

Ranch Roping on the Rise – September 19, 2006 Horses All
By Denice Stewart

Ranch roping is a method of roping and doctoring cattle in a low-stress environment with the emphasis on the well-being of the livestock and the skill of the riders and their horses that have learned the traditional methods of roping and doctoring cattle.

As a spectator and participant event, this method of roping is just coming into popularity in rural communities with the formal development of the Canadian Ranch Roping Association (CRRA) in 2004.

Organizer of the Key Ranch Roping Series, Denice Stewart of High River, AB, credits the success of the CRRA organization and its growing membership to the organization's mandate that all sanctioned roping must have a Novice division.

"Having a Novice division introduces new members to the sport and gives them an opportunity to compete against other ropers of their skill level," she says.

Competition in the Novice event allows an Open division roper to coach the novice ropers and to assist the team to rope, tip, and doctor the cattle. More experienced ropers compete in the Open division.

The CRRA requires appropriate attire to compete in sanctioned ranch roping events, which includes Western hats, chaps and boots, long ropes, as well as appropriate conduct. You will not find cowboys in ball caps and running shoes at these events.

Rather, you will see working cowboys and others interested in maintaining a Western tradition of good livestock and horsemanship practices. All the information you need to host a ranch roping event can be found at the association website at www.canadianranchroping.ca.

"This year is an exciting year of growth for the CRRA with 30 new memberships sold at the Key Ranch during our ropings in June and July" says Stewart. "Ranch roping has really grown in popularity in the last few years. In our area you can rope just about four times a week with practices held at four different locations throughout the week.

"Our roping clinics this summer have been filled, with our youngest participant only eight years old."

Again this year, the Key Ranch Roping Series had a large number of participants turn-out to take a swing at the Novice and Open high point buckles offered by the buckle sponsors: Tecumseh Industries and Somerset Tree Service, both of High River.

"Having great sponsors goes a long way to getting a great turn-out for our events and we appreciate their continued support," says Stewart.

The roping techniques of the vaquero (cowboys of Spanish descent) are the basis for the ranch roping methods taught at the Key Ranch.

If you are interested in learning more about ranch roping, contact Keith or Denice Stewart at denice@keithstewart.ca, call Keith at (403) 601-7370, or visit their website www.keithstewart.ca.