of Canada stating that rodeos involve violence against animals and that the televised broadcast of these events promotes violence against animals. The Humane Society provided detailed explanations of its concerns in multiple letters to the CBSC. In a letter of July 6, the organization's Chairman and CEO expressed his concerns about rodeo issues, including some that have no relationship to broadcasting. Those parts of the letter that are in some way pertinent to, or to some extent connected with, matters over which the CBSC has jurisdiction are as follows (the full text of all correspondence, including those issues extraneous to the challenged broadcast, are nonetheless included in the Appendix to this decision):

I am writing you on behalf of our 115,000 supporters and the millions of Canadians who share our views about the protection of animals. In light of the recent tragic, preventable deaths of 9 horses, with a tenth horse missing and presumed dead at this year's Calgary Stampede Trail Ride; we are once again

asking you to reconsider your decision to allow Canadian broadcasters to display scenes of violence towards animals which glamorizes cruelty to animals.

[...]

We feel that the violence in rodeos is in direct contravention of Article 9 of the *Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming (CAB Violence Code)*. Article 9.1 states that "Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which sanctions, promotes or glamorizes violence against animals".

We are writing to ask that such programming be prohibited, and until such time as this happens, we urge you during your investigation of this matter to require any network airing these events to broadcast before and during commercial breaks the violence warning "This program contains scenes of violence and is not suitable for young viewers. Viewer discretion is advised."

[...]

Having inspected rodeos here in Canada and in other countries, I can assure you that rodeo events are but an ugly caricature of modern day accepted livestock handling practices.

Calf roping involves roping a calf, and then jerking the animal to a sudden stop while it's running at speeds as high as 40km/hr. Team roping has the animal roped by the horns and hind legs and then wrestled to the ground.

Bronco busting and Bull riding have the rider sit astride a seemingly wild, unbroken animal to see how long they can stay on before being thrown off. The flank strap used to make horses and bulls buck is tightened around their abdomens; near their intestines, groin and other vital organs. It is the resulting pain and discomfort that causes the animals to buck. When this belt is removed, in the cases of the broncos – these "wild" horses are docile and gentle, and allow people to ride them.

[...]

We don't need to regulate cruelty for the sake of entertainment. We need to abolish it.

And to be fair, we also need the blame for rodeos' continued existence where it squarely belongs – on the heads of every person who pays an admission ticket, on the head of every ad agency who told their client it was a great idea to advertise at rodeos, and on the head of every corporation that thinks this kind of advertising will attract more customers or viewers.

The following background, primarily from the Calgary Stampede, underscores our concerns:

- A horse was killed at last year's Calgary Stampede following an injury that resulted in a broken leg
- Before that, an 18-month-old steer was killed when his neck was broken at the Cloverdale Rodeo
- In 2002, six horses had to be euthanized after they were involved in a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1999, one horse was killed following a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede

- In 1995, three horses were killed in various rodeo events at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1986, six horses were killed in a Chuckwagon crash, and before the end of that year's Stampede, another six horses were euthanized
- Rodeo riders who chose to take part in these events are [*sic*] also at risk and include a man who was killed in the Medicine Hat Stampede in 2000, three people who were killed in the 1999 Calgary Stampede and two other deaths in the 1995 Calgary Stampede
- More recently, a director of the Cloverdale Rodeo was seriously hurt when he was hit by a bull
- A calf moving at speeds of up to 40 km/hr is suddenly jerked to a sudden stop when a rope is thrown around the animal's neck
- Bareback and bronc riding involve terrified animals trying to escape a painful bucking strap around their groin area as they tried to throw a rider from their back

Make no mistake. Without advertising, sold as a privilege of every broadcaster's licence to operate, rodeos would eventually disappear.

[...]

In our view, inflicting cruelty on animals for thrills and entertainment legitimizes and encourages cruelty in society.

The CBSC should enforce the rule that cruelty to animals cannot be shown on television. To this end, we request that you sincerely reconsider phasing out the broadcast of such egregious cruelty.

The Broadcaster's Response

The Humane Society also sent correspondence directly to CTV Inc., the corporate owner of OLN, which replied on July 8:

[W]e would like to respond to your concerns with the broadcasting of the Calgary Stampede and other Canadian and international rodeo events on OLN and TSN.

While we understand your concerns, we have received full assurances from both the Calgary Stampede as well as other professional Rodeo associations that the care and treatment of these animals is of the greatest importance to them.

We have been informed that the Calgary Stampede works closely with the Calgary Humane Society as well as with the Alberta SPCA, and are given full access to the Stampede and related events to review procedures and make suggestions regarding the safeguard of their animals. As well, all livestock are under constant veterinary care and scrutiny to ensure their wellbeing. The Calgary Stampede assures us that safety – to the animals, rodeo participants and spectators, is their number one concern.

[...]

The Calgary Stampede, as well as other Rodeo events, have long been a Western Canadian tradition, and those involved with them are passionate about the animals they work with. A representative of the Stampede notes, "The Core purpose of the Stampede is to preserve Western Heritage and Values. The

Events within the Stampede are intended to be a celebration of our Western Roots.”

At CTV, the programming of these events is watched by viewers who love the sport and the tradition they represent. While we respectfully appreciate your point of view, we do not, however, believe rodeo events breach the Violence Code of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CBSC) [*sic*].

We have, however, taken your concerns into account and will monitor the programs vigilantly on an on-going basis. [...]

We are members in good standing with the CBSC, and take our obligations very seriously. However, please be aware that if you are dissatisfied with our response, you may contact the CBSC directly at complaints@cbsc.ca.

