



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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South Carolina Completes Updated Equine Impact Study

COLUMBIA, S.C. – South Carolina’s equine industry contributes nearly \$2 billion and 29,000 jobs annually to the state’s economy, according to a new study released today by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture in coordination with the University of South Carolina’s SmartState Center of Economic Excellence in Tourism and Economic Development. The study finds that the economic impact of the equine industry in South Carolina has nearly quadrupled in the past 14 years.

The purpose of the study was to quantify the specific economic impact of the equine sector on South Carolina. The study examined both the primary factors that generate economic activity within the state’s equine sector and the ongoing business activities of horse-related institutions.

“Agriculture is a very diverse industry and the continued growth in the equine sector truly speaks to why agribusiness is the state’s largest industry. Whether it’s training facilities, racing or recreation, we are passionate about the impact the agriculture industry contributes to the state’s economy,” said Hugh Weathers, South Carolina’s Commissioner of Agriculture.

“The equine industry is a dynamic blend of tourism, entertainment, agriculture and cultural heritage that plays a critical role in South Carolina’s identity and economy,” said UofSC SmartState Center Director Simon Hudson. “Effective knowledge development and sharing between academic researchers and industry professionals provides a competitive advantage for South Carolina that is critical for industry growth.” The interdisciplinary research team led by Hudson included professors from South Carolina’s College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management and the Darla Moore School of Business.

Highlights of the recently completed study:

- 73,600 horses in South Carolina (about 1% of total horses in the U.S.)
- Annual impact of \$1.9 billion, supporting 28,545 jobs and more than \$1 billion in labor income
- 524 horse owners and 88 horse-related facilities surveyed
- 17,963 Thoroughbred horses in South Carolina
- Nearly 26 percent of all horse-related expenditures are for recreation/pleasure

To view the equine study in its entirety, please click the following link –

<https://agriculture.sc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019EquineImpactStudy.pdf>

For more information on South Carolina agriculture, please visit agriculture.sc.gov

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