



CATTLE EVENTS

Project Guide

The 4-H Motto

“Learn to Do by Doing”

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge
My **head** to clearer thinking,
My **heart** to greater loyalty,
My **hands** to larger service,
My **health** to better living,
For my club, my community,
my country, and my world

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment Tools

The Cattle Events project is for 4-H members who want to train horses and ride in Cutting, Team Penning and/or Working Cow Horse competitions. It is recommended that members and their horses have some advanced riding skills and lots of experience before enrolling in this project. Horses used in this project should be athletic, having a willing attitude and an instinct for working cattle.

It is important for Western riders to develop the ability to ride properly with one hand and to use a leverage bit correctly. Members are encouraged to develop the ability to ride with one hand using a transitional bit then a leverage bit. Levels 1 & 2 may be completed with two hands with either a snaffle or transitional bit. By Level 3, they should be using a transitional bit and begin using one hand, though some maneuvers (such as lateral movements) may still require two hands (depending on the training of the horse). By Levels 4 and 5, members should be performing all of the assessments with one hand using a leverage bit. This is not a strict requirement, as it will depend on both the horse and the rider. In some instances it is better to complete a task well with two hands than to complete a task poorly using one hand. This requires some discretion, but with recognition of the importance of Western tradition using one hand.

Project Resources

We suggest that clubs build a reference library for members' use.

Cattle Horses

A horse that does cattle work is an athlete and should have a body that boasts strength and agility. They are a working horse, expected to make quick, fast turns. In order to work cattle, horses must possess "cow sense" and an instinct for working cattle. They are horses that are expected to work another animal. In training, you can teach the horse techniques and work with its mind and ability to respond to cattle. In competition, it is up to the horse to utilize those techniques and use its natural instinct to respond to the animal it is asked to control.

BASIC TRAINING

The horse's body must be supple and flexible to work cattle. With a supple body, a rider should be able to control their horse's every movement with their fingertips and legs. The horse should move easily with light aids. The more you work at it, the more easily you will be able to control your horse with light aids. It should be trained to neck rein and should respond well to hand aids, leg aids and weight aids.

Basic maneuvers of horses to work cattle:

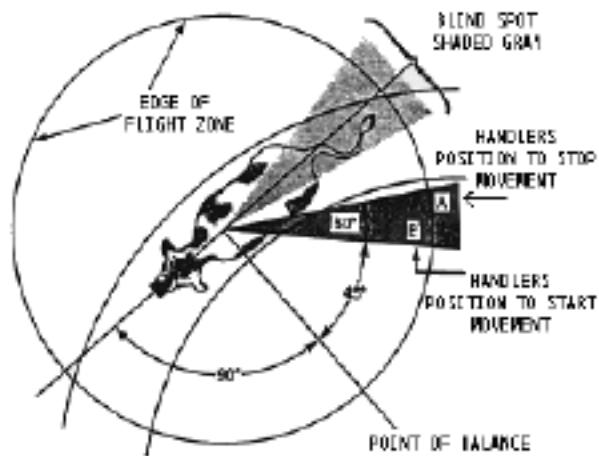
- Focus
- Read and control cattle
- Neck rein
- Stop
- Back
- Roll-over-haunches
- Work on hind end
- Good attitude
- Light and responsive in bit

WORKING CATTLE

To be successful at any event involving cattle, contestants must develop an understanding of how cattle behave. Taking advantage of the natural and behavioural characteristics of cattle will help with their handling. A handler must be aware of how an individual animal will probably react to the horse and rider in various situations and must be able to position themselves and their horse to obtain the desired results and above all else, keep both of them safe.

Cattle cannot see directly behind their body because of where their eyes are positioned. They also have a blind zone between 10 to 15 feet in front. The peripheral vision of cattle and how they react to what they see and don't see is an important factor in how to handle them. When you are off to one side, they can see you and you can make them turn away from you. Even from a distance, they will see you and you can make them stop or turn without getting much closer. To maintain control, it is best to be out and away from cattle. This gives the cattle room to move away from you and gives you space to maneuver in response to their moves.

