

Cluster development in equestrianism; an example from North West of Iceland



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The presentation

- The research
 - Purpose and aims
 - Research methods
- The study area – North West of Iceland
 - The geographical area
 - The image - horses and equestrianism
- Cluster development
 - Development of equestrianism
 - Distribution of existing horse businesses in the NW
 - Productivity and competitiveness
 - Further research
- Conclusion

The study

- **The purpose**

- To analyse cluster development in relation to horse based businesses in North West of Iceland
 - An emphasis on equestrian tourism

- **Research question**

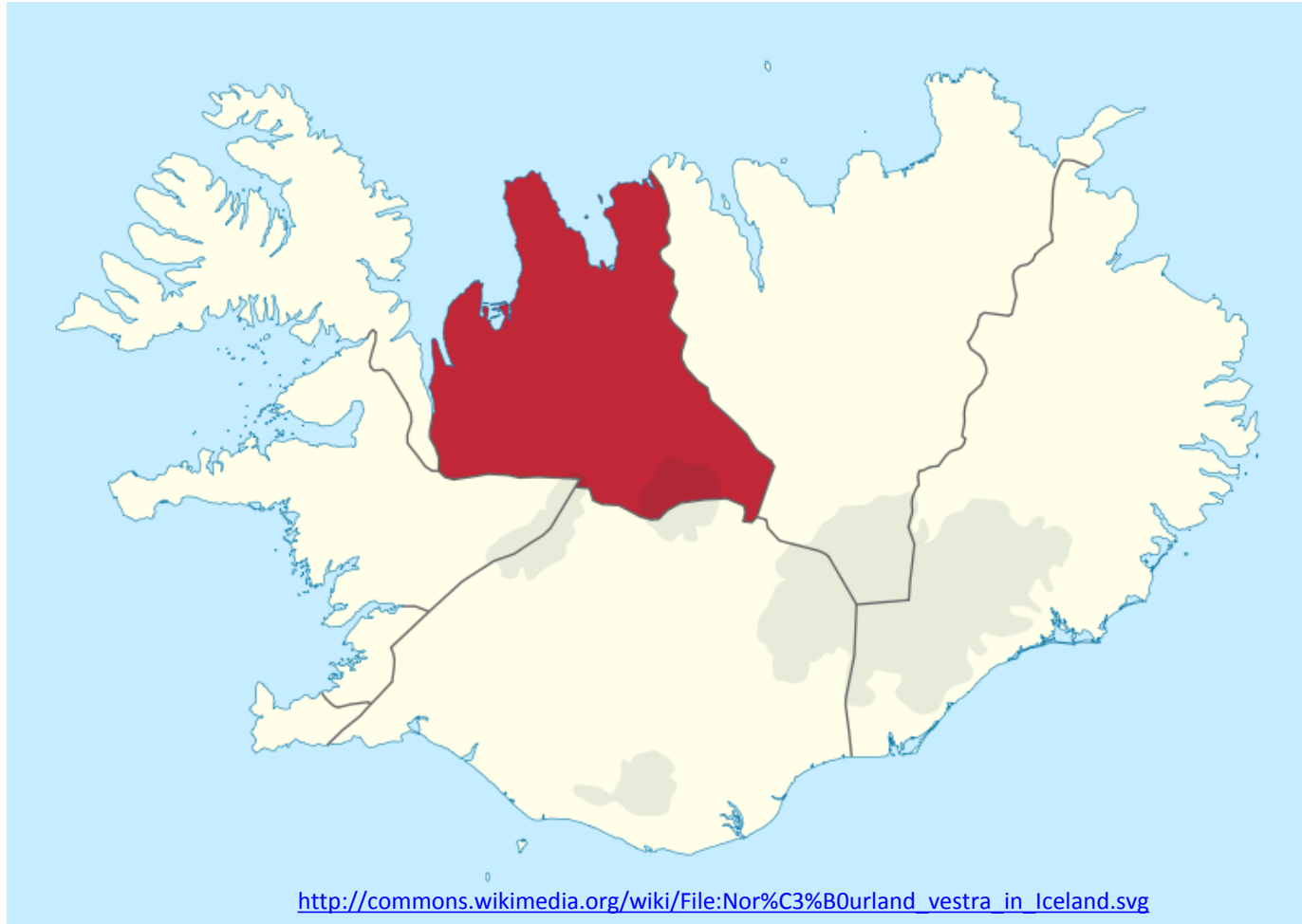
- Is there a cluster in equestrianism emerging in North West of Iceland?
- What are the relations of that cluster to the development of equestrian tourism



