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**“EUnetHorse: A European project to improve resilience and performance of equine farms in Europe – a focus on socio-economic performance, health, welfare and environmental sustainability.”**

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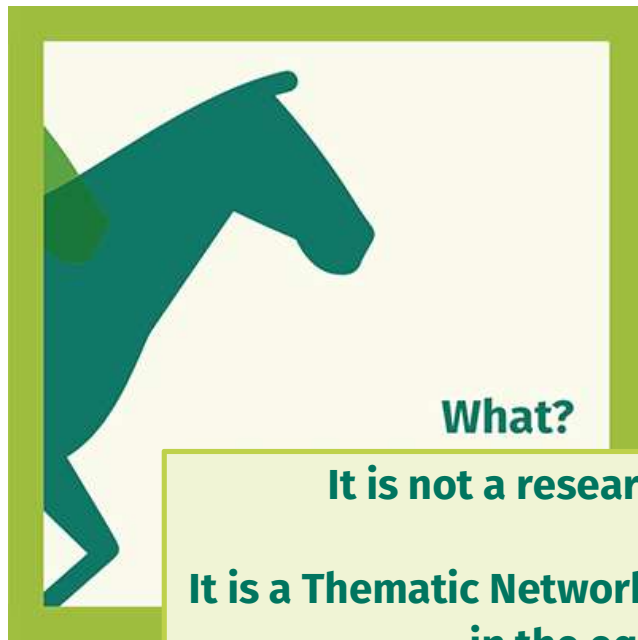


WBFSH

General Assembly, Portugal, 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 2024

# EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms

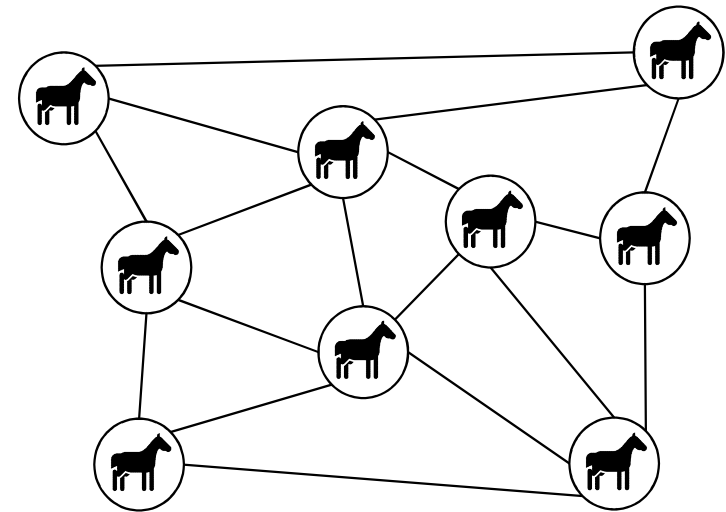




**What?**

**It is not a research project “*per se*”**

**It is a Thematic Network for knowledge exchange  
in the equine sector**



# EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms

## 9 countries; 15 partners

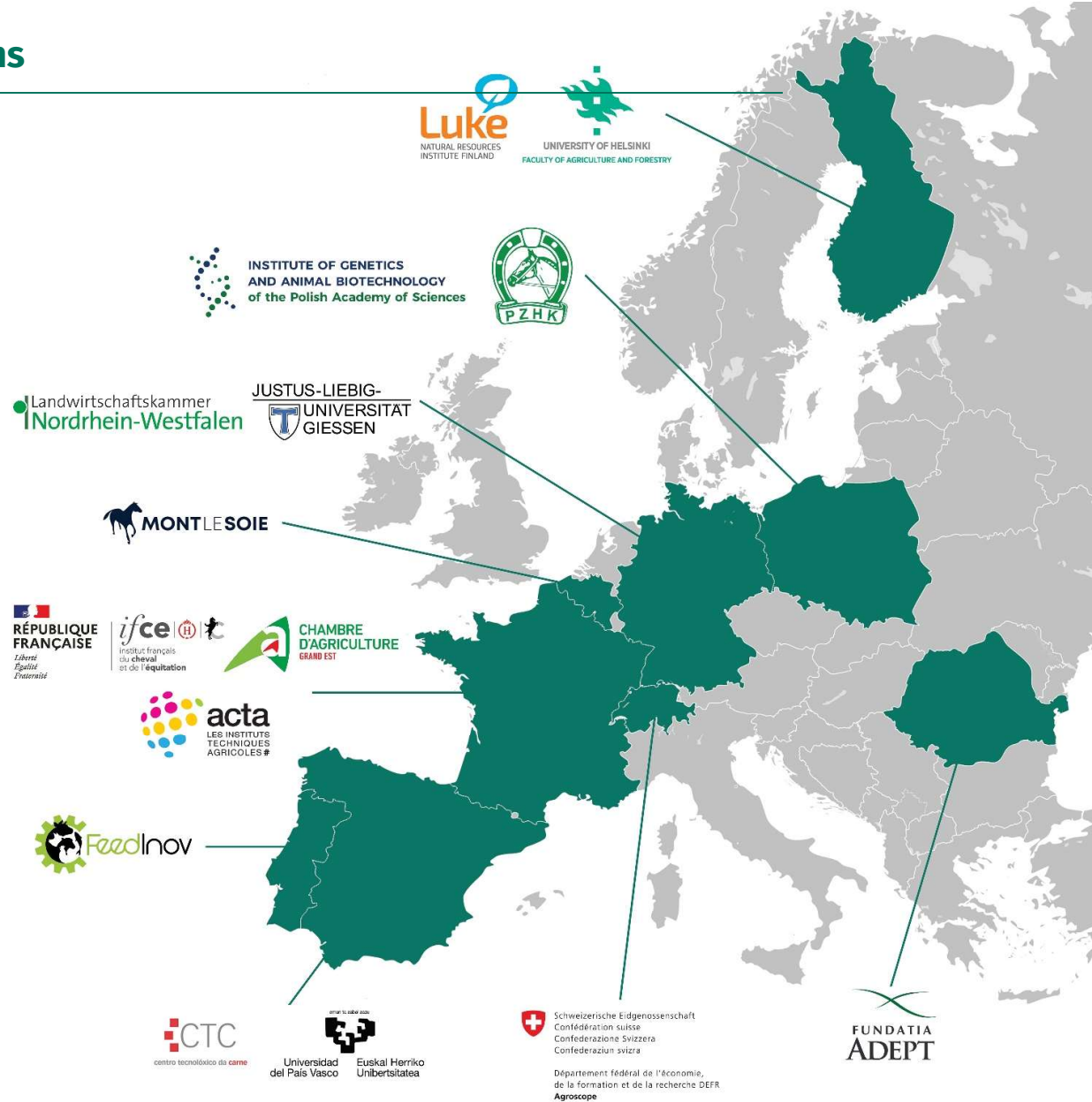
France, Belgium, Finland, Portugal, Germany, Romania, Poland, Spain & Switzerland



