

RODEOS

Code of practice
for
the conduct of rodeos
in
Western Australia

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PREFACE

The **Code of practice for the conduct of rodeos in Western Australia** is based on *the NCCAW Position Statement – Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock* and has been adopted in principle for use in Western Australia. The original *Position Statement* was prepared for the National Consultative Committee for Animal Welfare. It was prepared in consultation with the relevant industry organisations and state agencies.

This code has been prepared to assist all persons handling or using livestock at rodeos in Western Australia, and reference to this code is made in Regulations provided under Section 25 of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* for the purposes of a defence against cruelty. While the original NCCAW position statement on rodeos states that its purpose is to set minimum standards for the welfare of animals used at rodeos, this code is not intended to be used for either audit or compliance purposes.

This Western Australian version of the code is supported by the Western Australian rodeo industry. It is based on current knowledge and technology. It will be reviewed in the future on a needs basis, to take account of advances in the understanding of animal physiology and behaviour, technological changes in animal husbandry and their relationship to the welfare of animals.

Further copies of this code are available from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development or from the Internet at: <http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au>

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Part I - Introduction

1. Introduction

The National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) is a national body whose role it is to provide advice to the Federal Government and assess animal welfare issues. Its membership is made up of representatives from a cross section of government, animal industry and community organisations.

This Position Statement is the NCCAW recommended national standard for the management and control of rodeos. It has been developed following extensive consultation with the major rodeo associations. All States and Territories are encouraged to adopt the contents of this document when developing rodeo standards.

2. Acknowledgment

NCCAW would like to thank the Australian Professional Rodeo Association for its help and support with the development of this standard and the provision of its Code of Conduct for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock on which these standards are largely based. NCCAW would also like to acknowledge the support and advice of the National Rodeo Council of Australia, the Australian Bushmen's Campdraft and Rodeo Association and other Rodeo Associations who contributed to the development of these standards.

3. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Position Statement is to set minimum standards for the care and welfare of rodeo livestock and to establish benchmarks for effective co-regulation between industry and animal welfare agencies to ensure the welfare of animals at all rodeos in Australia.

4. General Principles

Proper consideration must be given to the health and welfare of animals used in rodeos. Events and procedures in rodeos should be specifically designed to prevent cruelty and minimise the impacts on the welfare of the animals used. Furthermore, people who have responsibilities in the organisation and running of rodeos must have appropriate training to ensure that the animal welfare needs are met.

All people associated with rodeo animals must comply with prevention of cruelty legislation and adhere to the national, Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals. These rodeo standards are designed to address issues that specifically arise with rodeos and are complementary to legislation and national codes of practice.

Rodeo Associations should have written rules that are based on and consistent with these standards. Such rules should be specifically designed to prevent cruelty and minimise the risk of injury to livestock. Associations should monitor compliance with the standards and enforce them as required. Associations should have in place formal accreditation programs for Rodeo Managers and Stock Contractors based on the standards and actively promote the standards to all those involved in running rodeos.

If other animal events are run in conjunction with a rodeo, then further standards should be established by the rodeo association, which takes into account the welfare of those animals involved in the other events.

5. Objectives

The objectives of these standards are to:

- (a) protect the welfare of livestock in rodeos;
- (b) ensure that rodeo personnel are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in these standards;
- (c) provide guidelines and standards for arena conditions, yard and chute design;
- (d) establish criteria for rodeo participants and staff in the handling and care of livestock and
- (e) provide a basis for monitoring the welfare of animals at rodeos.

6. Definitions

Throughout this document, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions apply.

6.1 Rodeo

For the purposes of these standards, a rodeo is a competition using cattle and/or horses which includes one or more of the following events:

Saddle Bronc Riding,

Bareback Bronc Riding,

Bull Riding,

Steer Riding,

Roping and Tying,

Steer Wrestling,

Team Roping,

Barrel Racing,

Breakaway Roping,

Steer Undecorating.

6.2 Rodeo Association

An incorporated association established for the purpose of running rodeos.

6.3 Rodeo Organiser

A person, or group of persons, who instigates and promotes the rodeo.

