



Economic Impact of the California Horse Industry

2024 Report by the American Horse Council

The California Horse Power Coalition is proud to report the results of the American Horse Council's 2023 Economic Impact Study. The California breakout study surveyed horse owners and suppliers throughout the state to determine the industry's impact on the California economy.

ECONOMY

From the direct impact of caring for California's estimated **477,426 horses** and spending on events and recreation, to the ripple effects on other sectors of the economy, the equine industry is an enduring economic driver for the state of California, seeing tremendous growth since the previous study was conducted in 2018.

Total Value to CA Economy: **\$11.6 Billion**
39.8% increase from \$8.3 Billion

Direct Contribution to CA GDP: **\$6.5 Billion**
44.4% increase from \$4.5 Billion

Total Employment: **132,496 Jobs**
14.7% increase from 115,474

Direct Employment: **93,467 Jobs**
20.3% increase from 77,703

POPULARITY

Horses are incredibly popular in the State of California. **30.48% of households in 2022 reported having an enthusiast in their home:** someone who participates in or attends horse events and activities. This holds steady from the 2018 study, which reported 30.5% households with a horse enthusiast.

- California Households with a horse enthusiast: **4.1 Million**
- Household income for 21% of horse enthusiasts: **\$50,000–\$75,000**
- Participants under the age of 18: **38%**

The equine industry generates tourism to California through competitions, sporting events, recreational events and more. In 2022, individuals are estimated to have spent **\$4.2 billion in California on travel, dining, and lodging** while participating in and attending these events.

- Total Tourism Impact: **\$6.1 Billion**
- Direct Tourism Impact: **\$3.3 Billion**

HORSE RACING

California is one of the largest horse racing hubs in the United States, with nine racecourses across the state.

The state has been selected as the host site for the Breeders' Cup World Championships, which began in 1984, at Santa Anita Park and Del Mar for 12 of the last 18 years, including this year and 2025.

Last year, California horse racing saw **\$136 Million in purses**, with **total handle of \$3.2 Billion**. Employment rose significantly to 24,860 direct jobs, up from 17,798 in 2018.

- Total Economic Impact: **\$2.5 Billion**
- Direct Economic Impact: **\$1.5 Billion**

- Total Employment: **36,890 Jobs**
- Direct Employment: **24,860 Jobs**

RECREATION & LAND PRESERVATION

Recreational activities – including horseback riding lessons, trail riding, and more – foster individual relationships with horses and encourage the preservation of trails and public lands through associations that support these activities and their associated environmental conservation work.

- **1.3 Million** California households who participated in trail riding
- **816,000+** California households who took riding lessons

Additionally, the horse industry plays a significant role in preserving agricultural land.

- **87%**: California trail riders who utilized public land
- **48%**: California horse owners report owning or leasing a farm, barn, or stable.
- **410,000 acres**: California land owned or leased for horse-related uses

EQUINE WELFARE

The California equine industry cares for horses throughout their lives. A network of 123 animal welfare organizations across the state – including aftercare organizations, equine rescues, and equine sanctuaries – are dedicated to the rehabilitation, re-training, and/or retirement of the state's estimated 477,000+ horses.

- Total Economic Impact: **\$14.7 Million**
- Direct Economic Impact: **\$8.6 Million**

- Employee Compensation: **\$4.8 Million**
- Total Employment: **196**
- Direct Employment: **150**



CALIFORNIA HORSE INDUSTRY

2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT



\$11.6
BILLION

Total Value to the California Economy

132,496

Total California Jobs



93,467

Industry Workers



\$6.5
BILLION
Direct Contribution to GDP



410,000

Acres of California Land Owned or Leased for Horse-Related Purposes



477,426

Horses in California

California Residents who Volunteer Their Time with Horses:

220,000



4.1
MILLION

California Households with Horse Enthusiasts



CALIFORNIA RACING SECTOR

2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT



\$2.5
BILLION

Total Value to the California Economy

36,890

Total California Jobs



24,860

Industry Workers



\$1.5
BILLION
Direct Contribution to GDP

\$136
MILLION

Total Purses



\$3.2
BILLION

Total Handle

816,000

Horseback Riding Lessons Taken in California



\$100
MILLION

Generated by Breeders' Cup Championships in local economy



CALIFORNIA HORSE INDUSTRY

2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT



COMPETITION SECTOR

\$2.1
BILLION

Total Value to California Economy

\$1.2
BILLION

Direct Contribution to California GDP

25,278

Total Jobs Supported

18,081

Industry Workers

RECREATION SECTOR

\$2.2
BILLION

Total Value to California Economy

\$1.2
BILLION

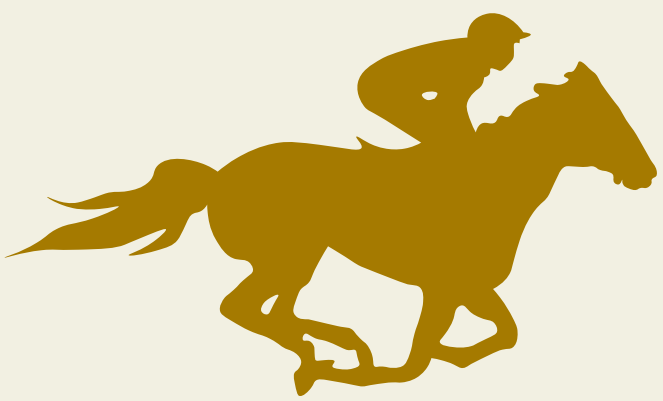
Direct Contribution to California GDP

25,922

Total Jobs Supported

18,410

Industry Workers



RACING SECTOR

36,890

Total Jobs Supported

24,860

Industry Workers

\$2.5
BILLION

Total Value to California Economy

\$1.5
BILLION

Direct Contribution to California GDP

RESCUES & SANCTUARIES

\$14.7
MILLION

Total Value to California Economy

\$8.6
MILLION

Direct Contribution to California GDP

196

Total Jobs Supported

150

Industry Workers

EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY

\$42.5
MILLION

Total Value to California Economy

\$30.3
MILLION

Direct Contribution to California GDP

673

Total Jobs Supported

579

Industry Workers