

**Aeres University of Applied Sciences**

## **Bachelor thesis**

### ***Strategy to improve the effectiveness of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms***

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## ***Preface***

The following research is written to complete the bachelor's degree International Equine Business Management at the Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Dronten. The idea of the theme got developed during my work placement at the Swedish stallion station 'PS Flyinge & Partners AB'. Hereby I like to express my sincere thanks to Helena Torstensson, the CEO of the company, for the support during the last months. Furthermore, I would like to thank my thesis coach Mr. Smit for his support during the whole writing progress.

Luca Peveling, 9<sup>th</sup> of August in Sendenhorst, Germany.

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## I. Management summary

The technological change during the last years changed the way of working in many industries. The use of online marketing became more important because many people can be reached effectively, independent of the place and time of destination.

Sweden is a developed and forward-looking country where 96% of the population uses online communication platforms and social media, which shows a high potential for online marketing for Swedish companies. The research was made to determine how online marketing can be more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms.

The Swedish stallion stud farms have quite traditional marketing tools like stallion catalogues on paper, live stallion shows, and breeding advice in face-to-face conversations. It was unknown if Swedish breeders are available for online marketing or if they want to get the information online.

The main question of the research was: 'How can online marketing become more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms?'. To answer this question, sub-questions about actual developments in the equestrian sector, advantages of online marketing, and questions about the target group of Swedish stallion stations were answered.

On the basis of an internet research, expert interviews, a questionnaire, and interviews with breeders, the research was carried out and has shown the following results:

Most Swedish warmblood breeders are female, have 1-3 mares for breeding, and more than ten years of breeding experience. They would like to become informed via the website, on stallion shows, or through online breeding advice of the stallion stud farms' expert. Also, social media is an essential online platform for Swedish warmblood breeders, especially Facebook and Instagram.

That means Swedish stallion stud farms need at least a website with the option for online breeding advice, an account on Facebook and Instagram, and an online stallion show.

The website needs to have high visibility, useability and should include all necessary information for potential customers. Every stallion should be presented with general information, the genetics, character, offspring, and successes in competition. The texts can be detailed, as well as the videos. The option for an online breeding advice will increase the service of Swedish stallion stud farms.

Furthermore, essential is the usage of the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Those are the platforms on which the Swedish warmblood breeders are active. To be successful there, posts have to be made regularly, on a weekly to daily basis. The photos and videos should have high quality; videos can be up to two minutes and show the stallions on competitions, in training, the general behaviour, and the offspring. Texts should be clearly structured and kept short.

The stallion show can take place live and be broadcasted on a video platform. Also, the stallion catalogues could be presented online. To extend the touchpoints with potential customers, Swedish stallion stud farms can cooperate with an influencer. The influencer's reach can be used to come in contact and to create new touchpoints with potential customers.

Important to support the effectiveness of online marketing is professionalism. It needs someone who takes pictures, videos, writes the texts, and posts them online to keep the target group up to date. The person needs knowledge about online marketing and the equestrian industry, knows the target group, knows what they want to see, and can understand the passion for horses and breeding.

Those are the essential online marketing strategies that Swedish stallion stud farms should use. If there is more time to improve the online marketing, there are many opportunities in online marketing like other social media platforms or the cooperation with sponsors, for example. It is essential to regularly conduct market research to keep in touch with the Swedish warmblood breeders, to know what they want, where they expect the Swedish stallion stud farms and how they are changing.

## 1. Introduction

The origin of online marketing was found in 1978, when Gary Thuerk sent the first advertising e-mails to 320 people (Harajan, 2020). After that and especially during the past twenty years, electronic media, and tools like 'social media, television, radio channels, SMS, email, search engines, websites, mobile apps, electronic billboards, and social networks' (Anjala S. Krishen, 2021) were implemented which made the marketing get a worldwide reach and started to get more important.

Businesses started to use the digital platforms to come in contact with customers, spread their products and services and use it to become more popular. Nowadays, the use of innovative digital platforms and devices make it easier to reach many people worldwide in a cost-effective way, independent of time and place of destination. Furthermore, online marketing campaigns can get implemented faster and are more flexible than traditional marketing methods (Anjala S. Krishen, 2021). By 2017, about one-third of the global advertising was done by using digital channels and it looks like this number will increase in the future (Stephen, 2016).

The authors Krishen, Dwivedi, Bindu and Kumar (2021) define the digital marketing as 'the application of data, ICT-based technology (e.g. artificial intelligence), platforms (e.g. social networks), media and devices to extend the scope of marketing within both physical and virtual spaces, for the purpose of improving customer relationships by empowering, informing, influencing, and engaging consumers' (Anjala S. Krishen, 2021).

The online marketing is a part of the digital marketing and describes internet-based channels which spread information about the brand, products, and services to potential customers. The goal is to get people from online platforms to the company's website and to convert those visitors into potential customers. Online tools like 'Website/Blog, Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Content Marketing, Video Blogging, Online Classifieds' are strategy opportunities to improve the marketing of a business (S. Yogesh, 2019).

Nowadays, there is a wide range of opportunities and businesses can choose which online marketing tools they want to use. Furthermore, studies have shown that it is more effective to use different marketing medias simultaneously to increase the effectiveness. The use of multiple media can be termed as media synergy (Lisan Lesscher, 2020).

### **Sweden – the target country**

Sweden in general is already well developed. The government has the vision of a completely connected Sweden until the year 2025. The country wants to take the advantages of the technological developments which includes the access to broadband to improve the efficiency of the public sector, the social services, and the quality of life of the Swedish population. The digitalisation shall be used to develop a smart industry and a sustainable society which gain for quality improvements, cost savings and decreases the strain on the environment (Sweden, 2017).

The whole country is progressive and forward-looking, and the use of social media and online communication platforms is high with about 9,670,000 internet users (Nordea, 2021) of a total population of 10,099,265 (Worldometer, 2021). That signifies an internet penetration of 96%. Furthermore, the social media penetration was about 73% with Facebook as the most used social network platform. But also, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, and Tumblr were much-used social media platforms in 2018 (Nordea, 2021).

A study from 2017 has shown that Sweden, with about 6.6 million users, has the most social network users of Scandinavia. Furthermore, 98% of the population between 18-34 years uses social media, 83% of the people between 35-49 years and about 50% of the above 50 years old people are social media users as well (Markets, 2021).

### **The Swedish equestrian sector**

In Sweden, the equestrian industry is a large and growing part of the whole economy. There are more than 360,000 horses which equates to 39 horses to 1,000 inhabitants. 500,000 Swedish people ride regularly (400,000 of them are women), and another half million have regularly contact with horses.

The whole Swedish equestrian sector has a turnover of SEK 45-50 billion which is equivalent with about 4,43-4,92 billion €. Furthermore, there are about 30,000 full-time jobs in the Swedish equestrian sector (Stiftelse, 2021).

The Swedish warmblood breeding sector is one part of the equestrian industry and for this research the most important. The Swedish Warmblood Association (SWB) counts in total 5700 members in 2020 which are not all breeders, but people who are interested in the Swedish warmblood breeding. Due to the fact that Swedish warmblood breeders do not have to register themselves at an association, the exact number of Swedish warmblood breeders is not known. Nevertheless, it is known that in the number of born foals a year slightly increased from 2750 foals, in 2018 to 2850 foals in 2019 and to 3050 foals in 2020 (Hellsten, 2021).

Furthermore, the typical Swedish warmblood breeder breeds 1-3 foals a year. 65% of the breeders breed show-jumping horses, about 30% dressage horses and the remaining breeders breed eventers or horses for other purposes (Hellsten, 2021).

Most of the Swedish warmblood breeders are based in the South of Sweden, in the region Skåne, and in a radius of 150km around Stockholm. 87% of the breeders are women and their average age is 58. Besides that, 28% of the breeders are 50-60 years old, and 20% are 40-50 years old (Hellsten, 2021).

## **Relevance**

The equestrian industry in general is an important part of the whole Swedish economy, but how do they come in contact with their customers? How do they make their brand, their products, and services popular? Until now, there is little information about marketing strategies in general, and nearly no information about the use of online marketing in the Swedish equestrian industry.

Additionally, actual challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic make some traditional marketing strategies nearly impossible. Worldwide, many stallion stud farms promote their stallions on events like stallion shows and competitions. They come in contact with the breeders directly and show the quality of their horses in real life.

Due to the pandemic and also the outbreak of the equine disease EHV-1 in March 2021 (a highly infectious disease with enormous pathogeneses which can lead to the death of the horses (FEI, 2021)), many events, shows and stallion shows got cancelled, and the traditional way of marketing is not possible anymore. But how can a stallion stud farm inform and convince the breeder of the own stallion? It requires a strategy change.

Other common marketing methods to show the stallions, for example via stallion catalogues on paper, are possible but cannot replace the real-life impressions of the stallions. Especially stallion stud farms with young stallions which are not very popular and cannot show their quality during this time are difficult to promote.

The aim is to find out how especially Swedish stallion stud farms can handle the actual challenges and how they can use online marketing in the most efficient way. The world is changing, the technology is developing, and the equine breeding sector seems to keep traditions. But is this possible on long term? Are there maybe cost-, and time-efficient ways to improve the marketing through innovative online tools?

This research is relevant for all Swedish stallion stud farms who offer the semen of warmblood stallions. The goal is to find out who the Swedish warmblood breeder is, to know which information is needed by the clients and which way of presentation they prefer. The research will be delivered for Swedish stallion stud farms to get an overview about their target group, the needs and wishes of existing and potential clients and solutions how they can make their online marketing more efficient.

Furthermore, it is a market research about the Swedish warmblood breeding sector and focusses on the Swedish warmblood breeders. Many Swedish stallion stud farms only focus on the national market because most of the clients come from Sweden and there are not many customers from other



countries. Other countries like Germany, Denmark, or the Netherlands for example have more successful stallions for breeding than Sweden and their target group is more international. It is more likely that stallion stud farms from other countries send semen to Sweden, than Swedish stallion stud farms send their semen to other countries over the whole world. Due to that, Swedish stallion stud farms focus on the national market and need to have an online marketing strategy which convince the Swedish warmblood breeder.

## 2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is divided into general online marketing trends and opportunities, and information about the Swedish warmblood breeding sector, as well as information about the company PS Flyinge & Partners AB.

### 2.1 Online marketing opportunities

It is already known that the online marketing gets more popular and that traditional marketing tools like print and broadcasting get suppressed worldwide. Furthermore, it helps to stay connected with customers and to improve the customer relation (Harajan, 2020).

To come in contact with the target group, it is important to understand the customer journey, the different steps of a potential customer from the first contact with a product or a company until the purchase, to the status of an existing customer. This journey can take days, week, or even months, and can need different amounts of touchpoints with the product or the company. The typical customer journey model is divided into five different phases: awareness (interest), consideration (searching for information), conversion (purchase), retention (making experiences), and advocacy (sharing experiences with other people) (unicum-media.com, 2021).

The aim of marketing is to convince as many potential customers as possible in an effective way. Effectiveness in this way means how the company can increase its revenue through their marketing strategy while decreasing its costs (Soffer, 2019). To reach this goal, there are different online marketing methods available which could also be interesting for Swedish stallion stud farms to improve the brand awareness, the customer centric marketing and the consumer loyalty (Harajan, 2020).

To come in contact with potential customers and stay in mind of existing customers, different touchpoints should be available. The following text describe possible touchpoints with the potential customer which could lead to a purchase or even to a recommendation:

#### **2.1.1 Website**

The website is one of the most important methods of online marketing because nearly all other platforms will transmit potential customers to the website. It is the platform which shows a broad range of information about the company, the products, and the services (Kummer, 2013). Therefore, it is important to have a website which attracts the attention of the customer, has a high usability for different electronical devices like computers, tablets, and smartphones and a high engine visibility (Tóth, 2012).

Furthermore, websites can collect information about the guests, how they have found the website and which pages are most interesting for them. These are also important information to analyse the target group (S. Yogesh, 2019).

#### **2.1.2 Display advertising**

Display advertising includes online banners made out of photos, videos, texts which stand out from the rest of the website. Most of the time, it includes the image of a product, the brand and a call-to-action button which leads the consumer go to a company's website or landing page (Bannerflow, 2021).

#### **2.1.4 Search engine optimization (SEO)**

Through keywords and phrases, the website of a company can get placed on a specific position on the search engine result page. Good chosen keywords and phrases for the website improve the online visibility and makes it easier for customers to find a website. There are two types of SEO, the Off page which includes the promotion of a website through social media, bookmarking, forum submissions, article submission, etc., and the On page which includes all activities on the website like the creation of the meta title, the meta description, content optimization, internal linking, keyword research, Google Analytics and the web master tool for example. (S. Yogesh, 2019)

Different from SEM, companies do not have to pay for the clicks on their page. It is only about a set of practices to improve the visibility of the website. Through relevant, regularly updated content and the inclusion of link-worthy sites, the algorithms will show the website more on the top of the search engine. (Harajan, 2020)

#### **2.1.5 Search engine advertising (SEA)**

SEA includes the location of the information, so the place of an advertisement or website on a search engine. When someone types a keyword into a search engine, on the lower, left-hand part of the page the unsponsored search results appear, which are relevant to the searched keyword. The links on the top and on the right-hand side are sponsored search results. While the unsponsored search results are free of charge, for the sponsored search results have to be paid for each click. (Skiera, 2012)

The sponsored search results are helpful for companies who want to sell products or services to the client. Depending on the searched keywords, matching advertisements will be shown on the top of the page. Through this, the internet user has to look at the advertisement before he gets the real searched information. This could lead to a purchase without an earlier intention. (Benjamin Edelman, 2012)

#### **2.1.6 Content marketing**

The content marketing is a marketing strategy which can be used online as well as offline through e-mail marketing, social media marketing, SEO, or inbound marketing for example (Onlinemarketing.de, 2021). The goal of this marketing strategy is to create and distribute relevant content which informs potential customers about a specific theme without a direct message to buy a specific product. It is more a useful tool to inform potential customers about their interests and needs which could lead to a purchase. (Christandl, 2019)

Forms of the content marketing are for example tutorials, encyclopaedias, blogs, graphics, or questionnaires (Onlinemarketing.de, 2021).

#### **2.1.7 E-mail marketing**

E-mails as marketing strategy are addressed, written and commercial messages which 'can trigger the interest in a product/service and eventually lead to purchase' (Lisan Lesscher, 2020). It can be a method to make unaware consumers aware of the need of a purchase. (Lisan Lesscher, 2020)

#### **2.1.8 Influencer marketing**

Influencer marketing includes a marketing strategy where companies work together with social media influencers to promote their brand, products and/or services. Through a cooperation, the social media influencer creates content about a company, a product or the service and shows this on social networks to the followers. Most of the time, the influencer has an enormous reach and can influence other people's opinion about a specific brand or product which could convince them to a purchase (Samira Farivar, 2021).

#### **2.1.9 Social media marketing**

Many companies invest much on social media because it is a powerful medium to come in contact with customers and people all around the world. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter offer the opportunity of communication between companies and the customers, as well as between customers and other social network users. The communication between the customers got more important because people buy products and services often because of positive recommendations of friends and colleagues. The interaction in the online community can have a positive influence on the buying behaviour of people. (Copuš, 2017)

Furthermore, it became easier for companies to get insights and knowledge about the customers purpose and intentions because they create content with other users on the social media platforms. Through this information, companies are able to improve marketing strategies and the communication towards potential customers. (Ana Reyes-Menendez, 2020)

Another strength of social media is that it can be used as a good marketing strategy to control the content, timing and frequency of the information which is shared with the customers (Copuš, 2017).

## 2.2 Swedish warmblood breeding sector and PS Flyinge & Partners AB

Next to the general online marketing opportunities, there are some facts about the Swedish Warmblood Association (SWB), about the Swedish warmblood breeder who form the target group of this research. Furthermore, there is some information about the Swedish stallion stud farm PS Flyinge & Partners AB because the research is written in cooperation with this company.

### 2.2.1 Swedish warmblood breeding sector

The SWB counts 5700 members which are interested in Swedish warmblood horses. They are not all active breeders, but people who are interested in the warmblood breeding (Hellsten, 2021).

There was a slightly increase in born foals during the last years. In 2018, there were 2750 foals born, in 2019, 2850 foals and in 2020, 3050 foals were born. 65% of the breeders breed show jumping foals, 30% dressage foals and the rest breeds for the eventing or other disciplines. The typical Swedish warmblood breeder breeds between 1-3 foals per year and only a very small number of breeders breed more than six foals a year (Hellsten, 2021).

The statistics of the SWB has shown that the average age of breeders is 58. In total, 28% of the Swedish warmblood breeders are between 50-60 years old, and about 20% are between 40-50 years old. Furthermore, most of the breeders are located in the south of Sweden, in the region Skåne, and in a radius of 150km around Stockholm (Hellsten, 2021).

At the moment, there is a tendency that foals get born later in the season, but this can also be a temporary fluctuation (Hellsten, 2021).

Besides that, the SWB is in the world ranking of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses (WBFSH) on rank 14 for show-jumping, on rank 15 for dressage and on the 9<sup>th</sup> rank of eventing in June 2021 (WBFSH, 2021). In comparison with other studbooks, the SWB has no leading position in the worldwide breeding of sport horses.

### 2.2.2 PS Flyinge & Partners

The company PS Flyinge & Partners AB is a Swedish stallion stud farm which is a company of Paul Schockemöhle GmbH, Germany. In cooperation with the German stud Paul Schockemöhle and the Danish stud Helgstrand, PS Flyinge & Partners AB is able to offer a wide range of successful European stallions for the dressage and show jumping sport. Furthermore, they offer the service to let the mare get inseminated at the mare station of Flyinge or to send the semen through the whole country directly to the breeder.

The actual marketing strategy of the company includes a stallion show every year at the beginning of the season. It is a good opportunity to show the quality of all stallions in one evening and maybe to convince the breeder of the stallions. Furthermore, they send stallion catalogues to all Swedish breeders, not only to existing customers. Until now, their online marketing includes a website and the use of the social network platforms Facebook and Instagram.

The target group for this research are Swedish warmblood breeders. In total, there are 5.700 members of the Swedish Warmblood Association (SWA) (Association, 2021) which are potential clients of the company PS Flyinge & Partners AB. In 2020, there were about 350 mares which got inseminated by the company and more than 90% of them got pregnant.

### 3. Knowledge gap

Until now, there was no research about the opportunities and effectiveness of online marketing in the Swedish breeding sector. During the last years, businesses out of the equestrian sector started to use online marketing tools like social media platforms and improved the search engine optimisation (SEO) for their website. But how important is the usage of this online marketing tools? Is the target group available for online marketing or is the equestrian sector more traditional and want to keep this?

Breeders are used to traditional information sources like stallion catalogues on paper, conversations with stallion holders and other breeders, or through own impressions on events like horse shows or stallion shows. It was not known if there is space for the expansion of online marketing within the Swedish horse breeding sector. Furthermore, it was not clear which platforms Swedish breeders use, which information they want to get (show results, training impressions, daily handling, general behaviour, etc.) and in which form (like texts, photos, or videos for example).

There are already different marketing agencies which offer a planning for different equestrian businesses, but there was no official research about the needs and wishes of the clients, especially not for the horse breeding sector. It was not clear if online marketing is an opportunity for this specific market. Also, unclear was which platforms the target group prefers and which information it wants to get.

It was important to do a market research to be able to understand what the consumer behaviour is, and which needs and wishes existing and potential customers have (Stephen, 2016). It was also unknown if there are any country specific differences.

The outcome of this research is relevant for all Swedish stallion stud farms which offer semen of warmblood stallions. It was important to find out which wishes and needs the clients have, relating to online marketing. The companies need to know in which way they can come in contact with the clients to improve the relationship to existing customers, but also to convince potential customers to buy the semen of the stallions.

Due to the cooperation with the stallion stud farm PS Flyinge & Partners AB, especially this company was interested in the research. Also, other Swedish stallion stations can benefit of the research to know which information the clients want to get, as well as preferred ways of information presentation and used online platforms. Especially nowadays, in times of the Covid-19 crisis, the world got more and more digital, and the sources of information have changed. Events, horse shows, and stallions shows got cancelled because of regulations of social distancing due to Covid-19. Especially for stallion stud farms, who normally show their stallions on stallion shows and on competition, is it nearly impossible to show the quality of young stallions and it is difficult to convince the breeder. But also after the challenging times of Covid-19, the digital change usually will stay and Swedish stallion stud farms have to adapt.

## 4. Main question and sub-questions of this research

The aim of this research is to answer the following main question:

*‘How can online marketing become more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms?’*

To answer this question, the following sub-questions helped to get an answer with a reliable result:

- 1) *Which online marketing developments are in the equestrian industry, especially in Sweden?*
- 2) *What is the advantage of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms?*
- 3) *Where does the Swedish breeder want to get information from?*
- 4) *Which information wants the Swedish warmblood breeder on online platforms?*
- 5) *Which way of presentation prefers the Swedish warmblood breeder?*

The sub-questions are divided into two different core areas. While question one and two are based on the online marketing in the horse breeding sector in general, question three, four and five will give information about the wishes and needs of the Swedish warmblood breeder.

The first question gives information about the developments and trends of online marketing in the equestrian industry. The aim is to find out which opportunities there are, and which strategies are already used by many businesses out of the sector, especially in Sweden, but also worldwide.

