

## Chicken Roping: A Way Of Life Or Another Way Of Cruelty?

From [Unparalleled Suffering](#)  
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*Moorcroft, Wyoming just had its 9th annual chicken roping event at Dewey's Bar and Grill. This event is so absurd that it might be the last one left in the state known as "Like no place on Earth."*



*A rooster being used one of many times for the chicken roping contest at Dewey's Bar and Grill on February 18, 2023. The firstplace winners walked away with cash and chicken roping belt buckles. My video expose of this event can be viewed [here](#).*

Rodeo activities are ingrained in the culture throughout the state of Wyoming. Many of the state's residents who identify as cowboys and cowgirls will rope any animal they can get a rope around, whether the animal has two legs or four.

Not only does the official Wyoming license plate glorify a cowboy's domination over other animals as he sits atop a bucking horse, but Wyoming is also home to many of the biggest rodeo events in the world; the College National Finals Rodeo, the nightly Cody Nite Rodeo that takes place on a daily basis throughout the entire months of June through August, and finally Cheyenne Frontier Days, a packed 9-day rodeo that's the largest in the world and [always involves inevitable nonhuman injuries and deaths](#).



*A helpless calf being roughed up by two men at the College National Finals rodeo practice in Casper, WY. As if rodeos aren't already abusive enough, rodeo participants are far rougher towards the animals during practice.*

In all the years that I've been driven to expose blatant injustices against sentient beings who happened to only be born in a different body than us, I've been to around twenty or more rodeos. My ["Using Animals: Rodeos" video](#) highlights many of the rodeos that I've documented, including a rodeo practice for the college finals in Casper, Wyoming. Anyone who watches can see the unquestionable bullying and maximized disregard inflicted onto the unwilling participants of rodeo "sports," forced to suffer unimaginable pain, terror, and sometimes death. It's alarming how using animals (who clearly communicate resistance) for entertainment, pride, and money is still justified and accepted in this day and age. I'm aware that there are many rodeo events I haven't yet seen firsthand, such as the lethal [Wild Cow Milking](#), but it's been quite a while since I've found out about a rodeo event that I wasn't already familiar with. But earlier this month after opening an email from Karen Davis of [United Poultry Concerns](#) I found out about "chicken roping."

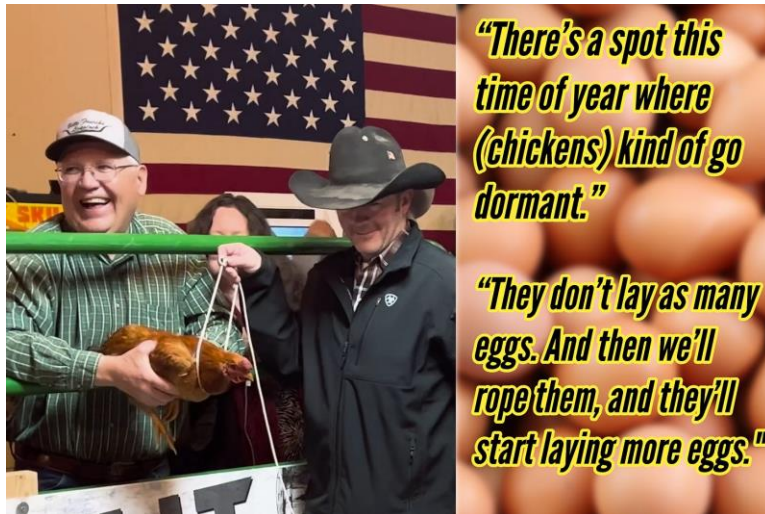


*The advertising for the 9th annual chicken roping event on the Dewey's Place [Facebook page](#). Even the cartoon chicken doesn't look too pleased. Is this a "fun night" for everyone involved?*

UPC offered to sponsor my investigation. I was pleased to find out that this isn't a particularly popular activity; the people who put this event on at Dewey's Place might be the last in the state to host such a disturbing public display of trampling over the interests and dignity of feathered individuals. The chicken roping contest is supposed to be one of their most financially successful evenings of the year, drawing in plenty of locals and people from other towns. Roping chickens has been utilized successfully for [fundraising](#) in the past at Wyoming's Recluse Community Hall in an effort to raise funds for maintenance costs. Toby Connally, a local who has proudly organized chicken roping contests at this community hall and elsewhere told the Gillette News Record that "The chickens are fine with it" and that "they'll lay better tomorrow than they did today." I can't think of an example of a human putting another animal through hell for some kind of self gain and admitting that the animal isn't "fine with it."

The chicken exploiter who supplies the birds for Dewey's Place, Troy Dysart, explained to the [Cowboy State Daily](#) that he'd only be able to bring roosters this year because a predator broke into the chicken coop at his property and destroyed most of the chickens (hens). Mr. Dysart cares so much about his

chickens that he brought enough individuals to make sure they wouldn't have to get roped more than 9 times each. Like Toby Connally, he claimed that the chickens aren't put off by this event because they allegedly lay more eggs the following day. If egg laying is a sign of satisfaction, then the debeaked chickens severely trapped in filthy battery cages (the most common way a modern hen spends her life), who are unable to even spread their wings, are much happier than their wild free-living counterparts, since they lay almost 280 more eggs per year than them.



