



Horse Breeding as a Land Use and Agricultural Activity

EU Equus 2009

Anna Hedberg

Horses and Agriculture

- About 300 000 horses in Sweden
- About 100 000 horses kept on farms
- ~2 000 farms with horse business
- Farm buildings get an alternative use
- More than 6 000 breeders in Sweden, ~2 000 professionals
- Mainly horses for leisure and sports
- Horse breeding as a business activity!
- Nothing about genetics



Land Use and the Rural Economy



- Alternative land use in farming;
feed production, grazing, leisure riding, training of horses...
- 300 000 hectares, 10% of agricultural land, used for horses in Sweden
- An opportunity but also conflicts!
- Horse businesses create jobs in rural areas
- Regional effects on incomes and employment often substantial
- Contributes to a diversified rural economy
- Basic services and quality of life in rural areas

The Landscape and Grazing



- Extensive areas of semi-natural grazing land in Sweden
- The number of cattle and other grazing livestock decline
- Grazing horses increasingly important for the landscape and for biodiversity
- A challenge to co-ordinate horses to the relevant grazing land

The Swedish Rural Development Strategy

- Goal: to better include the rural perspective in all policy areas
- A positive view on Sweden's rural areas
- Rural resources crucial for growth and development in the country as a whole
- Important to the development of a sustainable society and eco-efficient economy
- Urban and rural areas are becoming increasingly integrated.

A shift in the Government's view
of rural areas!



Horse Issues in the Strategy

- Better conditions for horse businesses
- Development of societal planning tools for horse activities
- Education of qualified farriers
- “The expanding horse industry”
important for the rural economy
and for society.



Rural Development Programme for Sweden 2007–2013

- Important strategic tool for rural businesses!
- Entrepreneurship, growth and employment in rural areas. Improving competitiveness in agriculture/forestry (axes 1).
- Ambitious environmental policy and a holistic view on the landscape as a basis for development (axes 2).
- Improving quality of life in rural areas. Building local capacity, partnership, local action groups (axes 3 and Leader).

The CAP after 2013

- Reduced total budget for agriculture
- 3 major priorities: growth & jobs, climate and energy security, a global Europe.
- Larger focus on pillar 2; Rural Development
- A new Rural Development Programme in 2014: discussions about a broader target group compared to the present programme
- A new 3rd pillar (Climate)?



Education and Research

- Extensive educational programs on different levels
- Adjustments: quality of the programs, the demand of the horse industry, international processes etc.
- Research about many different horse issues
- Future financing?

Future Challenges for the Horse Industry

- Professionals and hobby breeders and users together in the horse industry
- Incomes and profitability for breeders and other horse businesses
- Land use: how to find win-win solutions?
- Educational programs suited for the horse industry
- Long-run financing of research about horse issues; basic/applied; veterinary, horse keeping, breeding, economics, social aspects...

Conclusions

- Horse breeding and keeping an extensive alternative use of agricultural land
- Breeding and other horse businesses are important for the rural economy and for society
- Horse issues included in rural policy and Government programmes
- Future challenges to handle!

Thank You!