Methods

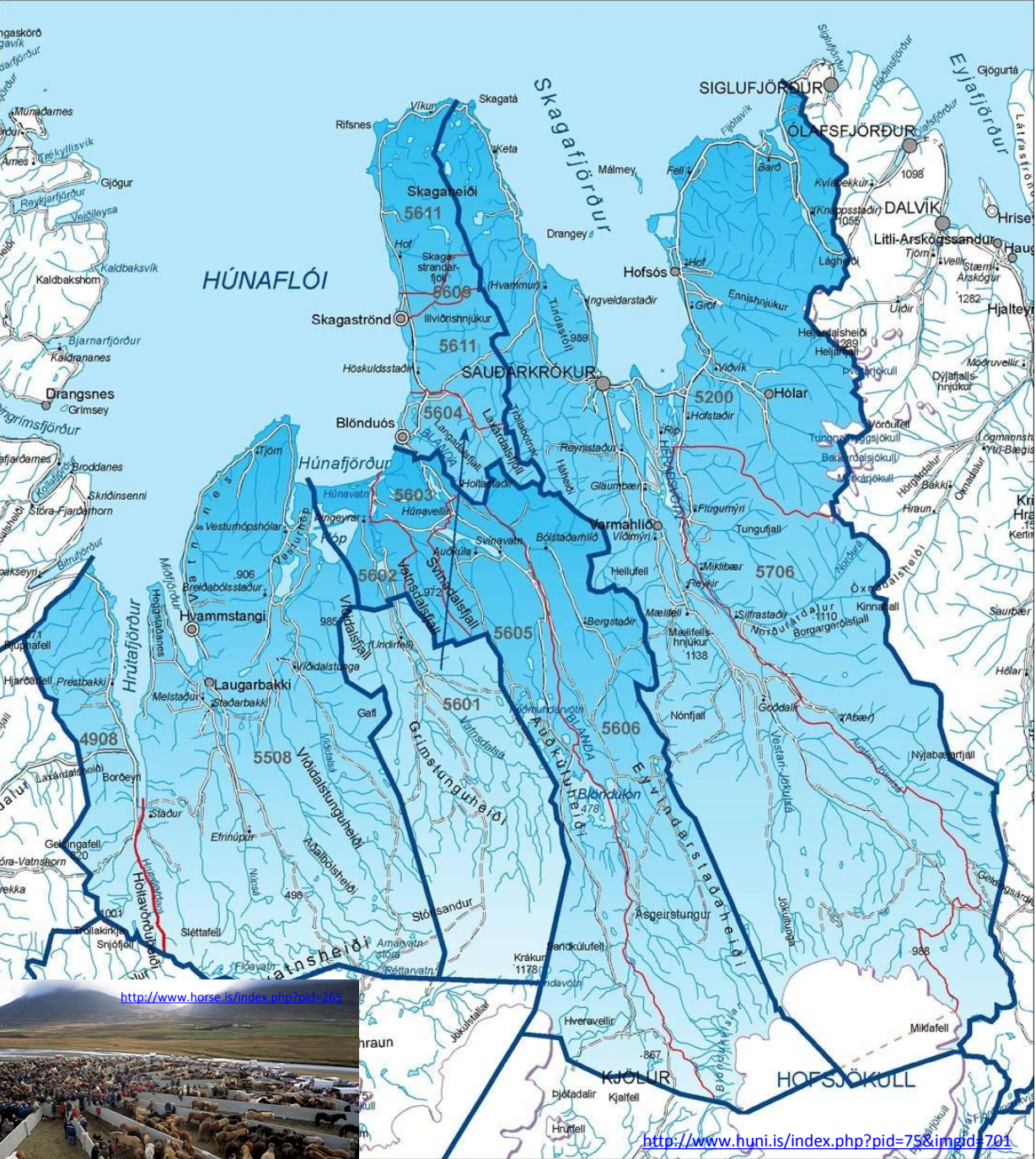
- Analysis of secondary data on:
 - The development of equestrianism in the NW area
 - The distribution of horse based businesses and support system; in terms of co-location, development of relations etc.
 - The characteristic of the horse industry in the area and it's competitive environment; number and profile of businesses, size, growth, exports, rivalry, cooperation etc.
- Open ended interviews
 - With operators which participated in an attempt to develop a 'horse based business cluster initiative' in the NW area
 - With horse based business operators, in terms of cluster development in general

