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Coca-Cola Company Board of Directors

c/o Office of the Secretary

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Dear Coca-Cola Company:

I admire Coca-Cola's involvement in areas such as environment, civic action, and scholarship programs. That's all the more reason I'm confused by the company's lax ethics on animal welfare.

Specifically, your statement about rodeo sponsorship claims Coca-Cola Company and its U.S. bottling partners "will not sponsor events or attractions that feature animals unless event organizers have policies and procedures in place to support humane treatment and provide...quality veterinary care to protect the animals' health and safety."

Animals in rodeos do not receive "humane treatment" or "quality veterinary care." In fact, rodeo handlers bully animals with electric prods, straps, spurs and tail twisting. On-site veterinarians (if present) cannot intervene once a deliberately agitated animal is released into the ring.

"Without torture, there can be no rodeo," says Peggy W. Larson, DVM, MS, JD, a former bareback bronco rider who explains that horses and bulls buck wildly only because they are in pain from rigid flank straps and spurring.

Why are Coca-Cola banners — apparently arranged between your bottling partners and rodeo organizers — prominently displayed at the Cheyenne Frontier Days Rodeo? Coca-Cola's logo has popped up in rodeos throughout North America. At the 2005 Cheyenne, Wyoming rodeo, blood from a horse's hoof wound was even splattered around a Coca-Cola sign beside an entry chute.

Since actions speak more convincingly than words, I urge Coca-Cola to cut all ties to the rodeo. Please ask your bottlers to ensure banners and other materials are removed from rodeo events.

Rodeo organizers allege compliance with animal welfare rules, but documented images tell a different story. A scared calf flees into the ring at speeds up to 27 miles per hour so the "cowboy" can neck-choke him into the ground. He typically body-slams the young animal again for theatrical effect.

In bucking events, the horses' intestines and groins are cinched so tightly they lurch in response to pain. Animals who won't buck may be electrically shocked. Many careen into fences, posts or chutes.

Animal welfare groups worldwide denounce rodeo's trail of busted bones, cracked skulls and severed spines. Please ask your bottlers — and any other entities related to Coca-Cola — to comply with the company's claim to "care about the welfare of animals."

Sincerely,