Further Correspondence from the Complainant

The Humane Society of Canada wrote again to the CBSC on July 28 and August 12, providing specific dates and times of rodeo broadcasts that had aired on OLN. The Society reiterated its concerns that the broadcast of “the violence in rodeos is in direct contravention of Article 9 of the *Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming*” and expressed its disappointment that its requests to include viewer advisories in the broadcasts had not been heeded by OLN. The Society also provided the CBSC with a copy of the letter it had sent directly to CTV Inc. on July 26 in response to the broadcaster’s reply:

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chairman & CEO of The Humane Society of Canada. We have received your fax of 8th July 2005 and while we thank you for expressing your views, we do not share them.

[...]

In our opinion, the overriding imperative of the Calgary Stampede and the PRCA is to continue to perpetuate rodeo violence towards animals, at all costs. [...] It is our opinion that the best way to prevent rodeo violence is to stop it from taking place.

Your letter also reports in part: “... The Calgary Stampede assures us that safety – to the animals, rodeo participants and spectators, is their number one concern ...” You may be interested to learn that even after the deaths of the ten horses in the trail ride, and before the conclusion of the investigations by the police and local humane societies – even before the Calgary Stampede’s own investigation – that representatives for the Calgary Stampede have categorically refused to rule out holding another trail ride. In our opinion, it is difficult to imagine a more wilful overweening arrogance and lack of total regard for the safety of animals.

Again from your letter: “... We have been informed that the Calgary Stampede works closely with the Calgary Humane Society as well as with the Alberta SPCA, and are given full access to the Stampede and related events to review procedures and make suggestions regarding the safeguard of their animals ...”

We have the greatest respect for the situation that our colleagues with the Calgary Humane Society and the Alberta SPCA are faced with in bringing an end to rodeo violence towards animals.

However, we are greatly troubled by your suggestion that their presence at the Calgary Stampede somehow represents an endorsement of rodeo violence towards animals, and we urge you to contact them directly in this regard.

[...]

Your letter also says in part: "... The Calgary Stampede, as well as other Rodeo events, has long been a Western Canadian tradition, and those involved with them are passionate about the animals they work with ..." Most recently, we can think of eleven dead horses and many concerned people who do not share that view. [...]

As a nation, our cultures and our traditions have much to offer; however, promoting violence towards animals for the sake of entertainment is not, in our view, the kind of direction many people would conclude is a particularly good thing for Canadian society.

Moreover, in our view, hiding behind culture and traditions to perpetuate violence for the sake of money and entertainment is nothing more than transparent sophistry. The Calgary Stampede is not about culture or tradition, it is about money. [...] The fact that we are having this discussion in Toronto about the broadcasting rights that you have purchased for widespread national and international distribution which in turn will generate millions of dollars in advertising revenue for your corporation simply underscores that economic reality.

Your enthusiastic support for the Calgary Stampede includes the broadcasting rights you have purchased, the advertising you have sold to corporate sponsors, the fact that Bell is a major corporate sponsor [...]. It is impossible for a reasonable person not to conclude that your own current defence of the Calgary Stampede is a direct reflection of your own multimillion business interests and investments in these activities.

[...]

At the end of the day, rodeo violence cannot survive without the hard-earned money of people who pay the price of admission and who buy the goods and services promoted by the corporate sponsors and the media. The real question is simply this: "Does the money made by rodeos for the sake of entertainment justify violence towards animals, and should the public continue to pay for it?"

We have reviewed a representative sample of the tapes of the OLN coverage of the Calgary Stampede and regrettably you have continued to air rodeo violence towards animals. We had also asked that if you aired such footage, that it would contain a warning that: "This program contains scenes of violence and is not suitable for young viewers. Viewer discretion is advised."

You have chosen to ignore those requests, and therefore regrettably, you have left us with no other recourse but to file a complaint with the CRTC and the CBSC.

At the end of the day, the real question from our perspective is whether or not making millions of dollars on the backs of animals who are the target of violence will be allowed to continue. By your actions, it is apparent that CTV, OLN and Bell have already made a firm decision in your answers to the concerns we have expressed. Since we apparently cannot work with you to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to end rodeo violence, we will continue to pursue other courses of action, including asking the CRTC and CBSC to investigate our concerns.

The Rodeo Events Reviewed

The CBSC reviewed OLN's coverage of the 2005 Calgary Stampede on the three dates noted by the complainant organization, namely July 9, 10 and 11. The CBSC paid particular attention to those of the rodeo events mentioned in the Humane Society of Canada's July 6 letter that were a part of those broadcasts.

The first of those events was Calf Roping (or Tie-down Roping), a timed event. In this event, a competitor on a horse chases after a running calf, which has been given a head start out of the chute. The cowboy, who starts from behind a barrier, ropes the calf, dismounts as rapidly as possible, grabs the calf's flanks, throws it to the ground and ties any three of its legs together with a pigging string he carries in his teeth. Because the calf must be standing before being tied, a fallen calf must be stood upright before being tossed down on its side. When the tie is completed, the rider must remount his horse and permit slack in the rope. If the calf escapes the tie within six seconds, the run does not count (as happened on one occasion in the programming screened). Immediately thereafter, the calf is untied and released. At one point in the July 9 broadcast, the announcer mentioned that the calves were bred specifically to be Tie-down Roping calves.

The second event was Steer Wrestling, also a timed event. As in Calf Roping, the steer is given a head start out of the chute and the cowboy again starts from behind the barrier. When that barrier opens, the mounted contestant chases the running steer, leaps off his horse, grabs the steer by the horns, digs his heels into the ring, turns the steer and throws the animal to the ground. The time stops when the steer is on its flank with all four legs pointed in the same direction.