**Who?**

15 partners distributed among universities, research centres and agriculture chambers throughout Europe

### Coordinator



## Main objective

## What for?

To establish an active multi-stakeholder network across the European Union to increase the performance and the resilience of equine farms by widely disseminating best practices, tools and solutions in order to improve:

- ✓ Their socio-economic performance;
- ✓ The health and welfare of equines on farms;
- ✓ The environmental sustainability of the sector.

## 3 Thematic Areas

## Targets

Equine  
farmers

An equine farmer is a professional who breeds, keeps or works with horses, while at the time adds value to the utilized agricultural area. Breeders are considered as primary producers.

Trainers

Policy makers

Riders

Horses' owners

Advisors

## Duration



**When?**  
The EUnethorse project  
will last four years

from                      until  
**2023 - 2027**

## Project Phases/Steps

**How?**

**Step 1 :  
Identification of  
needs  
2023**

**Step 2 :  
Identification of  
solutions  
2024**

**Step 3 :  
Assessment of  
solutions  
2024-2026**

**Step 4 :  
Adaptation of  
solutions  
2025-2027**

**Step 5:  
Dissemination of  
solutions  
2025-2027**



## Project Phases/Steps:



## Identification of needs:

- Minimum of **40 interviews** were carried out with equine farmers in each country (representing diverse equine activities and different sectors);

### In-Depth interviews....

- Identification of farmers
- Farm history
- General info on the activity
- Socio-economic performance and resilience
- Health & Welfare
- Interaction with other agricultural sectors
- Remarks and suggestions



