

6666 RANCH WORLD SERIES OF CUTTING

Enthusiasm is high after a strong Series start at Houston, with three major events remaining on the calendar.

WARNING: the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting could cause increased entries, large purses and unabashed enthusiasm at weekend shows! That's what happened at the inaugural 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting event at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in early March. A record number of entries—more than 900 in the NCHA and AQHA cuttings combined—vied for \$50,000 in added money, split equally between the Open and Non-Pro.

"We had a tremendous show," said Mike Rutherford, Jr., chairman of the Houston Livestock Show's cutting committee. "The cattle were good, the ground was good, and the competition was really exciting! I think the crowd proved that. I don't know where we've seen this many people in quite a while at a show outside of Fort Worth."

"The enthusiasm at Houston was amazing! The spectators were all pumped up, the crowd was really into the cutting, and I thought Houston did a tremendous job producing the first one," said NCHA Executive Committee member Ernie Beutenmiller, Jr. "I know we're all looking forward to seeing what happens at Calgary and Columbus and Kansas City, but we got a heck of a start in Houston."

The 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting continues at

the Calgary Stampede in July before traveling to the All-American Quarter Congress in October and the American Royal in November.

Enthusiasm is high for the three remaining events based on the Series' successful debut in Houston. Some of the industry's top older horses put on a quite a show, while the wallets of weekend cutters were fattened by the lucrative purses.

"Our intention was to bring some of those great older horses back out of retirement, and it worked," continued Beutenmiller, pointing to Lindy Burch's Play Peek A Boon as the perfect example. "Here's a 9-year-old broodmare who had a successful aged event history that they got back into shape and bought back and wound up second. Had it not been for the 6666 Ranch World Series, you would not have seen horses with that type of history there. We're also seeing some great performers, like Sister CD and Dual Rey Me, continue their careers."

"The format at Houston also impressed me because I saw some people who may not have been as high profile as others still make the finals and win a good check," continued Beutenmiller. "The crowd was phenomenal, and the show producers did a great job. I can't say enough good things about Houston."

The momentum started at Houston will surely build as the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting travels to the Calgary Stampede, in Alberta, Canada. Billed as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth," the Calgary Stampede will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2012. Cutting has been a part of the show since 1973, when AQHA Hall of Famer Bill Collins organized the first Stampede cutting.

"It was Bill who brought cutting to the Stampede and it's been part of the 10-day festival ever since," said Christine Sowiak, Chair of the Western Performance Horse Committee, which puts on the Stampede cutting, team penning and reined cow horse events. "It's never been a full weekend show. The intention has always been to show the best of the best of cutting to an international audience that comes to Calgary for the Stampede."



The Calgary Stampede is the next stop for the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting.

The Calgary Stampede draws an estimated 1.2 million people over the 10 days of the July festival—that's more than the population of Calgary! Among horsemen, the cutting has become so popular that the entries have outgrown the show. To accommodate everyone, the Western Performance Horse Committee moved the first go-rounds to the Okotoks Agricultural Society, a beautiful facility just 10 minutes south of Calgary.

"We're having the first go over two days in Okotoks, and then there will be two days of the second go at Stampede Park and the finals at Stampede Park," explained Sowiak. "The Okotoks facility is a nice, quiet, facility with good ground. People enjoy cutting there, and we're lining up a barbecue on one of the days for all of the competitors."

Entries at Calgary increased approximately 40% last year, when the Stampede increased their added money from \$10,000 to \$50,000 in anticipation of the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting in 2009. Among the top cutters who traveled to Canada were Chubby Turner, Lindy Burch, Pete Branch, who rode Open World Champion Ms Peppy Cat to win the Calgary Stampede Open, and non-pros Dan and Karen Hansen, Mary Jo Milner, McKenzie Mullins and Stephanie Haymes-Roven, among others.

"With the economy, we're expecting entries similar to last year, maybe a little more," said Sowiak. "We're expecting 120 cutters in the open and non pro combined."

While Calgary doesn't offer a full slate of weekend classes—they concentrate their efforts on the Open and Non-Pro—they do have a Youth division. For several years now, the youth champion has received the Bill Collins Youth Excellence Award, a \$1,000 college scholarship provided by Collins himself. Like the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, most of the work to produce the cutting is done by volunteers, including the 60-member Western Performance Horse Committee. They are hoping their similarities with Houston extend to the success of the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting event.

"It's a really cool partnership for us. I went down for the finals in Houston, and saw the way it grew the entries there," said Sowiak. "In a lot of the press and everything that I've seen come out of Houston, the emphasis on good older horses and weekend cuttings is really nice."

None of it would be possible without the dedicated support of the 6666 Ranch, Beutenmiller says. It is fitting that a ranch known for producing top performance horses is affiliated with a program that puts cutting's best older horses in the spotlight.

"With the generous support of the 6666 Ranch, the World Series of Cutting is off to a great start," said NCHA Executive Director Jeff Hooper. "The Series provides greater opportunities for our members, exciting competition for spectators, and a tremendous attraction for the participating shows. We look forward to continued growth in the program through the year, and into the future."

Watch for more information on the 6666 Ranch World Series of Cutting at the All-American Quarter Horse Congress and The American Royal in future issues of the *Cutting Horse Chatter*. ★



Of the 1,200,000 people who visit the Calgary Stampede each year, an estimated 40% are tourists from out of town.

Entry deadlines

Calgary Stampede

Event Dates: July 5–9

Entry Closing Date: June 22 at 10:00 am

Telephone entries will not be accepted. Faxed and online entries will be accepted if accompanied by credit card information. U.S. entries must be paid by credit card or money order in Canadian funds.

Calgary Stampede Agriculture Entries Office

Box 1060, Stn M, Calgary, AB T2P 2K8

1-800-661-1260 / (403) 261-0313 / fax (403) 263-5717

agriculture@calgarystampede.com

www.stampedeagriculture.com

All-American Quarter Horse Congress

Event dates: Oct. 2–8

Entry closing date: Postmarked by August 25

Entry information for the 2009 Congress will be released as soon as the Entry Book is finalized. Entry books mail around the middle of July.

Mail entries to: Carol Osborne

P.O. Box 8183, Zanesville, OH 43702

(740) 453-4225

www.oqha.com

American Royal

Event dates: Nov. 11–14

Entry closing date: Two weeks prior to the event.

Contact: Lee Ann Bates

(620) 286-5614 or (620) 664-7230