

Bull riding

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lazier and won't try to buck the rider off their backs."

This can happen with any bull which is over used, and is almost certain to happen to a horse which is less than five years old.

"Unless they are old and set in their ways, they get broke after being ridden in a couple of rodeos, and that's how you lose money," he explains.

Well-selected and well-

cared-for stock can be used for several years, however. Bulls, especially, learn what's expected of them and can become real opponents in the arena.

"After you've worked with a bull for half a year or a season, they learn that their job is to buck and get the rider off as quickly as possible," states Martin. "And, when you ride a bull that's been hauled to rodeos for three to five years, it gets

to be a real battle of the minds," he continues.

Rodeo riders will ask each other for tips on the bucking patterns of the experienced animals, and then try to compensate for the bulls' moves by leaning and shifting their weight. If an experienced bull feels the rider doing this, he will often make an entirely unexpected turn designed to catch the rider off guard, and throw him to the ground. And, often times, once he has done his job and thrown the rider off his back, the bull will head to the gate knowing he's done for the event.

"They know they're going to be fed when the event is over," remarks Martin, "because, just like most athletes, the animals aren't fed or watered for two to four hours prior to performances.

To get this type of good bull, Martin has to go through an extensive hand picking process, because only certain bulls will work out.

"If you get a bull that's a fighter, most times he won't

buck, and a lot of the times an animal that buck won't fight," says Martin. He experienced this with his first group of bulls.

"They were so wild that they'd injure themselves in the pen before the rodeo, so we had to get rid of them," he noted. Out of the original 16 he got from Florida, only three remain. He didn't do badly, however, because he could resell them, many times, for more than he had paid.

At present, he has several noteworthy bulls. One is Bonecrusher, a Hereford and Brahma crossbred from Texas who is nine years old and weighs in the vicinity of 1600 pounds. Bonecrusher has bucked out over 174 times and has rarely been ridden for the qualifying eight seconds.

Another is a Charolais who bucks to get the rider off, but is a pet before and after the rodeo.

According to Martin, the best animals are Brahmas



At 23 years of age, Dave Martin has been riding bulls for seven years and is going on his third year of producing rodeos.

crossed with either Angus, Charolais, or Hereford.

"Oh, you always have to have a couple purebred Brahmas in your string so the spectators are satisfied, but really, they don't make the best bulls," says Martin. Instead of bucking, Brahmas will run from one end of the arena to the other, which does not provide an exciting show.

"The best bull is a spinner," says Martin. When a bull spins, centrifugal force throws the rider out from the animal, and if it stops suddenly and changed its direction of spin, the rider is in for a surprise — one that is often to his downfall — quite literally.

"If they've been hauled to enough rodeos, they're expert on what verbal signals mean," explains

Martin. So, they're ready for any move the rider makes from the time he climbs on the bull's back.

There are a few problems that go along with owning these ornery animals, according to Martin. For one thing, they have a tendency to tear their living quarters apart.

"Nineteen bulls can get to fighting each other, and it's just not feasible to house each one separately," he commented.

A second problem is that they get loose and can take weeks and months to find. And, when a person uses these animals in a rodeo, the Humane Society is a constant problem.

"I really think the Humane

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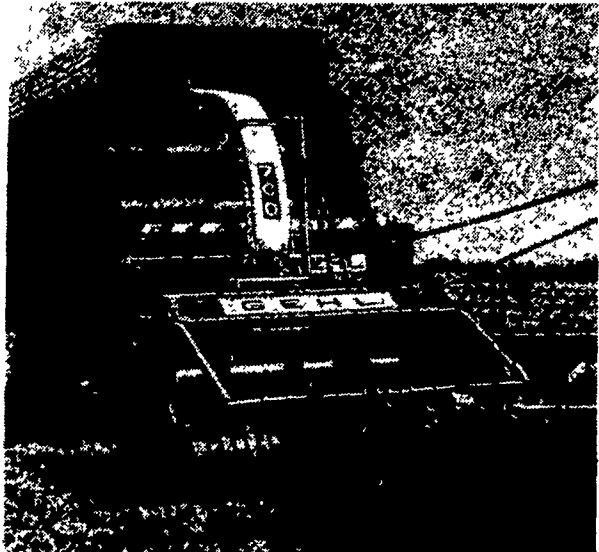


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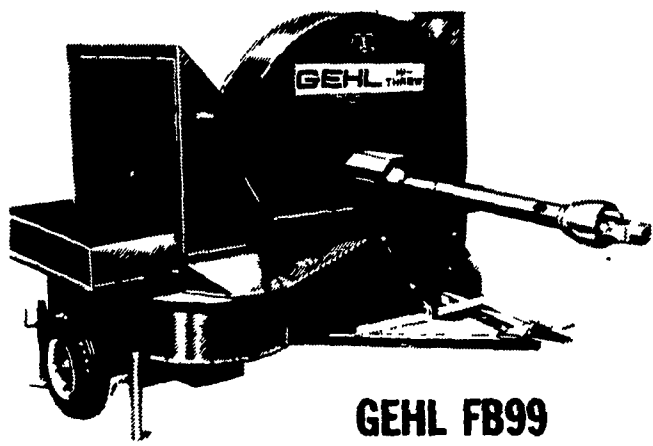


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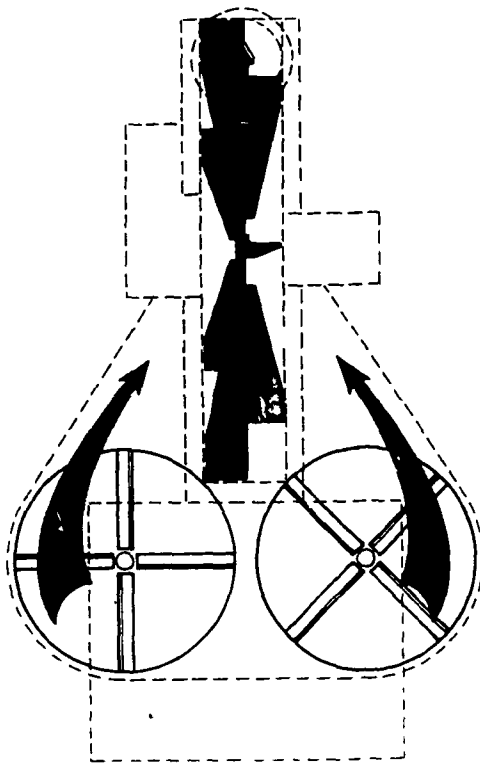


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