

Economic and Social Impact of the Horse Racing Industry in BC

Prepared for the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General |
Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General’s (PSSG) Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) regulates live horse racing in BC. As part of a review to broaden its understanding of the economic and social contributions of the industry, GPEB engaged MNP LLP (MNP) to undertake an economic impact analysis as well as an evaluation of the sector’s social impacts.

Key Findings



The number of race days and horses is declining. Between 2019 and 2024 the number of race days at Hastings Racecourse has declined by 16 percent and the number of thoroughbreds has declined by 41 percent. At Fraser Downs Racetrack, the number of race day has declined by 10 percent and the number of standardbreds has declined by 36 percent.



Horse racing has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and there will be fewer BC-bred horses in the near term. In 2020 and 2021 facility closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant declines in the number of race days, live races and the number of horses that competed in races. While there has been some recovery, racing activity remains below pre-pandemic levels. This is affecting breeding activity which will reduce the number of BC bred horses eligible for racing beginning in 2025.



Horse racing provides low barrier employment. There are a range of positions in horse racing for which most required skills are developed through on-the-job training. As a result, the industry provides meaningful employment for individuals who may face challenges in securing traditional employment.

Additionally, Hastings Racecourse offers on-site accommodation that is available to industry participants, providing stability and reducing commuting challenges for backstretch workers. This accommodation is a significant benefit for many workers who may otherwise be at a higher risk of housing insecurity.

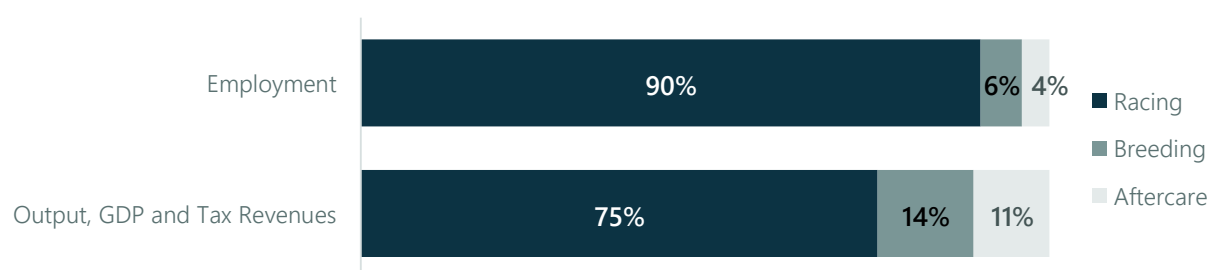
Economic Impacts

Table A and Figure A summarize the economic impacts of horse racing in BC in 2024. Approximately 75 percent of output, GDP and tax revenues and almost 90 percent of employment is generated by racing. Breeding is the next largest contributor, accounting for approximately 14 percent of output, GDP and tax revenue and 6 percent of employment. Aftercare accounts for the remainder of the impacts.

Table A: Total Economic Impacts of Horse Racing in BC, 2024

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$5.2 - \$6.6	\$2 - \$2.4	47 - 58.5	\$0.2 - \$0.3	\$0.1 - \$0.2	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$6.6 - \$8.1	\$4.1 - \$5.1	38.4 - 47.9	\$0.5 - \$0.7	\$0.5 - \$0.6	<\$0.1
Total	\$11.8 - \$14.7	\$6.1 - \$7.5	85.4 - 106.4	\$0.7 - \$1	\$0.6 - \$0.8	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$41.3 - \$43.3	\$16 - \$17.2	1,328.3	\$2 - \$2.1	\$0.9 - \$0.9	\$1.4 - \$1.4
Indirect & Induced	\$40.1 - \$42.2	\$25 - \$26.3	214.7 - 226.6	\$3.1 - \$3.3	\$3 - \$3.2	\$0.7 - \$0.7
Total	\$81.4 - \$85.5	\$41 - \$43.5	1,543-1,554.9	\$5.1 - \$5.4	\$3.9 - \$4.1	\$2.1 - \$2.1
Aftercare						
Direct	\$3.5 - \$4.9	\$1.5 - \$2	35 - 49	0.2 - 0.2	\$0 - \$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$4.6 - \$6.4	\$2.9 - \$4	27.5 - 38.6	0.4 - 0.5	\$0.4 - \$0.5	<\$0.1
Total	\$8.1 - \$11.3	\$4.4 - \$6	62.5 - 87.6	0.6 - 0.7	\$0.4 - \$0.6	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$50 - \$54.8	\$19.5 - \$21.6	1,410.3 - 1,435.8	2.4 - 2.6	\$1 - \$1.2	\$1.4 - \$1.4
Indirect & Induced	\$51.3 - \$56.7	\$32 - \$35.4	280.6 - 313.1	4 - 4.5	\$3.9 - \$4.3	\$0.7 - \$0.7
Total	\$101.3 - \$111.5	\$51.5 - \$57	1,690.9 - 1,748.9	6.4 - 7.1	\$4.9 - \$5.5	\$2.1 - \$2.1

Figure A: Distribution of Impacts by Segment



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

Horse racing in BC has a long history, dating back to 1889, when Vancouver hosted its first recorded thoroughbred race. By 1892, the British Columbia Jockey Club had established Hastings Racecourse, which remains the province's longest-running professional sports venue. In the early to mid-20th century, Richmond's Minoru Park and Lansdowne Park were major thoroughbred racing hubs, while Patterson Park in Delta hosted standardbred racing in the 1920s until 1968. Fraser Downs Racetrack became the home of standardbred racing in 1976.

The BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's (PSSG) Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) regulates live horse racing in BC. As part of a review to broaden its understanding of the economic and social contributions of the industry GPEB engaged MNP LLP (MNP) to undertake an economic impact analysis as well as an evaluation of the sector's social impacts.

The scope of the study encompassed:

- Estimating the economic impact, including the number of horses, expenditures and employment within the industry.
- Developing case studies to illustrate the social impacts of the horse racing industry in BC.

1.2 Approach

In conducting this study, MNP carried out the following activities:

- Gathered data from publicly available sources, such as Statistics Canada.
- Conducted an online survey among owners, trainers and breeders in BC to gather information on operating expenditures, capital expenditures, revenue and employment in the sector.
- Conducted intercept surveys at both racing facilities in BC to gather information from backstretch workers.
- Conducted key informant interviews with horse racing industry associations, Great Canadian Entertainment (GCE) and representatives from the cities of Vancouver and Surrey.
- Analyzed all data collected and developed estimates of the economic impacts created by horse racing in BC.
- Identified the social impacts generated by the sector.
- Developed a report detailing the findings of the study.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The remaining sections of this report are organized as follows:

- Section 2 provides the methodology and data sources used in the study.
- Section 3 provides an overview of the BC horse racing industry.
- Section 4 summarizes the economic impacts created by the BC horse racing industry.
- Section 5 presents examples of the social impacts generated by the BC horse racing industry.
- Section 6 provides a summary of the study's findings.
- The appendices provide additional detail including the economic impact methodology and relevant assumptions.

1.4 Limitations

This report is not intended for general circulation, nor is it to be published in whole or in part without the prior written consent of MNP. The report is provided for information purposes and is intended for general guidance only. It should not be regarded as comprehensive or a substitute for personalized, investment or business advice.

We have relied upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of all information and data obtained from GPEB, industry participants and public sources believed to be reliable. The accuracy and reliability of the findings and opinions expressed in the report are conditional upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of the information underlying them. As a result, we caution readers not to rely upon any findings or opinions for business or investment purposes and disclaim any liability to any party who relies upon them as such.

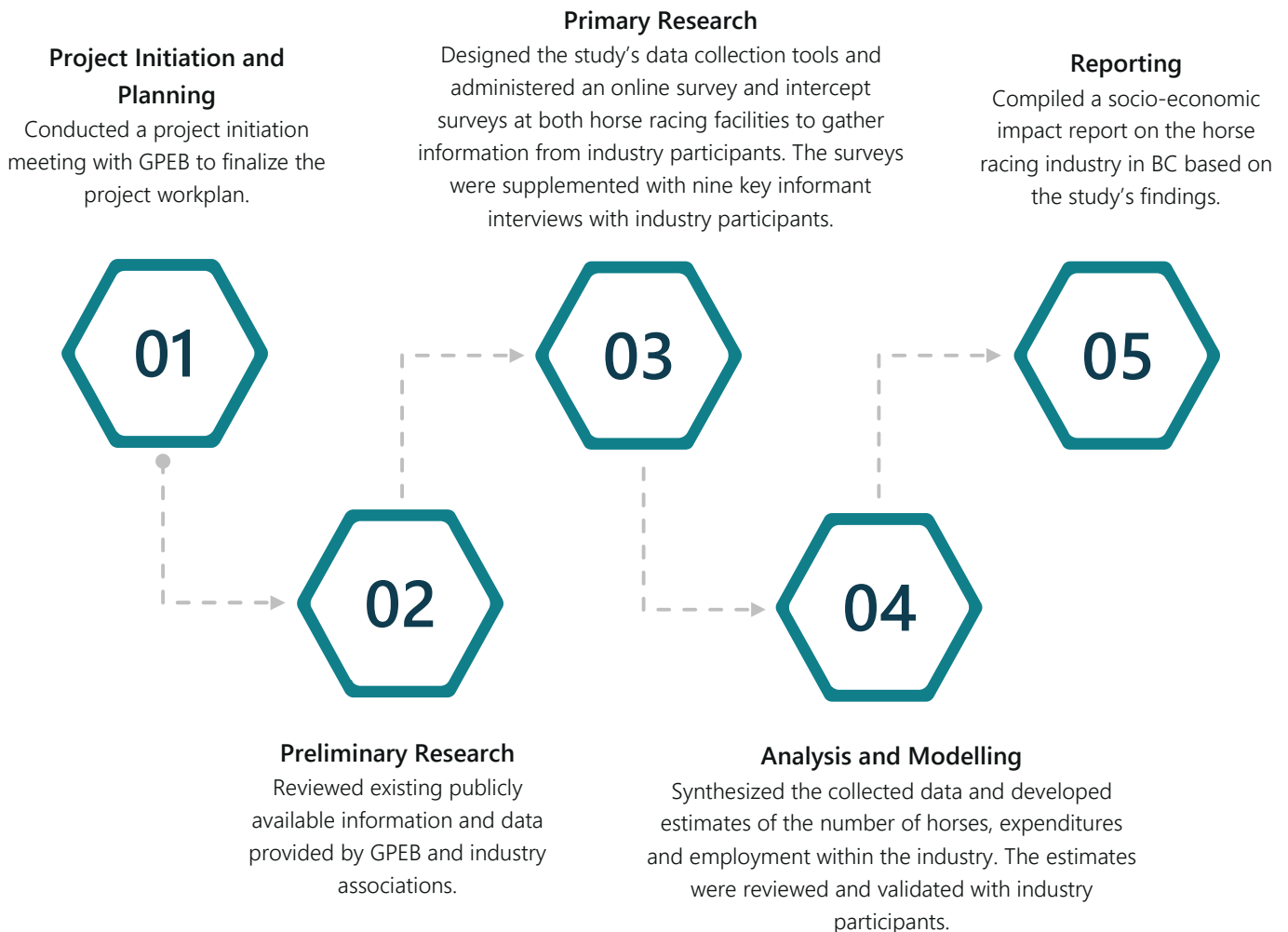
The findings and opinions expressed in the report constitute judgments as of the date of the report and are subject to change without notice. MNP is under no obligation to advise of any change brought to its attention which would alter those findings or opinions.