The aim of the second question is to find out why Swedish stallion stud farms should use online marketing. It is about the effectiveness of different online marketing methods and the reasons why it is important for those businesses.

Question three gives information about the online behaviour of Swedish breeders. There are many online platforms available, but it is not clear which ones are used by Swedish warmblood breeders. The answer to this question shows which online platforms should be used by Swedish stallion stud farms to come in contact with the breeders.

Next to the where, it is also important to know which information Swedish warmblood breeders want to get. Due to that, question four arose. For stallion stud farms, it is possible to show information like competition results, impressions of the daily training, the general behaviour of the stallions and/or daily routines for example, but it is not clear what Swedish breeders want to see of the stallions.

The fifth question is about the way of presenting the information. When it is clear where and what the Swedish breeders want to see, another question is which way of presentation they prefer. Possible ways of presentation are through photos, videos and/or texts. Furthermore, it is interesting how much time the target group wants to invest to get the right information. Do they prefer short texts in combination with a photo or a short video or do they want long videos and detailed texts?

This information describes the equestrian sector, especially the Swedish breeding sector, but also developments of online marketing worldwide and information about the customer behaviour. Through answering these sub-questions, it is possible to give an answer to the main question how online marketing can be more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms.

## 5. Importance of the research

The aim of this research was to find out how effective online marketing can be for Swedish stallion stud farms to reach potential and existing clients in Sweden and convince them of the stallions. The SWB has no leading position in the worldwide ranking of studbooks, and it is unusual that Swedish stallion stud farms sell their semen to other countries. Because of that, it is especially important to know the Swedish warmblood breeders, their wishes and needs and the best way to contact them.

Due to the technological developments and the digital change, many sectors and companies have to adapt their marketing strategies. Also, challenges like the Covid-19 crisis and the outbreak of the equine disease EHV-1 in March 2021, a highly infectious disease with enormous pathogeneses which can lead to the death of the horse (FEI, 2021), made traditional marketing methods impossible and support the need of online marketing opportunities. Normally, many stallion stud farms show their stallions on stallion shows, on competition, create stallion catalogues on paper and come in contact with the breeders directly, but during this time, it is not possible to show the horses on the traditional way to the clients because of many regulations and cancellations of events. A big disadvantage, especially for stallion stud farms with young stallions, which are not very popular and cannot show their quality during this time.

Also, after those challenges, many industries will go on with online marketing strategies to support the traditional marketing methods and to reach the target group in a cost- and time-efficient way. So, this research is important and relevant for Swedish warmblood stallion stations to develop or improve marketing strategies for the future.

## 6. Material and Methods

This chapter is about the materials and methods which were needed to answer the main question *'How can online marketing become more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms?'*, as well as the in chapter 4 mentioned sub-questions.

Due to the Covid-19 crisis it was not possible to be in Sweden personally, which required other methodologies of data collection. Normally, the data collection would have took place with personal contacts like face-to-face interviews to get in contact with the company PS Flyinge & Partners AB, experts, and the target group. Furthermore, there would have been the opportunity to get own experiences about the Swedish equestrian industry in real life. But the actual circumstances desired a change in the way of getting information.

Nevertheless, living in a modern world where online platforms and online communication gets more and more important, and the technological opportunities are growing, there are ways to purchase information which do not require physical contact or being actually in Sweden. For the thesis, where online marketing in the digital world plays the decisive role, the way of purchasing information was changed from traditional face-to-face communication to online conversations on Microsoft Teams, Skype or Zoom, traditional phone calls and mail contact. Those innovative communication tools made it possible to come in contact with important people to get enough information which was needed to find answers to the main- and the sub-questions.

### 6.1 Research methods

There were different research methods planned to get answers to the main and sub-questions. The aim was to find out which developments, trends, and opportunities the equestrian industry offers and what the needs and wishes of the Swedish breeder are. For that, the research was divided into different interviews with experts, semi-structured interviews, as well as a questionnaire with Swedish breeders, and an internet research. In general, the research was a qualitative research to measure the effectiveness of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms. The aim was to find out how the stallion stud farms can stay in contact with existing customers and how they can come in contact with potential customers. To answer the above mentioned main- and sub-questions, the following research methods have been made.

#### 6.1.1 Internet research

The first method of this research was an internet research. It was a qualitative research to find out which common online platforms are used by European stallion stud farms and how the different stallion stud farms react there. It has been an observation about strong and weak points of different businesses and the different opportunities of online marketing for stallion stud farms.

The research method focused for the biggest part on the online marketing strategy of Swedish stallion stud farms, but also popular stallion stud farms from Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands were analysed. Through that, it was possible to get an international overview about different opportunities in the breeding sector. The focus has laid on common

#### 6.1.2 Expert interviews

Another research method was to make interviews with two experts out of the equestrian marketing sector. The aim was to explore actual online marketing developments and opportunities in the breeding sector and the equestrian sector in general, to set up the fundament for the research (Döringer, 2020). Furthermore, it gave an answer to sub-question one and two.

For the analysation of the expert interviews the method of the summarizing content analysis is made. With this method, the whole material got summarized to a short text where only the substantial information is kept (Pfeiffer, 2020).



#### *6.1.2.1 Expert interview 1*

The research started with an interview with Dipl. Ing. agr Christian Dietz. He is an expert for inbound marketing and is owner of the inbound marketing agency Dietz & Consorten GmbH and Equine74, a company for horse supplements. These companies offer their service and products worldwide and gave him the opportunity to make many experiences in the equestrian sector worldwide as well as in strategic and marketing developments. Christian Dietz is a specialist in the worldwide equestrian sector and has an enormous network within the sector.

The interview was a qualitative research to get an overview about online marketing developments and developments in the equestrian sector. One of the most important factors was the online marketing in Germany, his knowledge about the Swedish equestrian sector and possible differences, as well as about the horse breeding sector in general and possible international differences. The interview took place via Skype to reduce contacts because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It took about 60 minutes.

It was a conscious decision to interview Mr. Dietz because it was already known that he has a worldwide network with people out of the equestrian industry. Furthermore, through his own companies, he has many experiences with strategic marketing.

#### *6.1.2.2 Expert interview 2*

Furthermore, the research got wider with another qualitative research through an interview with Claire Marie Spackman. She is owner of the company 'Digital Equine Marketing' which is a digital equine marketing and equine web design consultancy for equestrian businesses in Sweden, Denmark, and USA. She has more than ten years digital marketing experiences in the equine business, corporate tech companies and marketing agencies.

This interview increased the knowledge about the online marketing. Themes of this interview have been actual and possible online marketing opportunities and developments in the equestrian sector. In comparison to the interview with Mr. Dietz, this interview was more focussed on the equestrian sector in general and the opportunities of different online platforms.

The interview was also a qualitative research to get an overview about especially trends and developments in the Swedish equestrian sector. The interview took place through a phone call to reduce social contacts because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It took about 60 minutes.

### *6.1.3 Research target group*

For collecting data about the opportunities of digital marketing in the Swedish horse breeding sector, qualitative and quantitative research methods were chosen. These two research methods are important to make the research reliable.

#### *6.1.3.1 Semi-structured interviews Swedish breeder*

First, there was a qualitative research through semi-structured interviews with Swedish breeders. The goal was to establish what the Swedish breeder wish for, which information they want and in which way they want to get these. Therefore, it was important to get answers of high quality about experiences and opinions to understand and discover the opportunities of the sector (Quality, 2015).

For that, eight semi-structured interviews have been made. The questions were prepared as a manual, but every interview deviated a bit. The aim was to develop a real conversation, where the interview structure was a bit flexible. The goal was to find out what the person really thinks about the specific topic (QuestionPro, 2021).

The semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts. The first four interviews were made before the questionnaire to get an overview about the Swedish breeders and to improve the questionnaire questions. After the questionnaire, the other four interviews were made based on and improved through the answers out of the questionnaire.

Through the interviews, it was possible to start a conversation and to get more information about needs and wishes than with a questionnaire. It was also possible to discuss different opportunities and

to get opinions about different online platforms and types of information. With this information, it got clearer which methods Swedish stallion stud farms should use to get in contact with existing and potential clients and especially gave an answer on the sub-questions three to five.

Besides that, the validity of the research is another important factor. The validity describes the accordance of the measurements with the intention of the measurements. It means that the results of a measurement correspond with the reality of characteristics and variation (Middleton, 2019). To ensure the validity of this research, different variables have been used. The Swedish breeders asked for the interviews have been of different gender, age, they needed to have different breeding sizes and breeding goals to get outcomes of high quality which represent the whole population of the Swedish warmblood breeders.

The test conditions were the same for every interview. All people got called by phone and got the same questions. To develop a conversation/discussion, not all questions have been exactly the same and were not asked in the same order, but at the end of every interview has been an answer to every question.

The sample method for these interviews has been stratified sampling. That means that the population of Swedish warmblood breeders has been divided into different subgroups depending on the gender, age, number of mares and goal of breeding. Out of every subgroup some people got randomly selected (McCombes, 2019). The cooperation with the Swedish stallion stud farm PS Flyinge & Partners AB made it possible to get contact data of different Swedish warmblood breeders which are part of different sub-groups of the population.

After the interview, all answers have been written down and afterwards categorised to make them comparable with answers of other people. The next step was to compare the results in a table (Quality, 2015).

#### *6.1.3.2 Questionnaire Swedish breeder*

To make the research more reliable for the whole population of Swedish breeders, a questionnaire has been made after the first four interviews. Through the interviews, important needs and wishes were uncovered and the questionnaire has shown if those needs and wishes are representative for the whole Swedish warmblood breeding population.

The target group of this research method has not only been clients of the company PS Flyinge & Partners AB, but all other Swedish warmblood breeders. The sample method has been a simple random sample out of all Swedish warmblood breeders to get the most reliable outcome as possible (McCombes, 2019). The goal was to get answers from Swedish warmblood breeders with different variables like gender, age, as well as different breeding goals (hobby or professional), and breeding size (small-, medium-, big-sized breeders).

To get in contact with this population, the questionnaire has been placed online in different Facebook groups with Swedish warmblood breeders. Furthermore, the veterinarian of the company handed the questionnaire out to clients who directly came to the mare station of the company. Through this, a wide range of different breeders has been reached.

This part of the methods is an important part for the reliability of the research. The reliability of a research describes the consistency of the measurements. To achieve a high reliability in a research, the results have to be the same when the research gets replied under the same circumstances and with the same methods (Middleton, 2019). The goal of this research was to represent the needs and wishes of the population of Swedish warmblood breeders in Sweden.

To achieve a reliable result, the number of completed questionnaires has been important. The more answers there are, the more reliable the research is in the end. Normally, the minimum number of participants will be determined on basis of the number of Swedish warmblood breeders. Due to the fact that Swedish warmblood breeders do not have to register themselves as a breeder, there is no exact number available. With the help of the official numbers of the SWB (5700 members in the SWB, 3050 born foals in 2020) and through the advice of a breeding expert, the assumption is made that

about 60% of the members are active breeders. This makes a Swedish warmblood breeder population out of 3.420 active breeders. This was also a likely number of active horse breeders because 3050 foals were born in 2020, some of them have been from the same breeder, but also some breeders could have problems to get their mare pregnant or made a year break of breeding. To reach a confidence level of 90% with a confidence interval of 5%, the sample size calculator calculated a minimum number of participants of 251 (Raosoft, Raosoft, 2021). To reach this number of participants, the questionnaire was online for four weeks.

## 7. Results

In this chapter, the results for the different research questions are shown. Every sub-question has its own chapter and is further divided into the different research methods which have given information to answer the question.

### 7.1 Online marketing developments in the breeding sector

The first sub-question was '*which online marketing developments are in the breeding sector, especially in Sweden?*'. To answer this question, two qualitative research methods are used. First, interviews are conducted with marketing experts, as well as an internet research. The results are shown in the following texts.

#### 7.1.1 Qualitative research – Expert interviews

The expert interviews have shown that there were and still are developments in online marketing in the equestrian industry in general. First of all, everything has changed quickly from offline to online, and this was a bit like a shock for the equestrian sector. In the past, the equestrian sector did not follow the digital change, but now they caught up. It is a niche market that has developed very fast the last few years.

In general, more people buy and inform themselves online, and the range, as well as the variation of information got broader. Essential online marketing tools are the website, the analytic tools, direct marketing like customer service and e-mail, as well as the social media package.

Videos were already used earlier, but nowadays, they got more important. The equestrian sport is dynamic, and people want to have this dynamic feeling when they watch it. This is also important for the breeding sector when breeders inform themselves online about different stallions on the website or on different social media platforms. Also, video platforms like ClipMyHorse.tv are important. They provide videos of for example competitions, stallion shows, foal- and mare shows, and are another opportunity for breeders to get information (ClipMyHorse.tv, 2021).

Another development is that stallion stud farms have to be on social media nowadays. They have to be visible online, and they should have SEO with good keywords that people can find the stallion stud farm. Furthermore, each online platform has its purpose, and companies need to know where their target group is active, as well as which information they want to see. For this, regular market research has to be made to check if the target group has changed its online behaviour.

Another aspect is the growing influencer market. People want to know who is behind a company, behind the stallion stud farm, for example. It could be an option for a stallion stud farm to work together with an influencer to get a more extensive range and to come into contact with potential customers. It is not necessary to work together with a successful and popular sport rider, but there are many influencers who have many followers because they are authentic and produce content regularly. Such a cooperation will maybe reach more young people than the breeder directly, but the children and grandchildren of the breeders. People nowadays are willing to spend much money for their children's wishes, and they usually influence of the choice of the stallion.

Also, the cooperation with sponsors is a chance to bring a company in a better position and to come in contact with potential customers. Such a cooperation can expand the contact of potential customers for both parties, the company, as well as the stallion stud farm, when both parties make the cooperation visible online.

Another trend is the online platform TikTok. It is popular, stands for awareness, and does not take much time or money to create funny and creative videos. Another advantage is that those videos also can be implemented to other places as well.

Nowadays, semen can be sold internationally. A breeder can choose from stallions all around the world, and stallion stud farms can sell semen worldwide. Companies need to have an international website and international social media accounts when they want to reach breeders worldwide.

Another huge trend in the breeding sector is the use of forums, especially on Facebook. People exchange information about different stallions and their offspring. This trend is not only positive because there are also negative reactions. It can be supportive if people write positive things about a special stallion, but it can also have negative influence on the breeder's decision if there are negative comments and discussions. Stallion stud farms should have Google-Alert to know where people write something about the stallions and the company to be able to react on it.

Less important for stallion stud farms seems to be the use of display marketing and SEA. Those are more important for e-shops, but not really for stallion stud farms.

There are no special online marketing developments in the equestrian industry which are especially considerable for Sweden. But there are some considerable facts which could have influence on the online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms.

Breeders want to see the offspring of a stallion. Earlier, breeders went or still go to a breeding stable with many foals and young horses to get an indication about the heredity of a stallion. Nowadays, there is the opportunity to show the offspring online. For that, stallion stud farms need to come in contact with the breeders to get photos, videos and information about the offspring. This is especially important for the offspring of young stallions which are not popular. Also, the service of an online breeding advice could improve the online service of a stallion stud farm.

There are some trend stallions which are popular and are much used by breeders. To convince breeder of young stallions, the stallions have to be present, have to go to competitions. In times of Covid-19, competition got cancelled which means that stallion stud farms have to rethink and have to show the young stallions online.

In general, the online marketing tools are the same for the equestrian industry and other industries. In the equestrian industry it depends on you as a person and if you are an athlete, a trainer, or a breeding stud farm. You have to be there where your target group is, and you have to show them what they wish for. Social media platforms for the breeding sector are usually Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Important to remember is that the equestrian world its own world is. They have an own lifestyle; they are like an own sub-culture with an own language. The online marketing of an equestrian industry need to do someone who understand this community and can connect with them. Furthermore, this person needs to have the knowhow about online marketing to do it in a professional way and to be successful.

#### 7.1.2 Qualitative research – Internet research

The internet research (see appendix 7.1) has shown that European stallion stud farms are present online. There are in total ten stallion stud farms from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands compared (table 1). Most of them are from Sweden because the whole research was focussed on Swedish stallion stud farms. Those stallion stud farms got chosen because they are well-known stud farms in their country, but also Europe-wide.

The stallion stud farms use different online platforms and have different numbers of followers. For every online platform, the stallion stud farm with the most followers/subscribers or with a remarkable strategy became analysed in the following chapter.

#### **Website**

Very popular is the use of a website. All chosen stallion stud farms have a website. As already mentioned in the theoretical framework (chapter 2), the website is one of the most important methods of online marketing because nearly all potential customers will have a look at the website or get transmitted to it via other online platforms.

#### Language:

Furthermore, it depends on the target group in which language texts have to be on the website. People who visit a website have to understand it. This increases the chance that they will recommend a website to get more potential customers (W3LAB, 2021).

As in table 1 can be seen, all stallion stud farms have their website at least in their national language. Three stallion stud farms (Gränsbo stuteri, Stockholm seminstation, Hengststation Rohmann) only offer their website in their national language. This could be an indication that their target group comes from their home country and that they do not trade internationally.

Conspicuously, all Swedish stallion stud farms offer their website in their national language, and some of them in English as well. They do not offer their website in different international languages like Schockemöhle, for example, where the customer has the opportunity to choose between seven different languages. It seems that Schockemöhle has an extensive and international reach, and the Swedish stallion stud farms only take care of the national market and do not trade internationally.

Furthermore, it is conspicuous that the Danish and the Dutch stallion stud farms all offer three different languages. Their national language, as well as English and German. It seems that many German breeders also buy semen in Denmark and the Netherlands.

#### Online breeding advice:

The comparison in figure 1 shows that only one of the stallion stud farms has an opportunity for an online breeding advice at the website. The breeder can send some information, photos, and videos about the mare and the favoured stallions to an expert who gives a breeding advice. This has the advantage that the breeding expert can get a better impression of the mare through photos and videos.

It is already common that breeders can contact the breeding experts of a stallion stud farm by phone, but it is challenging to give a qualitative advice without seeing the mare. The online breeding advice is an innovative idea to extend the service for the breeder. As in figure 1 shown, this service is provided by only one of ten stallion stud farms and does not seem to be very common. Nevertheless, it may become an innovative trend in the future.

#### *PS Flyinge & Partners AB:*

PS Flyinge & Partners AB is the only stallion stud farm which offers an online breeding advice. Next to the general option to call a breeding expert, there is the option to fill in an online form with information about the mare, the favoured stallions for the breeding pairing and other important information. Furthermore, the breeder can make a choice if they want to get contacted by phone or by mail. This is an innovative idea to win potential customers because it makes it easier and offers another method to reach a breeding expert to get a breeding advice.

#### E-mail/newsletter:

Furthermore, some stallion stud farms offer the opportunity to enrol for an e-mail newsletter to get informed about the latest news of the stallion stud farm. This is part of the E-mail marketing, which is already mentioned in the theoretical framework in chapter two. It is a marketing strategy to send commercial messages to potential clients to trigger the interest in the stallions of the stallion stud farm which could eventually lead to a purchase of a semen (Christandl, 2019). Out of the ten chosen stallion stud farms only the minority of three stud farms offer this to their potential clients.

#### *Blue Hors:*

One out of the three stallion stud farms which offers the opportunity to get newsletter via the mail is Blue Horse. Potential clients can sign in on the website and will receive the latest news via the mail. Through that, potential customers get new information about the stallions or different happenings on the stallion stud farm and eventually get convinced to buy semen from the stallion stud farm.

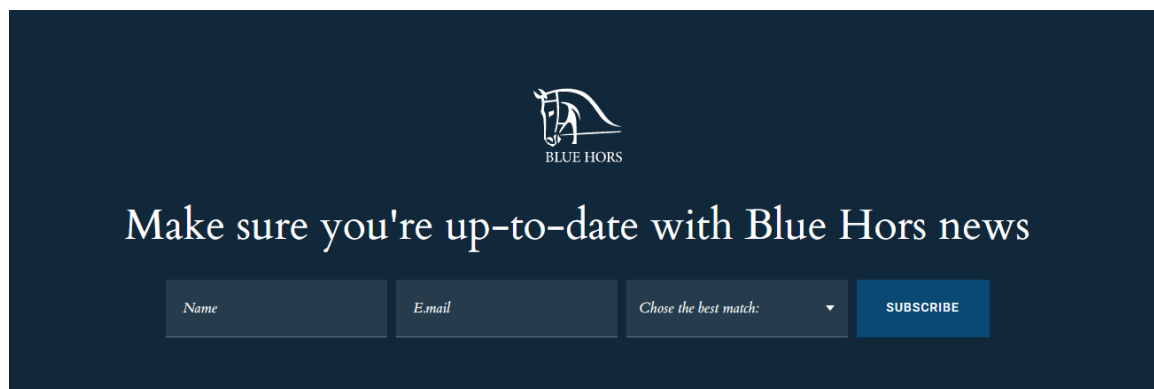


Figure 1 Example newsletter of Blue Hors (Blue Hors, n.d.)

### Social media

Furthermore, all ten stallion stud farms (100%) have a Facebook and an Instagram account. The other social media platforms like YouTube (90%), LinkedIn (40%), TikTok (10%) and Twitter (10%) are used from less stallion stud farms.

