



# Collaborative community project – horse welfare in Romania

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Event on the welfare of working equids – 27 June 2024



# About World Horse Welfare

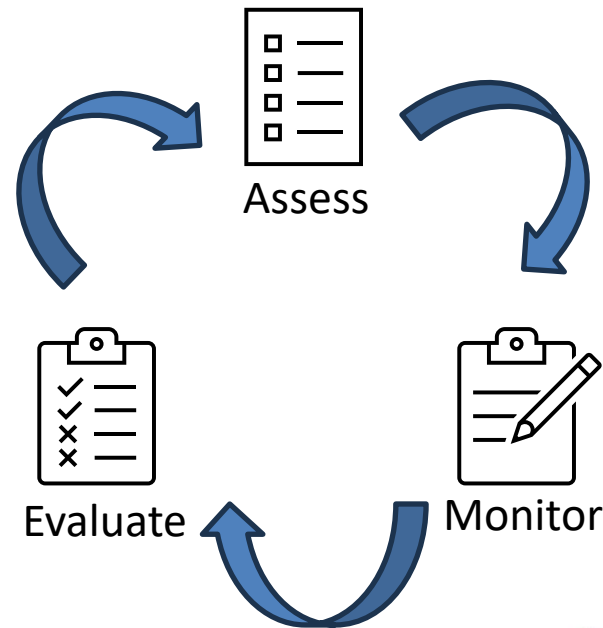
- Leading equine charity since 1927
- Present in 19 countries
- Only equine charity working with the whole equine spectrum
- Supports horse-human partnership
- Partnership working with governments, universities, sport, NGOs
- Influence EU policy – member of Eurogroup for Animals, European Horse Network, and observer at the Equine Sub-group EU Platform on animal welfare.
- Supports responsible horse sport – advisor to regulators – FEI



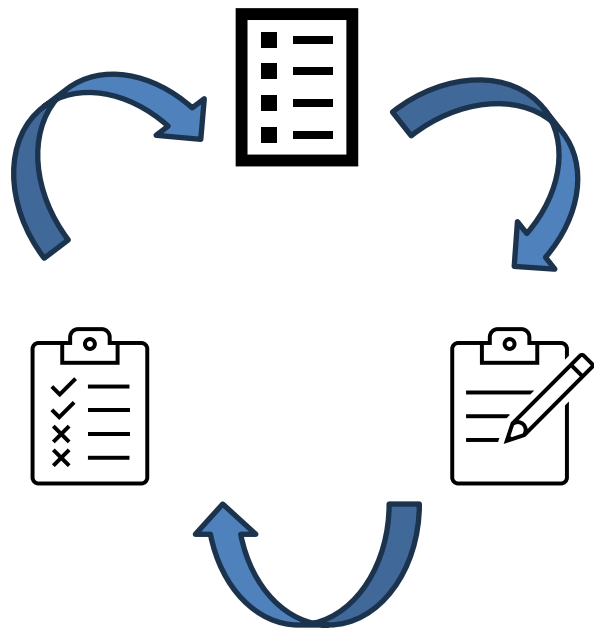
# Assessing – Monitoring – Evaluating

Help...

- ...Understanding needs and concerns
- ...Ensuring effective resource use
- ...Determining success and failures
- ...Ensuring sustainability of activities



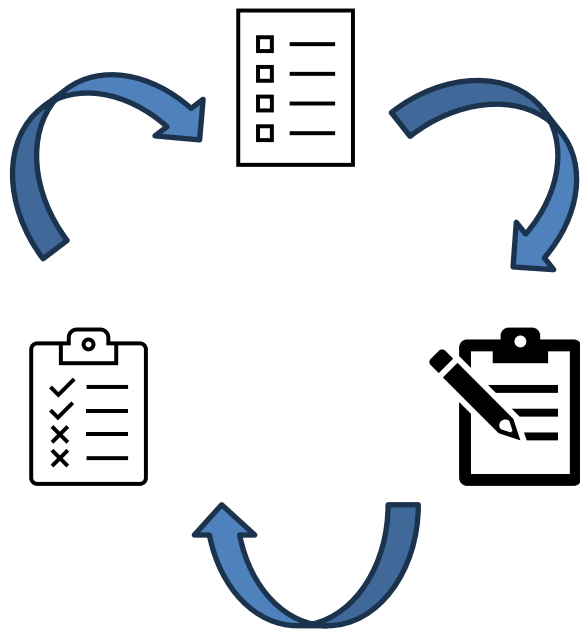
# Assessing – Monitoring – Evaluating



Determining and addressing the needs or between current and desired conditions



# Assessing – Monitoring – Evaluating



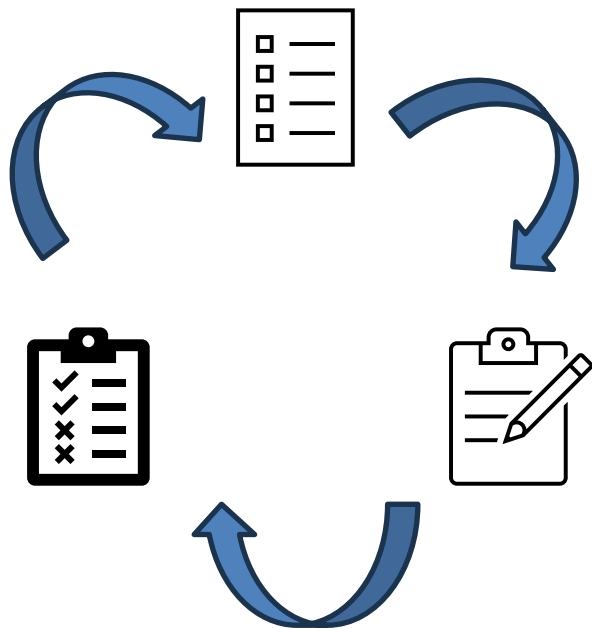
Ongoing and systematic collection and analysis of the data of the project