An important concept of handling cattle is the flight zone (the animal's "personal space"). The size of the flight zone varies depending on the tameness or wildness of livestock and how much they have been handled. The flight zone of less handled animals may be as much as 50 meters while the flight zone of feedlot cattle may be 2 to 8 meters. The size of the flight zone will slowly diminish when animals receive frequent, gentle handling. Extremely tame livestock can be more difficult to handle because they no longer have a flight zone.



The edge of the flight zone can be determined by slowly walking up to the animal and when it responds by showing uneasiness or moving away, you have begun to enter its flight zone. Source: <http://www.grandin.com/>

When a person enters an animal's flight zone, it will move away. If your pressure gets too close to an animal (if you move too far and too quickly into its flight zone), it will look for an escape and may turn behind, or on you. The animal will either bolt and run away, or turn back and run past, or over, you. Being too close means it is difficult to respond to this animal darting away from, or running over, you. Keeping a good distance will help you maintain control and be able to respond to any unwanted moves.

The best place for a person to work on is the edge of the flight zone. Cattle move away from a threat or pressure. To move cattle forward, ride toward their hip. To turn cattle, ride towards their flank, side or shoulder, depending on the degree of turn desired. To stop cattle, ride past and turn into them. When the handler retreats from the flight zone, the animal will stop moving.

When handling cattle, there is a time to move fast and a time to move slowly. A handler must learn when to push cattle and when to back off and give them room. The speed at which you handle an animal and the angles and distance you keep will be determined by the disposition of the individual animal.

Cattle must be handled according to their individual temperament and disposition. Each animal will have a slightly different flight zone and will respond differently to the pressures they feel from the handler. It is critical that handlers learn about the behaviors of cattle and learn to recognize and respond to these behaviors in individual animals.

Cattle are herd animals. They prefer to stay in a group. Therefore, to cut one animal away from a herd can be difficult. The best way to learn is by watching others do it and then by doing it yourself. The more animals you handle, the more you will begin to understand their individual behaviors and temperaments.

To be able to work cattle, you must also be able to identify specific animals from others. They may be identified or distinguished through numbers (on tags in their ears, or number brands, or stickers on their backs), colors, markings or breed. No two cattle look identical. There is always some sort of identifying feature, whether it is as obvious as color, breed, sex or brand or as subtle as the difference in size and shape of their eyes, ears, horns, head, body or markings, or their condition or disposition. It is a good idea, when working with cattle, to practice identifying distinguishing characteristics about each animal and forming a mental picture of what you see.

TERMINOLOGY OF CATTLE EVENTS

Cow sense: a curiosity or natural instinct a horse has about working cattle, demonstrated by the horse following the movements of a cow with its head and eyes.

Down on the front end: a phrase that refers to a horse shifting its weight to its front end while working an animal.

Drawing: when a horse causes a cow to move closer to it by the horse's reluctance to step toward the cow, it is said to be "drawing" the cow.

Dry work: moving your horse back away from a working maneuver with a cow, to work on training maneuvers with the horse.

Facing up to a cow: when a horse turns its body at a 90° angle to a cow so that it is looking straight at the cow after she has stopped (rather than remaining parallel with the cow).

Falling off a cow/losing ground: the movement of a horse away from a cow, (even as almost imperceptible as leaning away from), as the two go across the pen; opposite of "leaning on a cow".

False moves: an incorrect movement that a horse makes when it anticipates and reacts incorrectly to moves a cow does or does not make.

Heavy on the front end: the act of a horse during a turn that causes all of its weight to be placed on its front end, thereby making the horse less able to flex and turn as he would if his weight was positioned properly on the hindquarters.

Herd holders: two riders who are positioned on each side of the herd, responsible for holding the herd behind the cutter after the contestant has selected a cow to work.

Hot quit: when a horse and rider quit a cow before it has stopped, turned away or is behind the turn back horses.

Leading with the nose: when a horse moves more correctly into a turn by leading with its nose, rather than its shoulder.

Leaking: drifting toward the cow while working rather than remaining on a constant distance away.

Leaning on a cow: a horse that angles its body toward a cow as the two cross the pen, applying an almost invisible pressure in an attempt to move the cow away; opposite to "falling off a cow" or "losing ground".

