

28 November 2023 - EHN Webinar on Equine Workforce

37 participants attended the Webinar

Welcome by Mark Wentein, Chairman of the European Horse Network

The entire equine industry is struggling to employ a new workforce, whatever the activities, from breeding and racing/sport to veterinary professionals.

The industry offers many possibilities but is considered as hard work with important costs. Therefore the recruitment is becoming more and more difficult over the years and the business model for breeding is less valuable.

However, some initiatives and investments that could be developed and copied are bringing solutions.

Mark Wentein gave the floor to the moderator: **Professor Dirk Winter from the Department Dean Equine Management at Neuringen-Geislingen University.**

EHN estimates that the horse sector in Europe represents around 400 000 full time jobs equivalent.

These are also quite often in regions where there is limited rural employment in other sectors.

It has been a sector where employment was growing for many years but it has slowed and is now critical

The Webinar intends to understand why and is presenting positive initiatives that have supported and maintained recruitments in many areas.

- ***Workforce figures from the recent Impact study of the equine industry in Finland – Minna Peltonen, Team Operations Developer, Equestrian Federation of Finland and Lumi Drozzin, Specialist Equine Industry & Organic Farming at MTK in Finland***

15000 jobs in the equine industry in Finland with 72000 horse, equivalent to the Tourism industry in Lapland. The impact study was made to show the benefits of this industry on young people activities, mental health and agricultural long term investments. It seems therefore essential to facilitate the access and the development of this industry.

- ***Are we lacking Equine vets? – Dr. Lucy Grieve, Vice President of FEEVA***

The industry is lacking experienced vets:

British survey – 50% struggling to recruit new vets. Reasons for leaving the job: family and salary

FVE survey – 328 500 vets in EU – 21% working with equines – 65% are women

90% are stressed – 23% depression, burn out, exhaustion

Challenges: clients have more difficulties to pay, increase in medical costs

- ***Label on wellbeing at work and good practices, Equures – Emma Humbert, Horse Council of Normandy***

Latest studies to recruit in France were reflecting problems such as: lack of respect for work/life balance with little support from managers and lack of security in the industry. The decision to create a tool for professionals was taken to improve the conditions.

Equures is a 3 years certification with 3 levels.

The label is just starting and possible professionals certified in December. The ambition is to promote and possibly use the label outside France.

- ***British and International Grooms Associations - Lucy Katan, founder and Executive Director***

Some situations are qualified as modern slavery, abuse of powers and exploitation of the passion of young people for the horses. The perception of our industry is bad although horseracing stays at a convenient level but the situation must change.

We must “clean up” the industry! A Code of Good Employment was promoted and employers should sign if they respect a list of requirements (written contracts, minimum wages, supply pensions, safe workplaces).

National Equestrian Federations must work towards such obligations.

- ***Equi-ressources – Marie Morin, IFCE***

Publications of jobs in the industry for employers and job seekers, Equi-ressources, created in 2007, is managed by IFCE and Hippolia. It also provides information on careers and training.

More than 3700 job offers published in 2022 and 1218 candidates found a job thanks to the platform.

132 International job offers published in 2022.

- ***Trotting College in Wången in Sweden - Håkan Karlsson, CEO at Wången***

In 1996 Wången became the national centre of education and development for the Swedish harness racing business. It welcomes around 200 students per year.

From 1996 to 2022 - 150 million SEK have been invested in Wångens facilities in order to develop the training of people in the equine industry and provide workforce.

Education – Secondary School - Three year programme:

 Harness racing– lad drivers

 Icelandic horse – grooms

Bachelor in Equine Science in cooperation with SLU- Swedish Agricultural University

- Harness racing

-Icelandic horse, Instructor level