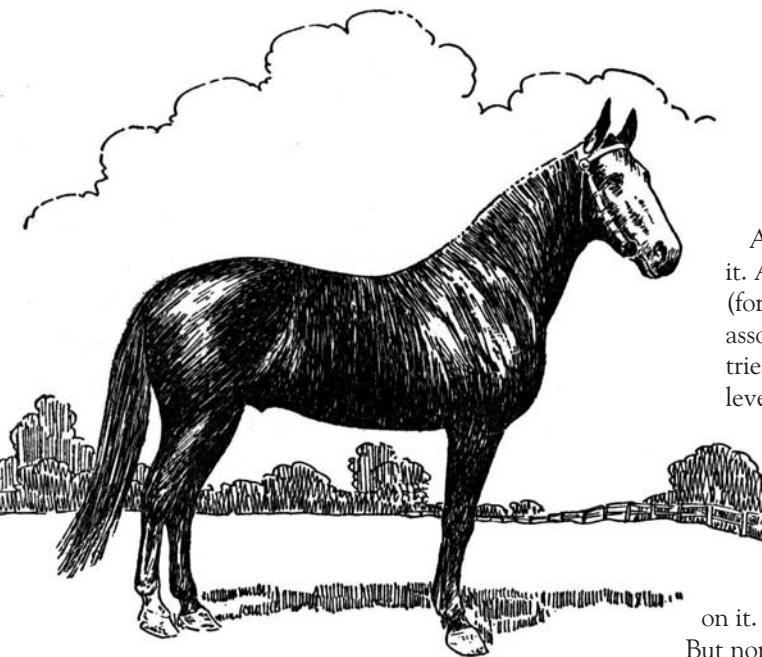


Stand Up & Be Counted!



Currently, if there were a major infectious disease outbreak, the State Vet would not know how many horses would be at risk, or how much vaccine or medicine might be needed. This census will change that.

If you do not receive a survey, please call 410-841-5740 or 1-800-675-0295, and they will put you on the list and mail one to you.

In order for this study to be statistically valid, they must know to whom they are sending the survey, which is why the questionnaire won't be published here, in *The Equiry*, why blank copies will not be distributed randomly, and why you can't fill the survey out on line.

AQHA has tried to do it. AHC has tried. USAEq (formerly known as the association AHSA) has tried. All on the national level. But they can't do it.

The University of Maryland has tried to estimate the number for Maryland. Cooperative Extension has tried to get a handle

on it.

But none of their numbers matter. Whether it is one thousand, one million or one billion, those counts do not count.

Why not?

Common philosophy believes that in order for the government, be it national or state, to listen to the horse industry, to take us seriously, to recognize how big and strong we are, we have to show them how many horses we have. We have to provide a head count.

Well, that may be, but the truth of the matter is that unless the government counts the horses themselves, they don't consider the numbers legitimate—just mere smoke and mirrors possibly inflated to impress them.

Why does it matter that we count our horses? In order to get adequate funding for equine health research (think West Nile, think Potomac Fever, think Lyme or EPM), the government needs a handle on the potential impact of any disease, and the possible benefits of any research.

So, in order for our count to count with the government, the government has to do the counting.

But the feds don't fund head counts of horses. They will fund inventories of livestock used in the production of food or fiber (cows, sheep, hogs), but not horses.

So, in order to get an equine census, states must come up with their own dollars. In order to find the funding, somebody or bodies need to think this is important, and then need to make it happen.

Kentucky made it happen. Tennessee made it happen. Because some body or bodies made it happen.

In Maryland, those somebodies are the Maryland Horse Industry Board, a commodity group established by legislation promoted by Maryland horse folk and operating under the auspices of the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

MHIB dedicated the bulk of their budget to getting Maryland horses counted. M.D.A. then contracted with the U.S.D.A.'s Ag Statistical Services to have the official head count.

Ag. Statistical Services has spent the past year merging and purging databases from a wide variety of sources (MDA's is a confidential database, and not available for commercial use) and crafting a survey that could capture not only how many horses are in Maryland but also the types of horses and their functions.

"We know that there are a lot of horses in Maryland, and we know the equine industry is economically important," said MDA Secretary Hagner R. Mister. "Getting an accurate count of equine animals is the first step in planning economic development, health, safety, and emergency activities and in understanding the breadth of the industry's economic impact."

Horses = Open Lands & Green Space

We do know that Maryland is becoming more and more suburbanized. We also know that suburbia pushes out traditional farming. What we are discovering is that other forms of nontraditional ag uses of farm land is thriving because of, not in spite of, suburbia. Farm related activities such as pick-your-own fruit and vegetable farms and lessons & boarding stables thrive next to suburbia. Let's face it, if you were going to operate a 30 horse lesson barn for beginning riders, where would you want it located in order for it to be profitable? Next to Columbia? Or out in a remote region where your nearest neighbor might be 20 miles down the road, and that neighbor has his own horse, and so won't

be coming to you for lessons?

This study will help identify and verify these trends and equine population centers. Armed with statistically valid information, rather than anecdotal information, leaders and legislators can make better decisions about Smart Growth and preservation programs, Green Space initiatives and park usage.

