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Sport horse breeding and agriculture: the end of a relationship?



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Introduction

- ▶ Historically, Swiss horse breeding is steeped in agriculture
- ▶ Horse breeding – of Freiburger in particular – is financially supported by the government

2013: Swiss government cut funding for stud horse performance tests (exception: Freiburger)

- ▶ Additional cuts are to be expected in the coming years



Research issue



The argumentation of the Swiss government:

Sport horse breeding is not directly related to agriculture.

- ▶ Analysis of the relation between sport horse breeding and agriculture in Switzerland
 - ▶ Structural aspects
 - ▶ Financial aspects

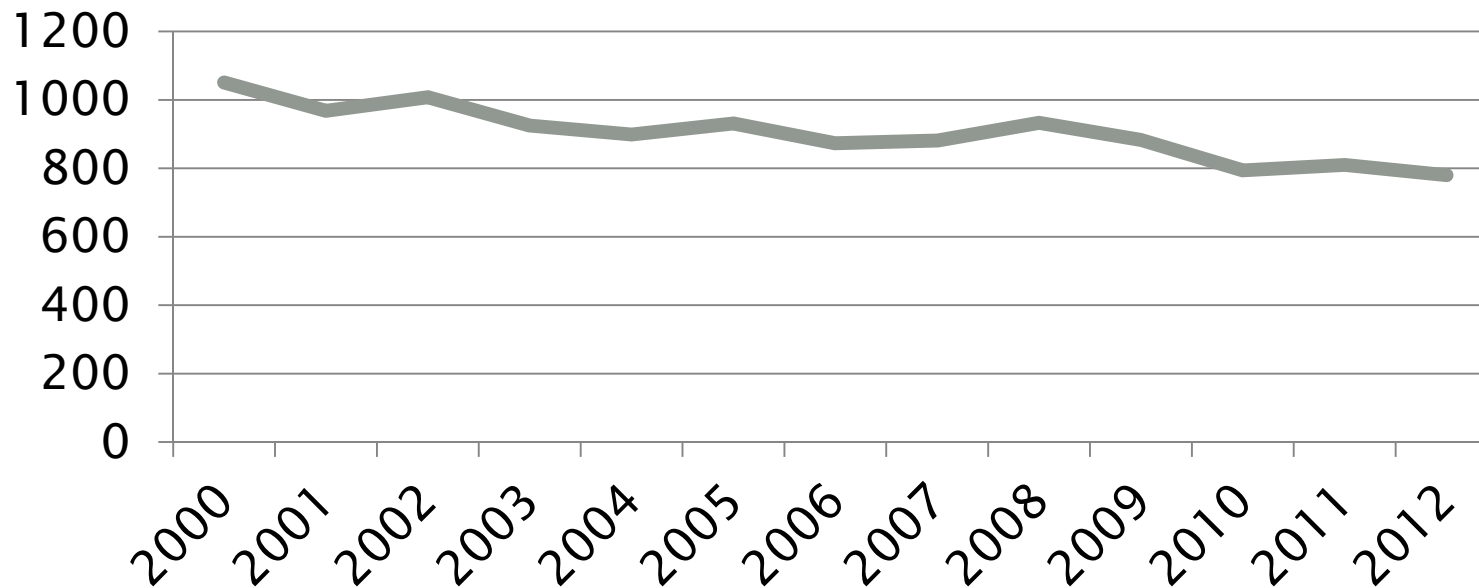


Background

- ▶ Swiss horse population: ca. 100,000
- ▶ Swiss sport horse population: 15,000
- ▶ Birth rate is sinking:



Birth rate of Swiss Sport Horses



Source: *Swiss Sport Horse Breeding Federation ZVCH 2013*



Method

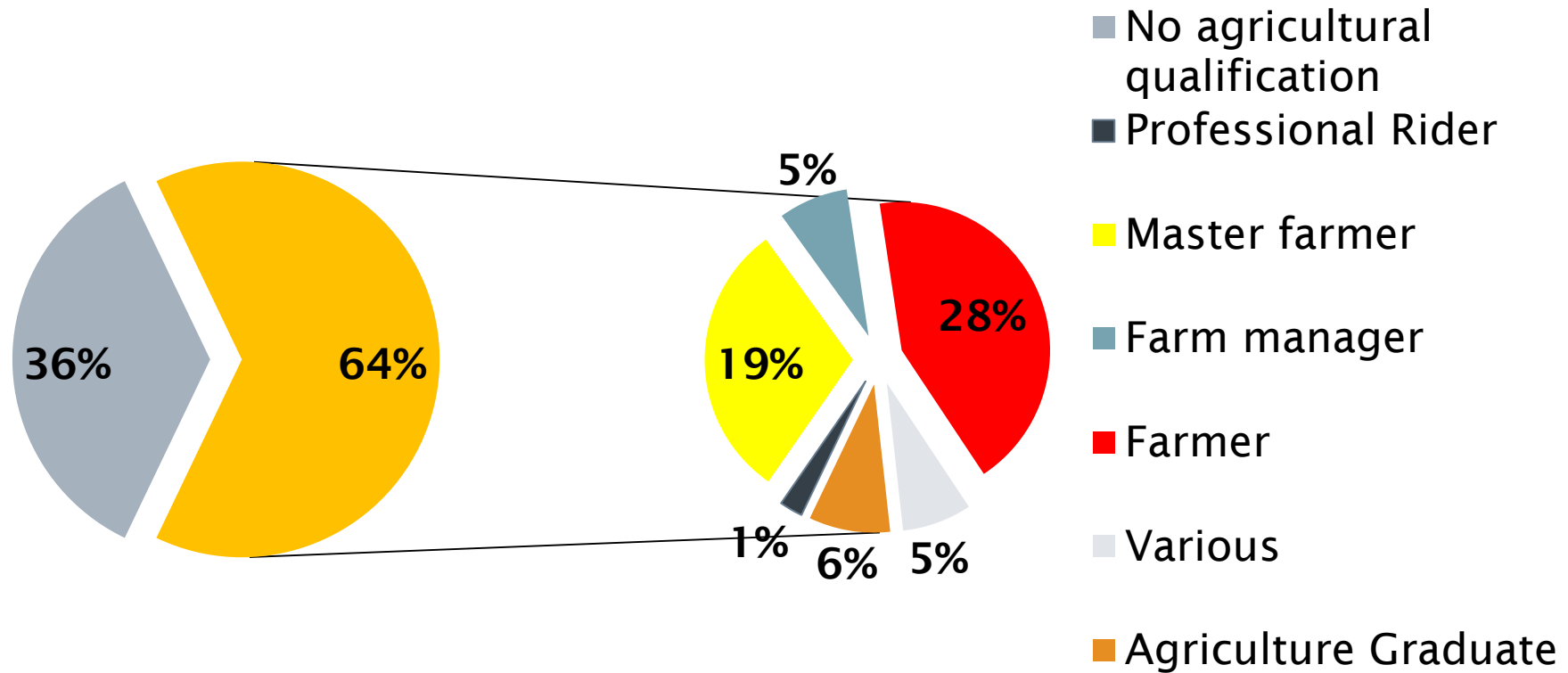


- ▶ Postal and phone survey
- ▶ All members of ZVCH - *Swiss Sport Horse Breeding Federation* (n=1.935) were contacted
 - ▶ Only active members were included in the analysis (n=1.718)
 - ▶ Poor return rate of 8.6% (n=147)
- ▶ Representative sample regarding geographical origin
- ▶ Statistical analysis with SPSS 20