North West of Iceland - the research area



The three regions:

- West- Húnavatnssýsla
- East- Húnavatnssýsla
- Skagafjörður



<http://www.horse.is/index.php?pid=75&imgid=701>

<http://www.huni.is/index.php?pid=75&imgid=701>



<http://www.horse.is/index.php?pid=75&imgid=701>



<http://www.skagafjordur.is/category.mvc/display/5129>

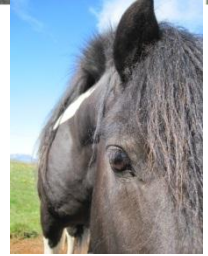
The image (findings from a pilot study)

- Long history of breeding and horsemanship
- A huge number of horses
- Common participation in horsemanship
- Various horse related activities
- “The Mecca of the Icelandic horsemanship”
- Easy access to horse related education
- Beautiful nature
- Good riding trails
- Relaxed atmosphere
- Operators little emphasis on profit
- Horse round ups

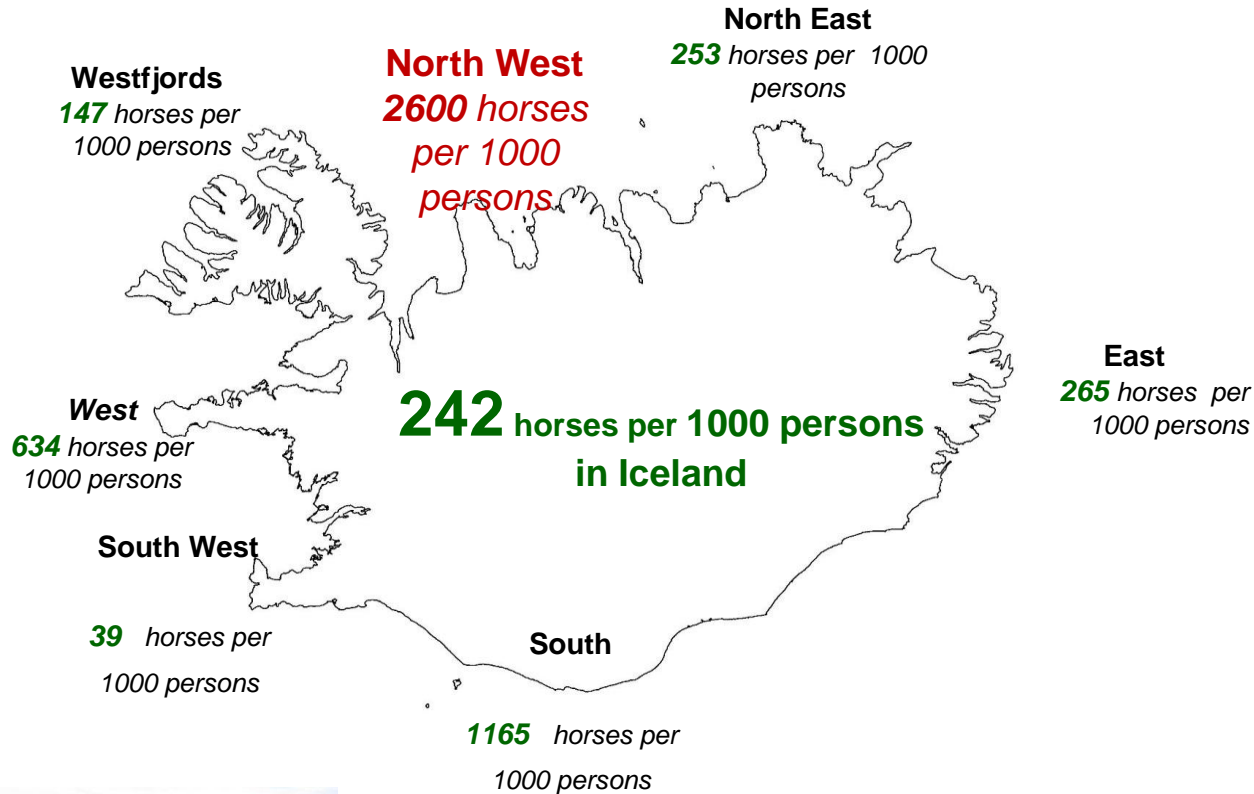
(Sigurðardóttir, 2011a; Sigurðardóttir, 2011b)

