

### Group management in active stabling

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In active stabling the horses live in a group and are in constant social contact with their equine companions. Separate, dedicated areas define the concept. The key element of active stabling is the automatic feeding of hard feed, minerals and forage. This ensures the correct level of feeding and encourages the horses to increase their level of activity. The organisation of the dedicated areas in active stabling is dependent on a number of factors, such as the given facilities, the planned group sizes and the commercial and working aspects.

The ongoing acquisition of knowledge from science and research, practical experience from the horse industry, and the relevant national guidelines and conditions for keeping horses, form the basis for the planning of active stabling.

For example, in Germany, an important contribution to the further development of the active stabling concept is coming from the current research by Dr Zeitler-Feicht and her team into automatic feeding systems and the arrangement of areas to lie down in the quiet space. Together they run around 500 active stabling facilities, and they made a significant contribution to the 2009 guidelines for horse husbandry in the animal protection regulations.

At the ISEM 2012, practical examples of group management in active stabling will be presented. The aim of the participants is to achieve a continuing improvement in horse husbandry, combining the requirements of animal protection with the uses of the horses.

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