

HORSE COMMISSION

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Equine Science Education in Slovenia

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The paper on equine science in Slovenia represents the conditions and organisation of horse breeding and equine sport in Slovenia and their connections with educational and research institutions. Main information on teaching the horse breeding and its programmes at vocational, secondary, university and post-graduate level are given. The addresses of main institutions that carry out education of professionals for these fields at the above levels and an overview of their organisation and facilities are given. The Riding Academy of Slovenia as an educational service of FN with its organisation and programmes is discussed.

Horse production in Slovenia

Slovenia has quite a long tradition in horse breeding. The Stud of Lipica originated in the year 1580 and is a cradle of Lipizzaner breed and until today the leading stud for this breed. The domestic trotting horse and the first horse race were registered in 1875, which was only two years after the first race in Vienna, and resulted in Ljutomer Trotters, where a good trotter breeding and production is present till today. Main part of horse production and history, besides these two breeds, was connected with cold-blood horses that prevail even today and are used for transport and work and more and more for meat production.

Unfortunately other horse production and development of equine sport and education of experts for horse production and sport stayed behind after Second World War. After the change of political system and first years of transition the renaissance of horse sport and breeding on private basis started hence the number of registered horses came from 9,500 to 20,000 and is growing constantly.

There are two Faculties of University Ljubljana close connected to horse education, breeding and organisation in Slovenia.

The first is Biotechnical Faculty together with its Horse Centre Krumperk and its staff that takes care of study of horse production and research work of agricultural students on university and college level, and the second is Veterinary Faculty with its National Horse Breeding Service and State Foal Centre Briga that is responsible for breeding and expert help and work for all 13 existing and registered Horse Breeding Associations in Slovenia and veterinary students. Both faculties collaborate on the equine science education in Slovenia. On the expert level they are assisted by Republic Extension Service with 6 regional animal breeding units.

Today there are 6 horse breeding centres active in Slovenia: Stud of Lipica, HBC Krumperk (Biotechnical Faculty) HBC Brdo (trotters, HBC Grm, Vocational agricultural School, HBC Grad Prestranek, Island horse Foal centre Briga) Veterinary Faculty.

The breeding association and stud books are organised for: Lipizzaner horse, trotters, Slovenian cold-blood, Slovenian warm-blood, Haflinger, Posavje horse, Noric, English thorough breed, Arab horse, Island horse and Quarter and Appaloosa horse. All of them as well as sport clubs, riding schools, centres and private farms need the experts and people who are educated in equine science.



Picture 1: Riding course is obligatory for all students of horse production

University education and research

After 1979 horse production and riding have become popular again and some new activities and institutions have been started. Within the University of Ljubljana the Horse Breeding Centre at Krumperk was established with the governmental support. It is a breeding, research and educational centre for the needs of Slovene horse production. Furthermore, a riding club at Biotechnical Faculty was established to improve the riding sport in Slovenia. Since 1980 the Chair of Horse Production has existed at the Zootechnical Department performing curriculum on horse production. From the very beginning the Veterinary Faculty and their National Horse Breeding Service (founded in

1962) with its staff collaborate on realisation of educational programme and often on research work of students and professors.

The Chair of Horse Production has one professor for horse production, an assistant, two riding trainers and two workers at the Horse Centre Krumperk.

At Agricultural Faculty Maribor, which is another university institution for animal husbandry in Slovenia, the subject Horse Production is not an independent subject but a part of general course on animal breeding and other subjects. The Faculty in Maribor does not have its own infrastructure and horses for study and research.

Horse production – curriculum

Students of animal husbandry at Biotechnical Faculty can choose horse production as an optional subject with 65 lessons (30 hours of lectures and 35 hours of practical exercises) in the last year of college study or in the last year of university study. The fourth year students already have a certain degree of knowledge in anatomy, physiology, genetics, selection, nutrition and zoo-hygiene. Horse production is lectured by a university teacher who is also the chairman of the Chair of Horse Production and Horse Breeding Centre. In the curricula collaborate five professors for ethology, molecular genetics, special nutrition, reproduction and breeding organisation and a FN specialist for equine sport.

The study of horse production requires some basic knowledge from the above mentioned fields and it includes selected lectures on subjects: Domestification, Use of Horses, Horse Breeds (10 %), Genetics, Selection and Breeding Organisation (25 %), Horse Nutrition (20 %), Ethology and Technology (15 %), Reproduction (5 %), Zoo-hygiene and Veterinary Care (10 %), Psychology and Training of Horse (10 %), Equine Sport (5 %). Besides the appointed university teacher and other chair staff also teachers from Veterinary Faculty and FN collaborate in the programme.

