



The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the equine industry and the necessary adaptations

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The Covid-19 pandemic led to various consequences, especially on financial and work conditions. Adaptations have been made to comply with sanitary protocols, the use of IT tools, teleworking, partial or total unemployment, deferral of charges and credit and closure of businesses.

Today, to revitalise the sector, the European equine industry is focussed on recovery strategies, mainly based on communication and, innovative development.

The main needs rely on visibility and communication, sanitary materials, and financial aids.

Covid-19 led to:

- The shutdown of teaching, training, competitions, events, touristic activities, renting of infrastructures, trade and sales (including agricultural services),
- A drop in demand for horse boarding and for the activities of users of working equids,
- Horse racing was stopped in nearly the whole world. In EU, only Sweden continued to organise races,
- The lockdown of retail betting activities on horseracing stopped potential benefits that are returned to the organisers of racing in many European countries,
- Treasury difficulties because of the drop of revenue, business downturn, partial or total unemployment, late and unpaid invoices, frozen allowances, and closure of business. *According to a survey made by Hippolia, French Equine Industry Cluster, recovery of the shortfall seems to be unattainable for 68.8% of interviewees.*
- All equine competitions were stopped. The loss in Sport horses amounts to € 400 million.
- A decrease in the trade of horses since people could not travel to try potential horses. Trade was reduced considerably.
- Heavy restrictions on the transport of horses by road and air. Still today and despite the relaxation of certain precautions, air travel for horses (and their grooms) is heavily restricted.

- The lockdown has prevented owners from taking care correctly of their horses. Farriers, vets, and dental technicians could not always deliver services, preventing and treating disease conditions. So, the risks of animal welfare and abandonment have increased.

Immediate and long-term losses:

- Between 35% of revenue for riders, sellers, and gallopers' trainers, to 80% for equestrian establishment and trotters' trainers.
- Tourism sector, for instance the Bruges' carriages lost 600 000€ of revenue between March and June 2020.
- In the equine shipping industry, revenue drops of up to 90%
- The Horse feed Industry has a drop of sales (April-May-June) between 20 and 30% - 10 to 15% drop for July 2019
- FNRS (Equestrian centres in the Netherlands) valued the losses for the breeding sector over the 3 next years at about €13,3 million.
- The Equine industry in Belgium reported a total loss of more than €5 million in turnover
- The UK National Equine Welfare Council conducted a survey on the impact of the pandemic on Equine Rescue Organisations showing that over 83% of rescue centres reported a negative impact on fundraising, with more than half reporting a reduction in income of over 50%.

Ongoing necessary adaptations:

- Horseracing and Equestrian competition have resumed but without public attendance (or with very limited crowds). It means a clear reduction of incomes for the whole equine industry

Identified needs and demands:

- **Be heard - visibility and communication,**
- **legal adaptation on future legislations and policies, such as European Animal Health Law**
- **Value the green assets of Equines and ease the access to more opportunities in the future European Green Deal strategy,**
- **National and regional financial support where possible,**
- **European recovery plan for tourism should bear in mind the working equids touristic sector,**
- **inclusion of equines in the European Agriculture policy as they can play a key role on sustainable agriculture.**
- **Statutory funding of horseracing from betting thereon**

List of documents and surveys collected by EHN to measure the impact of the crisis:

- *Economic impact of Irish Sport Horse*
- *European Equestrian Federation - Actions taken to prevent the further spread of the Coronavirus*
- *European Equestrian Federation - Future of the equestrian sport in the aftermath of the pandemic*
- *Federation of Dutch Equestrian Centres - Figures of the impact of the crisis in the Netherlands*
- *French Equine Institute (IFCE) - Economic impacts of covid-19 on the equine sector*
- *Hippolia (FR) - Survey of the impact of the covid-19 on companies in the equine sector*
- *Belgian Royal Federation of Equestrian Sports - Analysis of the covid-19 impacts*
- *World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses - Survey conducted on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the WBFSH studbooks / sport horse breeding industry*
- *FEEVA – European Federation of Equine Veterinarians - Impact COVID on the veterinary profession and welfare of animals*
- *EMHF - European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation – Survey of member countries on pandemic’s impact*
- *Results survey – The economic impact of Covid-19 on the Belgian Horse Industry – October 2020*