

Safe Transportation of Horses

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) supports the safe transport of horses and livestock. Our members utilize specially modified double deck trailers to provide safe transport of horses and other livestock across the country every day. The PRCA is deeply committed to the proper care and treatment of livestock, and constantly strives to insure that the livestock/athletes at PRCA sanctioned events are healthy and sound. World class livestock are the foundation for any successful Pro Rodeo.

Two bills have been proposed, S.850 and H.R. 1282 that would ban the use of double deck trailers for all horses. This is unnecessary and redundant legislation that would put more trucks on the road while harming small business and communities.



The average height of a horse is approximately 60 inches. Floor to ceiling clearance in most double level trailers used to haul bucking horses range from 71 to 75 inches, leaving more than 11 to 15 inches of headroom for the average horse in these modified trailers. We understand that double deck trailers should *never be used to haul very tall horses*.

Rodeo stock contractors and cowboys stand to suffer severe adverse effects if a ban on transporting in double deck trailers is enacted. The rodeo industry actively opposes the ban based on the following:

1. While transporting horses and livestock, the main goal is always their safety, as reflected in the special equipment used to transport them.
2. As with any form of transportation, accidents may happen and the focus of any potential legislation should be on safe transport, rather than an overarching ban with unintended consequences.
3. Stock contractors safely transport rodeo horses in special order/specifically modified double deck trailers, include modifications to ramps and doorways.
4. Rodeo horses must be fit and able to perform when they arrive at their destination. Thousands of horses are successfully hauled each year in specially modified double deck trucks.
5. Taller rodeo horses are transported in the single level areas at the front and/or back of the modified trailers, which may have up to 9 feet of floor to ceiling clearance.
6. The majority of bucking horses used in professional rodeos today come from breeding programs where they are specifically bred to buck. These horses are conditioned to riding in specially modified double level trailers from a young age.



For more information, please visit prorodeo.com or contact Jim Richards at jrichards@cgagroup.com or (202) 448-9509.

USDA Double Deck Trailer Research

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commissioned research to study horses being transported to slaughter plants in the late 1990's. This is the only research the PRCA is aware of regarding transporting horses in double deck trailers and the information has been used to make a case against transporting all horses in double deck trailers. The PRCA and our member stock contractors and veterinarians familiar with this sort of transportation maintain that rodeo horses are safely transported in double deck trailers because they are familiar with the form of transportation, familiar with the horses they are being transported with and the trailers are modified for their safety.

USDA Regulations Strengthened

The USDA adopted the final rule amending and strengthening the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Act (the Act) on September 7, 2011. The final rule changes extend the same regulatory protections to horses transported to intermediate points, such as assembly points, feedlots, or stockyards, as those shipped directly to slaughter. The final rule changes went into effect on October 7, 2011.

What do Veterinarians Say:

"I have been a practicing veterinarian for 34 years. During those years I have served as an on-site veterinarian for numerous Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association events. Most bucking horses at these events have been transported in specially modified double deck trailers. I do not remember ever having to treat an injury related to this form of transportation of rodeo horses to rodeo events. The horses are very accustomed to each other and to the trailers."

Douglas Corey, DVM, Walla Walla, WA

"I have been the veterinarian for Jim Korkow of Korkow Rodeos for 20 years. In all of the time I have worked for Jim I have never seen or treated a horse that has been injured on the trailer or while loading on the trailer. Jim is very proud of his horses and would do nothing to put them in harms way. I believe that the double deck trailers are a safe way for Jim to haul his horses."

Jim F. Wolf, DVM, Pierre, SD

"I have seen many horses that are routinely hauled in double deck trailers to rodeos and I have never witnessed a problem with this mode of transportation for these horses that are accustomed to it. The modifications of the trailers, sorting of the horses by height and other precautions taken by PRCA stock contractors make the transport of rodeo horses in double deck trailers as safe as any other method."

Shannon Gonsoulin, DVM, New Iberia, LA

"Valley Veterinary Center has provided veterinary service for Barnes MJM Rodeo Company for nearly 50 years, and I personally have worked for them for the past 21 years. At no time during our service to the Barnes' have any of their horses suffered injury due to being hauled on double deck trailers. The horses have been properly acclimated to the hauling conditions. They become trained for this and are routinely loaded and unloaded without incident."

Steve Benson, DVM, Cherokee, IA

"I have been involved with rodeo livestock for over fifty years. Experience as a veterinarian has been on a basis of working as a veterinarian for specific rodeos and as a veterinarian for rodeo producers. Livestock, including horses, have traveled between ranch and rodeo in double deck trailers (modified for horses) for many years and I have never had to treat a horse for problems that developed from travel in a double deck trailer."

Ed LeTourneau, DVM, Madera, CA

"I have not seen any difference in the incidence of livestock injury related to double deck trailers verses any other type of livestock transport system. A double deck trailer appears to be as safe as any other mode of transportation, as long as proper protocol is used for loading and unloading of the horses. "

Garth W. Lamb, DVM, Veterinarian for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas for 25 years