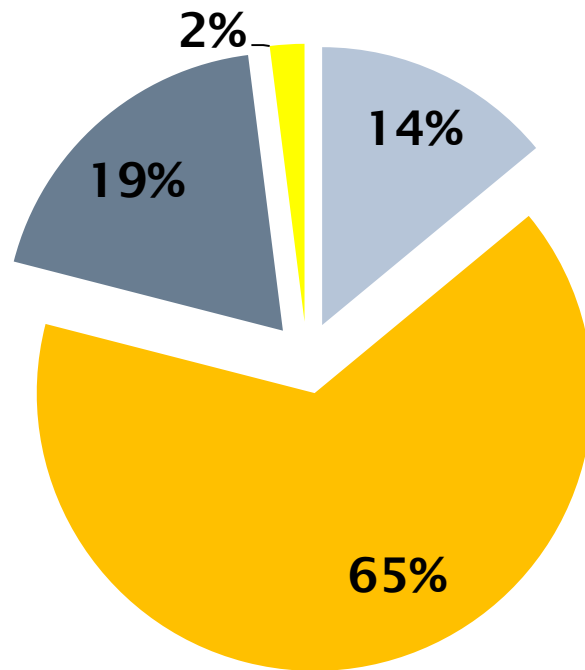
Qualification of the breeders

(n=123)



Where are stud horses kept?

(n=143)



- Kept by owner: Not on a farm
- Kept by owner: On a farm
- Kept at a boarding facility: on a farm
- Kept at a boarding facility: not on a farm

83,9% of all sport stud horses and 90.5% of stud horses in boarding stables are kept on Swiss farms

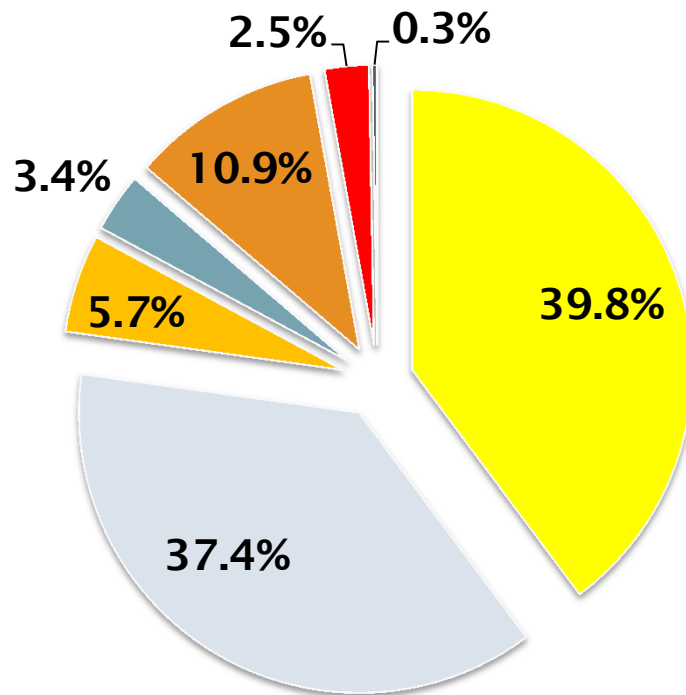


Where are young horses reared?



Rearing of young horses in %

n = 143



- Own farm
- In Switzerland
- Abroad
- Abroad AND Own farm
- Swiss farm AND Own farm
- Abroad AND Swiss farm
- Others

Over one year, 68% of the young horses were reared entirely, and 13.4% partially, on Swiss farms.





Direct gross expenses

- ▶ Horse breeding as independent branch
- ▶ Extrapolations of the gross expenses of sport horse breeders

■ Kept by owner: Not on a farm

■ Kept by owner: On a farm

■ Kept at a boarding facility: on a farm

■ Kept at a boarding facility: not on a farm

- Acquisition of feed and bedding
 - Lease costs for land
 - Disposal and use of manure
 - Horse boarding costs
- Internal input