2.0 Methodology and Data Sources

2.1 Study Methodology

Figure 1 outlines the approach used to conduct the study.

Figure 1: Overview of Study’s Approach



2.2 Data Sources

The data used in the study included both quantitative and qualitative information gathered from primary and secondary sources.

Primary Research

The primary research activities for this study included:

An Online Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

An online survey targeting owners, trainers and breeders within the horse racing industry in BC was designed by MNP and Mustel Group (Mustel) and reviewed and approved by GPEB. The survey was designed to gather information on operating expenditures, capital expenditures, revenue and employment in the industry. GPEB developed the distribution list, specifically targeting owners and trainers using a list of licensed owners and trainers. The survey was sent to 452 owners and 42 trainers and 98 licensed as both an owner and a trainer. Breeders received an open link to complete the survey, with the distribution facilitated by the breed associations, so the number of breeders who received an invitation to complete the survey is not known. Mustel administered the survey between February 3 and February 19, 2025 and conducted follow-up to recipients, which included three email reminders and up to four callbacks per participant. A total of 233 completed surveys were received, with 230 owners, 86 breeders and 62 trainers completing the survey.¹ The survey respondents represented approximately 26 percent of the registered owner population and approximately 27 percent of the registered trainers in BC. Information on the number of breeders in BC was not available to enable a comparison of the response rate for breeders.

On-Site Survey of the Backstretch Workers

An on-site, intercept survey targeting backstretch workers was designed by MNP and Mustel and reviewed and approved by GPEB. This survey was conducted in-person by Mustel at both racing facilities, gathering information on participants' primary occupation within the horse racing industry, licensing in other occupations, years of experience, primary residence, income range, employment status, work hours, expenses, travel and demographic details.

Between February 10 and 12, 2025, Mustel visited Fraser Downs Racetrack to speak directly with backstretch workers. A total of 19 backstretch workers participated in the interview. Due to the time of year and weather conditions, there were a limited number of workers at the track and thus available for interview.

Similarly, Mustel administered the survey in-person at Hastings Racecourse between March 6 and 7, 2025. A total of 42 backstretch workers were surveyed. As the racing season at Hastings does not begin until May, the number of backstretch workers at the track was limited. Each participant at both racing facilities received a \$5 gift card in recognition of their participation and time.

¹ The number of individuals completing the survey exceeds the total number of surveys because some respondents are licensed in multiple categories.

Key Informant Interviews with Interested Parties

Key informant interviews were conducted to gather insights from interested parties in BC’s horse racing sector. MNP collaborated with GPEB to identify 11 parties that were invited to participate. A total of 10 interviews were completed, with each session lasting between one to two hours. A full list of interview participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Key Informant Interviews

Organization	Role within the industry	Engagement
Harness Racing BC (HRBC)	Industry association representing standardbred racing in BC	In-person
Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society - BC (CTHS)	Industry association representing the thoroughbred breeding industry	In-person
BC Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association (TOBA)	Industry association representing thoroughbred owners and breeders	In-person
The Horsemen’s Benevolent & Protective Association of BC (HBPA)	Industry association representing owners, trainers and employees in the thoroughbred industry	In-person
New Stride Thoroughbred Adoption Society	Non-profit that provides aftercare and rehoming for retired racehorses	Virtual
Wildhearts Thoroughbred Adoption	Non-profit that provides aftercare and rehoming for retired racehorses	Virtual
Great Canadian Entertainment	Track operator	Virtual
The City of Vancouver	Track lessor of Hastings Racecourse	Virtual
The City of Surrey	Track lessor of Fraser Downs Racetrack	Virtual
TBC Teletheatre BC	Organization operating teletheatre locations in BC where people can watch and wager on horse races in BC and around the world	Virtual

Secondary Research

Relevant information from publicly available sources such as data sets from Statistics Canada was collected as part of this study.

Administrative Data

The administrative data for the study was sourced from GPEB, the breed associations and GCE. This data included:

- Horse racing licences by category.
- Industry revenue including gaming revenue associated with the sector, both from horse racing and the casino operations at the racing locations.
- Expenditures associated with track operation and maintenance.
- Number of race days.
- Number of room nights spent in track accommodation and number of sleeping rooms.
- Demographic data on industry participants.

3.0 Overview of the Horse Racing Industry in BC

3.1 Overview

Horse racing has a long history in BC, beginning in the late 19th century when the first recorded thoroughbred races took place in Vancouver. Over the years, the sport grew in popularity, with multiple racetracks operating across the province. Today, BC has one thoroughbred track and one standardbred (harness racing) track still in operation.

Thoroughbred racing is held at Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver from April or May (weather permitting) to October, featuring premier events such as the BC Derby and BC Oaks, which attract top regional competitors. Standardbred racing takes place at Fraser Downs Racetrack in Surrey from September to April or May, showcasing pacing races.

The regulation of horse racing in BC is shared by the provincial and federal governments. Betting on horse races is regulated by the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA), a federal agency within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. GPEB is responsible for regulating live horse racing and registering and licensing horse racing workers, track operators and teletheatre operations under the authority of the *Gaming Control Act*.

Current State

The horse racing industry in BC relies on the cooperation and contributions of a diverse range of groups, including track operators, owners, trainers, jockeys, drivers, veterinarians and sponsors. Together, these groups ensure the ongoing operation, competitiveness and growth of the industry. The main industry groups include:

- **Horse Racing Industry Management Committee (HRIMC):** was formed in 2009 to bring the industry together under a single team to work towards its revitalization and sustainability. It is comprised of one representative from GCE, one from an industry association representing the thoroughbred sector (i.e., TOBA) and one from an industry association representing the standardbred sector (i.e., HRBC). It approves and manages the administration of a revenue-sharing agreement between the three parties, which governs the distribution of industry revenues.
- **TBC Teletheatre BC (TBC):** is responsible for wagering on horse races at the tracks in BC and at teletheatres. This includes facilitating the live streaming and broadcasting of horse racing events within BC, as well as providing simulcast wagering on races from other parts of Canada, North America and the world. This expands access to horse racing beyond in-person attendance at tracks and allows viewers to place bets remotely from locations throughout the province. Online betting on horse races is run by HPIbet.
- **Great Canadian Entertainment (GCE):** operates a variety of entertainment venues across

Canada, including casinos, racetracks and other leisure facilities, offering a range of gaming, dining and entertainment options. GCE and its subsidiaries are responsible for the management and operation of the two horse tracks in BC - Hastings Racecourse and Fraser Downs Racetrack.²

- **Municipalities:** The cities of Vancouver and Surrey provide the land where the tracks are located. Hastings Racecourse, the thoroughbred track, is located in Vancouver and Fraser Downs Racetrack, the standardbred track, is located in Surrey.
- **Breed Associations:** Industry associations that promote and represent thoroughbred and standardbred racing in BC. This includes Harness Racing BC (HRBC), the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society - BC (CTHS), BC Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders (TOBA) and the Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Association of BC (HBPA).