#### Facebook:

The internet research has shown that the more professional the account is, the more followers and subscribers the stallion stud farm has. The stallion stud farm Helgstrand Dressage for example has nearly daily reports about the latest news, as well as photos and videos of high quality about the stallions and offspring. This stallion stud farm also has clearly stated posts with the titles in bold type in combination with an informal text in English language which makes it understandable for a wide range of people (figure 2). This strategy could lead to a result of 78,252 followers on Facebook and 50,500 followers on Instagram which is the highest number of followers out of the ten chosen stallion stud farms.

#### Instagram

A supportive strategy for the social media platform Instagram could be the usage of hashtags and good chosen keywords to find the posts of the stallion stud book easier. Also, the usage of the so called "highlights" could improve the success of an Instagram account where pictures and videos can be saved. At the account of Helgstrand Dressage, these highlights are categorized into the themes "foals 2020", "horses", and "stallions" and shows different impressions. These are interesting photos and videos for breeders because they can get an impression of the stallions as well as the offspring.

#### Twitter:

It seems that Twitter is a quite uncommon platform to promote a stallion stud farm. There are about ten stallion stud farms compared to each other in table 1 and only Team Nijhof uses this platform. Conspicuously, the last tweet was on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 which shows that they are not active on this platform anymore. They have 1.069 followers, which is also not a very big range compared to the number of followers on other social media platforms where Team Nijhof has around 15.000 followers. In general, Twitter does not seem to be a trend platform.



Figure 2 post on Facebook of Helgstrand Dressage (Helgstrand Dressage [@helgstranddressage], 2021a)



#### YouTube:

For the online platform YouTube, Schockemöhle has the most followers in comparison with the other stallion stud farms in table 1. The account shows many short videos between 30 seconds and a maximum of two minutes of foals. These foals are offspring of the own stallions and can show an indication of the heredity of the stallions.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the season, they published videos of the stallions. Those videos are up to 8 minutes and longer than the offspring videos. In comparison with the videos of the foals, the videos of the stallions are of higher quality. Those videos also show the whole pedigree at the beginning of the video and afterwards the different gaits as well as different dressage exercises or jumping capabilities, depending on dressage, or jumping horse. There are also some sequences of competitions and sequences of the offspring of the older stallions.

The mix of videos and the regular upload of new videos every week could make it interesting for breeders and other people to follow this account.

The account of PS Flyinge & Partners AB in comparison has only 45 subscriber and the least of all other stallion stud farms in table 1. Conspicuous is that there are only seven videos which have been uploaded three months ago which could be an indicator that people want to see new videos regularly. Furthermore, there are only videos of the stallions.

Although the videos have the same quality, the same layout and show the same content as the stallions' videos of Schockemöhle (both stallion stud farms are owned by Paul Schockemöhle). This could be an indicator that it is not only about quality, but also the upload sequence of new videos. It could also be effective for stallion stud farms to show videos of the offspring to indicate the heredity of the stallions.

#### LinkedIn:

LinkedIn in general does not seem to be a common platform for stallion stud farms. Out of the ten stallion stud farms in table 1, only three stallion stud farms have an account on this online platform. One of those is the stallion stud farm Helgstrand Dressage. They have with 889 subscribers the highest amount of the chosen stallion stud farms.

Also, the LinkedIn page of Helgstrand Dressage seems to be very professional. On every online platform they have their logo as profile picture which let the people recognize the company. Furthermore, there is an introduction text about the stallion stud farm, some general information like the location and accompanying locations and the link to different employees of the company. As well as on other online platforms, the company also has some professional posts about the latest news of the stallion stud farm in a professional format. The headlines are always in bold types, underneath a text in English language which makes it understandable for a big range of people and there are always pictures of high quality.

#### TikTok:

TikTok in general is a common online platform nowadays as in the expert interviews is mentioned. But it does not seem to be a trend in the European breeding sector because only one out of the ten chosen European stallion stud farms, Hengststation Rohmann, uses this online platform. The stallion stud farm Lövsta stuteri seems to have an account but do not publish any videos there. They only make TikTok videos and publish them on Instagram.

The Hengststation Rohman started with the TikTok account in the beginning of April this year which shows that the account is quite young. On their account, they show short videos with training impressions of different stallions during training, competition or while preparing for training. Furthermore, they show videos of foals or a stable tour of the facility.

It seems to be a platform to show short sequences which are more creative and 'funny' than videos on the website or other social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram for example. There is also



the chance to come in contact with a broad range of people, especially with the younger target group because 41% of the users are between 16 and 24 years old (up, 2021). This target group could have an influence on their parents or grandparents as breeders. It can become a trend for stallion stud farms during the next months, but until now, there are not many stallion stud farms.

The table underneath (table 1) shows the comparison of in total ten stallion stud farms from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. Most of them are from Sweden because also the whole research is specialised in Swedish stallion stud farms. Those stallion stud farms got chosen because they are well-known stud farms in their country, but also in Europe.

The yellow marked words and numbers show stallion stud farms with specialities for the website or with the most followers/subscribers on social media platforms. The information out of the table are the actual numbers from the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.

*Table 1 Comparison of European stallion stud farms*

	GRÄNSBO STUTERI	LÖVSTA STUTERI	PS FLYINGE & PARTNERS AB	STOCKHOLM SEMIN- STATION	BLUE HORSE	HELGSTRAND DRESSAGE	HENGST- STATION ROHMANN	SCHOCKE- MÖHLE	TEAM NIJHOF	VDL STUD
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Denmark	Denmark	Germany	Germany	Netherlands	Netherlands
<b>WEBSITE</b>	(stuteri G., 2021)	(stuteri, 2021)	(AB, 2021)	(seminstatio n, 2021)	(Horse, 2021)	(Dressage, 2021)	(Rohmann, 2021)	(Schockemöhle, 2021)	(Nijhof, 2021)	(stud, 2021)
<b>LANGUAGES</b>	Swedish	Swedish English	Swedish English	Swedish	Danish English German	Danish English German	German	German English French Italian Spanish Finnish Swedish	Dutch English German	Dutch English German
<b>ONLINE STALLION ADVISE</b>	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>E-MAIL/ NEWSLETTER</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
	<b>Social media: Number subscriber/follower</b>									
<b>FACEBOOK</b>	4.533	11.359	3.903	2.892	36.405	78.252	5.218	55.649	18.104	44.430
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	2.282	26.800	826	1.869	46.000	50.500	2.944	19.100	13.500	24.700
<b>TWITTER</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.069	-
<b>YOUTUBE</b>	183	378	45	70	2.290	3.620	-	5.590	2.660	5.190
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	-	72	-	47	273	889	-	-	-	-
<b>TIKTOK</b>	-	videos on Instagram	-	-	-	-	3.045	-	-	-
	<b>Other online marketing tools</b>									
<b>PODCAST</b>	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Conclusion:

After the comparison of different European stallion stud farms in table 1, it was obvious that every stallion stud farm has a website which seems to be very important. The selection of the language seems to depend on the target country because while the Swedish stallion stud farms only offer the website in the national language and sometimes in English, stallion stud farms in Denmark and the Netherlands, most of the time offer three different languages. Very big stallion stud farms like Schockemöhle offer much more languages.

Furthermore, all of the ten chosen stallion stud farms have an account on Facebook, and Instagram, as well as nearly all stallion stud farms have an account on YouTube. Those seem to be the online platforms where European stallion stud farms need to be present.

Online platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok do not seem to be very popular in the breeding sector. While Twitter and LinkedIn are already a long time online, the platform TikTok is relatively young. Therefore, it could become a trend in the future for stallion stud farms to use TikTok.

Another important point for online platforms is the quality of the photos and videos. Nowadays with the technological development, it is possible to take photos and videos with an enormous resolution,

and it is conspicuous that accounts with high-quality materials have more followers and subscribers than others.

Nevertheless, not only the quality of the photos and videos is very important, but also the sequence of news and posts. People seem to want to stay up to date and follow especially the stallion stud farms who post new information regularly.

Furthermore, next to the country-specific differences in the availability of the languages, there are no other differences in the use of online platforms. All chosen stallion stud farms have a website, Instagram, and Facebook, and there do not seem to be country-specific differences regarding online platforms which are not used by all stallion stud farms.

## 7.2 Advantages of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms

The second sub-question of this research was '*what is the advantage of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms?*'. Out of the expert interviews and the semi-structured interviews with the breeders, the following results arose.

### 7.2.1 Qualitative research – Expert interviews

Online marketing nowadays makes it possible to reach markets easier with fewer marketing tools than in the past. Furthermore, it is easier to analyse the success of the different marketing tools directly afterwards. It is also possible to use different marketing tools for different regions and target groups much easier than in the past. That means that Swedish stallion stud farms can divide their target population into different disciplines and regions, for example, and make better-adapted marketing campaigns.

Another advantage of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms is that they can introduce themselves and their horses online to the rest of the world. With that, they can achieve a much broader range. The more professional the online marketing is done, the more potential clients can get contacted and convinced.

Through the use of online marketing, companies should be able to get international clients. Online platforms are available all around the world, and people from everywhere have access to the information.

Furthermore, the stallions and the offspring can be shown online. Before the internet was used, breeders had to go to the stud farms or competition to see the stallions or go to other breeders to see the offspring. Nowadays, photos and videos can be uploaded online, and breeders can get an overall impression of different stallions simultaneously.

Especially in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, where personal contacts needed to become reduced and horse competitions, as well as stallion shows, could not take place, stallion stud farms had to rethink. For those kinds of happenings, online marketing can be beneficial for staying in contact with the target group and still showing news and videos about the stallions.

### 7.3 Online information sources for Swedish warmblood breeders

To answer the sub-question ‘*which information wants the Swedish warmblood breeder on online platforms?*’, the questionnaire is conducted as quantitative research and interviews with breeders as a qualitative research method. The results are shown in the following chapter.

However, to know which online platforms the Swedish warmblood breeders use, it was necessary to know who the Swedish warmblood breeder is. The questionnaire results (Appendix 11.4.2) have shown that with 86,3%, most Swedish warmblood breeders are female.

#### 1) Age of the respondent

271 answers

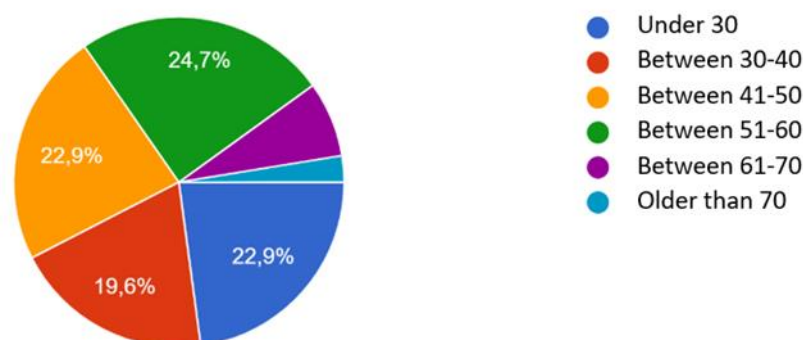


Figure 3 Age of the respondents

The average age is more difficult to give because the age groups under 30, between 30-40, between 41-50, and between 51-60 all have around 20%. Only the age groups above 61 years are obviously smaller. The biggest age group with 24.7%, is the age group between 51-61 which would underline the information of the Swedish breeding association who has an average age of 58 years (chapter 2.2).

Furthermore, 67.9% of the target group has between 1-3 mares for breeding and 45.8%, which is nearly half of all respondents, have more than ten years of breeding experience which means that the average Swedish warmblood breeder is experienced and has knowledge about reproduction of horses.

#### 7.3.1 Quantitative research – Questionnaire

The questionnaire results are divided into the chapter actual information sources, wishes of Swedish warmblood breeders, and the use of social media platforms. This subdivision gives an overview of where breeders are searching for information, where they wish to find information, and to get a more profound impression about their social media usage.

##### 7.3.1.1 Actual information sources

The questionnaire has shown that about 79.7% of the breeders look at the website to inform themselves about stallions. Also essential are the stallion shows (for 67.5%), recommendations of other breeders (55%), and the information on social media (48.7%).

On fifth position in the ranking are with 43.7% stallion catalogues. Also, the presentation of the stallions on competition (36.9%), as well as the advice of stallion stud farm experts (35.8%) are less important for the respondents, but with still around one third of the whole population an important source of information. The same seems to be with the video platform ClipMyHorse.tv which achieved 26.6%. This is the last position of the predetermined answer options but is with over one-fourth of the population still significant for Swedish stallion stud farms.

Respondents also had the opportunity to write their own answers down. Some of them answered that they have a look at Språngrulla, a website where information about stallions, as well as Swedish stallion stud farms can be found (Språngrulla, 2021). Another Swedish website on which some participants search for information about stallions is called Blup. This website also gives information about breeding values of Swedish breeding horses, test results of Young Horse Tests, Riding Horse Test, and competitions (Blup.se, 2021).

Other Swedish warmblood breeders use the international website Horsetelelex, another website where information about the horses and their pedigree can be found (Horsetelelex, 2021), or they have a look at the stallion approvals. Some of them also use their own experiences for the selection of the stallions.

#### *7.3.1.2 Wishes of Swedish warmblood breeders*

To the questions about how they wish to get informed, 76% of the respondents chose the website. Furthermore, very important seems to be stallion shows. Those shows are organized by the stallion stud farm and show all stallions in one evening. With that, breeders can get a good overview about all stallions and can compare them. The outcome of this questionnaire shows that 65.3% of the participants want to go to those stallion shows.

The third position of importance is with 52.8% social media. Nowadays, there are many social media platforms and stallion stud farms are active there. They upload the latest news, photos, and videos, and breeders can get information there.

With about 48%, which are 130 out of 271 participants, the wish for online advice from a breeding expert of the stallion stud farm is significant. Furthermore, 46.1% want to get a stallion catalogue, and at least 34.3% of the Swedish warmblood breeders want the opportunity to make a personal phone call with a breeding expert of the stallion stud farm.

There was, next to the predetermined response option, also the opportunity to write their own ideas down. Many participants wish to see the stallions live and want to get information from experts or people who know the stallion but who do not do it for profit and to be honest. Furthermore, the websites Blup, Språngrulla, and Horsetelelex, as well as the SWB breeding advice are mentioned and also the wish for one complete platform where the breeder can find all information about all stallion

### 7.3.1.3 Social media usage

#### 8) Usage of online platforms

261 answers

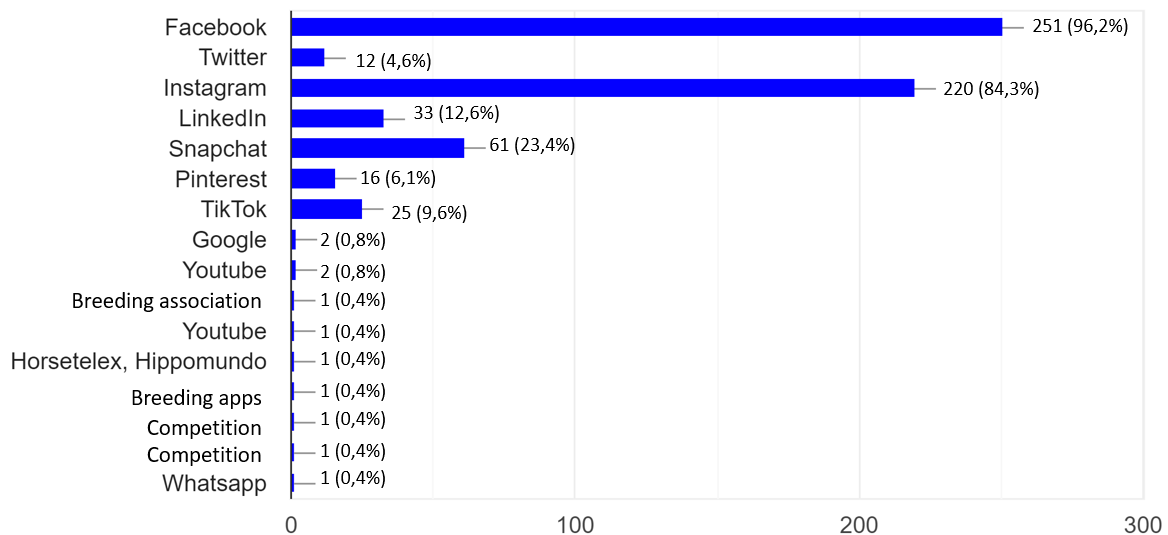


Figure 4 Usage of online platform

Out of the 261 answers, 96.2% prefer the social media platform Facebook, followed closely by Instagram (84.3%). Less used are social media platforms like Snapchat (23.4%), LinkedIn (12.6%), TikTok (9.6%), Pinterest (6.1%), and at least Twitter (4.6%).

For this question, there was also the option to write other social media platforms down. Some participants mentioned the online platforms Google, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Furthermore, platforms like Horsetelex, Hippomundo, and breeding apps have been written down which are not social media platforms. Also, answers like competition and the breeding association cannot count for the results of this question.

The result of this question shows that Swedish warmblood breeders are especially active on Facebook and Instagram.

### 7.3.2 Qualitative research – Interviews with breeders

The research method of the eight semi-structured interviews with Swedish warmblood breeders has shown that most of the breeders search for potential stallions on a stallion show (87.5%) and on the website (75%). With about 50%, also many people are interested in competition results and videos, in the stallion catalogue, the information on Facebook, and in the breeding advice of a stallion stud farm expert or of other breeders.

To the question where they would like to find information, 75% mentioned the website of a stallion stud farm, as well as on the social media platform Facebook. Directly behind is the social media platform Instagram with 62.5%. Further mentioned are the breeding advice of the stallion stud farm expert (37.5%), the stallion show, and ClipMyHorse.tv with 25% each, and through a newsletter.

With 87.5%, nearly all interviewed persons have a Facebook account, 50% an Instagram account, and only one out of eight (12.5%) have a LinkedIn account or a Snapchat account.

## 7.4 Kinds of information for Swedish warmblood breeders

The fourth sub-question was ‘Which information wants the Swedish warmblood breeder on online platforms?’. The questionnaire is conducted as quantitative research, and semi-structured interviews with breeders as a qualitative research method to answer this question. The results are shown in the following chapter.

### 7.4.1 Quantitative research – Questionnaire

The following figure shows the results of question 9 of the questionnaire about in which information respondents are interested in.

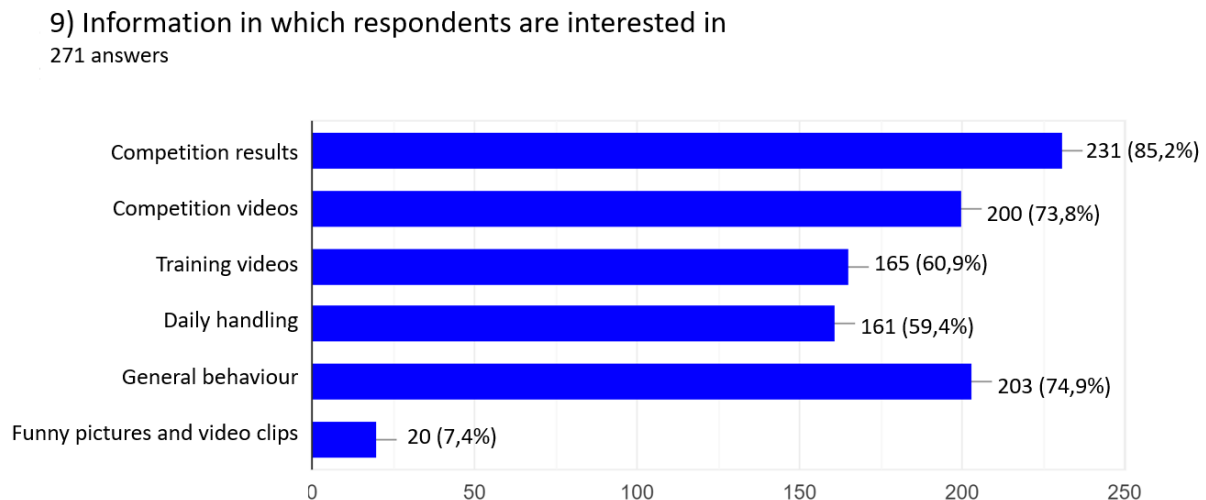


Figure 5 Information in which respondents are interested in

Most of the participants want to get competition results (85.2%). The general behaviour (74.9%), nearly followed by competition videos (73.8%), are important to the breeders. With about 60.9%, a little bit behind are training videos and information about the daily handling (59.4%). Least significant with only 7.4% are funny pictures and video clips of the stallions.

### 7.4.2 Qualitative research – Interviews with breeders

The Swedish warmblood breeders want different kinds of information about the stallions. Many breeders want information about the character (62.5%), the quality (62.5%), and the behaviour (50%) of the stallions. Furthermore, the exterior (37.5%), the offspring (37.5%), and show results (37.5%) have been desired information. Also, information of the training (25%), the pedigree (12.5%), bloodline (12.5%), genetics (12.5%). The three last-mentioned points (pedigree, bloodlines, genetics) could get summarized into one category, which would conclude a need for the genetics of 37.5%.

## 7.5 Preferred online presentation for Swedish warmblood breeders

The last sub-question was '*Which way of presentation prefers the Swedish warmblood breeder?*'. The questionnaire is carried out as quantitative research and semi-structured interviews with breeders as a qualitative research method to answer this question. The results are shown in the following chapter.

