

Sonoma State University
School of Business and Economics

Equestrian Society and Activities in Sonoma County in 2004

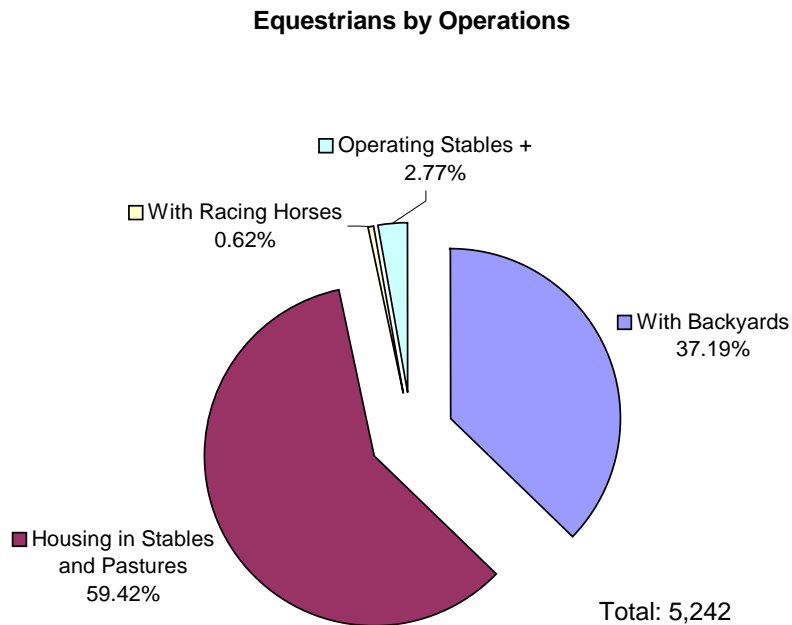
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Equestrian Society and Activities in Sonoma County in 2004

In the year 2004, there were 5,401 equestrian ownership households in Sonoma County. See Figure 1. One or more of their 12,907 family members were involved in horse related activities. Among their members, female adults represented the largest group (50%), followed by male adults, and children. See Figure 2.

Figure 1



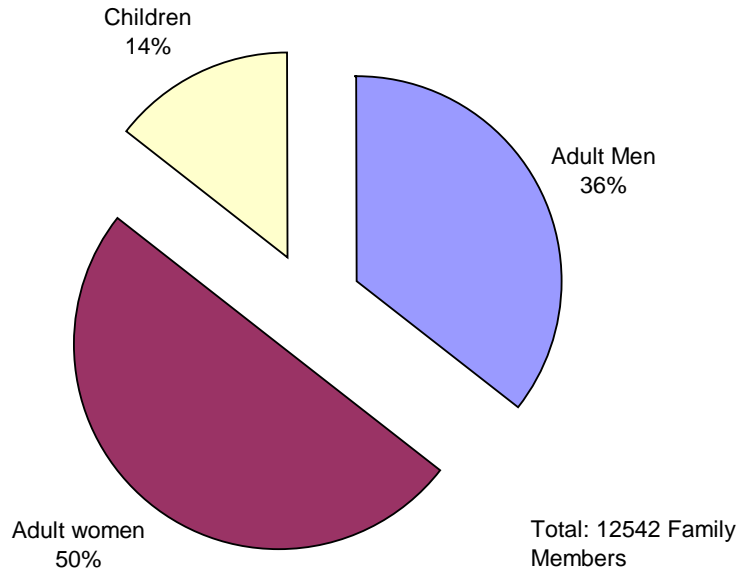
Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

In addition to household members, there are friends, neighbors and workers who are concerned with and care for horses. The approximate number of horse-involved individuals for Sonoma County is 30,000.

