



EUnetHorse

HOW TO IMPROVE THE
PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE
OF EQUINE FARMS IN EUROPE?

RESULTS of the EUnetHorse EUROPEAN PROJECT
PHASE 1: IDENTIFICATION of NEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

The European EUnetHorse project has reached the end of its first phase: identifying the needs of equine farmers across Europe to improve their performance and resilience. To achieve this, each partner country (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Switzerland), was asked to carry out around 40 interviews to equine farmers between June and November 2023.

HOW WERE THESE FARMERS SELECTED?

For the purposes of the project, the definition agreed by the partners at European level was that an equine farmer is a professional who breeds or keeps horses while at the same time adds value to the utilized agricultural area. This condition had to be fulfilled at least in 80% of surveyed farmers.

The aim was also to have the widest possible representation of the equine industry throughout interviewed farms including different sectors (racing, sport, leisure, traction, meat and milk production, mediation, etc.), different activities (breeding, boarding, development, training, riding school, logging, etc.), different experience and technical itineraries, etc.

HOW WERE COLLECTED NEEDS PRIORITIZED?

Initially, at national level, a ranking of identified needs was established. Then, a multi-stakeholder national workshop was organized to enrich these results and prioritize them using a point voting method. Each country consulted the prioritized list of needs with its National Advisory Board (NAB) before sharing them at European level.

At European level, each country was able to share its 5 most important needs by Thematic Area (Socio-economics, Equine Health and Welfare and Environmental Sustainability). Finally, nine common priorities were identified, in which each country was able to highlight its specific needs to be met by the EUnetHorse project.

WHO ARE THE EUROPEAN EQUINE FARMERS INTERVIEWED?

To complete phase 1, 305 equine farmers were interviewed across Europe.

LOCATION

- 52 of the farms surveyed are close to a major city
- 18 are close to suburbs
- 135 are in rural areas, of which 84 are close to a village and 40 are isolated
- 15% of the farms are in sensitive areas (areas of a country where special measures may be given to protect the natural habitats which present a high level of vulnerability)



FARM SIZE

- Utilised agricultural area from 1 to 5000 ha, on average 31% of it is composed of permanent meadows
- From 1 to 520 horses per farm, the median is 25, average is 45
- From 1 to 180 births per year and farm, median is 4, average is 10



FARM WORKERS

- There is an average of 5 employees per farm
- 43% are women

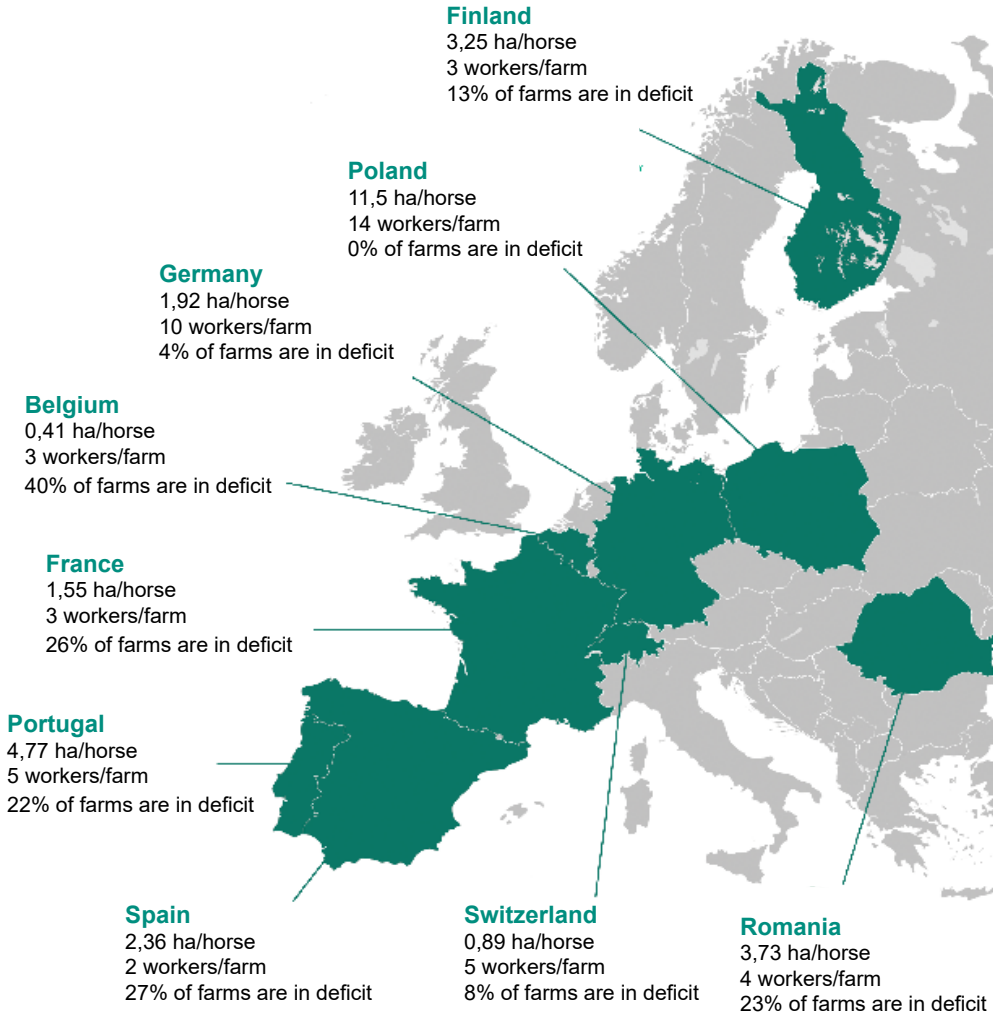


ECONOMIC AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- For 57% of farms, equine activity is their main activity
- Economic objectives: 44% aim to achieve economical balance, 48% aim to make a profit, 8% have no economic objectives
- Economic performance (including salaries): 21% are in deficit, 30% break even, 48% make a profit



Find all the average figures by country:



WHAT COMMON PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AT EUROPEAN LEVEL TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE OF EQUINE FARMS?

During the 4th to 8th of December 4 to 8, 2023, the fifteen partners from the nine countries involved in the EUnetHorse project met at the Agrapôle in Lyon, France, to finalize the first phase of the project. After pooling and discussing data collected in each country, nine priority needs have been identified at European level to which partners will have to provide solutions over the coming months.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND HEALTH ON FARMS

- What practices can be implemented to promote biosecurity measures and prevent emerging diseases?
- How can horse welfare conditions be improved?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FARMS

- How can practices and resource management can be adapted to climate change?
- How can biodiversity be improved while maintaining equine activities?
- How can pastures be managed to face future challenges?

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE OF FARMS

- How can equine farm profitability be improved?
- How can working conditions be improved?

TRANSVERSAL

- How can problems associated with access to agricultural land be solved?
- How can training and knowledge transfer be improved?

MORE INFO

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