### 7.5.1 Quantitative research – Questionnaire

#### 10) Duration of videos

271 answers

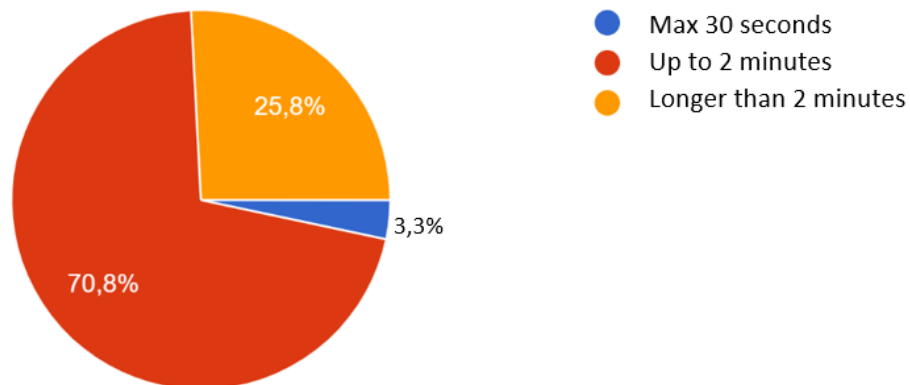


Figure 6 Duration of videos

To the question about how long a video of a stallion should be, 70.8% of the participants answered that they want to have videos up to two minutes. On the second position, with 25.8%, are videos longer than two minutes and only 3.3% of the Swedish warmblood breeders want to see videos that have a maximum length of 30 seconds.

That means that Swedish warmblood breeders prefer videos up to two minutes. Also, videos that are longer than two minutes seem to be interesting for them.

#### 11) Text size

271 answers

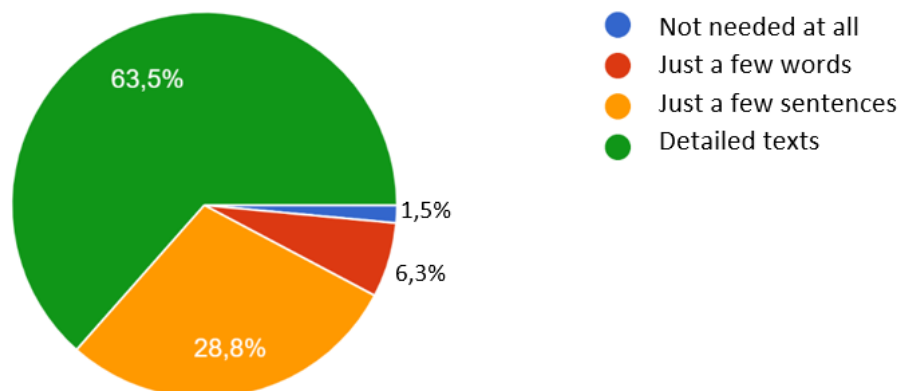


Figure 7 Text sizes



The last question of the questionnaire was about the length of texts. With about 63.5%, most participants want to get detailed texts about the stallions with well-described information. 28.8% of the participants also like to have short texts out of a few sentences.

#### 7.5.2 Qualitative research – Interviews with breeders

The information about the lengths of videos and texts is more difficult to analyze because there have been different interview questions in part one and two. The first four breeders got the question which lengths of videos and texts they prefer, while the second group also got the question if they want to have different lengths on social media and the website.

There were different answers about the lengths of videos in the first group. While two breeders mentioned that short videos are desired, another breeder wants long videos because bad sequences will get cut out. Also, the answers to the lengths of the texts were different that no precise results can be shown.

Clearer were the results of the second group where the lengths of videos and texts should be defined on social media and the website. All interviewees agreed that texts and videos on social media should be short to midsize, and on the website should be longer videos and detailed texts.

The last question was about which information should be shown where was only asked to the second group of the interviews. All breeders answered that they want to have on social media information about competition results and training impressions. Further significant have been the daily handling (50%), the offspring (50%), and actual news (50%). On the website, they are more interested in the bloodlines (75%), general information of the stallion (50%), competition results (50%), and the grades of the stallion approval (25%).

## 8. Discussion of results

This chapter summarizes the results of the research and discusses the relevance of the research. To get a structured overview, the results are discussed for every sub-question out of chapter 4. Sub-question one and two focus on online marketing in general, on actual developments and the advantages of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms. Sub-question three to five focuses on the wishes and needs of the Swedish warmblood breeder.

The first sub-question was about actual online marketing developments in the equestrian industry with a focus on Sweden. For this sub-question, the internet research and expert interviews have been made.

The internet research was needed to get an overview of the use of online platforms of European stallion stud farms. The internet research gave an overview about differences between different stallion stud farms, as well as some country-specific differences. Of course, the internet research is only a snapshot but indicates how successful online platforms are build up and what kind of content seems to be wanted by the breeders.

The success of a stallion stud farm on social media can furthermore not only get determined by the number of followers. Some big stallion stud farms like Schockemöhle and Helgstrand Dressage are more popular than others and will have some more followers only because of that. Usually, it will not change the conclusions of the results because it was obvious that they do it very professionally and regularly, which was also an indication for success in the expert interviews.

The expert interviews also indicated important developments in online marketing. Those have been made with two marketing experts out of the equestrian industry, but they were quite different. Both experts are in different parts of the equestrian sector. While Mr. Dietz gave much information about the developments in the breeding sector and had a point of view out of the breeder perspective, Mrs. Spackman gave more information about online marketing in the equestrian sector in general with a focus on social media. Both interviews have been informational and useful but went in different directions and are difficult to compare. Nevertheless, the outcome of both interviews was to ask the target group and to be present online where the target group is.

Furthermore, it seems to be difficult to analyse the online marketing in one specific country. Especially the online marketing is used for the world wide web and restrictions to one country are nearly impossible because it is visible for everyone around the world. Furthermore, both marketing experts indicated that there are no markable marketing trends for Sweden that are not actual in other European countries like Denmark, Germany, or the Netherlands for example. Those are the countries with which the marketing experts are primarily familiar.

The internet research, as well as the expert interviews, gave much information about online marketing in the equestrian and in the breeding sector. To get a deeper impression about the online marketing developments in the breeding sector, an interview with a stallion stud farm could have been useful to extend the information about online marketing in the breeding sector.

The second sub-question was about the advantages of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms. To answer this question, expert interviews have been conducted. Both experts gave some good indication of why it is important to use online marketing and the advantages. Next to the general advantages of online marketing in the equestrian sector, they also focussed on the breeding sector.

The second part of the sub-questions was about the Swedish warmblood breeders, their needs, and wishes. To answer these questions, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with breeders have been made.

First, four of the eight interviews have been made to understand why Swedish warmblood breeders breed, how they search for a stallion, and which online platforms they use. Those interviews also helped to optimize the questionnaire.

Afterwards, the questionnaire has been made. In general, the minimum number of participants gets determined on the basis of the number of Swedish warmblood breeders. But because Swedish warmblood breeders do not have to register themselves as a breeder, there was no exact number available. With the help of the official numbers of the SWB (5700 members in the SWB, 3050 born foals in 2020) and through the advice of a breeding expert, the assumption was made that about 60% of the members are active breeders. This makes a Swedish warmblood breeder population out of 3.420 active breeders. This was also a likely number of active horse breeders because 3050 foals were born in 2020; some of them have been from the same breeder, but also some breeders could have had problems to get their mare pregnant or made a year break of breeding. To reach a confidence level of 90% with a confidence interval of 5%, the sample size calculator calculated a minimum number of participants of 251. With 271 respondents, the questionnaire got a reliable result for the calculated population. There is the risk that the actual population of Swedish warmblood breeders is bigger than calculated, which would make the questionnaire unreliable.

The outcome of the questionnaire showed comparable results to the numbers of the SWB. The SWB defines the Swedish warmblood breeder for the most part female, breeds one to three foals a year and is on average 58 years old. Also, the questionnaire for this research has shown that with 86.3%, most of the Swedish breeder is female and that with 67.9%, most of the Swedish breeders have between 1-3 mares for breeding. Regarding the age of the breeders, the results of the questionnaire and the numbers of the SWB are a bit different. While the questionnaire did not show significant differences between the different age groups. The numbers of the SWB define with 28% the age group between 50-60 years as the biggest. Also in the questionnaire, this is the biggest age group, but with only 24.7%. On the second place is the age group of the 40-50 years old breeders, where the numbers of the SWB counts a percentage of 20%, the questionnaire has a little bit bigger percentage with 22.9%. The numbers do not differentiate a lot, but there are slight differences.

In general, to make the result more reliable, it was useful to share the questionnaire online on social media as well as to give it directly to the breeders in the mare station. Through that, also Swedish warmblood breeders could be reached who are not on social media but helped to make the questionnaire more reliable.

There were some questions in the questionnaire which could have been formulated clearer. Question one was about the age of the breeder with the first category of an age under 30 years. This category could have been divided into under 20 and between 21-30 years to get a better overview about the youth in the target group.

Furthermore, question six should have been formulated clearer. It could be possible that it was unclear if the stallion catalogue is printed on paper like the traditional stallion catalogues or online. For question six, most respondents usually thought about a stallion catalogue on paper because this is more common than an online stallion catalogue. For question seven, the category stallion catalogues could have been divided into stallion catalogue on paper and stallion catalogue on paper to get a precise result. But nevertheless, the questionnaire gave an indication.

Out of the 271 respondents of the questionnaire, only 261 answered question eight about the use of social media. This is a clear indication that a category was missing for people who do not use social media. This mistake does not change the result of the questionnaire because the people do not necessarily have to answer this question but is a point of attention for the following questionnaire.

Furthermore, some more questions could be attached about where the Swedish warmblood breeders come from and for which discipline, they breed. That information could have given some more information to specialise some online marketing campaigns for specific segments. But the information of the SWB gave some reliable facts through which is known that most of the breeders breed show jumping foals and come from the region Skåne and around a radius of 150km around Stockholm.

In total, the questionnaire gave much information about the breeder which helps to answer the sub-questions. Some questions could get improved and some additional questions could have

strengthened the results. But in total, it was a successful research method to answer sub-question three to five and to get an overview about the Swedish warmblood breeder.

Next to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews have been made. The first four interviews were conducted before the questionnaire to get a better impression of the Swedish warmblood breeder and to improve the questionnaire. Through the questionnaire, some more questions arise which could get asked to some breeders to get detailed answers. The first part of the interviews has been a bit superficial and through the second part, more detailed answers were given.

The interviews with the breeders gave a good impression about who they are and what is important for them, but especially the information out of the second part of the interviews is not really reliable. Other results may arise with the same kind of questionnaires because four interviews are not representable for the Swedish warmblood breeder population.

Furthermore, the Swedish warmblood breeders seem to be mainly active on the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Due to this fact, it is difficult to analyse different information needs on different platforms. However, every social media platform has its purpose and functions which should be considered.

To summarize the research methods results, there have been four different research methods: the internet research, expert interviews, a questionnaire, and interviews with breeders. All research methods have been useful for getting results, to get an overview of online marketing, the European breeding sector, and the Swedish warmblood breeder. There are some points of attention that could have strengthen the results. However, all research methods have shown important information to improve the effectiveness of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms.

## 9. Conclusions and recommendation

This chapter is about conclusions and the answer to the main question *'how can online marketing be more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms?'* which can be made because of the research results. Furthermore, there is a recommendation for Swedish stallion stud farms.

### 9.1 Conclusion

The technological change during the last years changed the way of working in many industries. The use of online marketing got more essential and is nowadays popular worldwide. Through online marketing, many people can be reached in an effective way, independent of the place and time of destination.

Also, the Swedish country is a developed and forward-looking country that wants to be completely connected until 2025. Out of the whole Swedish population, 96% use online communication platforms and social media, which shows a high potential for online marketing in Sweden.

This research was done to determine how online marketing can be more effective for Swedish stallion stud farms. In general, the equestrian sector has kept itself traditional for a long time and was not up to date like other industries. Especially, the horse breeding sector has quite traditional marketing tools like stallion catalogues on paper, live stallion shows, and breeding advice in face-to-face conversations. It was not known if Swedish warmblood breeders are available for online marketing, if they want to get the information online, or if they want to keep the traditional information sources. Furthermore, it was unknown on which online platforms Swedish stallion stud farms can reach the target group of Swedish warmblood breeders and which information they want to get.

The research has shown many opportunities and advantages in online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms. First of all, the Swedish warmblood breeders are nearly in all age groups present, are for the most part female, have one to three mares for breeding, and have many experiences with horse breeding.

The results have shown that Swedish stallion stud farms need to have a website with good visibility and usability. The target group expects them there and want to get the information there. The website should be visible on search engines and should include good keywords that people can easily find the stallion stud farm. Furthermore essential is good useability that potential customers can find what they search. That means that the website has to be clearly structured with all information that could be needed.

The website should include detailed texts about the stallions, the pedigree and the bloodline, as well as about competition results and information about the character. Photos and videos that give a good impression about the stallion are also essential and should be high quality. The videos can be longer than two minutes. It is also advisable to show competition videos and results, videos of the training, the general behaviour and if possible, of the offspring.

Furthermore, important for the website is the selection of possible languages. As the research has shown, especially Swedish stallion stud farms tend to offer the website only in the national language. If the target group is only Swedish speaking, it can be sufficient, but to open the website for a bigger range of people, a website should also be available in the English language. The website could also get expanded through online offers like online breeding advice or the option to subscribe to a newsletter.

Another effective online marketing strategy is to make a stallion show, live and online. With 65.3%, more than half of the Swedish breeders like to get information about the stallions on a stallion show. Next to the opportunity to join the presentation in person, the presentation could be filmed by a video platform like ClipMyHorse.tv. Through this, people can join the presentation even if they cannot be at the facility. Furthermore, the video could be saved afterwards that people can have a look at it later.

In combination with an online stallion show, an online stallion catalogue could be an innovative option for a website. The traditional catalogues are on paper, and nearly half of the breeders want to get

information out of the stallion catalogue. Through uploading the catalogue online, the breeder could have the opportunity to get the information whenever needed online.

Another valuable tool for the website could be a page to offer foals of clients for sale. Some Swedish breeders want to sell their foals, and it is a good opportunity for the breeder to reach potential customers. On the other hand, it is an opportunity for the stallion stud farm to get photos, videos, and information about the stallions' offspring to show online.

The use of social media is also a necessary tool for Swedish stallion stud farms. With 52.8%, more than half of the breeders want to get the information on social media. The Swedish warmblood breeders use especially the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. It is important to recognize that the more professional the social media accounts are, the more followers they usually will have. That means that weekly to daily posts are needed with new information about the stallions, the team, the facility, or the offspring, for example. Furthermore, the photos and videos should be high quality, and the texts should be written professionally. Small stallion stud farms that only sell the semen to Sweden could write the texts in the Swedish language. However, stallion stud farms that sell semen internationally should use English to make it understandable for people from different countries.

The results have shown that a big part of the Swedish warmblood breeders wants to see videos up to two minutes. Nevertheless, there are also many breeders who want to see longer videos. It is advisable to show long and detailed videos on the website to get a detailed overview of the stallion. The videos on social media should be shorter, up to two minutes, with impressions of competitions, training, as well as about the general behaviour. Especially on Instagram, Swedish stallion stud farms can use the tools of stories, reels, and highlights to make the account professional and interesting for the followers and to keep them up to date.

The same is advisable for the lengths of texts. On the website there should be long and detailed texts about the stallion, and on social media only short texts out of a few sentences.

Nowadays, people want to know who is behind a company and the customer wants to have a connection with a company. It can be effective to show photos and videos 'behind the scenes' and show who the people behind the stallion stud farm are and how they work, for example.

Another trend in the equestrian sector is the expansion of the influencers market. It could also be an innovative idea to invite an influencer to the stallion stud farm and shoot a video together. Influencers often have many followers and a wide range and can reach many people. Another opportunity could also be a cooperation with sponsors to expand the touchpoints with potential customers for both parties, the sponsor company, as well as the stallion stud farm. Also, if those videos will not reach the breeders directly, it is known that also children and grandchildren have an enormous influence on their parents and grandparents.

The usage of forums on the internet, especially on Facebook, is much used by breeders. The comments in online forums can positively influence breeder's opinion, but they can also negatively influence if there are negative comments. Because of that, Google-Alert should be used by stallion stud farms to know what is written about the company online and to be able to react on it.

The expert interviews have shown that online marketing strategies like display marketing and SEA do not seem very effective for Swedish stallion stud farms. There are other opportunities that are more effective. Also, platforms like TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Pinterest are less used by Swedish warmblood breeders and are not advisable for Swedish stallion stud farms right now. Also, the production of a podcast does not seem to be very popular at the moment.

To be successful in online marketing, it is advisable to have a person who manages the online platforms. As the results have shown, it is important to have someone who has knowledge about online marketing and the online platforms, and knows, understands, and can connect with the target group. Also, time is an essential factor to make it professional and to be successful. It needs time to

create content, to keep everything up to date and to be reachable for the Swedish warmblood breeders.

## 9.2 Recommendation

There are many opportunities for Swedish stallion stud farms to improve their online marketing. Nevertheless, to make it more effective, Swedish stallion stud farms should use the online marketing strategies which are most important.

Nearly all Swedish breeders search for information on the website. Swedish stallion stud farms need to have a good-working website with a good visibility and useability. There has to be all information about the stallions in combination with photos and videos of high quality. Also, all essential information about the purchase, dispatch, and other relevant points of attention for the customer must be available. The website needs to be clearly structured and easy to operate. The language should be available in Swedish and English to give international customers the opportunity to understand what is written on the website.

The photos, videos, and texts on the website should offer a broad range of information and can be longer and more detailed than on social media. Important themes are general information about the stallions, information about the genetics and pedigree, the general behaviour, and the information about the offspring, if available. Breeders are also interested in the successes of competition or the results of the stallion approval of young stallions.

Furthermore, very important is the usage of the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Those are the platforms on which the Swedish warmblood breeders are active. To be successful there, posts have to be made regularly, on a weekly to daily basis. The photos and videos should be of high quality; the texts should be clearly structured and kept short. Furthermore important for Instagram is the use of hashtags. Through well-chosen hashtags, the visibility of the posts and the account can get improved.

It is advisable to upload photos and videos up to two minutes as posts or in the story about impressions of competitions, training, as well as the general behaviour and the offspring. Especially on the social media platform Instagram, stallion stud farms can use the tool of highlights to give the breeders an overview about the stallions and the offspring, for example. Also, the stories can help to upload new photos and videos daily and to stay in mind of potential customers.

Another effective online marketing strategy will be to broadcast the stallion show online. Many breeders will join the event in person to see the stallions live, but it can be a good opportunity for people who cannot be there. In combination with an online stallion catalogue, people can get the information they want to get.

Important to support the effectiveness of online marketing is that Swedish stallion stud farms have enough time for online marketing. To build it up professionally, it needs someone who takes the pictures and videos, writes the texts, and posts them online to keep the target group up to date. It needs someone who has time to think about interesting content for the breeders, to produce it and to place it online. Furthermore, it is important that the person is out of the equestrian industry, knows what the target group wants to see, talks the same language, and understands the passion for horses and breeding.

Another innovative idea could be the cooperation with an Influencer. In the video could be the stallions, the facility, and the daily routine be shown. Many breeders are interested in the character and the general behaviour of the stallions which can be shown in such a video, next to sequences of training or competition. Many potential customers or the youth that influences of the breeding decision of the parents can be reached through the range of the influencer. This is another touchpoint for potential customers.

If a Swedish stallion stud farm has the capacity, they can also extend the service and offer an online breeding advice. Many breeders have wished for such an online offer. It will be easier for the stallion stud farm to give qualitative advice through photos and videos of the mare, or even of earlier foals are available than only through explanations on the phone. Furthermore, it is more flexible in time because the breeding expert does not have to react directly when the breeder is calling.

Those are the essential online marketing strategies which should be used by Swedish stallion stud farms. If there is more time to improve the online marketing, there are many opportunities in online marketing like other social media platforms or the cooperation with sponsors, for example. It is essential to regularly conduct market research to keep in touch with the Swedish warmblood breeders, to know what they want, where they expect the Swedish stallion stud farms, and how they are changing.



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## 11. Appendices

### 11.1 Internet research

This first research method is a qualitative research about online marketing trends of European stallion stud farms. It is an observative research about opportunities and trends on different online platforms and an analysis about the strong points for a successful online appearance.

There is an overview about the usage of different online platforms as well as the number of followers or subscribers to determine the most successful stallion stud farm. Furthermore, the strategy of the stallion stud farm with the most followers or subscribers per online platform gets analysed in the following text.

As to be seen in 2, there are in total ten stallion stud farms from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands compared. Most of them are from Sweden because also the whole research is specialised in Swedish stallion stud farms. Those stallion stud farms got chosen because they are well-known stud farms in their country, but also in Europe.

Furthermore, the yellow marked words and numbers show stallion stud farms with specialities for the website or with the most followers/subscribers on social media platforms. The information out of the table are the actual numbers on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.