<p style="text-align: center;">β</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Horse-involved Individuals</p>	<p>Figure 12,907 family members who participate in horse related activities, is an underestimation of the total of persons involved with horses in Sonoma County. It does not include what is called “horse husbands, horse boy/girl friends, and horse neighbors,” and other relatives of horse owners. Equestrians report that when there is a horse in the family, extended family members have some level of involvement in horse care and attendance at equestrian events, in vacation horse care, driving the truck and trailer, handling manure and issues of readiness to ride.</p> <p>There are those categories of "I want to own a horse; I used to own a horse; I will own a horse; my relative owns a horse and is performing here today." When a horse owner takes a vacation or travels for reasons other than horse activities, these "horse-involved individuals" will visit the barn and administer interim horse care for their related horse owner.</p> <p>Further, we need to consider direct industry vendors and employees of those vendors. Their income is dependent on horses, and they are required by their trade to be experienced and knowledgeable in equestrian matters.</p> <p>Based on conversations with expert opinions, we could state that in Sonoma County there are about 30,000 "horse-involved individuals.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>A Conversation with Ed Weber, an equestrian in Sonoma County, July 2005.</i></p>
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Figure 2

Equestrian Household Members by Gender and Age - Sonoma County 2004

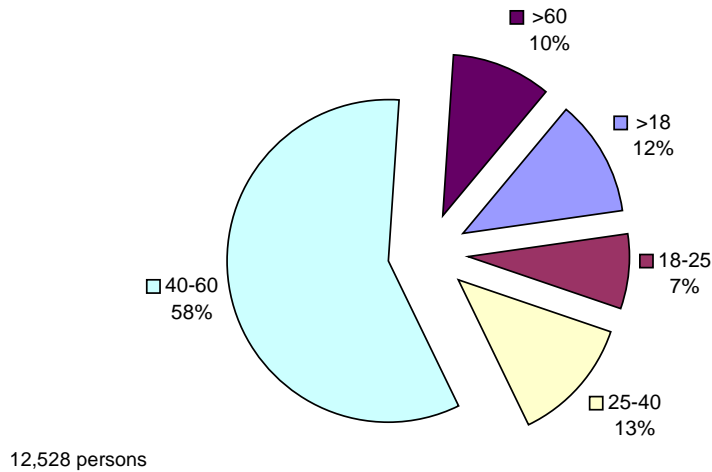


Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

These family members represented a wide range of age groups (see Figure 3), but the most noteworthy was the 40-60 year old group.

Figure 3

Equestrians by Age Groups - Sonoma County 2004

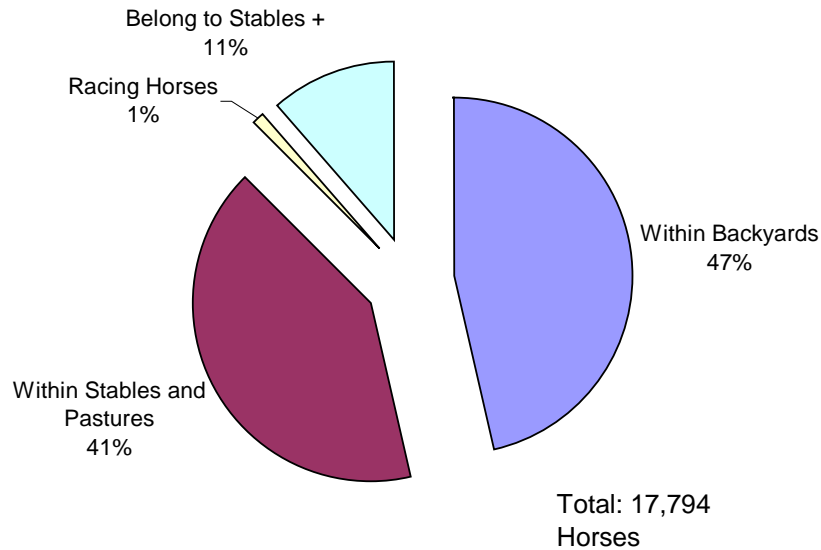


Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

Sonoma equestrian households control 17,794 horses, which they house in their backyards or at-home facilities, or in leased space in stables and pastures (see Figure 4). The largest group of equestrians (47%) keeps horses in their own backyards or at-home facilities, followed by those who house them in commercial stables and pastures (41%). Commercial stables, in turn, control 11% of horses, and some of them are used for leasing in recreational areas and resorts.

