

The Vermont Horse Council, in partnership with the UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs), engaged the UVM Center for Rural Studies to conduct this economic contribution analysis of equine ownership and enterprises in Vermont. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the cost of equine ownership in Vermont, and equine ownership's role and impact in the Vermont economy. This report focuses primarily on equine ownership and peripherally on related enterprises. A previous study of the economic contributions of equine events within the state (completed by this same partnership in April 2019) found spending by out-of-state parties participating in Vermont equine events generated an estimated \$15,462,850 in total direct spending and \$21,680,981 in local economic activity over one competition season.

The results of the current study demonstrate that Vermont equine owners have a measurable impact on the Vermont state economy, and that they make considerable purchases outside of Vermont to support their equine as well. The results also suggest that Vermont's horse owners come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and the majority own their horses simply for pleasure and non-competitive riding. Key findings of this study include:

- The survey collected 700 responses with 400 fully completed responses representing 2,334 equine—an estimated 27% of the state's total horse population of 8,500, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.
- The median number of horses owned by respondents was two.
- Tick-borne disease and related health implications for equines, access to trails and open land for riding, and traffic/road sharing issues are some of the top concerns of equine owners.
- The most frequently cited suggestion for how to improve communication within the equine community was a centralized website where equine enthusiasts could find information (20%).
- Twenty eight percent of respondents (191 people) reported that they owned, operated, and/or earned income from an equine-related business located within Vermont in 2019. Of those enterprises, 51% (97 people) reported that a registered tradename, LLC, or corporation existed for that equine business.
- For 2019, equine owners reported expenditures that generated a total of \$45,635,922 in local economic activity, including \$27,429,481 in the support industries for agriculture and forestry, vet services, and wholesale trade sectors; and \$6,940,352 in related sectors.
- Equine owner expenditures supported 652 jobs in the Vermont economy, with 525 of those jobs primarily in support industries for agriculture and forestry, vet services, and wholesale trade sectors.
- Every dollar contributed in value added (defined in more detail on page 13) in support industries for agriculture and forestry, vet services, and wholesale trade sectors, such as wages and profit, due to equine ownership, adds an additional \$0.69 to the Vermont economy.
- For every job in the support industries for agriculture and forestry, vet services, and wholesale trade sectors, 0.24 additional jobs are supported in the Vermont economy.