The industry's activities can be categorized into the breeding, racing and aftercare segments:

- **Breeding** – Breeding is the foundation of the horse racing industry. To be eligible to race, horses must meet specific criteria, including pedigree,³ age, physical condition and registration/licensing requirements. Breeding stock typically consists of mares and stallions with successful racing careers, to increase the chances that foals will inherit desirable speed, stamina and conformation traits. Young horses, including weanlings (under six months old) and yearlings (one year old), receive structured care and early training before transitioning to race training. Their developmental process includes specialized nutrition, exercise regimens and veterinary oversight to ensure they reach optimal health, strength and conditioning for future competition. Horses under the age of two that are preparing for their racing debut are closely monitored and guided through this phase to maximize their potential on the track.
- **Racing** – Horses are eligible to begin racing at two years old, though some may start later depending on their development, training and soundness. Most racehorses retire by the age of eight, though this varies based on performance, health and the type of racing they compete in. During their racing career, horses are under the care of trainers, who develop customized training and conditioning programs to maximize speed, endurance and race readiness. They also work with a team of specialists who provide essential support, including jockeys, drivers, grooms, exercise riders, veterinarians, farriers, hot walkers and stable staff. Horses follow a structured routine of training, rest and recovery, with schedules tailored to their race schedule and overall condition. Their diet is carefully managed with specialized nutrition plans, including high-energy feeds and supplements to maintain peak performance.
- **Aftercare** - After retiring from racing, many racehorses transition into second careers. Their post-racing opportunities can depend on their physical condition, as any injuries sustained during their career will influence the types of aftercare activities they can safely pursue. Some become sport horses, specializing in show jumping, dressage, eventing, or barrel racing due to their athleticism and training. Others take on therapeutic roles, working in equine-assisted therapy

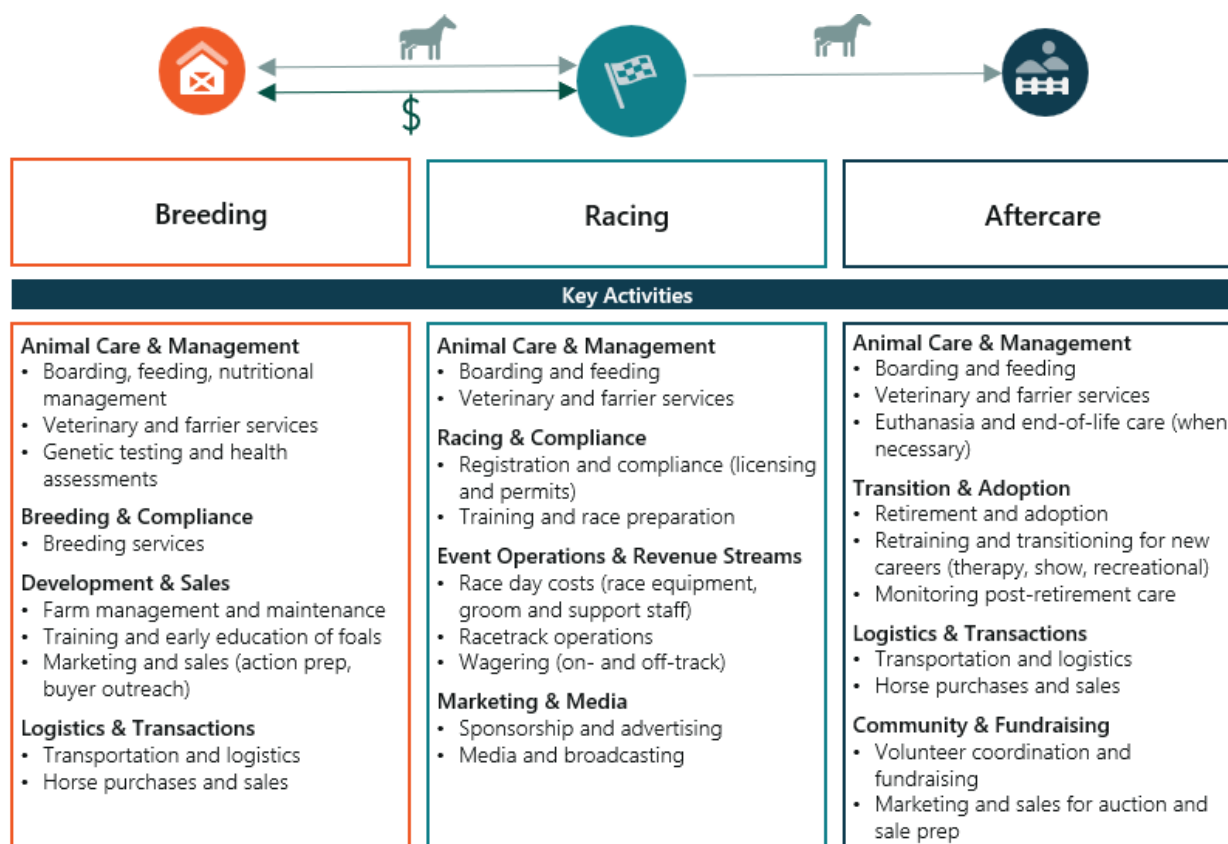
² Great Canadian Entertainment, Racing – British Columbia. Available here: <https://greatcanadian.com/racing/>

³ While pedigree matters in elite racing, many lower-level races and local tracks accept horses of various backgrounds, as long as they meet health and fitness requirements.

programs to support individuals with disabilities or mental health challenges. Many racehorses also find homes as pleasure riding horses, while some return to breeding programs to pass on their bloodlines.

Each of these segments is supported by a wide range of suppliers and partner organizations that provide goods and services. Combined, these linkages produce economic benefits across Canada. Figure 2 illustrates the linkages by segment.

Figure 2: Linkages within the Horse Racing Industry in BC



Revenue and Participation

Industry revenue comes from a variety of sources including wagering on horse racing both within BC and at tracks around the world through TBC and online through HPIbet, a share of net revenue from slot machines located at the casinos the tracks are part of, and a share of the fees levied on bets placed at horse racing events. In 2024 approximately \$117.6 million was bet on horse racing in BC. Of this, approximately \$98 million was paid out in winnings, \$12.9 million went to TBC to cover operating costs and the remainder went to the industry.

Table 2 shows the revenue that went to the industry by source for 2024. The industry received \$8 million from wagering on horse racing, \$8.5 million from slots at the casinos located at the racetracks and \$1.3 million from provincial betting fees. After contributions to the marketing fund of \$0.5 million, \$17.5 million was available for distribution to industry. While the distribution of revenue by source was

consistent with 2022 and 2023, industry revenue was approximately seven percent lower in 2024 than 2023.

Table 2: Industry Revenue by Source, 2024

	Value	Percentage
Wagering Income Net of TBC's Costs	\$8,021,194	45%
Slot Machine Net Revenue*	\$8,524,464	47%
Betting Fees Returned to Industry**	\$1,345,955	7%
Interest Earned	\$136,955	1%
Sub-Total	\$18,028,435	100%
Marketing Fund	-\$505,000	
Total Available for Distribution to Industry	\$17,523,435	

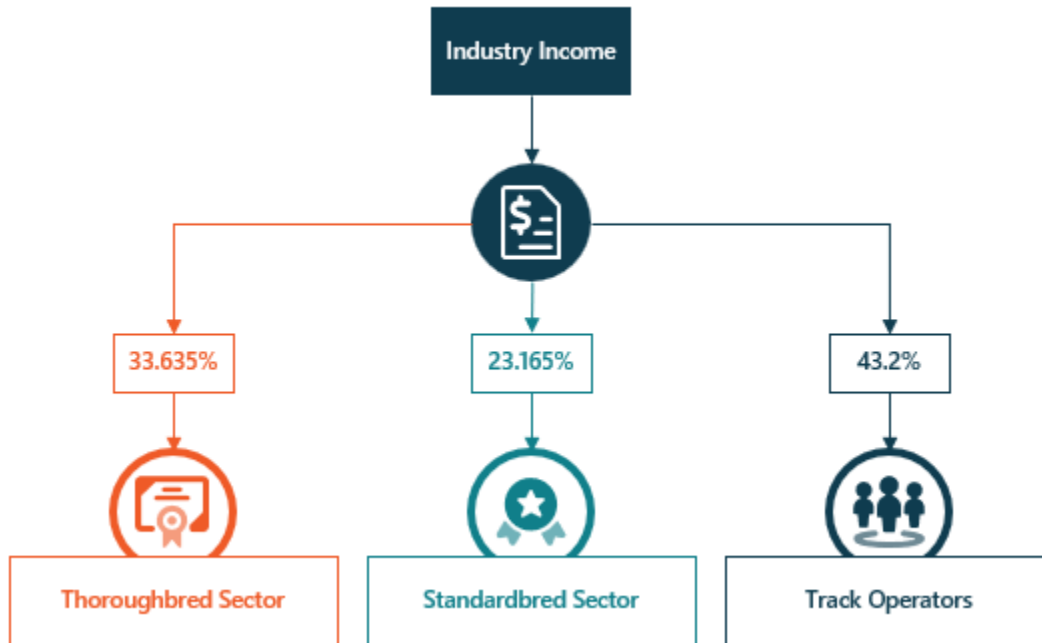
*25 percent of the net revenue from slot machines in the casinos co-located with the tracks.

**Provincial levy is a 4.5 percent levy on triactor bets, where the better selects the top three finishers in exact order, and a 2.5 levy on all other types of bets.⁴ In 2024, the BC Government collected \$3.2 million in betting fees, \$1.9 million of which was used to cover costs associated with GPEB's administration of horse racing.

As shown in Figure 3, the distribution of horse racing revenue is structured through the HRIMC revenue sharing agreement which stipulates that 43.2 percent of industry revenue is allocated to the track operators, 33.635 percent to the thoroughbreds and 23.165 percent to the standardbreds.

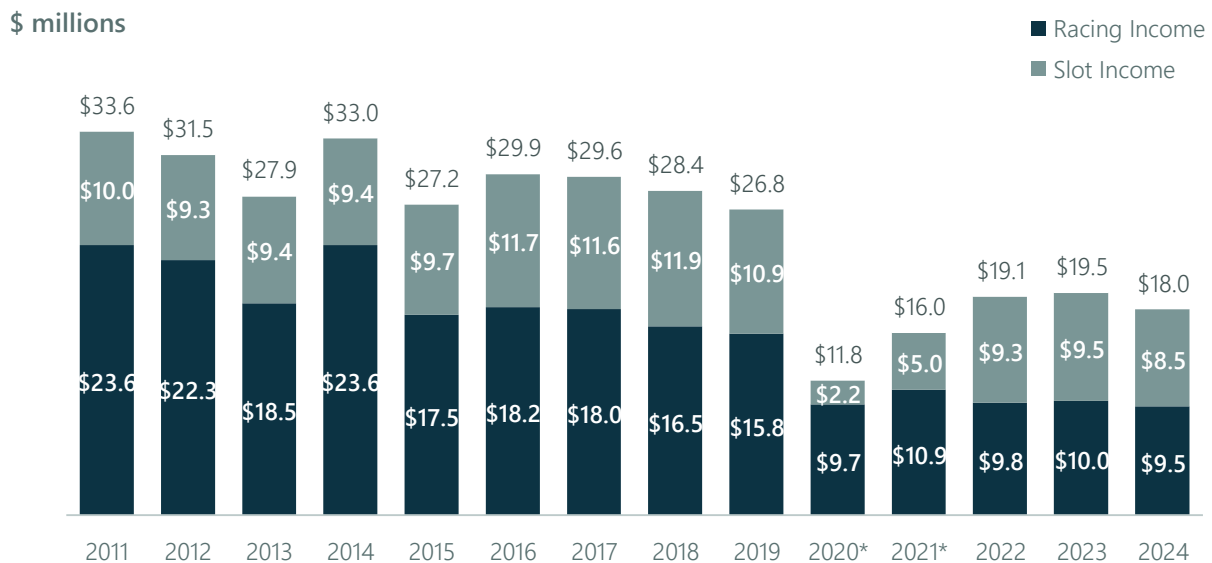
⁴ Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch. (2023). Annual report 2022–2023. Government of British Columbia. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/gambling/gambling-in-bc/reports/annual-rpt-gpeb-2022-23.pdf>

Figure 3: Distribution of Industry Income



As shown in Figure 4, the total income for the industry has declined from \$33.6 million in 2011 to \$18 million in 2024. This decline is primarily due to a drop in racing income, which fell from \$23.6 million in 2011 to \$9.5 million in 2024. Racing income has been steadily declining since 2011. Slot income for the industry has also declined, but by a much smaller percentage.