Horses and inhabitants in the North West

- A common participation in equestrian associations
 - About 15% of residents are members of the six equestrian associations operating in the area
 - 3,25% of Icelanders are members of similar equestrian associations
- 18.497 horses
 - About 24% of the Icelandic horse stock
 - 2,3% of the population in Iceland



Number of horses per 1000 persons



Iceland	242
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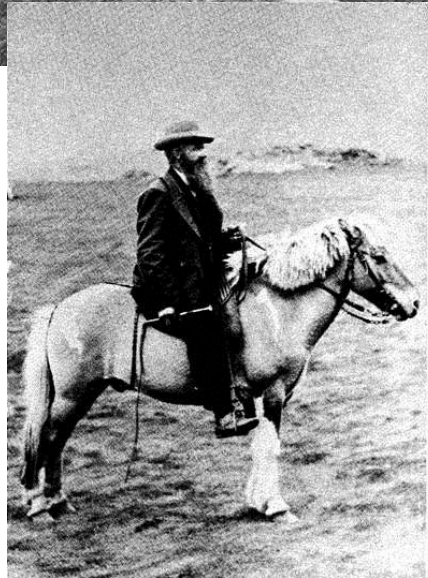
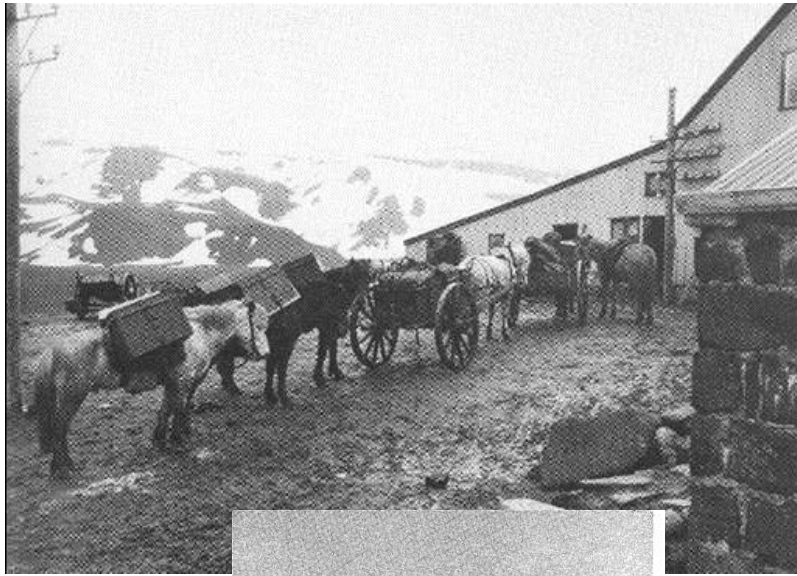
(Sigurðardóttir, 2011)