The third event was Saddle Bronc Riding. In it, the competitor must stay on a bucking horse for eight seconds to have a ride that counts (the rules also require the contestant to begin the ride with his spurs touching the animal above the shoulder on the horse's first jump out of the chute). The event is scored by two judges each of whom awards the earned part of 25 points for the rider and the earned part of 25 points for the horse (for a total of 100 points, in the case of a hypothetical perfect ride). The cowboys are judged on their control, spur motion and timing. The saddle broncs are judged on their bucking ability. The fourth event, Bareback Bronc Riding, is similar to Saddle Bronc Riding, except that the competitor rides the horse without either a saddle or reins, relying on leather rigging attached to a flank strap for his grip.

The fifth event covered by OLN was Ladies' Barrel Racing, in which women ride horses in a clover-leaf pattern around a pre-set placement of three barrels in the arena. It is a timed event, won by the rider getting around the barrels in the fastest time (with a penalty imposed for each barrel knocked over). This event was not mentioned by the complainant Humane Society of Canada and apparently did not raise any issues of violence against animals.

The sixth event included in OLN's coverage was Bull Riding. As in Saddle and Bareback Bronc Riding, the rider must stay on the bull for eight seconds. The event is scored in precisely the same way as the Bronc Riding events (although in Bull Riding the spurs above the shoulder rule does not apply). In one of the competitions broadcast on July 11, a rider was thrown by the bull, which then stomped on the competitor's head. The unconscious cowboy was attended to by the medical team. After a few moments, it was announced that the rider had regained consciousness and he was carried out of the ring on a stretcher.

The final event in each day's coverage was Chuckwagon Racing, a competition first included as a part of the Calgary Stampede in 1923. In the event, there are several heats in each of which three chuckwagons must do a figure-eight around two barrels and then race around the perimeter of a track to the finish line. Each of the teams consists of a single wagon driver with a team of four horses and four outriders, each of whom has different tasks as a part of the underlying concept that each competitor is (in the historic sense) breaking camp and racing to the finish line. The event is strictly a time, not a form, contest but time penalties are added to the running time for certain infractions.

Slow-motion replays were provided for all of the competitors in each of the events. OLN did not, however, broadcast a slow-motion replay of the man being trampled by the bull.

THE DECISION

The National Specialty Services Panel examined the complaint under the following provisions of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) *Code of Ethics*:

CAB Violence Code, Article 9.0 – Violence against Animals

- 9.1 Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which sanctions, promotes or glamorizes violence against animals.
- 9.2 Broadcasters shall not be restricted in the telecast of legally sanctioned activities associated with animals. In such telecasts, judgment shall be used in the selection of video and associated audio, particularly if the telecast is broadcast outside of late evening hours.

CAB Violence Code, Article 10.0 – Violence in Sports Programming

- 10.1 Broadcasters shall not promote or exploit violent action which is outside the sanctioned activity of the sport in question.
- 10.2 In sports programming which involves animals, broadcasters shall refer to Section 9.0 of this Voluntary Code.

CAB Violence Code, Article 5.0 – Viewer Advisories

[...]

- 5.2 Broadcasters shall provide a viewer advisory at the beginning of, and during programming telecast outside of late evening hours, which contains scenes of violence not suitable for children.

The National Specialty Services Panel examined all of the correspondence and viewed 16 hours of videotapes of the broadcasts on the dates in question. It concludes that the broadcasts of the 2005 Calgary Stampede are not in violation of any of those Code provisions.

The CBSC Mandate: Complaints about Rodeo *Broadcasts*, Not Rodeo

Much of the substance of the Humane Society complaint has to do with the nature of rodeo events and only incidentally with their broadcast. Indeed, the initial letter refers in its first paragraph to the July 3 deaths of nine horses (of a herd of about 200 unbroken horses on a 6-day drive from the Stampede ranch in Hanna to Calgary in connection with the Calgary Stampede), who were approaching the Bonnybrook Bridge when they were apparently spooked and stampeded, falling 10 metres into the Bow River.

Although this was not a broadcast matter, it set the tone for what was to follow in the Humane Society complaint, namely, that the blame for that occurrence was linked to the rodeo activities associated with the Stampede. The essence of the Humane Society's complaint invokes rodeo, the Calgary Stampede and the broadcasters which carried the Stampede events. While the CBSC understands the Society's goals in this respect, it has no connection with the greatest part of the complaint and no comment to make regarding the nature of rodeo events and the treatment of animals. Those issues fall outside of the CBSC's mandate, whereas the *broadcast* of those events falls squarely within its responsibilities. The bottom line is that it is not the role of the CBSC to evaluate or comment on rodeo itself or the various events that comprise rodeo, much less the treatment of animals before, during or after training and actual rodeo competitions. Such assessments must be left to other bodies with jurisdiction over matters relating to animals and their welfare.

The *sole* concern of the CBSC with this file relates to the identified broadcasts themselves. The question for the CBSC is whether *those* broadcasts included content in contravention of the rules established in Article 9 (and peripherally in Article 10) of the *CAB Violence Code*. If not, there is no Code violation. If so, of course there is, with the consequences that flow from any negative decision of the CBSC, which may guide the future broadcast content of that type of programming.

