

## RTA SETTLES CATTLE FOR TEAM PENNING COMPETITION

Submitted by Cheryl Wegner

Team penners began arriving on Friday afternoon, as the rain was coming down. During the evening I could still here the drops hitting the windows as I tried not to worry about the next day and what it might bring. Ramona Trails Association was once again asked to settle the cattle for this annual event that organizers Greg Wald and Tammy Allen have dubbed March Madness. This rain or shine event attracts team penners from all over California, but many locals participate as well. Team penning involves cutting designated cattle out of a herd by a team of three competitors. Their goal is to move those three particular cows down to the other end of the arena and move them into a small pen in as little time as possible. There's more to it, but that's the gist. Our role as cattle settlers is to keep the cattle bunched at the far end of the arena, then as the team penners cross the timing line, we get out of the arena as quickly as we can, staying out of the penners way. After the penners have completed their run, the settlers then push the released cows back into the herd and the process starts all over again. We go in two at a time. At first our horses can be pretty silly, but they soon get into a groove, seemingly knowing they've got a job to do. But the initial energy can sometimes be more than some horses can handle, which the team penners definitely don't appreciate.

Saturday morning I awoke to no rain, but threatening clouds, and very wet ground. Upon arriving at the rodeo grounds, along with the other settlers that were on for the morning shift, we warmed up alongside the competitors in a very soggy arena. The start of the competition was postponed for an hour while the arena was dragged with a tractor. The day went on really well, with only a few issues. We did get rained on only briefly and were treated with a small rainbow and dramatic clouds with intermittent sunshine.

Sunday brought a glorious day with lots of warm sunshine. The competition began with the kids division. As cattle settlers, we get the benefit of front row seats, and it was fun and exciting to watch those kids, some barely able to keep their little legs in the stirrups. Then came the adults and stiff competition. By one o'clock we were heading home.

For our efforts, RTA received \$500, and kudos from Greg Wald. We did get thank yous from a couple of individuals, which was nice to hear. The whole weekend we were supplied drinks and fed lunch. I did over hear one gal say that the penning goes so much smoother when there are good settlers helping.

So with that, I want to say a very big THANK YOU to all who helped. There were a few of you who ended up staying the duration of the competition when we came up a little short. The 12 hours + you spent in the saddle over the course of the two day competition was really above and beyond, and I am so very thankful to you. All of you made it a fun couple of days and I look forward to next year. Thanks also to Janine Ramirez, Laura Sosa, and Joan Amaral for ground and gate support. You all jumped in to lend a hand.

THANK YOU – THE CATTLE SETTLERS!!!

Bill & Gloria Collins

Cathy Pritchard

Kristine Steinberg  
Rob Schwarz  
Carmen McWay  
Julie Behnke  
Della Stevens  
Janet & Mike Neil  
Lindsey Gwizdak  
Jessica Clark