Figure 4

Horses by Operations - Sonoma County 2004

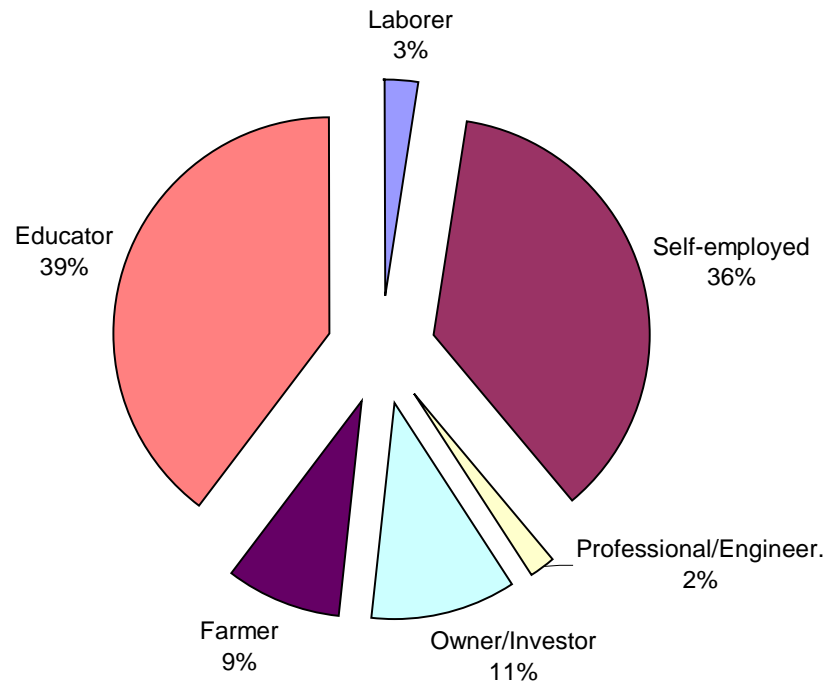


Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

Heads of equestrian households work in a variety of occupations. See Figure 5. The most important occupational groups are educators (such as teachers, professors, librarians, school administrators and others), health care employees, realtors and self-employed workers who operate a variety of small businesses and crafts. Other equestrians are business owners and investors, professionals (from medical doctors to engineers), farmers, and a small percentage of laborers and farm workers.

Figure 5

Equestrian Heads by Occupations

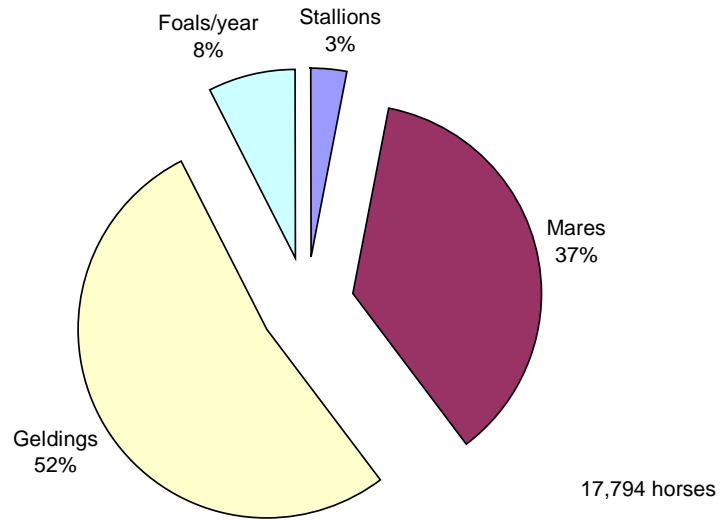


Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

The present distribution of horses by type (Figure 6), include large groups of geldings and mares, followed by much smaller groups of foals and stallions.

