

# Horses of Iceland



**Goals – Activities – Results**

**2018**

## **MAIN GOAL**

The purpose of the Horses of Iceland (HOI) project is to increase the awareness of and strengthen the image of the Icelandic horse internationally. The main goal is to lay the groundwork for increased value creation and increased foreign currency income from the sale of Icelandic horses, related products and services with professional and progressive marketing under the slogan Horses of Iceland – bring you closer to nature.

## **EMPHASIS**

Emphasis is placed on wide-reaching collaboration between members of the Icelandic horse community around the world to ensure that the message delivered through marketing is unified and to give the project increased weight. The project is carried out with long-term goals in mind.

Special emphasis is placed on digital media, the project's website and social media, to reach as large an audience as possible, all around the world. Synergy in marketing with other industries represented by Promote Iceland – such as tourism through Inspired by Iceland and promotion of Icelandic culture through Iceland Naturally – is also important.

## **TARGET GROUPS AND MARKETS**

In 2018, the main emphasis was placed on reaching target group 3) Owners and riders of other horse breeds, in the hopes of increasing awareness of the Icelandic horse and encourage increased trade, services and recreation in connection with the Icelandic horse.

In addition, we continued to work on reaching the following target groups: 1) Foreign parties all over the world who already have some connection to the Icelandic horse; 2) Tourists in Iceland and travellers passing through Keflavík International Airport. Promotional videos were screened in the in-flight entertainment system of Icelandair and advertisements published in the in-flight magazines of Icelandair and Air Iceland Connect.

Our goal is – after recruiting new partners from overseas, such as Icelandic horse associations – to place increased emphasis on promotion in the country in question and in that way, support the collaboration.

In 2018, the Danish Icelandic Horse Association became a partner and Horses of Iceland took part in organising the celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Funding was allocated towards promoting the Icelandic horse at international fairs where numerous horse breeds are demonstrated, for example in Sweden, the United States and Germany.

Considerable funding was also allocated towards education and presentations in Iceland, particularly during the Landsmót National Horse Competition in Reykjavík.

It is now possible to reach people strategically through social media by country of origin, gender, age and interests, and that was taken advantage of, especially on Facebook.

## MARKETING ACTIVITIES, PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL AND EVENTS IN 2018

### Shows and events:

- Attendance at Gothenburg Horse Show, 20–25 February.
- FEIF Education Seminar at Hólar in Hjaltadalur, 23–25 March (in cooperation with FEIF and Hólar University College)
- Horse parade through Reykjavík city centre, 28 April (in cooperation with LH – the Icelandic Horse Association)
- The International Day of the Icelandic Horse, celebrated globally, 1 May (an annual event)
- Landsmót National Horse Competition in Reykjavík, 1–8 July, with participation from ministers of the Icelandic government and the President of Iceland
- Media trip and documentary making at Landsmót in Reykjavík and visits to HOI partners (FEI TV and Gallop magazine)
- One of the world’s most prominent equine photographers, Christiane Slawik, travelled Iceland 20–28 August and took pictures for HOI with some of the project’s partners in West and East Iceland
- Media trip to Laufskálaréttir horse roundup and visits to partners in September (*Islandshästpodden* and *National Geographic Traveller UK*)
- Stand at Elmia Power Horse Show in Sweden, 12–14 October (in cooperation with the Swedish Icelandic Horse Association, SIF)
- Agricultural fair in Laugardalshöll arena in Reykjavík, 12–14 October
- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Danish Icelandic Horse Association (Dansk Islandshesteforening) in Copenhagen 21 October with the participation of a minister of the Icelandic government
- Stand at the Equine Affaire exposition in Springfield, MA, USA, in November (in cooperation with the US Icelandic Horse Congress)
- Stand at Sweden International Horse Show in Stockholm, Sweden, in November (in cooperation with the Swedish Icelandic Horse Association)
- Stand at the Pferd & Jagd fair in Hannover, Germany, in December

It should also be noted that the project has been promoted at numerous occasions, including at the general meeting of FEIF, LH – the Icelandic Horse Association and at the general meeting of the Horse Breeders Association of Iceland.

### The Horses of Iceland website:

The website *HorsesofIceland.is* is intended to encompass content concerning the Icelandic horse and is entitled: “The Official Site of the Icelandic Horse”. The website exists in four languages: Icelandic, English, German and Swedish.

An update of the website went live in spring 2018. Increased emphasis was placed on “living content”, that is, that our stories, events and gallery are given more weight and therefore, these categories were moved higher up on the website.

