

# Invitational Ranch Rodeo

## 2026 Recap



Denver, CO – Eight historic ranches representing Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Wyoming and Nebraska vied for the championship title in the Invitational Ranch Rodeo during a record-breaking Opening Day at the 120<sup>th</sup> National Western Stock Show (NWSS). An event rooted in tradition and legacy and over \$26,000 in prize money, the Invitational Ranch Rodeo showcases tasks commonly performed on the ranch. The winning team earns the coveted invitation back for 2027 in addition

to prize money and awards.

Teams went head to head in four events, including Cut and Brand, Team Sorting, Double Mugging, and Wild Cow Milking. The competition was close, with Broken Spear Ranch of Model, CO ultimately snagging the top spot. Team members Austin Kuhn, Shade Etbauer, Trent Sharon and JT Schalla were the fastest team in two events. Their fast times of :54 in the Team Sorting (six-tenths off the arena record) and 1:07 in the Double Mugging clinched their second NWSS championship.

Haythorn Land & Cattle Co. of Arthur, NE dominated the Cut and Brand with an impressive time of 1:06. Crutch Ranch, hailing from Borger, TX, were triumphant in the Wild Cow Milking with a time of :31.

The title of Top Hand went to Jet McCoy of McCoy Ranch and Top Horse was awarded to Okay to Be Blue, ridden by Kasen York of Silver Spur Ranches.



Proper animal welfare and respectful animal husbandry practices are of the utmost importance at NWSS. The Excellence in Animal Care award was given to Haythorn Land & Cattle Co. for their mindful handling of the stock in the Invitational Ranch Rodeo within a competitive atmosphere.

The Invitational Ranch Rodeo exemplified the dedication and skill inherent in the western way of life. The event drew a large crowd both entertaining and educating the public regarding ranch practices. Its success demonstrates the connection between competitors and the community, while steadfastly preserving the legacy of working ranch traditions.

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Photos by Performance Horse Photography

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