Figure 4: Industry Income by Income Stream, 2011 to 2024



Source: GPEB

* Racing income and slot machine net income were lower in 2020 and 2021 due to the temporary closure of facilities

during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Industry Snapshot

Table 3 provides an overview of the number of race days and number of thoroughbred and standardbred horses in BC in 2024. Horses are not tracked if they did not start a race or participate in breeding. To estimate the number of horses, data on breeding activity and number of horses starting a race between 2016 and 2024 was used, as well as information provided by interviewees to estimate the relevant horse population. These estimates are provided as a range.

There were estimated to be between 750 and 915 thoroughbreds involved in the racing industry in 2024. Of these, between 350 and 400 were racing or in training to race at Hastings Racecourse. In addition to the horses involved in the racing industry, there were estimated to be between 750 and 1,250 thoroughbreds that were no longer involved in the industry.

Standardbreds account for a smaller number of horses in BC’s horse racing industry. In 2024 there were estimated to be between 525 and 650 standardbreds involved in the industry. Of these between 300 and 325 were racing or training to race. In addition, there were estimated to be between 200 and 300 standardbreds that were no longer in the industry.

BC Bred Racing Stock

Between 85 percent and 90 percent of horses at Hastings Racecourse are BC-bred.

Data were not available on the number of BC bred horses at Fraser Downs Racetrack.

Source: Data provided by industry

Table 3: Number of Horses and Race Days in BC by Breed, 2024

	Thoroughbred	Standardbred
Number of race days, 2024	43	56
Number of horses that started in a race, 2024	325	250
Number of active racehorses, 2024*	350-400	300-325
Number of breeding stock 2024**	135-190	75-100
Number of young horses (2023 and 2024 foals)***	115-125	50-75
Number of retired horses, 2024****	150-200	100-150
Number of other horses, 2024*****	750-1,250	200-300

Source: GPEB administrative data, HRBC and CTHS and MNP Estimates

*Active racehorses include those that started a race, as well as those that trained at Hastings Racecourse or Fraser Downs during the season. Not all horses that train at a track start a race.

**Breeding stock includes those that were bred, as well as those available to breed.

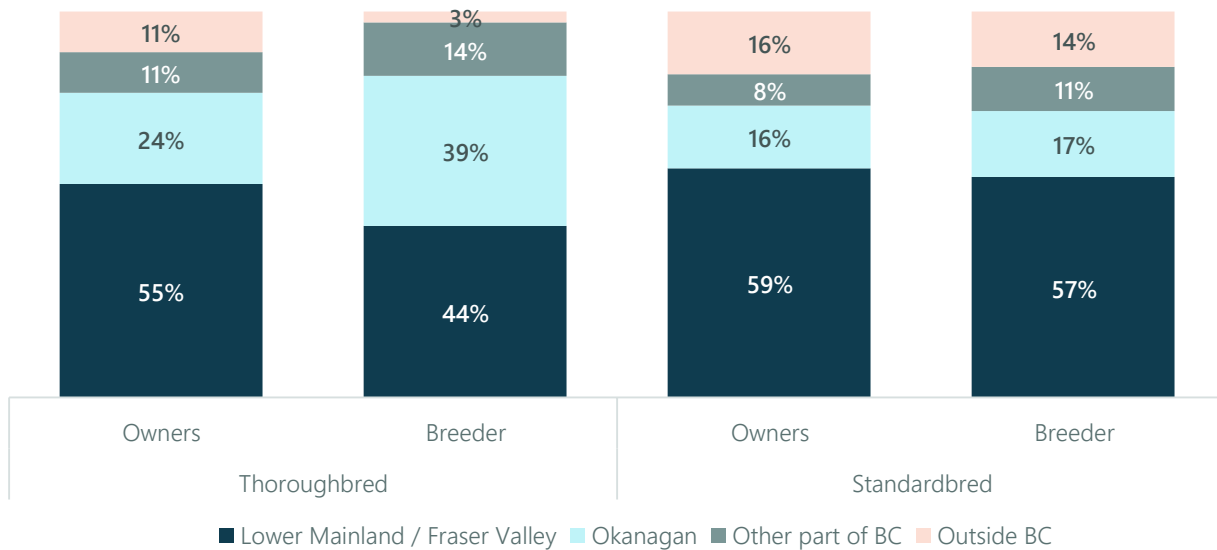
***Includes those born in BC, as well as those brought to BC from other jurisdictions.

****Retired horses are those that are in the process of transitioning from racing or breeding to other uses, or that have not transitioned to another use.

*****Other horses are those that have left racing or breeding and are sport horses, therapeutic horses or saddle horses.

Horses that are involved in the horse racing sector are stabled throughout the province. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of farms with horses involved in breeding and racing are in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley and the Okanagan. Thoroughbred breeders are more likely to have their farms located in the Okanagan than standardbred breeders.

Figure 5: Location of Farms Owned by Owners and Breeders



Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

3.2 Workforce

In 2024, there were 1,566 licensed individuals involved in various roles in horse racing in BC including owners, jockeys, drivers, trainers, grooms and exercise riders. All of these people are required to be licensed with GPEB to ensure suitability to participate in the horse racing industry.

In terms of immigration status, 16 BC-based jockeys held work permits that entitle them to work as jockeys in Western Canada and competed at the Hastings Racecourse. Additionally, there were seven jockeys brought in by trainers specifically for certain races, primarily stake races, who also held work permits for Western Canada. Apart from jockeys, a number of individuals working in other roles on the backstretch (such as stable hands or other support staff) had work or study permits that allowed them to work in the industry in BC.⁵

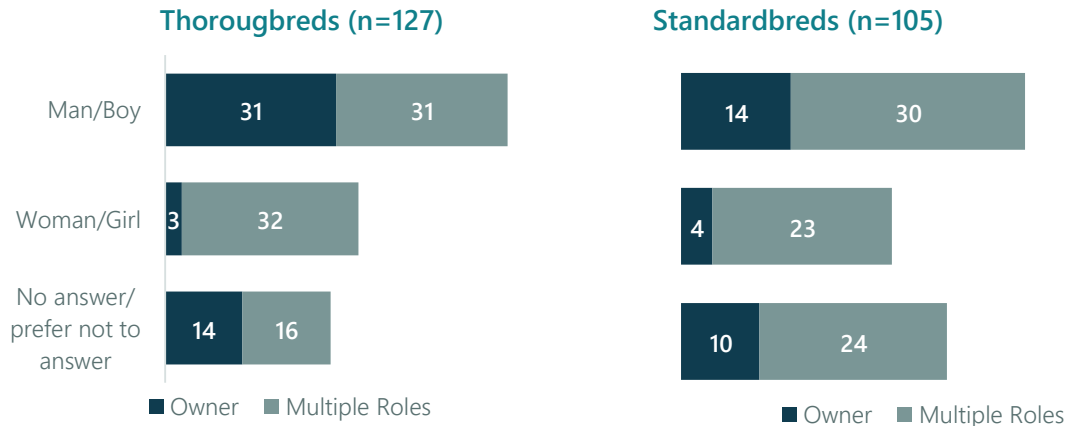
Ownership

Figure 6 shows ownership patterns and roles in the industry by gender reported in the survey of owners, breeders and trainers. Respondents were more likely to identify as man/boy than woman/girl. The majority of owners who responded to the survey tend to be involved in more than one role in the industry. Those who owned standardbreds were somewhat more likely to have multiple roles in the

⁵ Administrative data received from GPEB.

industry. Those who identified as woman/girl were significantly more likely to report having multiple roles within the industry than those who identified as man/boy. These included breeder, trainer and roles caring for horses. Among men/boys with multiple roles, breeder and trainer were the most commonly reported. Men/boys who reported multiple roles were less likely to report being in roles caring for horses than women/girls who reported multiple roles.

Figure 6: Ownership by Gender



Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

Approximately one-third of thoroughbred owners reported that their primary role in the industry was as a breeder, while approximately 40 percent of standardbred owners reported breeder as their primary role.