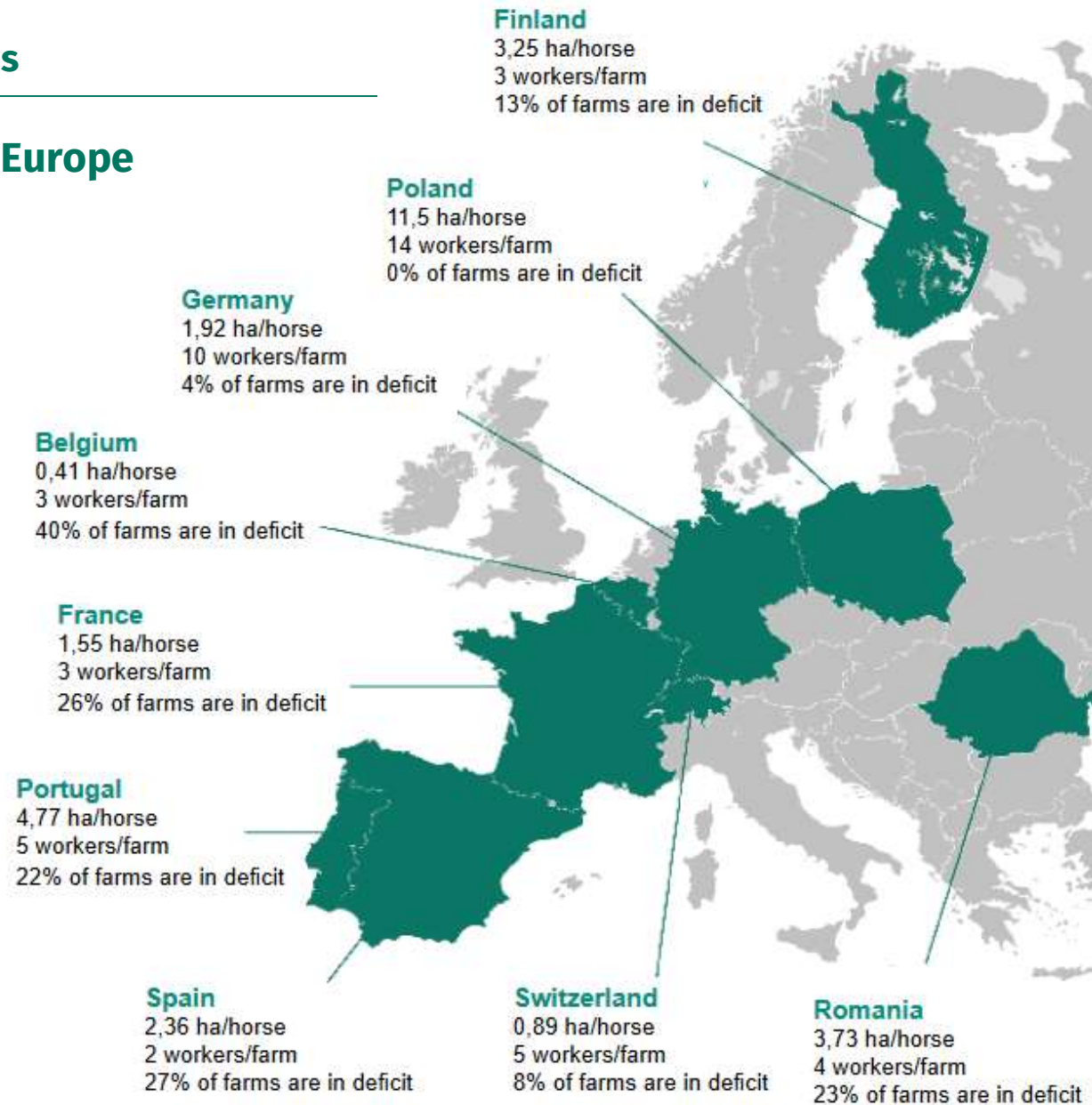
## EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms

### 305 equine farmers were interviewed across Europe



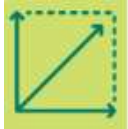
#### Location (Surveyed farms)

- ✓ 52 of the farms are close to a major city;
- ✓ 18 are close to suburbs;
- ✓ 135 are in rural areas (84 close to a village);
- ✓ 40 are isolated.
  
- ✓ 15% of the farms are in sensitive areas (areas where especial measures may be given to protect the natural habitats with a high level of vulnerability).



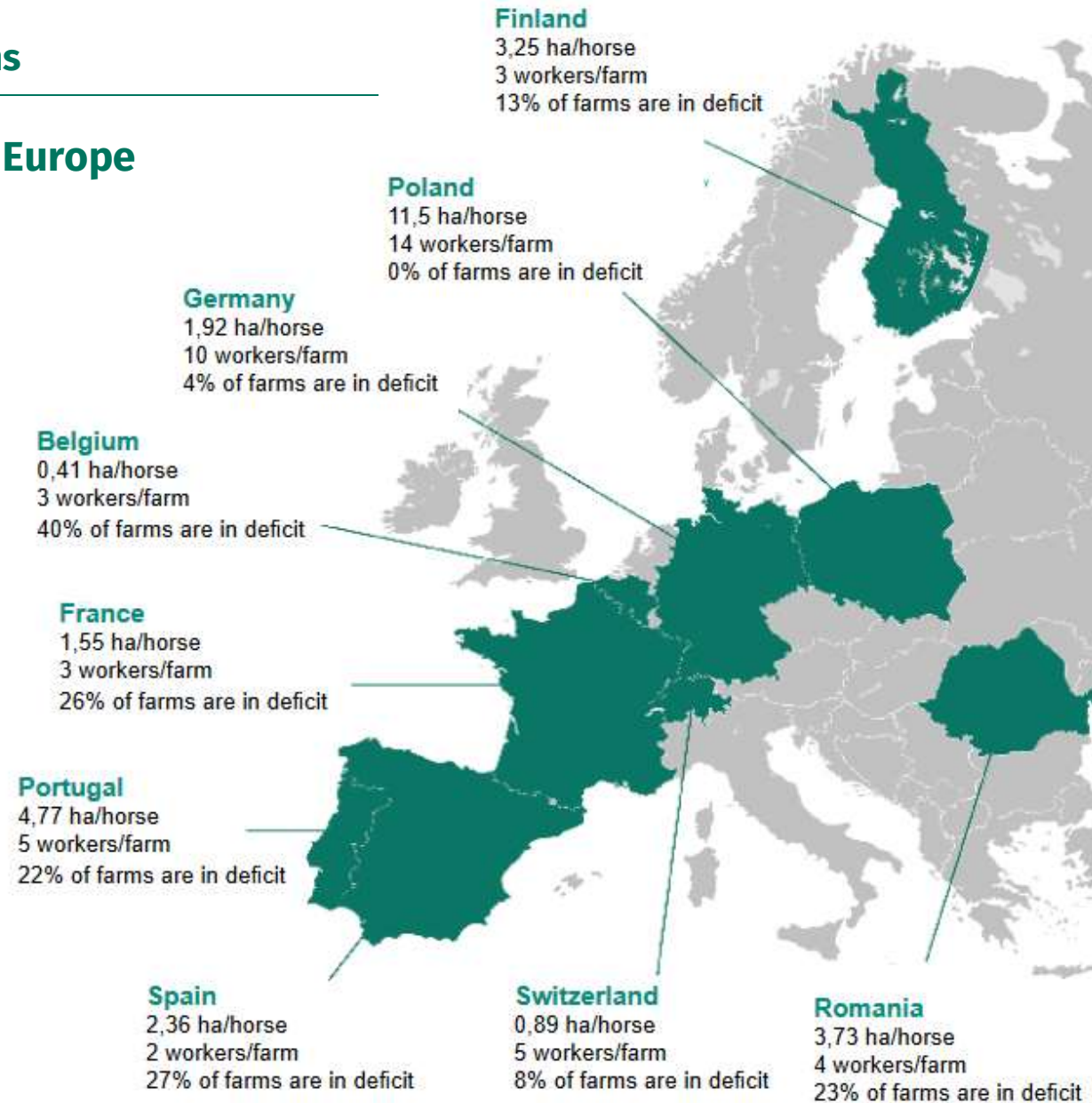
## EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms

### 305 equine farmers were interviewed across Europe



#### Farm size (Surveyed farms)

- ✓ Utilized agricultural area ranges from 1 to 5000 ha, on average 31% of it is composed of permanent meadows;
- ✓ From 1 to 520 horses per farm, the median is 25, average is 45;
- ✓ From 1 to 180 births per year and farm, median is 4, average is 10.





## EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms

### 305 equine farmers were interviewed across Europe



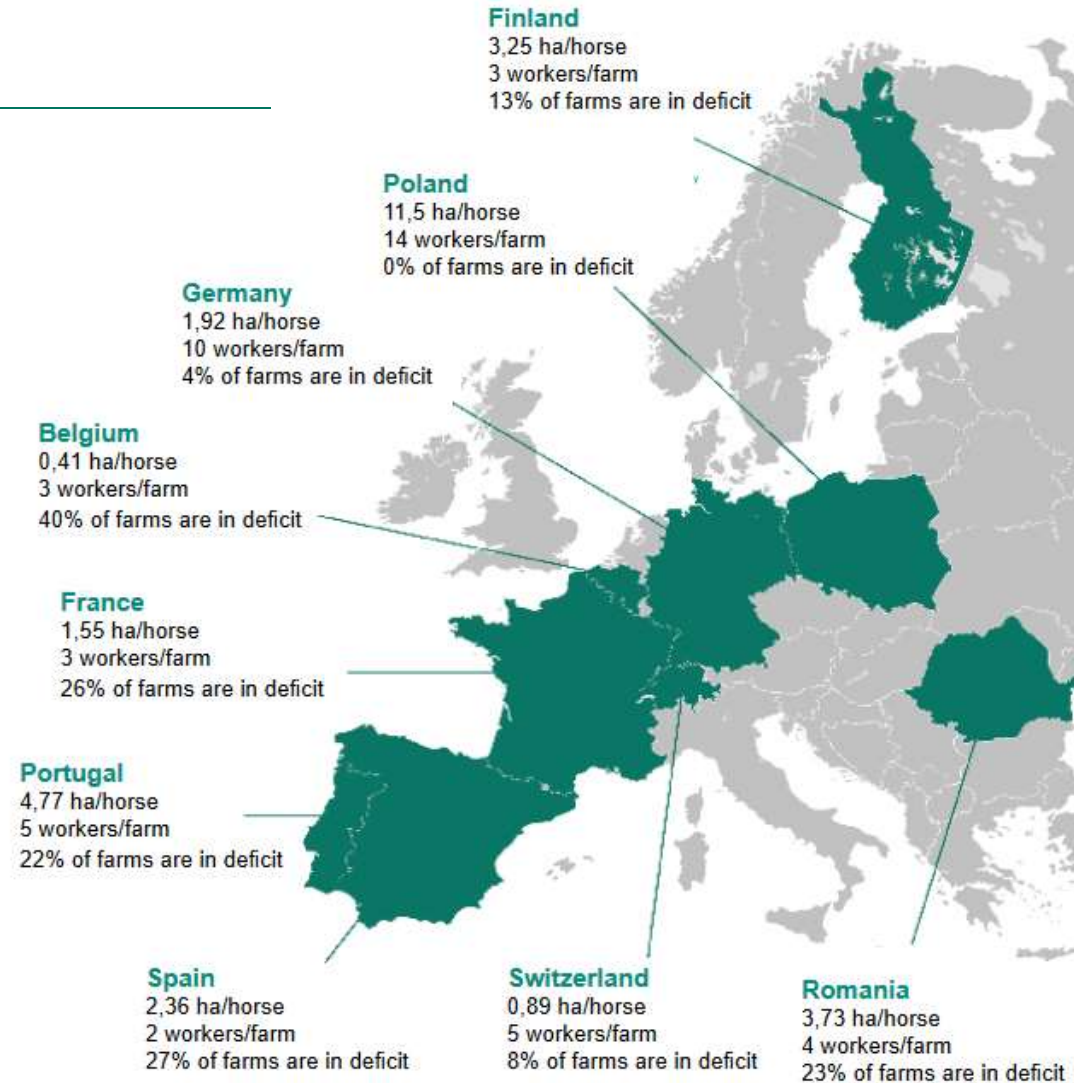
#### Farm workers (Surveyed farms)

- ✓ There is an average of 5 employees per farm;
- ✓ 43% are women.