Aimed to measure the achievement of the objectives of the programme





# Assessing – Monitoring – Evaluating



Process to determine if the programme has met expected aims or/and changes  
It evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme



# Why Romania? - Challenges & insights

- Project between 2006-2010
- The working horses are less and less a necessity:
  - Lowering numbers; increased mechanisation
  - Less preoccupied owners;
  - Changes in horse breeding.
- Potential “new” welfare problems.
- Collaborating association Asociația pentru Bunăstarea Cailor (ABC).



# What are the project goals?

- Our overarching goal is to sustainably enhance the welfare of working horses
- Promoting owners' awareness on equine welfare
- building a sustainable positive attitude towards working horses
- Inform our decisions at the EU level – where we lobby for better legislation to protect equids







# Feasibility study

- Animal-based vs resource-based parameters
- Positive indicators
- Flexibility and adaptability of the protocol



# FEASIBILITY AND BASELINE ASSESSMENT

**1<sup>st</sup> objective: accurate record of the number of equids across Romania**

Three official sources, 2022 data:

- The National Institute of Statistics: **406,702** equids;
- The National Authority for Zootechnics: **546,727** (524,072 horses, 22,257 donkeys, and 395 hybrids) = it includes “equids in an uncertain situation”;
- The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority: **224,377** (5319 donkeys, 1 hybrid) = the minimal number of equids.



# FEASIBILITY AND BASELINE ASSESSMENT

## 2nd objective: working equid welfare conditions in selected Romanian locations (2023, completed)

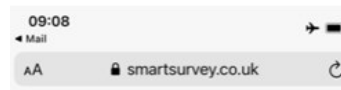
Questionnaire to horse owners in the Bistrita-Nasaud County (in the north of the country).

About 1000 working horses assessed in 31 locations between December 2022 and May 2023.

Location selection:

- Accessibility and distance;
- Good equid density;
- Agreement of the official veterinarians.

Animal-based parameters (such as open wounds, hoof conditions, lameness, etc.).



The Offline Survey feature is changing due to some planned browser updates and this link may stop working for some devices in the coming months. Our [help guide](#) has more information on what to do.

Offline Survey

Add New Response

Start Kiosk Mode

Upload All Local Responses

Completed Responses (1)

Response #1 - Mon, 09 Nov 2023  
09:08:12 GMT [upload](#) | [edit](#) | [delete](#)

[Check for Updates](#) | [Debug](#)

Offline Survey

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# Main welfare assessment results



- Respiratory difficulties
- Good body condition score
- Hoof abnormalities most severe and frequent welfare issue – lameness observed
  - 68.7% of the working horses were trimmed/shod only twice a year.
  - 22.6% of the assessed horses were trimmed/shod by someone occasionally performing this work (owner, neighbour, family member).



## Differences between the communities (horse owner interviews)

### GENERAL AND HORSE MANAGEMENT DIFFERENCES

#### Mountainous area – 2 communities

More forestry and transport work.

82% of the horses (and people) work in pairs.

80% of the working horses are geldings. Stallions are preferred for hard (forestry) work, mares are least wanted.

86% of the horses bought as adults, preferably trained for work already.

78% of the owners consider a horse “too old for work” over 15-17 years of age and find it easy to change horses.

#### Mildly hilly area – 1 community

More agriculture work and crop and milk transport.

78% of the horses work alone.

70% of the working horses are mares, 40% of these are pregnant and/or with a foal. Stallions are least preferred.

76% of the horses bought as young foals or home-produced from an existing mare.

68% of the owners prefer to work with a horse they know, even after the age of 20 years and find it complicated to change horses.





## Differences between the communities (horse owner interviews)

### ECONOMIC AWARENESS DIFFERENCES

#### Mountainous area – 2 communities

92% of the owners know the amount and price of feed for their horse(s).

32% of the owners consider that they save money by working with horses vs. tractors (but lose time).

10% of the owners mention farrier and veterinarian costs in the expenses with their horse(s).

#### Mildly hilly area – 1 community

70% of the owners struggle to calculate the feed costs for their horse(s).

64% of the owners never calculated the expenses they could have had if they did not work with a horse (saving money vs income).

No owner mentions any other cost (except for feed) if not specifically asked.



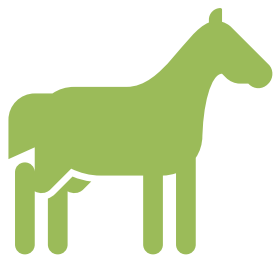
# What are we doing?



- Establishing and strengthening collaboration with horse owners and farriers
- Improving hoof care in the north of the country by training
- Build relationships and trust – improve relationship with owners through basic hoof care and community visits with vets
- We build upon existing community efforts while acknowledging the state of horse welfare



# Monitoring and evaluation



Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the yearly improvements on hoof and equine conditions, and financial status of the family/owner

→ Project in early stages so difficult to evaluate the outcomes of the project







**THANK YOU**

Any question?