



Bern University  
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## Horse breeding in Europe – Quo vadis?

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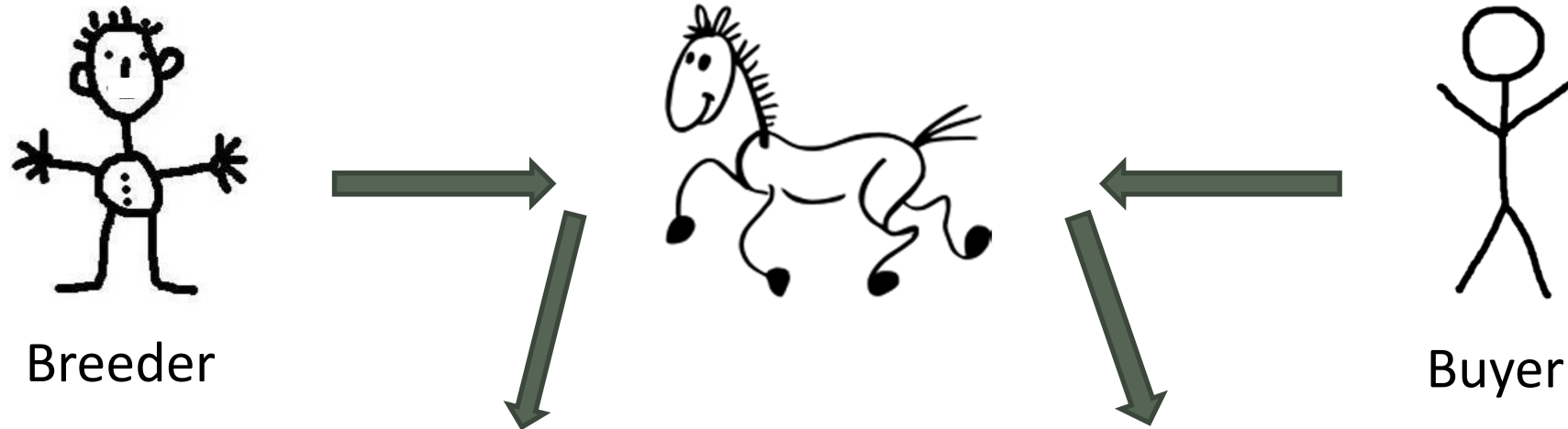
# The role of horses in society is changing

- ▶ Sport and performance are less important
- ▶ Number of “wild riders” is increasing
- ▶ Horse is partner and companion



The current trend strongly influences the future of saddle horse breeding in Europe

# System: Horse market



Breeder

Buyer

Specific characteristics:

- Jumping ability
- colour
- Social behaviour etc.



Specific wishes and expectations:

- Jumping ability
- colour
- Social behaviour etc.



Who is the horse buyer of today and tomorrow?



# The horse buyer

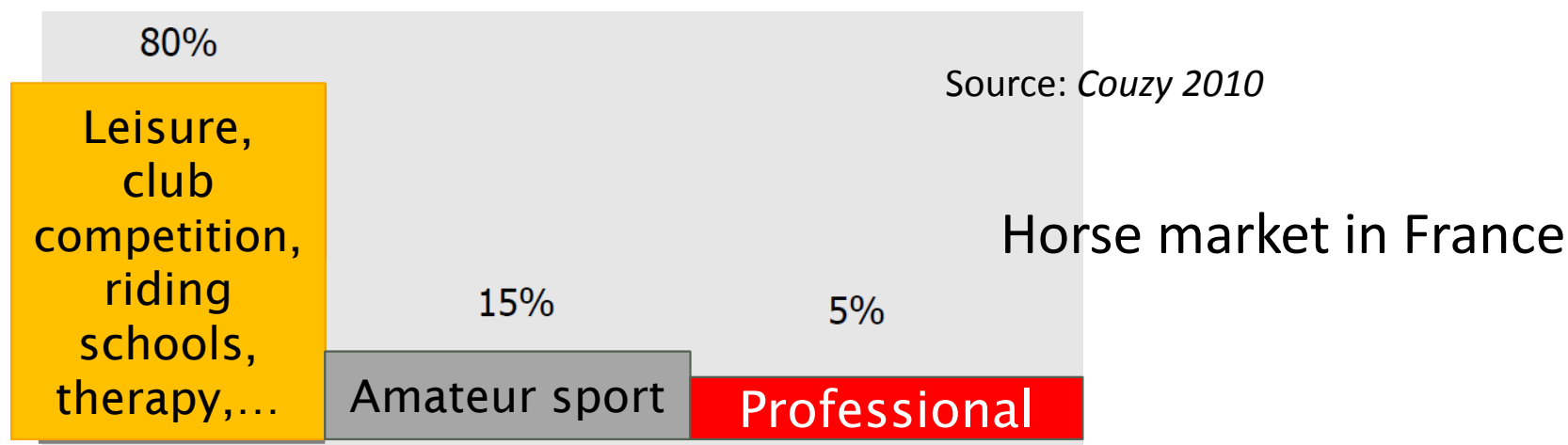
- Horse owners...
  - are female
  - are young (30 or younger)
  - spend 10 to 18h per week in the stable
- ride because of their love for animals and nature
- see the horse as a partner, companion, family member