Coming in August To Your Mailbox

Maryland horse owners will soon be receiving the questionnaire. "It is important that everyone who receives a questionnaire respond," said Gregory W. Gingery, chairman of the Maryland Horse Industry Board. "Whether you own a single horse for your family's recreation use or run a large breeding or training facility, we need your input."

Anyone who owns a horse or pony of any breed, a mule, donkey or burro should receive a questionnaire.

If you do not receive a questionnaire, please call 410-841-5740 or 1-800-675-0295, and they will put you on the list and mail one to you.

In order for this study to be statistically valid, they must know to whom they are sending the survey, which is why the questionnaire won't be published here, in the *Equiery*, why blank copies will not be distributed randomly, and why you can't fill the survey out on line.

If you get the survey, but no longer own horses, they need to know that also, so please fill it out and return it.

By law, all personal and financial information is strictly confidential. However, if you are not comfortable filling out the financial information, you can still participate in the census part. Just fill out the horse related information and return.

The questionnaire is well designed, and will allow the statistician to account for horses that may be reported twice by different people, so don't worry about that. Just fill out the survey and return it a.s.a.p.!

The *Equiery* hopes to publish the results of this study sometime this winter.

To learn more about this study, log onto www.nass.usda.gov/md.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board received 72 applications for their 2002 Grant Program. The requests were evaluated for their value to the industry, the degree of industry promotion, the size and scope of the activity, financial need, and the quality of the written presentation.

\$20,000 Awarded In Grants

"I was very pleased with the overall quality of the applications this year," said Beverly Raymond, who works for the Board. "It seemed like a lot more thought and time went into the preparation, which can be an indication of the future success of their project. I think the grant writing seminar at Horse World Expo helped a lot."

The Grant Committee spent a grueling day reviewing the applications. "It was tough," said Board member Tim Capps, "there are a lot of worthy programs and hard working people out there. You want to give money to everyone."

The committee finally narrowed it down to the following 27 recipients:

Pasadena Horse & Pony Association: \$300

To hire instructors and purchase written materials for a two-day "Kids Equestrian Camp."

Meade Pony Club: \$500

For lessons to children of military dependents and who are of limited means.

Old Peoples Riding Club: \$1,000

Funding to teach people over the age of 20 fundamental horse management skills as well as riding skills.

Resource Conservation Office MDA: \$1,000

Replenishment of the neon colored pasture management measuring sticks, which provide tips for effective pasture management; sticks are distributed free at Horse World Expo as an education effort.

Linthicum 4H Hi Riders: \$1,000

Purchase of portable sound system.

Graham Equestrian Center: \$1,000

Purchase lumber to replace arena fencing.

Prison Fellowship: \$1,000

Horse care and riding clinics for 24 children of inmates.

Junior Girl Scout Troop 1932: \$500

Assistance towards Horse Lover & Horseback Rider badges.

Fresh Meadows: \$500

A series of free monthly health care seminars for horse owners.

Carroll County Equestrian Council: \$1,000

For purchase of low-rise aluminum spectator seating for Carroll County Equestrian Center.

Drillmasters: \$500

Purchase matching performance blankets and dressage letters.

Maryland 4-H Foundation: \$1,000

Jamboree to be held July 9/10 at Charles Co. fairgrounds; demonstrations, speaker fees and displays

Higher Dreams for Horses and Children: \$1000

Purchase materials to construct outdoor riding ring.

Saddle Tramps 4-H Club: \$500

Expenses to attend State competition for 4-H Club in Garrett County.

Therapeutic Riding at Normandy Farm: \$1,000

To provide dust control for outdoor riding ring.

Centaurus 4-H Club: \$300

To sponsor a county-wide 4-H Jamboree of youth-oriented equine events.

Maryland Horse Council: \$500

Print Multi-Use Trail Etiquette Brochures; cash prizes for state wide photo contest.

Howard County Economic Development Authority: \$500

Annual Howard County Horse Industry Dinner to educate participants on land use, taxation and licensing issues affecting local horse industry.

Seneca Valley Pony Club: \$400

Train upper level pony club members to prepare and teach riding lessons.

Great Strides Therapeutic Riding, Inc.: \$500

send two therapeutic riding instructors to a lunging and vaulting clinic.

Montgomery County Agriculture Center, Inc.: \$1,000

To create children's activity book about horses for distribution at County Fair and local libraries.

We 3 Polocrosse: \$1,000

For Australian instructor to teach a 4 day clinic at the Prince George's Equestrian Center.

Maryland 4-H Foundation: \$1,000

Purchase of educational materials for state horse program.

Great Falls Vaulting Team: \$500

Provide training for instructors and coaches; repair and purchase practice vaulting barrels, mats and promotional materials; transportation.

Freedom Farm Equestrian Incentive Program: \$500

To provide hands-on training in horse care, communication and stable management.

Honky Tonk 4-H Horse & Pony Club: \$1,000

Week long camp for underprivileged youth.

The Ranger Foundation, Inc.: \$1,000

Free horse care education for children and adults.

2003 GRANTS—Prepare Now

The application period for the next round of funding will be *earlier* than this last round, with a tentative deadline in late fall. MHIIB will offer a grant writing seminar at MDA in September. Check future issues of *The Equiery* for more information, or visit www.marylandhorseindustry.org.