

## Major Report Concludes That Rodeos Are Illegal In Québec

The report has been submitted to the Rodeo Advisory Committee created in August 2017 by the Québec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ)

**MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC** - Law professor Alain Roy of the Université de Montréal has made public the observations and analyses conducted by Dr. Jean-Jacques Kona-Boun, DMV, MSc, DACVAA, veterinarian and anesthesiologist on the video database of 20 full rodeos, recorded in Montreal and St-Tite last summer.

The report of over 600 pages arose from a demand for an injunction filed by Professor Roy and his students last spring against the rodeos organized for Montreal's 375th anniversary on the grounds that rodeos violate Québec's new law.

Based on an agreement approved by Québec Superior Court, Professor Roy obtained the right to send three observers to the Montreal and St-Tite rodeos with unlimited access to the facilities and the animals to collect evidence throughout the 20 rodeos.

Having first witnessed the entire 45 hours of live activity during the 20 rodeos, and then having spent more than 360 hours analyzing the rich and unprecedented database of resulting videos, frame by frame, Dr. Kona-Boun's conclusion is unequivocal:

*"The rodeo activities held in accordance with the standards in effect in Montréal and St-Tite subject horses and bulls to the risk of injury such as fractures and other serious injuries. The same is true of the calf-roping and steer-wrestling. The psychological distress experienced by all the animal beings used in such activities is also very real."*

– Dr. Jean-Jacques Kona-Boun, DVM MSc, DACVAA

### The Government of Québec must now ensure compliance with its own law

In December 2015, the Québec National Assembly adopted, by unanimous vote, a new law on animal welfare and safety that *prohibits all abuse or mistreatment that may affect the health of animal beings, or any action or omission that exposes them to distress.*

According to Professor Roy, Dr. Kona-Boun's observations and analyses lead to the conclusion that rodeos are in violation of the law:

*"The treatment of horses, bulls, steers and calves in rodeos is irreconcilable with the provisions of the new law, according to which animals are no longer objects, but 'beings endowed with sentience' whose welfare and safety must be assured."* – Professor Alain Roy

It is now up to the MAPAQ Rodeo Advisory Committee to review Dr. Kona-Boun's observations and analyses and draw the conclusions that follow. A report of the Committee's conclusions is expected by next autumn.

According to Professor Roy, the people of Québec are entitled to expect the Québec government to ensure compliance with its own new law:

*"If it fails to act, the government will have to assume the consequences of its decisions. Animal advocates are now sufficiently well-organized to defend their cause by using all the expertise and judicial resources at their disposal."* – Professor Alain Roy

To access all the elements of the file, go to [www.alainroy.ca](http://www.alainroy.ca) and click on:

« Dossier RODEO File »

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## COMMENTS ON THE DATA FROM VETERINARIANS AND ETHOLOGISTS

*"As a board-certified veterinarian for over 20 years and the current President of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association and Past President of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics, I was deeply troubled by the video and still image footage provided for me to review by observers of the recent Quebec Rodeo event. The frequency with which animals appear to undergo real, probable or potential physical injuries is alarming to say nothing of the signs of fear and pain many of these animals demonstrate during some of the roping and bucking events. That we are still debating animal sentience in 2018 is truly disheartening. Based on my review of this material it is undeniable that animal welfare is seriously compromised and that many of the rodeo events, by their very nature, would be impossible to undertake without creating a genuine risk for a wide range of animal injuries."*

- **Dr. Gary Block**, DVM, MS, DACVIM, Current President of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, Past President of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics, Past Delegate to the American Veterinary Medical Association
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*"Forcing animals into situations where they show obvious signs of extreme distress and risk entirely avoidable injuries is too great a price to pay for human glory and entertainment."*

- **Dr. Paul McGreevy**, BVSc, Ph.D, Veterinarian and Ethologist, Professor of Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare Science, Sydney School of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney, Australia
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*"The rodeo is unquestionably brutal, life-threatening and all too often life-ending for the animals involved. That this activity is marketed as sport is equally concerning. Shall we adults take pleasure in animals' pain and suffering? Shall we teach our children that this behavior is not only acceptable but entertaining? The link between abuse of animals and abuse of people is well-established. Activities that terrify and harm animals such as rodeo must be viewed through this lens as well."*

- **Dr. Joann M. Lindenmayer**, DVM, MPH, Dipl. American Veterinary Epidemiology Society (Hon.); Chair, Leadership Council of HSVMA
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*"The rodeo video footage shows calves, adult cows or horses being thrown to the ground, crashing into barriers and physically assaulted in multiple ways. The apparent normalcy of these practices within rodeos does not alter the biological reality that some of these practices are physically and psychologically abusive - and indeed, markedly so. In just one example a calf's neck is violently twisted approximately 180 degrees. Such mishandling risks serious injuries and can cause severe stress and fear in the affected animals. Given modern understanding of animal sentience and of their capacity to suffer, these practices can no longer be justified for the entertainment of some people."*

- **Dr. Andrew Knight**, BVMS, CertAW, MANZCVS, DipECAWBM (AWSEL), DipACAW, PhD, FRCVS, SFHEA, Professor of Animal Welfare and Ethics; Founding Director, Centre for Animal Welfare, University of Winchester, UK
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*"The Quebec National Assembly is to be congratulated for representing both scientific and popular opinion in its recognition in law of animal sentience. I am a Canadian veterinarian in practice for almost 50 years. I have also written many books on animal behaviour that are underpinned with the accepted knowledge that animals have internal mental lives. It is apparent in the video and stills I have viewed from the Montreal and St-Tite Rodeo events that the welfare and safety of calves, steers and horses was compromised. The animals display behavioural signs of significant distress. Rodeos are part of my cultural history. Cultural change is difficult; but to deny what I see in the video and stills would be the same as denying all that has been learned about animal behaviour in recent decades."*

- **Dr. Bruce Fogle**, MBE DVM(Guelph) MRCVS, Chair, Humane Society International

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*“The numerous scientific studies showing that animals have feelings have made it possible to pass a law protecting them and their well-being, so is it right to still be seeing so-called “recreational” activities for humans that endanger the mental and physical health of these animals?”*

— **Mylène Quervel-Chaumette**, PhD., Ethologist, Director, *Éthope*

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*“In view of the obvious signs of distress of the animals used in the rodeos, it is difficult to justify inflicting such a fate on them under the guise of “sport” or entertainment. The idea that animals subjected to such stress, without consideration for the physical risks and the fear generated, can be considered athletes who are ‘happy’ to participate -- is disconcertingly naïve.”*

— **Marine Cassoret**, PhD., Animal Behaviorist

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*“From a scientific point of view, the physical, physiological and behavioral indicators measured to evaluate the well-being of equines and cattle used in rodeos go against their biological imperatives. Physical indicators, such as injuries, physiological symptoms such as hyperthermia, and behavioral indicators such as bucking lead to the conclusion that the welfare of these animal beings is compromised in such activities”*

— **Anik Boileau**, MSc., Ethologist, Director, CERSI