



Economic Study Reaffirms Marion County Florida as Horse Capital of the World®

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OCALA, FL—The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association released results of the American Horse Council Foundation's 2023 Equine Economic Impact Study for the Marion County/Ocala Metro on Feb. 22. The county-wide equine industry powers \$4.3 billion in total economic impacts and an estimated 22% of the county's gross domestic product.

Marion County maintains its trademarked title as the Horse Capital of the World® with 75,000 horses and ponies, more than any other single county or parish in the United States.

Thoroughbreds lead the charge at nearly one-half of the county headcount.

Approximately 28,500 equine and equine-related jobs combine for about one-fifth of Marion County employment. Thoroughbred-related jobs sustain a 56% majority of the equine workforce.

Acres used for horse-related purposes in Marion County total 210,000, more than 20% of the total county landmass.

“Marion County has clearly maintained its rightful position as Horse Capital of the World® by population, participation and economic value,” Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association's CEO Lonny Powell said.

Included in those estimates is Ocala Breeder's Sales, the worldwide auction leader for juvenile Thoroughbred racing prospects. OBS owns 75% of the national 2-year-old in training marketplace and generates more than \$180 million total sales annually.

The report noted Marion County is one of the world's leading centers for horse breeding and horse activity with Thoroughbreds dominating both categories.

The opening of the World Equestrian Center in 2021, a major catalyst for increased equine activity, has attracted growing numbers of horse enthusiasts and owners from out of state and internationally. The report also noted Marion County as a growing polo center that did not exist when a prior study was last published in 2018.

The report emphasized the equine industry's outsized impacts on tourism and hospitality. High profile and well attended equine competitions within Marion County include the longtime hunter-jumper season at Horse Shows in the Sun, Live Oak International combined driving and show jumping, the North American Reining Stakes, CONFEPASO Youth Equitation Mundial, WEC's Winter Spectacular horse shows and the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup jumping series, among others.

Summary data from the study is available under the Horse Capital of the World® header on the FTBOA website at FTBOA.com. Members from FTBOA management are available to present study results to business leaders and community groups.

The study was conducted by a third-party economics firm residing outside of the equine industry. The Innovation Group, based in Louisiana, utilized IMPLAN data and software in addition to AHC surveys, U.S. Census data and accounting conventions of the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The FTBOA funded the report.

The FTBOA produced three takeaway cards with key data related to state equine impact, the impact of Florida Thoroughbreds, and Marion County equine impact, all available on the FTBOA.com website or via request from the FTBOA headquarters located in Ocala, Florida.

About the FTBOA

Established in 1948, the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association is a not-for-profit association with the mission of promoting the Florida Thoroughbred. The FTBOA represents more than 1,300 Thoroughbred breeders and owners internationally who breed, raise, sell, train and own racehorses born in the state of Florida. The FTBOA is located at 801 SW 60th Avenue in Ocala, Fla., the heart of one of the top equine regions worldwide and recognized as the Horse Capital of the World®.