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Agroscope

EUnetHorse

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

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

www.eunethorse.eu

WHO ARE THE SWISS FARMERS INTERVIEWED?

In Switzerland, 40 equine farmers were interviewed.

LOCATION

- 13 of the farms surveyed are close to a major city
- 1 are close to suburbs
- 26 are in rural areas, of which 19 are close to a village and 7 are isolated
- 0% are in sensitive areas

FARM SIZE

- Utilised agricultural area from 0,3 to 100 ha, on average 57% of it is composed of permanent meadows
- From 3 to 150 horses per farm, the median is 29, average is 35
- From 1 to 10 births per year on farms, the median is 3, average is 4

FARM WORKERS

- There is an average of 4 employees per farm
- 45% are women

ECONOMIC AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- For 65% of farms, equine activity is their main activity
- Economic objectives: 52.5% aim to achieve economical balance, 40% aim to make a profit, 7.5% have no economic objectives
- Economic performance (including salaries): 12.5% are in deficit, 27.5% break even, 60% make a profit



WHAT NEEDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITIZED TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE IN SWITZERLAND?

In Switzerland, more than 60 needs were identified through interviews and the national workshop. Here are the ones shared with the European partners during the first European Workshop:

ANIMAL WELFARE AND HEALTH ON FARMS

- Introduce compulsory specific training for farmers to allow them to keep horses
- Introduce compulsory training for horse owners
- Need solutions to improve horses' housing conditions even when the space available is limited
- Need solutions to feed horses with tendency to overweight
- Ensure the good quality of self-produced hay and/or purchased hay

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FARMS

- Need solutions for producing hay in periods of drought
- Training on new invasive plants and toxic plants: how to identify them and reduce them
- Need solutions to protect horses and stables against heat, strong wind, heavy rain, hail, etc.
- Need solutions to save water and ensure water availability
- Need solutions for preserving soil health over the long term

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE OF FARMS

- Facilitate the process of obtaining permission to build new facilities for horse housing
- Need support with budgets, economic projections, assessing investment opportunities, etc.
- Farmers with boarding services need support for managing conflicts with horse owners
- Make the profession more attractive to counter labour shortages (missing farm workers)
- Support with time-consuming administrative work: filling in forms, staying up to date with new legislation, etc.

MORE INFO

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