

The Epidemiological Situation of the Horse Stock in Slovakia

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Slovakia was part of the Hungarian Kingdom till 1918. In the Felvidék, or 'Northern Region' of that time there were several operating stud-farms, e.g. in Pered (since 1825), Szomolány (1855), Nagyszalánc (1860), Bucsány (1871), Oroszvár (1873), Parnó (1880), Eleonóra Udvar – Pozsony (1889) and Gomba (1890).

In Czechoslovakia, the new state founded after the Versailles Treaty, the stud-farms were closed down on Slovak territories, and only 161 of 468 stud-horses remained.

In the 1930's, 230,000 – 250,000 horses were bred on the territory of present-day Slovakia. After the Second World War, in 1955, this figure fell to 209,942.

From the early 1960's on, the horse stock started to diminish greatly: in no other European country was it liquidated to such an extent. In 1985, there were only 18,000 horses remaining on the territory of Slovakia.

When the independent state of Slovakia was founded in 1993, the horse stock still showed a diminishing tendency. In the year 2000, no more than 9,000 horses were registered, and then there were about 8,000 horses in 2007. That year can be considered a watershed, as in 2008 there were already 11,068 registered horses, and this figure grew to 12,917 by 2009.

The number of horses in neighbouring countries in relation to population and territory:

Country	Number of horses as of 31-12-2008	Number of horses per 1,000 inhabitants	Number of horses per 1 km ²
Austria	100 000	12.00	1.19
Poland	350 000	8.97	1.12
Czech Republic	67 036	6.48	0.85
Hungary	60 000	5.90	0.64
Slovakia	11 068	2.15	0.22

The source of the above data is a lecture by Fratišek Grác

There are currently four stud-farms in Slovakia. In 1993, the Kistapolcsány (Topoľčianky) farm was declared a national stud-farm, where the central horse register is kept. There are also stud-farms in Felsőmotesice (Motešice), Újbars (Nový Tekov) and Nagysáros (Veľký Šariš). The state-owned horserace track in Pozsonyligetfalu is also a part of today's Slovakian horse-breeding, as it hosts international races.

As regards animal health, the horses are treated exclusively by private veterinarians.

As Slovakia became a member of the EU on May 1, 2004, the country is obliged to comply with EU animal health regulations.

According to the regulations of the Slovakian Animal Health and Food Inspectorate, breeders are obliged to have two serological examinations performed within 21 days if their horses

have abortions. A culture test is also compulsory in order to exclude contagious equine metritis). The costs of these examinations and samplings are fully covered by the inspectorate.

The breeders are obliged to have the following examinations performed at their own expense:

- Serological examination of breeding stallions before and after the breeding season to exclude equine infectious anaemia, dourine, equine viral arteritis and Taylorella equigenitalis infection.

- Examination of broodmares before breeding to exclude equine infectious anaemia, dourine, equine viral arteritis and contagious metritis.

- The examination of sport horses and draught horses is also compulsory for the above-mentioned diseases if the owner intends to breed them.

As regards immunisation, only the vaccine against equine influenza is compulsory for breeders at their own expense. It has to be done with a type of vaccine registered in Slovakia. The examinations prescribed by the authorities have to be performed in the breeding season.

The private veterinarians have founded the Slovak Hippiatric Society (SHS). The members of this society are usually veterinarians pursuing equine practices. The management of the hippiatric society has made a recommendation concerning the health care of horses. Sport horses are vaccinated for equine influenza every 6 months, and then for the EHV-1 infection every 6 months. For tetanus, the SHS has recommended annual vaccination.

Before the sporting season, serological examinations for strangles and equine infectious anaemia are recommended.

For breeding horses, vaccination for equine influenza is also compulsory every 6 months, and then for EHV-1 and EHV-4 every 6 months. For tetanus, annual vaccination is recommended. Against endoparasites, the Society recommends four treatments per year.

The chart below contains the results of the tests performed by the institutes in Pozsony and Zólyom:

Institute	Pozsony						Zólyom					
	2007		2008		2009		2007		2008		2009	
Result	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Eq. Infectious Anaemia	0	1023	0	590	0	799	0	531	0	662	0	453
Strangles	0	1013	0	531	0	716	0	517	0	654	0	435
Dourine	0	376	0	278	0	521	0	197	0	471	0	269
Brucellosis	0	34	0	19	0	65	0	5	0	9	0	2
Equine Viral Arteritis	11	263	14	253	13	232	11	221	13	489	13	300
Rhinopneumonitis	5	2	2	0	14	7	6	1	3	0	7	0
Contagious Metritis	0	375	0	172	0	304	0	102	0	260	0	80

The data came from the Pozsony and Zólyom institutes