



EQUINE

The Kansas equine industry is made up of many different types and uses of horses. Historically, horses were a significant part of the original cattle ranching infrastructure in Kansas. Horses remain an important part of the animal industry in Kansas today and opportunities exist to significantly expand support and visibility.

The need for current data to demonstrate the breadth and economic impact of the equine population in Kansas was met with the completion of an equine economic impact survey in 2021.

A high priority for the equine industry that has been identified is the need for equine facility improvements and new facility developments across the state, capable of hosting larger or combined shows. These are necessary to support, recruit and retain equine exhibitors and event producers in Kansas, which serve as an economic driver to the host communities.

The industry also recognizes the need for a state equine extension specialist. This position would enhance education and outreach to horse owners of all ages and all stages of knowledge and experience. It would be responsible for providing support, consultation, education and outreach for established businesses as well as those working with horses for the first-time horse experience, all of which would be paramount for positive outcomes for this sector.

Stakeholders in the Kansas equine industry will focus on the challenges that prevent growth, and will work to overcome them by input and discussion among key partners who are committed to long-term strategic growth. The strategic growth plan created through these collaborative efforts from both public entities and private stakeholders is critical to the future success of the equine industry in Kansas.

Status

The Kansas horse industry is vast, representing many different types and uses of horses. Kansas has a long-standing history with horses, as they were a major component of the original cattle ranching infrastructure in the state. Horses continue as a natural part of the rural landscape. According to the latest equine economic impact survey, Kansas has a healthy number of horses and horse activities to maintain and offer growth potential in the industry.

According to the 2021 Equine Economic Impact survey, the Kansas horse population is approximately 70,000 horses valued at \$260 million. This figure is probably low as new data has been introduced showing one registered breed association reported 73,000 head were registered in Kansas in 2021, indicating the survey has been underestimated. IMPLAN reports the tallied economic impact of Kansas' equine industry (with direct, indirect and induced effects) is about 2,600 jobs, \$150 million of all types of income, and \$280 million of total economic activity. Ideally, future data collection may be obtained with increased frequency to support relevancy to current market and industry conditions.

Successes

- The Kansas State Fair has recently had arena improvements to insulation, lighting, heating, and air circulation in the Expo, making the venue more aesthetically pleasing. Year-round sales tax from any facility rentals across the campus are able to be retained by the KSF for improvements and maintenance as needed. This, coupled with recent additional funding, is allowing for some impressive campus-wide improvements to occur.
- An equine economic impact survey was completed and provided useful data. The last report was done 26 years ago.
- American Royal plans are underway for a 5,000+ seat arena, over 300,000+ square feet of exhibition/stalling space, a flexible auxiliary arena space allowing for two side-by-side arenas or additional exhibition space, outdoor festival space, and a 40,000+ square foot high-end exhibit floor. The over one million indoor square feet facility will be able to accommodate 1,500 indoor, climate-controlled horse stalls and will host a variety of events year-round. Plans may also include an outdoor equestrian trail.
- The Stormont Vail Events Center – Domer Livestock Arena renovations completed renovations in 2022. The warmup arena was fully enclosed, water hydrants were added to every stall row, electrical drop downs were added to service every two stalls, the floor was groomed and leveled. Also, there was improved lighting to Domer Arena which will allow highlighting or dimming for special effects; large commercial fans were installed throughout the stall barn, warmup arena and Domer Arena for improved air circulation; and the café and restrooms were updated.
- The newly developed American Tobiano Horse Association has set up headquarters in Hutchinson to be located at the center of the U.S., making travel distance half as far for equestrians in all directions.
- Kansas State University has plans underway to build a new indoor arena facility to enhance student experiences next to its current outdoor arena, near the Stanley Stout Center on the north end of campus.
- 2023 Kansas EquiFest in Salina attracted 14,000 attendees from 30 states and had an economic impact of \$1.3 million.