Table 2 Comparison of European stallion stud farms

	GRÄNSBO STUTERI	LÖVSTA STUTERI	PS FLYINGE & PARTNERS AB	STOCKHOLM SEMIN- STATION	BLUE HORSE	HELGSTRAND DRESSAGE	HENGST- STATION ROHMANN	SCHÖCKE- MÖHLE	TEAM NIJHOF	VDL STUD
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Denmark	Denmark	Germany	Germany	Netherlands	Netherlands
<b>WEBSITE</b>	(stuteri G., 2021)	(stuteri, 2021)	(AB, 2021)	(seminstatio n, 2021)	(Horse, 2021)	(Dressage, 2021)	(Rohmann, 2021)	(Schockem öhle, 2021)	(Nijhof, 2021)	(stud, 2021)
<b>LANGUAGES</b>	Swedish	Swedish English	Swedish English	Swedish	Danish English German	Danish English German	German	German English France Italian Spanish Finnish Swedish	Dutch English German	Dutch English German
<b>ONLINE STALLION ADVISE</b>	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>E-MAIL/ NEWSLETTER</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Social media: Number subscriber/follower</b>										
<b>FACEBOOK</b>	4.533	11.359	3.903	2.892	36.405	78.252	5.218	55.649	18.104	44.430
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	2.282	26.800	826	1.869	46.000	50.500	2.944	19.100	13.500	24.700
<b>TWITTER</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.069	-
<b>YOUTUBE</b>	183	378	45	70	2.290	3.620	-	5.590	2.660	5.190
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	-	72	-	47	273	889	-	-	-	-
<b>TIKTOK</b>	-	videos on Instagram	-	-	-	-	3.045	-	-	-
<b>Other online marketing tools</b>										
<b>PODCAST</b>	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

#### Website:

First of all, all chosen stallion stud farms have a website. As already mentioned in the theoretical framework (chapter 2), the website is one of the most important methods of online marketing because nearly all potential customers will have a look at the website or get transmitted to it via other online platforms.

#### Language:

It always depends on your target group in which language your texts have to be on your website. It is important that the people who visit your website are able to understand it and it also increases the chance that they will recommend your website to get more potential customers (W3LAB, 2021).

As in figure 2 to be seen, all stallion stud farms have their website at least in their national language. Furthermore, there are three stallion stud farms (Gränsbo stuteri, Stockholm seminstation, Hengststation Rohmann) which only offer their website in their national language. This could be an indication that their target group comes from the own country and that they do not trade internationally.

Conspicuously, all Swedish stallion stud farms offer their website in their national language and some of them in English too. They do not offer their website in different international languages like Schockemöhle for example, where the customer has the opportunity to choose between seven different languages. It seems that this stallion stud farm has a big and international reach. It seems that the Swedish stallion stud farms only take care of the national market and do not trade internationally.

Furthermore, it is conspicuous that the Danish and the Dutch stallion stud farms all offers three different languages, their national language, as well as English and German. Apparently, many German breeders also buy the semen in Denmark and the Netherlands.

#### Online breeding advice:

The comparison in figure 2 shows that only one of the stallion stud farms has an opportunity for an online breeding advice at the website. This includes the opportunity to send some information about the mare and the favoured stallions to an expert who gives a breeding advice. It is already common that breeders can contact the breeding experts of a stallion stud farm by phone. An opportunity to get a breeding advice online has the advantage that the breeding expert can get a better impression of the mare through photos and videos. This is quite difficult by phone and with that an innovative idea to extend the service for the breeder. As in figure 2 shown, this service is provided by only one of ten stallion stud farms and does not seem to be very common. Nevertheless, it might become an innovative trend in the future.

#### *PS Flyinge & Partners AB:*

PS Flyinge & Partners AB is the only stallion stud farm which offers an online breeding advice. Next to the general option call a breeding expert, there is the option to fill in an online form with information about the mare, the favoured stallions for the breeding pairing and other important information. Furthermore, the breeder can make a choice if they want to get contacted by phone or by mail. This is an innovative idea to win potential customers because it makes it easier and offers another method to reach a breeding expert to get a breeding advice (PS Flyinge & Partners AB, n.d.).

#### E-mail/newsletter:

Furthermore, some stallion stud farms offer the opportunity to enrol for an e-mail newsletter to get informed about the latest news of the stallion stud farm. This is part of the e-mail marketing, which is already mentioned in the theoretical framework in chapter two. It is a marketing strategy to send commercial messages to potential clients to trigger the interest in the stallions of the stallion stud farm which could eventually lead to a purchase of a semen. Out of the ten chosen stallion stud farms only the minority of three stud farms offer this to their potential clients.

#### *Blue Hors:*

One out of the three stallion stud farms which offers the opportunity to get newsletter via the mail is Blue Horse. Potential clients can sign in on the website and will receive the latest news via the mail. Through that, potential customers get new information about the stallions or different happenings on the stallion stud farm and eventually get convinced to buy semen from the stallion stud farm (Blue Hors, n.d.).

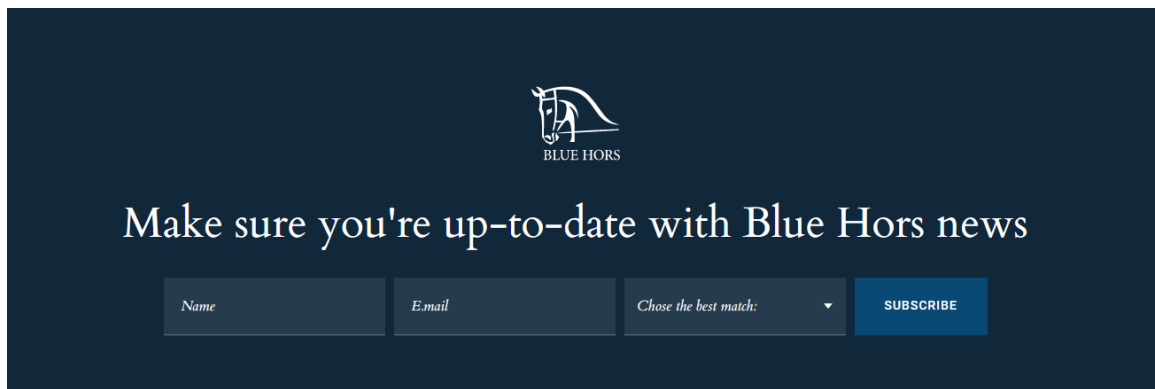


Figure 8 sign-in for the newsletter on the website of Blue Hors (Blue Hors, n.d.)

### Facebook:

The social media platform Facebook gives private users and companies the possibility have a member profile to connect with each other. Many companies use this website for marketing reasons to represent their company online (Lösel, 2019).

Conspicuous in table 2 is that all compared stallion stud farms have a Facebook account which means that this social media platform is a common platform for stallion stud farms. In the comparison with the chosen stallion stud farms, the Danish stallion stud farm Helgstrand Dressage has the most subscribers.

### Helgstrand Dressage:

78.252 subscribers  
69.850 likes

The Facebook page of Helgstrand Dressage has a very professional radiance. The whole Facebook page is in English language which makes it understandable for a big range of people. This is also the first indication that the business works internationally.

At the top of the page, there is some general information about the company, how they developed and who stands behind it. Furthermore, there is information about the address, how to contact the company and a link to the website.

The content on the page is updated every day with professional made photos and videos. The posts contain information about actual show results of own horses and stallions, but as well of already sold horses which are successful with the new riders. Besides that, there are pictures and videos from horses which are for sale and also of offspring of the company's stallions. This is good information for breeders about the heredity of the stallions (Helgstrand Dressage [@helgstranddressage], 2021b).



Figure 9 Example Facebook post Helgstrand Dressage (Helgstrand Dressage [@helgstranddressage], 2021a)

## Instagram:

Instagram is another social media platform where people create their personal account and can share photos and videos with friends and followers. Important functions of Instagram are the hashtags which are a kind of picture caption and are written down underneath the photos and videos. Each hashtag consists of one word with a hash key in front (#stallion). User of Instagram can search for hashtags and can find posts about the theme easier (unternehmer.de, 2017).

Also, the social media platform Instagram seems to be a common platform for European stallion stud farms because all chosen stallion stud farms have an account there. Also, for this social media platform, Helgstrand Dressage have the most followers.

### *Helgstrand Dressage:*

50,500 subscribers

Also, the Instagram page of Helgstrand Dressage has the most subscribers in comparison with the in table 2 mentioned stallion stud farms.

On this Instagram page, there is also some general information and the link to the website at the top of the page. Underneath, there are some so called “highlights” where pictures and videos can be saved. These highlights are categorized into the themes “foals 2020”, “horses”, and “stallions” and shows different impressions. These are interesting photos and videos for breeders because they can get an impression of the stallions as well as the offspring.

Also on this social media page, Helgstrand Dressage uses professional photos and videos with a short text of information with a title in bold type and hashtags which let them get a broader range. Furthermore, they upload posts nearly every day which keeps the followers up to date. The posts also include competition results of the stallions, of other horses and already sold horses and also of offspring of the stallions and general information about happenings at the stable (Helgstrand Dressage [helgstrand\_dressage], 2021).

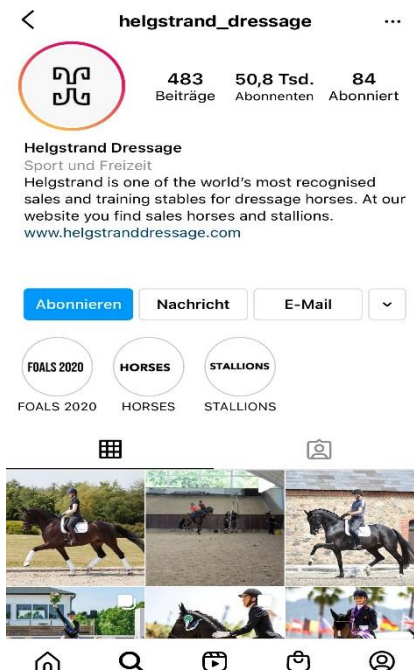


Figure 10 Instagram account Helgstrand Dressage (Helgstrand Dressage [helgstrand\_dressage], 2021)

## Twitter

Another social media platform is Twitter. This platform is well-known for the exchange of short messages to give an update which are called ‘tweets’ (onlinemarketing-praxis.de, 2021).

It seems that Twitter is a quite uncommon platform to promote a stallion stud farm. There are about ten stallion stud farms compared to each other in table 2 and only Team Nijhof uses this platform. Conspicuously, the last tweet was on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 which shows that they are not active on this platform anymore. They have 1,069 follower which is also not a very big range in comparison with the number of followers on other social media platforms where Team Nijhof has around 15,000 followers (Team Nijhof [@TeamNijhof], 2021b). In general, Twitter does not seem to be a trend platform.

## YouTube

YouTube is a video portal where people can watch and upload videos at no charge. There is a big variety of videos about different themes (magazin, 2021).



This platform seems to be quite popular for European stallion stud farms because nine out of the ten chosen stallion stud farms out of Europe have an account there to upload videos. The stallion stud farm with the most followers is Schockemöhle from Germany.

*Schockemöhle*

5,590 followers

For the online platform YouTube, Schockemöhle has the most followers in comparison with the other stallion stud farms in table 2. The account shows many short videos between 30 seconds and a maximum of two minutes of foals. These foals are offspring of the company's stallions and can show an indication of the heredity of the stallions.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the season, they published videos of the stallions. Those videos are longer up to 8 minutes. In comparison with the videos of the foals, the videos of the stallions are of higher quality. Those videos also show the whole pedigree at the beginning of the video and afterwards the different gaits as well as different dressage exercises or jumping capabilities, depending on dressage or jumping horse. There are also some sequences out of competitions and sequences of the offspring of the older stallions (Paul Schockemöhle, 2021).

Through this mix of videos and also the regularly upload of new videos every week makes it interesting for breeders and other people to follow this account.

The account of PS Flyinge & Partners AB in comparison has only 45 subscribers and which is the least of all other stallion stud farms in table 2. Conspicuously is that there are only seven videos which were uploaded three months ago which could be an indicator that people want to see new videos regularly. Furthermore, there are only videos of the stallions. Although, the videos have the same quality, the same layout and show the same content as the stallions' videos of Schockemöhle (both stallion stud farms are owned by Paul Schockemöhle) (PS Flyinge & Partners, 2021). This could be an indicator that it is not only about quality, but also the sequence of new videos. It could also be effective for stallion stud farms to show videos of the offspring to show an indication of the heredity of the stallions.

#### **LinkedIn:**

In comparison to the already mentioned social media platforms LinkedIn is specialised in the connection of business relations worldwide. There is for example the possibility for companies to present themselves, to post job advertisements and to find new employees (Achilles, 2020).

LinkedIn in general does not seem to be a common platform for stallion stud farms. Out of the ten stallion stud farms in table 2, only three stallion stud farms have an account on this online platform. One of those is the stallion stud farm Helgstrand Dressage. They have with 889 subscribers the highest amount of chosen stallion stud farms.



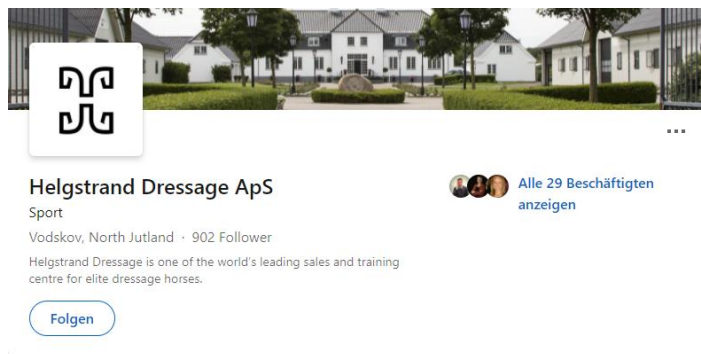


Figure 11 LinkedIn page of Helgstrand Dressage (Helgstrand Dressage ApS, 2021)

#### Über uns

Helgstrand Dressage is one of the world's leading sales and training centre. The company buys, develops and sells elite dressage horses and houses today more than 500 horses. The company was founded in 2009 by Andreas Helgstrand immediately upon the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, where he and the Danish national team won a bronze medal. Helgstrand Dressage has its base in the northern part of Denmark with divisions in Wellington, US, and activities established in Germany as well, ensuring the development and continuous flow of dressage horses on all levels for clients all over the world. In that way, Helgstrand Dressage is one of the leading stables in the international league of competing, selling and training high-

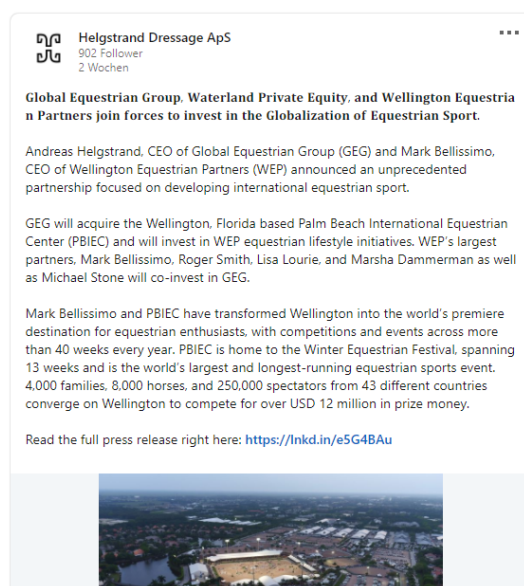


Figure 12 Post of Helgstrand Dressage on LinkedIn (Helgstrand Dressage ApS, 2021a)

#### Helgstrand Dressage:

889 subscribers

Also, the LinkedIn page of Helgstrand Dressage seems to be very professional. On every online platform they have their logo as profile picture which lets the people recognize the company. Furthermore, there is an introduction text about the stallion stud farm, some general information like the location and accompanying locations and the link to different employees of the company. As well as on other online platforms, the company also has some professional posts about the latest news of the stallion stud farm in a professional format. The headlines are always in bold types, underneath a text in English language which makes it understandable for a big range of people and there are always pictures of high quality (Helgstrand Dressage ApS, 2021).

#### TikTok:

TikTok in general is a platform where people share short video clips with humorous and funny content which get provided with music in the background (up, 2021).

It does not seem to be a trend for stallion stud farms. Out of the ten stallion stud farms in table 2, there is only one stallion stud farm who has an account on this online platform. The stallion stud farm Lövsta stuteri seems to have an account but do not publish any videos there. They only make TikTok videos and publish them on Instagram.

#### Hengststation Rohmann:

3,045 followers

61,500 likes

The Hengststation Rohman started with the TikTok account in the beginning of April this year which shows that the account is quite young. On their account, they show short videos with training impressions of different stallions during training, competition or while preparing for training. Furthermore, they short videos of foals or a stable tour of the facility.

It seems to be a platform to show short sequences which are more creative and 'funny' than videos on the website or other social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram for example. There is also the opportunity to get into contact with a broad range of people, especially with the younger target group because 41% of the users are between 16 and 24 years old (up, 2021). This target group could have in influence on their parents or grandparents as breeders. It can become a trend for stallion stud

farms during the next months, but until now, there are not many stallion stud farms (Hengststation Rohmann [hengststationrohmann], 2021b).

#### **Podcast:**

The word podcast is a combination out of the words 'broadcast' and 'iPod' and describes series of media data files (audio and video data files) (Ludwig, 2021). In July 2020, most listeners came from the US, followed by Scandinavia, the UK and Germany and age younger than 45 years old. Common genres are News, Entertainment like comedy, music, culture/art, and sports for example (editor, 2020).

This online platform is also not really common for European stallion stud farms. As in table 2 shown, only one out of ten stallion stud farms create podcasts.

#### *Lövsta stuteri:*

The Swedish stallion stud farm Lövsta stuteri is the only stallion stud farm out of table 2 who creates podcasts. They started with the first episode in May 2020 and make podcasts with a length of 10-20 minutes about different themes like 'meet the stallion manager', 'Swedish breeding' or 'recipes for success'. With that strategy the stallion stud farm offers information in a way of content marketing to the breeders (Lövsta Stuteri, n.d.).

#### **Conclusion:**

After the comparison of different European stallion stud farms, it was obviously that every stallion stud farm has a website which seems to be very important. The selection of the language seems to depend on the target country because while the Swedish stallion stud farms only offer the website in the national language and sometimes in English, stallion stud farms in Denmark and the Netherlands offers the language in three different languages. Very big stallion stud farms like Schockemöhle offers much more languages.

Furthermore, all of the ten chosen stallion stud farms have an account on Facebook and Instagram, as well as nearly all stallion stud farms have an account on YouTube. Those seems to be the online platform where European stallion stud farms need to be present.

Online platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok do not seems to be very popular in the breeding sector and especially for Twitter and LinkedIn, which are already a long time on the market, the potential for the future will usually not be very big. While TikTok is a quite young platform with potential for the future, also for stallion stud farms. It seems to be possible that TikTok could be a trend in the breeding sector in the next time.

Another important point for online platforms in general is the quality of the photos and videos. Nowadays with the technological development, it is possible to make photos and videos with an enormous resolution and it is conspicuous that accounts with high-quality materials have more followers and subscribers than others.

Nevertheless, not only the quality of the photos and videos is very important, also the sequence of news and posts. People want to stay up to date and follow especially the stallion stud farms who posts new information regularly.

Furthermore, next to the country-specific differences in the availability of the languages, there are no other differences in the use of online platforms. All chosen stallion stud farms have a website, Instagram, and Facebook, and there do not seem to be country-specific differences regarding the online platforms which are not used by all stallion stud farms.

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## 11.2 Expert interviews

### 11.2.1 Interview Christian Dietz

Christian Dietz is an expert for inbound marketing and is owner of the inbound marketing agency Dietz & Consorten GmbH and Equine74, a company for horse supplements. These companies offer their service and products worldwide and let him make many experiences in the equestrian sector worldwide as well as in strategic and marketing developments. Christian Dietz is a specialist in the equestrian sector worldwide and has an enormous network within the sector.

The interview was a qualitative research to get an overview about online marketing developments and developments in the equestrian sector. One of the most important factors was the online marketing in Germany, his knowledge about the Swedish equestrian sector, as well as about possible differences. Furthermore, about the horse breeding sector in general and possible international differences. The interview took place via Skype to reduce contacts because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It took about 60 minutes.

It was a conscious decision to make an interview with Mr. Dietz because it was already known that he has a worldwide network with people out of the equestrian industry. Furthermore, through his own companies, he has many experiences with strategic marketing.

The interview with Christian Dietz was an in-depth interview with open questions. The goal was to get many important information about the marketing opportunities in the equestrian sector.

The interview questions with the summarized answers of Mr. Dietz are written down below:

#### **What are actual online marketing trends in the equestrian sector?**

Christian Dietz as shop owner is experiencing that more people buy online. It maybe also increased through the Covid-19 pandemic, but more people and also riders inform themselves online. Furthermore, the range and the variance of information got broader. It started some years ago with 'Nennung-online' (a German online portal where riders can register for horse shows), this was a first start. Now, it is a strong trend that people buy and inform themselves online on the internet.

Another sub or maybe also mega trend are forums in which people exchange information. Especially in the social network platform Facebook. One example of breeders: there are groups on Facebook which discuss different stallions. This is not only a positive, but also a negative trend. There is for example one stallion which won a 1,30m showjumping class in Belgium. The first person says 'Wow, have you seen the round? what a great stallion. He developed really good!' and another writes 'We talk about a stallion, that should be the slightest!'. Such platforms, forums and discussion rounds can also be positive but also negative.

#### **Are forums and online marketing important for stallion stud farms and breeders? Do you think it is needed to be present there?**

Stallion stud farms should of course have Google-Alert which have to get fed with specific terms like of course the name of the stallion stud farm and the names of all stallions. Such an Alert-system scant the words and give a signal when they arise somewhere. With that, it is possible to see what become written, and it is possible to react on that.