Neck rein: a rein response where the horse moves away from pressure of a rein placed against its neck (also “indirect” rein).

Over-rotate: a horse’s action while working a cow in which it turns more than 180° and steps past the point where it should have stopped in its turn.

Pushing with the rib cage: when a horse has extended the rib cage area of its body toward the cow (making it more difficult for the horse to turn).

Reading: development of a horse’s “cow sense” as it pays attention to a cow’s behaviour, attempting to figure out what the cow is about to do.

Rocking back: the technique of shifting the horse’s weight to its hindquarters.

Stepping across the cow: when a horse changes its body position from its head being parallel with the cow to its head being parallel with the cow’s hip.

Stepping into a cow: a horse moving toward a cow.

Too flat: A horse that is at such a parallel position with a cow that it will be difficult for it to change direction if the cow does.

Too long: when a horse steps past a cow after the cow has stopped, allowing space behind for the cow to return to the herd.

Too short: when a horse does not step out far enough to stop a cow, allowing space in front for the cow to return to the herd.

Turn back riders: in cutting competitions, they help to keep the animal that the competitor has cut, from running to the opposite end of the arena. They keep the animal turning back toward the herd so the competitor can perform.

TEAM CATTLE PENNING

Team cattle penning involves working in teams of three to sort three designated animals out from a herd of 30 and pen them. They must accomplish this within 90 seconds (120 seconds for youth). It is a timed event that requires much skill in working with cattle. A judge watches for penalties and infractions to the rules, for which teams can be disqualified.

The rules and regulations for Team Cattle Penning are available from:

Canadian Team Cattle Penning Association

Website: www.canadianpenning.com

There are three phases to each run: cutting, moving the cattle up the arena and penning the cattle. There are two main strategies that teams use. The One Cut strategy in which one rider will enter the herd while the other two on the team stay back to roll the cattle back as the cutter pushes the selected cattle out of the herd. Once the cutter has pushed the first cow past the teammates, he/she will return to the herd to do the same with the second and third cows.

The Rotate or Shotgun strategy involves each teammate entering the herd and removing one identified cow. The first rider will cut his/her cow out past the teammates and another teammate enters the herd to cut out the second. Once the second cow is past the team, the third rider enters to bring out the final cow. With this strategy, two riders may enter the herd at one time.

In both of these strategies, the riders remaining out of the herd are called the “turn back” riders who must help to hold the herd from passing the foul line and also keep any cut cows from returning to the herd.

Whatever strategy a team chooses to cut their designated cattle from the herd, it must be adapted to the disposition of the cattle, the size of the arena and the caliber of the handlers.

Once the cattle are cut from the herd, they can be moved up the arena, past the back of the pen then guided into the pen. As they do this, the riders should be aware of who is pushing the cattle and who is guiding them.

Time is called once one horse's head is in the pen, following the cattle. Raising a hand when this has been achieved will help to indicate for time to stop.

CUTTING

Cutting is a judged competition in which the performance and skills of the horse are judged for 2 minutes. During this time, a contestant enters the herd of cattle from a prescribed starting position, cuts out an individual animal and brings it to the front of the herd. The contestant must then hold this animal and keep it from returning to the herd, until the rider feels the horse has sufficiently shown its abilities. The rider may cut more than one animal from the herd during their time.

For a complete list of rules, regulations, judging and penalties, contact:

Alberta Reined Cow Horse Association

Website: www.acha.ca

This is a sport that requires a lot of thinking on the part of the horse, during both training and competition. You are teaching the horse to respond to another animal, not to your commands. The horse is the one expected to make the decisions in response to the other animal, not the rider.

In cutting, there is more than just the horse performing. There is a team effort and as you learn cutting, you will be expected to fill these roles. The main competitor is the cutter. There are two turn-back riders and two herd-holders (optional). The herd-holders help to hold and settle the herd as the competitor rides in to cut an animal and as the competitor displays his/her horse's abilities in front of the herd. The turn-back riders help to keep the animal that the competitor has cut, from running to the opposite end of the arena. They keep the animal turning back toward the competitor and the herd.

