Nordic Native Breeds and the New Equine Economy in the 21st Century,

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• What is a native breed?
• Native breeds and the economic imperative.
• What is the New Equine Economy?
• What’s so special about Nordic native breeds?
• How can we promote Nordic native breeds?
What is a ‘native breed’?

How are ‘native breeds’ different from other breeds?

A Good Question!
Popular imagination:
- natural??
- wild??
- non-commercial??
- amateur, not professional??
- old, not new??
NO!!

- Native breeds were bred by people
- ‘Wild’ herds are feral
- Breeders of native breeds were skilled ‘professionals’
- For example, the Icelandic Horse, as we know it, was created in 1922 by Theodór Arnbjörnsson.
Breeding?

Not scientific experts on one hand and ignorant peasant farmers on the other
Breeding?

Breeding is no more or less ‘scientific’ whether done at a Royal Stud, or by a Færoese farmer.

Breeding is the combination of nature and culture.
Culture = human intentionality

Nature = genetic potential
Breeding is an act of future-building

Breeding is a gamble!
Breeding remains uncertain even with the latest scientific techniques.

Reliability and the ability to predict future outcomes remains uncertain.
Like most gambling, decision making is a combination of rigid method and mystical, non-rational processes. This is about assessing potential based on past events (pedigree), current structure (conformation), and, at best, an educated guess (that something extra).
• Cassidy writes about thoroughbred markets where yearlings are sold on.

• In this case, ‘nature’ is the yearling with all its potential and ‘culture’ is the high prices which can be paid for potential winners.
between nature and culture

- People talented at selecting yearling thoroughbreds are described as having a “great eye.”

- This is the highest accolade possible in the business of selecting yearlings. It is not a quality that can be reduced to “seeing,” at least not in any sense of “seeing” an objective set of properties in a yearling.

- It is a mystical property that refers to their sense of the yearling as a complete entity, and this depends not only on the physical properties of a horse but also on the horse’s spirit, intelligence, or heart.
Native and non-native breeds

• Both are bred to meet human purposes
• Often, both are bred to work (many official Royal Stud breeds were intended to work on the farm or in industry)
• Both represent the intersection of nature (genetic potential) and culture (human needs and outcome prediction ability)
Native and non-native breeds

- What separates them is quite subtle, actually.

- It is the milieu in which the breeding activity happens and within which the purpose of that breeding is situated.
Nordic native breeds

- Fjordhest
- Icelandic horse
- Nordland/Lynghest
- Dalehest
- etc
• Nordic Native breeds were bred to assist people wrest a living from a cold and difficult environment.

• Bred for *efficiency*, for easy temperament, for sturdiness, to aid humans accomplish specific tasks.
• Efficiency:
  – no supplementary feeding
  – Low inputs

• Sturdiness
  – Cope with cold winters without rugs, etc
  – Resistant to illness
  – Strong confirmation to pull, push, carry

• Temperament
  – All members of the family can work them
  – Can ‘take responsibility’ in their tasks
  – Quick learners
Native vs Non-native breeds

• Native breeds bred to be in competition with the natural environment and the tasks necessary to wrest a living from it

• Non-native breeds bred to be in competition in sport, in war, and in modern industry
What happened to native breeds?

• Advent of internal combustion engine removed the need for all horses, and native breeds in particular.

• Numbers decline precipitously

• No economic imperative to breed
There must be an *economic imperative* or people will not breed them.
The New Equine Economy of the 21st Century

• What are the new economic imperatives of horse breeding?
• What new uses create new demand?
New Equine Economy

- Leisure riding
- Health
- Tourism
- Learning
New Equine Economy

• The Leisure sector has seen the greatest growth in terms of numbers

• Horses satisfy important drives, desires and aspirations of a rapidly urbanizing and increasingly wealthy population

• This creates new economic imperatives for breeding
Equine tourism?

• The traditional view of equine tourism involves travel to new, and often exotic locations, riding horses through specified landscapes, and appears to be a form of trekking-type tourism.

