

# *Horses of Iceland*



**Goals – Activities – Results 2017**

## **MAIN GOAL**

The purpose of the Horses of Iceland (HOI) project is to increase the awareness of and strengthen the image of the Icelandic horse internationally. The main goal is to lay the groundwork for increased value creation and increased foreign currency income from the sale of Icelandic horses, related products and services with professional and progressive marketing under the slogan Horses of Iceland – bring you closer to nature.

## **EMPHASIS**

Emphasis is placed on wide-reaching collaboration between members of the Icelandic horse community around the world to ensure that the message delivered through marketing is unified and to give the project increased weight. The project is carried out with long-term goals in mind.

Special emphasis is placed on digital media, the project's website and social media, to reach as large an audience as possible, all around the world. Synergy in marketing with other industries represented by Promote Iceland – such as tourism through Inspired by Iceland and promotion of Icelandic culture through Iceland Naturally – is also important.

## **TARGET GROUPS AND MARKETS**

In 2017, the plan was to reach the following target groups: 1) Foreign parties all over the world who already have some connection to the Icelandic horse; 2) Tourists in Iceland and travellers passing through Keflavik International Airport. Promotional videos were, for example, screened in the in-flight entertainment system of Icelandair and advertisements published in the in-flight magazines of Icelandair and Air Iceland Connect.

In 2018, in addition to these target groups, emphasis will be placed on reaching the owners and riders of other horse breeds. They are to be introduced to the Icelandic horse and made aware of its qualities. The goal is to make them curious enough to book tours, buy products or services relating to the Icelandic horse – or even buy a horse – and in that way, further trade relating to the Icelandic horse.

Another goal is that when a new foreign partner is recruited to the project, an Icelandic horse association, for example, increased effort is invested in marketing the Icelandic horse in that respective country and to reinforce the cooperation.

In 2017, great emphasis was placed on marketing in Germany, where there are more Icelandic horses than in any other country outside Iceland; the Netherlands, where the World Championships for Icelandic Horses was held; and in Sweden, where the Swedish Icelandic Horse Association is a partner to the project.

Funding was also provided for marketing in the USA as the United States Icelandic Horse Congress is also a partner to the project, although their involvement is on a smaller scale than that of Icelandic horse associations in other countries.

Trough digital media, people can be reached strategically according to their country of origin, gender, age and interests. This is something HOI has taken advantage of, especially on Facebook.

## **MARKETING ACTIVITIES, PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL AND EVENTS IN 2017**

### **Shows and events:**

- The international day of the Icelandic horse on 1<sup>st</sup> May (an annual event)
- Horse parade in central Reykjavík on 30<sup>th</sup> April (in cooperation with the Icelandic Equestrian Association)
- Cooperation with the Swedish Icelandic horse association at EuroHorse in Sweden in February (teaching demonstration)
- A stand at Equitana in Essen, Germany, in March
- The World Championships for Icelandic horses in the Netherlands in August
- Taking foreign journalists to Laufskálaréttir horse roundup and on visits (to Hólar University College, among other places)
- Presentation of cultural events at Munsterland Festival in Germany in October
- A stand at the Equine Affair trade show in Springfield, MA, USA, in November (in cooperation with the United States Icelandic Horse Congress)
- A stand at the Sweden International Horse Show in Stockholm, Sweden (in cooperation with the Swedish Icelandic Horse Association)
- A visit to the Pferd & Jagd fair in Hannover, Germany

### **The Horses of Iceland website:**

As the official site of the Icelandic horse, HorsesofIceland.is hosts all the necessary information about the Icelandic horse, as well as all the content created as part of the project.

The website is now available in four languages: Icelandic, English, German and Swedish. The website is currently being updated and the new version is set to be launched this January.

The intention is for the website to be active with new content published regularly, including stories and events, and new photos added to the archive, showing at the top of the page. The plan is to add new features, for example “contributing writer”, where a notable person from the Icelandic horse community is asked to write about a topic relating to the Icelandic horse.

### **Brochures and promotional material:**

An elaborate brochure about the Icelandic horse has been published in four languages: English, German, Swedish and Chinese. One of the tasks in 2018 is to publish the brochure in Icelandic.

### **Newsletter mailing list:**

On the project’s website, people can register to a mailing list and currently almost 4,000 people around the world receive our newsletter regularly.

### **Social media:**

The Icelandic horse is hugely successful on social media. Our followers on Facebook and Instagram – our main platforms, along with YouTube – now number around 67,000 people. A contractor is responsible for creating most of the content for social media.

Our followers are particularly active. Our entries have a very high engagement rate, which is an indicator for how many people like, comment on and share our content. This makes social media an excellent platform to reach a large group of people.

### **Videos:**

Five major videos have been produced as part of the project, in addition to a number of other shorter videos. They are accessible on the project's website, YouTube and Facebook.

The gait video, which was published in October, was incredibly well received and by the end of 2017, it had been viewed 934,000 times.

The latest video, the main HOI promotional video – or “hero” video – premiered last November. It has also garnered significant attention, having been viewed 893,000 times by the end of 2017.