*Troy Dysart, the animal exploiter who brings chickens to Dewey's Bar and Grill, smiling as he holds onto the next chicken who will be thrown into the miniature arena. Troy [told the Cowboy State Daily](#) that the chickens are fine with this activity as they start laying more eggs following these events, implying that the more eggs chickens lay the happier they are.*

When I went to Dewey's Place I was floored by the amount of people inside of the bar. Their walls could sure contain the sound inside because from the outside it sounded as empty as an abandoned building. Inside Dewey's Place there was children of all ages as well as adults everywhere who were chain smoking cigarettes, getting loaded on beer and liquor, and socializing in pairs and large groups.

Although many of the people there were looking forward to the entertainment factor of the chicken roping contest, there was already plenty of options inside for a night full of entertainment; Dewey's Place has pool tables, dart boards, a variety of arcade games, and more. Sign ups for the event started at 6 PM and the action started about an hour later.





*A header pulls up the rooster's head while the heeler ropes the rooster back by their feet. The birds face the chance of death while the worst the humans face is a \$100 fine.*

Humans of all ages can watch or participate in the chicken roping craziness. To enter one must pay a \$5 entrance fee, but participants can stack up their entrance fees and their chances of winning first, second, or third place by trying numerous rounds and numerous partners. Killing a chicken is one of the risks all participants take, which would be a \$100 fine if it were to happen.

Although the parents want their kids to be as amused as they are at the violence taking place in front of them, I don't think all of the kids shared their parents enthusiasm. One child can be heard in my chicken roping expose yelling out "You're probably killing that poor bird." Aside from trying not to kill the birds, participants must follow other basic rules: the bird must first be noosed by the neck in one or two attempts from the header, the bird must then be noosed around their legs in an attempt or two by the heeler (you only get two attempts if the header was successful on their first attempt). It wasn't uncommon to witness the ropers getting their cords caught around the wings of the birds, causing panic among the far more rational beings.



*A chicken who tried to escape gets grabbed by their legs at the announcer table. Despite showing the clearest signs possible with movement and vocalizations of not wanting any part in this event the birds will still be used again repeatedly.*

It was very common for [the chickens to try to escape](#) their tormentors, which caused a lot of screaming amongst the crowd, as if the birds were flying outside of the little arena to terrorize those who had sadistically been smiling and laughing at the frightening and threatening ordeal that was repeatedly being imposed onto them. Some chickens were roped while flying away and sent right back onto the ground, which was marked by a loud bang as they hit floor. Sometimes the roosters got eerily quiet, a choice not of their own as they were being choked by their abusers. One man from Texas who was by me and watching this event for the first time in his life [remarked “This is the coolest shit.”](#) He was observant enough to notice a rooster “playing” submission and laying on top of his feet, so he couldn’t get roped and pulled back yet again. Straight from the [mouth of the Texan visitor](#): “That shit’s playing submission. It’s covering its feet like it knows.”



*Two men actively torturing a rooster in front of a crowd full of children and adults. The man in the maroon top was a repeated offender and heavily intoxicated, not exactly a great role model for the kids.*

One of the highlights of the evening was the repetition of chokings that the birds had to endure again and again. Who in the world would want to have a cord or a rope around their neck and then be hoisted into the air? What can that be other than torture? Even Renee Jean, the pro-animal exploitation Cowboy State Daily writer who published an article about this event began her article with “Saturday was not a good night to be a rooster in Moorcroft” and later on stated “it’s clearly a stressful night for them.”

A female participant who tried her hand and roping skills numerous times [referred to one of the roosters as “nice”](#) because he didn’t actively do much to avoid being roped and he certainly didn’t try to escape. He stood in one spot and took the abuse, which was likely him going through learned helplessness. Learned helplessness occurs when someone has experienced something stressful repeatedly so many times that they no longer try to escape the negative situation as they don’t believe anymore that they have the power to control or change what’s being done against them.

One rodeo “sport” that all who are involved can recognize learned helplessness in is goat tying. Goat tying is when [mostly] baby goats are tied by a rope to a stake that’s buried in the ground, which prevents the goat from escaping, being picked up, getting slammed down, and ultimately being tied up. The goats used for goat tying will try desperately to run away and avoid capture, but after many rounds of the same thing they recognize that trying to escape is unproductive and ultimately futile. Once the goats reach the stage of learned helplessness they no longer run away when their abusers charge at them and they simply just stand around, ready for the cycle to continue. At this stage, the goats no longer present any kind of challenge for the human participants and they are usually killed and replaced with a new goat.



