



EAAP 2015 – Horse Commission Session 26 and 33

“Innovation and research for developing the horse sector – Equine practice in Science.”

September 2nd, 2015 Warsaw, Poland

Joint Session EAAP and European Horse Network (EHN)

This joint symposium was supposed to have taken place last year in Copenhagen, and it was programmed with the past president Nicoletta Miraglia. Due to the Equestrian games and other issues, it was postponed for this year in Warsaw. It was a relatively easy symposium to organize, with all the cooperation of the involved. Its main purposes, as I understood them, were to gather the HC and the EHN in a future fruitful cooperation, and to start filling in the gap between science and practice, and to find common ground for getting funds for research.

In fact, equine (equidae) research that has been carried out in the several European countries, and world wide, in the several fields of expertise is extremely relevant, and several results are of highly important interest to final stakeholders. However, the message does not seem to pass to them, with some exceptions, like in the nutritional and breeding areas, mainly related to sport horses. It is also important to remember that horses worldwide are used not only for sports. Although sport may bring in a big amount of economical output, leisure riding is probably one neglected area of high importance both economically and socially. Human-horse relations are, in my opinion, a key point to get the message out.

Equine production is, in my opinion, within the current challenges of animal production, one of the most stimulating animal production in this upcoming context. Equines produce a great amount of different products for human consumption.

The use of horses in Sports is a highly developed industry that involves great economic transactions from production to end-users; therapeutic use of horses has been shown to be of great importance and with proved results; their use as company and leisure animals, allowing the urban communities to get in touch with the rural, contributing to rural development; horses are a valuable tool for maintaining the rural landscape and controlling shrub encroachment; Equines are becoming more and more used in sustainable agricultural systems, and in urban areas as a work force. Animal traction using equines (horses, donkeys and mules) is an uprising production niche. Besides this, they still can be produced for milk and meat production, both of these products have interesting nutritional characteristics for humans. The economic, and agricultural impact of horse production is somewhat an unexplored issue. The few numbers that exist indicate a worldwide sector with great influence.

It is important that research on the equine sector is correlated to the end-use that these animals have. In our opinion, horses play and will continue to play a major role in innovation in agriculture.

It is up to us, to make sure that this message gets out to the right people. Basically, we need LOBBYING! The EAAP is an excellent platform to do that. The fact that, within the European Federation of Animal Science, horses are considered an independent commission, like cattle or pigs, is of high importance. We should take this into advantage. Horses are on the negotiations table, side by side with other production species. But we need to prove that horses (equidae) are species to target, and

are not only a "kids play" when it comes to production. our sector has a huge economical, social, and production importance. We need to demonstrate that. Only then we can do both: get science into practice, and put equine on the international funding agenda. For that, we need to market ourselves: **MARKETING** would be another keyword.

Ana Sofia Santos
President of the Horse Commission, EAAP

Chair part 1: Rhys Evans and Françoise Clement

Theatre presentations

1. Equine Practice into science – what does this mean? – *Miraglia, N. (Invited speaker)*
2. Development of Horse Industry – *Clément, F. (Invited speaker)*
3. Innovation and research in Equine Science and practice – *Korpa, V. (Invited speaker)*
Saastamoinen M., Rantamäki-Lathinen L.
4. Equi-ressources: Keys to understanding the job market's dynamic in the French horse industry – *Doaré, S.*
5. Improving horse businesses by introducing the lean production process model – an exploratory study - *Öwall, J., Herlin, A.*

Chair part 2: Anna Stojanowska and Dorota Lewczuk

Theatre presentations

1. Horses, Humans, and life in the 21st century: new challenges, new opportunities –*Evans, R. (Invited speaker)*
2. How to evaluate the welfare of racing and sport horses? –*Minero, M. (Invited speaker)*
3. Equitation science: a research-based approach to improved understanding of horse perspective. –*Wickens, C.L. (Invited speaker)*
4. Horse purchases, horse husbandry and riding schools: key quality demands of “tomorrow’s customer” – *Wiegand K., Ikinge, C., Spiller A.*
5. Research funding in Norway/Sweden – *Johansson, S. (Invited speaker)*
6. The French network for research in animal production. Analysis of European funding for equine research (today and future). – *Macherez, F. (Invited speaker)*

