

Demographics of the U.S. Equine Population

For the Equine 2005 study, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) collected data on equine health and management practices from a representative sample of operations with 5 or more equids in 28 States within four regions.* The 28-State target population represented 78.0 percent of equids and 78.6 percent of premises with 5 or more equids in the United States. Interviews were conducted from July 18 through August 12, 2005, and 2,893 equine operations provided data on equine health and management. For this study, a resident equid was defined as an equid that spent or was expected to spend more time at the operation than at any other operation during the previous 12 months.

Operation size

Operations participating in the Equine 2005 study were categorized as small (5 to 9 equids), medium (10 to 19 equids), and large (20 or more equids). Although small operations accounted for only 36.6 percent of resident equids, they made up 66.1 percent of all operations. In comparison, large operations represented 29.2 percent of all resident equids but just 7.8 percent of operations (table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of operations and percentage of resident equids by size of operation:

| Size of Operation (Number of Equids) | Percent Operations | Percent Resident Equids |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Small (5 to 9)* | 66.1 | 36.6 |
| Medium (10 to 19) | 26.1 | 34.2 |
| Large (20 or more) | 7.8 | 29.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

*Operations that had five or more equids per the National Agricultural Statistics Service list frame (primarily comprised of equine information from the 2002 Census of Agriculture) but fewer than five equids on July 1, 2005, were included in this category.

Primary function of operation

As part of the Equine 2005 study, operators were asked to identify the primary function of their operation. A total of 40.3 percent identified their primary function as "farm/ranch" and 37.0 percent identified their primary function as "residence with equids for personal use."

Approximately 4 of 10 small operations reported a primary function of residence with equids for personal use or farm/ranch (46.0 and 40.3 percent, respectively). As operation size increased so did the percentage of operations where the primary function was boarding/training or breeding farm. As operation size increased the percentage of operations where the primary function was residence with equids for personal use decreased (table 2).

*Regions:

West: California, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming

Northeast: New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania

South: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia

Central: Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

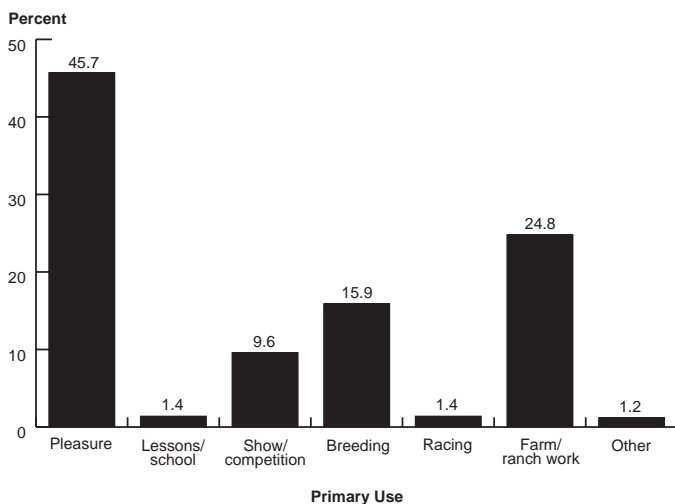
Table 2. Percentage of operations by primary function and by size of operation:

| Primary Function | Percent Operations | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | Size of Operation (Number of Equids) | | | |
| | Small (5-9) | Medium (10-19) | Large (20 or More) | All Opera- tions |
| | Percent | Percent | Percent | Percent |
| Boarding/ training | 2.8 | 10.4 | 17.2 | 5.9 |
| Breeding farm | 9.2 | 21.8 | 34.1 | 14.4 |
| Farm/ranch | 40.3 | 42.5 | 32.3 | 40.3 |
| Residence with equids for personal use | 46.0 | 22.2 | 10.4 | 37.0 |
| Other | 1.7 | 3.1 | 6.0 | 2.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Primary use of equids

