

Molalla Pioneer

written by Bethany Monroe

Cowboys aren't the only stars of the Molalla Buckeroo.

Livestock play a vital role in any rodeo and the bucking bulls and horses are considered by many to be athletes themselves.

Stock contractors Big Bend Rodeo Company, Flying Five Rodeo Company and Diamond "G" Rodeo will provide the animal athletes for this year's Buckeroo.

Not any animal can be trained for rodeo. A good rodeo animal depends greatly on genetics and personality, Cyndi Gilbert of Diamond "G" Rodeo said.

"You can't make them buck," Gilbert said. "Sometimes it just decides it doesn't want to."

Good livestock are also an investment. A bucking horse can cost \$14,000 to purchase, while bucking bulls can sell for more than \$40,000, according to the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Web site.

Bucking bulls generally start their rodeo careers around age four or five, Gilbert said. Bucking horses typically don't start competing in professional shows until they are six or seven years old, due to their bones being less stable when they are young.

Typically, a bull's prime age for rodeo competition is between ages four and nine. Bucking horses, on the other hand, can have a much longer rodeo career, often competing until around age 25, Gilbert said.

After retirement, livestock are often used for breeding future rodeo stock.

One of the rodeo stars competing at the Molalla Buckeroo will be "White Magic" from Diamond "G" Rodeo.

White Magic is a six-year-old white bull who makes his home on a ranch in Toquerville , Utah near Zion National Park when he's not traveling to rodeos.

“Last year, he was up for PBR (Professional Bull Riders) Bull of the Year and he should be again this year,” Gilbert said.

White Magic has a 92 percent career buck off rate, Gilbert said, and hasn't been successfully ridden in 24 straight PBR events.

She said White Magic's genetics, muscular build and personality all combine to make him tough competition for any cowboy.

“He's one of those one in a million bulls that you get that is pretty spectacular,” Gilbert said. “I call him Studmuffin. He just ripples ... There's not an ounce of fat on him and just walks with a lot of confidence. He has a personality all his own.”

White Magic and the rest of the Buckeroo livestock will arrive in Molalla at least a day before the rodeo opens, giving the animals time to stretch their legs, rest, eat and acclimate before the competition, Gilbert said.