WORKING COW HORSE

A working cow horse competition consists of a reining pattern and fence work with a cow. Points scored for the reined work and the cattle work are totaled and scoring is based on 60 to 80 points. Contestants are judged from the time they enter the arena until the pattern is completed.

For a complete list of rules, regulations and penalties, contact:

Alberta Reined Cow Horse Association

Website: www.albertareinedcowhorse.ca

The reining pattern must include circles, lead changes and runs terminating in well-balanced stops straight to the line of travel, turns and a back up of a reasonable distance. The rider should include slight hesitations denoting each maneuver.

Basic maneuvers of a reining pattern include:

Circles

Circles are the foundation of the reining horse. All reining maneuvers are built upon a solid basis of correct body alignment for the horse. Developing the ability for a horse to circle with upright alignment (not leaning into or out of the circle) and traveling through the rider's hands. Moving in a straight line, a horse's body is in correct alignment when its spine is straight from its head to tail. When circling, a horse's spine is in an arc position, the same degree as the circumference of the circle. In a large circle, the horse's body is bent only slightly. In a small circle, the horse's body is bent tightly around the rider's inside leg.

Circles are round paths sharing a common centre and performed at a lope in a specific location. There must be a clearly defined difference in the speed and size of small slow circles and large fast ones. Each circle to the right should match the circle to the left in size and speed.

Lead Changes

In reining patterns, lead changes are very important. All lead changes in reining patterns are flying lead changes. It is important to develop this skill in your horse. Riders are discouraged from using simple lead changes with their horse but rather develop the ability to move your horse through flying lead changes. Lead changes must be performed at specific locations in the pattern.

Stops

Use poll flexion exercises to help teach a horse to stop. The rider asks the horse to come to a halt after a controlled gallop. In a sliding stop sequence, the horse brings its hind feet and hocks under itself in a locked position and slides on its rear shoes. The preferred stop is when the horse lowers its hindquarters and brings its rear legs underneath while it remains loose in the front end and its front legs continue forward pedaling motion.

Back ups

A good back up is an important tool in teaching a horse to stop. A horse should be able to bend and use all its working parts in reverse. Remember that the back up is a fluid two-beat motion, with some speed and flexibility.

Rollbacks

A rollback is a half a turn-on-the haunches. It's an 180° turn on the hocks and after a rollback, the horse and rider depart at a lope. It is a stationary turn on the haunches in which one hind leg acts as a pivot and the other legs turn around it.

Turn-on-the-Haunches/Spins

A 360° turn on the hocks with a pause following the turn before continuing at a lope. With a spin, the inside front leg should take the first step. The horse should turn flat, with both shoulder blades level (one is not higher than the other) and with some speed.

Hesitates

Are used to show that the horse can stand quietly after being asked to move at speed. The horse is required to remain motionless and relaxed to demonstrate the horse's obedience.

Run Downs

Are runs performed in a straight line down the center or side of the arena. They are the approach to a stop and must be performed at approximately the same speed as demonstrated in the large, fast circles.

Speed Control

Teaching a horse quietness and discipline at speed is crucial in reining patterns. The biggest stops and fanciest spins won't win anything if you can't control them. Speed control will help relax a reining horse and keep it mentally right for the maneuver that will be expected of it.

Working Cow Horse Pattern Requirements

The fence work begins with a contestant receiving a cow in the arena, which he/she holds on the prescribed end of the arena for a sufficient time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to contain the cow at the end. After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant

shall take the cow down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence. Then the contestant shall take the cow to an open part of the arena and circle the animal at least once in each direction. The contestant shall show their horse to the best of their ability based upon the judge's instruction and their own discretion.

Boxing

Working the cow on the end of the arena until such time as the contestant has proven the ability of the horse to hold the cow. The horse should exhibit superior cow sense and natural cow working ability without excessive reining or spurring.