One of the goals of 2019 is to make the project's partners even more visible on the website, such as with an interactive map of Iceland, where the locations of all HOI partners are included.

### **Brochures and promotional material:**

An elaborate brochure about the Icelandic horse has been published in five languages: English, German, Swedish and Chinese, in addition to Icelandic. In 2018, the brochure was translated to Icelandic and published in print with updated pictures. The brochure was distributed at various events, including Horse Days in Reykjavík, the youth horse show Æskan og hesturinn, The Champions League, Landsmót in Reykjavík and the agricultural fair in Laugardalshöll.

### **Newsletter mailing list:**

On the project's website, people can register to a mailing list and currently over 5,000 people around the world receive our newsletter regularly. It has proven successful to encourage new people to sign up for the newsletter with various games, sweepstakes, etc. This media is proving influential.

### **Social media:**

The Icelandic horse is hugely successful on social media. Our followers numbered around 67,000 at the end of 2017, but at the end of 2018 the number had grown to around 90,000. Facebook and Instagram are our main social media platforms, along with YouTube. A contractor is responsible for creating most of the content for social media. A more detailed analysis of social media can be found towards the end of this report.

### **Video:**

In 2018, emphasis was placed on making videos that were shorter and smaller in scale than the large-scale productions of 2017. Effort was put into streaming live video content from the events and shows HOI participated in last year and use the recorded material for making videos. Increased emphasis was also placed on the making of photo essays and stories.

Videos were made at Landsmót, Sweden International Horse Show and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Danish Icelandic Horse Association. We also visited the world champion in flying pace, Charlotte Cook, and made a short video about her.

In 2018, preparations for the making of larger videos to be published in 2019 were made, including videos made in cooperation with FEIF – International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations and on the 100 years development of the breeding and riding style of the Icelandic horse.

Videos from 2017 have also been republished and content from them used for promotions and advertisements. All of the video content is available on the project's website, YouTube and Facebook.

### Partner promotions:

At the end of 2018, HOI partners numbered 65.

Partners who contribute to the project with ISK 150,000 or more are given a special promotion about their operations and/or services on HOI's social media platforms. The promotion includes a visit from a photographer who shoots photos/videos and writes a promotional text. The partners will also receive photos which they can use. The following partners were promoted in 2018:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Skjaldarvík Guesthouse   | Hrímnr, Sögusetrið museum,         |
| 2. Hornhestar   | Knapamerkin – The Icelandic Riding |
| 3. Hrímnr   | Levels, Hólar University College,  |
| 4. The Champions League   | Appfengur, MAST, Landsmót 2020 and |
| 5. Friðheimar   | more                               |
| 6. Íslenski hesturinn – The Icelandic Horse   | 14. Hólar University College       |
| 7. The Horse Breeders Association   | 15. MAST                           |
| 8. The Danish Icelandic Horse Association   | 16. Kjarr Horses breeding farm     |
| 9. Hestvit  | 17. Íshestar                       |
| 10. Appfengur   | 18. Horse Expo                     |
| 11. Brjánsstaðir  | 19. Vesturkot                      |
| 12. Litla Brekka  | 20. USIHC                          |
| 13. Landsmót – a number of partners were promoted, including The Icelandic Horse Trainers Association (FT), | 21. Blesastaðir                    |

The goal is to promote 1-2 partners per month on average.

Partners who contribute to the project with ISK 300,000 or more are given access to the HOI stand at the trade shows and fairs in which the project participates. Partners can make good use of the facilities and promote their companies, give presentations, distribute promotional material, screen promotional videos and have their company's logo printed on one of the walls of the stand.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018

### Horse Days and International Day of the Icelandic Horse on 1 May:

What stands out is the horse parade through central Reykjavík. It started out at the BSÍ bus terminal, then the riders progressed up to Hallgrímskirkja church, down Skólavörðustígur street, to Austurvöllur square, around the Tjörnin pond and back to BSÍ. The same weekend, young riders organised horse shows in the riding hall of Fákur horse club in Víðidalur, Reykjavík, which are open to all. The Icelandic national team of riders organised competitions and fundraising.

Following the Horse Days, on 1 May, the International Day of the Icelandic Horse was celebrated around the world. The day has become a fixed feature with events taking place in Iceland and abroad. Five or six events were held overseas, including in Belgium and Sweden. A similar number of events was organised in Iceland, for example by horse clubs Sprettur and Sörli. Great many Icelandic horse lovers helped spreading the joy on that day, opening their stables to the public, inviting people to go horseback riding and organising shows and competitions. All events were naturally shared on social media with the #horsesoficeland hashtag.

