

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Equine health at the heart of a new joint technology unit

**The French Horse and Riding Institute (IFCE) and ANSES have set up a joint technology unit (UMT) to strengthen their shared research on horse health. Its work will focus on three main areas: an equine census and monitoring of mortality, several risks associated with parasites and pathogens in the horse environment, and infectious diseases affecting reproduction.**

The SABOT UMT (its name comes from the French for Equine health and welfare – sector organisation and traceability) aims to improve knowledge of certain health risks and diseases affecting the equine sector. Set up in early 2022 for a period of five years, it will be organised around research projects conducted jointly by ANSES and the IFCE. Some of these have already begun, while others are still being explored.

#### **Long-standing partners**

*"The IFCE and ANSES have had strong links for many years,"* explains José-Carlos Valle-Casuso, manager of the SABOT UMT and head of the Pathophysiology and Epidemiology of Equine Diseases (PhEED) Unit at the ANSES Laboratory for Animal Health. *"The UMT's research areas build on the joint work already carried out."* For example, the two organisations are already working together on the health of breeding horses, and on ways to manage outbreaks of regulated diseases that are transmissible during reproduction.

The UMT will be based on ANSES's premises in Goustranville, Normandy, while the IFCE's Le Pin site will also provide animals, equestrian facilities and a breeding centre.

## **Monitoring of the equine population, parasites and infectious reproductive diseases**

Disease prevention is dependent on a good knowledge of the French equine population, and yet its size, composition and geographical distribution are still poorly understood. The first area of research therefore aims to improve the traceability of horses and the monitoring of their mortality, with the help of existing databases and monitoring systems.

The second area, devoted to environmental risks, has two components. The first will focus on parasites, with the aim of reducing the use of antiparasitic products. This involves both prevention of infestation by digestive parasites and better targeting of horses needing deworming. Limiting the use of antiparasitics will help prevent the development of resistance and the release of residues into the environment.

The second component will look at bioaerosols, which are particles that can contain pathogenic bacteria and fungi. These contribute to the spread of certain equine diseases and can also have consequences for human health. The goal will be to measure the exposure levels of horses, riders and equestrian professionals in order to identify the situations that pose the greatest risks.

Lastly, the UMT's final research area will be the study of infectious diseases affecting reproduction. The aim will be to improve monitoring and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, as well as those that cause abortions and genetic abnormalities.

The UMT's various research projects will benefit the entire equine sector, and results will be rapidly shared with professionals.

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**The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)** provides public decision-makers with the scientific benchmarks needed to protect humans and the environment against health risks. It studies, assesses and monitors all the chemical, microbiological and physical risks to which humans, animals and plants are exposed, thereby helping the public authorities take the necessary measures, including in the event of a health crisis. A national agency working in the public interest, ANSES comes under the responsibility of the French Ministries of Health, the Environment, Agriculture, Labour and Consumer Affairs.

**The French Horse and Riding Institute (IFCE)** is the public body that supports the professional development of the equine sector. It arose from the merger of two entities in 2010: the *Haras National* (National Stud Farms) and the *Cadre Noir de Saumur* training centre. It is under the dual supervision of the Ministries of Agriculture and Sport.

The IFCE is recognised as the reference technical institute for the equine sector. It specialises in producing and promoting knowledge of horses and their various uses in all their dimensions: genetic, agricultural, environmental, economic, social, sporting, leisure and animal welfare.