6.4 Rodeo Manager (Person in Charge)

Some rodeos have a Rodeo Manager who is appointed by either the Rodeo Organiser or the Rodeo Association. Where this appointment is made, this person is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the rodeo and ensuring compliance with these standards. The appointing body or person must ensure that the Rodeo Manager is competent and has the authority to undertake his/her duties.

6.5 Judge

A judge officiating at a rodeo. Judges are responsible for ensuring that the rodeo rules are adhered to during the events.

6.6 Stock Contractor

A person who provides livestock for rodeo events. The Rodeo Organiser must ensure that the Stock Contractors used are competent to undertake their duties in compliance with these standards.

6.7 Livestock Supervisor

Where there is no Stock Contractor, the Rodeo Manager must appoint a Livestock Supervisor. The Livestock Supervisor must have the same level of knowledge and competence expected of a Stock Contractor and assumes all the duties and responsibilities of the Stock Contractor as outlined in this standard.

6.8 Competitor

A person who competes in a rodeo event.

6.9 Veterinarian

A veterinary surgeon who is registered in the State or Territory of Australia in which the rodeo is held and has the necessary experience with cattle and horses to deal with the health and injury issues that might arise in a rodeo.

Part II - Responsibilities of Rodeo Personnel

7. Policy Statement

Animals used in rodeos must be treated humanely.

The Rodeo Manager, Veterinarians, competitors, Stock Contractors and Judges must have a high level of knowledge of these standards and must ensure the welfare of animals used in rodeos within their areas of responsibility. They also must comply with relevant animal protection legislation.

8. Rodeo Organiser's Responsibilities

The Rodeo Organiser appoints the Stock Contractor, and must ensure that he/she is competent to undertake his/her duties. Where the Rodeo Organiser appoints the Rodeo Manager he/she must also ensure that the Rodeo Manager is competent and has the authority to undertake his/her duties.

9. Rodeo Association's Responsibilities

Where the Rodeo Association appoints the Rodeo Manager it must ensure that he/she is competent and has the authority to undertake his/her duties.

10. Rodeo Manager Responsibilities

The Rodeo Manager is ultimately responsible and accountable for the conduct of the rodeo and ensuring compliance with these standards. He/she must have the competence and the authority to undertake his/her duties.

The Rodeo Manager must ensure that:

- (a) all participants and staff are aware of the requirements of these standards;
- (b) a Stock Contractor who is accredited and registered with the State rodeo association, is appointed and is in attendance at the rodeo;
- (b) only properly qualified and competent personnel are appointed to care for, handle and treat rodeo livestock;
- (c) the Veterinarian inspects all animals used in a competition prior to the commencement of the rodeo, and that any lame, sick or injured animals are removed from the draw and the person in

charge of the animal directed to seek treatment for the animal. Also animals with defective eyesight, are removed from the draw;

- (d) all animals used in any event conform to the specifications of these standards;
- (e) yards and chutes are inspected prior to the rodeo and comply with these standards;
- (f) inspections are performed on all competition equipment and the manner in which the equipment is set or used on the animal complies in all respects with these standards;
- (g) in those jurisdictions where veterinary attendance is not mandatory and where the rodeo is being held in a remote area, the Rodeo Manager must make reasonable attempts to secure the services of a veterinarian. Where a veterinarian cannot attend, the Rodeo Manager must appoint a person who is experienced and competent in assessing and dealing with health and welfare problems of cattle and horses, including having the knowledge and means to undertake safe and humane euthanasia, to assume the responsibilities of the Veterinarian as outlined in this standard. The Rodeo Manager must make prior arrangements for this person to be able to contact a veterinarian for advice and direction should it be required. In the case where a veterinarian cannot attend and a Rodeo Manager has appointed a person to act in this position, then that person assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Veterinarian; and
- (h) a report is provided to the State/Territory authority for animal welfare within 21 days of the rodeo being held. The report should detail the date and location of the rodeo, the names, addresses and contact details of the Rodeo Manager, the Stock Contractor and (*if applicable*) the attending Veterinarian. The report should also detail the number and type of events and the number of animals used, the number, types, and severity of any animal injuries or breaches of the code and corrective actions taken.
- (i) any animals which, for any reason, fail to meet the age, weight or size specifications for any event, are withdrawn from any affiliated rodeos for a specified period of time. Likewise, any animals that are identified as 'chute fighters' or show distress in the chute may be excluded from competition for a nominated or indefinite period.

