



THE OAK RIDGE BOYS



CONWAY TWITTY



EDDIE RABBITT



LORETTA LYNN

# Houston Rodeo to be biggest ever

Breaking records seems to be a tradition at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and according to show officials, it has happened again. The world's largest livestock show has grown even bigger.

More than 27,800 livestock entries are expected for the show, February 21 through March 4, an all-time record. Of these, more than 15,000 (64%) are from junior exhibitors, 4-H and FFA members from all over the state. In 1978, the show had 23,739 entries.

For the thousands of professional livestock exhibitors from throughout the United States, and for the junior exhibitors, the Houston Show is the culmination of a year's hard work of preparing their animals for the toughest of show ring competition.

Their hard work can reap big rewards in Houston. This year, open show and junior exhibitors will be competing for more than half a million dollars in prize money and premium auction prices, which are well above market value.

For more than three-quarters of a million spectators, the exhibitors are on center stage in a two-week-long entertainment extravaganza that begins when Houston takes a step backwards in time and returns to the days of the western frontier.

The streets once again belong to the original internal combustion engine — the horse. Buckboards and stagecoaches wind through the concrete and steel canyons, and businessmen don western hats and boots to welcome one of the largest events in the history of the city.

More than 6,000 trailriders, some journeying from as far away as 400 miles, will join city and state officials as brass bands herald the annual rodeo parade on Friday, February 23 at 9:15 a.m.

Following the parade, which is naturally the biggest Houston sees all year, the action moves to the Astrodome complex. Here the rodeo opens at the Astrodome in a matinee performance at 2 p.m., and thousands of quality animals are going through their paces in the adjoining exposition facilities — the Astrohalls and the Horse Arena.

The livestock show begins earlier in the week, with open show competition getting under way on February 21. Professional breeders and ranch owners from some 35 states will bring in their best breeding stock to compete in breeding beef, dairy, swine, poultry, sheep, Angora goat and rabbit shows.

The Houston Livestock Show is a showcase of the livestock industry, and many cattlemen from Europe, Mexico, Central America and South America attend the show to get a look at the best stock.

Horse show activities will fill the 4.3-acre Abercrombie Arena, adjacent to the Astrohalls, where livestock are exhibited. With more than 2,500 horses entered in the nine shows, the horse show competition must run 16 days, beginning February 17, in order to accommodate all classes. In addition, the third annual junior horse judging contest will have 800 contestants competing on February 22.

Junior show exhibitors will take over the 22.3-acre Astrohalls for the second week of the livestock show, with junior judging beginning on March 1. Each exhibitor knows he is up against the best in livestock, with much riding on the decisions of the most experienced livestock judges in the nation.

Junior shows include breeding beef heifers, dairy cattle, breeding sheep, Angora goats, beef and dairy scramble heifers, commercial steers, breeding rabbits, market lambs, market poultry, market swine and market steers, including a carcass contest.

Besides the premium awards and trophies, exhibitors of market animals know that a grand championship in their market division in Houston can translate into the funds for a future cattle herd or a college diploma.

The Houston show holds the world's record auction price for four junior market champions: Grand Champion Steer, \$50,000; Grand Champion Lamb, \$19,500; Grand Champion Turkey, \$13,005; and Grand Champion Pen of Broilers, \$18,000.

More important, community involvement and civic support from thousands of individuals and businesses combine to assure junior exhibitors that their animals selling in the market auctions will bring premium prices. Show officials estimate that more than one-third of the market animals entered will make the auction sales.

Thousands of junior exhibitors will also compete in livestock and

dairy judging contests, where their knowledge of animals can win calf purchase certificates worth \$275 toward the purchase of a purebred registered beef or dairy heifer.

More than just a crowd-pleasing rodeo event, the calf scramble also offers winning boys the opportunity to win a calf purchase certificate worth \$275. With the top 40 winners of the judging contests, calf scramble winners participate in a special year-long program that stresses education and responsibility. It concludes with special show ring competition at the 1980 show.

Spectators at the 1979 rodeo, which runs February 23 through March 4, will again be treated to top flight rodeo competition. Cowboy champions will be matched against rodeo's toughest stock, with the richest purse in American rodeo riding on the outcome. Twice in the last four years, the record for most money won at a rodeo has been set and broken at Houston. Last year, Larry Ferguson walked away with more than \$13,000 in Houston rodeo winnings.

For the final performance of the rodeo on March 4, the top finalists in each event will compete in the Houston rodeo finals for additional prize money, trophy saddles and the coveted title of Houston All-Around Cowboy. In 1978, rodeo contestants split more than \$171,000 in prize money, so rodeo fans can always count on the top cowboys and barrel racers making a stop in Houston.

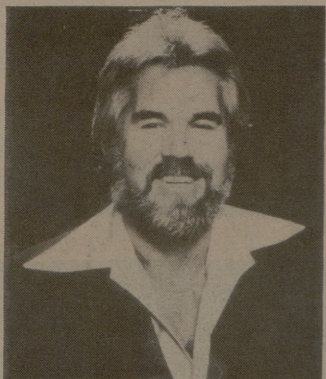
Spicing up the rodeo performances is a spectacular lineup of recording stars (see list opposite page) with something to please almost everyone's musical taste.



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