

Can Maryland's Breeding Industry Survive COVID-19?

While many lesson stables are booming with waitlists, other aspects of Maryland's horse industry have suffered due to state and county COVID-19 restrictions. In an attempt to measure the state of the Maryland's breeding industry, *The Equiery* sent out a survey to stallion and broodmare owners. Overall, the results and 2021 predictions look positive!

STALLION SURVEY

Q. Are you standing a breeding stallion for 2021?

A. 80% of those who took our survey said that they are standing a stallion for 2021 with 20% saying no.

Of those who said they are no longer standing a stallion in 2021, all replied "other" and did not give a specific reason. In addition to "other," the survey gave the following options for those who clicked they were no longer standing a stallion: stallion no longer producing, lost interest in breeding, lack of funds, and COVID-19 pandemic.

Maryland's 2021 stallion lineup looks healthy, with diversity of breeds including Warmbloods, Thoroughbreds, Hackney Ponies, Welsh Ponies, Standardbreds and more. For a full list of Maryland stallions, please see our online Stallion Directory at equiery.com.

Q. Are your bookings similar to pre-COVID-19 years?

A. 50% of those who took the survey said that so far, their bookings are in line with pre-pandemic years. 25% reported smaller bookings to date and another 25% clicked the "too soon to tell" option,

Q. Are you concerned at all that the current COVID-19 pandemic might impact the breeding industry?

A. Overall, the responses we received were positive with people saying that so far, they have not seen much effect. Below are a few responses.

"Yes, I have already noticed a decline in horse related purchases like lessons and leasing and I have not been approached for one booking yet. Last year at this time we had four bookings."

"I think in the pony industry, probably little impact."

"Absolutely – sales and breeding remained stronger this year than anticipated but [I'm] hesitant to assume that will continue."

"Yes. It has impacted the rest of our business tremendously and we expect it to similarly impact the business in 2021."

Q. Where do you advertise your stallion?

A. The answers to the above question were interesting as the survey offered a variety of print and web options. There was no overwhelmingly preferred method, so to speak, with 31% stating they primarily advertise on their own stallion/farm website and 23% saying they primarily use social media as an advertising platform.

Another 23% clicked "other" stating they either don't advertise at all or hang flyers/business cards at local feed stores and stables.

Interestingly, these advertising strategies do not match up with the places broodmare owners look for their stallions. See below in the Broodmare Survey results.

BROODMARE SURVEY

Q. Do you plan to breed your mare in 2021?

A. An overwhelming 88.9% of those who took our survey said that yes, they do plan to breed their mare(s) in 2021.

Of the 11.1% who said no, 50% credited lack

of funds as the reason while 50% stated "other" reasons.

Q. If you are breeding your mare in 2021, what stallion(s) are you considering breeding to?

A. We are happy to report that the majority of people who responded to our survey listed stallions standing in Maryland as their answer to this question.

The most popular breed of stallion listed was the Thoroughbred with 50% listing Maryland stallions and 50% listing out of state stallions (Florida and Kentucky). Other breeds represented were Hackney Ponies, Appaloosa, Welsh Ponies, Standardbreds.

One person replied they are having frozen semen shipped from a European stallion.

Several broodmare owners stated they plan to breed to the stallion(s) standing at their farms.

Q. How do you find a stallion to breed to?

A. While most stallion owners stated they advertise only through their own websites, the majority of broodmare owners said they find their stallions through word of mouth (25%). Another 25% stated they only breed to stallions they own or stand at the same farm where their broodmare resides.

Only 16% of broodmare owners actually look at stallion websites and 16% said they look at social media sites.

Interestingly, more broodmare owners look at print publications to find their stallions than stallion owners reported using print advertising.



If you are a broodmare or stallion owner and would like to share your 2021 breeding plans, please email editor@equiery.com