Sweden	31
Belgium	29
Denmark	28
Ireland	19
Great Britain	17

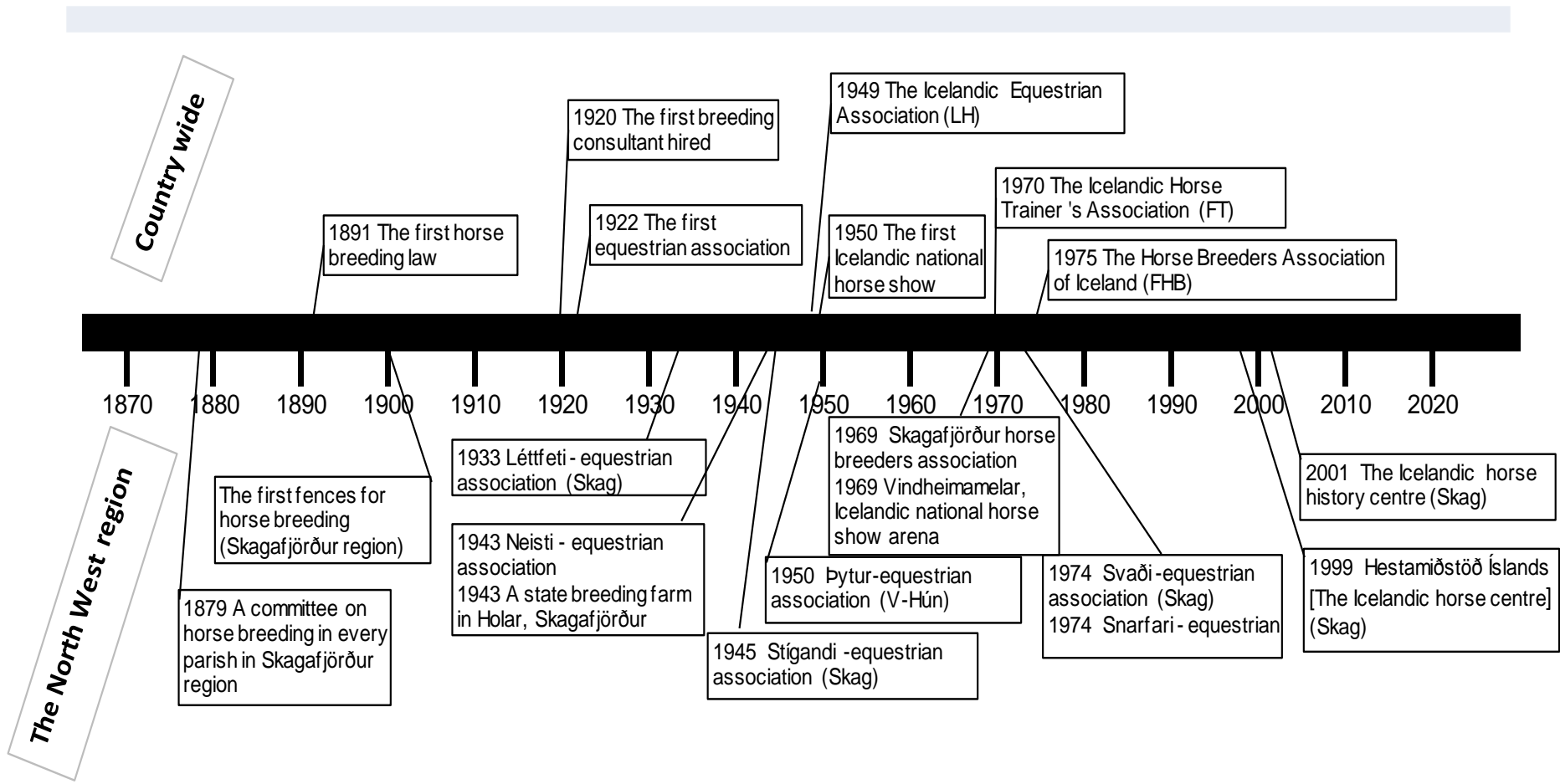
(Liljenstolpe, 2009)