Figure 6

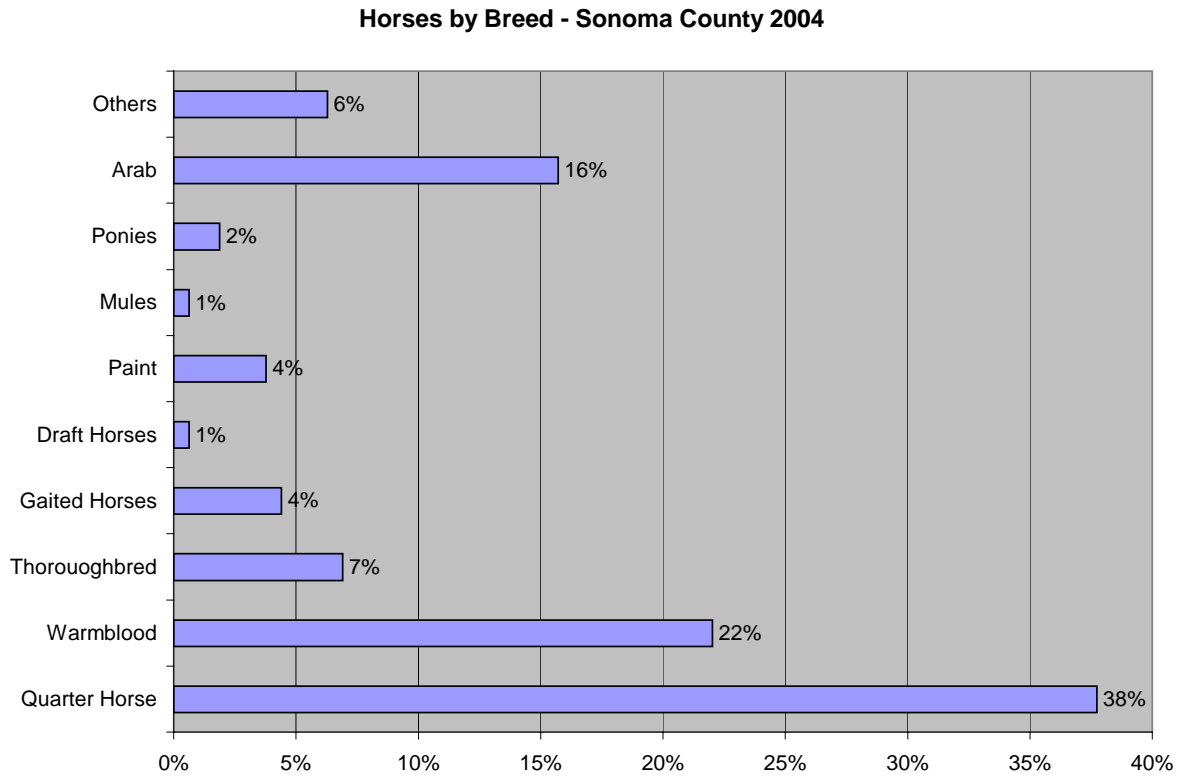
Horses by Type - Sonoma County 2004



Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

Regarding the distribution of Sonoma County horses by breed (See Figure 7), notice the importance of Quarter, Warmblood and Arab horses. In 2004, they represented 75% of the horse stock of the County.

