



WASIQUE HASAN

Before you call the cops on me, let me make it clear that my love is pure. I am just a person who is very fond of all types of animals, even the ones which support Argentina. After exhausting the collection of animal posts on /r/animalphotos, I was looking for other places to satiate my animal curiosity. That was when I stumbled upon a potential goldmine: animal shows.

Not to be confused with animal movies or television shows, I didn't look at "Bambi" or "13 reasons why I go awoo". Just a clarification. Instead, I looked at formal animal shows. The kind where there are judges, and an audience, and where the audience travels thousands of miles to catch a glimpse of their favourite competitors.

To start off, I dipped my toe into the world of cattle shows. What better place to start than the world's cattle central, Texas. The spectacle begins with in-depth interviews with the competitors, some of whom have spent their entire bovine lives preparing for this moment. The stars of the show are surprisingly tight-lipped, preferring to let their handlers do all the talking. On the other hand, the handlers cannot get enough of the attention. One person even boasts of being with his prized possession twelve hours a day. As he brushes the silken fur, you can spot tears in his eyes. The audience is slightly put off by how attached he is to the bull. The handler does not care for what other people think, for his love is pure. Like mine.

Once we finally get into the meat of the event, I am even more confused. During one part of this event, a group of helpless bulls are released in a closed arena and swarms of people charge

towards them with vengeance in their hearts. These people are not just the cattlemen, but the cattlemen and the cattlechildren as well. Tackles are made left and right, but not ones you'd expect. People are charging at the bulls as if it were an (American) football game. Some go straight for the legs, others employ vice-grips right on the necks of the beasts. Others seem to forget the rules of engagement and get on the backs of the broncos for riding them. I'm sure they don't get points for that, but hey, at least it looks cool.

Having had enough of cattle, I move on to man's best friend. Dog shows have much less drama, and you can get straight into the action. From the variety of events that the good boys partake in, I picked the ones that sounded the most interesting. That turned out to be a bad idea, since the first one I picked was a

conformation show. If, like me, you didn't know what that was, it's a show where dogs' appearances are rated based on how well they conform to the standard. Obviously, this triggered me to no end. To think that even in the modern age poor doggies are judged according to what society decides what is and isn't beautiful. Once I had calmed down and had finished calling PITA and Fuzzbeed, I moved on to the next category.

Dog agility competitions were the real deal. There, the four-legged furries get to shed their leashes and blast through obstacle courses as if there are doggy treats at the finish line. The skills on display were amazing. The obstacles included tunnels to go through, bars to jump over, see-saws to play on alone because they have no friends. There were also hoops to jump through, which interestingly enough isn't a metaphor for

anything. Top dogs set blistering times, and you could hardly see them as they raced across the grassy knolls, running from one obstacle to the next. Watching the jumps were the best part, as even tiny doggies jumped many feet in the air to clear the bars easily.

However, not all the competitors were so fortunate. One competitor lost his balance and had an involuntary front-flip while exiting a tunnel. The ensuing disorientation made him miss the start of the next obstacle. For a few seconds, he was stranded in the middle of the field looking utterly lost. He had no clue where to go. During the brief mistake that felt like an eternity, he pondered over the complexities of life and questioned his own existence.

He snapped out of it when his handler called out, and he was back to his agile ways, finishing the course without making himself anxious with such intricate thoughts. Seeing his joy at finally completing the run was cut short when I spotted his owner taking him out back and putting him down. I hated it, but I kind of understand. Competitive dog shows are a dog eat dog world, after all.

The last category that was left to see is titled "World's Ugliest Dog Contest", which is the one I'd win if I were a canine. I am not, unfortunately, and the awards just go to some ugly puppies. They're still good boys, don't worry.

I'm not sure if I learned anything significant from the day I spent loving animals even more. There were plans to watch some cat shows, but I ignored those. They ain't got nothing on my cattle and canines.



*With a heart of ash and a PC of potato, Wasique Hasan could use some help. Send help: [facebook.com/hasique.wasan](https://facebook.com/hasique.wasan)*