*A baby goat being tied up by a child for a round of goat tying at a Texas rodeo. Goats are typically used at least a couple times in a row before they are changed out for a new goat.*

The participant who stood by me for a bit and referred to one particular rooster as “nice” lit up when she found out that she could potentially win a chicken roping belt buckle if she were to get first place. Upon learning about the belt buckle [she said:](#)

I want a goddamn buckle for winning chicken roping so goddamn bad. I will travel 4 hours down here just to win a chicken roping buckle.



*The 2023 Dewey's Place chicken roping belt buckles for the winning header and heeler. Could it be any more clear that humans find these belt buckles more valuable than the actual lived experiences of the chickens?*

I showed my video footage to Melanie Moonstone, a woman who founded an animal sanctuary called [Rooster Redemption](#). Melanie has rescued roosters from diverse backgrounds such as cockfighting busts, religious animal sacrifice, slaughterhouses, and abandonment in freezing cold weather. The hens and roosters in her care are treated with kindness, respect, and love like family; they are given the best



quality life Melanie can afford to give them. Her roosters are never exploited for any human gain and they live as long of a life as possible with all of the veterinary care and treatment that humans typically only provide to cats and dogs. If her roosters ever require euthanasia it's done peacefully and mercifully because they've run out of options and to prevent them from experiencing a miserable ending to life.

This is what Melanie Moonstone of Rooster Redemption had to say about Dewey's Place 2023 chicken roping:

What I witnessed in the footage is nauseating entitlement over non-human animals. Loads of ego, superiority, and zero empathy. The chickens are visibly terrified, evidenced by their attempts to escape, vocalizations, and eventual submission by putting their heads on the floor. It makes me very angry to see this, and what typically drives anger is fear. In this case, fear of small towns in the United States who have an overt yearning to practice violence and dominance over animals. It is very difficult for me to comprehend why this would be entertaining and it is extremely unfortunate to see such a blatant lack of empathy. I truly think they should try this 'entertainment' on consenting humans first and then decide if they would still do it to a non-consenting animal who is 10 times smaller than them. Absolutely disgusting, to the max.



*Melanie and Vitto, a rooster who was rescued from a cockfighting bust in Colorado in 2017 and is spending the rest of his life in a mode of sanctuary with Melanie, her partner Jay, and the rest of the crew.*

A bartender at Dewey's Place justified the event to the Cowboy State Daily by proclaiming that "it's [roping] a way of life for a lot of guys." This is a common justification in the rodeo world, given that we are all fully aware none of this harm needs to be inflicted onto animals as it is all completely unnecessary and done for no more than tradition, pride, money, entertainment, fitting in, and pleasure. We could call anything "a way of life" but does that make something okay? Serial killers who go on murder sprees killing others is "a way of life."

People who abuse their partners, pets, and/or children are harming those closest to them is "a way of life." Corporations who screw over ordinary citizens is a "way of life." We all have the option to choose a way of life that can be fulfilling and doesn't deliberately put others in harm's way. A satisfying life can be had by promoting peace, respect, compassion, justice, and decency. And what about the way others want their life to go, aren't their life interests worthy of consideration?



*A calf being choked and pulled back at a US rodeo event I attended in 2018. No matter the year of history and no matter the species, we are all equally against being subjected to mistreatment like this.*

No human would consent to being on the opposite end of the rope, the end where your neck, head, legs, and feet are pulled back violently by someone trying to dominate you. If something is so aversive to us how can we pretend that others don't mind or that others don't experience an extremely aversive event as we would? The only way a human would ever have involvement of being roped in a rodeo style event is if they were drugged and unable to fight back or escape. Other animals are far more similar to us than they are different and they all show extreme resistance when it comes to anything that involves a rope going around their body. If we want bodily autonomy for ourselves, don't we only deserve it if we are willing to afford it to others?



*Featured on the Dewey's Place Facebook page, one of the repeat intoxicated chicken roping offenders shows off the money in both of his hands that he won from animal abuse at this year's event. The arcade game right behind him is one of limitless examples of how we can play games and have fun without involving non-consenting individuals who've done nothing to deserve being tormented and traumatized.*

Just like others have dropped chicken roping in Wyoming and in other parts of the country, Dewey's Bar and Grill can do the same. They can make money and people can have a good time without harming live animals. We humans should remember that we've done nothing to be born human just as much as



chickens have done nothing to be born as birds. As sentient individuals with a will to live and a will to be safe and free, we all deserve basic respect and autonomy for our lives and our bodies. A life is a life, discrimination is discrimination, and abuse is abuse. Putting children around rampant cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, and animal abuse sends dangerous messages to developing minds and can have seriously devastating consequences for their development into becoming upstanding citizens who hold basic values like consent and respecting boundaries later on. Let's do right by the children, the chickens, and everyone else by dropping this nonsense once and for all.

[Click here to view my video expose of this event: "Chicken Roping Craziess At Dewey's Place"](#)



*The girl who was eager to win a chicken roping belt buckle stands over a seemingly defeated bird. I hope she'll realize how she has wronged individuals and hang her head down in shame the way this individual has hung their head down in defeat.*

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