+ External rearing of young horses on Swiss farms

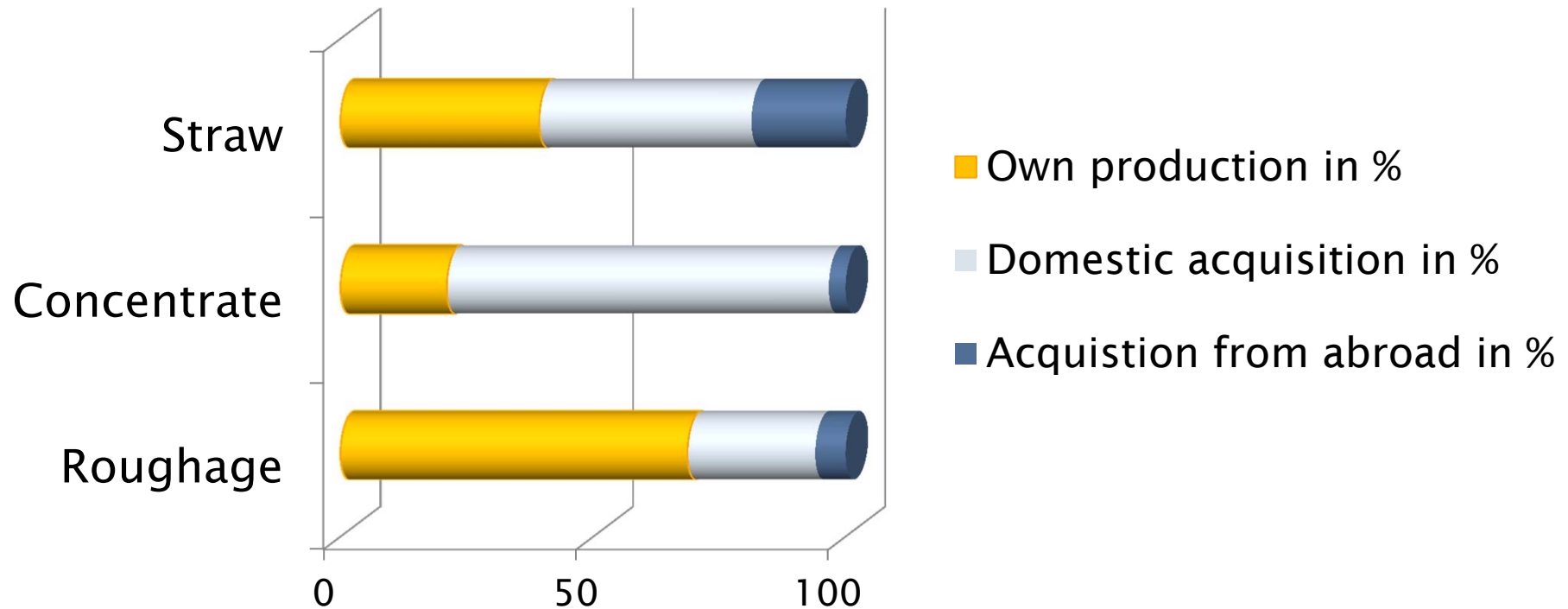


Gross expenses benefitting Swiss farms

Expenses generated by sport horse breeding flowing into Swiss agriculture	Cash flow into CH agriculture, in million euros
Boarding of stud horses on Swiss farms	8.6
Acquisition of feed and bedding from Swiss farmers	1.4
Feed and bedding produced on Swiss farms for own use	3.1
Rearing of young horses on Swiss farms	1.1
Land lease costs paid to Swiss farmers	0.5
Disposal and use of manure	0.3
TOTAL	15.0
Additional potential from feed and bedding (acquisition from Swiss feed producers)	0.9



Feed and bedding



- ▶ **4.5 million euros' worth of feed and bedding are produced for sport horse breeding in Switzerland**



Discussion

- 15.0 million euros – the minimum limit!
 - Potential of feed supply by domestic producers not included
 - Feed costs calculated on a conservative basis
- Not taken into consideration:
 - Net value
 - Multiplier effects
 - Labour market effect
- Data is limited to the Swiss sport horse breeding

 **More research is necessary!**



Conclusions I



Swiss sport horse breeding

- ... still has strong links to agriculture and
- ... is an economic pillar of Swiss agriculture.

The observed trend opens up a **market niche for horse breeders who own farms:**

- Boarding facilities for stud horses
- Assistance and counselling for newcomers in horse breeding



Conclusions II

Future threats:

- Increasing competition for land use
- Increasing competition for government funding

➔ **Perception of horse breeding is changing.**

- Declining acceptance in the agricultural policy
- Declining public acceptance

Lobbying and public relations are going to be more important in the future!



A far-sighted view...



...into the future of sport horse breeding.

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