### **The promotion of partners:**

Partners who contribute to the project with ISK 150,000 or more are given a special promotion about their operations and/or services on HOI's social media platforms. The following partners have been promoted:

1. The Icelandic Equestrian Association
2. Icelandair Cargo
3. Hey Iceland
4. Eldhestar
5. The Swedish Icelandic Horse Association
6. Íshestar
7. Hof á Höfðaströnd
8. Íslenski hesturinn/The Icelandic Horse
9. Sólvangur Icelandic Horse Center
10. Riding Iceland
11. Margrétarhof Horsebreeding Farm
12. Skjaldarvík
13. MAST – Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority
14. Lífland
15. Hrímnir

Blesastaðir and Vesturkot have been visited and special promotions about these partners will be published in January or February 2018. One or two partners are usually covered each month.

Partners who contribute to the project with ISK 300,000 or more are given access to the HOI stand at the trade shows and fairs in which the project participates. Partners can make good use of the facilities and

promote their companies, give presentations, distribute promotional material, screen promotional videos and have their company's logo printed on one of the walls of the stand.

Furthermore, the HOI project has been presented at numerous occasions, including a FEIF congress, an Icelandic Equestrian Association board meeting, the general assembly of the Horse Breeders Association of Iceland, the national assembly of the Norwegian Icelandic Horse Association, among others.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017 / MEASURABLE SUCCESS IN 2017**

### Equitana

HOI participated in the Equitana fair in Essen in Germany 18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March with an elaborate 63-square-meter stand. In addition to promoting the HOI project, partners (who contributed with ISK 300,000 or more) were able to promote their operations, products and services and distribute promotional material. Equitana is the largest fair for equestrian sports in Europe and at one point attendees numbered 30,000. This is the first time that the HOI participates in an international fair like Equitana, but the Icelandic horse association in Germany and Icelandic companies have attended the fair for years. In 2017, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir came to the fair. HOI's representatives guided the minister around the fair, she participated in a meeting with the German association and discussed the success which can be achieved when parties of interest from all over the world join efforts in promoting the Icelandic horse, among other issues. The minister formally opened the sale of tickets to Landsmót, the 2018 national horse festival, which will be held in Reykjavík in early July.

Demonstrations of Icelandic horses took place with regular intervals in a paddock inside the arena. Helmut Bramesfeld, world champion in 200-m flying pace demonstrated exercises, for example where he controlled three horses without any gear, performing all sorts of tricks, using a so-called Natural Horsemanship method.

### The World Championships for Icelandic Horses

At the championships, Promote Iceland supervised a tent, dedicated to Iceland. Inside the tent, HOI (and partners), Landsmót national horse festival and a few companies had separate stands where they promoted their products and services. The championships were attended by 40,000 people from all over the world. Receptions were held for guests, partners and the Icelandic national team, and Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir, minister of fisheries of agriculture, was the guest of honour. A special luncheon was held in the honour of President of Iceland Guðni Th. Jóhannesson. Partners were promoted at the championships, and videos and other marketing material was distributed to guests.

### Munsterland Festival in Germany

An art and music festival is held annually in Munster, Germany. Every year, different countries are special guests and last year Iceland and Greece were in the limelight. The Icelandic Embassy in Berlin helped organise Iceland's participation in the festival. The Icelandic horse was honoured on the opening day of when a large group of riders rode through Munster. Presentations were held, promotional material screened and distributed, and Icelandic films, dedicated to the Icelandic horse, were shown. Approximately 100 people participated in the group ride and 200 people listened to the presentations.

### Equine Affair in USA

HOI participated in Equine Affair in USA, a four-day trade show in Springfield, MA, where 50 different horse breeds are presented. HOI in cooperation with the United States Icelandic Horse Congress

organised the presentation of the Icelandic horse. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people attended the trade show. Visitors were very interested – the promotional material ran out on day three.

### Sweden International Horse Show

Held in Friends Arena in Solna, Sweden, it is estimated that 90,000 people attended the show. There were teaching demonstrations with Icelandic horses and HOI participated in the evening program on Friday and Saturday. Between 10,000 and 15,000 people were in the audience on these two nights. Shows and teaching demos were of top quality. World champions and other professionals from the international Icelandic horse community were involved.

### Studies

A survey was carried out among members of FEIF – the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations. A questionnaire in four languages was sent out to all members of FEIF in 21 countries. About 110 people responded to the survey. The results were presented at a meeting with HOI partners in September 2017. A report with the conclusions was sent to the partners and posted in their closed group on Facebook. The main conclusions will also be presented to the public this winter.

