

Entrepreneurship in equestrian tourism; business development and customer satisfaction



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The presentation

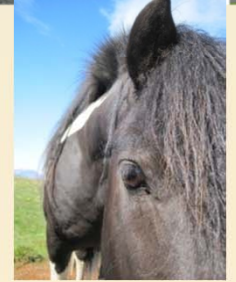
- An introduction on:
 - Horses and equestrian tourism in Iceland
- The PhD research:
 - Subject and aims
 - Research questions
 - Contribution
 - Methods
 - Preliminary findings
 - The structure of the thesis



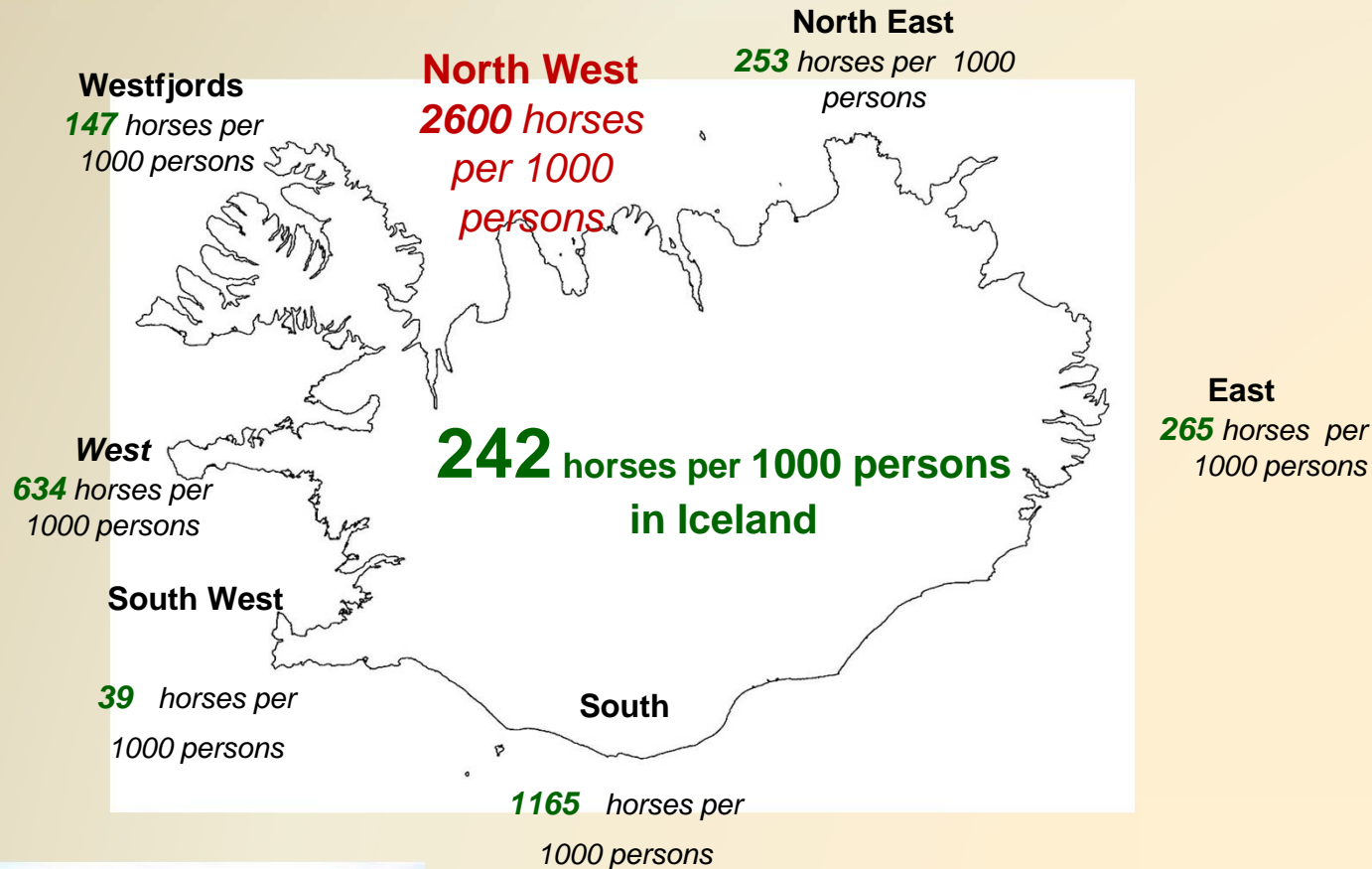
The number of horses

- **77.000** horses in Iceland
 - 170.000 Icelandic horses abroad
- **242 horses per 1000 persons in Iceland**





Horses per 1000 persons



Iceland	242
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(Sigurðardóttir, 2011)

Sweeden	31
Belgium	29
Denmark	28
Ireland	19
Great Britain	17

(Liljenstolpe, 2009)



The horse industry

- Diverse horse related business operations
 - Breeding, training, shoeing, selling...
 - Tourism including e.g:
 - horse rentals (short tours), horse trekking (longer tours), horse shows
- Events and competitions
- Education and support system



Equestrian tourism in Iceland

- About 80 businesses
- Long and short riding tours are the most common form
- 17% of all foreign guests go riding
 - About 110.000 foreign guests did go riding in year 2012 in Iceland
- The extent of the domestic market is unknown
 - Travelling on own horses also creates demand for various services



The PhD - subject and aims

- **The subject:**

- What identifies businesses and business development in equestrian tourism in Iceland and how this development contributes to the process of creating an economically sustainable horse industry in Iceland

- **Aims:**

- To enhance knowledge on business development and characteristics of horse based tourism businesses in Iceland and it's relations to the Icelandic horse industry



Research questions

The research deals with three main questions, which are the following:

- *What identifies the demand and supply sides of businesses in equestrian tourism in Iceland and its development?*
- *What is the role of equestrian tourism in developing economically sustainable horse industry in Iceland?*
- *How are equestrian tourism businesses related to other kinds of horse based operations in Iceland?*



Contribution

- Contributes to a limited but growing field of academic research on equestrianism and equestrian tourism



Methods

- Qualitative
 - Open-ended interviews
- Quantitative
 - A survey conducted through a questionnaire
- Mainly qualitative approach
 - The demand side (the customer's view) is investigated through a quantitative approach

The structure of the PhD thesis

- **An introductory chapter**
- **Article 1** – Defining equestrian tourism (a literature review)
- **Article 2** – „Riding high: Customer satisfaction in equestrian tourism“ (demand side)
- **Article 3** – „Identifying the success criteria of Icelandic horse tourism businesses; interviews with operators“ (supply side)
- *(Article 4 – The role of tourism in developing economically sustainable horse industry in Iceland (supply side))*
- **Article 5** – Development of an equestrianism cluster in North West of Iceland (the industry)
- **A concluding chapter**



The supply side/businesses of equestrian tourism - *findings*

- Developed from operator's hobby
- Have characteristics of lifestyle businesses
- Little focus on financial issues but an emphasis on surviving
- Strong focus on horses, safety and positive experience of guests



The demand side of equestrian tourism - *findings*

- High customer satisfaction
- Satisfaction is related to:
 - length and diversity of trails
 - performance and service mindness of staff
 - facilities for horses (overseas visitors)
- Different focusgroups
 - Short vs. long riding tours
 - Domestic vs. international guests



Thank you



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