There are also some trends with the typical breeder: major breeder arise which have many mares to breed with. They all have 6-7 or more mares. Some very popular breeders have around 100 mares. The breeder with one mare is not the typical breeder anymore because that is becoming less.

Breeders like Christian Dietz, who has one mare, speak to his friend for expertise and have a look at a breeding stable with many foals and young horses, the offspring of potential stallions for his mare. When it is possible to see different foals with the same father, there can be an indication how a specific stallion heredity. Especially in the age of foals when also the mares can be seen. And this option of getting information changes.

The typical breeder is not the farmer anymore. In the past, foal shows have been in May and in June. This is the time when the farmers have time because the plants on the fields are growing and the farmers have time. Furthermore, in the past the foals are born in January and February that they already have been good developed on the foal shows. Nowadays, the foals cannot go out day and night, because it is too cold, and the risk is too high that they get injuries when they are only some hours on a frozen paddock. To avoid this risk, foals have stayed in the box all day and night and problems of OECD and OCD arose. Because of that the actual trend is that the foals get born later (April, May, June) because the foals need to go outside to develop the bones and muscles in a good way. But with late born foals, you do not go to a show because they are too small in comparison with older foals. Normally, the foal shows also has to be later in the year.

Furthermore, there is the opportunity on foal shows to see different foals of the same stallion out of different mares. That makes it possible to take conclusions about the stallion's heredity.

Nowadays, ClipMyHorse.tv is very important. Breeders can follow the foal shows there later on. Another problem is that the typical breeder is not a farmer anymore and cannot take a free day for a foal show. This makes it impossible for some breeders to go to a foal show.

Stallion stud farms have to react on that. As stallion stud farm, it would be good to come in contact with the breeders and try to get videos and photos of the stallions' offspring to present it online to potential clients. That is especially important for the young stallions. The older stallions are most of the time already successful in the sport and people/breeders see them on competitions and on ClipMyHorse.tv, but the young stallions are more difficult to market. So, it is important to contact breeders who have a foal of a young stallion and ask if they want to give data (photos, videos,...), to show these to other breeders.

Especially nowadays with Corona, this is maybe no trend but a phase in which stallion stud farms have to rethink, because in many regions there are no competitions, and they are not able to show the young stallions to the public.

As stallion stud farm it is important to know the target group! A really important point is: WHO IS THE BREEDER? With whom do I have to speak?

One important point is the breeding advice from the stallion stud farms to the breeder. One opportunity is to create an online platform where the breeder can give information about himself and the mare (age, pedigree, and last foals, as well as photos and videos of the mare and earlier foals) and the favoured stallions of the stallion stud farm. Due to this information, the stallion stud farm can advise which stallion could fit very well. That is an opportunity to support the breeder.

In the past, the foals went with the mare in front of the carriage, the breeder had a lot of contact to and time with the foal and knew which characteristics it had. Furthermore, the breeders went with the mares to one stallion station and took the semen of one or two stallions there. Nowadays, the breeders changed. The breeders do not have so much daily contact to the foals anymore and they can take stallions from all around the world. Furthermore, there are a lot of 'Fernseh-Hengste', translated 'tv-stallions'.

Stallion stud farms need mares for the young stallions in the first years to be able to show offspring of them. It is especially important in the first years because when they are successful on competition and people can see them, it will be easier. So, stallion stud farms need breeders who trust them and take the young stallions. And you only win trust through good advises. The try of advice and analysis of the mare. It is needed to get a picture of the mare and to be honest to the breeder.

Nowadays, it is possible to buy semen of stallions all around the world and nobody controls if it fits your mare. When the goal is to sell semen international, also the website has to be international. The

website has to recognize from which country the customer comes from and which language the customer needs. Furthermore, information about the way of dispatch of the semen, how to pay, etc. has to be available.

A trend for the payment of the semen could be an **online payment via Paypal or Mastercard** for the first deposit. **Because everyone pays online, everybody has a Mastercard.** This makes it also safer for the stallion station because they already get a part of the money. Especially for Sweden, where the people pay cashless.

Another marketing opportunity for Sweden, where the target group of the breeder is female, is to **take female riders for the stallions.** You have to know with who you correspondents, who your clients are.

**Who is my target group? Which age do they have? Which communication tools are they using? How can I reach them? Which opportunities for advising does the stallion station have?** The **shopping experience has to be nice (like Apple):** beautiful photos (of horses), easy way of purchase, after-sales-service which includes for example mail/WhatsApp when semen is sent (when you get a message of courier that semen has arrived at breeder, stallion stations could send an automatic message with for example important information for storage and usage, after 3 days mail with the question if everything went well and best wishes.

It is very important that **stallions are active in the sport.** When top rider will ride the horses, there is a high chance that stallions become successful and that they are in magazines like 'The World of show-jumping', 'St. Georg'... A journalist who likes the stallion can also be a good marketing.

***Very important: service before and after purchase, trust, and honesty, as well as a good working website.***

#### **Which online platforms should be used?**

It **depends on the target group!** The stallion stations **must be online where the clients are.** Where expects me the target group? When the target group expects me on Instagram, then I have to be there. When they do not expect me there, I will not be there but will ask six months later again if they maybe expect me there then. ***Ask the target group!***

#### **Are there differences in online marketing in the equestrian sector in comparison with other sectors?**

No, the **equestrian sector caught up the last years.** Many companies in the equestrian sector started online and also have their social media activities. **Probably, there is no difference between the equestrian sector and other industries.** Especially, because companies/people can earn much money in this sector, more than for example the racing-bike industry.

#### **What do you think could be future online marketing trends and are there strategies which will probably lose the significance?**

The theme **fairs will lose the significance** because as entrepreneur is it maybe not necessary anymore to go to a fair. **Customers are nowadays able to find everything online and it does not matter from which country it will be delivered.** **When a company start to go online it has to be clear that it can become an international business with orders out of other countries.**

#### **Do you know country specific differences in the online marketing between Germany and Sweden?**

**The Swedish people are more nationalistic.** They are **related to the country** and buy **products earlier out of Sweden** than out of other countries. They **are all kind**; they earn they money but are not as 'ripped off' as the Dutch people for example. **They trade but not as hard as the Dutch people.**



**Are there any difficulties which makes the online marketing more difficult in the equestrian sector than in other sectors? For stallion stations?**

Sweden is not the most popular country for horse breeding. There are good horses, but many Swedish breeder come to Germany to buy horses (foals, yearlings, and mares). They breed less for the international sport. Belgium and the Netherlands for example breed more for the international top sport. Sometimes I have the feeling they are kind but somehow in some situation they isolate themselves.

**What is the best way to come in contact with breeders? In Germany and in Sweden?**

There is not the difference in the culture but a difference in the demand. It is important to ask the target group. The equestrian industry developed a lot, but they are not as professional as other industries who have market research as central instrument to check their strategies. It is important to ask the target group.

When you want to export to another country, you have to ask the target group in the other country and when they are on Instagram, you also have to be on Instagram. But in the breeding sector, probably only the best 30-40 stallions will be sold international. And that when the stallions are older and already successful in the top sport.

Stallion stud farms should regularly make qualitative questionnaires about where do the breeder get information about stallions? Where expect the breeder the stallion station? Where not? What is a good advising for the breeder? Furthermore, important is the positioning strategy. How does a stallion stud farm want to be seen?

When a company decide to go online, they need an implementation strategy. The following questions should be asked: What expect breeder in pre-sale? (Have a look on mare, advise for stallion), what does the breeder expect in sale? (Implementation→Paypal, Klarna, Mastercard...), what does the breeder expect in after-sales? (From moment when semen goes in dispatch→ message to breeder until next spring when foal is born, and stallion station ask if they can come to visit)

The strategy of online marketing depends on the wishes of the target group!

**What are the biggest advantages and the biggest disadvantages of online marketing?**

*The biggest advantage:* in comparison to the past, you can reach markets more easily with less marketing tools. Furthermore, you can analyse them directly afterwards. That means we can for example develop a marketing campaign for the Netherlands today, can diversify it for different regions or into dressage and show-jumping rider, can determine a budget and have a special success. Through this database the company knows in which region which campaign worked the best for which target group. That makes it easier for further marketing campaigns in the future.

In the past, you started a marketing campaign and then you had to wait what will happen. But you had no market data and could not know why it did not work out.

*The biggest disadvantage:* Often, companies do not have the knowledge about online marketing and want to change the strategy very often. There is no consistency, but a disorientation. They make everywhere a bit marketing.

Further, you cannot do something against special customers. When they write bad things, you cannot do so much against it, but they spread their opinion to other potential customers very broad and fast. It is not directly online marketing but more social networking, but this is of course also part of the



online marketing. **Very important is Google-Alert** to see where people write something about your business.

### **Conclusion:**

Mr. Dietz talked about some important facts out of the breeding sector, as well as about online marketing. He mentioned that the equestrian sector developed quite fast the last years and caught up with other industries. There are no conspicuous differences between different sectors, but also not between different countries with regard to online marketing.

Everything has changed from offline to online, more people buy online, the range and variation of information got broader stallion stud farms have to rethink. Also, the fact that semen get sold international means that the target group can be international which means that the website and all other online marketing strategies has to be international.

But it is all about the target group! Companies need to make market research regularly to stay up to date and to know who and where the target group is and which information they want to get where. The company has to be there where the target group is and where the target group expect the company. It is important to regularly ask the target group about their wishes and needs.

There are some innovative online media tools like online breeding advice, online payment, and online after-sales-service which could improve the online service of a stallion stud farm.

The biggest advantage of online marketing is to reach markets easier, to diversify the target group easier, as well as to analyse the success of a campaign easier and the need of less marketing tools. But there are also disadvantages like missing knowledge of many companies which could lead to disorientation with missing consistency and the fact that people can write whatever they want on the internet. Positive, as well as negative comments.

Mr. Dietz has the feeling that the Swedish people are more nationalistic, prefer to buy Swedish products and somehow isolate themselves sometimes. Furthermore, it is not the most popular country for breeding and many Swedish breeders and riders buy German horses.

### **11.2.2 Interview Claire Marie Spackman**

The interview with Claire Marie Spackman was an in-depth interview with open questions. The goal was to get many important information about the marketing opportunities in the Swedish equestrian sector.

Claire Marie Spackman is 37 years old and has a background in digital marketing for different kind and sizes of companies, start-ups, health-companies, and classic commercial brands. There were also some quite big brands, but her personal passion is the equine sector, so everything around horses. She thinks that with the age you get more expertise and experiences, and the job makes fun if you do stuff in which you are interested in on personal level.

Digital equine marketing was born when she came back out of the US where she worked for a Frisian stud farm and realised that stud farms, especially in the US, not really know what they can do digitally. The equestrian world is a bit its own world and you talk to your friends and to your trainers, you get contacts when you compete on horse shows, but everything is mouth-to-mouth. Many stud farms are following up now because they realized that they did not follow the digital change. And there she found the gap on the market to help equestrian businesses to be present online and to introduce themselves and their horses to the rest of the world.

### **What are the most important online marketing tools for you?**

The platform on which you are on, so the **website** definitely. It is your **analytics tools**, so if you are using Google-analytics or something else. Furthermore, the way people can contact you, **your direct marketing (Customer service, e-mail) tools as well as social media package.**

**What do you think are trends in the online marketing in the equestrian sector?**

They have to be social.

Video is already older but is really important nowadays. It is a huge thing, because the equestrian sport is really dynamic and when you have a look at it, you want to have the same feeling.

**Do you think there are country specific differences?**

Absolutely! It depends on the demographics of the people behind it. In some cases, the target group has a certain age and did not follow the latest trends online. It also depends on the level on which you are in the equestrian world.

Edwina Tops-Alexander is not only an equestrian person, but she is also a businessperson, and she does the whole online thing very good, very professional.

Everything has changed so quickly from not online to online. It is a bit of a shock. Because also the sponsors want to have something back from the athletes now. They want the visibility on the athlete's platform. And you as an athlete or as a breeding stud farm bring yourself in a better position when you work together with sponsors.

**Are there conspicuous differences in the equestrian sector in comparison with other industries?**

No. It depends more on if you are an athlete, a trainer, a breeding stud farm, or anything else. It depends on you also, but the tools are the same. Also, in other sectors.

The equestrian sector is a niche in itself, and this niche has exploded the last years. When she was in school, she could not choose out of 20 different riding helmets or 500 different riding breeches with different colours. It has exploded.

It is about your community. It does not matter if you are selling saddle pads or breeches as an online shop or an equestrian professional or a breeding facility, it is the horse which connect all of us and it is a community all around this animal we all love. And it is important to realize that you speak to a worldwide community. It is a sub-culture. They have a very own language that people who are not into horses do not speak and do not understand. It is a kind of private club you enter. And that differs to a normal B2B company for normal people because they do not need a special language.

And Claire lives the lifestyle since she is 5-years old. She knows the language, she knows everything about horses, she is a nerd, like everybody else in the horse world. To deliver good results, you need to have this interest, otherwise you cannot connect.

Furthermore, it is about authenticity. The customers have to feel your interest, so if you are interested or not, they feel if you love what you are doing or not and if you are part of this close community or if you are only a big agency that who makes that for many brands but are not really horse persons. You need to know your community to which you are talking to.

**Are there some difficulties in the online marketing of the equestrian sector?**

1. You need to be part of the community; you need to know how the customers are. It will be difficult to outsource your marketing to a normal agency, because there is a gap, they maybe do not know the target group, the customer. And this is difficult when you did not live this lifestyle.

That is what she really believes in. In the end, (and that is what we have to remember in online marketing) people buy from people, they buy from your website, they buy from you as a person, they go to your training or your breeding facility because of the person you are. So, people buy services and goods from people, and it does not matter what it is.

**Are there any future opportunities or future trends in the equestrian sector? Especially in the Swedish equestrian sector?**

What we see a lot are influencers right now. And you do not have to be that big show-jumping girl, you only have to engage authentically with your followers. A good example is the Dutch guy, Matt Harnecke, he is a model and has a passion for horses, bought a horse and is so passionate about the horse that he shares everyday great content. He is a brand himself. He is a normal horse person, he is not a big showjumper, but people connect with him. In Sweden and Denmark, Mrs. Spackman sees the trend also, especially with young girls who are 16 years old. One of them makes liberty training with one of her ponies and shares her training methods, her liberty methods and how she engages with the horse. This is a good example for brands who has a holistic approach to horse health, they could give her some great food for her horse, for example a natural and healthy horse feed and that would fit perfect her followers which could be interested in that.

**Do you think influencer marketing is also an opportunity for breeding stud farms?**

Absolutely, people want to know who is behind the breeding facility, who are the people behind it. Furthermore, it is not only about the breeder himself. Breeder has a family with children and that is exactly the audience. People nowadays are willing to spend much money for the wishes of their kids. She would also not disregard the teenage audience at all, they have a huge influence on what the parents buy. It will not work out for the whole target group, but for the segment and there is a big power in it.

**How would you describe the Swedish breeding sector and the typical Swedish breeder?**

You have to divide it into show-jumping and dressage breeders. It gets very semi-professional, and they take it very seriously.

**Which online marketing strategy would you recommend to a Swedish breeding stud farm?**

Breeding stud farms need a CMS system (content-management-system) it does not matter which CMS-system they chose. They have to be visible online; they need to have SEO; you need to be visible and need to have good keywords. It also should include social media. And that is the foundation.

**Which social media platforms would you recommend?**

It depends on the business you are in. When you are a brand which sells products for the horse, you have to be on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. If you are a breeder, it is Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

**Are there also some innovative or creative opportunities which could be effective?**

TikTok: it is huge, and it is awareness. You can make something which is fun and very creative, it does not take much, and you can implement that to other places as well. Furthermore, it is good for the breeding perspective if you want collaborations with brands. When you do a partnership with a specific brand and your breeding facility is sponsored by a specific brand for horse food for example, that is great. You can also show your horses.

It is important to have someone in your team who knows something about the social media stuff and knows what can be interesting for the target group. The breeder itself is interested in bloodlines, sales, working with the horses. Everyone has to do what he/she does best and most of the breeders are not into the social media part. So, breeding stud farms need to have someone who is interested in it and have the knowledge.

### **Would you make different content for different social media platforms?**

Each platform should have its own purpose. TikTok is more for the funny stuff, but also very personal. You are more personal and closer than on Instagram for example. Instagram is good with the reels and the stories and also with the hashtags for your keywords. You need to have an understanding for each platform and each platform has its purpose.

There are many companies and also big brands who share the same content on all platforms and do not understand the purpose of each single platform. This is the reason why many companies need someone who is into the theme and has the knowledge to reach the segments with the right content. The more professional it runs the better. So, you need a strategy of how you can do it.

### **What do you think about display marketing for the breeding sector?**

It is not really important for the breeding sector, for an e-shop it means a lot, but it is not really the place-to-be for a breeder. For the breeding sector it is the online visibility.

At the end: there are different audiences, and you need to know which audiences are where. Blue horse is a really good example for being digital. They are a brand, they are global, they got it.

### **Conclusion:**

Mrs. Spackman mentioned many important points of online marketing. First of all, very important is the website, as well as your analytic tools, your direct marketing which includes the customer service and e-mail for example, and your social media package.

In the equestrian sector it is nowadays really important to be social and to use video sequences because of the dynamic of the sport. Furthermore, the online marketing depends on if you are an athlete, a trainer, a breeding stud farm. The tools are the same.

She believes in country specific differences because of the people behind it. It is all about the target group. Important in the equestrian industry is that horse people are an own sub-culture with their own language. To deliver good results in online marketing it is important to understand this community, to live the lifestyle, and to be interested, otherwise it will be difficult to connect. It is all about authenticity because in the end, people buy from people.

Actual opportunities of online marketing in the equestrian sector are the cooperation with sponsors and influencer to become well-known and to improve the visibility. It is also an opportunity to come in contact with the family of the breeders. Nowadays, kids have an enormous influence, and the parents are willing to pay much money for the wishes of their children.

Important for stallion stud farms is to have a CMS-system, to be online, to have SEO, to be visible and to choose good keywords, as well as to include social media. This is the foundation. The decision of social media accounts depends on your business, for breeders it is Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Online marketing should be done by someone who knows the target group and has knowledge about social media. Every platform has its own purpose, and you need to have an understanding for it and the more professional the online marketing gets done, the better.

Not really important for the breeding sector is display marketing for example. This is more for an e-shop. The breeding sector needs to know where the audiences are.

### 11.2.3 Comparison of expert interviews

To get an overview about the two expert interviews and to be able to compare the information for sub-question one and two, the following table is made.

The statements of Mr. Dietz and Mrs. Spackman are not directly comparable to each other. It gives an overview about information from the experts which are relevant for sub-question one and two.

*Sub-question 1: Which online marketing developments are in the equestrian industry, especially in Sweden?*

<b>Mr. Dietz</b>	<b>Mrs. Spackman</b>
More people buy online.	Everything has changed so quickly from offline to online. It was a bit of a shock!
	The equestrian sector is a niche market and has exploded the last years.
The range and variation of information got broader.	Very important: website, analytics tools, direct marketing, and social media.
People buy and inform themselves online on the internet.	It depends on you as a person (athlete, trainer, breeding stud farm), the tools are the same.
There are no competitions because of Covid, so stallion stud farms have to rethink. Especially important for young and unpopular stallions.	They have to be social (On social media).
A trend is the usage of forums, especially on Facebook.	Video is already older, but important nowadays. The equestrian sport is dynamic and when you have a look at it, you want to have the same feeling.
Stallion stud farms should have Google-Alert to know where people write something about the company.	
ClipMyHorse.tv is really important. Foal shows can be watched online.	You bring yourself in a better position when you work together with sponsors
Breeders want to see the offspring of a stallion. They ask a friend for expertise and have a look at breeding stable with many foals and young horses of the same stallions.	What we see a lot now, is the influencer market right now. You do not have to be that big show-jumping girl, you only have to engage authentically with your followers. A good example is the Dutch guy, Matt Harnacke.
Offspring can be shown online. For that, the stud farm needs to come in contact with breeders.	
Especially important to show offspring from young stallion which are not very popular.	Furthermore, it is not only about the breeder himself. A breeder has a family with children and that is exactly the audience. People are willing to spend much money for the wishes of their children.
Use of online platform depends on target group. The company has to be there where the target group is. Regular market research is important to check if target group changed online behaviour.	Stallion stud farms have to be online; they should have SEO, they should have good keywords and should include social media. This is the foundation.
Nowadays, it is possible to choose semen from all around the world.	Social media platforms for breeders are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

The website is really important. When the goal is to sell the semen internationally, also the website must be international	Each platform has its own purpose
One important point is the breeding advice from the stallion stud farm online	TikTok: it is huge, it is awareness. You can make something which is fun and very creative, it does not take much, you can implement it to other places as well
There are a lot of 'Fernseh-Hengste' (trend stallions)	Online marketing should be done by someone who knows the target group and has knowledge about social media.
Stallions have to be active in the sport	The equestrian world is a bit its own world, an own sub-culture. Important to speak the same language, live the same lifestyle to be able to connect.
Ask the target group! Companies have to be there where the target group expect them to be.	

