



November 19, 2004

Mr. Steven J. Hatchell  
Commissioner  
Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association  
101 Pro Rodeo Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Dear Mr. Hatchell:

In June, the *New York Times* reported that PRCA officials had indicated they would re-examine their relationship with the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC) before signing any new deal when their 10-year contract ends next year.

As supporters of rodeo, we are very pleased and proud that the sport is growing so much in popularity. But we believe that the kids and families in rodeo audiences should see that being a cowboy means being tough and healthy, not using tobacco. We strongly urge you not to renew the PRCA's contract with USSTC in 2005.

Tobacco doesn't belong in any sport, including rodeos. Spit tobacco causes deadly, disfiguring oral cancers and increases the risk of heart disease. Unfortunately, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in ten teenage boys uses spit tobacco.

Large rodeo scoreboards, banners, and program ads sponsored by USSTC send a confusing message to young audience members. Sampling booths may be off-limits to children under 18, but children see adults going in and out to get free samples, which gives them the message that chewing tobacco is part of being a grown-up rodeo fan or cowboy. Asking parents to counteract those messages is like telling kids in a polluted environment not to breathe the air.

We support the PRCA's efforts to attract more family-friendly sponsors, and we are pleased to see companies like Pace Picante, Wrangler, and Justin Boots supporting rodeo events. Given these companies' interest in sponsoring rodeo and the troubling influence that tobacco has on young rodeo audiences, we urge the PRCA not to renew its contract with the USSTC in 2005.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[to sign this letter, send an email to [info@bucktobacco.org](mailto:info@bucktobacco.org)]