Innovative Future in the Equine Sector

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The concept of Innovation

- Innovation in the broadest sense of the word is defined as something **new**. (Latin innovātiō means 'to renew or change' and is made up of two words:
  - *in* which means "into" and
  - *novus* which means "new." So, to innovate is to go into the new.)

- Innovation – a new idea, process, product, service, method, technology, device etc. which can be brand-new or just a bit different from conventional practices.

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“Do better” and “Do different” Innovation

„do better” innovation:
incremental improvements,
evolutionary changes

„do different” innovation:
radical shifts,
revolutionary changes

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The changing role of the horse:
From Beast of Burden to Partner in Sport and Recreation

(Georgina K. Crossman & Rita Walsh)
Historical uses of the horse

- Horses used for transport
- Cavalry horse utilised
- Horse increasingly used in agriculture
- Horses used for preservation of biotopes
- Horses hunted as wild animals
- Horses used for charioteering
- Horse racing begins
- Horses used for recreation
- Horse domestication
- Horses riding becomes commonplace
- Horses used in fox hunting
- Horses used in therapy
- Horses used in war
- Horses used in industry
- Equestrian sport debuts in the Olympics

Figure based on Crossman, 2010; Perkins, 2010
The Equine Sector Today

Supplying sector
Fodder production; veterinary services; farrier services; show organisation; education; media; betting; organisations of the sector; accounting services, building and construction services, contracting of agriculture machinery, etc.

Core sector
- Breeding
- Productive horse keeping (for meat, milk, etc.)
- Sport
- Tourism, recreation
- Rehabilitation
- Preservation of biodiversity (Native breeds; wild horses)
- Work (agriculture; forestry; transport; etc.)

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Recent Trends Within the Sector

- Specialisation/diversification: different clients – various needs
- Customer service/client orientation
- Acknowledging the importance of horse welfare
- Focusing on solving horse and human safety issues
- Marketing activities and new ways of communication – homepages and social networks

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Diversification as a Way to Attract Various Customer Groups Within the Equine Sector

One of the largest farms in Latvia - stud farm "Zirgaudzētava Kocēni" offers almost full range of equine-related services:

- breeding of sports horses,
- livery stable with indoor arena,
- trail rides,
- riding lessons for all age groups and riding skill levels,
- possibilities to train and participate in show-jumping, dressage and carriage-driving competitions.
Specialisation in a Specific Area of the Sector

Although many stables are trying to provide a wide range of services and attract various kinds of customers, there are equine entrepreneurs that are doing the contrary – focusing on a very narrow area or discipline.

For example:

• Rohan stable in Finland is specialising in the Medieval riding shows and lessons;
• Viking Pony School (Viikin Ponikoulu) in Finland has specialized into riding lessons for children on ponies;
• Adventure Ride in Latvia specialises on several day trail rides for foreign tourists;
• Tihuse stable in Estonia is breeding native Estonian breed horses and using them in trail rides for tourists;
• Several farms in Latvia are keeping Polish Konik horses to sustain biodiversity in the preserved territories.

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© Rohan Stable
Customer Service/ Client Orientation

The clients visiting riding stables in Finland/ Sweden / Latvia identified the issues that are important for them:

- Quality of daily horse care and regular stable cleaning;
- Qualification, friendliness and motivation of the working staff in the stable;
- Facilities for clients (shower; locker room, etc.);
- Horse and rider safety.

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Acknowledging the Importance of Horse Welfare

• Horses are social animals, that are born to eat and move;
• Horse owners are increasingly valuing the importance of horses natural needs over the risks of pasturing horses and keeping them in herds;
• If previously associated with hobby riders, now even high level riders are stressing the benefits of keeping horses in a natural way.
Marketing Activities and New Ways of Communication Within the Sector

Where do clients find information about the services provided by the equine industry (results form the INNOEQUINE survey)

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Using Internet for Better Communication in the Equine Sector

There are two basic types of home pages –
• webpages, that are mainly used as an informative resource and
• webpages that are mainly used for selling of goods and services

Screenshoot: http://www.lapinvaellshevoset.fi/
Keeping People Informed and Managing Services Online


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Future challenges of the sector (1)

- Interpretation of the equine sector and defining its role in contemporary society
- Elaboration of particular policies
Equine Sector for Sustainable Development

RURAL ECONOMY

PUBLIC HEALTH

EQUINE SECTOR

SOCIAL NEEDS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Policy for the Equine sector

Challenges

• Public benefits of the equine sector are not clearly formulated and communicated
• Policy makers evaluate sector from traditional perspective – turnover, income, profit, effectiveness
• Split between agriculture policy and rural development policy on governmental level
• Lack of strategic focus in activities of equine associations

Solutions

• Professional associations should elaborate development strategy (long term perspective, also used for lobbying policy makers, rising public awareness);
• Active participation in elaboration of policy documents related to the equine; clear formulation of sectoral needs for state and EU funds support;
• New functions for professional associations (policy making, international marketing, demand to vocational education, social security issues, etc.);
• Closer cooperation.

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Future challenges of the sector (2)

• Tackling the environmental and horse welfare issues
• Thinking of horse and human safety issues
• Investigation of public interests, attitudes, needs and knowledge about nature, horses
• Popularization of the sector whilst urbanized and modern society experiences alienation from the nature and animals
• Improved skills and professionalism (in doing business, language skills, communication with costumers)
• Improved collaboration both between horse businesses and other sectors of rural economy to develop innovative products and to share experience
• ..................................................?
Thank You for your attention! Tack så mycket!
Kiitos! Tänan väga! Takk!