



## **Contribution of the European Horse Network (EHN) to the Upcoming Proposal on European Agricultural Statistics**

### **Reintegrating Equines into European Agricultural Statistics: A Strong demand from the European Equine Sector**

The European Horse Network (EHN), which brings together 34 organisations representing all equine activities across Europe, welcomes the call for contributions launched by the European Commission to define new rules for agricultural data collection for the period 2030–2039.

**For stakeholders in the sector, this upcoming regulation represents an opportunity to reintegrate equines into the list of livestock variables to be collected by Member States.** Since the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2018/1091, equines have been excluded from this list.

Through this contribution, the EHN wishes to draw the Commission's attention to the significant long-term risk of losing knowledge and monitoring of equines within the European Union if they are not reintroduced into European agricultural statistics.

Since 2018, the equine sector has argued that this exclusion runs counter to the objectives of Regulation 2018/1091, which aims to “inform decision-making with up-to-date data” (Recital 3) and to “provide the statistical knowledge base necessary for the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of relevant policies” related to agricultural holdings. The Commission particularly seeks the data needed to monitor the CAP, “including rural development measures, as well as Union policies on the environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, land use, and certain sustainable development goals” (Recital 2).

In this regard, the EHN would like to remind the Commission that **equine animals are included in several EU agricultural legislation**, including the Animal Breeding Regulation, and the Animal Health Law, and the legislation on animal transport which is currently under revision. Furthermore, equine activities can be included in the current CAP. Acquiring data on horses would then improve the monitoring of the CAP and its value for this sector. It would also help to ensure the welfare of the horses and good sanitary conditions for the sector, aiming to provide a safe intra-Community trade in equidae. With a view to the effective implementation of One Health, having equine statistics available would be useful, especially when zoonoses are transmissible from one species to another.

**Equines are agricultural animals, raised on agricultural land.** Even though they are not always bred for their meat, they can be reintroduced in the food chain and contribute to other productions (draft power, fertilisers, etc.). In any case, their breeding constitutes an agricultural activity, notably in terms of pasture management, manure management, and biodiversity preservation. In this respect, the full range of equine and equestrian activities (training, sport, racing) adds value to breeding especially thanks to the positive feedback to breeding organisations (performances).

**The presence of equidae has an important role to play in the “greening” of agriculture and in the development of rural areas as it provides economic activity in the most remote regions of our countries.** A good knowledge and a monitoring of their presence may be decisive in bringing European efforts for environmental preservation to the fore, especially in the context of the “New Green Deal” and the objectives of the EU in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Better understanding of the role of equines on farms could lead to the development of innovative policies and contribute to achieving the Union’s agricultural objectives. Accurate knowledge and a relevant monitoring of their presence could prove crucial in highlighting European efforts in environmental preservation.

In addition, green tourism is flourishing everywhere in Europe. Vacationers are always looking for new ways to discover countries and to feel closer to nature. Horse trekking is a good way to achieve this objective and seduce new tourists every year, actively contributing to the development of a tourism less harmful for the environment.

**In light of the above, the EHN calls for the reintegration of equines into agricultural data collection by Member States, to fully recognise their agricultural role and the environmental services they provide.** Equines represent an asset for the transition towards a more sustainable Common Agricultural Policy. A harmonised census of their population across all Member States would undoubtedly strengthen their positive contribution to the future of European agriculture.

The European Horse Network (EHN) is a non-profit network of stakeholders acting at a World European-, National- or Regional-level within the European horse, pony, donkey and welfare-sector. The welfare of equines is paramount for EHN.

<https://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu/>

**Key figures on the European equine industry :**

- 100+ billion euros a year economic impact
- 400 000 full-time equivalent jobs provided by the sector
- 6 million or more horses in Europe
- 6 million hectares of permanent grassland given over to Equestrian horse grazing