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NEWS RELEASE

WILL SWALES WIN ANOTHER?

Calgary – Growing up around horses, it isn't surprising that John Swales of Millarville makes his living training working cow horses and riding them, with considerable success, in competition. The Open Bridle division of the Stampede's Working Cow Horse Classic presented by Tesla Exploration Ltd. in particular, has seen Swales achieve considerable success.

"I've been lucky, I guess," Swales says of his record of seven wins in twelve tries at the Open Bridle win. Although he didn't win Open Bridle last year, Swales did take the Open Hackamore crown. "I'd never won Hackamore before. I'd been Reserve Champion a couple of times. The horse I had last year was really good."

The 37-year old Swales is part of a strong family equine tradition. "Dad and Mom trained jumping horses," he notes, and both his brother Clint and sister Veronica have been strong WCH competitors.

"We have 18 – 20 head in training," Swales says. Most working cow horses get shown for the first time as three-year olds. Four- and five-year olds can be shown either with a snaffle bit or a hackamore. "Once they turn six, they get put into a bridle," Swales explains. When preparing for competition, he says, "They get ridden every day so you know them really well, so you get to know each ones little deals."

The Stampede's Working Cow Horse Classic presented by Tesla Exploration Ltd. continues a tradition of skilled horsemanship dating back to the earliest days of working stock from horseback. Horse-and-rider teams are judged on their authority, discipline and precision in two distinct areas – reined work, or dry work, and cow work, also known as fence work. Reined work, labeled "Western dressage" by some, is based on a predetermined pattern of manoeuvres, including figure-eights, straight runs, sliding stops and 360-degree spins. Cow work, the exciting, action-packed portion of the show, sees the horse-and-rider team first box a steer, then send it at full tilt along the fence, heading it off and turning it both ways, before finally circling it once in each direction in the centre of the arena.

The Stampede's Working Cow Horse Classic presented by Tesla Exploration Ltd. hosts bridle and hackamore divisions for fully-trained horses and four- and five-year-olds, respectively, with open, non-pro and novice designations for various levels of rider experience. Six championships will go up for grabs — Open Bridle, Open Hackamore, Non-Pro Bridle, Limited Open Bridle, Limited Open Hackamore, and Novice Non-Pro Bridle.

Reined work is a most demanding test for both horse and rider. "They have to be listening to you one hundred percent for the reined work, versus the cow work where they're going to do a lot on their own," Swales points out. Some animals are better at one aspect than the other, so success can often depend upon choosing the horse that possesses the best balance of talents.

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

Box 1060, Station M, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2K8 1.800.661.1260 T 403.261.0101 F 403.265.7197 www.calgarystampede.com



Swales says he watches the other riders who go out before him. "I don't know if there's any benefit to it," he shrugs. "Other than you get to see what the cattle are like as a whole – how they're reacting to the horses."

The order for competitors in the first Working Cow Horse Classic presented by Tesla Exploration Ltd. round, held on Friday, July 12th beginning at 11am in the Big Top, is established by a draw. Points earned on the first day establish the order on Day 2 – which begins at 11am in the Big Top on Sunday, July 14th - with the highest-ranked riders and mounts coming out late.

Although everybody wants to start later on Sunday because it means they have a strong points standing, Swales observes that there can be a handicap that comes with it. "A lot of times, the wilder cattle go to the back of the pen, so they come out last."

Although he's had a lot of success in the Working Cow Horse Classic presented by Tesla Exploration Ltd., winning in front of your hometown friends and family never gets old. "It's kind of cool," he admits. "It's the Calgary Stampede. Everybody kind of gears up for it."

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The Stampede will be webcasting all events being held in the Big Top this year. Visit <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/big-top-ustream> to see live streaming of action from the Big Top.

Agrium Western Event Centre

Scheduled for completion before the 2014 10-day Stampede, the Agrium Western Event Centre is a state-of-the-art facility for western events and agriculture education, exhibition and industry in southern Alberta. Designed to form a lasting connection between urban and rural communities, it will host an engaging, globally-focused educational program called Journey 2050, and it will play a central role in making the Calgary Stampede a year-round gathering place. For more information visit <http://corporate.calgarystampede.com/about/park-development/agrium-western-event-centre/>

For more information, please contact:

Megan Gauley
Ag Media Committee Chair
T 403.232.9087
C 587.226.6766
F 403.262.3067
E agmedia@calgarystampede.com

Tracey Foster
Agriculture Program Coordinator
T 403.261.0127
C 403.483.1927
F 403.262.3067
E tfoster@calgarystampede.com

About the Calgary Stampede



As we enter our second century, the Calgary Stampede celebrates the people, the animals, the land, the traditions and the values that make up the unique spirit of the west. The Calgary Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through our world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. Exemplifying the theme We're Greatest Together; we are a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities.

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