### Landsmót hestamanna – National Horse Competition:

Horses of Iceland organised an ambitious educational programme at Landsmót – National Horse Competition in Reykjavík. The project was promoted along with its partners, videos were screened, and other promotional material was distributed to visitors. The educational programme comprised of a multitude of events, including lectures on feed from Lifland, presentations from Hólar University College and Knapamerkin – The Icelandic Riding Levels, a presentation on horse shoeing in cooperation with the Farrier Association of Iceland, lectures from Fákur horse club, a lecture on the flying pace gene and a lecture by the national horse breeding consultant. WorldFengur, the studbook of origin for the Icelandic horse had a stand inside the HOI tent and the Icelandic Horse Trainers Association (FT) offered riding demonstrations in a paddock next to the HOI tent.

On the first day of the competition, the public could attend for free and approximately 3,000 people came to the competition area. The competition ran for 8 days and the total number of guests was approximately 8,000. HOI held a few receptions where ministers of the government and the President of Iceland were the honorary guests. HOI also held a party for the youngest contestants and the President of Iceland presented them with grand gifts from HOI and the project's partners, which they received for taking part in Landsmót. There were great many musical acts and other events inside the HOI tent during the competition week.

### Exhibitions abroad:

#### - Elmia Power Horse Show in Sweden

Elmia Icelandic Power Show is held simultaneously with the Elmia Scandinavian Horse Show in a unique concept with three disciplines in equestrian sports under one roof. Last year the event attracted over 17,000 visitors to Elmia in Jönköping. HOI shared a booth with the Swedish Icelandic horse Federation, SIF to introduce the Icelandic horse to onlookers of other disciplines. HOI had videos playing on large screens during the competition, had press meetings and presentations about the project.

#### - Equine Affaire in USA

HOI participated in Equine Affaire in the USA, a 4-day exposition in Springfield, MA. There, around 50 different horse breeds are represented. The promotion was organised by HOI in cooperation with the US Icelandic Horse Congress. The estimated number of visitors was approximately 100,000. Lectures and presentations on the Icelandic horse took place, along with a short demonstration of the Icelandic horse. Visitor took a great interest in the breed – HOI ran out of promotional material on the third day of the exposition.

#### - Sweden International Horse Show in Stockholm:

Held in Friends Arena in Solna, Sweden, the estimated number of visitors to the horse show was around 90,000. Demonstrations were organised and HOI participated in the evening programmes on Friday and Saturday. Each evening between 10,000 and 15,000 people watched the programme. HOI video material was screened on a giant screen during shows and competitions, as well as during intermissions. Shows and demonstrations were of top quality, featuring world champions and professionals in Icelandic horsemanship from around the world.

#### - Pferd & Jagd in Germany:

The fair is held in Hannover, Germany, where the Icelandic horse is very popular. Approximately 102,000 visitors came to the fair, where HOI had a stand and was assisted by partners in various tasks during the fair. The project was promoted, along with its partners, videos were screened and other promotional material distributed to guests.

#### Public relations – newspapers/magazines/media/television:

- Advertisements in international horse magazines around the world, including New Zealand, USA, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Denmark.
- Advertisements at international fairs and competitions around the world, including the UK, Germany, USA, Sweden and Denmark.
- HOI was visible on television in Iceland, for example in connection with Landsmót (at national broadcaster RÚV) and the Champions League (at private channel Stöð 2 Sport).
- Successful cooperation with Inspired by Iceland and other projects at Promote Iceland on publishing and sharing content from HOI.
- Foreign photographers were invited to Iceland to photograph the Icelandic horse with HOI partners around the country. German photographer Christiane Slawik spent one week in the country. HOI has also cooperated with Brazilian photographer Guadalupe Laiz.
- Filmmakers from FEI TV, a subscription television channel run by the international association for all horse breeds in the world, were invited to visit the country in July 2018. They filmed at Landsmót, among other places, and visited partners. The television features were aired in early 2019. FEI TV has a reach of an estimated 238 million.
- Representatives of international horse magazine *Gallop Magazine* were also invited to the country. They covered the flying pace race of the Icelandic horse both in their online and print publications. The magazine has around 200,000 followers on Facebook. The magazine is printed in 14,000 copies and distributed around the world.
- Representatives of Swedish radio programme *Islandshästpodden* were invited to the Laufskálaréttir horse roundup. They recorded dozens of programmes which can be listened to in their podcast. Approximately 10,000 people listen to each programme.

- Representatives of *National Geographic Traveller UK* were invited Laufskálrétt which resulted in a 8-page feature. The magazine has an estimated 150.000 readers in the UK.
- A HOI commercial was screened during the start-up advertising programme of the Icelandair in-flight entertainment system.