#### Economic and performance objectives (Surveyed farms)

- ✓ For 57% of farms, equine activity is their main activity;
- ✓ Economic objectives: 44% aim to achieve economical balance, 48% aim to make a profit, 8% have no economic objectives;
- ✓ Economic performance (including salaries): 21% are in deficit, 30% break even, 48% make a profit.



## EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms



### How were collected needs prioritized?

- 1 Multi-stakeholder national workshop was organized to identify needs  
Attendees: breeders, breeders associations, researchers, academy, professional associations (equine vets, farriers), ...



The needs were then classified according to their priority

# EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms



e.g. Portugal...

A – Socio-economic resilience	Priorities
Disengagement of stakeholders	1º
Absence of political involvement	2º
Resistance to change	2º
High production costs (*)	2º
Differentiated training (*)	3º
Piroplasmosis (*)	4º
Uncertainty of the market (seasonal, “fashionable” and very variable ) (*)	5º
Product differentiation (*)	5º

(\*) most frequently mentioned in the surveys

B – Horse health and welfare	Priorities
Communication	1º
Piroplasmosis	2º
DOD’s, Hoof’s	3º
West Nile virus	4º
Herpesvirus	5º

C – Environmental sustainability	Priorities
Communication	1º
Pasture & forages	2º
Lack of awareness among breeders	3º
Energy efficiency of the farms	4º



How were collected needs prioritized at European level?

### 1<sup>st</sup> European workshop – Dec. 2023 Lyon, France

To identify common needs and define european priorities





## European priorities:

### Socio-economics

How to improve farm profitability?

How to improve working conditions?

How to deal with issues related to access to agricultural land?

How to improve the image of the equine industry?



### Environmental sustainability

How to adapt our practices and resource management to climate change?

How to improve biodiversity while maintaining equine activities?

How to manage the pastures in the face of the various challenges to come?

### Equine health and welfare

What practices can be implemented to improve the housing conditions of horses from a welfare point of view?

What practices can be implemented to promote biosecurity and prevent emerging diseases?

## European priorities:

Socio-economics



Environmental sustainability

Equine health and welfare

### TRANSVERSAL NEEDS

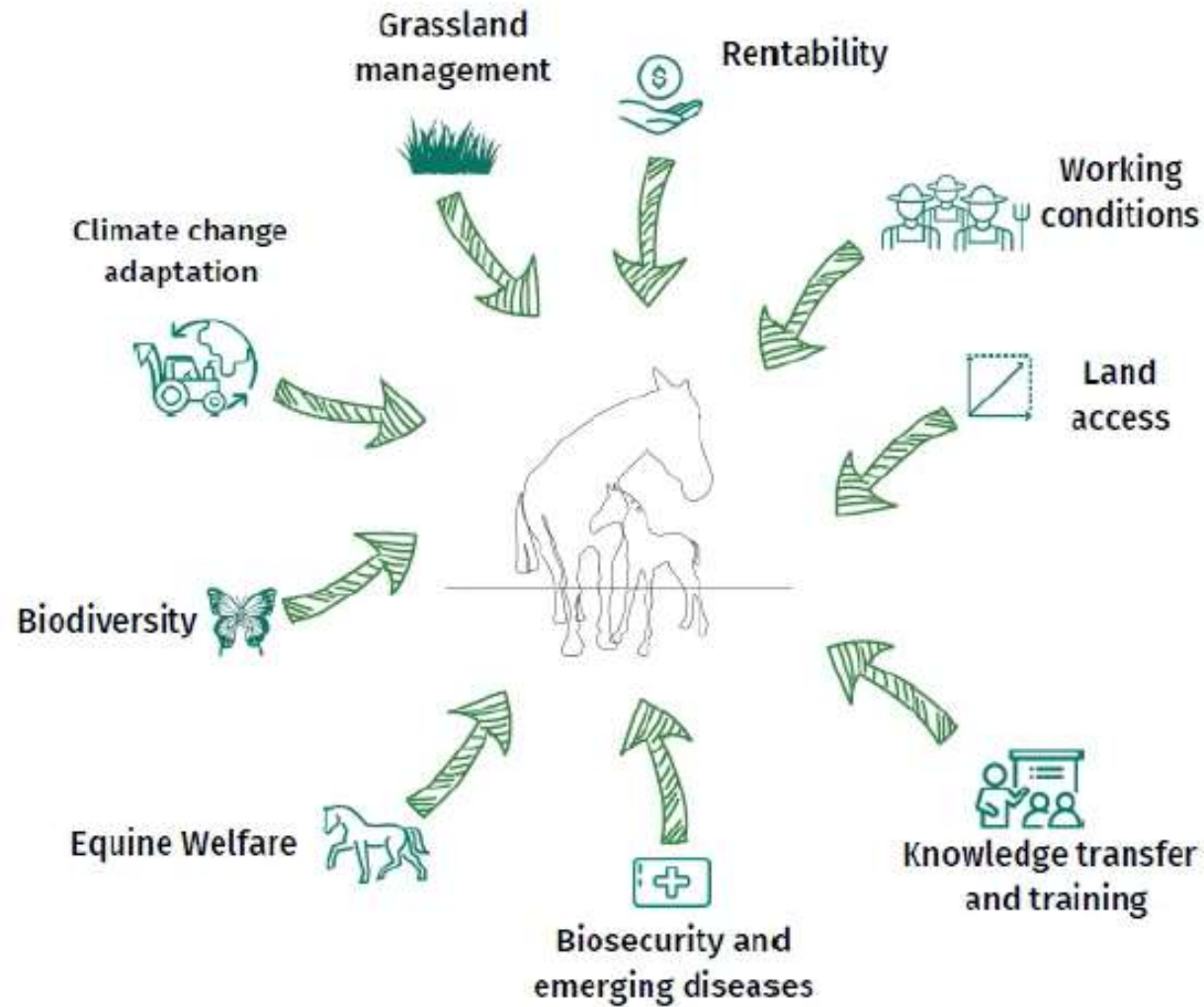
How can problems associated with access to agricultural land be solved?