11. Stock Contractor's Responsibilities

The Stock Contractor is responsible for the welfare and appropriate husbandry and handling of all rodeo livestock.

Rodeo associations are encouraged to accredit Stock Contractors to ensure that they have the required knowledge of the standards and the skills to comply with them.

The Stock Contractor must ensure that:

- (a) transport and handling of animals is undertaken in accordance with the relevant Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals;
- (b) all animals supplied are in good health and are suitable for the purpose for which they are intended;
- (c) except when animals are competing in the arena (where the Judges are responsible), the welfare of livestock is maintained. This includes humane handling and the provision of adequate food, water and shelter;
- (d) no stimulant, hypnotic or other substance is used on any animal which is to take part, other than that prescribed by a veterinarian for the legitimate treatment of injury or illness;
- (e) no substance is administered to an animal, which could mask an injury, thereby enabling that animal to compete;

- (f) unsuitable animals are withdrawn from competition;
- (g) the instructions of the Veterinarian and Rodeo Manager are implemented;
- (h) cattle and horses are penned separately in the yards and during transport. Aggressive and injured animals are isolated from others and animals with young at foot are not yarded or used in connection with a rodeo; and
- (i) proper treatment for any injury is given promptly and veterinary assistance obtained if required.

12. Judges' Responsibilities

Judges have responsibility for animals that are competing in the arena.

13. Competitors' Responsibilities

A competitor in a rodeo event is responsible for the animals he or she uses during that event. All competitors must:

- (a) treat all animals they interact with, in a humane manner;
- (b) only use equipment complying with these standards; and
- (c) obtain prompt and proper treatment for any injury to any of their animals.

14. Veterinarian's Responsibilities

The Veterinarian is responsible for:

- (a) providing expert advice on the health, injury or disease status on an animal and its suitability for competition. The Veterinarian has the final say on this;
- (b) inspecting animals before and after events and
- (c) dealing with emergencies.

Part III - Rules for the Care of Livestock

15. Sick and Injured Animals

- (a) The Rodeo Manager must ensure that the Veterinarian before competition inspects animals used in all events. No sore, lame, sick or injured animal or any animal with defective eyesight will be permitted in the draw at any time.
- (b) Should an animal become sick or injured between the time it is drawn and the time it is scheduled to be used, that animal must not be used.
- (c) Sick or injured animals must be given appropriate treatment.

16. Veterinary Attendance

A veterinarian is the most appropriate person to look after the animal welfare issues. It is expected that a veterinarian should be on site at all times to handle animal emergencies and to inspect all animals prior to and after competition. In some jurisdictions the attendance of a veterinarian is mandatory.

In those jurisdictions where veterinary attendance is not mandatory and where the rodeo is being held in a remote area the Rodeo Manager must make reasonable attempts to secure the services of a

veterinarian. Where a veterinarian cannot attend, the Rodeo Manager must appoint a person who is experienced and competent in assessing and dealing with health and welfare problems of cattle and horses, including having the knowledge and means to undertake safe and humane euthanasia, to assume the responsibilities of the Veterinarian as outlined in this standard. The Rodeo Manager must make prior arrangements for this person to be able to contact a veterinarian for advice and direction should it be required. In the case where a veterinarian cannot attend and a Rodeo Manager has appointed a person to act in this position, then that person assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Veterinarian.

The decision of the Veterinarian as to the suitability of an animal for competition shall be final.

17. Response to Serious Stock Injuries

- (a) A conveyance must be available to remove a seriously injured animal to a suitable place for further examination and treatment. If an animal is to be euthanased, this must be done humanely.
- (b) A seriously injured animal must be placed apart from other livestock, housed in an appropriate manner, and be examined and treated immediately by the Veterinarian.
- (c) A means to euthanase seriously injured animals and a person licensed and qualified to use the means must be available at all times while the rodeo is in progress. Livestock must be euthanased in accordance with the national Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals for the species concerned.

