

# **The reality of future jobs in the equestrian sport industry**



**The equine industry is professionalizing.**

**Educations play an important role in this professionalization by preparing more and more pupils for a future job function in the equine industry.**

**It seems that the educations are not preparing the employees the industry really needs.**

## ***'Nowadays the content of different job functions is expanded'***

As the industry itself, the number of equine educations grew rapidly as well. Educations get creative by defining their educational programme to attract more pupils. The equine educations value educating good future employees. But does this explosive growth of equine educations and pupils not affect the quality? According to educations their pupils are educated broad and versatile to be able to work in different job functions.

However, this positive view of educations is disappointing in reality. A recent research performed by Frederieke Verhaar describes the actuality of working in the equine industry. During this research she collected data and opinions of both theory (equestrian sport educations) and practice (managers and employees of equine companies). The goal was to visualize the daily activities and responsibilities of experienced professionals in the equine industry and which experiences and competencies they want to improve during their daily activities. The results were used by Verhaar to write present-day job competency profiles for the equestrian sport industry.

Managers seem to have difficulties with the changing attitudes of graduates nowadays. The job functions and job attitudes described in the new job competency profiles are therefore written down more critically and complex. A little pessimistic description of the labour market should make these graduates aware of the future.

The content of all the job functions was expanded with more general working processes like the taking care of horses. These extra working processes added are essential for most of the job functions. Points of improvement like hospitality, psychology and didactics are described more extensively to stress their importance as well. Nowadays the content of different job functions is more than only instructing.

The demand for a special job competency profile for the leisure employee equestrian sports was high. The changing tendency of the way people spending their leisure time is changing rapidly. This new job function focuses on the joy for both horse and rider. This requires a whole other mentality, skills and competencies for an employee.

Remarkably, the research also shows that most of the employees have no equine related certificate, but another mbo- or hbo-certificate. A large group even has no certificate at all. To be relying for a big part on uncertified employees or none-equine-related certificated employees is strange in this professionalizing industry. Up to 16% of the participants of this research have no certificate at all.

A research performed by Aequor in 2009 shows that the number of equine graduates on the labour market is bigger than the vacancies available. Approximately 150 graduates enter the labour market every year. According to that research a national growth of employment in the equine industry of 3,5% is expected. This will balance the labour market on the long run. However, most job functions are filled up by current relationships of or within companies. This seems to be a typical characteristic of the equine industry. This causes the number of vacancies to stay lower than the number of people actually available on the labour market in the future. These statements were recognized by most of the managers participating in the research of Verhaar.

The research indicates that this problem can be caused by both the educations or the industry. Companies can be unaware of working with specified equestrian graduates. A big part of the equine companies work with volunteers and freelance employees regularly, who are financially attractive. Hereby it seems that a relevant education is less important. On the other hand it is possible that the educations and their graduates do not meet the demands of the market. In this case an alignment should be made between the educations and the actual practice.

The new job competency profiles developed should be a new basis for the future of the equine industry.

Article about: thesis report *'Dream job in reality'*  
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