How can we improve training and knowledge transfer?

# EUnethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms



## Summarizing the priorities:



## Project Phases/Steps:



## Identification of solutions

### What is a solution or best practice for EUNetHorse?

A technique, a procedure, a system, a tool, a social organization, a political or social initiative that respond to a specific need and that is possible to be implemented in daily practice in equine farms.

### Identification of solutions

The identification of solutions was based on the analysis of interviews, operational groups, focus groups, european projects, national and regional projects and literature review.

**2<sup>nd</sup> National workshop per country to describe, classify and discuss solutions.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> European workshop (20-24 May 2024, Göttingen, Germany) to discuss solutions, select them and do a matchmaking between needs and solutions.**





# EUNethorse: Improving resilience of equine farms



## Matchmaking of needs and solutions

**64 solutions were validated!**

- Green cells identify that there is at least one solution for the corresponding need;
- Red cell identify a GAP (not all needs found their match).

Priority	Official Need Number	Is there a solution linked?	Priority	Official Need Number	Is there a solution linked?
Biosecurity	1	YES	Climate change	29	YES
	2	YES		30	YES
	3	YES		31	YES
	4	YES		32	YES
	5	YES		33	YES
	6	YES		34	YES
	7	YES		35	YES
	8	YES	Biodiversity	36	YES
	9	YES		37	YES
	10	NO		38	YES
	11	YES		39	YES
	12	YES	40	YES	
	13	NO	Grassland management	41	YES
	14	YES		42	YES
15	YES	43		YES	
16	YES	44		YES	
17	YES	45		YES	
18	YES	46		NO	
19	YES	47		YES	
20	YES	Profitability		48	YES
21	YES		49	YES	
22	YES		50	YES	
23	YES		51	YES	
24	YES		52	YES	
25	NO		54	YES	
26	NO	55	YES		
27	YES	Access to land	60	YES	
28	YES		61	YES	
Working conditions	56		YES	62	YES
	57		YES	63	YES
	58		YES	64	YES
	59		YES		