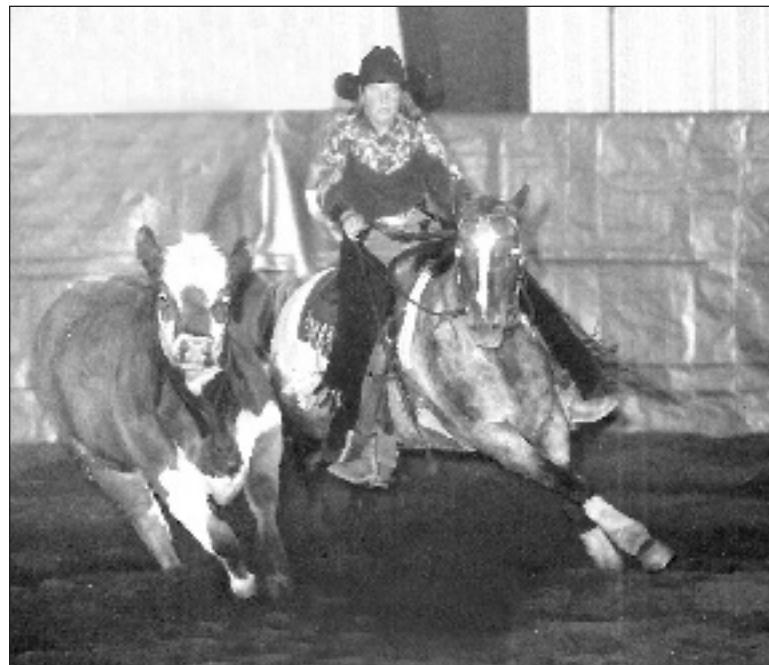
Turning on the Fence

A good turn on the fence may be defined as one in which the cow, while being run down the fence on one side of the arena, is turned in the opposite direction and ran back down the fence in the new direction, while being worked close to the fence. During the turn, the horse should use itself in a controlled athletic manner, using its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, while using its front end to balance and turn.

The contestant must execute at least one turn in each direction. To be considered a turn, the contestant must be close enough to the cow to be cause of the turn. The turn must be tight enough as not to be considered just circling to the fence.

Circling

Taking the cow to the centre of the arena and maneuvering it smoothly at least one full circle in each direction without interference from the fence. The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted.



EQUIPMENT

Riding Surfaces

As with any riding, it is important that the rider be concerned with the riding surfaces they expect their horse to perform on. Ideal footing for competitions in reining, team cattle penning, cutting and working cow horse is provided in an arena that has a level and firmly packed base covered with 10 to 15 cm of loose sand.

Horseshoes

Horseshoes and properly trimmed feet can be an important part for horses working cattle. If a horse's feet aren't level or balanced, it will fall out of its tracks as it struggles to catch and balance itself. Their feet should be in balance with their conformation. Special shoes (modified slide plates) are shoes specifically designed for horses competing in reining patterns that include sliding stops. Shoes with trailers (extensions of the heels of the shoe beyond where the normal shoe would end) on the rear feet can also help to guide the flight of the rear foot during a sliding stop. Such shoes can help the horse to perform the sliding stop maneuver asked of them in a reining pattern.

Spurs

Are aids to enhance your natural signals to your horse. Riders should learn to wear and ride with spurs so that spurs become a natural extension of their heels. Spurs should have enough rowels and should be dull so that the horse will move off it without being scared.

Saddles

Because horses working cattle move through very athletic maneuvers and shift their centre of gravity a lot, a saddle should allow the rider to adjust their body position to stay in balance with their horse. The rider also wants to be able to easily cue their horse with their legs, so less bulk in the sides and fenders of a saddle will maximize the leg aids. The stirrup fenders should also be flexible to allow forward and backward leg motion. Refer to the Horse Reference Manual for 4-H members for pictures of different western saddles.

Bits

Whatever bit you use, and the way you adjust it, influences the pressure points on the horse's mouth and face. However, your hands on the reins have the greatest effect on the bit in your horse's mouth. Don't use a bit that is too harsh on the pressure points of your horse if you don't have the ability to use it with sensitive enough hands. A snaffle may be a good idea for starting out with two hands as you and your horse learn to handle cattle.

Protective Leg Gear

Because of the work that horses do when handling cattle, protective leg gear can be important for their comfort and safety. Splint boots, bell boots, skid boots and knee guards are recommended equipment.

