

Action Recommendations

How can we expand the economic impacts of the equine sector in Eastern Kentucky?

Expanding the economic impacts of the equine sector in Eastern Kentucky will require

- *A belief in the possibility of change*
- *A shared vision of a future economy where the equine sector is prominent and valued*
- *An organization focusing on growing the equine sector*
- *Time*
- *Collaborative partnerships (public-private, private-private, public-public)*
- *Private and public investments*

SHORT TERM (1 – 3 YEARS TO COMPLETE)

- **Build the organizational capacity to grow the economic value of the equine sector in Eastern Kentucky**
- **Build public knowledge of the economic impacts of the equine sector**
 1. Increase public understanding within the region of the economic potential of the equine sector by:
 - a. Collecting stories from business owners on the impact of horse-related purchases on their bottom line and publish these stories in diverse outlets
 - b. If possible, utilize secondary data to establish estimates of current economic impact of the equine sector
 - c. Develop a multimedia presentation on the cultural heritage of horses in Eastern Kentucky and present to diverse community groups
- **Develop an inventory of the region's equine-related assets**
 1. With volunteers from each county using an identical survey, inventory each county's equine-related assets
 2. Use public records to identify ownership of assets
 3. Volunteers take photographs of existing public assets
 4. Volunteers take videos of the ways in which the equine-related assets can be explored on horseback
- **Evaluate quality of existing equine-related assets and determine quick and volunteer driven improvements that would enhance the use experience**

Action Recommendations: expanding the economic impacts of the equine sector in Eastern Kentucky

1. Identify the top two equine assets in each county that would provide significant value if improved
 2. Identify the resources required to make the identified improvements
 3. Seek volunteers from county, regional and state organizations to implement improvements
- **Market existing equine-related assets**
 1. Create potential Horse Lovers Get-Aways (2 - 5 days) and/or Photographers Vacations. These require regional partners to present possible itineraries with daily choices for morning, afternoon and evening activities, where to stay and options for eating for each route of each number of days.
 2. Use the photos and videos provided by volunteers to illustrate opportunities
 3. Identify 3-5 starting points to build the activities for each morning, afternoon, and evening as well as places to stay and each
 4. Partner with Appalshop and Mountain Tech Media for marketing
 5. Market with a strong emphasis on Internet outlets including You Tube
 6. Co-market by incorporating information on equine-related assets into existing county and trail town and state park promotions
 - **Build public and private commitment to expanding the economic impacts of the equine sector**
 1. Coordinate the timing of horse related events so that they are spaced close enough to encourage visitors to stay for more than one event but don't fully overlap
 2. Develop a regional calendar of events so that organizers can collaborate on more effective scheduling
 3. Identify additional horse-related events that can be sponsored by public or private entities to bring new visitors to the area (e.g., field trials - dogs and horses with shooting competitions, endurance races, or specialized events such as teen trail rides, all women trail rides, midnight trail rides)
 - **Complete the planning and acquisition of required approvals for a 50 mile endurance competition**
 1. Create an organizing committee
 2. Inventory existing trails on a single map and update once a year
 3. Bring in a professional endurance course developer to provide recommendations on a course

4. Send riders onto several proposed course routes with Go Pros to assess the visual value and difficulty and to identify improvements needed
 5. Identify sponsors for endurance competition
 6. Develop an operational budget
- **Nurture the establishment of one new horse-related business in the region**
 1. Collaborate with KCARD (KY Center for Agricultural and Rural Development), Morehead State University, and the Small Business Development Center
 2. Host at least one workshop on the fundamentals of business planning for equine-related tourism businesses in each of the counties
 3. Work with local banks and private investors to identify potential sources of business start-up funding
 4. Engage operators of existing horse-related tourism businesses as mentors for new business start-ups
 - **Market the new horse-related tourism business with others in the region through interviews in the local newspapers, postings on social media, and discount opportunities for linked horse-related activities following a visit to the new business**
 - **Convene a state summit to address "Innovative approaches to addressing the insurance and liability concerns of horse-related businesses" with the following goals:**
 1. Explain the existing Kentucky legal environment for horse-related businesses
 2. An overview of how other states have created a more friendly legal environment for horse-related businesses
 3. Identify changes in Kentucky laws and regulations that would improve the business environment for horse-related businesses
 4. Establish a planning committee with persons from at least the following groups: insurance providers, state representatives and senators, owner/operators of horse-related businesses, KY Department of Insurance
 5. Identify a day, time and location for the summit
 6. Develop a list of potential speakers who can provide an overview of national initiatives re liability and property insurance for horse-related businesses
 7. Build a list of invitees who will receive a "save the date" alert followed by a specific invitation to attend

MID-TERM ACTIONS (3 TO 5 YEARS TO COMPLETE)

- **Increase youth involvement in horse-related activities**
 1. In collaboration with community partners, plan a series of youth fun horse activities/events (e.g, read to a horse, gymkhanas for youth with horses, coloring contests, etc.)
 2. Sponsor at least one new 4-H Horse Club and one new 4-H Horseless Club in the region
 3. Evaluate the interest in participating in a horse-related club by youth and their parents in the counties of the region
 4. Select one or two counties to host the new clubs
 5. In each county, find at least 3 volunteers who are willing to be certified and serve as club leaders
 6. Get the volunteer leaders certified by 4-H
 7. Attract participants to one of the types of clubs (horse bowl, photography, arts and crafts, riding)

- **Develop and/or enhance the infrastructure essential for growing the economic impact of the equine sector**
 1. Develop new and enhance trail riding opportunities in the region
 2. Mark and map existing trails
 3. Create new public access points with trailer parking and water for existing trails
 4. Establish new trails with public access, trailer parking and water
 5. Identify opportunities to link existing trails within the region into a connected system
 6. Collaborate with existing certified trail towns and other communities along existing and new trails to create an inviting environment for horse riding visitors (e.g., hitching posts, water stations)
 7. Encourage the development of overnight choices for those who visit the region for horse related activities
 8. With the state Bed & Breakfast Association host a workshop on the fundamentals of operating a Bed & Breakfast to encourage overnight horse boarding facilities
 9. In partnership with KY Dept of Tourism and others, host a workshop with guest speakers from the west to provide information on full service "dude ranches"

- **Explore options for increasing access to equine health service providers (i.e., veterinarians, farriers, equine dentists) in the region**

- **Increase the economic impact of horse-related businesses in the region**

1. Convene a summit of existing manufacturers, economic development agencies and Appalachian Proud representatives to assess opportunities to establish manufacturing capacity related to horses by building on existing knowledge and skills (e.g., stall components, gates, metal components, mounting blocks, fencing, leather work, portable corrals, tack boxes, saddle racks).
2. Continue to work with existing retail businesses, craftsmen and entrepreneurs to identify opportunities for value-added design and production businesses (e.g., horse themed arts, jewelry, crafts)

This document was prepared by Dr. Lori Garkovich, from a strategy session held in Hindman Kentucky on September 9, 2016.. The session was organized by the Appalachian Horse Center.

In attendance were 20 professionals and individuals interested in the Equine Economy representing the Appalachian Horse Center, Kentucky Horse Council, KEEP, the KY Community College System, Judge Executives from Breathitt and Knott County, retired Big South Fork National Park Supervisor, U. of Kentucky Breathitt Co. Extension Office, McKee Trail Town, Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky Senators and Representatives, horsemen from Breathitt and Magoffin, and tourism advocates from Magoffin. Also invited but unable to attend were the Morehead State Vet Tech Program and Farm Bureau.