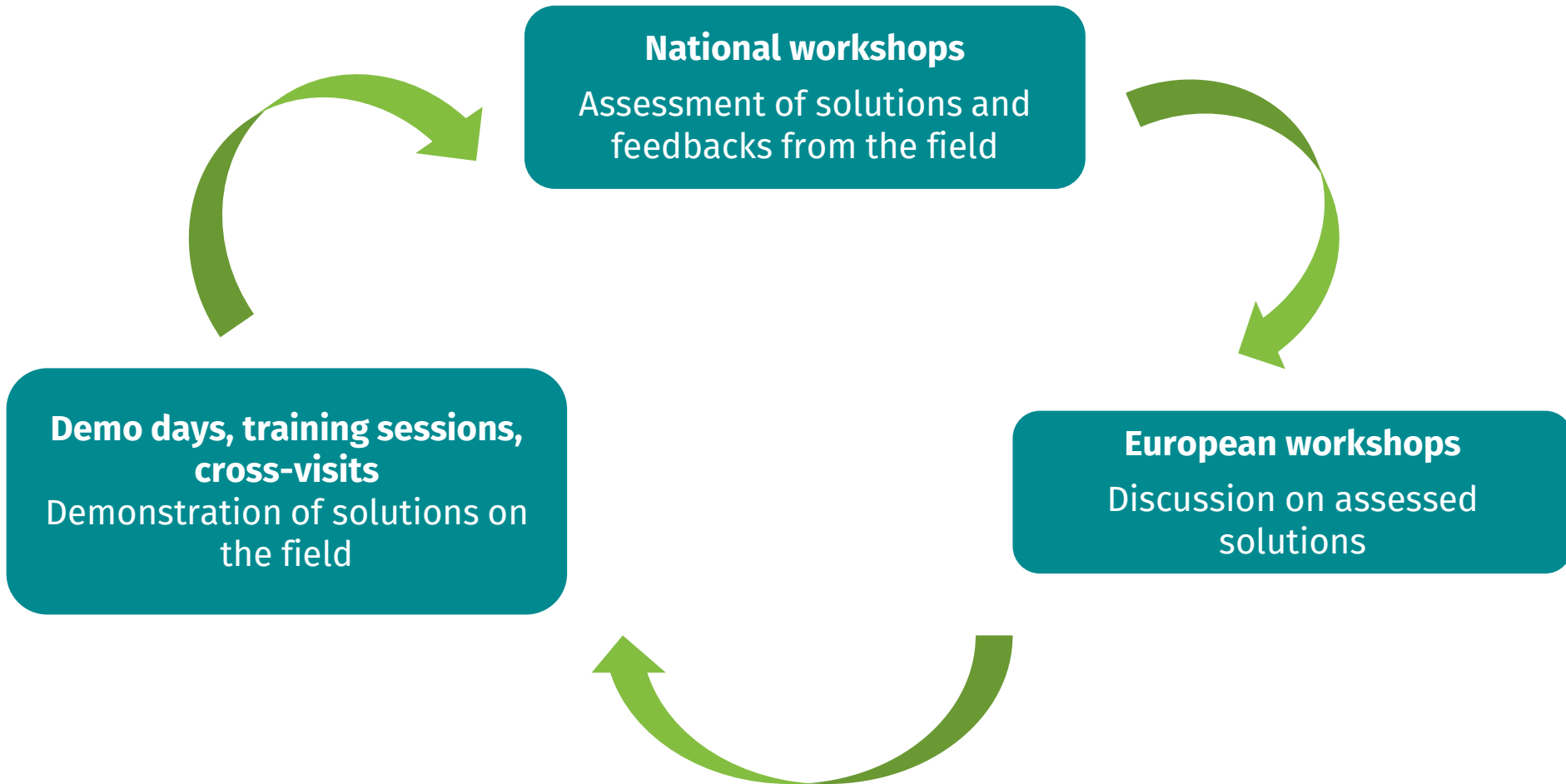
## Project Phases/Steps:



### Assessment and adaptation of solutions

(A cost-benefit analysis will be also performed)

## Assessment and adaptation of solutions:





## Project Phases/Steps:



## 2 main objectives

1. To reach farmers, trainers and advisors to facilitate the adoption of best practices in each country (e.g. training and demonstration days);
2. To maintain the practical knowledge in the long-term and beyond the project lifetime.



**EU-FarmBook**



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## Project Main Networking Activities:

- **Project Governance**



- **Cross-visits**

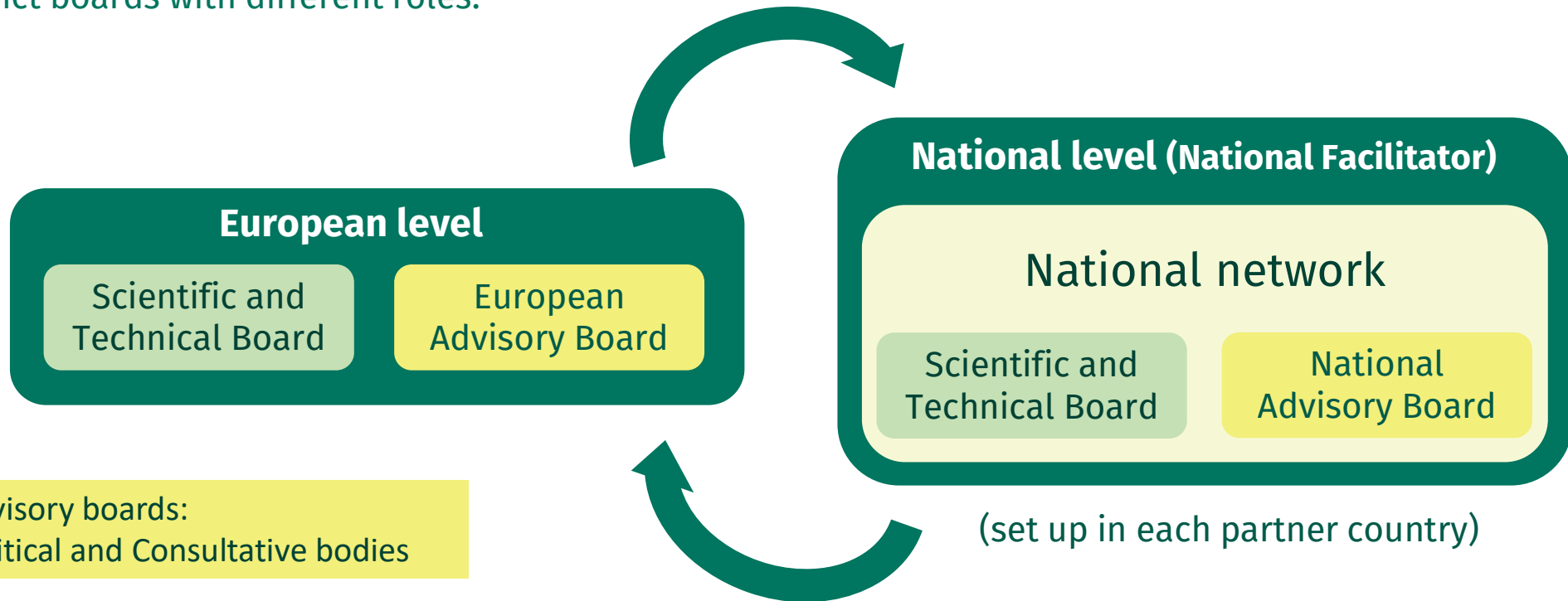


- **Trainers and Advisors Network (TANet)**



## Project governance is split into two level: European and National

Distinct boards with different roles:



Advisory boards:  
Political and Consultative bodies

Scientific and Technical boards:  
Expert and operational bodies

### European Advisory Board

Members of European and international organizations, independent of the partners, representing the equine and agricultural sector and experts:

- European Horse Network (EHN)
- European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP)
- European Federation of Working Equine (FECTU)
- Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations (COPA-COGECA)
- European Federation Thoroughbred Breeders (EFTBA)
- **Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA)**
- **World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses (WBFSH)** ←
- **World Horse Welfare**

### Cross-visits (with farmers of the different partner countries)

Cross-visits play a very relevant role in the context of knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning among actors and stakeholders of the horse sector.





## Trainers and Advisors Network (TANet)

- It was established in April 2024 with 25 trainers and advisors, coming from the 9 partner countries;
- Is a structured and animated trainers and advisors network;
- Involved in the identification of trainers' and advisors' needs
- Involved in the design of training activities;
- Will continue operating beyond the EUNethorse project.

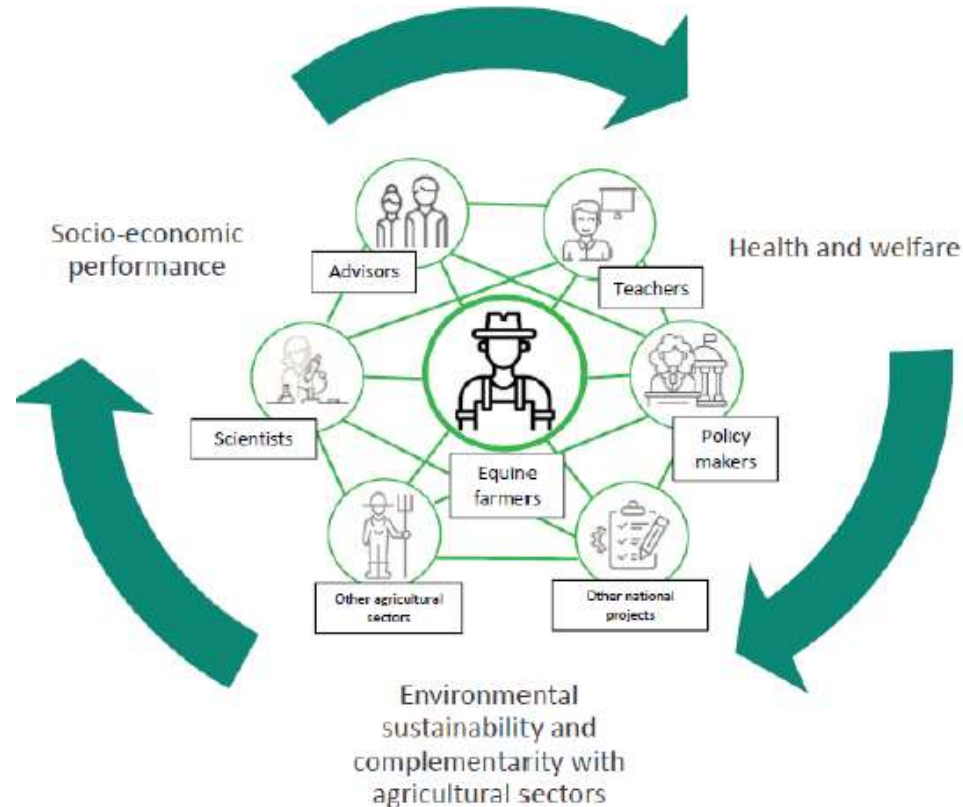
<b>BELGIUM</b>
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Christa Wyss, Agroscope Luisa Achermann, Liebegg Patrick Rüegg, Inforama Conny Herholz, BFH-HAFL Claire Brussard, Grangeneuve



## How to get involved?

### National horse-agriculture knowledge and innovating systems (NH-AKIS)

Is a multi-actor concept describing how people and organizations join together to promote mutual learning, to generate, share and use agriculture-related knowledge and information.





**Thank you!**

[www.eunethorse.eu](http://www.eunethorse.eu)

[www.ifce.fr](http://www.ifce.fr)

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Project title: ***EUropean Network for knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning between actors and stakeholders of the Horse sector to improve the resilience of equine farms***

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Funding: European Research Executive Agency (REA)

Call: HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01

Duration: 48 months, from March 1, 2023, to February 28, 2027.