(Sources: bbw Studie Wirtschaftsfaktor Pferd 2014, Adams et al. 2013; Moreau Grefe und Pickel Chevalier 2013; Kolstrup et al. 2013; Münch 2013; Ikinge et al. 2013; Flierl 2012; Reitsportstudie 2012; AHP 2011; Gille et al. 2011; Couzy 2010; Cofichev 2009)

# Future horse market

- The number of horses in the leisure sector is high and still rising (*bbw Studie Wirtschaftsfaktor Pferd 2014, Wägeli et al. 2014, HSI 2013, Réseau REFERENCEs 2011, Couzy 2010*)
- Interior/social behaviour of the horse will be more important (*Mutti 2013, Flierl 2012, Gille und Spiller 2013, Teegen et al. 2008*)



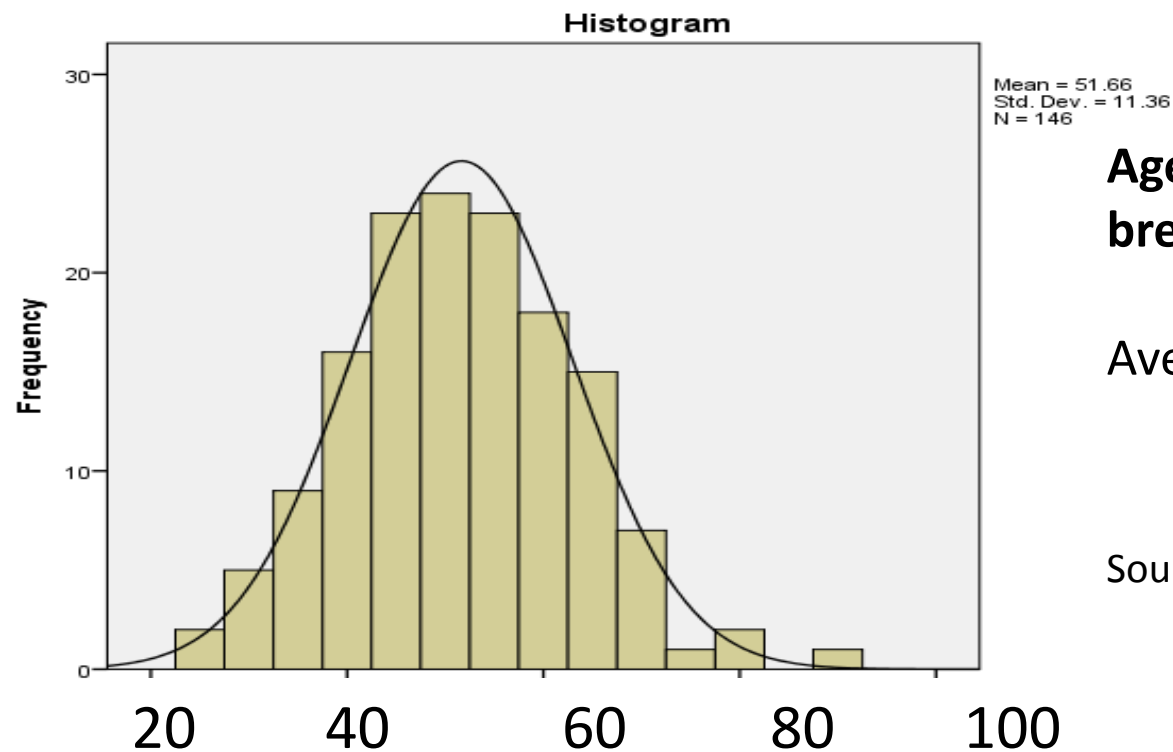
**ca. 30% of horse owners are in amateur or professional horse sport** (*Wägeli et al. 2014*)

Who is the horse breeder of today and tomorrow?