Poster presentations

1. Equine welfare assessment and feedback. – *Viksten, S.M.*
2. The analysis of differentially methylated regions between equine sarcoids and healthy skin. – *Semik, E., Zqbek, T., Fornal A., Gurgul A., Szmatoła T., Zukowski K., Wnuk M., Bugno-Poniwierska M.*
3. The application of a CGH technique to analyse equine sarcoids . – *Pawlina, K., Gurgul A., Klukowska-Rötzler J., Koch C., Bugno-Poniwierska M.*
4. Influence of relaxing massage on emotional state in Arabian race horses – *Kowalik, S., Janszarek I., Kedsierski W., Stachurska A., Wilk I.*

ROUND TABLE/PANEL DISCUSSION

“How to get more Horse research funding at both national and European level?”

Panel:

Rhys Evans, Michele Minero, Carissa Wickens, Francoise Macherez, Nicoletta Miraglia,
Francoise Clément, Markku Saastamoinen, Sylvie Doaré

Moderator:

Stefan Johansson

Questions on the screen

- **Is there a definition of the Horse role in the society?**
- **Is there understanding of the importance and the need about Horse research?**
- **Which are the main projects/topics to be fund? Health, welfare, vet research, societal challenges?**
- **Needs from the industry! What to do to strengthen the dialogue between researchers and the industry?**
- **Research resources! How can we strengthen the dialogue between different research teams and find new partnerships but also between different countries to attract funding from new levels?**
- **How to learn from each other?**
- **Find best cases! Create partnerships with other animal species? Arenas for benchmarking?**

Summary

Thinking of how to define the role of the horse in the society. Maybe there shouldn't be a certain definition. Maybe that creates the picture of the horse in society too narrow. The horse should be considered in a larger context (research funding, acceptance by the society) in the society and animal production. It is important to approve the importance of the horse and the whole horse sector. Welfare issues and environmental impacts are important to the image of the horse sector.

Requests from practice and professionals must be communicated to the industry, to the researchers and to creators of education at universities and vocational schools so that products, activities and educations meet actual needs.

Strategy of marketing must change. In companies, the focus must be moved from the horse towards the consumer/customer. The values in a company are of course horses and facilities but there must be a better awareness of how to identify/create value in a customer perspective. Which are the needs, quality aspects as o. And, what can the horse sector and horse researchers/universities offer.

Different clients have different needs. The sector has to be customer/client orientated and find new activities. In different countries there are different, but also similar innovations. “Mad” people asking for strange activities might not be that “mad”.

Lots of work is going on about new routines/guidelines and new equipment/tools. As a parallel there must, connected to that work, be an ongoing process on how to ensure the horse welfare.

The horse is a key player in rural development. The horse and human must stay in balance. The research must be sustainable and interdisciplinary and the results must be communicated in a clear, understandable and efficient way.

There must be more interdisciplinary activities such as joint/interdisciplinary sessions at scientific conferences.

Research should promote and collaborate about innovations and new research areas. New techniques from either research or industry must be well approved in the field of practice before taken into use. The acceptance from the practitioners will be more successful if the product/service is reliable in practice.

To find funding you must ask; what can I offer you, not: what can you offer me.

If you, in 2030, tell the story of success there are two main chapters:

- How did it happen?
- Who made it happen?

Catch the ball!!

Take home messages

- Be careful so that the questions of horse research and innovation not fall into “gaps” between politicians, universities, funders and so on.
- Lobbying is crucial.
- Networking is crucial.
- Be brave.
- Think “outside the box”.
- Think “what can I offer”.
- Talk to the industry and to the researchers.
- Go together with other species into “animal production”.
- Dissemination is needed. Knowledge must be transferred in a clear, understandable and efficient way.

STEFAN JOHANSSON ENDED A VERY INTERESTING AND SUCCESSFUL DAY WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED!

Minutes were taken by Anna-Lena Holgersson, 1st secretary EAAP Horse Commission