

# HORSE PRODUCTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS: goals, perspectives and key challenges of the Horse Commission Working Group in Socio-Economy



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# 1) Context of the working group creation





# The development and transformation of the European horse industry

## ❑ The evolution of horses in the history of mankind:

The use of horse power (agriculture, transportation, military) -> recreation, leisure, sport (+ racing, meat, work)

## ❑ A global growth of the horse industry:

Horses in Europe: at least 6 million

Horse riders in Europe: at least 6,2 million, growth of 5% a year

International events: have more than tripled over the last 10 years

## ❑ Particular characteristics of the horse industry:

A lot of amateurs

A problem of low profitability

*Sources : EU Equus, 2001, European horse network, 2007*





# The impact of the horse industry

## Economic significance:

400 000 full time jobs equivalent

## Environmental contribution:

Horse grazing and feed production: at least and 6 million ha  
Complementarity with cattle or sheep

## Rural dynamism:

Farmer diversification, horse use in modern agriculture and forestry, horse feed production...

Horse related revenues = 4% of the total agricultural revenues

## Social importance:

Horse riding, riding for the disabled, social links creation...

*Sources : EU Equus, 2001, European horse network, 2007*





# The recent rise of interest and studies devoted to horses

## **A lack of information:**

- Little is known about the horse industry and its development
  - Few studies
- Low quality or lack of statistics



## **An increasing interest:**

Multiplication of studies devoted to socio-economic aspects of the horse industry





# The Horse Commission Working Group in Socio-Economy

**Creation during the 2010 EAAP conference**

**Goals:** to share ideas and experience, to think about topics of interest for research and development, to build common projects...



**Today : 29 members (and we hope more soon!)**

England: 1

Italy: 1

Finland: 10

Norway: 1

France: 11

Sweden: 2

Germany: 2

USA: 1





## **2) An overview of current members' research subjects**





## Sociological approaches

**Analysis of sociological evolutions or people attitudes:**

- Feminization**
- Social status of horses in history and in the society**
- Relation to the animal**
- Conflict or co-operation around horses**
- Actor profiles and behaviors: breeders, instructors, buyers, consumers...**
- ...**







## Economic aspects

**Study of different segments of the horse industry:**

- Racing and betting -> high incomes**
- Breeding : a need for support in several countries**
- Sports and leisure : a growing sector with a lot of amateurs**
- Equine tourism: a significant growth but a need for studies and promotion**





## Rural development

- ❑ **Multi-purpose uses -> importance in land occupation and management**
- ❑ **Restructuration of the peri-urban countryside**
- ❑ **Contribution to agriculture diversification and multifunctional development : horse livery, equine services, agritourism...**
- ❑ **Maintenance of relationships between urban citizens and cultural rural life**
- ❑ **Conflicts over land use with other users in suburban areas**





## Data collection

- ❑ **An important key challenge**
- ❑ **Data : number and localization of Equine, economic information...**
- ❑ **Example in France :**
  - **an observatory gathers data, completes it with surveys and transmits it through publications and databases**
  - **A network (REFErences) which is collecting technico-economic references in farms of the horse industry**





### **3) Goals and prospects of the group**





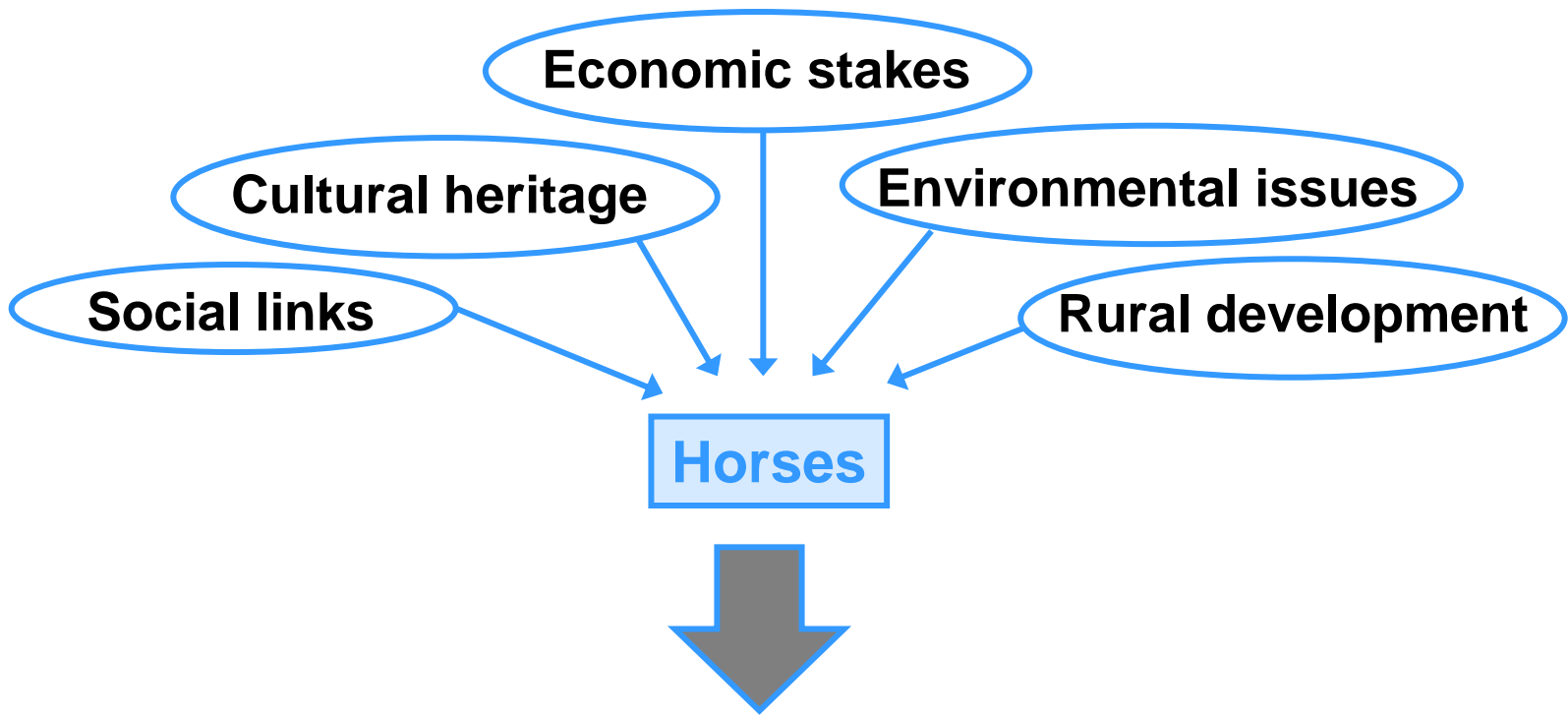
## Working group aims

- To create links between people around the world who are working on the horse industry socio-economy
- To think about relevant areas for future research and collaboration :
  - Demand characteristics and determinants
  - Equine tourism growth
  - The impact of the horse industry on the territory
  - ...
- To improve data collection and sharing





# Conclusion



**The importance of studies and joint actions to promote sustainable development**





***To join the group, tell us about your work or just give us a name of someone working on these subjects, please email me at [vialc@supagro.inra.fr](mailto:vialc@supagro.inra.fr)***

***Thank you for your attention !***