18. Injury Prevention

- (a) Chutes, yards, lanes and races must be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner which minimises the risk of injury to handlers or animals and facilitates the quiet and efficient handling of stock.
- (b) An animal that repeatedly gets down in the chute; repeatedly tries to jump out of the chute; becomes excessively excited; or appears to be in danger of injuring itself must be released and examined by the Veterinarian and, if found to be unfit for any reason, must be withdrawn from participation for that day or session.
- (c) Appropriately trained people and suitable equipment should be available to humanely assist an animal should it become caught in the chutes, yards or races and to make any repairs necessary to ensure that the facilities meet the required standard.

19. General Safety and Welfare Provisions

- (a) Livestock must be removed from the arena promptly after completion of the individual entry.
- (b) No small animal or pet will be allowed in the arena or in the line of sight of livestock, during any event involving horses or cattle.
- (d) The use of any fireworks is to occur only after all animals have been removed to a safe distance, where they will not be unduly disturbed or distressed by the fireworks.

20. Welfare Issues

A person who witnesses or suspects that there is an animal welfare problem at a rodeo, must advise the rodeo manager who must assess the information, and where appropriate, act upon it.

Part IV - Equipment Requirements and Specifications

21. Rodeo Livestock Handling Equipment

- (a) All livestock must be treated humanely and handling equipment must not be used cruelly or excessively.
- (b) Equipment for livestock handling must be of the type and specification generally used for the transport and handling of horses and cattle and must comply with the national Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals for the species concerned.

21.1 Electric Prods

- (a) Electric prods may be used subject to the following conditions:
 - they must be of low amperage powered by dry cell batteries only; and
 - be of the standard used generally for the handling, yarding and transport of livestock;
 - used with restraint and restricted to the minimum amount necessary as an aid for loading and handling livestock; and
 - applied only to those parts of the animal covered by hair.
- (b) In time events electric prods must not be used under any circumstances.
- (c) In riding events electric prods must not be used:
 - when the animal is secured in the chute; or
 - when the chute gate opens; unless it is necessary to protect both the animal and the contestant from possible injury against the chute or chute gate or to turn out a known chute stalling animal.

In such cases the electric prod may only be applied to the shoulder or hindquarters of an animal to clear it from the chute and by, or under the direct supervision of, the Stock Contractor.

Under no circumstances may an electric prod be used in the arena.

21.2 Handling Aids

The use of aids which encourage movement in response to sound such as flappers, metallic rattles and light polythene tubing is acceptable to encourage movement and for handling animals in yards, lanes and races. The use of aids which can be used to strike or poke animals with sufficient force to cause pain or injury are not permitted. This would include sticks, lengths of heavy plastic, metal piping, fencing wire or heavy leather belts.

22. Event Equipment

Event equipment is used to facilitate the event and in doing this should be designed to ensure that the animal is not injured.

Equipment must conform in all respects to the specifications below.

22.1 Spurs

Spurs are used to help the rider's timing and purchase on the animal in bucking stock events and should not be used as a goad. To reduce possible injury to the animal, the spur rowel must be

dulled and not less than three millimetres in width at its narrowest part; there must be a minimum diameter of 2cm to the point of the rowel.

- For bucking horse events the rowels must be free running.
- For bull riding the rowels may have restricted movement but must not be fully locked (they must be able to move at least a quarter turn).
- Competitors will be disqualified for using any equipment, which causes injury to animals during competition.

22.2 Flank Straps

Flank straps are used to improve the horse's bucking style. Only lined, quick release flank straps can be used. The lining must be soft and flexible such as a soft plastic, felt or sheepskin. The lined portion of the flank strap must be positioned in such a way that it covers both flanks and the belly of the animal. The coverings and linings of flank straps must be soft and flexible and must not be hard, brittle, worn or damaged.

22.3 Protective Horn Wraps

Horn wraps must be used in team roping and must protect the ears and base of horns from rope burns.

22.4 Neck Ropes

The neck rope is used to maintain the horse's head towards the steer while the rider dismounts and discourage dragging. A neck rope must be fitted to horses used for roping and tying, through which the catch rope must pass before it is tied to the saddle horn. Placement of the neck rope must be no more than half the distance down the roping horse's neck, as measured from the head.

