



« Challenges of 21st century for stakeholders involved in equine care and management? In focus: ageing population »

7th October 2025, Szépalma Foundation, Hungary

The consequences of ageing in horses have been the subject of increasing attention for several years now. What are their needs, the challenges, and what solutions can we strive for to improve their welfare? The event provides an opportunity for all stakeholders - veterinarians, horse owners, researchers and agricultural experts, to share their projects, experiences and ideas. Talks will highlight various aspects and concerns regarding this topic, as well as engage different initiatives and their outcomes. This should result in all parties having a better understanding of the topic.

0845-0900	Welcoming and introduction to the conference day / Üdvözlő fogadás <i>Dr. Sc. ETH Vladimir Milojevic, Dr. Zsolia Kelemen, Sandgrueb and Szépalma Foundation</i>
Session I – Housing and Nutrition	
0900-0925	Challenges and concerns in the horse sector: from housing to welfare - a European approach within the framework of the EUnetHorse project <i>Dipl. Ing. Agr. ETHZ Christa Wyss, Agroscope, Switzerland</i>
0930-1000	The digestive system: nutritional and metabolic challenges in the context of ageing horses, with a focus on their group-keeping practices <i>Prof. Orsolya Korbacska-Kutasi, University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest, Hungary</i>
1005-1035	Horses and slow-feeders: investigating consequences on health and behaviour <i>Dr. Marie Roig-Pons, University of Bern, Switzerland</i>
1035-1050	Coffee break / Kávészünet
Session II – Feeds and Forages	
1050-1120	Exposure of horses to biotoxins and abiotic contaminants from a variety of feed materials and supplementary feeds: (un)detected risk for the horse sector <i>Linn Marie Kwaß, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria</i>
1125-1155	Monitoring of non-structural carbohydrates and endophytes in forages: (un)predictable component with a significant welfare impact for the horse sector <i>Dr. Bajnok Marta, University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest, Hungary</i>
1200-1230	Evaluation of the effect of pasture botanical composition on equine digestion, energy metabolism and health: a multidisciplinary approach as a model <i>PhD Cleo Omphalius, Lab to Field, France</i>
1230-1345	Lunch break / Ebédészünet
Session III – Digestion and Health	
1350-1420	Changes in faecal microbial ecosystem, large intestinal epithelial integrity and inflammation in horses with age: learnings from 2020-2024 and outlook 2025 <i>PhD Samy Julliand, Lab to Field, France</i>
1425-1455	Equine parasite control in ageing horses: effect of selective deworming strategy <i>PD Dr. med. vet. Hubertus Hertzberg, Sandgrueb Foundation, Switzerland</i>
1500-1530	Indicators of mortality risk in ageing horses <i>Dr. Zsolia Kelemen, Szépalma Foundation, Hungary</i>
1530-1545	Coffee break / Kávészünet
Session IV – Roundtable discussion	
1545-1645	“How to promote healthy ageing: the (new) role of animal sanctuaries?” <i>Prof. Jessica Cavalleri, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria</i> <i>Dr.med.vet., DVM, PhD Karina Klein, University of Zürich, Switzerland</i> <i>Prof. Florian Jenner, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria</i> <i>PhD Samy Julliand, Lab to Field, France</i>
1645-1655	Conclusion of the conference day / Összefoglalás és a konferencia lezárása <i>Dr. Sc. ETH Vladimir Milojevic, Dr. Zsolia Kelemen, Sandgrueb and Szépalma Foundation</i>
1700-1800	Guided visit of premises (optional) / Ménesbirtok látogatás (opcionális)
1830	Dinner / Vacsora



CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS IN THE HORSE SECTOR: FROM HOUSING TO WELFARE – A EUROPEAN APPROACH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUnetHorse PROJECT

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SUMMARY

EUnetHorse is the first European agricultural project dedicated to the horse industry. It represents Europe's inaugural initiative, aiming to advancing the equine sector through a co-creative process to generate and exchange knowledge and innovation. The EUnetHorse project was initiated in March 2023 and funded by Horizon Europe. For four years, 15 partners from nine countries - France, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland - are working together to establish a robust European network. The aim of this collaboration is to improve the resilience and sustainability of equine farms.

Objectives and Approach

By creating a multi-stakeholder network, EUnetHorse aims to disseminate scientific knowledge and practical expertise in order to improve the resilience and performance of Equine farms. The members of EUnetHorse are convinced that every country can benefit from the knowledge of its neighbours.

The project's primary objectives are to:

Enhance Socio-Economic Performance: Develop and disseminate practices that improve the profitability and sustainability of equine operations.

Improve Animal Welfare and Health: Implement strategies that ensure health and well-being of equines, aligning with contemporary welfare standards.

Promote Environmental Sustainability: Adopt practices that reduce the ecological footprint of equine farming.

The EUnetHorse project is set up in several phases in order to achieve the above mentioned objectives:



Identification of needs: The first phase of the EUnethHorse project involved identifying the needs of Equine farmers. To this end, in each of the partner countries, 40 managers of equine farms, relating to almost all areas of equine industry, were interviewed. In December 2023, the needs of the nine member countries were compiled, resulting in the identification of 72 priority needs for the horse industry at European level.

Identification of Solutions: Over 1,000 potential solutions that might meet the beforehand collected needs were gathered. These solutions may include technological innovations, management practices (best practices), policy recommendations etc.

Evaluation and Adaptation of Solutions: Experts evaluate the quality, effectiveness and feasibility of the solutions. This identification of needs and the provision of solutions always takes place in an exchange between the national and European levels, as well as between practitioners and expert groups in order to select the best solutions, which will be passed on to horse farm managers.

Dissemination and Training: During exchange activities like workshops, demonstration- and training days and cross visits, the solutions and best practices are presented and discussed with equine farmers and experts in each country.

Exchange of knowledge

The aim of this project is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, support innovation and promote collaboration among equine farmers and diverse stakeholders including breeders, advisors, trainers, researchers, policymakers, and industry representatives. The solutions, best practices, technical sheets, online tools etc. will be available to all interested parties across national borders.

For more information, visit the official project website: <https://eunethorse.eu>

Keywords: European project, Resilience of equine farms, Exchange of knowledge, Animal welfare, Climate change

References:

<https://eunethorse.eu>

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<https://www.ifce.fr/ifce/project-eunethorse-plus-de-1000-solutions-identifiees-au-niveau-europeen/>