The subject is lectured in the form of block study during the summer holidays. The course lasts two weeks (10 working days). Lessons and practical work are kept at the horse centre together with horse care and riding school (A degree) and driving. At the end of the course students have a practical examination from riding (Rider I). The highest number of students in the course is 15. Since 1996 the students of other department of Biotechnical Faculty have been able to choose Horse Production and attend lessons. The new legislation and credit system (Horse Production has 4.5 credit points) will enable other students of University of Ljubljana to attend horse courses too and we expect more courses per year. Now there are normally only two.

Post- graduate course

At the moment a new post-graduate course on horse breeding is in preparation at Biotechnical Faculty, Veterinary Faculty and Sport Faculty. This level of study has always been a part of post-graduate study of animal husbandry. At the Biotechnical Faculty - Zootechnical Department it was so far performed within the post-graduate Msc. study of animal breeding with individual study of a subject connected with equine science but there have been only few students till now.

Since 1990 the chair has collaborated by post graduate study of horse production on Agricultural Faculty in Zagreb, Croatia.



Picture 2: Biotechnical faculty, Veterinary faculty and Sport faculty collaborate in educational activities of **Riding academy of Slovenia** and education of professionals for equestrian sport

Infrastructure and facilities at Biotechnical Faculty

The Chair of Horse Production has its own Horse Centre Krumperk, which is a breeding and test centre for Hanoverian and Haflinger horses. The Centre has 50 ha of land, a modern stable for 50 horses and permanently 1 to 3 stallions, and a smaller herd of mares with foals, and about 10 -12 school and competition horses. There is a small lecture hall and all necessary equipment and infrastructure for riding and driving with five rides, one of which is covered. The Centre capacities are also used by students of Veterinary Faculty and Sport Faculty as well as post-graduate students for research and by vocational school students for practice and exercises on horse production.

Vocational education

Vocational education of animal production is performed in 14 vocational and agricultural centres or schools around the territory of Slovenia. They provide study programmes on general animal management and husbandry and for all species of animals. Horse production at these schools is a part of animal husbandry and the short term practice of it

is carried out in different horse breeding centres or private breeding farms. Only the Higher Agricultural School Grm, which has its own horse breeding centre Grm with modern stable, good herd of horses and riding facility, has good and complete basic vocational programme for horse production. After such basic vocational education the students continue study on college or university level of animal husbandry in Ljubljana or Maribor.

Connection with equine sport and FN

The Equestrian Federation of Slovenia (FN - founded in 1949) includes all equestrian sports except trotters. FN registers today 54 riding clubs (show jumping and dressage) and Trekking Association with 53 trekking clubs. The Trotter Union of Slovenia and Trotter Central care for 14 trotter clubs and trotter racing system. Observable sport results in the central European area have been achieved by trotters and dressage competitors. The dressage is a domain of FN and Stud Farm Lipica that train horses and organises international performances. Show jumping, driving and other disciplines are in development and are not present enough on international level.

The new quality in show-jumping has been provided by Riding Club of Biotechnical Faculty Krumperk founded in 1979. The club propagates modern show jumping and has already won several times the state championship. The Centre and the Club collaborate with Hanoverian Association and the Riding School in Verden. Many Slovene trainers and riding teachers were trained there. The Club helps the Centre to test working horses, to train them and to take part in sport activities and organise them as well.

The Chair of Horse production and Centre Krumperk collaborate in educational activities of Slovene FN. They were co-founder of **Riding Academy of Slovenia** which provides the education of professionals for equestrian sport and for needs of FN.

It performs theoretical part of education at Biotechnical Faculty and practical part at HBC Krumperk. Courses and training of experts for riding have been performed mainly at Krumperk and Lipica. In the programme of Riding Academy, which is an educational unite of FN for education of professionals in equestrian sport, licensed competitors, instructors, trainers, teachers and judges, the staff of Biotechnical faculty, Veterinary faculty, Faculty for Sport, FN, Lipica and nearly all HBC in Slovenia take part. The programmes, system and books of RAS were made according to the German FN model.



Picture 3: The life, riding and practical work of students with horses on HBC Krumperk give them in ten days needed basic knowledge about horses.

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