*Sub-question 2: What is the advantage of online marketing for Swedish stallion stud farms?*

<b>Mr. Dietz</b>	<b>Mrs. Spackman</b>
In comparison to the past, you can reach markets easier with less marketing tools	If you are present online, you can introduce your horses and yourself to the rest of the world
You can analyse them directly afterwards (for example: it is possible to develop a marketing campaign for the Netherlands, to diversify it for different regions, into dressage and show-jumping, can determine a budget and have a special success → the company is able to know in which region which marketing campaign worked best)	It is not only about the breeders itself. Breeders have family with children and that is exactly the audience. People nowadays are willing to spend much money for the wishes of their kids
When a company start to go online it has to be clear that it can become an international business with orders from all around the world	The more professional it runs the better
Stallion stud farms can come in contact with breeders online, does not matter how far they are away. They can show their stallions as well as the offspring which is really interesting for many breeders.	
It is really important for stallion stud farms to show the young stallions which are not really popular. Through Covid-19, it was not possible to show them on competition or on stallion shows, but online platforms makes it possible to show the stallions to the customers	

### 11.3 Semi-structured interviews breeder:

The semi-structured interviews with the breeders have been a qualitative research method to establish the Swedish warmblood breeders, and how and where they search for a potential stallion. Eight semi-structured interviews were made with Swedish warmblood breeders of different age, gender, and breeding size. The questions were prepared as a manual, but every interview deviated a bit and the structure was flexible.

The semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts. The first four interviews were made before the questionnaire to get an overview about the Swedish breeders and to improve the questionnaire questions. After the questionnaire, the other four interviews were made based on and improved through the answers out of the questionnaire. Attached the interview questions and the results, separated into the first and the second part.

#### 11.3.1 Part one of the interviews

The first part of the interviews took place before the questionnaire and includes the following interview questions and results.

##### **11.3.1.1 Interview questions first part of the interviews**

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) Which gender are you?
- 3) How many mares do you have?
- 4) How many years do you already breed?
- 5) For which reason do you breed?
- 6) How are you searching for a stallion?
- 7) How would you like to get informed online of the stallions?
- 8) Which social media platforms do you prefer?
- 9) In which information about stallions are you interested in?
- 10) How long should a video be?
- 11) How long should texts be?

##### **11.3.1.2 Answers/summary first part of the interviews**

Interview	1)	2)	3)	4)
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female
Age	65	53	60	57
Number mares	2	8	25-30	1
Years of breeding experiences	45	30	Fourth generation of breeding in family	9
Reason for breeding	Selling, for profit	Sell at foal age or raise up, train, and sell at the age of four or five, for profit	For profit, sells foals or at young age, keeps some fillies for breeding	For keeping/for selling
How is she/he searching for a stallion?	-Discussion/ advice of breeding experts	-Stallion shows -Facebook -Competitions -Website	-Stallion shows -Stallion catalogues -Website	-Competitions -Talks to other breeders, breeding experts

	-Stallion catalogue -Performance of the stallions -Website -Performance of offspring -International competitions	-ClipMyHorse.tv	-Talks to other breeders	-Stallion shows -Stallion catalogues
<b>Where would she/he like to get informed online about a stallion?</b>	Advise of breeding expert of stallion stud farm about character of stallions	-Facebook -website -ClipMyHorse.tv	-Facebook -Instagram -Newsletter	-Website -Facebook -Instagram
<b>Which social media platforms does she/he use?</b>	-	-Facebook	-Facebook	-Facebook -Instagram -Snapchat
<b>Which information about stallions is interesting?</b>	-Character -Jumping quality -Offspring	-Behaviour -Jumping quality -Offspring	-Genetics -Lose jumping -Behaviour -Pedigree	-Show results -Training videos -Temperament -Behaviour -Exterior
<b>How long should a video be?</b>		Longer videos (possible to cut out bad sequences in short videos)	Short videos	Short videos
<b>How long should texts be?</b>		-Really interested in special stallion: long texts -Quick look: short texts	Texts are less important because they are most of the time very commercial	Short texts

### 11.3.2 Part two of the interviews

The second part of the interviews took place after the questionnaire and includes the following interview questions and results.

#### 11.3.2.1 Interview questions second part of the interviews

- 1) How old are you?
- 3) How many mares do you have?
- 4) How many years do you already breed?
- 5) For which reason do you breed?
- 6) When you search for a stallion, what is most important for you?
- 7) How/where do you search for a stallion?
- 9) where would you like to get informed online about the stallions?
- 10) Which social media platforms do you use?
- 11) Which kind of content do you want to see on which platform? Differences between the website and social media for example? Differences on different online platforms?
- 12) In which information about stallions are you interested in?



13) How long should a video be? Any differences on different platforms?

14) How long should texts be? Any differences on different platforms?

### 11.3.2.2 Answers/summary second part of the interviews

Interview	5)	6)	7)	8)
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female
Age	36	45	39	56
Number mares	2	3	2	1
Years of breeding experiences	6	40	Around 10	40
Reason for breeding	Both, keep the fillies and sell the stallions	Sell for profit	Both, some foals get sold directly, some get trained first	To keep the foal
How is she/he searching for a stallion?	- Website - Advises of other breeders - Stallion shows - social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)	- Stallion shows and catalogues - Website - Competitions - Stallion approval - Social media (Facebook)	- Website - Social media (Facebook, Instagram) - Stallion shows - Horsetelelex - advice of stallion stud farm expert	- Stallion shows - Breeding advice of other breeders and stallion stud farm expert - Website
Where would she/he like to get informed online about a stallion?	- Breeding advice of stallion stud farm expert (phone, personal or online) - Facebook - Instagram - Website	- Website - ClipMyHorse.tv - Facebook - Instagram	- Facebook - Instagram - Website - Stallion show	- Website - Stallion show - Online breeding advice
Which social media platforms does she/he use?	- Facebook - Instagram - LinkedIn	- Facebook - Instagram	- Facebook - Instagram	- Facebook
Which information about stallions is interesting?	- Character - Exterior - Quality	- Jumping quality - Offspring - Bloodline	- Competition results - Quality - Willingness to work - Exterior	- Competition results - Temperament - Training videos - Daily handling
How long should a video be?	<b>Social media:</b> Shorter videos, sequences, up to 1:30 minutes, Use of reels and stories	<b>Social media:</b> Short videos up to 2 minutes	<b>Social media:</b> Short videos	<b>Social media:</b> Long and detailed videos
	<b>Website:</b> Longer videos up to five minutes	<b>Website:</b> Longer, detailed videos	<b>Website:</b> Detailed Videos	<b>Website:</b> Longer videos
How long should texts be?	<b>Social media:</b> Short, only few words/sentences	<b>Social media:</b> Short, few words to sentences	<b>Social media:</b> Short, maybe on Facebook	<b>Social media:</b> Short to mid-sizes texts on Facebook

			sometimes more detailed than on Instagram	
	<b>Website:</b> Long and detailed texts	<b>Website:</b> Longer than on social media	<b>Website:</b> Long texts out of many sentences	<b>Website:</b> Long and detailed texts
<b>Which information should be where?</b>	<b>Social media:</b> Competition results/videos, training videos, daily handling, photos and videos of offspring, news  More shorter impressions of daily handling, training on Instagram in reels and stories than on Facebook	<b>Social media:</b> Competition results/videos, training videos, photos and videos of offspring  No differences between different social media platforms	<b>Social media:</b> Competition results/videos, training videos, maybe also daily handling  Instagram: through stories more opportunities to show short training impressions	<b>Social media:</b> All actual news, training/competition videos and pictures,
	<b>Website:</b> Detailed information about bloodlines, competition results, grades of stallion approval	<b>Website:</b> All important information about stallion	<b>Website:</b> Detailed information about the stallion, pedigree, successes	<b>Website:</b> Detailed information about the stallion, especially bloodlines, and heredity

### 11.3.3 Conclusion of all interviews

The research method semi structured interviews with Swedish warmblood breeders have shown that most of the breeders search for potential stallions on a stallion show (87.5%) and on the website (75%). With about 50%, also many people are interested in competition results and videos, in the stallion catalogue, the information on Facebook and in the breeding advice of a stallion stud farm expert or of other breeders.

To the question where they would like to find information, 75% answered that they would like to get the information on the website of a stallion stud farm, as well as on the social media platform Facebook. Directly behind is the social media platform Instagram with 62.5%. Further mentioned is the breeding advice of the stallion stud farm expert (37.5%), the stallion show, and ClipMyHorse.tv with 25% each, and through a newsletter.

With 87.5%, nearly all of the interviewed persons have an Facebook account, 50% an Instagram account and only one out of eight (12.5%) have an LinkedIn account or an Snapchat account.

The Swedish warmblood breeders want different kind of information about the stallions. Many breeders want information about the character (62.5%), the quality (62.5%), and the behaviour (50%) of the stallions. Furthermore, the exterior (37.5%), the offspring (37.5%), and show results (37.5%) have been desired information. Also, information of the training (25%), the pedigree (12.5%), bloodline (12.5%), genetics (12.5%). The three last mentioned points (pedigree, bloodlines, genetics) could get summarized into one category which would conclude a need for genetics of 37.5%.

The information about the lengths of videos and texts is more difficult to analyse because there have been different questions between the interviews in part one and two. The first four breeders got the question which lengths of videos and texts they prefer, while the second group got the question if they want to have different lengths on social media and the website.

There were different answers about the lengths of videos in the first group. While two breeders mentioned that short videos are desired, another breeder want to have long videos because bad sequences will get cut out. Also, the answers to the lengths of the texts were different that no clear results can be shown.

Clearer were the results of the second group where the lengths of videos and texts should get defined on social media and on the website. All interviewers were agree that texts and videos on social media should be short to midsize, and on the website should be longer videos and detailed texts.

The last question which was about which information should be shown where was only ask to the second group of the interviews. All breeders answered that they want to have on social media information about competition results and training impressions. Further important have been the daily handling (50%), the offspring (50%), and actual news (50%). On the website they are more interested in the bloodlines (75%), general information of the stallion (50%), competition results (50%), and the grades of the stallion approval (25%).

## 11.4 Questionnaire breeders

### 11.4.1 Question structure questionnaire

The questionnaire will be based on the results of the interviews of the existing breeders and can therefore differ from these questions. But the questionnaire will be out of closed questions with one or more possible answers.

1) How old are you?

- ☐ Under 30
- ☐ Between 30-50
- ☐ Between 50-70
- ☐ Older than 70

2) Which gender do you have?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ female
- ☐ divers

3) How many mares do you have?

- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ More than 10

4) How many years do you already breed?

- ☐ it is the first year
- ☐ about 1-3 years
- ☐ 4 or more years

5) For which reason do you breed?

- ☐ To keep the foal
- ☐ To sell the foal
- ☐ Other, namely \_\_\_\_\_

6) How are you searching for a stallion?

- ☐ Websites

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Stallion catalogues
- ☐ Stallion shows
- ☐ Recommendation
- ☐ Show results

7) How would you like to get informed of the stallions?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Stallion catalogue
- ☐ Stallion shows

8) Which social media platforms do you prefer?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Other, namely \_\_\_\_\_

9) In which information about stallions are you interested in?

- ☐ Show results
- ☐ Training videos
- ☐ Daily handling
- ☐ General behaviour

10) How long should a video be?

- ☐ Max 30 seconds
- ☐ Up to 2 minutes
- ☐ Longer than 2 minutes

11) How long should texts be?

- ☐ Not needed
- ☐ Only a few sentences
- ☐ Detailed texts

#### 11.4.2 Results questionnaire

Swedish stallion stud farm has to set up good marketing campaigns to come in contact with their target group. The intention of the questionnaire was to get an overview about the Swedish warmblood breeders, about who they are, where they search for stallions and in which information about the stallions, they are interested in. Furthermore, the questionnaire focused on the use of online platforms to improve the online marketing of Swedish stallion stud farms.

The Swedish Warmblood Association (SWB) counts about 5700 members who are interested in the Swedish warmblood breeding, but not all of them are active breeders. In arrangement with the SWB, the assumption is made that about 60% of the members are active breeders. This makes a Swedish warmblood breeder population out of 3.420 active breeders. To reach a confidence level of 90% with a confidence interval of 5%, the minimum number of participants is 251. (Raosoft, Raosoft, 2021)

Through giving the questionnaire to clients in the mare station of the Swedish stallion stud farm PS Flyinge & Partners AB, as well as online via different Swedish Facebook groups, 271 Swedish warmblood breeders participated in the questionnaire. That are 20 respondents more than the minimum.

The following graphs show the outcome of the questionnaire:

##### Result of question 1:

#### 1) Age of the respondent

271 answers

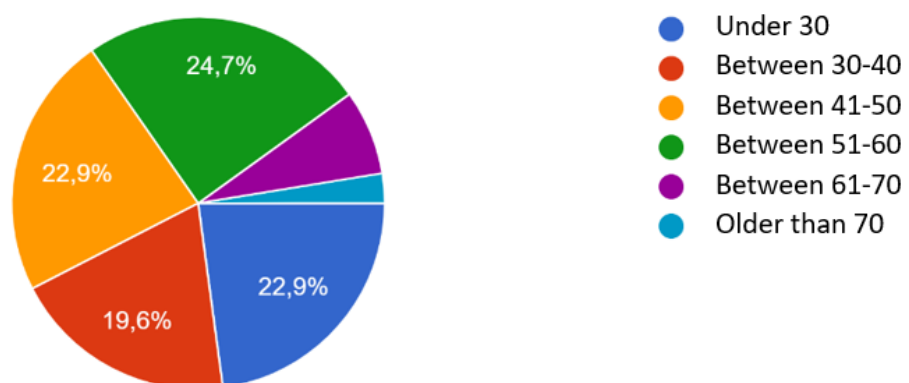


Figure 11 Question 1

The questionnaire has shown that most of the Swedish warmblood breeders (24.7%) are between 51-60 years old. But also, the three age groups under 30, between 30-40, and between 41-50 years have about 20% which does not differ very much from the biggest age group. Only the age groups above 61 years obviously smaller. That shows that the target group of Swedish stallion stud farms cannot narrowed down to one specific age group.

Result of question 2:

2) Gender of the respondent

271 answers

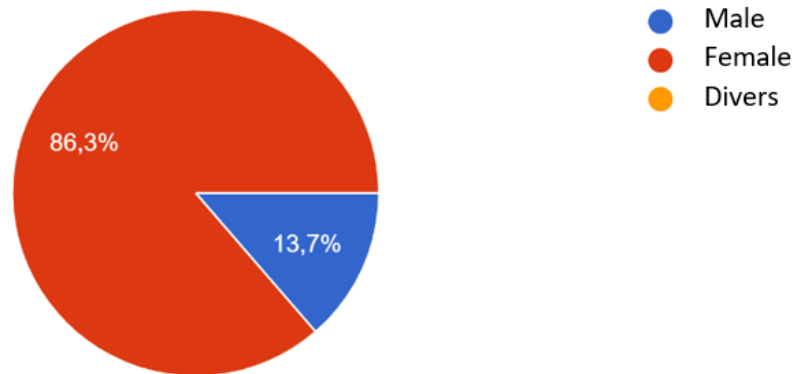


Figure 12 Question 2

Question number two was about the gender of the Swedish warmblood breeders and the questionnaire has shown that about 86.3% of the whole population is female and only 13.7% male.

Result of question 3:

3) Number of mares of the respondent

271 answers

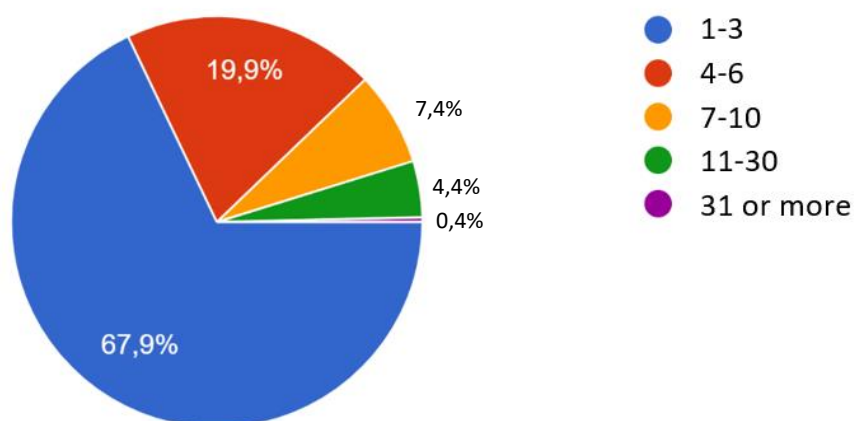


Figure 13 Question 3

Question three was about the number of mares every Swedish breeder has. The result shows that 67.9% of the breeders have 1-3 mares, 19.9 % have 4-6 mares, 7.4% has 7-10 mares, 4.4% 11-30

mares, and only 0.4% has 31 or more mares. This means that the average Swedish warmblood breeder is a small sizes breeder with 1-3 mares.

#### Result of question 4:

##### 4) Breeding experiences of the respondents in years

271 answers

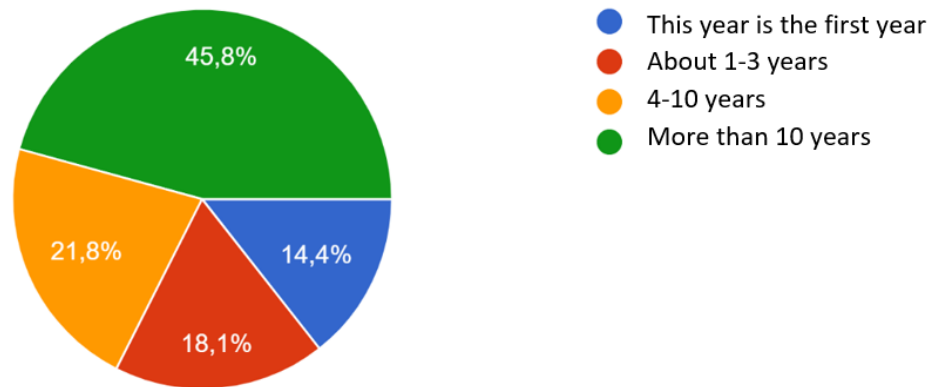


Figure 14 question 4

Question four was formulated to find out how many years the Swedish warmblood breeders already breed and how much experiences and with that probably also knowledge they have. The result has shown that nearly the half of the population, around 45.8%, already breed longer than ten years. That means that most of the breeders have a lot of experiences, already breed some foals and also have some knowlegde about breeding, genetics and heredity.

# Result of question 5:

## 5) Reason for horse breeding

271 answers

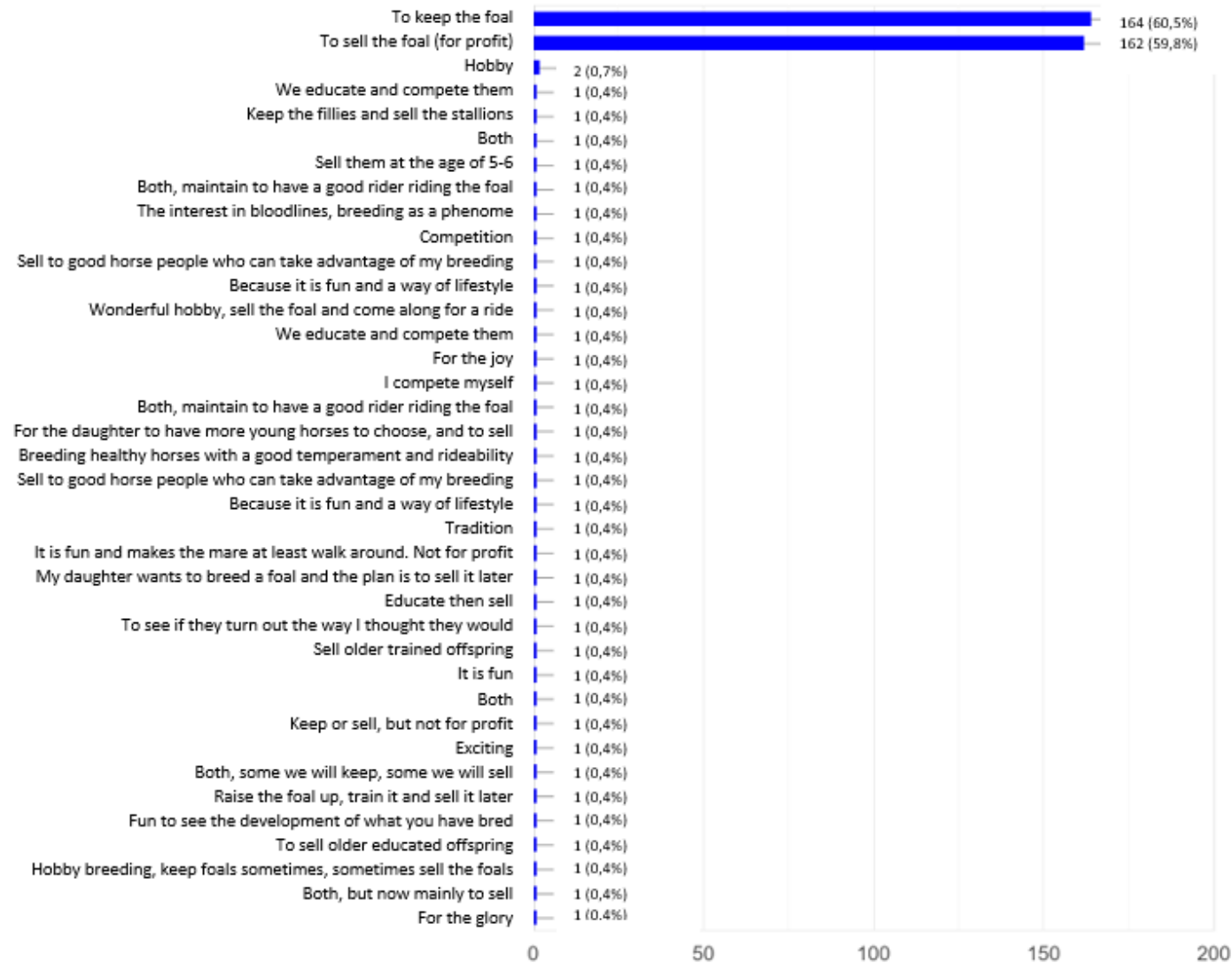


Figure 15 Results of question 5



Question 5 is about the reason why Swedish warmblood breeders breed and it does not really show a clear result. The two predetermined options to answer were to keep or to sell the foal and both answer options have about 60%. Out of the whole group of participants, 60.5% want to keep the foal and about 59.8% want to sell the foal.