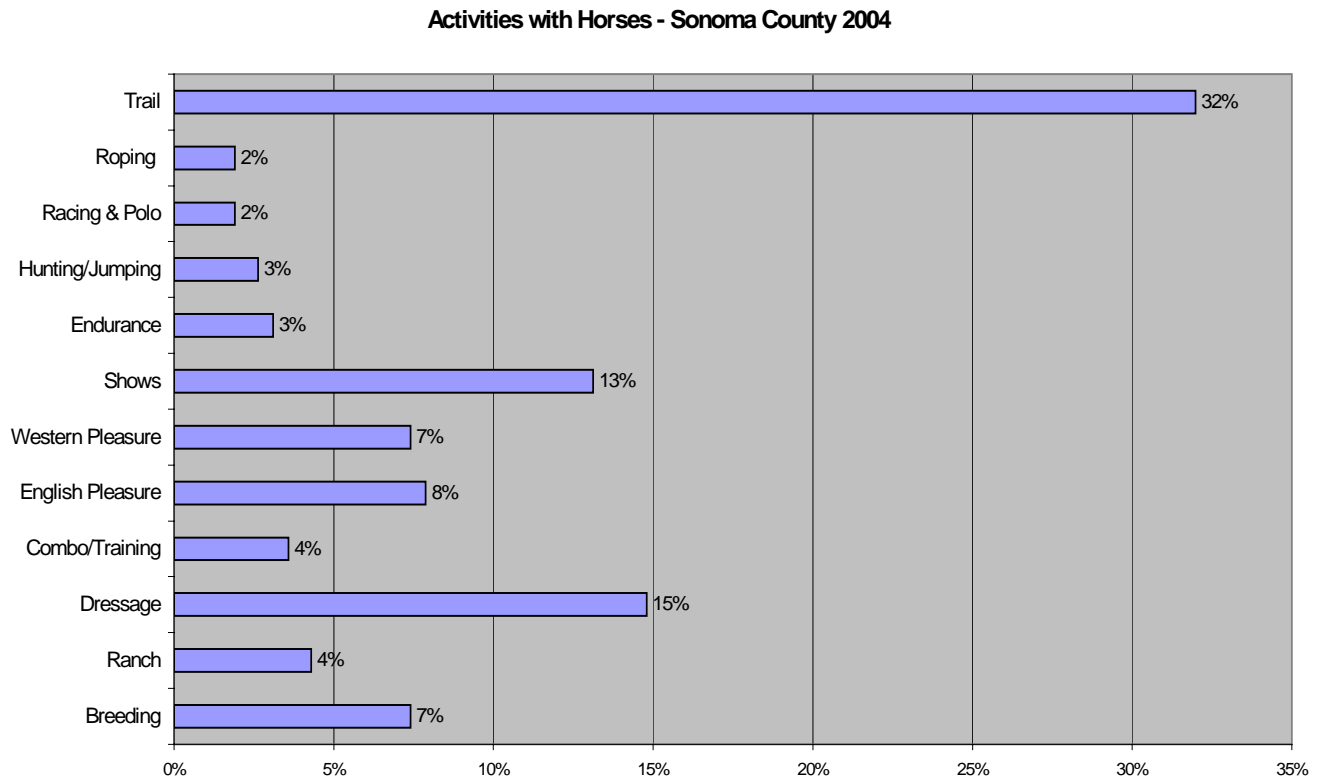
Figure 7



Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

With the above horses, equestrians engage themselves in a variety of activities (See Figure 8), where trail riding and showing predominate. Some horses are used for commercial activities such as ranching (say, farming, training, and others), and others for breeding.