The Humane Society Letter: Focussed on Rodeo Issues

The foregoing being said, much of the Humane Society's correspondence relates directly to rodeo issues. The Panel has done what it can to reduce the correspondence in the body of the decision to matters central to the broadcasting issue or, even if somewhat peripheral, nonetheless linked to broadcast matters. Since the CBSC has not wanted to distort the overall thrust of the Society's concerns, even if these do not fall within the Council's mandate, it has ensured that the complete correspondence is included, as noted above, in the Appendix to this decision.

Despite the attempt of the CBSC to segregate the rodeo-driven concerns from their broadcast aspect, there are understandably allegations relating to the former issues that are connected to the latter. After all, the Humane Society would probably argue that the nature of the rodeo activities about which it complained is so inherently violent that *any* depiction of these contests colours any broadcast of them. Since the CBSC's surgical effort has not been neat and clean (it could not have been), some issues relating to rodeo events remain in the correspondence cited here.

In the circumstances, the Panel has had to face a dilemma. While the CBSC will not render any decision or make any determination regarding the relationship between rodeo and the treatment of animals, the Panel considers that the Humane Society's presentation of some of the underlying rodeo event *information* is not even-handed. The Panel does not quibble with the Society's point-of-view or perspective. That is, after all, the basis for its complaint. Fair enough. It does take issue with its presentation of facts relating to the rodeo events it criticizes. The most problematic of these is the assertion that "It is the resulting pain and discomfort [from the flank strap] that causes the animals to buck" and that the "wild" animals "are docile and gentle, and allow people to ride them." To the extent that the Humane Society was making the point that the behavioural issue of the flank strap is the *sole* reason for bucking behaviour, the Panel considers that the failure to note the role of background, genetic and training components a regrettable omission.

Returning then to the substance of the letter of July 6, following the story of the July 3 Bonnybrook Bridge stampede, the Chairman and CEO of the Humane

Society provided ten bullets of specific examples or information, referring in eight of these cases to deaths or injuries suffered by horses, a steer and human contestants in the Calgary Stampede, the Medicine Hat Stampede and the Cloverdale Rodeo between 1986 and 2005. The remaining two bullets were comments on particular rodeo events. None of the specific examples given was directly associated with the *televised* rodeo broadcasts under consideration.

The letter also provided details of the nature of certain of the events, including Calf (or Tie-down) Roping, Team Roping (which was not a part of the OLN broadcasts on any of the dates reviewed), Bronco Busting (Saddle or Bareback Bronc Riding) and Bull Riding. There was no complaint registered about Ladies' Barrel Racing or, in any direct sense, either Steer Wrestling or Chuckwagon Racing (although they were noted in the bullets referred to above; and Chuckwagon Racing appears to be the event in which most of the deaths of men and animals have occurred in the history of Alberta rodeos documented by the Humane Society).

The On-screen Issues

Although the concerns of the Humane Society focus to a great extent on matters far removed from the television screen, it must be clearly understood that the only issue for the CBSC is *what appears on-screen*. While the National Specialty Services Panel assumes that the Humane Society would argue that the rodeo activities about which it complained are so inherently violent that *any* depiction of these in a broadcast must constitute the broadcast of violence against animals, the Panel does not share that view.

In the first place, the issue is whether the broadcast "sanctions, promotes or glamorizes violence" against animals. In this respect alone, the Panel considers that the complaint fails. It finds *no* glamorization, promotion or even valorizing of violence *against* the animals. None of the rodeo events is a *bullfight* or approximation thereof. None of the events has a hunter-hunted format. There is no *goal* of injury to either the human or the animal contestant. At best, there is a test of wills between the cowboy, on the one hand, and the calf, the bronc or the bull, on the other. The calf wants to get away but rarely does (there were a few examples of an unsuccessful roper in the footage viewed), although, having been roped and then tied for six seconds, it is released immediately thereafter. In the bronc and bull riding, the human wants to stay on his steed for *eight* seconds, while the horse or bull simply wants to buck, not even necessarily with the goal of alleviating itself of its mounted burden. Indeed, in the riding events, there may even be a sense of collaborative effort between the contestant and the bucking stock. After all, half of the points relate to the performance of the horse or bull and half relate to the performance of the cowboy.

The Panel is also aware, from the colour commentary, that the competitors prize the broncs and bulls which come “with a reputation”; there is no indication whatsoever that there is *any* form of antipathy. The riders appear to desire a bronc or bull with spirit and a known reputation. After all, they know that that bucking ability will earn half their points. It must also be appreciated that the other half of the points are not earned from human-over-animal supremacy, or from the victory of the one over the other. If anything, it is a type of grace under pressure, which comes from the “control, spur motion and timing” of the rider, not the equivalent of a knock-out or a technical knock-out, as in boxing, or a pinning, as in wrestling.

In summary, the Panel does not see the broadcast of rodeo events as *violence*, much less sanctioned, promoted or glamorized violence. It finds no breach of Article 9.1 of the *CAB Violence Code*. Moreover, it so concludes without the need for application of Article 9.2, which, if anything, allows an exception to Article 9.1. It provides that broadcasters shall not be restricted in the telecast of “legally sanctioned activities associated with animals.” The effect of this provision is obvious. Until such time, if any, as rodeo activities become illegal under Section 446 (Cruelty to Animals) of the *Criminal Code* or other statutory instrument, their broadcast is one of a legally sanctioned activity.