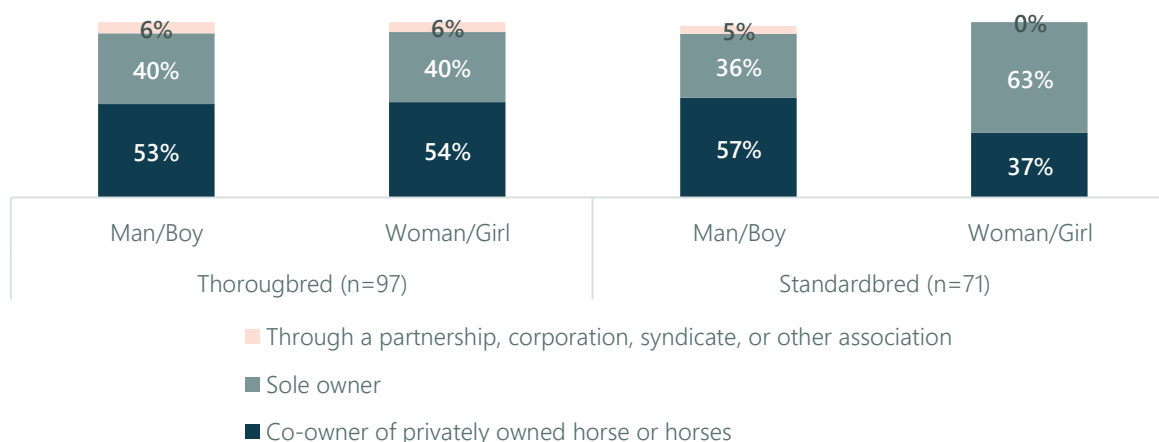
Figure 7 shows the form of ownership by gender for each breed. Co-ownership of privately owned horses was the most common form of ownership reported for thoroughbreds, followed by sole ownership. There was no difference between those who identified as man/boy and woman/girl. For standardbreds, those who identified as woman/girl were significantly more likely to report being the sole owner of their horses than those who identified as man/boy.

Few Owners Operate Farms

Two-thirds of standardbred owners and almost three-quarters of thoroughbred owners reported that their horses were stabled at a farm operated by someone else.

Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

Figure 7: Form of Ownership by Gender



Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

Employment

Industry employment occurs at racing facilities and on horse farms. This section provides information from the survey of owners, breeders and trainers on farm employment and from the survey of backstretch workers on racing facility employment. It is important to note that due to the time of year, the findings from the backstretch worker survey may not be representative of the workforce profile.

Horse Farms

Approximately 50 percent of survey respondents that own farms reported not having paid employees. Table 4 reports the types of employment for farms that reported having paid employees and the range in the number of employees reported. Thoroughbred farms were more likely to report full-time, full-year positions, while standardbred farms were more likely to report seasonal and casual positions. Most positions on farm were stable hands, with some administrative and management positions.

Table 4: Employment by Type, Farms with Employees

		Thoroughbred (n=17)		Standardbred (n=13)	
		Share of Farms That Reported	Number of Employees Reported	Share of Farms That Reported	Number of Employees Reported
Full-year	Full-time	65%	1 to 16	46%	1 to 14
	Part-time	41%	1 to 17	31%	1 to 4
Seasonal	Full-time	35%	1 to 18	38%	2 to 5
	Part-time	24%	1 to 6	38%	2 to 9
Casual		24%	1 to 10	46%	2 to 13

Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

Table 5 shows the hourly wage rate reported by position. Most employees earn between \$20 and \$30

per hour. Positions requiring specialized skills such as trainers, jockeys and drivers tend to have higher hourly wages; however, these positions are less likely to be full-time, full-year.

Table 5: Hourly Wage Rates by Position

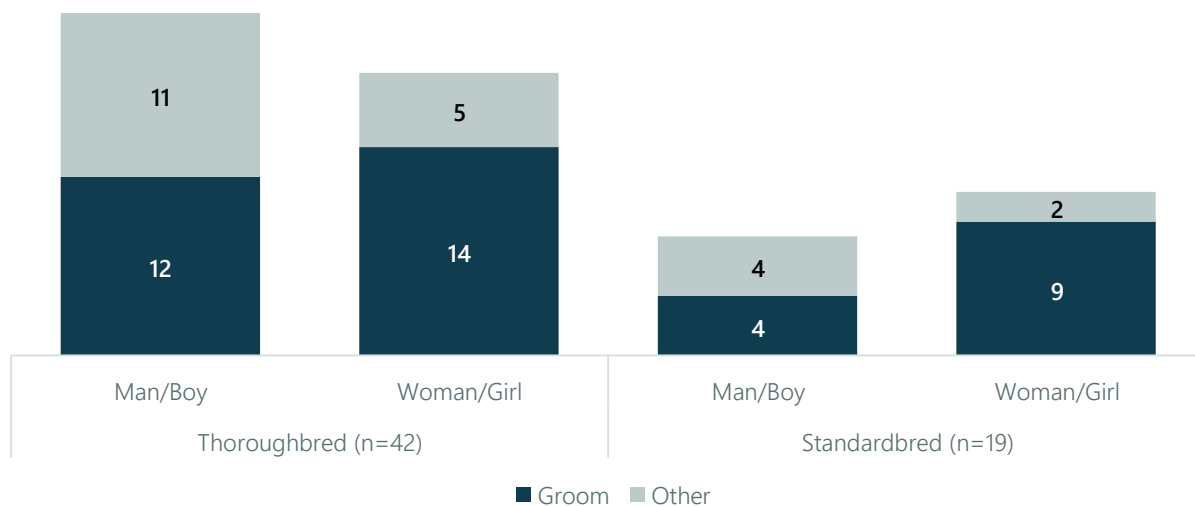
Position	Range of Hourly Wage Rates
Administrative staff	\$21.25 to \$30
Breeding specialist	\$25
Exercise Riders	\$20 to \$45
Jockeys/Drivers	\$30 to \$75
Manager	\$20 to \$30
Stable hands	\$20 to \$23
Trainers	\$30 to \$35

Source: Survey of Owners, Breeders and Trainers

Backstretch workers

Figure 8 shows the occupation and gender of respondents to the backstretch workers survey. Among those who work with thoroughbreds the majority of respondents identified as man/boy, and of these, roughly half worked as grooms. Among women/girls working with thoroughbreds, the majority worked as grooms. Among those who work with standardbreds the majority of respondents identified as woman/girl and most worked as grooms.

Figure 8: Occupation by Gender

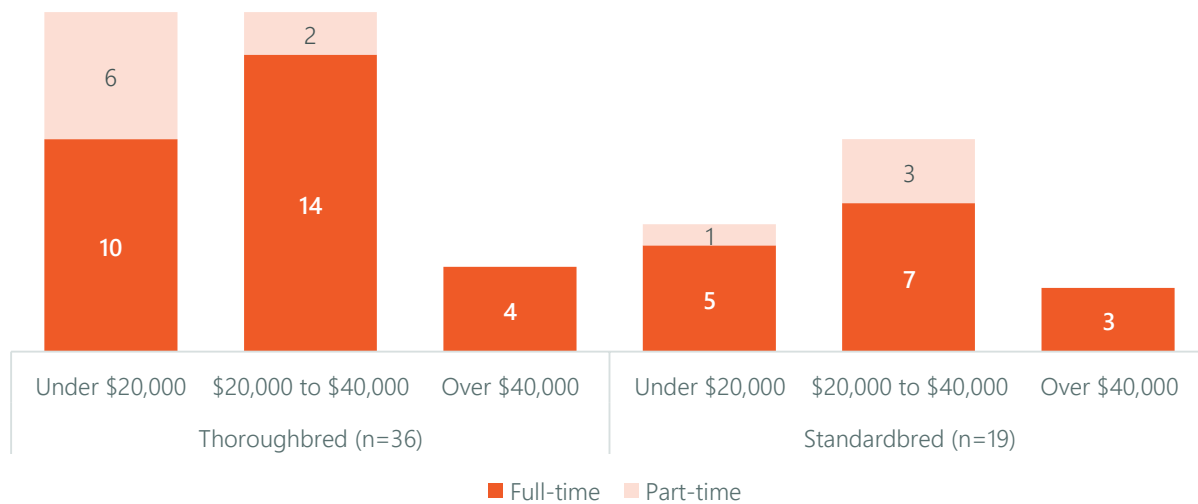


Source: Survey of Backstretch Workers

Figure 9 shows the reported annual earnings for backstretch workers. The majority of respondents reported working full-time. Just under half of those working full-time reported earning between \$20,000 and \$40,000 annually, one-third reported earning under \$20,000 annually and the remainder of full-time

workers reported earning more than \$40,000 annually. Most workers that reported earning more than \$40,000 annually were in specialized positions such as race officials or clockers. The vast majority of part-time workers reported earning less than \$20,000 annually. There were no differences in earnings by role for those identifying as man/boy and woman/girl.

Figure 9: Earnings of Backstretch Workers by Full-time and Part-time



Source: Survey of Backstretch Workers

Backstretch workers are long-tenured with 80 percent reporting working in the horse racing industry for at least 10 years. Among grooms the average reported tenure was 17.6 years and the median tenure was 20 years.

Approximately 62 percent of backstretch workers that work with thoroughbreds and 68 percent of backstretch workers that work with standardbreds reported being of European descent, African or Caribbean (14 percent) was the next most commonly reported racial identify, followed by Latin American (10 percent).

3.3 Trends Over Time

Table 6 shows total number of race days, live races and horses participating at each track from 2019 and 2024. During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021) the number of race days, live races and horses participating in races fell significantly. Between 2022 and 2024 there was some recovery; however, racing activity remains well below pre-pandemic levels. Race days are down 10 percent at Fraser Downs Racetrack and 16 percent at Hastings Racecourse, while the number of horses is down 36 percent at Fraser Downs Racetrack and 41 percent at Hastings Racecourse.