Figure 8

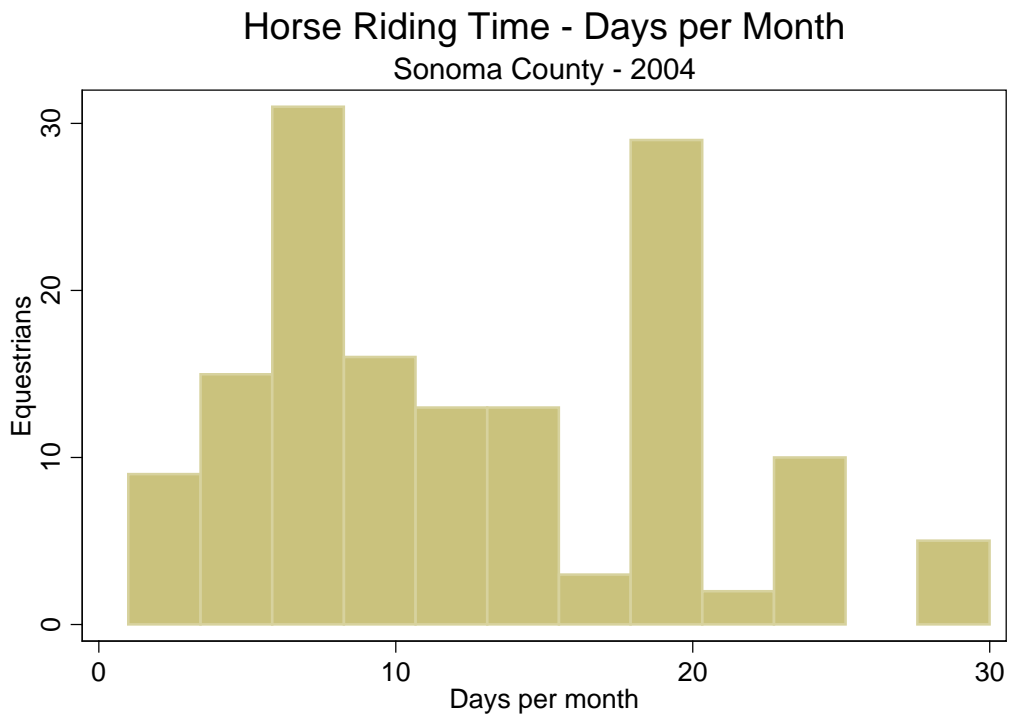


Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

Sonoma County equestrians spend, on average (mean), 12 days a month and 2.5 hours per day riding their horses. That is, on average, they ride 30 hours per month. See Figures 9-10. This however is not a uniform behavior--there exist distributions around those means. For example, an important group rides more than 20 days per month,

including those who ride every day of the month. On the other hand, there are equestrians who ride very few days per month¹.

Figure 9



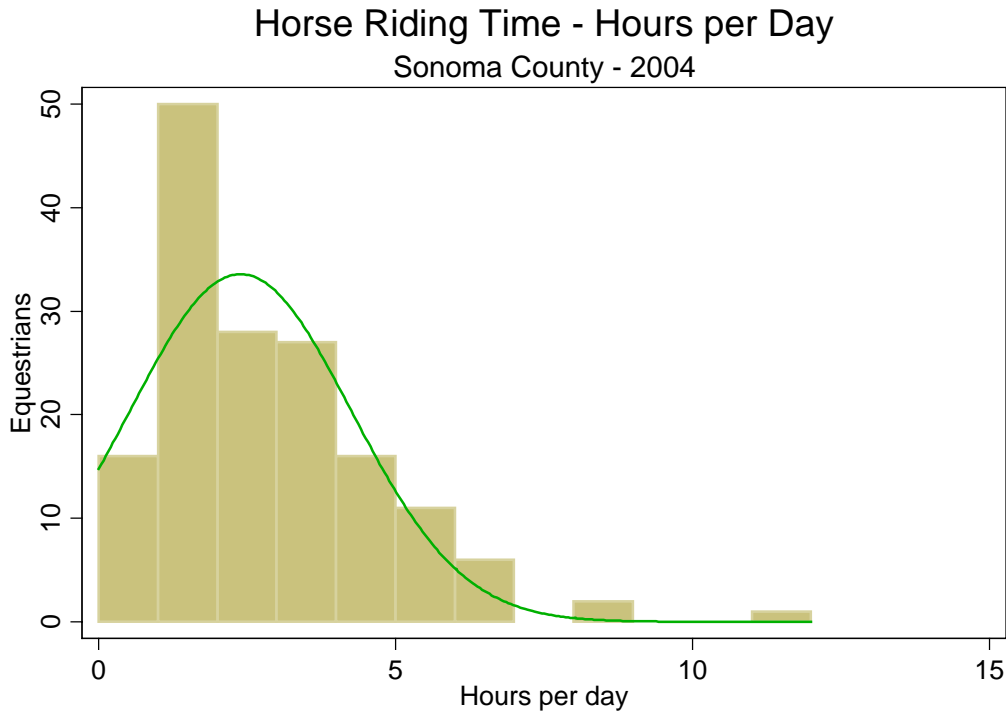
Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

Regarding the number of hours that equestrians ride per day, the typical time is one to two hours per day, but there are some equestrians who ride five or more hours per

¹ It will require further research to determine if this is a sample from a normal distribution, or rather from a

day (See Figure 10). There is a very small group of equestrians who ride many hours per day, such as trainers in commercial operations².