• For horse-people, it is a unique and special way to experience landscape, as well, of course, as experiencing new relationships and enjoying new experiences with an equine companion.
• Tourism in general and Equine Tourism in particular is about the *Experience*.

• Equine tourism is part of the *experience economy*.

• The *experience* remains in the *memory* of the individual engaged by the event.
From Commodity to Experience
From low to high value

Extract Commodities
Differentiated

Make Goods

Deliver Services

Stage Experiences
Relevant to needs of customer

Low, market driven
Premium

Value

Irrelevant to needs of customer
Undifferentiated
“The best things in life are not things”

They are experiences.
• The *Experience* lives on in the customer in the form of emotions, memories, and most importantly, the *story*.

• Story, or *narrative* is the way that the customer understands, remembers and feels their experience.
Equine tourism?

– There is much more to equine tourism than riding in exotic destinations

– Equine tourism incorporates a wide array of touristic services across multiple scales

– Equine tourism can function as the key identifier to a place or region and attract visitors beyond specific horse communities....
Equine tourism??

– Some equine tourism is farm tourism, some is adventure tourism, and some can be seen as nature tourism.

– Heritage and Outdoor and nature tourism are the fastest growing sub-sectors of tourism in general.

– Depending on definitions adopted, many types of equine tourism would qualify as ecotourism (Ollenberg 2005)
So, what is equine tourism?

The meaning of equestrian tourism, previously only encompassing trail riding or journeys on horseback, has today widened to include:

"all equestrian activities undertaken by equine-oriented tourists outside their normal place of residence",

(Castillon, 2012, FITE, 2012)
Equine tourism as tourism sub-sector

• Nature/Outdoor Tourism
• Adventure Tourism
• Rural Tourism
• Sport Tourism
  – Recreation
  – Competition
• Tradition Tourism
• Event Tourism
Tourism Equestrian Activities (Castillon, 2012)

- Jumping
- Dressage
- Driving
- Horse Fair
- Eventing
- Endurance
- Horseback riding
- Equestrian Museum
- Riding Centre
- Breeders visit
International consumption/domestic consumption

• Although the image of equine tourism is one of travel to far-off and exotic locations to ride, this remains a minority sector

• Where national tourism sectors have been studied, domestic riding tourism is by far the largest proportioned sub-sector
Therefore, equine tourism can be, in the main, seen as *domestic tourism*, and not about jetting off to remote distant locations.
• However, whether the tourists are domestic or international, their decision to undertake a touristic experience on a horse is driven by their aspirations. The things that affect their buying decisions are emotional, about identity, and aspirational. Their decision is about *experience*. 
The Experience Economy and the New Equine Economy

When we sell equine activities to customers, we sell them *experiences* whether touristic, or therapeutic, or recuperative.
Native breeds and the New Equine Economy

• Native breeds are much more than just horses!

• Native breed horses are part of the story of heritage, of people and their lives in particular places

• Native breeds *represent* the values, aspirations, ambitions, acts and experiences of the peoples who bred and used them to make their lives better.
Marketing nordic native breed tourism

The three most important things in a tourism business?
• When we market equine tourism we often focus on the horse, the journey, the place.

• But we do not address the aspirations, the need for narrative, the wish of the customer to immerse themselves in heritage, in the environment, in an experience
Nordic native breeds are more than just horses – they are the living embodiment of the stories of the people in whose lives they are/were intertwined.

The values they represent are things that customers want – virtue, hard work, nature, freedom, landscape values.

These are what we should be marketing, and nordic native breeds have these qualities and values in large amounts.
Nordic native breeds and the new equine economy?

• These native breed horses carry with them not only their riders, but the history, heritage, hopes, dreams and acts of the people and places where they were bred and ridden.

• We need to make even more of these values so that our customers will realize that by riding these horses they too can experience them.
And by realizing the increased new economic opportunities in these new sectors, we can provide greater and greater economic imperatives to breed them, keeping the breeds alive and vital and assuring that they do not disappear as times change.
Thank you.

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