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Final Report: Trade fair for equestrian sports surpasses expectations

spoga horse provides positive momentum for the equestrian sports year 2009

Over 4,000 trade visitors at the international sector platform in Cologne — strong demand from abroad — even more exhibition space and an extended range of exhibitors

On Monday, 9th February, spoga horse — the International Trade Fair for Equestrian Sports — came to a close with excellent results. From 7th to 9th February in Cologne, 257 exhibitors from 26 countries provided around 4,100 trade visitors with an extensive overview of the latest equestrian sports items on the market. "One year after its promising premiere, spoga horse spring 2009 established itself as the sector's most important international business forum," was the conclusion of Oliver P. Kuhrt, Executive Vice President, Koelnmesse GmbH. "Despite the unfavourable economic situation, the trade fair proved to be a positive engine of momentum for the coming year, featuring an extended range of exhibitors including all major players." For the first time, Hall 7 was opened in addition to Hall 8. With nearly 70 per cent of exhibitors and 51 per cent of visitors coming from abroad, spoga horse succeeded in strengthening its position as the international hub of the equestrian sports world. "International audience, participation of important decision-makers, the trade fair exceeded expectations" — these comments summed up the general impressions of many exhibitors.

In total, 79 suppliers from Germany and 178 suppliers from abroad presented their trends for horse and rider at the trade fair for equestrian sports. By integrating the ordering events of the Kassel-based Association of the Equestrian Sports Trade (IVR) and the Wiesbaden-based Euroriding purchasing association into the international spring trade fair, spoga horse once again presented itself as a one-stop shopping event.

BSI: sales levels are better than the overall economic mood



spoga horse spring
International Trade Fair for
Equestrian Sports

Cologne 2009
07th to 9th February

www.spogahorse.com

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According to the conceptual sponsor of spoga horse — the Federal Association of the German Sports Goods Industry (BSI) — spoga horse spring clearly demonstrated its importance as a purchasing platform for the coming green season and the important autumn business in the German and European equestrian sports trade. “The current market situation is still better than the general mood of the economy; in view of this fact, the trade fair went better than most exhibitors had expected,” concluded Désirée Derin-Holzapfel, President of the BSI. The market for equestrian sports articles in Germany and Europe is brand oriented and will grow further, although at a slower pace. Export continues to be a strong pillar supporting the German equestrian sports suppliers. With the exception of the US market, which nearly collapsed due to the financial crisis, turnover in the traditional equestrian sports countries beyond Germany’s borders, including Austria, Switzerland, France and Poland, has remained stable.

According to a study carried out by the German Riding Club (FN), the more than 1.7 million active horse riders in Germany (depending on whether or not they belong to a riding organisation) spend on average between €239 and €168 per month. In addition, riders in Germany spend significantly more money in the second half of the year on wind and weather-proof products for horse and rider than in the first six months.

Trend topic — safety

Thanks to the suppliers' numerous innovations, spoga horse has become the leading platform for new products and the trend barometer for the equestrian sports equipment sector. The suppliers presented new developments and innovations in all product groups — from grooming equipment, fittings, saddlery goods and saddles, riding helmets and clothing, right through to accessories and services. Quality is still what counts: the manufacturers rely on top-quality materials and first-class processing. The topic of safety is becoming increasingly important and was also the focus of spoga horse. Although helmets and riding caps are not mandatory, among recreational riders there is a great demand for head protection. Numerous new developments were presented here in Cologne. The new-generation helmets meet the highest safety standards, are made of ultra light high-tech materials, can be individually and comfortably adjusted to any head size and feature temperature regulated interiors. The rider’s head isn’t the only part of the body

that can be equipped with special protective clothing. New body protectors and special safety vests will provide protection against injuries for professional and recreational riders.

The latest equestrian fashion collections presented at spoga horse included bright colours like orange, pink and purple, as well as the trend colour brown — especially in the shades “choco”, “toffee” and “noisette”. Manufacturers are also constantly developing their products for horses. Gaiters with a ventilated outer shell, caparisons in fashionable colours, new therapy systems especially for horses and horse blankets with silver fibres were presented to the trade visitors at the fair.

The Centre of Expertise for Equestrian Sports was a popular attraction Located in the heart of Hall 8, the first-ever Centre of Expertise for Equestrian Sports provided the trade dealers with information and know-how. Here, companies that provide special services and products gave tips and ideas on shop design, presentation of advertising materials and merchandising systems. High marks were also given to the job exchange, where for the first time spoga horse exhibitors could present their current vacancies and further training programme offerings. Experts from the industry and trade also settled on the “red sofa” to respond to questions from the sector publication *Equitrends*. Topics that were discussed included opportunities and risks related to online retailing, legal aspects of selling saddles, and practical tips for the decoration and design of retail areas.

For the second time the trade magazine *Reitsport-Markt* presented the prize for the “best specialist retailer” at spoga horse. A jury of renowned sector experts evaluated the participating retailers according to criteria including product line, customer advice, presentation and special sales campaigns and marketing. In addition, “mystery shoppers” for equestrian sports visited the retailers incognito. In the end, the award trophy for the best specialist retailer of 2008 went to the Reitsport Live company of Konstanz. The trophy was presented by Hinrich Romeike, who won two gold medals for Germany in the Eventing competition in Beijing in 2008.

spoga horse spring 2009 in numbers:

At spoga horse spring, a total of 257 companies from 26 countries, including 69 per cent from abroad, exhibited on a gross exhibition space of 23,600 square metres. The participants included 77 exhibitors and two additionally represented companies from Germany, as well as 174 exhibitors and four additionally represented companies from abroad. Taking into account estimates for the last day of the fair, spoga horse spring attracted 4,100 trade visitors, including 51 per cent from abroad.*

Next dates:

spoga horse autumn, from 6th to 8th September 2009, parallel to
"spoga" – the International Trade Fair for Sport, Camping and Garden Lifestyle.
spoga horse spring, 6th to 8th February 2010

* * All figures calculated in accordance with the guidelines of the Society for Voluntary Control of Trade Fair and Exhibition Statistics (FKM).

Further information and photo material is available at
<http://www.spogahorse.com> .