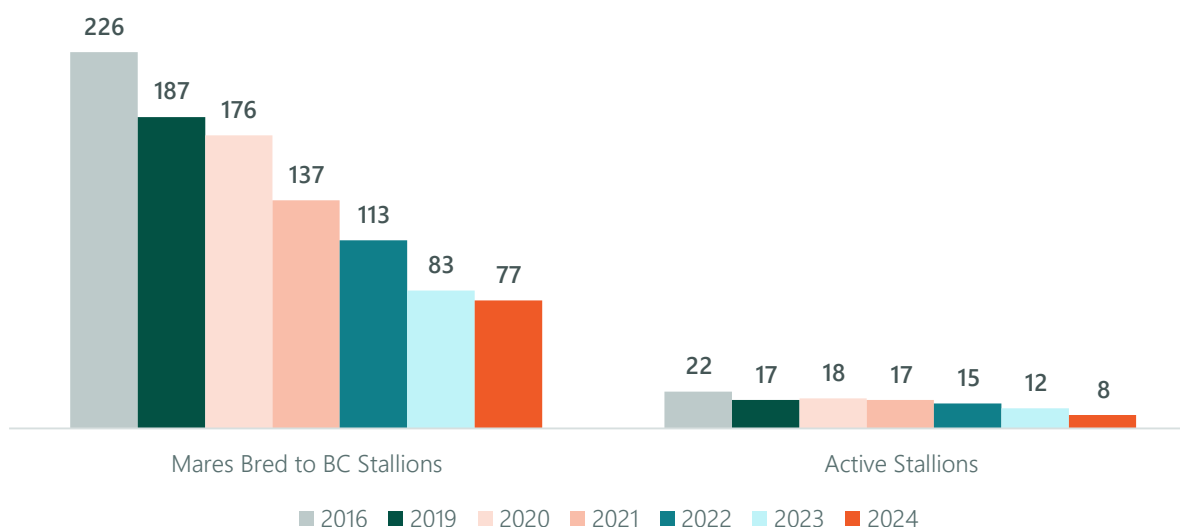
Table 6: Trend in the Number of Race Days, Live Races and Horses Participating in Races, 2019 to 2024

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change 2019-2024
Number of Race Days							
Hastings Racecourse	51	25	39	45	44	43	-16%
Fraser Downs Racetrack	62	46	34	64	56	56	-10%
Number of Live Races							
Hastings Racecourse	390	206	269	312	317	288	-26%
Fraser Downs Racetrack	694	485	332	625	492	498	-28%
Number of Horses Participating in Races							
Hastings Racecourse	2,871	1,465	1,598	1,987	1,814	1,685	-41%
Fraser Downs Racetrack	5,109	3,405	2,044	3,914	3,386	3,285	-36%

Source: GPEB, HRBC and CTHS

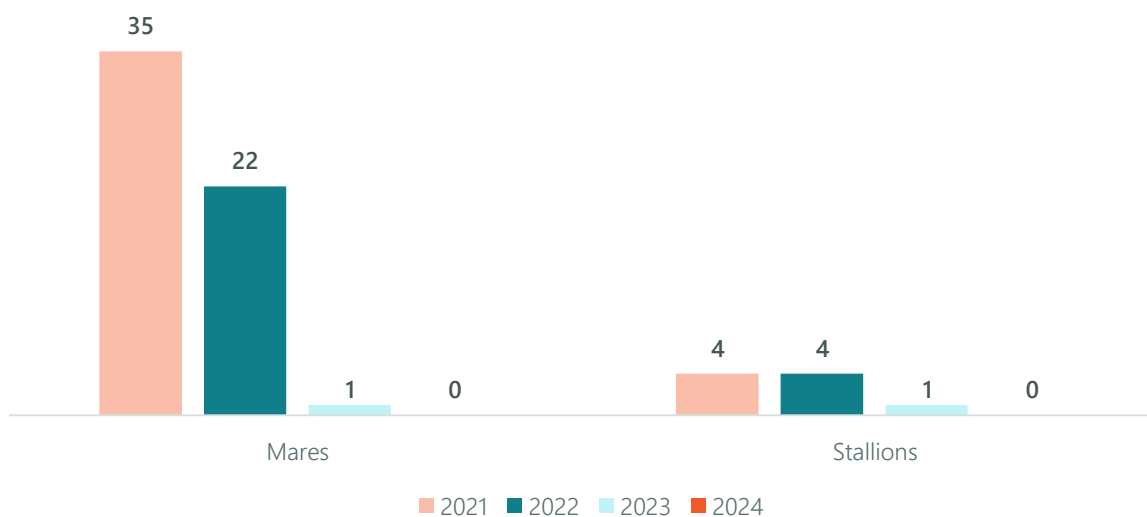
The decline in racing is affecting breeding activity and the future racing stock. It takes a minimum of three years from the time a mare is bred until the foal can begin its racing career. Figure 10 shows trends in breeding activity for thoroughbreds in BC between 2016 and 2024. In 2016 there were 226 mares bred to BC stallions and 22 active stallions. By 2019 the number of mares bred to BC stallions had declined to 187 and the number of active stallions was 17. During COVID-19 (2020 and 2021) breeding activity declined further and has continued to decline. In 2024, 77 mares were bred to 8 stallions. Breeding data for standardbreds were only available for 2021 to 2024 and are shown in Figure 11. As with thoroughbreds, breeding activity has declined significantly. In 2024 there were no mares bred. With fewer horses being bred, the overall horse population is dropping, which means there are fewer horses available to compete. This will lead to a reduced racing schedule.

Figure 10: Trends in Thoroughbred Breeding Activity, 2016 to 2024



Source: The Jockey Club. 2025 British Columbia Fact Book. A statistical guide to the thoroughbred industry in BC

Figure 11: Trends in Standardbred Breeding Activity, 2021 to 2024



Source: Standardbred Canada, Breeding Statistics, July 22, 2024

The declines in racing are the result of several interconnected factors. Attendance at races has steadily decreased, with younger generations showing less interest in the sport and changing entertainment preferences shifting people away from traditional horse racing events. Financial struggles among racetracks, including pandemic related closures and fewer races have exacerbated the issue.⁶ According

⁶ Equestrian Canada. (2023). The Canadian equine sector: Socio-economic insights 2023. Available here: https://equestrian.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The-Canadian-Equine-Sector_Socio-Economic-Insights-2023.pdf

to interviewees the increase in the number of casinos, online gambling and legalization of single action sports wagering in 2021 has also diverted potential bettors from horse racing and increases in operational costs have strained the industry's financial viability. Additionally, the decline in breeding programs and a shrinking horse population have reduced the quality and quantity of races. Combined, these factors have resulted in the overall decline of the horse racing industry in BC.

4.0 Economic Impact Analysis

4.1 Economic Impact Methodology

In general, economic impacts are viewed as being restricted to quantitative, well-established measures of economic activity. The most commonly used of these measures are output, GDP, employment and government revenue:

- **Output** is the total gross value of goods and services produced by a given company or industry measured by the price paid to the producer. This is the broadest measure of economic activity.
- **Gross Domestic Product (“GDP”)**, or value added, refers to the additional value of a good or service over the cost of inputs used to produce it from the previous stage of production. Thus, GDP is equal to the unduplicated value of the goods and services produced.
- **Employment** is the number of jobs created. It may be reported as jobs or full-time equivalents (FTEs). One FTE is equivalent to one person working full-time for 12 months.
- **Government Revenues** are the total amount of revenues generated for different levels of government. Revenues arise from personal income taxes, indirect taxes less subsidies, corporate income taxes, taxes on products and royalties. The provincial levy on wagering is not included as it is used to recoup the costs of regulating live horse racing and any excess goes to the industry. Please note that because tax revenues can frequently change due to modifications in tax policy, the government revenues in this report are estimates only and subject to change. They should be viewed as approximate in nature.

Economic impacts may be estimated at the direct, indirect and induced levels:

- **Direct impacts** are due to changes that occur in “front-end” businesses that would initially receive expenditures and operating revenue as a direct consequence of the operations and activities of an industry, organization, or project.
- **Indirect impacts** arise from changes in activity for suppliers of the “front-end” businesses.
- **Induced impacts** arise from shifts in spending on goods and services as a consequence of changes to the payroll of the directly and indirectly affected businesses.

To estimate the economic impacts generated by the horse racing industry, MNP employed an input-output methodology using multipliers published by Statistics Canada. Input-output modeling is a widely used and widely accepted approach, making it recognizable by many different audiences. The structure of the approach also facilitates easy comparisons between reported results for different industries and organizations.

4.2 Economic Impacts

Horse racing in BC generates economic activity through the expenditure on goods and services used in the breeding, racing and aftercare of racehorses. To estimate the expenditures attributable to horse racing in BC in 2024, MNP developed expenditure estimates using financial data provided by TBC on its operations, the estimated number of horses by breed (see Table 3), financial data on operations and

capital spending provided by GCE and estimates of the expenditures related to horses developed from the survey of owners, breeders and trainers. The estimated expenditures are provided as a range to account for the range in the estimated number of horses in BC.

For aftercare, the expenditures were limited to those related to horses that were in the process of transitioning to other uses or that had not transitioned to other uses. The economic impacts of horses that have left the horse racing industry and are being used in other activities (e.g., sport horses, chuck wagon racing, therapy, etc.) are reported separately.

Thoroughbred Horse Racing

Table 7 shows the estimated expenditures in BC on thoroughbred horse racing in BC in 2024 by each segment of the industry. The thoroughbred horse racing industry was estimated to have spent between \$31.3 million and \$33.9 million in 2024. Racing operations which cover the expenditures on goods and services by TBC and GCE was the largest component of expenditure, accounting for between 35 percent and 38 percent of the total spending. Wages and salaries paid to those working in the industry was the next largest component at 25 percent, followed by expenditures on boarding and feed at between 13 percent and 15 percent of the total expenditures.

Table 7: Estimated Expenditure on Thoroughbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024, \$ millions

	Breeding	Racing	Aftercare	Total
Wages and Salaries*	\$1.2 - \$1.3	\$5.7 - \$6.1	\$0.9 - \$1.1	\$7.8 - \$8.5
Boarding and Feed	\$1.2 - \$1.4	\$2.1 - \$2.4	\$0.9 - \$1.2	\$4.2 - \$5.0
Training and racing	\$0.0	\$3.7 - \$4.2	\$0.0	\$3.7 - \$4.2
Veterinary Care	\$0.3	\$0.5 - \$0.6	\$0.2 - \$0.3	\$1.0 - \$1.2
Other	\$0.4 - \$0.6	\$0.9 - \$1	\$0.1 - \$0.2	\$1.4 - \$1.8
Racing operations**	\$0.0	\$11.9	\$0.0	\$11.9
Facility repair and maintenance*	\$0.0	\$1.3	\$0.0	\$1.3
Total	\$3.1 - \$3.6	\$26.1 - \$27.5	\$2.1 - \$2.8	\$31.3 - \$33.9

*Wages and salaries includes wages paid by owners, trainers, TBC and GCE.