22.5 Jerk Line

The jerk line is used for roping and tying events. It is a rope from the bridle fed through a pulley on the saddle to the rider. As the rider dismounts to throw the steer, the jerk line plays out in a series of jerks, which discourages the horse from moving backwards and dragging the steer.

The contestant must adjust the catch rope, reins and jerk line to prevent the rope horse from dragging the roped animal.

Part V - Stock Selection and Use

23. Stock Source

Ideally a Stock Contractor should supply all stock used in rodeos. It is acknowledged however, that in some areas and for some events local stock may be used. Where there is no Stock Contractor the Rodeo Manager must designate a Livestock Supervisor to assume the responsibilities of the Stock Contractor.

24. Horses

- (a) Horses used in rodeo rough stock events must be mature, sound and fit for the intended use. Age should not be used as the sole criterion of maturity, other factors such as size and physical conformation must be taken into account.
- (b) The criterion for determination of the suitability of a rodeo bucking horse should be complete epiphyseal closure. This can best be determined by the presence of the central adult incisors in wear.

- (c) Horses under three (3) years may not be sufficiently mature for bucking events and must not be used.
- (d) Horses used for bucking events may not be used on more than two occasions on any one day.
- (e) If a time event horse shows signs of injury or fatigue it must not be used.
- (f) Recommended minimum size of horses is 14.2 hands.

25. Cattle

All cattle must be fit, healthy and suitable for the intended use. The number of times that cattle may be used in competition varies according to the rigours of the event and the conditioning of the cattle to rodeo competition.

The following limitations must be observed:

- (a) the same cattle must not be used for steer wrestling and roping events;
- (b) cattle may not be used for steer wrestling and roping more than three times on any one day for contract stock and two times a day for local stock. This includes practice for events and the event itself;
- (c) cattle may not be used as bucking stock more than ~~three~~ two times on any day. This includes practice for events and the event itself;
- (d) each competitor is allowed only one loop (throw) in roping and tying events and in team roping only three loops are allowed in each team.

26. Selection of Animals for Rope and Tie

Cattle used in Roping and Tying must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for roping and tying is 115 kg with a minimum of 100kg and a maximum of 130kg. All calves must be weaned.

27. Selection of Animals for Steer Wrestling

Animals used in steer wrestling must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for animals is 250kg with a minimum of 200kg and a maximum of 300kg.

All animals must have suitable horns and the horns must be a minimum of 23cm in length. Horns must be tipped to the size of a 50-cent coin at the ends.

28. Selection of Animals for Team Roping

Animals used in team roping must be fit, healthy and without defects. The optimum weight for animals in team roping is 250kg with a minimum of 200kg and a maximum of 300 kg.

All animals must have suitable horns and the horns must be a minimum of 17.5cm in length. Horn wraps must be used for this event.

Part VI - Arena Selection and Use

29. Arena, Chutes and Yards

The Veterinarian and the Stock Contractor must be assured that the arena, chutes, yards and races will not compromise the welfare of the animals.

30. Surfaces

The Rodeo Manager is responsible for ensuring the arena surface provides traction and safety for personnel and livestock. In general, the standard arena should be a suitable, soil based surface, rotary hoed or softened to a depth of approximately 8-10cm.

Other surfaces may be used provided that they are well drained, provide a secure footing and be at least as safe for the animals as an appropriate soil based surface. The Veterinarian, Rodeo Manager and the Stock Contractor must approve the surface.

31. Size

Arenas that are too small for the particular event create a danger to livestock, competitors and the spectators in the event. The arena must be of a size suitable for the events taking place.

32. Fencing

Careful planning and construction of arenas will make the handling and removal of stock from the arenas easier and will also increase stock, competitor and public safety.

The construction, height and appearance of arena fencing should discourage stock from attempting to push through the fence or jump over it. There must be no protrusions on fences or gateways likely to cause injury.

Arena fences should be clearly visible and not appear open to the animal.

Where it is thought that stock will pressure certain points of an arena more than others, care should be taken to ensure that the fencing is suitable.

32.1 Portable arenas

Portable arenas must have panels that are suitably braced and secure. As a guide the minimum height should be 1800mm.