LEVEL ONE: DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Attend a sanctioned cow horse event as a spectator.
- Describe riding equipment used for working cattle.
- Explain what “flight zone” means when working cattle.
- Describe how cattle see and how this affects their behaviour.
- Describe 3 cattle events briefly and their objectives.
- In an arena and on foot, control a single animal, demonstrating abilities to turn, stop, chase and hold the animal.
- Explain different ways to identify cattle (distinguish one from the others).

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL ONE: MOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Lope a moderate sized circle fast and slow, demonstrating basic collection.
- 180° turn over the haunches in both directions.
- Demonstrate a rollback, entering at a walk and exiting at a jog.
- Demonstrate a collected stop from a lope.
- In an arena or small pasture, follow one cow, demonstrating speed control.
- Ride a \$250 Limit Stock Horse Pattern (as defined in the Alberta Reined Cow Horse Association Handbook).

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL TWO: DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Discuss riding surfaces that are and those that aren't desirable for riding when working cattle in an arena.
- Explain what happens at cutting, team penning and working cow horse competitions – rules, layout, and judges.
- Explain what "cow sense" is.
- Explain what it means when a horse "tracks" a cow.
- On foot, in a small pen (or alleyway) cut a single animal out of a herd of ten.

Evaluator's signature

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LEVEL TWO: MOUNTED ABILITIES

Assesment Tools

- Using a "mechanical cow", a flag on a rope, or people (simulating the movements of a cow), mirror the movement of the object, emphasizing stopping, backing, and rollbacks – done at a walk, trot and lope.
- Move a cow around the arena in both directions, in a controlled manner.
- Demonstrate boxing using one cow at one end of the arena.

Evaluator's signature

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LEVEL THREE: DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Identify the major penalties for cutting, team penning and working cow horse competitions.
- Attend a judges or officials clinic.
- Explain how to prepare your horse (grooming) before a competition.
- Explain the mandatory maneuvers of a reining pattern for a working cow horse competition.
- Describe what boxing, turn on the fence and circling is in fence work of a working cow horse competition.

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Date

LEVEL THREE: MOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Separate one cow from a herd and take it to the middle of the arena and then pen it (not using the corners of the arena to turn it).
- Take a cow from the herd and hold it away from the herd for 60 seconds (cutting).

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LEVEL FOUR: DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Explain the strategies and terms used by teams for penning cattle.
- Explain things you can do when working cattle to gain credits in a competition.
- Explain special care the cattle used for cattle events should receive before, during and after competitions.
- Describe how to identify an “exhausted” cow that should not be worked any longer.

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL FOUR: MOUNTED ABILITIES

Note: at least one experienced adult is required during these assessments

Assessment Tools

Cutting:

- Herd work – demonstrate an ability to work as a herd holder.
- Demonstrate an ability to work as a turn back helper.
- Demonstrate an ability to perform two-handed (with a helper) ranch cutting by removing 2 designated cows from a herd – one at a time.

Team Penning:

- Performed in a team of three, emphasizing horsemanship and quiet control of cattle - not speed.
- Demonstrate the herd holder position.
- Demonstrate the cutter position.
- Demonstrate the shot gun strategy.

Working Cow Horse:

- Ride an approved Cow Horse Reining pattern including lead changes.
- Demonstrate a Working Cow Horse run including all mandatory elements.

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LEVEL FIVE: DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

- Host an Interclub Cow Horse day – organization of the event – judges, timers, entries, stock, arena, etc. would be the responsibility of the hosting members.
- Explain a how cattle events are judged.
- Explain what actions may lead to disqualification of a horse and rider in the cutting event.
- Explain what actions may lead to disqualification of a horse and rider in the team penning event.
- Explain what actions may lead to disqualification of a horse and rider in the working cow horse event.
- Explain special care your horse may require when being transported to and stalled at a competition.

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL FIVE: MOUNTED ABILITIES

Assessment Tools

Cutting

- Compete in a judged, 2.5 minute event with no major (5 point) penalties.

Team Penning

- Performed in a team of three, emphasizing horsemanship and quiet control of cattle.
- In a team of three, pen 3 designated animals within 120 seconds.

Working Cow Horse

- Compete in a judged event (including a reining pattern and fence work with a cow) with no major (5 point) penalties.

Evaluator's signature

Date