**Racing operations is TBC and GCEs expenditures net of wages and salaries.

Table 8 shows the lower end of the estimated economic impacts of thoroughbred horse racing based on the expenditures in Table 7. Thoroughbred horse racing in BC was estimated to generate:

- \$62.9 million in total economic output, consisting of \$50.9 million of output attributable to racing, \$7.1 million of output attributable to breeding and \$4.9 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- \$31.9 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$25.6 million of output attributable to racing, \$3.7 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$2.6 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- \$8.2 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$3.9 million in federal tax revenues, \$3 million in provincial revenues and \$1.3 million in municipal revenues.
- 1,117.7 FTEs of employment in BC, including 945.7 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of impacts related to racing occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region, while the impacts related to breeding and aftercare occur throughout the province.

Table 8: Estimated Economic Impacts of Thoroughbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024, Low

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$3.1	\$1.2	28.4	\$0.1	\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$4.0	\$2.5	23.2	\$0.3	\$0.3	<\$0.1
Total	\$7.1	\$3.7	51.6	\$0.4	\$0.4	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$26.0	\$10.1	896.3	\$1.3	\$0.6	\$0.9
Indirect & Induced	\$24.9	\$15.5	132.3	\$1.9	\$1.8	\$0.4
Total	\$50.9	\$25.6	1028.3	\$3.2	\$2.4	\$1.3
Aftercare						
Direct	\$2.1	\$0.9	21.0	\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$2.8	\$1.7	16.5	\$0.2	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total	\$4.9	\$2.6	37.5	\$0.3	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$31.2	\$12.2	945.7	\$1.5	\$0.7	\$0.9
Indirect & Induced	\$31.7	\$19.7	172.0	\$2.4	\$2.3	\$0.4
Total	\$62.9	\$31.9	1,117.7	\$3.9	\$3.0	\$1.3

Table 9 shows the higher end of the estimated economic impacts of thoroughbred horse racing based on the expenditures in Table 7. Thoroughbred horse racing in BC was estimated to generate:

- \$68.4 million in total economic output, consisting of \$53.8 million of output attributable to racing, \$8.2 million of output in the breeding industry and \$6.4 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- \$34.9 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$27.4 million of output attributable to racing, \$4.1 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$3.4 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- \$9.2 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$4.5 million in federal tax revenues, \$3.4 million in provincial revenues and \$1.3 million in municipal revenues.
- 1,146.3 FTEs of employment in BC, including 956.9 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of impacts related to racing occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region, while the impacts related to breeding and aftercare occur throughout the province.

Table 9: Estimated Economic Impacts of Thoroughbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024, High

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$3.7	\$1.3	32.6	\$0.2	\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$4.5	\$2.8	26.7	\$0.4	\$0.3	<\$0.1
Total	\$8.2	\$4.1	59.3	\$0.6	\$0.4	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$27.4	\$11.0	896.3	\$1.4	\$0.6	\$0.9
Indirect & Induced	\$26.4	\$16.4	140.6	\$2.1	\$2.0	\$0.4
Total	\$53.8	\$27.4	1,036.9	\$3.5	\$2.6	\$1.3
Aftercare						
Direct	\$2.8	\$1.1	28.0	\$0.1	\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$3.6	\$2.3	22.1	\$0.3	\$0.3	<\$0.1
Total	\$6.4	\$3.4	50.1	\$0.4	\$0.4	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$33.9	\$13.4	956.9	\$1.7	\$0.8	\$0.9
Indirect & Induced	\$34.5	\$21.5	189.4	\$2.8	\$2.6	\$0.4
Total	\$68.4	\$34.9	1,146.3	\$4.5	\$3.4	\$1.3

Standardbred Horse Racing

Table 10 shows the estimated expenditures in BC on standardbred horse racing in BC in 2024 by each segment of the industry. The standardbred horse racing industry was estimated to have spent between \$18.8 million and \$21.1 million in 2024. Racing operations was the largest component of the 2024 expenditure, accounting for between 29 percent and 33 percent of the total spending. This was followed by expenditures on wages and salaries which accounted for 27 percent of total expenditures and boarding and feed expenditures which accounted for between 17 percent and 19 percent of the total expenditures.

Table 10: Estimated Expenditure on Standardbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024

	Breeding	Racing	Aftercare	Total
Wages and Salaries*	\$0.8 - \$1.1	\$3.6 - \$3.8	\$0.6 - \$0.9	\$5.0 - \$5.8
Boarding and Feed	\$0.8 - \$1.1	\$1.8 - \$2.0	\$0.6 - \$0.9	\$3.2 - \$4.0
Training and racing	\$0.0	\$1.9 - \$2.0	\$0.0	\$1.9 - \$2.0
Veterinary Care	\$0.2 - \$0.3	\$0.4 - \$0.5	\$0.1 - \$0.2	\$0.7 - \$1.0
Other	\$0.3 - \$0.5	\$0.8	\$0.0 - \$0.1	\$1.1 - \$1.4
Racing operations**	\$0.0	\$6.2	\$0.0	\$6.2
Facility repair and maintenance	\$0.0	\$0.7	\$0.0	\$0.7
Total	\$2.1 - \$3.0	\$15.4 - \$16.0	\$1.3 - \$2.1	\$18.8 - \$21.1

*Wages and salaries includes wages paid by owners, trainers, TBC and GCE.

**Racing operations is TBC and GCEs expenditures net of wages and salaries.

Table 11 shows the lower end of the estimated economic impacts of standardbred horse racing based on the expenditures in Table 10. Standardbred horse racing in BC was estimated to generate:

- \$38.4 million in total economic output, consisting of \$30.5 million of output attributable to racing, \$4.7 million of output attributable to breeding and \$3.2 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- \$19.6 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$15.4 million of output attributable to racing, \$2.4 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$1.8 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- \$5.6 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$2.5 million in federal tax revenues, \$2.3 million in provincial revenues and \$0.8 million in municipal revenues.
- 573.2 FTEs of total employment in BC, including 464.6 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of impacts related to racing occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region, while the impacts related to breeding and aftercare occur throughout the province.

Table 11: Estimated Economic Impacts of Standardbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024, Low

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$2.1	\$0.8	18.6	\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$2.6	\$1.6	15.2	\$0.2	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total	\$4.7	\$2.4	33.8	\$0.3	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$15.3	\$5.9	432.0	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.5
Indirect & Induced	\$15.2	\$9.5	82.4	\$1.2	\$1.2	\$0.3
Total	\$30.5	\$15.4	514.4	\$1.9	\$1.9	\$0.8
Aftercare						
Direct	\$1.4	\$0.6	14.0	\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$1.8	\$1.2	11.0	\$0.2	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total	\$3.2	\$1.8	25.0	\$0.3	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$18.8	\$7.3	464.6	\$0.9	\$0.7	\$0.5
Indirect & Induced	\$19.6	\$12.3	108.6	\$1.6	\$1.6	\$0.3
Total	\$38.4	\$19.6	573.2	\$2.5	\$2.3	\$0.8

Table 12 shows the higher end of the estimated economic impacts of standardbred horse racing based on the expenditures in Table 10. Standardbred horse racing in BC was estimated to generate:

- \$43.1 million in total economic output, consisting of \$31.7 million of output attributable to racing, \$6.5 million of output attributable to breeding and \$4.9 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- \$22.1 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$16.1 million of output attributable to racing, \$3.4 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$2.6 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- \$6.0 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$2.6 million in federal tax revenues, \$2.6 million in provincial revenues and \$0.8 million in municipal revenues.
- 602.6 FTEs of total employment in BC, including 478.9 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of impacts related to racing occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest, while the impacts related to breeding and aftercare occur throughout the province.

Table 12: Estimated Economic Impacts of Standardbred Horse Racing in BC, 2024, High

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$2.9	\$1.1	25.9	\$0.1	\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$3.6	\$2.3	21.2	\$0.3	\$0.3	<\$0.1
Total	\$6.5	\$3.4	47.1	\$0.4	\$0.4	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$15.9	\$6.2	432.0	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.5
Indirect & Induced	\$15.8	\$9.9	86.0	\$1.2	\$1.2	\$0.3
Total	\$31.7	\$16.1	518.0	\$1.9	\$1.9	\$0.8
Aftercare						
Direct	\$2.1	\$0.9	21.0	\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$2.8	\$1.7	16.5	\$0.2	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total	\$4.9	\$2.6	37.5	\$0.3	\$0.2	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$20.9	\$8.2	478.9	\$0.9	\$0.9	\$0.5
Indirect & Induced	\$22.2	\$13.9	123.7	\$1.7	\$1.7	\$0.3
Total	\$43.1	\$22.1	602.6	\$2.6	\$2.6	\$0.8

Total Horse Racing

Table 13 shows the estimated total economic impacts of thoroughbred and standardbred horse racing. Horse racing in BC was estimated to generate:

- Between \$101.3 million and \$111.5 million in total economic output, consisting of \$81.4 million to \$85.5 million of output attributable to racing, \$11.8 million to \$14.7 million of output attributable to breeding and \$8.1 million to \$11.3 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- Between \$51.5 million and \$57 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$41.0 million to \$43.5 million of GDP attributable to racing, \$6.1 million to \$7.5 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$4.4 million to \$6.0 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- Between \$13.4 million and \$14.7 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$6.4 million to \$7.1 million in federal tax revenues, \$4.9 million to \$5.5 million in provincial revenues and \$2.1 million in municipal revenues.
- Between 1,690.9 FTEs and 1,748.9 FTEs of total employment in BC, including 1,410.3 FTEs to 1,435.8 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of impacts related to racing occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest, while the impacts related to breeding and aftercare occur throughout the province.