# The horse breeder

- ▶ Mostly men
- ▶ Age of breeders is rather high
- ▶ (*Wägeli et al. 2013; Corbally et al. 2012; Réseau REFERENCEs 2008*)



## Age of Swiss sport horse breeders

Average age: 51,7 yrs

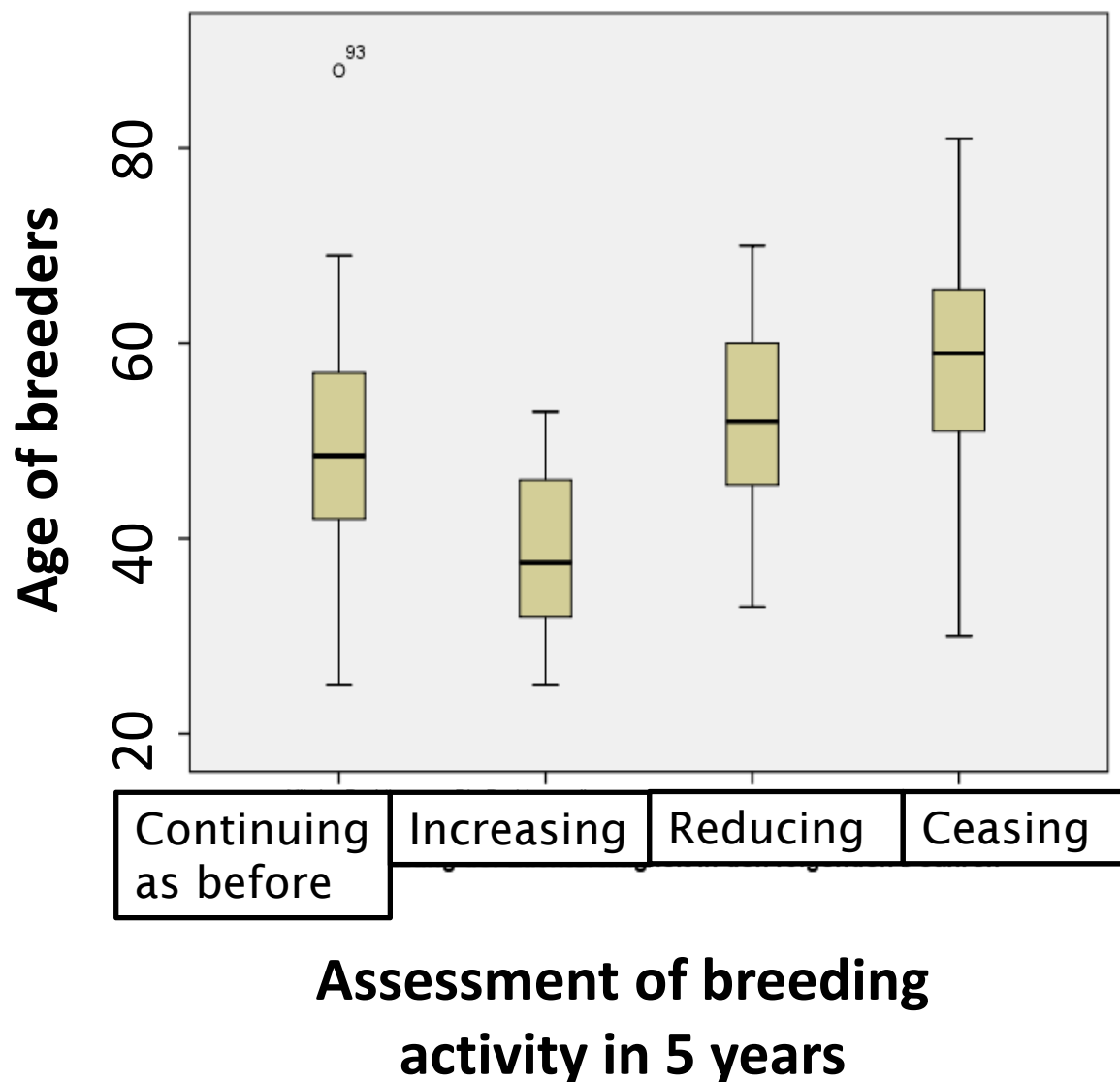
Source: *Wägeli et al. 2013*

- ▶ **Sign. age difference between male and female breeders**



## Future breeding activity

- Sign. correlation of age and future breeding activity
- 51,1% have no successor
- A third of them intend to stop breeding
- Sign. correlation of age and produced foals in the last five years



# Challenges for breeders

- Horse = Confidence good
- Need for information before buying a horse
- Important characteristics (interior, social behaviour) often not visible



Need for instruments to measure interior, social behaviour etc. (ex. behaviour test)



Increasing importance of the role of opinion leaders and counsellors in the buying process

# Trust is the first step

Experiences of horse owners are a benchmark.  
Image of a horse breed and a breeder is important.

 Creating transparency

 Raising credibility

 Building trust on a long-term basis

# New challenges for breeding associations

- Structural change of European breeders is to be expected
- Most of future breeders will not stem from traditional breeder families

## **Possible consequences:**

- Loss of successful mare lines?
- Loss of know-how?
- Loss of professionalism?



# Opening new paths...

...to ensure sustainable & successful horse breeding in Europe:

- ▶ **Young breeder and newcomer programs** are necessary
- ▶ **Education system** for young breeders and newcomers



**Practicing succession policy**

# Horse breeding in Europe:



**face the challenges.**

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