Viewer Advisories

Since the Humane Society has specifically requested that, at minimum, a viewer advisory be included to the effect that rodeo broadcasts contain “scenes of violence and [are] not suitable for young viewers,” the Panel must consider that point. It is obvious from the previous section of this decision that the Panel does not consider that there are scenes of violence in the 16 hours of tapes it viewed. There is action. There is athleticism, on the part of man and beast. There is, at most, a test of wills but there is not even, as between cowboy and animal, a distinction between victor and vanquished. The contests are as to time or form, or these in combination, with the winner being one cowboy or another. But of violence, there is none. There may be danger for either man or beast and, indeed for both, the Chuckwagon Races have been the greatest source of death and injury over the past half century, but danger, even if extreme, is not necessarily violence. Automobile racing would surely be another classic example of this distinction. The Panel also noted that, even where there was injury, in the case of the bull rider, it was neither emphasized nor repeated.

In the end, the Panel does not conclude that there are “scenes of violence not suitable for children”. In the circumstances, it finds no requirement for the broadcaster to include viewer advisories. The Panel fully appreciates that some individuals and families may have their own issues which lead them to decide that rodeo is an inappropriate type of programming for their home. Some may feel that way about some genres of dramatic programming, modern music, reality

shows, certain professional sports, and so on. All families need to make such decisions but they are not matters with viewer advisory implications.

Broadcaster Responsiveness

The CBSC always assesses the broadcaster's responsiveness to the complainant, which is, after all, a responsibility of membership in the Council. It expects that response to be thoughtful and focussed on the substance of the complaint. In the matter at hand, the Panel considers that much of OLN's response is focussed on issues outside of the jurisdiction of the CBSC; however, it can find no fault with that orientation since so much of the complaint letter discussed matters that have little or nothing to do with broadcasting. In responding more fully to those issues, OLN fully acquitted its obligation of responsiveness on this occasion.

This decision is a public document upon its release by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. It may be reported, announced or read by the station against which the complaint had originally been made; however, in the case of a favourable decision, the station is under no obligation to announce the result.

APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 04/05-1764 Outdoor Life Network re Calgary Stampede 2005

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following complaint dated July 6, 2005 from the Humane Society of Canada:

Re: Televising Rodeos on Canadian Television

I am writing you on behalf of our 115,000 supporters and the millions of Canadians who share our views about the protection of animals. In light of the recent tragic, preventable deaths of 9 horses, with a tenth horse missing and presumed dead at this year's Calgary Stampede Trail Ride; we are once again asking you to reconsider your decision to allow Canadian broadcasters to display scenes of violence towards animals which glamorizes cruelty to animals.

These events are shown on such channels as the CBC, the Outdoor Life Network (OLN), Global TV and others, often in prime time with no violence warning before and during commercial breaks.

Currently the CBSC standards for showing violence and cruelty are voluntary; we are calling on the CBSC to make these codes mandatory and a requirement for broadcast licence application and renewal.

We feel that the violence in rodeos is in direct contravention of Article 9 of the *Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming (CAB Violence Code)*. Article 9.1 states that "Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which sanctions, promotes or glamorizes violence against animals".

We are writing to ask that such programming be prohibited, and until such time as this happens, we urge you during your investigation of this matter to require any network airing these events to broadcast before and during commercial breaks the violence warning "This program contains scenes of violence and is not suitable for young viewers. Viewer discretion is advised."

For the past 35 years, I have worked extensively with livestock here in Canada and in over 95 different countries. My father was a farmer, and I also hold a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Guelph.

Having inspected rodeos here in Canada and in other countries, I can assure you that rodeo events are but an ugly caricature of modern day accepted livestock handling practices.

Calf roping involves roping a calf, and then jerking the animal to a sudden stop while it's running at speeds as high as 40km/hr. Team roping has the animal roped by the horns and hind legs and then wrestled to the ground.

Bronco busting and Bull riding have the rider sit astride a seemingly wild, unbroken animal to see how long they can stay on before being thrown off. The flank strap used to make horses

and bulls buck is tightened around their abdomens; near their intestines, groin and other vital organs. It is the resulting pain and discomfort that causes the animals to buck. When this belt is removed, in the cases of the broncos – these “wild” horses are docile and gentle, and allow people to ride them.

Cows and calves are raised today through generations of careful handling and genetic breeding practices. They are worth a great deal as breeding stock.

Rodeo operators also tell the public that the animals are only subjected to about 30 seconds of pain or suffering or terror. However, this is an outright lie. Rodeo cowboys practise with these animals hundreds of times, over and over again, before the cowboys are ready to participate in open competitions for prize money.

According to one steer roper, in these practice sessions one person can cripple three to four animals in an afternoon.

Owners also brag about how many livestock they have saved from going to the slaughterhouse. However, in many cases, animals injured in the rodeo are sent to these same places – vets often withhold painkillers from the animals because it would “spoil the meat”.

But the biggest lie of all is that by allowing rodeos to police themselves with so-called ‘humane codes of practice’ this simply makes everything all right. We don’t need to regulate cruelty for the sake of entertainment. We need to abolish it.

And to be fair, we also need the blame for rodeos’ continued existence where it squarely belongs – on the heads of every person who pays an admission ticket, on the head of every ad agency who told their client it was a great idea to advertise at rodeos, and on the head of every corporation that thinks this kind of advertising will attract more customers or viewers.

