

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

November 5, 2019

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Board Members:

Subject: ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDMENT ADDING SECTION 5.08.175 TO THE ALAMEDA COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE TO PROHIBIT SHEEP RIDING

RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct a second reading and adoption of an ordinance amendment related to prohibited activities at rodeo events in unincorporated Alameda County; approve adoption of ordinance section 5.08.175 prohibiting sheep riding/mutton busting at rodeo events.

BACKGROUND:

In response to concerns regarding animal safety and treatment at rodeo events, on January 15, 2019 at the Board Planning Meeting, your board received an informational report reviewing Animal Control regulations pertaining to rodeo activities including sheep riding, also commonly referred to as mutton busting, and wild cow milking. Over the years, these activities have received increased scrutiny due to the potential harm to rodeo participants and animals. Based on the discussion during the hearing, your Board directed Community Development Agency and Sheriff Office staff (*1/15/19 Planning Agenda, Item #3, File 30267*) to develop an ordinance to prohibit sheep riding.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

Rodeo activities are regulated under Chapter 5 of the Ordinance Code and certain activities are prohibited in Article III of the Ordinance. Adopted in 1993, language specific to rodeos was presented to the Board of Supervisors for adoption, as concerns were raised related to the treatment of animals. The existing ordinance currently prohibits intentionally tripping or felling equine or bovine animals. The ordinance has not been revisited or amended since its adoption in 1993.

The attached ordinance reflects and addresses public concerns around sheep riding, which involves having young children ride sheep for entertainment purposes. The ordinance change adds section 5.08.175 to Chapter 5.08 – *Animal Control Regulations Generally, Article III – Rodeo Events or Other Activities*

Prohibited and bans any individual from climbing, riding, or attempting to ride any sheep for the purpose of entertainment, sport or practice, including rodeo.

Alameda County has a long history of agriculture and rodeo activities, however concerns have been raised over the years that the current regulations are not adequate to address on-going rodeo activities that are considered unsafe for participants and unnecessarily cruel and/or inhumane to farm animals. According to the Humane Society and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, children's rodeo events such as sheep riding do not promote humane care and respect for animals.

This ordinance amendment expands upon existing code to promote public health, safety and welfare through the regulation and control of people's use and keeping of animals.

Active rodeos in the County are mostly found at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, in the City of Livermore, and at the Rowell Ranch Rodeo Park located just outside of the City of Dublin. Rowell Ranch Rodeo Park, owned and operated through the Hayward Area Recreational District is within the unincorporated area, and would be required to abide by any County ordinance.

Animal Control in the Alameda County Sheriff's Office is responsible for enforcing Chapter 5 of the Alameda County Ordinance Code.

FINANCING:

There is no increase in Net County Cost as a result of this action.

VISION 2026 GOAL:

The ordinance amendment supports our shared vision of **Safe and Livable Communities** by promoting public health, safety and welfare as well as the humane care for animals.

Respectfully,



Richard Valle, President



Wilma Chan, Supervisor

cc: Sheriff's Office
County Counsel

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-50

AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 5.08.175 TO THE
ALAMEDA COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE TO PROHIBIT SHEEP RIDING

SECTION I

In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda makes the following findings:

- a. The County of Alameda ("County") intends to promote public health, safety and welfare through the regulation and control of people's use and keeping of animals, including at certain rodeo events;
- b. Existing County Ordinance Code provisions regarding rodeos prohibit intentionally tripping or felling equine or bovine animals;
- c. In addition to these protections, the Board finds that the practice of children riding or attempting to ride sheep in a rodeo event known as "mutton busting," does not promote the humane care for animals and does not promote public health, safety or welfare;
- d. The Board recognizes that the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals also opposes mutton busting;
- e. The Board finds that this ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the common sense exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity subject to this ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment. CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda ordains as follows:

SECTION II

The Alameda County Ordinance Code is hereby amended as follows:

Section 5.08.175 is added to Chapter 5.08 – Animal Control Regulations Generally, Article III -- Rodeo Events or Other Activities Prohibited, and reads as follows:

Section 5.08.175 – Ovine animals.

No person shall climb on top of, ride, or attempt to ride any ovine animal (sheep), or to cause any other person to do so, whatsoever for the purpose of entertainment, sport or practice, including a rodeo.

SECTION III

This ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days from and after the date of passage and before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after its passage it shall be published once with the names of the members voting for and against the same in the Inter-City Express, a newspaper published in the County of Alameda.

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California, on the 11th day of November, 2019, by the following called vote:

AYES: Supervisors Carson, Chan, & President Valle - 3

NOES: Supervisor Miley

EXCUSED: Supervisor Haggerty



RICHARD VALLE
President of the Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,

By: Melissa Sydman
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DONNA R. ZIEGLER, COUNTY COUNSEL

By: Heather Littlejohn by Candice
Heather Littlejohn
Deputy County Counsel