32.2 Fixed arenas

Fixed arenas should be of secure construction and flush on the inside. Where cable is used in steel arenas, it should be strained and the space between the cables should not be great enough to allow stock to pass through it.

As a guide the minimum height should be 1650mm.

33. Time Event Chute

The time event chute for steer wrestling must have a 760mm clearance above the height of the animal in the chute and at the gate, when the gate is open.

Part VII - Specific Rodeo Events

34. All Events

The Judges have the final decision on the suitability of equipment. Any piece of equipment, either on the animal or which may be used on the animal, which may compromise its welfare, is not allowed.

35. Men's Saddle Bronc Riding

The saddle must not be set too far forward on the withers and must be correctly fitted. There must be a minimum clearance of 10cm under the gullet of the saddle.

The front cinch of the saddle must be a minimum of 12.7cm in width. The back cinch of the saddle must not be over-tightened.

36. Men's Bareback Bronc Riding

The bareback rigging must not be more than 25.4cm in width at the handhold and not more than 15.24cm in width at the D rings. Suitable pads must be placed under the rigging and extend a minimum of 5cm past the back of the rigging. The girth on the bareback rigging must be not less than 12.7cm in width.

37. Men's Bull Riding

The (front) girth-rope used in bull riding shall be a tight rope, with or without a hand hold. The rear flank-rope must be loose. There must be no knots or hitches preventing the rope from falling from the animal after the contestant has been thrown or dismounted. A contestant must not re-set and re-pull the front girth-rope more than twice if the bull is standing quietly in the chute.

38. Roping and Tying

38.1 Limits

The time limit to rope, throw by hand and complete the tie is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released. After the tie is completed and the time signalled, the roper must immediately mount the horse and ride it forward to loosen the catch rope.

Only one loop is allowed a contestant in each round of the event. If the first throw fails to catch the animal the roper is not permitted a second attempt. The purpose of this is to prevent the prolonged chasing of an animal around the arena.

38.2 Jerking down and Dragging

It is not acceptable to pull an animal backward off its feet (jerk down) or to drag a roped animal. Contestants must use an appropriate technique and appropriate and properly fitted equipment to protect the animal against an abrupt stop after being roped and to prevent the rope horse from dragging a roped animal. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in disqualification.

39. Steer Wrestling

39.1 Time Limit

The time limit to catch and throw the steer is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released. The steer must be released immediately upon the competitor receiving a time.

39.2 Legal Throws

The steer must not be knocked down or thrown before it is brought to a stop and the catch is made. If the animal is off its feet before a legal throw is made it must stand on all four feet and be properly thrown.

40. Open Team Roping

40.1 Protective Horn Wraps

Steers used for team roping must be fitted with protective horn wraps.

40.2 Time Limit

The time limit to rope the head and the heels of the steer is thirty (30) seconds from when the barrier is released. The time will be taken when the steer is properly roped with the catch ropes dallied, with both horses facing the steer and with no slack in the ropes. To prevent slack being taken up too hard both front feet should be on the ground when the time is taken.

Only three loops are allowed in each round of the event (one for the header and one for the heeler). If a throw fails to catch the animal the ropers are not permitted a second attempt. The purpose of this is to prevent the prolonged chasing of an animal around the arena. Any animal cannot be chased or tied for longer than 30 seconds.

40.3 Catching

The steer must be standing when both the header and the heeler rope it. The steer must not be roughly handled. The only permitted head catches for team roping are around both horns,

around the neck, or around a half head. The heel catch should be around both back legs including behind the shoulders, provided the catch is made over the heels.

The heeler should not attempt a heel catch before the header has dallied his catch rope and changed the direction of the steer.

41 Ladies Events

41.1 Ladies Barrel Racing

For any event, each rider may use only one horse. All horses must be of sound condition; the use of any pain-killing or performance-enhancing substances will result in automatic disqualification.

41.2 Ladies Steer Undecorating

Stock specifications as for Men's Steer Wrestling, except that horned cattle are not necessary.

41.3 Ladies Breakaway Roping

Stock specifications as for Men's Rope and Tie. The string on the saddle horn must break immediately the calf is successfully roped.