Horse purchases, horse husbandry and riding schools: key quality demands of “tomorrow’s customers”

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Agenda

- **Equestrian sports in Germany – research motivation**
  - quality uncertainty reported from riders

- **Quality demands towards**
  - horse purchase
  - horse husbandry
  - riding schools
Equestrian sport in Germany – research motivation

- since the 1960s,
  - the German horse sector has become more and more heterogeneous
  - the percentage of riders preferring nature- and leisure-time experiences in stead of tournaments has increased (and still does)
  - more people without horse-experiences or an agriculture background wish to learn how to ride and become horse owners

- for unexperienced people it is hard to estimate the quality of a horse, a housing system or a riding school

- quality uncertainty and dissatisfaction are emerging problems for both customers and suppliers
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„How easy / difficult do you find it to assess the quality in the following areas?“

- Bying small pieces of equipment: 86.2% very easy / easy, 13.8% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Horse husbandry: 70.8% very easy / easy, 29.2% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Competence of a riding instructor: 63.0% very easy / easy, 37.0% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Competence of a horse trainer: 47.1% very easy / easy, 52.9% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Bying big pieces of equipment: 35.9% very easy / easy, 64.1% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Competence of a vet: 35.5% very easy / easy, 64.5% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Horses standing for sale: 26.1% very easy / easy, 73.9% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Competence of a breeder: 20.6% very easy / easy, 79.4% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know
- Offerings of therapeutic riding: 7.7% very easy / easy, 92.3% undecided, 0% difficult / very difficult, 0% don't know

[n = 2,050]
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Quality demands of riders: horse purchase
“Which aspects are important for you when buying a horse?”

- Very important / important
- Undecided
- Not important / not at all important
- Don't know

Character of the horse: 97.04%

Behavior in daily handling: 89.76%

Pre-purchase inspection: 84.10%

Rearing conditions: 74.21%

Movement quality: 70.17%

Age: 69.45%

Price: 69.36%

Safety in every area: 53.82%

X-ray pictures: 53.19%

Training level: 48.61%

Breed: 41.78%

Pedigree: 30.64%

Success at tournaments: 13.57%

[n = 1,113]
Quality demands of riders: horse husbandry
„Which aspects are important for you when choosing a stable?“

- Availability of paddocks and pasture: very important / important 97.40%
- Type of housing system: very important / important 94.78%
- Health management: very important / important 91.56%
- Cleanliness of the stable: very important / important 85.17%
- Species-appropriate feeding: very important / important 85.12%
- Riding facilities: very important / important 81.90%
- Costs: very important / important 75.30%
- Many facilities for riders: very important / important 54.90%
- Specialisation of the stable: very important / important 30.40%

[n = 2,050]
Quality demands of riders: riding schools
Quality demands of riders: riding schools

- Totally agree / agree: 97.20%
- Undecided: 0.00%
- Don't agree / don't agree at all: 0.00%
- Don't know: 2.00%

The education of horse and rider is a very important topic.

- Totally agree / agree: 97.20%
- Undecided: 0.00%
- Don't agree / don't agree at all: 0.00%
- Don't know: 2.00%

For beginners in the equestrian sports it is difficult to recognize good riding schools.

- Totally agree / agree: 91.10%
- Undecided: 0.00%
- Don't agree / don't agree at all: 0.00%
- Don't know: 8.90%

I would appreciate a labelling of riding schools depending on their quality.

- Totally agree / agree: 69.30%
- Undecided: 3.00%
- Don't agree / don't agree at all: 28.00%
- Don't know: 0.00%

[n = 1,387]
Which aspects should be considered when labelling riding schools?

- Health status of horses: 98.70%
- Housing conditions of horses: 97.80%
- Daily workload of horses: 92.00%
- Condition of the equipment: 90.00%
- Training level of horses: 89.00%
- Range of services: 84.00%
- Riding facilities: 77.00%
- Qualification of instructors: 64.00%
- Tournament success of instructors: 21.00%

[n = 1,387]
Conclusion

- quality uncertainty occurs in different areas of the equestrian industry

- suppliers should be aware of both
  - information deficiencies of customers
  - and their demands regarding quality attributes

- uncertainty varies depending on the type of customer - especially newcomers to the equestrian sport may need understandable explanations, maybe even systematic quality labelling
Contact

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