#### Social media:

Content from HOI has appeared on the news feed of several million people on social media.

This is probably the largest and most extensive promotion that the Icelandic horse has ever received in times of electronic media. Followers on social media numbered 67,000 in 2017 but had reached 90,000 at the end of 2018. HOI has over 40,000 followers on Facebook and over 50,000 on Instagram.

What characterises our followers is how active they are, our posts have a very high “engagement rate”, which measures the number of likes, comments and sharing of posts (the engagement rate average is 17.6% on Instagram and 8% on Facebook). This makes our social media channels an excellent platform for reaching a large group of Icelandic horse lovers and Iceland enthusiasts and a superb opportunity for our partners to advertise and promote their operations.

Action to maintain the activity of followers included, for example, that social media posts were formulated as questions, encouraging followers to respond and post their own photos, such as in connection with Halloween and Christmas.

In the course of the year, some well-known individuals within the horse community were asked to do “takeovers” of HOI’s social media channels for a few days, which proved very popular. These include Gígja D. Einarsdóttir, Liga Liepinaa, Zola Runsten and students of Hólar University College, among others.

Increased emphasis was placed on the making of photo essays, such as on the eight-legged horse Sleipnir from Norse mythology, the Deacon of Dark River, elves and Yule Lads from Icelandic folk tales, in cooperation with Inspired by Iceland, etc.

Increased emphasis was also placed on sharing educational posts about the Icelandic horse on social media, where the content was presented in a short and concise manner, including on hooves, the sleeping patterns of horses, the birth of foals, etc.

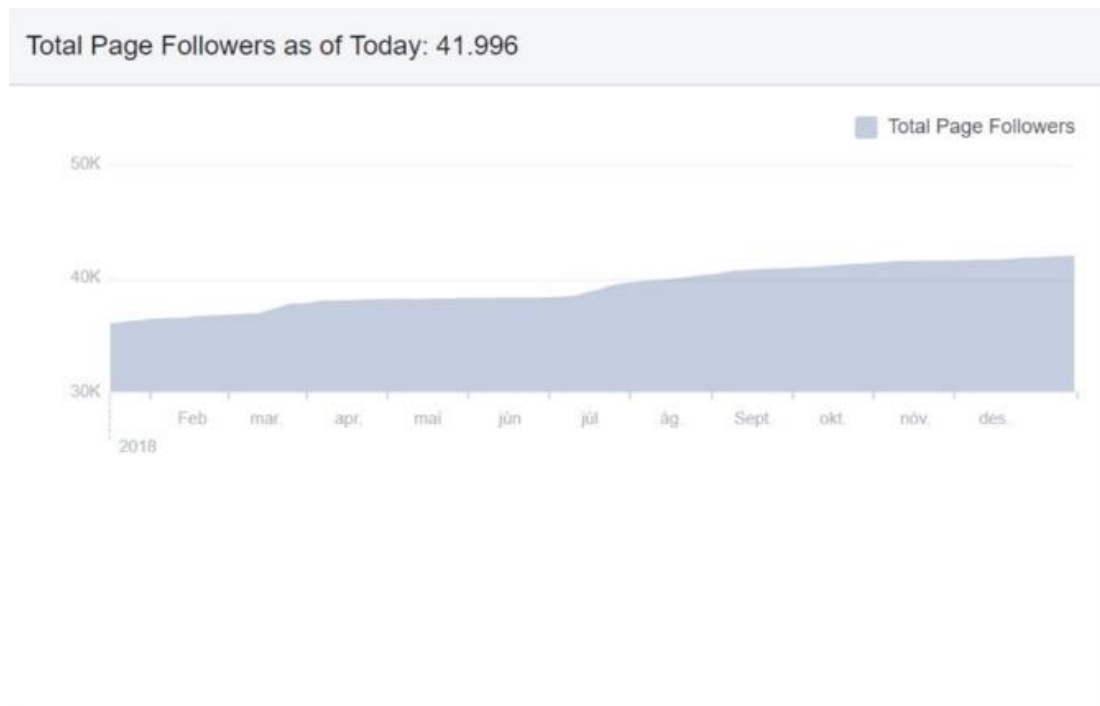
“Friday fun fact” proved popular, where fun facts on the Icelandic horse were posted on Fridays, for example on horse-related phrases and idioms.

In June the HOI Instagram TV channel was created.