The following background, primarily from the Calgary Stampede, underscores our concerns:

- A horse was killed at last year’s Calgary Stampede following an injury that resulted in a broken leg
- Before that, an 18-month-old steer was killed when his neck was broken at the Cloverdale Rodeo
- In 2002, six horses had to be euthanized after they were involved in a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1999, one horse was killed following a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1995, three horses were killed in various rodeo events at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1986, six horses were killed in a Chuckwagon crash, and before the end of that year’s Stampede, another six horses were euthanized
- Rodeo riders who chose to take part in these events are also at risk and include a man who was killed in the Medicine Hat Stampede in 2000, three people who were killed in the 1999 Calgary Stampede and two other deaths in the 1995 Calgary Stampede
- More recently, a director of the Cloverdale Rodeo was seriously hurt when he was hit by a bull
- A calf moving at speeds of up to 40 km/hr is suddenly jerked to a sudden stop when a rope is thrown around the animal’s neck
- Bareback and bronc riding involve terrified animals trying to escape a painful bucking strap around their groin area as they tried to throw a rider from their back

Make no mistake. Without advertising, sold as a privilege of every broadcaster’s licence to

operate, rodeos would eventually disappear.

There is evidence that early childhood abuse towards animals can lead to later violent behaviour towards people. The FBI considers cruelty to animals as one of its three primary indicators for criminal behaviour.

In our view, inflicting cruelty on animals for thrills and entertainment legitimizes and encourages cruelty in society.

The CBSC should enforce the rule that cruelty to animals cannot be shown on television. To this end, we request that you sincerely reconsider phasing out the broadcast of such egregious cruelty.

The Humane Society also attached the following press release to their letter:

Calgary Stampede Horse Deaths Should Have Been Prevented Says The Humane Society of Canada (HSC)

July 4, 2005, VANCOUVER – News reports that nine Calgary Stampede horses were killed, and a tenth missing and presumed dead on July 3rd, 2005 has drawn strong criticism from The Humane Society of Canada who says the deaths could have been prevented. “Trying to ride and herd 200 rodeo horses on a 206 km ride that last days was a disaster looking for a place to happen,” says Al Hickey, the animal charity’s Western Regional Director. “This many horses are usually trucked to the Stampede grounds and with good reason. Horses are herd animals which react with fear and flight at the first signs of danger.”

His remarks were echoed by HSC Executive Director Michael O’Sullivan who has worked with horses all of his life: “The best way to end this kind of cruelty is to prevent it from ever taking place. Our fascination with the ‘Old West’ is forcing these gentle noble animals to pay a heavy price.”

News reports say that ranch hands had reportedly been guiding about 200 rodeo horses on a six day, 206 km journey from the Stampede ranch near Hanna, Alberta to the exhibition site near downtown Calgary. The event, Trail Ride 2005, was organized to commemorate the province’s centennial. The horses were spooked and fell 10 metres from a bridge into the fast moving Bow River southeast of Calgary, where they were all killed. An investigation into this tragedy is underway.

The Humane Society of Canada (HSC) is asking Canadians and companies not to support the cruel animal spectacles that form a part of the Calgary Stampede which runs from July 8-17. “For the most part, humans and animals work together, but in rodeo events they meet in open conflict.”

O’Sullivan, who has inspected rodeos in Canada and other countries holds a Bachelor of Science of Agriculture, and has worked extensively with horses, says that today’s rodeo events have nothing to do with today’s livestock handling practices. “Rodeo spectacles are nothing but entertainment for bored ‘city slickers’. Horses, calves, steers and bulls suffer during countless hours of practice sessions where riders and ropers train to race against the clock for prize money. People need to find new ways to entertain themselves that doesn’t involve this kind of trauma for animals,” he says.

And anyone who believes that putting livestock into rodeo events saves them from that final trip to the slaughterhouse is simply fooling themselves. There are no ‘retirement homes’ for rodeo animals, says O’Sullivan.

The Humane Society of Canada believes that their five point action plan called “Ending Rodeo Violence” can help reduce and eventually bring an end to rodeo spectacles:

1. Develop creative engaging campaigns to encourage people to stop paying the price of an admission ticket;
2. Asking people to stop spending their hard earned money to buy goods and services from ad agencies and their companies which promote rodeos;
3. The CRTC needs to legally enforce and make into law the current Canadian Broadcast Standards Council’s voluntary guidelines for broadcasters which prohibit scenes showing cruelty to animals; and until this takes place require all broadcasters to issue a warning that rodeo events contain ‘scenes of violence and that viewer discretion is advised’;
4. Work with any municipalities that want to pass local bylaws to prohibit rodeo events;
5. Ask insurance companies and their brokers not to provide insurance coverage for rodeo events.

“We need to do everything in our power to reduce violence, and in our opinion, rodeo spectacles are cruelty for the sake of entertainment,” says O’Sullivan. “This painful chapter in human history needs to be brought to a close.”

CONTACT: Al Hickey or Michael O’Sullivan by toll free 1-800-641-KIND or Michael on his cell phone (416) 876-9685 or at www.humanesociety.com.

Additional Background

- A horse was killed at last year’s Calgary Stampede following an injury that resulted in a broken leg
- Before that an 18-month-old steer was killed when his neck was broken at the Cloverdale Rodeo
- In 2002, 6 horses had to be euthanized after they were involved in a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1999, one horse was killed following a Chuckwagon crash at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1995, three horses were killed in various rodeo events at the Calgary Stampede
- In 1986, 6 horses were killed in a Chuckwagon crash, and before the end of that year’s Stampede, another 6 horses were euthanized
- Rodeo riders who chose to take part in these events are also at risk and include a man who was killed in the Medicine Hat Stampede in 2000, three people who were killed in the 1999 Calgary Stampede and two other deaths in the 1995 Calgary Stampede
- More recently a director of the Cloverdale Rodeo was seriously hurt when he was hit by a bull
- A calf moving at speeds of up to 40 km/hr is suddenly jerked to a sudden stop when a rope is thrown around the animal’s neck
- Bareback and bronc riding involve terrified animals trying to escape a painful bucking strap around their groin area as they tried to throw a rider from their back
- Chuckwagon spills have injured people and resulted in the deaths of horses

[For more than 17 years, Al Hickey was the Chief Executive of the BC SPCA and before that headed up the Alberta and BC Chambers of Commerce, and the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vancouver. He has 6 grandchildren.