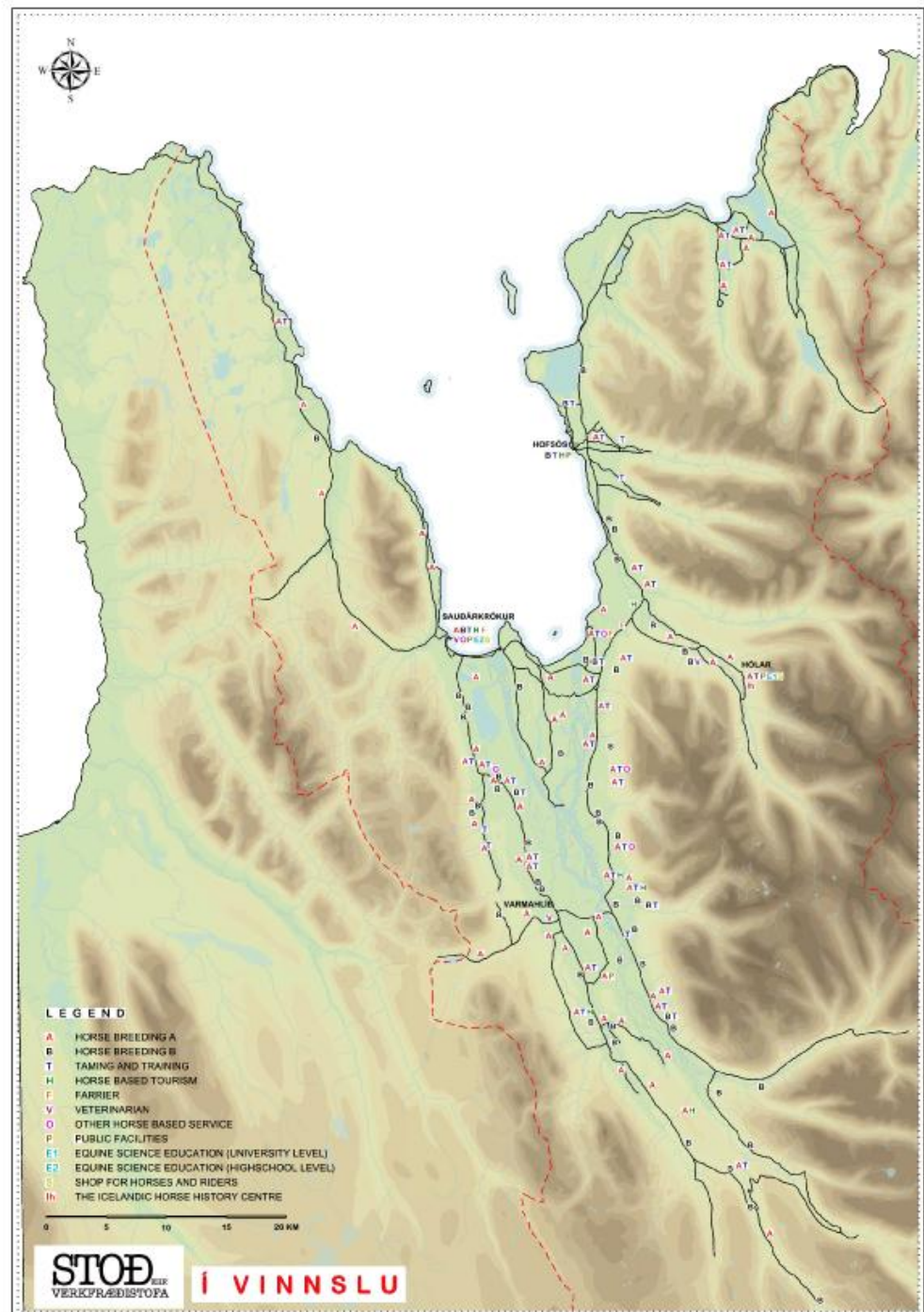
The horse in labour and transport



Development of equestrianism 1870-2013



The distribution of horse based businesses in Skagafjordur region (a draft)



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The North West - Competitiveness

- A leading actor in breeding the Icelandic horse
 - Two out of three main tribes of horses originate in the NW
 - A strong horse related image and long history of equestrianism
- Education in equine science up to university level
- An increasing competition within the horse industry
- Price horses in 1990, from the NW area:
 - 38% of first price stallions (all from Skag.)
 - 23% of price mares (all Skag.)
- Price horses in 2013, from the NW area
 - 13,7% of first price stallions (10% from Skag, 3,7% from Hún)
 - 18,5% of first price mares (10,4% from Skag, 8,1% from Hún)
- *Is the competitive advantages of the NW, in horse breeding and selling declining?*

Conclusion

- Horse based business clusters initiatives have so far not been successful – Why?
- A long standing development of equestrianism in the North West area
- Indications of existing resources for a possible cluster development
- A more in-depth research is crucial



The next steps

- Finish the cluster mapping
- Define main actors of the cluster
- Analyse opportunities and hindrances in the cluster environment
- Analyse the competitive environment and competitiveness of the NW area
- Execute open ended interview with actors in a 'horse business cluster initiative' and operators of horse based businesses

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Thank you...

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