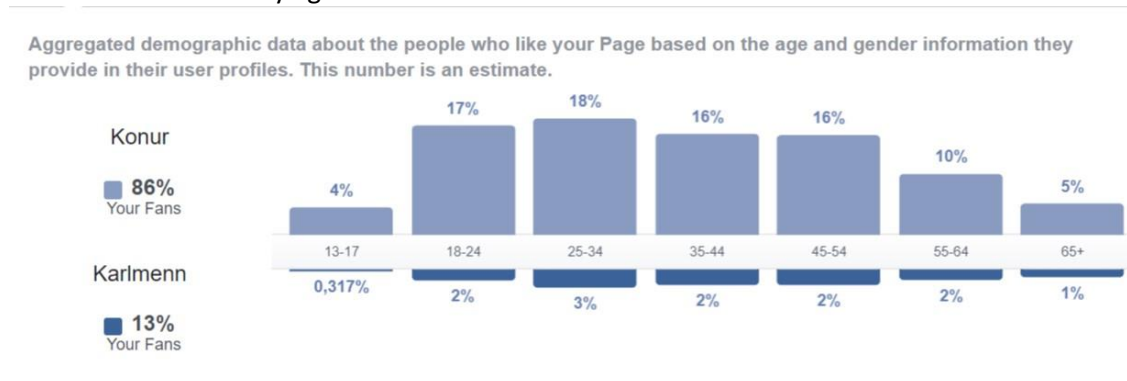
The majority of followers are still women (86%) but the ratio of men increased by 1% from 2017.



Development of number of followers in 2018:



Division of followers by age:



Division of followers by country:

Germany	10,812	New Zealand	122
USA	5,003	Greece	111
Sweden	4,395	Portugal	104
Iceland	2,851	South Africa	103
Denmark	2,588	Pakistan	102
UK	1,993	Slovenia	75
Norway	1,890	Taiwan	64
The Netherlands	1,637	Lithuania	63
Austria	1,186	The Philippines	62
Canada	961	Thailand	62
Finland	834	Argentina	

France	791	Turkey	61
Switzerland	659	The Faroe Islands	58
Italy	615	Slovakia	51
Australia	584	Luxembourg	51
Poland	459	Bulgaria	49
Belgium	380	Algeria	47
Spain	243	Egypt	46
Brazil	214	Japan	45
Mexico	186	Russia	45
Ireland	166		44
India	166		
Hungary	128		
Romania	126		
The Czech Republic	122		

We are happy to note that there has been an increase in followers in all countries, most significantly in the US, by 1,500 people.

### **MEASUREMENT TOOLS**

Below are the measurement tools, inner and outer factors, used to estimate the results of HOI marketing initiatives and monitor the development of operations related to the project.

#### **Outer:**

- Quantity, value and market share
- Turnover and foreign exchange income from export
  - Number of horses and value by country
  - Export of products (note tax categories)
  - Tourism in Iceland: how many tourists (or percentage of tourists) buy horse-related services (shorter and longer tours) and how often
  - Other services
- Number of Icelandic horses in the world
- Number of horse associations in the world and their members
- The awareness and attitude of consumers and of other parties in the value chain

#### **Inner:**

- Project funding and interest in participation, domestically and internationally
- Activity on social media
- Visits to website and activity
- The success of certain events and public relations initiatives
- The value of media coverage
- Participation and satisfaction of partners, the awareness and attitude of Icelandic and foreign partners
- Number of Icelandic and foreign parties in database

### **GAIN FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT**

Participants in the project gain the following:

- Synergy – to be a participant in a group of collaborators who are all keen to contribute to marketing the Icelandic horse.
- Attending meetings two to three times a year to review the policy and determine the focus of marketing.
- Networking with other participants – access to the HOI network of contacts.
- Access to information about marketing activities, conclusions of studies and practical knowledge.
- The opportunity to be included in marketing activities and events, such as in relation with Landsmót and the World Championships, where the project is promoted.
- Visibility and promotion of the participant, for example have the company's logo and a link to its website published on the project's website; visibility at events; have promotional material included in a media package distributed to journalists who come to Iceland in connection with the project; and promotion by direct target mail (note: this depends on the amount contributed to the project).
- Permission to use the project's slogan (Horses of Iceland – bring you closer to nature) on the company's website with a link to the project's website and access to HOI's marketing material.
- Various other opportunities, including on social media.

Further information is provided by project manager Jelena Ohm, [jelena@islandsstofa.is](mailto:jelena@islandsstofa.is). See also: [www.horsesoficeland.is](http://www.horsesoficeland.is) [www.facebook.com/horsesoficeland](https://www.facebook.com/horsesoficeland) [www.instagram.com/horsesoficeland](https://www.instagram.com/horsesoficeland)