



Brussels, 22nd June 2018

**Jean Arthuis calls on his partners in the European Parliament to remain vigilant in order to preserve the place of the horse industry in debates starting in Brussels on the future common agricultural policy beyond 2020.**

Around 10 MEPs present on June 20 in the European Parliament exchanged with the professionals of the equine sector gathered by the European Horse Network, EHN. Several representatives joined Jean Arthuis in expressing their concern about the proposal on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which will no longer count equine on farms after 2020 and which makes recognition of the status of equine breeder difficult as well as his access to land.

However, equine breeding activities, as Jean Arthuis recalls, correspond to the diversification and preservation of land, one of the objectives of the European agricultural policy.

The signs of concern are there. In Bulgaria, a legislative proposal almost excluded equidae from the list of grazing animals, as Georgi Sabev, adviser to Bulgarian MEP Momchil Nekov, said. In Belgium, land planning leaves little room for agricultural land as described by EHN President Mark Wenten, who struggles on a daily basis to preserve and develop his urban and innovative equine activity.

The new European proposals for the reform of the CAP presented on June 1, detailed by Pierre Bascou, Director at the Agriculture Directorate of the Commission, does not refer to equine breeding activities even if Mr Bascou is reassuring on the place of the horse as an agricultural animal.

Faced with these uncertainties regarding access to land and financing, Daniel Prieur of FNSEA in France proposes to harmonise the status of equine breeders at European level with coherent and adapted criteria. This would be all the more effective for the equines that the FNSEA is thinking about an agricultural base unit that would no longer be the enterprise in the legal sense but the active agricultural individual. On such a basis, horse breeders could once again find an official and recognized place in agricultural activity. The diversity of the agricultural entrepreneurial world would also be better taken into account.

The diversification of economic activities related to horses is possible with horse milk and donkey milk as Julie Decayeux, founder of ChevaLait and Pierluigi Orunesu, Eurolactis, demonstrate. Pit Schlechter, President of the European Federation of Working Horses, recalls that the horse is still an agricultural labour instrument in several European countries and notes the resumption of interest in the animal as a work force in the west of Europe.

**Reducing agriculture to strict food production is obsolete. Horse breeding is a land and agricultural activity. Horses are grazing animals and belong to agricultural areas.**

MEP José Bové believes that the preservation of the horse as an agricultural animal is a question of "agri-cultural" principle because of its place in our history.

Jean Arthuis concluded the session by asking the European Commission to take into account the importance of activities related to equidae in Europe, breeding, sport, horse racing, recreation, tourism, as many rural activities.

The debate on the next common agricultural policy and the less important financial resources that the Commission has already announced will intensify in the coming months. Beyond the basic agricultural regulation, the equine sector should pay particular attention to the delegated and implementing acts provided for in the text of the future CAP. In these texts, especially on rural development, equines should find their place. The equine professionals will multiply actions to be heard and promote the benefits of the industry.

More information about EHN: [www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu](http://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu)

European Horse Network members:

*European and International Associations linked to horses (Breeders, Sport, betting, research)*

*ATA - Animal Transportation Association, BCP-CBC - Belgian Horse Confederation, BETA - British Equestrian Trade Association, DBK - The Horse Carriage drivers from Bruges, EEN - Equestrian Education Network, EFTBA - European Federation Thoroughbred Breeders, EEHNC - Equine Health & Nutrition Association, EPMA - European Pari Mutuel Association, ESSA - European State Studs Association, EEF - European Equestrian Federation - EMHF - European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation - ETF - European Trainers Federation, FECTU - European Federation for the promotion of the use of Draught Horses, FEEVA - Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations, FEI - International Equestrian Federation, FEIF - International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, FITE - International Equestrian Tourism Federation, FNRS - Dutch Professional Equestrian Centres Federation, GESCA - French Horse sector professionals, HIPPOLIA - Equine Cluster (innovation) and research Foundation, HIPPOLIS - National Equine Competence Association of Finland, HNS - Swedish Horse Council Foundation, IFCE - French Institute for equestrian sport and equines, UET - European Trotting Union, WBFSH - World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses, WHW - World Horse Welfare*

*The European Horse Network has collected the numbers from different studies to give an estimate of the horse industry in Europe:*

- 100 billion by the economic impact*
- 400 000 full-time equivalent jobs provided by the sector*
- 7 million horses in Europe*
- 6 million hectares of permanent pastures devoted to pasture*

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