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## SYSTEM OF ACTIVE STABLING FOR HORSES

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### ABSTRACT

Horses are animals, which are naturally accustomed to all day movement and grazing with their herd. But the typical modern stabling of horses usually looks like so that a horse is 23 hours per day in a box alone. The welfare of horses is very bad in such case, but it is very comfortable for its keepers. Now, a new technology is available on market presenting a compromise for both sides - for the horses and for the human. 'System of active stabling' allows the horses to move freely in paddock and stable area. Each horse has a chip which communicates with the sensors placed on the requisite point and it also sends information to the operating computer. Feeding is done by feeding stations, in which a number and composition of the feed can be set for each individual animal. Thus, breeder has always a review available of how much his horse walked or how much of feed ate. And he has the option to direct horse choice, too.

**Key words:** horse, active stabling, welfare, feeding station.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's time, welfare of dairy cows is often better than in the case of the horses. Cows in free stalls can to move freely, maintain social contacts, eat or rest whenever they want and if milking is carry on by automatic milking robot, then we can say that they had "flexible working time". But when we look at the typical stabling of horses, it usually looks like so that a horse is 23 hours per day in a box alone (in the worst case even tethered in a stall) and it is taken by its rider to the hippodrome for one hour. If it is lucky and it can walk into the paddock, but it has a strictly defined "timetable", usually there. It is the best thing you can make for your horse – to give it all day free movement at the pasture. More and more breeders become aware of this fact, most of them succumb to their own comfort usually, when they knows that whenever they will come into the stables, they will find their horse to wait for them at its place - just to clean, to gear and to ride. As well as, people oppose to longterm stay of horse with the herd in the paddock because then they loses track of what feed ration ingest by their pet actually. They are afraid that the expensive granules were eaten by the extraneous pony and that (perhaps due to the more dominant individuals in the group) their horses did not had enough hay.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

"System of active stabling" allows the horses to move freely. To make the system function optimally, is necessary to have in addition to stable a space where horses can move and where the feeding points may be placed, watering places, etc. Each horse has a chip (on foot or in a mane) which communicates with the sensors placed on the requisite point and, of course, it also sends information to the operating computer. Thus, breeder has always a review available of how much his horse walked or how much of feed ate.

Feeding is done by a "Compident horse" stations, in which a number and composition of the feed can be set for each individual animal (it is possible to combine up to eight loose and one liquid feed). An animal gets (or does not get) a food according to a set parameters after entering to the feeding station. The natural position of the cattle-bin near the floor leads to the fact that horses receive the feed with bowed head and they do not gollup - this has an impact on the natural and smooth function of the digestive tract. In another place of the paddock, there is a station with a roughage placed (it is possible to use a bales or a loose material), waterhole, housing area, pasture, etc. Thanks to the area segmentation and a distance of the individual "points of interest" horses are forced into a natural activity that is similar to their behavior in the nature. But abreast with it, their owner has the option to direct horse choice, because animals must go through a selective computer-controlled points. For example, during the spring an access can be restricted to a rich and nutritious pasture for horses with a tendency to be fatty and allowed them to an area where only a hay is available instead. In the contrast, there will be an access granted for old horses or for individuals in a bad condition (to those rich and nutritious pastures) for which is such grazing desirable. Thus, feeding horses and other activities are controlled without the animals being forced to do something violently. It is proved that horses in the "System of active stabling" walked at average of 10–15km, which is significantly higher in comparison with the classic egress. Basically, it is the equivalent of the popular "paddock paradise", but system of active stabling has the advantage that although the horse decides for himself what it will do, the breeder can peacefully regulate its activity and also have an overview.

Moreover, a constituent advantage of the system is a fact that it reduces the workforce, which leads to a better working effectiveness. For example, in a stable in Austria, the only stable-girl manages daily care of thirty horses in three hours approximately, without her being revised and horses being suffered. Thank to this measurement, practically, horses care of themselves and so, the keeper may work especially with a cleaning and with replenishing reservoir in the feeding station, but first and foremost, he can also oversee the operation of the system. The saving of the feed is great, too – because there is no undue waste. Sophisticated feeding box "Compident horse" won an award for innovation at last year's Equitana exhibition.

## **CONCLUSION**

"System of active stabling" contributing to a health and well-being of the horses, filling their natural needs while reducing demands on a labor and on a feeding and leads to a better working effectiveness. Acquisition price of this system is no higher than the classic boxing stables for 20 horses. Innovative stabling system is already quite common in Austria with several dozen "active" stables, or in German and Switzerland – there the completed projects exceed 100.