

Frankie Chesler wins gold in Florida rodeo

Orangeville's Frankie Chesler recently became the first woman winner in the Florida Cattlemens Association Ranch Rodeo and Cowboy Heritage Festival.

The event was held in Kissimmee, Florida. Qualified riders and teams gathered, with all expenses paid, hoping for a chance to ride home a winner. The popular annual event drew huge numbers for the heritage festival action-packed rodeo and ranch-hand replicated events, which served as a charity fundraiser for the Florida Cattlemens Foundation.

The spectators had quite a sampling to choose from, including bronc riding, wild cow milking, team doctoring, team sorting, calf branding, stampede race, colt riding and double mugging classes, as well as a top trophy Ranch Hand Open Class. Plenty of young people attended, just loving every minute, and it was easily seen that horses touch kids in ways that other things cannot.

Chesler, who hails from Okeechobee, Florida, traveled there with her Trinity Ranch team that did not break the top three team finalists. However, the individual Florida Cattlemens Association Ranch Horse Open crowned her as its first ever woman champion. The coveted prize presented was a handmade World Champion Roper ? National Champion Rodeo Rider Rabe Rabon roping saddle, along with the custom made FCA Ranch Open buckle, which she immediately attached to her belt. Chesler was pleased and proud of her quarter horse, Sugarbadger Two, which she affectionately calls Slick, that out performed himself that evening.

Encompassing the Rand Hand Open class, all in a five-minute limit, were the exercises, including a reining pattern of ever reducing sizes and speeds, rollbacks, lead changes, backing, a spin and a slide. Also included was the task of boxing a cow, then chasing it, stopping it and changing its direction from the front and then roping it to boot. Chesler moved the cow off the rail to work it from the center of the arena while only using one hand, which was major plus in points. Trying to be efficient, she quickly completed that portion of the exercise, trying to calculate and prepare for the last task-roping. Then with determination, she cast the rope through the air where it slipped and settled over the head and around the neck of her bovine while her trusty Slick held everything in place all, under the allotted time. Not having much roping experience, she wanted it to be relaxed and it surely seemed that way when it was perfectly executed.

Meanwhile, it was back to the ranch training customer horses, raising cattle and preparing for the upcoming winter season of cutting, sorting and such.

Chesler, who was once ranked 136th in the international show jumping world, walked away from it all several years ago and switched her focus to the western discipline. She recently was engaged to bring out three young jumper prospects that are starting school at her Trinity Ranch.