A father with two children, and a houseful of dogs and cats, O’Sullivan has worked across Canada and in over 90 countries during the last 35 years helping people, animals and nature.]

The Humane Society of Canada works to protect dogs, cats, horses, birds, livestock, lab animals, wildlife and the environment. They carry out hands-on programs to help animals and nature, mount rescue operations, expose cruelty through hard-hitting undercover investigations, work to pass laws to protect animals, fund scientific research, support animal shelters and wildlife rehabilitation centres and spread the word about how to help animals and nature through humane education.

The Humane Society of Canada depends entirely on donations to support our programs to help animals and the environment. All donations are gratefully acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. If you would like to support our campaigns to bring an end to animal cruelty please make a donation here.

The CBSC responded to the Humane Society on July 7, indicating that it requires a specific station, date and time in order to pursue complaints.

Broadcaster's Response

The Humane Society also sent a letter directly to CTV Inc. Although the letter did not contain a specific date and time of broadcast, CTV Inc. responded on July 8 with the following:

Further to your letter of July 7, 2005 to [the President of CTV Inc.] and [the President & CEO of Bell Globemedia], we would like to respond to your concerns with the broadcasting of the Calgary Stampede and other Canadian and international rodeo events on OLN and TSN.

While we understand your concerns, we have received full assurances from both the Calgary Stampede as well as other professional Rodeo associations that the care and treatment of these animals is of the greatest importance to them.

We have been informed that the Calgary Stampede works closely with the Calgary Humane Society as well as with the Alberta SPCA, and are given full access to the Stampede and related events to review procedures and make suggestions regarding the safeguard of their animals. As well, all livestock are under constant veterinary care and scrutiny to ensure their wellbeing. The Calgary Stampede assures us that safety – to the animals, rodeo participants and spectators, is their number one concern.

In addition, Rodeo Associations practice vigilance and care towards their animals. They voluntarily observe codes which place the safeguard of these animals in the highest esteem.

The Calgary Stampede, as well as other Rodeo events, have long been a Western Canadian tradition, and those involved with them are passionate about the animals they work with. A representative of the Stampede notes, "The Core purpose of the Stampede is to preserve Western Heritage and Values. The Events within the Stampede are intended to be a celebration of our Western Roots."

At CTV, the programming of these events is watched by viewers who love the sport and the tradition they represent. While we respectfully appreciate your point of view, we do not, however, believe rodeo events breach the Violence Code of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CBSC) [*sic*].

We have, however, taken your concerns into account and will monitor the programs vigilantly

on an on-going basis. In addition, we have forwarded your concerns to the Calgary Stampede as well as the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association.

We are members in good standing with the CBSC, and take our obligations very seriously. However, please be aware that if you are dissatisfied with our response, you may contact the CBSC directly at complaints@cbsc.ca.

We thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Additional Correspondence

The Humane Society wrote again to the CBSC on July 28:

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman & CEO of The Humane Society of Canada.

Further to our letter of 6th July 2005 expressing our concern over the broadcast of rodeo violence towards animals, please find enclosed a copy of our exchanges of correspondence with the OLN.

We have viewed a representative sample of tapes from the OLN coverage of the Calgary Stampede and regrettably the OLN continued to air rodeo violence towards animals. We had also asked that if the OLN aired such footage, that it would contain a warning that: "This program contains scenes of violence and is not suitable for young viewers. Viewer discretion is advised."

The OLN has chosen to ignore our requests, and therefore regrettably, have left us with no other recourse but to file a formal complaint with the CRTC.

We believe that the violence in rodeos is in direct contravention of Article 9 of the *Voluntary Code regarding Violence in Television Programming* (CAB Violence Code). Article 9.1 states that "Broadcasters shall not telecast programming which sanctions, promotes or glamorizes violence towards animals."

We are asking the CBSC to investigate our allegations and make a determination whether or not the treatment of animals in rodeos violates these guidelines by sanctioning, promoting and glamorizing violence towards animals.

The tentative programming schedule posted on the OLN website is attached. However, we found that in reality, it differed slightly.

At the end of the day, the real question from our perspective is whether or not making millions of dollars on the backs of animals who are the targets of violence will be allowed to continue.

If we can provide you with any further details, then please do not hesitate to call.

The OLN programming schedule was not attached to that letter as indicated. The CBSC asked The Humane Society to provide the attachment on August 11. In response, The Humane Society sent an additional letter on August 12:

Thank you for your e-mail of August 11, 2005 regarding our complaint relating to Calgary Stampede rodeo events broadcast by OLN. Attached are the exchanges of correspondence

which should have accompanied our most recent letter.

We have VHS copies of the broadcasts that took place during the following times, and OLN continued to broadcast additional such coverage for the duration of the Calgary Stampede which lasted more than ten days:

July 9/05 10:00 am to 2:30 pm
 July 9 & 10/05 10:00 pm to 2:30 am
 July 10 & 11/05 10:00 pm to 3:30 am

We can send you copies of the tapes if OLN is unwilling or unable to provide them.

