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Equestrian activities in France: Between a sport and a way of life

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**International Scientific Conference
SPORTS SCIENCE AND HEALTH CARE IN SPORTS IN 2023 –
2 February 2023 - Riga**

**Equestrian activities in France:
Between a sport and a way of life**

ESLAN Camille & LE CLINCHE Servane



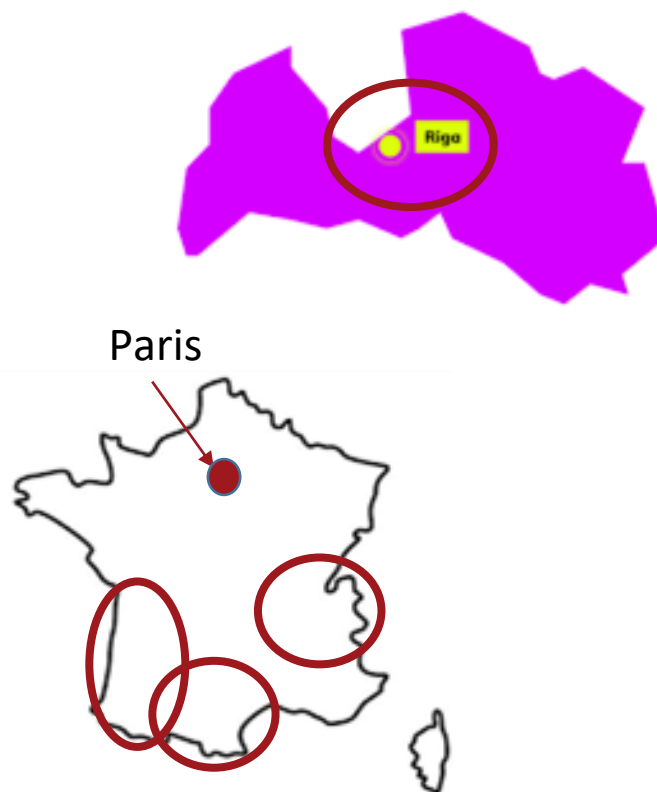
A MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT of horse riding in France

OFFER & ECONOMIC SIDE

FRANCE

9 500 stables
identified (1 per
7 100 inhabitants -
IFCE, 2021)

Conglomeration of
stables hacks centring
around 3 locations
(and not around Paris -
capital of France)



LATVIA

99 stables
identified (**1 per
19 000 inhabitants**
- <http://horseriding.lv>, 2023)

Conglomeration of
stables hacks centring
around the capital of
Latvia, Riga

RIDER SIDE

- 3rd federal sport (692 396 members in 2022 – 1 per 100 inhabitants)
- 3 million : occasional and regular riders (4 per 100 inhabitants)
- 1st nature sport
- 1st female sport

- Since 2012: FFE memberships (-13 %*) after 70 years of continuous progression / Growth +15% between 2020 and 2022

- Customer volatility: every year 30% of first-time members and 10% of practitioners switch riding schools



RIDER SIDE

WHILE:

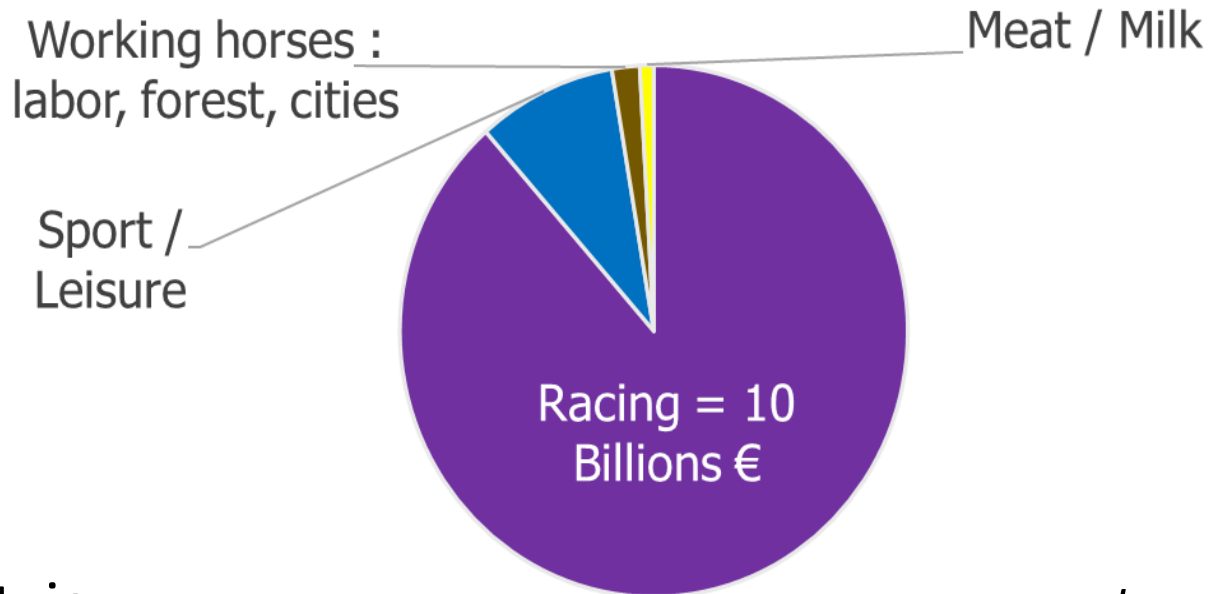
- Offer mainly focuses on competition in riding schools
- Transformation and diversification of rider's demand
- FFE makes of 22 disciplines + horse race + culture & tradition

For example:





- 4 sectors within the French equine industry
1 billion in sales generated by sports / leisure activities (IFCE, 2021)



- In Latvia

<http://horseriding.lv/>



All stables



Leisure riding



Training



Stud farms



Horse-human relationship

Almost all (former-)riders (>90%) came to horse riding being firstly motivated by the bond with the horse

Same result in 2017 and in 2021



© IFCE

The riding school

Almost all riders started horse riding in a riding school (>95%)

All of them have used at least one riding school along their path

Same result in 2017 and in 2019



The riding school

They have been more or less loyal to their riding schools :
from 1 to 20 used clubs



Initial choice criteria of a riding school

The most important:

- Progression
- Staff friendliness
- Proximity
- Having fun

Important:

- **Horse well-being**
- Number of riders per course
- Learning about the horse and its environment
- Infrastructure quality
- Prices

Reasons for leaving:

- 1/3: Moving house, structure closure
- 1/3: Teaching
- 1/10: Cavalry
- 1/10: Offer

Riding school

Livery yard/stable

Often linked to the purchase of a horse

Holiday structure

Occasional practitioner

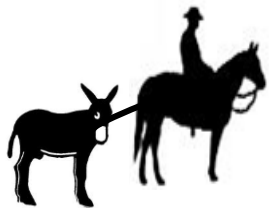
Independent rider

Horse-owner or not

Don't go back to RS



- 95% have already used professional riding centres (10% still do it)
 - Professional structure use for 9 years [0;51]
- Self-organization duration: 8 years [0;51]
 - 72% are equine owners (28% are just practitioners)
 - Number of equine: 3,5 [1;30] (54% with at least 1 retired equine)
 - 85% satisfied with current situation
 - Various disciplines practiced with 3,5 activities (mean)



- 80% hacking & 30% travelling
- 65% horsemanship
- 48% equine company
- 38% Olympic disciplines
- 24% competing

2 main motivations to self-organize:
to offer better living conditions to their equines (in 2017 : cost)

to practice the desired activity

© Mélanie Guillaumot



Grazing surface available: 5,7 ha [0,1 to 250]

Mean : 1,63 ha per horse



© Mélanie Guillamot

Trends

- Riding therapy
- Horse as partner, and even friend or confident
- Horse welfare / well-being
- streams of thought such as antispecism
 - ➔ ban of horseback riding



Thank you!