Figure 10



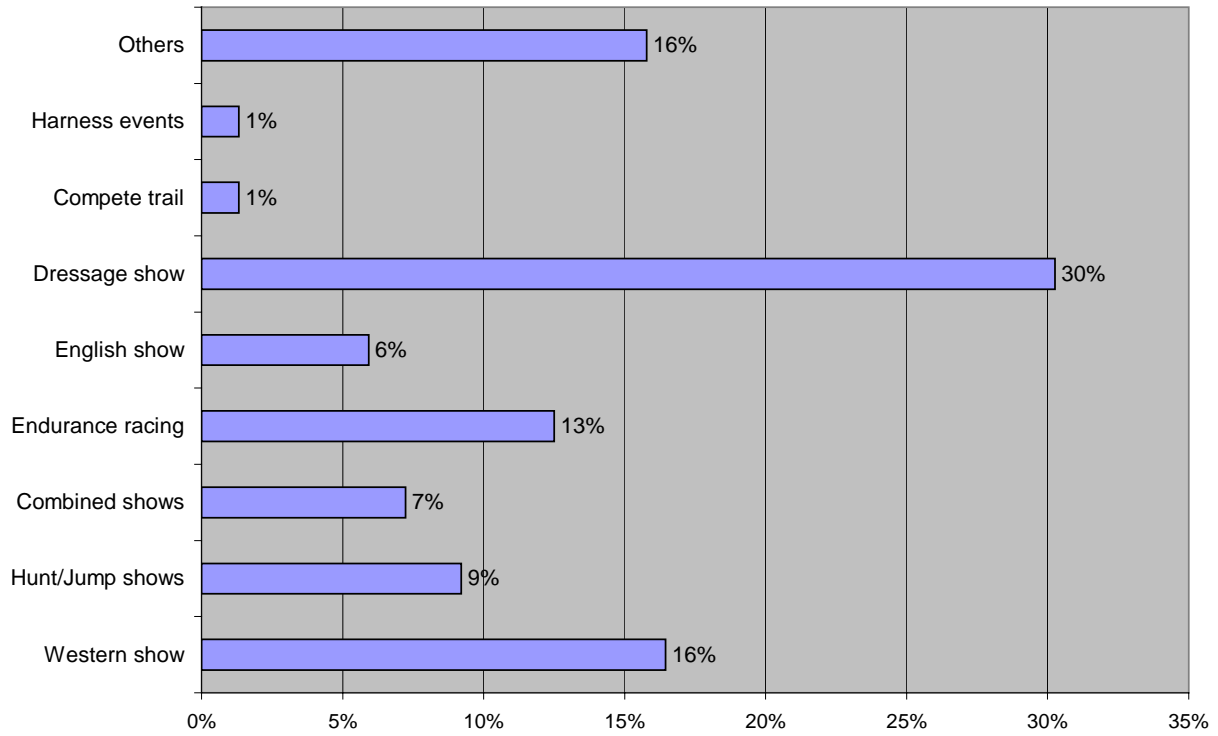
Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

The other important activity with horses is competition in shows. In 2004, equestrian showed their horses around 5016 times, within and outside Sonoma County. Figure 11, depicts the relative importance of each type of show. Competitions in dressage and Western shows were very important.

bimodal distribution.

Figure 11

Times and Activities that Equestrians Compete in Shows - Sonoma County 2004



Source: Sonoma Horse Study, 2004

² It could also be possible that the class "Riding more than 10 hours per day" includes over-reporting.