### Social media

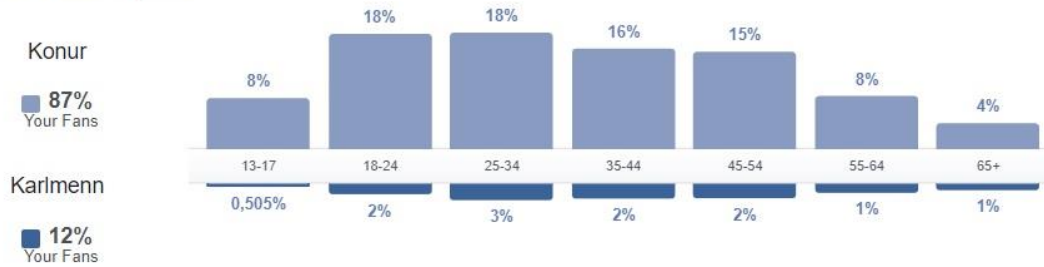
Content from HOI has appeared in the news feed of several million people on social media. This is likely the largest and most extensive promotion ever given to the Icelandic horse, now in the age of digital media. HOI has more than 67,000 followers on social media. The majority of followers are women (87%). The followers are characterised by how active they are (the engagement rate on Instagram is 17.6% and around 8% on Facebook). This indicates that followers actively view, like, share and comment on the content we publish. For example, the two latest videos, the gait video and “hero” video, have each been shared approximately 11,000 times.

Follower growth over time:



## Followers by age group:

Aggregated demographic data about the people who like your Page based on the age and gender information they provide in their user profiles.



## Followers by country:

Germany	10,330	Czech Republic	90
Sweden	3,924	Portugal	89
USA	3,765	Greece	84
Iceland	2,415	New Zealand	79
Denmark	2,168	Hungary	78
Norway	1,686	Pakistan	65
UK	1,516	Thailand	61
The Netherlands	1,414	Slovenia	58
Austria	998	South Africa	58
Canada	691	Lithuania	55
Finland	669	Argentina	50
Switzerland	561	Turkey	50
France	546	Faroe Islands	41
Italy	527	Taiwan	41
Australia	410	Japan	40
Poland	385	Slovakia	40
Belgium	310	Russia	38
Spain	187	The Philippines	38
Ireland	147	Luxembourg	38
Brazil	144	Bulgaria	36
Mexico	129	Algeria	32
India	108	Egypt	31
Romania	104		

## Public relations – newspapers/magazines/media/television

At the end of September, two German journalists were invited to come to Iceland to observe the Laufskálaréttir horse roundup. They represented two major newspapers in Germany:

- Nürnberger Zeitung, published in 281,240 copies. The estimated value of one page is ISK 2,764,332
- Stuttgarter Zeitung, published in 411,950 copies. The estimated value of one page is ISK 9,702,748

An Icelandic journalist also joined the trip to Laufskálaréttir. She writes for My North, the in-flight magazine for Air Iceland Connect. The magazine is available to all passengers flying to the airline's destinations in Iceland and abroad.

Videos were screened in the in-flight entertainment system on all Icelandair aircraft, a short video from July to December (seen by all passengers) and a longer video under "promos" from October to December.

HOI also published advertisements in Icelandair Stopover, the Icelandair in-flight magazine, which is distributed onboard all aircraft, from July to December. The magazine is published in 50,000 copies. The number of passengers flying with Icelandair in that period (sold seats) number 2.3 million. According to an in-flight survey, approximately 60% of passengers read the magazine.

## **MEASUREMENT TOOLS**

Below are the measurement tools, inner and outer factors, used to estimate the results of HOI marketing initiatives and monitor the development of operations related to the project.

### **Outer:**

- Quantity, value and market share
- Turnover and foreign exchange income from export
  - Number of horses and value by countries
  - Export of products (note tax categories)
  - Tourism in Iceland: how many tourists (or percentage of tourists) buy horse-related services (shorter and longer tours) and how often
  - Other services?
- Number of Icelandic horses in the world
- Number of horse associations in the world and their members
- The awareness and attitude of consumers and of other parties in the value chain

### **Inner:**

- Project funding and interest in participation, domestically and internationally
- Activity on social media
- Visits to website and activity
- The success of certain events and public relations initiatives
- The value of media coverage
- Participation and satisfaction of partners, the awareness and attitude of Icelandic and foreign partners
- Number of Icelandic and foreign parties in database



## **GAIN FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT**

Participants in the project gain the following:

- Synergy – to be a participant in a group of collaborators who are all keen to contribute to marketing the Icelandic horse.
- Attending meetings two to three times a year to review the policy and determine the focus of marketing.
- Networking with other participants – access to the HOI network of contacts.
- Access to information about marketing activities, conclusions of studies and practical knowledge.
- The opportunity to be included in marketing activities and events, such as in relation with Landsmót and the World Championships, where the project is promoted.
- Visibility and promotion of the participant, for example have the company's logo and a link to its website published on the project's website; visibility at events; have promotional material included in a media package distributed to journalists who come to Iceland in connection with the project; and promotion by direct target mail (note: this depends on the amount contributed to the project).
- Permission to use the project's slogan (Horses of Iceland – bring you closer to nature) on the company's website with a link to the project's website and access to HOI's marketing material.
- Various other opportunities, including on social media.

Further information is provided by project manager Þórdís Anna Gylfadóttir, [thordis@islandsstofa.is](mailto:thordis@islandsstofa.is). See also: [www.horsesoficeland.is](http://www.horsesoficeland.is) [www.facebook.com/horsesoficeland](https://www.facebook.com/horsesoficeland) [www.instagram.com/horsesoficeland](https://www.instagram.com/horsesoficeland)