

Keaten Cox's 4H Speech - March 19, 2007 Horses All

The following article was written by nine-year-old Canadian Ranch Roping Association member Keaten Cox of High River, AB

The article is a copy of the speech he prepared and delivered in his first-ever public speaking event for his 4-H club, the Cowboy Trail Blazers.

“Did you know that the traditional methods of doctoring cattle in the pasture is becoming a popular sport? Good afternoon chairperson, judges, ladies and gentleman, and fellow 4-H members.

Since before the 1900s, the vaqueros needed to doctor cattle. The vaqueros were great horsemen and understood cattle. They used rawhide ropes called reatas that they made by themselves.

They were very proud of their roping skills. I think they started to try and be better ropers than the other. This may be where ranch roping competitions started.

Most of today's cowboys do not need to do a lot of pasture doctoring, due to the loss of the art and modern conveniences.

There are still working cowboys who use these traditional skills everyday. But some don't work on a ranch and love tradition and practice these skills. I think that is the reason ranch roping competitions are becoming more popular in this area today.

Competitive ranch roping may have 1, 2, or 3 people on a team. There is a herd of cows in a pen. On a three-man team, one person catches the head, another catches the heels, and the third does the groundwork.

The ground worker is the doctor. He puts both hind legs in the heeler's loop, that is if he didn't catch two. He takes the head loop off and puts it around both front feet.

The ground worker is the guy that didn't catch the cow with his rope. If things don't go right, you might catch your horse or your hat instead of your cow.

When I started ranch roping I took a clinic. I learned that there are many different kinds of loops and ropes. When you learn to ranch rope, you start by the basic loops. The side arm to catch a head and a ride by for the heels.

There are many of the fancy shots, such as the houlihan, del viento, turnover, Johnny blocker, and the hip shot. You also start by roping a dummy on the ground and I don't mean your brother or sister!

When you are confident with your shots from the ground you can try it on your horse. It is important to have a good horse for roping. Your horse should be gentle, soft and easy to move. It is important for horse and rider to have cow sense.

When you catch a cow you need to dally from the slack end of your rope to your saddle horn. This will hold your cow. Keep your thumb up; you don't want to lose a finger.

Once you have taken a ranch roping clinic like I did you can enter competitions. You get a chance to meet new people and it is really fun to beat the adults!

I like ranch roping because it is traditional, easy on cows, and most of all I can do it with my family and friends.

Thank you chairperson, honourable judges, ladies and gentleman, and fellow 4-H members.”
Keaten Cox

If you are interested in learning more about ranch roping or the CRRA list of upcoming events, go to www.canadianranchroping.ca.

If you're interested in attending a ranch roping clinic, go to www.keithstewart.ca, call (403) 601-7370, or turn to the Calendar of Events page in this issue and look under Clinics and Seminars.