Please note that the projected broadcast schedule below that appeared on OLN's website before the opening of the Calgary Stampede rodeo events differs slightly from the programming schedule which OLN eventually followed:

July 8-18/05 inclusive from 10:00 pm to 2:30 am with an encore presentation from 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm the following day.

If we can answer any further questions then please do not hesitate to contact our office.

The Humane Society also replied directly to CTV Inc. on July 26 and copied the CBSC:

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chairman & CEO of The Humane Society of Canada. We have received your fax of 8th July 2005 and while we thank you for expressing your views, we do not share them.

In your letter you state in part: "... we have received full assurances from both the Calgary Stampede as well as other professional Rodeo associations that the care and treatment of these animals is of the greatest importance to them ..." While you may feel at ease with the fox guarding the hen house we do not.

The Calgary Stampede reportedly brings in more than \$340 million dollars. In our opinion, the overriding imperative of the Calgary Stampede and the PRCA is to continue to perpetuate rodeo violence towards animals, at all costs. Therefore, in our view, their self interest is so tightly wrapped up in protecting this \$340 million industry that to believe that their actions will result in any meaningful protection for rodeo animals, or that they will cooperate to bring an end to rodeo violence, defies logic and is simply an exercise in wishful thinking. It is our opinion that the best way to prevent rodeo violence is to stop it from taking place.

Your letter also reports in part: "... The Calgary Stampede assures us that safety – to the animals, rodeo participants and spectators, is their number one concern ..." You may be interested to learn that even after the deaths of the ten horses in the trail ride, and before the conclusion of the investigations by the police and local humane societies – even before the Calgary Stampede's own investigation – that representatives for the Calgary Stampede have categorically refused to rule out holding another trail ride. In our opinion, it is difficult to imagine a more willful overweening arrogance and lack of total regard for the safety of animals.

Again from your letter: "... We have been informed that the Calgary Stampede works closely with the Calgary Humane Society as well as with the Alberta SPCA, and are given full access to the Stampede and related events to review procedures and make suggestions regarding the safeguard of their animals ..."

We have the greatest respect for the situation that our colleagues with the Calgary Humane

Society and the Alberta SPCA are faced with in bringing an end to rodeo violence towards animals.

However, we are greatly troubled by your suggestion that their presence at the Calgary Stampede somehow represents an endorsement of rodeo violence towards animals, and we urge you to contact them directly in this regard:

Ms. [C. T.]
Executive Director
The Calgary Humane Society
Calgary, Alberta

Ms. [T. J.]
Executive Director
Alberta SPCA
Edmonton, Alberta

Tel: (403) 250-7722
Fax: (403) 291-9818

Tel: (780) 447-3600
Fax: (780) 447-4748

Your letter also says in part: "... The Calgary Stampede, as well as other Rodeo events, has long been a Western Canadian tradition, and those involved with them are passionate about the animals they work with ..." Most recently, we can think of eleven dead horses and many concerned people who do not share that view. And to correct the historical misstatement, the Calgary Stampede was in fact started and steered for many years through its infancy by American rodeo promoter, Guy Weadick.

As a nation, our cultures and our traditions have much to offer; however, promoting violence towards animals for the sake of entertainment is not, in our view, the kind of direction many people would conclude is a particularly good thing for Canadian society.

Moreover, in our view, hiding behind culture and traditions to perpetuate violence for the sake of money and entertainment is nothing more than transparent sophistry. The Calgary Stampede is not about culture or tradition, it is about money. Lots of it. The Calgary Stampede actively promotes itself at a local, provincial, national and international level, and in doing so, can expect to be the subject of that same level of public scrutiny and comment. The fact that we are having this discussion in Toronto about the broadcasting rights that you have purchased for widespread national and international distribution which in turn will generate millions of dollars in advertising revenue for your corporation simply underscores that economic reality.

Your enthusiastic support for the Calgary Stampede includes the broadcasting rights you have purchased, the advertising you have sold to corporate sponsors, the fact that Bell is a major corporate sponsor and that in 2002 your well-known *CTV National* anchorman Mr. Lloyd Robertson served as Grand Marshall (see attached letter). It is impossible for a reasonable person not to conclude that your own current defence of the Calgary Stampede is a direct reflection of your own multimillion business interests and investments in these activities.

In your closing remarks you say in part: "... we have forwarded your concerns to the Calgary Stampede as well as the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association ..." While animals cannot of course speak for themselves, we suspect that if they could, being reassured that their concerns were being brought to the attention of the very people responsible for inflicting torment and rodeo violence upon them, would give them the same cold comfort that it provides us.

At the end of the day, rodeo violence cannot survive without the hard-earned money of people who pay the price of admission and who buy the goods and services promoted by the corporate sponsors and the media. The real question is simply this: "Does the money made by rodeos for the sake of entertainment justify violence towards animals, and should the

public continue to pay for it?"

We have reviewed a representative sample of the tapes of the OLN coverage of the Calgary Stampede and regrettably you have continued to air rodeo violence towards animals. We had also asked that if you aired such footage, that it would contain a warning that: "This program contains scenes of violence and is not suitable for young viewers. Viewer discretion is advised."

You have chosen to ignore those requests, and therefore regrettably, you have left us with no other recourse but to file a complaint with the CRTC and the CBSC.

At the end of the day, the real question from our perspective is whether or not making millions of dollars on the backs of animals who are the target of violence will be allowed to continue. By your actions, it is apparent that CTV, OLN and Bell have already made a firm decision in your answers to the concerns we have expressed. Since we apparently cannot work with you to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to end rodeo violence, we will continue to pursue other courses of action, including asking the CRTC and CBSC to investigate our concerns.