Operators were also asked to identify the primary use of equids on their operation. The highest percentage of operations (45.7 percent) used equids for pleasure, followed by farm/ranch work (24.8 percent) and breeding (15.9 percent) (figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of Operations by Primary Use of Equids



Type of equid

Most operations (95.6 percent) had full-size horses (including draft horses). One-third of operations (34.8 percent) had equids other than full-size horses. A higher percentage of operations in the South region had donkeys or burros (17.2 percent) compared to the other regions. The Northeast and Central regions had higher percentages of operations with ponies (26.6 and 21.3 percent, respectively) than the West and South regions (9.0 and 12.4 percent, respectively). The percentages of operations with mules, miniature horses, and full-size horses were similar across regions (table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of operations by type of equids present on July 1, 2005, and by region:

| Type of Equid | Percent Operations | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------|------|---------|------------------------|
| | Region | | | | |
| | South | North- east | West | Central | All Opera- tions |
| | Pct. | Pct. | Pct. | Pct. | Pct. |
| Donkeys/ burros | 17.2 | 9.5 | 8.8 | 7.7 | 12.2 |
| Mules | 6.9 | 10.2 | 11.0 | 6.1 | 7.9 |
| Ponies | 12.4 | 26.6 | 9.0 | 21.3 | 15.7 |
| Miniature horses | 8.0 | 10.3 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 7.5 |
| Horses* | 94.3 | 95.0 | 96.7 | 97.4 | 95.6 |
| Other** | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Any equid other than full-size horse | 36.1 | 44.3 | 28.3 | 32.9 | 34.8 |

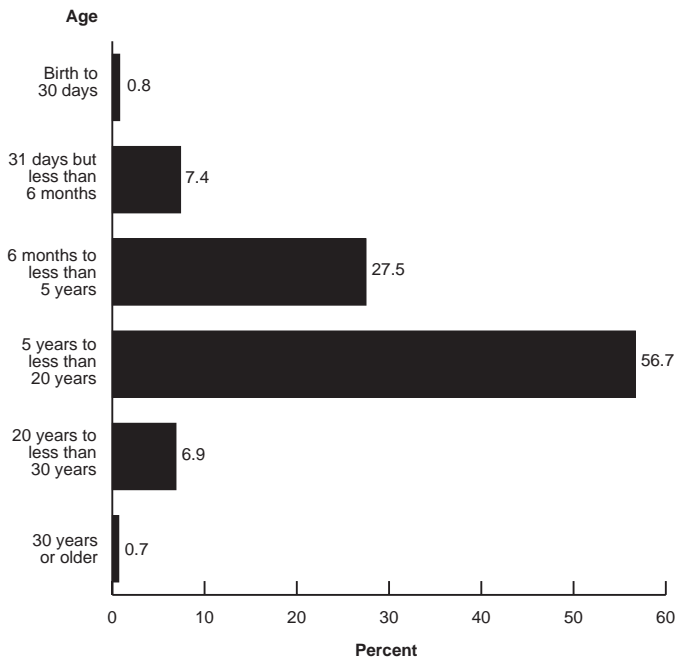
*Domestic equids generally more than 14 hands (56 inches) high at the shoulder (near the last hairs of the mane). An equid less than 14 hands high may also be considered a horse if its breed registry defines it as such (other than miniature horse). Excludes miniature horses but includes draft horses. Horses include light breeds (e.g., Thoroughbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse, Appaloosa, Morgan, Trakehner, etc.) and draft horses (e.g., Clydesdale, Belgian, and Percheron).

**Includes zebra and zedonk (zebra-donkey cross).

Age Distribution

The highest percentage of resident equids (56.7 percent) were 5 to less than 20 years of age. Just 7.6 percent of resident equids were 20 years or older. Since most foals are born during spring, the reference date regarding age of resident equids was July 1. The majority of foals were reported to be 31 days but less than 6 months of age (figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Resident Equids on July 1, 2005, by Age



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