Furthermore, there was the option to write other answers in an open box. That has shown that many breeders prefer to have a mix out of keeping the foal and selling the foal. Many answers has also shown that the breeders want to wait until the foals are grown up, want to train them and sell them later when they are older.

Other participants answered that they breed because it is fun, they do it for the joy and because it is exciting to see the result when the foal is born or even grown up. The breeders are also interested in the genetics and the blood lines.

## Result of question 6:

### 6) Sources of information for stallion choice

271 answers

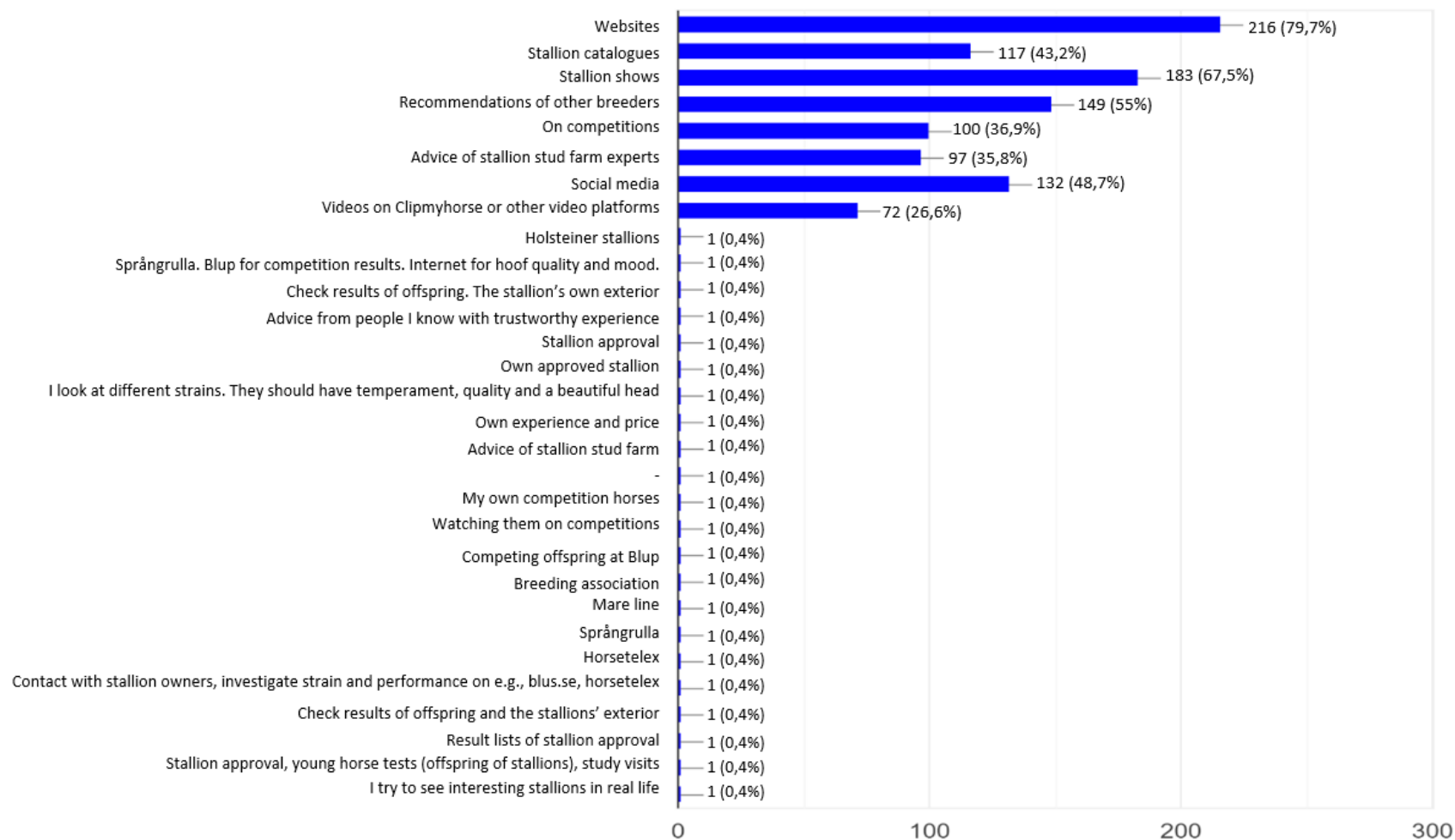


Figure 16

Results of question 6

To the question about how the breeders search for a stallion, most of the participants answered that they have a look at the website (79.7%). Also very important are the stallion shows (for 67.5%), recommendations of other breeders (55%), and the information on social media (48.7%).

On fifth position in the ranking are with 43.7% stallion catalogues. Also, the presentation of the stallions on competition (36.9%), as well as the advice of stallion stud farm experts (35.8%) are for less people important, but with still around one third of the whole population an important source of information. The same seems to be with the video platform ClipMyHorse.tv. This option achieved 26.6%, has with this the last position of the predetermined answer options but is with over one fourth of the population still important for Swedish stallion stud farms.

Respondents also had the opportunity to write own answers down. Some of them answered that they have a look at Språngrulla, a website where information about stallions, as well as Swedish stallion stud farms can be found (Språngrulla, 2021). Another Swedish website on which some participants search for information about stallions is called Blub. This website gives also information about breeding values of Swedish breeding horses, test results of Young Horse Tests, Riding Horse Test, and competitions (Blup.se, 2021).

Other Swedish warmblood breeders use the international website Horsetelex, another website where information about the horses and their pedigree can be found (Horsetelex, 2021) or they have a look at the stallion approvals. Some of them also use their own experiences for the selection of the stallions.

## Result of question 7:

### 7) How respondents want to get informed about stallions

271 answers

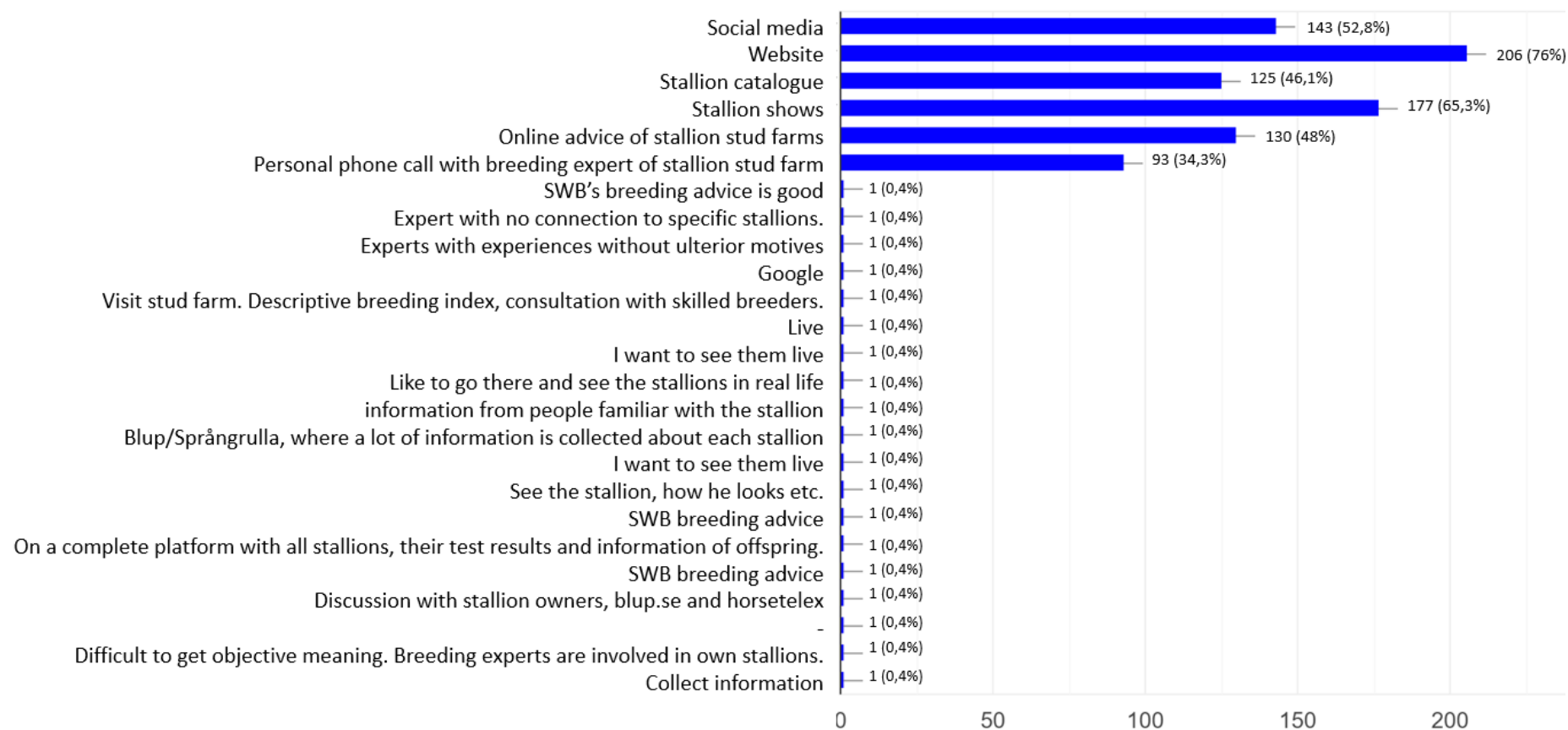


Figure 17 Results of question 7

Most of the Swedish warmblood breeders want to find information on the website of the stallion stud farm. With about 206 participants out of in total 271, which is about 76%, this category was the most important for this question.

Furthermore, very important seem to be stallion shows. Those shows are organized by the stallion stud farm and show all stallions at one evening. With that, breeders can get a good overview about all stallions and can compare them with each other. The outcome of this questionnaire shows that 65.3% of the participants want to go to those stallion shows.

On the third position of importance is with 52.8% social media. Nowadays there are many social media platforms and stallion stud farms are active there. They upload the latest news, photos and videos and breeders can get information there.

With about 48%, which are 130 out of 271 participants, the wish for an online advice from a breeding expert of the stallion stud farm is quite big. Furthermore, 46.1% want to get a stallion catalogue and at least 34.3% of the Swedish warmblood breeders want the opportunity to make a personal phone call with a breeding expert of the stallion stud farm.

For this question, there were next to predetermined response option also the opportunity to write own ideas down. Many participants wish to see the stallions live and want to get information from experts or people who know the stallion but who does not do it for profit and be honest. Furthermore, the websites Blup, Språngrulla and Horsetelex, as well as the SWB breeding advice are mentioned and also the wish for one complete platform where the breeder can find all information about all stallions.

#### Result of question 8:

##### 8) Usage of online platforms

261 answers

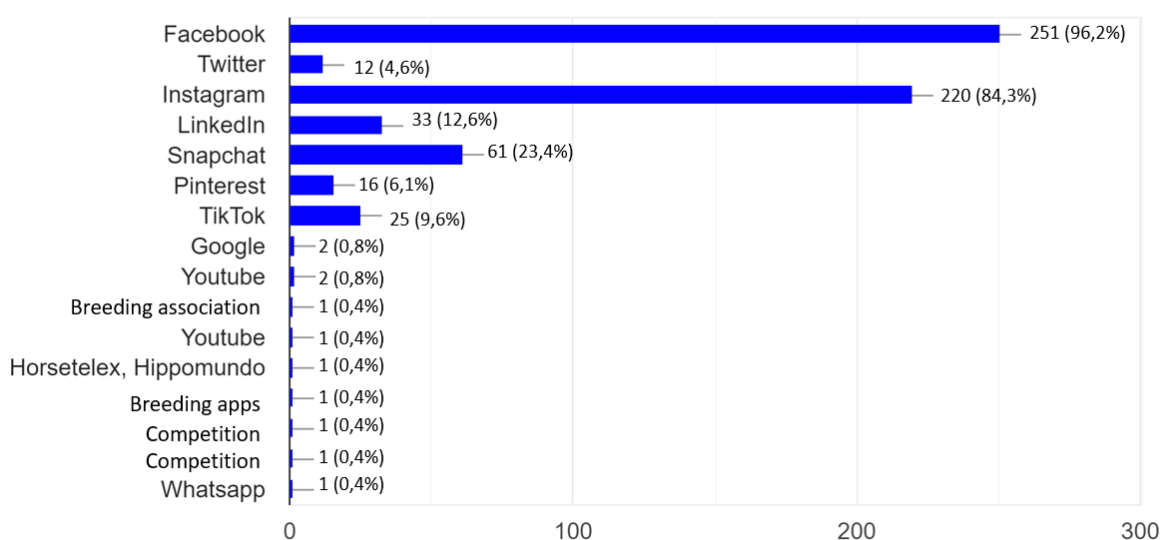


Figure 20 Results of question 8

Conspicuous for this question is that there are only 261 answers although there were 271 respondents. That means, that ten persons do not answered this question and usually do not use social media platforms.

Out of the 261 answers, 96.2% prefer the social media platform Facebook, followed closely by Instagram (84.3%). Less used are social media platforms like Snapchat (23.4%), LinkedIn (12.6%), TikTok (9.6%), Pinterest (6.1%), and at least Twitter (4.6%).

For this question there was also the option to write other social media platforms down and Google, Whatsapp and YouTube are also used platforms. Other wrote platforms like Horsetelelex, Hippomundo, and breeding apps down which are not really social media platforms. Also, answers like competition and the breeding association cannot count for the results of this question.

The result of this question shows that Swedish warmblood breeders are especially active on Facebook and Instagram.

#### Result of question 9:

##### 9) Information in which respondents are interested in

271 answers

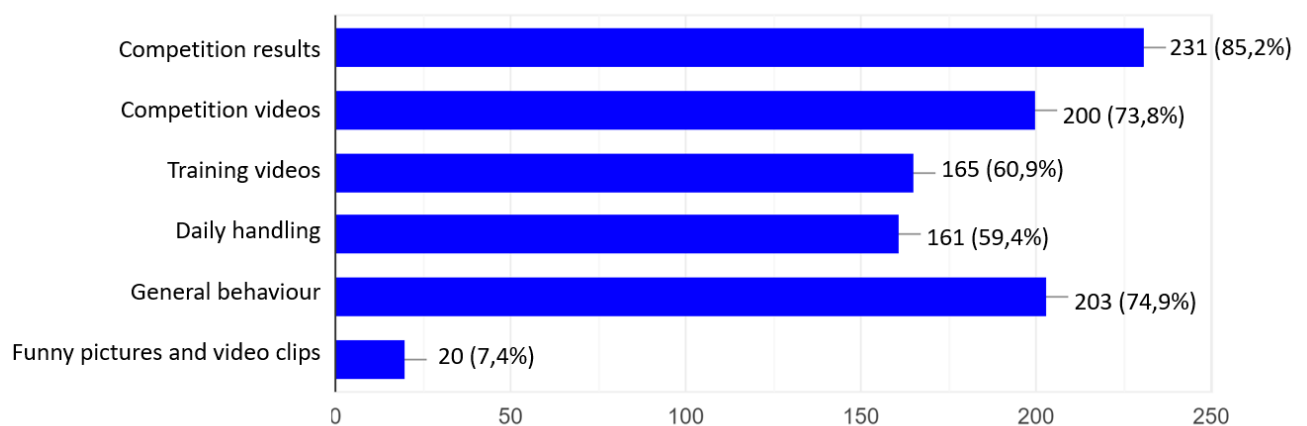


Figure 18 Results of question 9

Question 9 was about in which information Swedish warmblood breeders are interested in. Most of the participants want to get competition results (85.2%). But also, the general behaviour (74.9%), nearly followed by competition videos (73.8%) are important to the breeders.

A little bit behind, with about 60.9%, are training videos and information about the daily handling (59.4%). Least important with only 7.4% are funny pictures and video clips of the stallions.

### Result of question 10:

#### 10) Duration of videos

271 answers

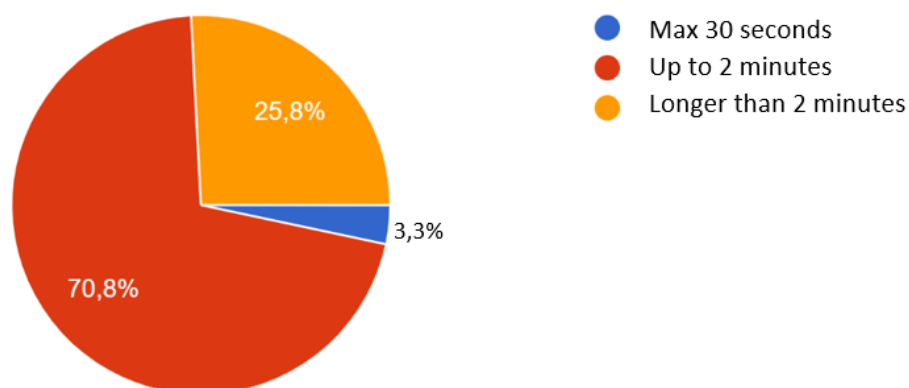


Figure 19 Results of question 10

To the question about how long a video of a stallion should be, 70.8% of the participants answered that they want to have videos up to two minutes. On the second position, with 25.8%, are videos longer than two minutes and only 3.3% of the Swedish warmblood breeders want to see videos which have a maximum length of 30 seconds.

That means that Swedish warmblood breeders prefer videos up to two minutes. Also, videos which are longer than two minutes seem to be interesting for them.

### Result of question 11:

#### 11) Text size

271 answers

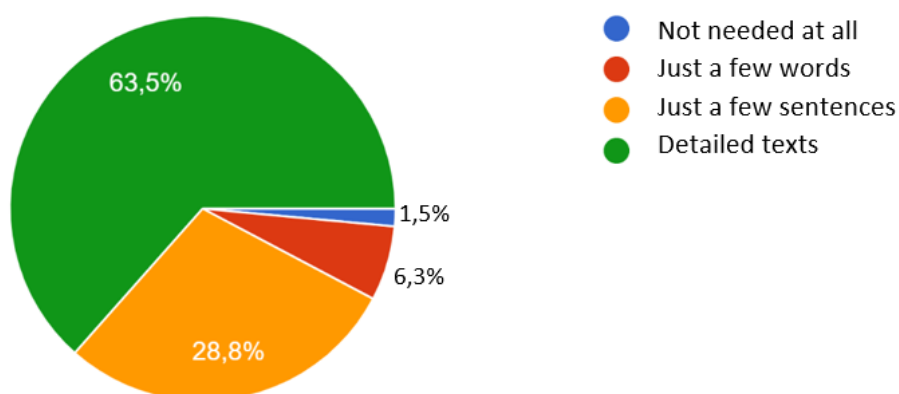


Figure 20 Results of question 11

The last question of the questionnaire was about the length of texts. With about 63.5%, most of the participants want to get detailed texts about the stallions with well described information. 28.8% of the participants also like to have short texts out of a few sentences.

### **Conclusion:**

For Swedish stallion stud farms, it is important to know the target group, the Swedish warmblood breeder. The results of the questionnaire show that the average Swedish warmblood breeder is female and has 1-3 mares. The age is difficult to limit, because up to 60 years, all age groups have similar shares. The biggest age group between 51-60 years.

Furthermore, many Swedish warmblood breeders already breed more than ten years and have a lot of experiences. There is no clear reason why Swedish warmblood breeder breed. Some want to sell the foal; some want to keep the foal and sell it later when it is already trained, and some want to keep the foal and want to ride it later on their own. The participants also indicate that they breed because it is fun, joy and they are interested in the genetics and blood lines.

Most of the breeders search for information on the stallion stud farms' website and have a look at stallion shows. Furthermore, they want to get recommendations from other breeders and have a look on social media platforms. Furthermore, they search on online platforms like Blup, Språngrulla, and Horsetelelex.

When they got the question how they would like to become informed, most of them also like to get the information on the website, on stallion shows, on social media, or through an online breeding advice of the stallion stud farms' expert. Very important for them is honesty because they are afraid of wrong information and that the experts of a stallion stud farm are not objective enough.

The most used social media platforms of Swedish warmblood breeders are Facebook and Instagram. They want to get information about competition results, the general behaviour of the stallions, and competition videos. Those videos should have a length up to two minutes or longer. Information in texts should be in detailed texts or wrote down in some sentences.