



PROJECT EUnetHorse - EUROPEAN WORKSHOP

May 19, 2025

EUnetHorse project: Fourth European Workshop Held in Portugal to Assess Solutions and Good Practices for the Equine Sector

The [EUnetHorse](#) project, the first European project dedicated to the equine sector, is working on its third phase: Evaluation of Solutions, in order to select the most appropriate ones to overcome the needs of the equine sector identified during the previous working phases. On this occasion, all EUnetHorse partners met in Warsaw (Poland) from the 15-18 of October, 2024, to discuss the assessments of the solutions previously evaluated at national level.

Evaluating Solutions to Strengthen Equine Farm Resilience: Since July 2024, the project's third phase has been underway in the nine participating countries: Belgium, France, Finland, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland. This phase focuses on evaluating solutions and good practices aimed at increasing the resilience of equine farms.

Out of over 400 mature solutions—those ready for on-farm implementation—each partner country assessed around 40 at the national level. These assessments were carried out using a multi-criteria evaluation grid developed within the project, which considers cost-benefit analysis, performance, and resilience (see: <https://eunethorse.eu/resources/D3.1>).

Sharing National Results at the European Level: During the fourth European workshop, held in Santarém, 15 partner organizations—including universities, research institutes, breeders' associations, chambers of agriculture, and technical centers—met alongside equine farmers and experts from the participating countries. Together, they discussed the most relevant national-level assessments related to two key priorities: **climate change adaptation** and **animal health**. After revision and debates, 12 most relevant solutions per priority were selected.

Solutions assessed and debated during the workshop will later be on-farm demonstrated at demo and training days to be organized in all partner countries during **September–October 2025**.

The selected solutions will ultimately contribute to building more **resilient, efficient, and sustainable equine farms**, addressing the project's three core thematic areas: **socio-economic development, animal welfare and health, and environmental sustainability**, while also incorporating important cross-cutting issues.

Exploring Portuguese Excellence in Equine Farming: As part of the workshop, on **Thursday, May 8**, participants had the opportunity to visit two exemplary Portuguese equine farms, offering a deeper understanding of good practices already in use:

(A) Coudelaria João Pedro Rodrigues:

This family-run farm has achieved significant recognition for its Lusitano horses, many of which have received top awards at major breed fairs. Their success lies in a diversified approach, which includes breeding, semen sales, riding lessons, horse boarding, rural tourism, and forestry products like pine and cork. The farm also showcases strong animal welfare practices, such as socializing young foals with older mares and using movable panels to ease weaning. In terms of sustainability, they produce their own hay, use solar panels to reduce external electricity consumption, and pump water using a solar-powered system. Their meadows support rich biodiversity, with uncut flower strips that enhance ecological value. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AmS2HFbFk/>

(B) Casa Cadaval:

One of the oldest Lusitano stud farms on the Iberian Peninsula, Casa Cadaval stands out for its heritage, diversification, and strong identity. Land use is diversified: over 50% is dedicated to agriculture, followed by forestry (20%), wine production (10%), beef production (10%), and horse breeding (less than 10%). Their horse management is fully pasture-based, helping control vegetation naturally. Weaning is gradual, and horses are selected using a simple yet effective scoring system based on temperament and potential. The farm is led by a woman whose leadership has created a deep sense of belonging among the workforce. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1G2ESuRLjq/>

These field visits promote peer-to-peer learning and foster dialogue between farmers and experts. By showcasing proven solutions already implemented in real equine farm settings, they lay the groundwork for broader adoption across Europe.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Noelia Aldai – UPV/EHU
eunethorse@euh.eus
(+34) 945 014501

<https://eunethorse.eu/press-room/>

ABOUT THE EUnetHorse PROJECT

The EUnetHorse project is the first European agricultural research project dedicated to the equine sector, bringing together 9 countries and 15 partners. It focuses on the knowledge transfer through the identification, evaluation, and dissemination of solutions to improve the performance and resilience of equine farms in Europe to face the challenges of tomorrow. To do this, it focuses on 3 thematic areas: the socio-economic performance of farms, the health and well-being of equines and the environmental sustainability of farms.