Table 13: Estimated Economic Impacts of Total Horse Racing in BC, 2024

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$5.2 - \$6.6	\$2 - \$2.4	47 - 58.5	\$0.2 - \$0.3	\$0.1 - \$0.2	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$6.6 - \$8.1	\$4.1 - \$5.1	38.4 - 47.9	\$0.5 - \$0.7	\$0.5 - \$0.6	<\$0.1
Total	\$11.8 - \$14.7	\$6.1 - \$7.5	85.4 - 106.4	\$0.7 - \$1	\$0.6 - \$0.8	<\$0.1
Racing						
Direct	\$41.3 - \$43.3	\$16 - \$17.2	1,328.3	\$2 - \$2.1	\$0.9 - \$0.9	\$1.4 - \$1.4
Indirect & Induced	\$40.1 - \$42.2	\$25 - \$26.3	214.7 - 226.6	\$3.1 - \$3.3	\$3 - \$3.2	\$0.7 - \$0.7
Total	\$81.4 - \$85.5	\$41 - \$43.5	1,543-1,554.9	\$5.1 - \$5.4	\$3.9 - \$4.1	\$2.1 - \$2.1
Aftercare						
Direct	\$3.5 - \$4.9	\$1.5 - \$2	35 - 49	0.2 - 0.2	\$0 - \$0.1	<\$0.1
Indirect & Induced	\$4.6 - \$6.4	\$2.9 - \$4	27.5 - 38.6	0.4 - 0.5	\$0.4 - \$0.5	<\$0.1
Total	\$8.1 - \$11.3	\$4.4 - \$6	62.5 - 87.6	0.6 - 0.7	\$0.4 - \$0.6	<\$0.1
Total						
Direct	\$50 - \$54.8	\$19.5 - \$21.6	1,410.3-1,435.8	2.4 - 2.6	\$1 - \$1.2	\$1.4 - \$1.4
Indirect & Induced	\$51.3 - \$56.7	\$32 - \$35.4	280.6 - 313.1	4 - 4.5	\$3.9 - \$4.3	\$0.7 - \$0.7
Total	\$101.3 - \$111.5	\$51.5 - \$57	1,690.9 - 1,748.9	6.4 - 7.1	\$4.9 - \$5.5	\$2.1 - \$2.1

Other horses

A horse's racing career typically ends between the age of 6 and 10 but they can live to 30 years or older. Following a racing career, horses that do not become part of the breeding stock go on to be sport horses, saddle horses and therapeutic horses. There were estimated to be between 950 and 1,550 former racehorses in BC that were not part of the breeding stock. The expenditures associated with the care of these horses was estimated to be between \$13.5 million and \$22 million annually. This does not include specialized training or expenditures associated with events that these horses participate in. Table 14 shows the estimated economic impacts of the care of these horses.

Table 14: Estimated Economic Impacts of the Care of Former Racehorses in BC, 2024

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (FTEs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Breeding						
Direct	\$13.5 - \$22	\$5.5 - \$8.9	133 - 217	\$0.7 - \$1.1	\$0.3 - \$0.4	\$0
Indirect & Induced	\$17.4 - \$28.5	\$11 - \$17.9	105 - 171	\$1.4 - \$2.2	\$1.3 - \$2.1	\$0.3 - \$0.5
Total	\$30.9 - \$50.5	\$16.5 - \$26.8	238 - 388	\$2.1 - \$3.3	\$1.6 - \$2.5	\$0.3 - \$0.5

Comparison of Economic Impacts with Other Industries

To provide perspective on the size of the economic impacts of horse racing in BC, it is useful to compare the impacts with those created by other industries and initiatives. One such industry is film and television production. In 2024 horse racing in BC was estimated to have generated total employment of between 1,690.9 FTEs and 1,748.9 FTEs which is between 4 and 5 times the FTEs supported by the production of a 10 episode season of a television series.⁷

4.3 Comparison with Past Studies

In 2008 HBPA and the BC Standardbred Association (now HRBC) commissioned a study of the size and scope of horse racing in BC. The 2008 study used a different methodology and categorization for activities. However, measures of the number of participants, direct expenditures, output and GDP used similar approaches. To provide perspective on how the size and scope of the industry has changed MNP compared the findings of the two studies using these measures.

Table 15 compares the number of licensed participants and direct expenditures on breeding and racing. Between the two studies, the number of licensed participants has declined by almost half. Breeding expenditures in 2024 were roughly 10 percent of what was spent in 2008, reflecting the significant decline in breeding activity that has occurred. Racing expenditures for thoroughbreds are approximately one-third of 2008 levels, while racing expenditures for standardbreds are roughly 60 percent of 2008 levels.

⁷ The first season of Sullivan’s crossing had 10 episodes. A 2024 economic impact study found that the production of Sullivan’s crossing generated approximately 385 FTEs of employment. See <https://cmpa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Case-Study-Economic-Impacts-of-Sullivans-Crossing.pdf>

Table 15: Comparison of 2008 and 2024 Participants and Expenditures

Measure	2008	2024	2008	2024
	Thoroughbred		Standardbred	
Number of licensed participants	1,920	1,079	750	487
Direct expenditures – Breeding (\$ millions)	\$35	\$3.1 - \$3.6	\$19	\$2.1-\$3
Direct expenditures – Racing* (\$ millions)	\$74	\$26.1 - \$27.5	\$25	\$15.4 - \$16

*In the 2008 study this was expenditures by trainers

The 2008 study did not provide economic impact estimates by breed. Table 16 compares employment, output and GDP impacts for breeding and racing for both breeds. Total output in 2024 is estimated to be roughly 27 percent of total output in 2008, while total GDP is estimated to be roughly one-quarter of total GDP in 2008. Employment generated by horse racing in 2024 was estimated to be roughly 50 percent of employment generated in 2008.

Table 16: Comparison of Output, GDP and Employment Impacts

Measure	2008	2024
Total Output – Breeding and Racing (\$ millions)	\$353.4	\$93.2-\$100.2
Total GDP – Breeding and Racing (\$ millions)	\$194.9	\$47.1 - \$51
Employment	3,588	1,690.9-1,748.9

5.0 Social Impacts

5.1 Case Study #1

Heritage and Tradition

Horse racing has a long and rich history in BC, dating back to the late 19th century. The first thoroughbred race in Vancouver took place in 1889 along what would later become Howe Street. Shortly after, thoroughbred racing moved to the Hastings East area, where the British Columbia Jockey Club established Hastings Racecourse in 1892. Originally known as East Park, Hastings has since become



Photo Description: Crowd in Grandstand watching a horse race in 1940¹²

Vancouver's longest continuously operating professional sports facility. By the early 20th century, the venue had evolved into a thriving social hub, attracting sports enthusiasts, politicians and business leaders, cementing its place in Vancouver's sporting and cultural history.

Richmond also played a significant role in BC's horse racing scene. With its two one-mile racetracks, Richmond became the province's thoroughbred racing capital, attracting thousands of spectators to its events.⁹ The track also served as an airstrip, playing a role in several significant milestones in Canadian aviation history.¹⁰

Meanwhile the early home of standardbred racing was at Patterson Park in Delta from the 1920s until 1968. Due to the need for a larger space, the standardbred racetrack days were moved to a bigger premises in Cloverdale.¹¹ This transition led to the opening of Fraser Downs Racetrack in 1976, originally known as Cloverdale Raceway. Since then, it has become the hub of standardbred racing in the province. Its founder, Jim H. Keeling Sr., is credited with modernizing standardbred racing in the province. During the peak racing years of the 1970s and 1980s, both Hastings and Fraser Downs held up to five race days

⁸ Vancouver Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). Hastings Park Race Course. <https://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/place-that-matters/hastings-park-race-course/>

⁹ Chan, K. (2023, August 6). Richmond's race tracks attracted large crowds, celebrities. Richmond News. <https://www.richmond-news.com/in-the-community/richmonds-race-tracks-attracted-large-crowds-celebrities-10060256>

¹⁰ City of Richmond. (n.d.). History & culture. Envision Minoru. <https://envisionminoru.com/history-culture>

¹¹ Delta Optimist, "Trotting Out Some Memories of Once Busy Paterson Park," Available: <https://www.delta-optimist.com/opinion/trotting-out-some-memories-of-once-busy-paterson-park-2942539>. Accessed: April 4, 2025.

per week.¹²

Live horse racing in BC continues at Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver and Fraser Downs Racetrack in Surrey, both of which have evolved over the years in response to changing market conditions. In addition to live racing, they offer teletheatres, with wagering at racetracks, off-track venues and online totaling approximately \$118 million annually.¹³

To attract new audiences, including families, both tracks have introduced community events and free live racing. They have also expanded beyond traditional racing by integrating casinos—often referred to as "racinos"—as part of their operations. The introduction of off-track betting has also played a role in the evolution of the sport. In 1994, TBC Teletheatre BC was established as a partnership between Fraser Downs, Hastings Racecourse and racing organizations, allowing residents to watch and wager on races remotely, further modernizing the industry.

Fraser Downs and Hastings Racecourse have been instrumental in preserving horse racing's heritage and ensuring its longevity in BC. As one of BC's oldest organized sports, horse racing is recognized alongside other major sports through institutions such as the BC Sports Hall of Fame, which celebrates athletes, contributors and moments that have shaped BC's sporting history. Horse racing is recognized by the BC Sports Hall of Fame as a foundational sport, with inductees like athlete Hedley Woodhouse (1979),¹⁴ and Jack Short (2001) and Dan Jukich as larger-than-life track announcers (2019).¹⁵

Hastings Racecourse, as Vancouver's longest-standing professional sports venue, has remained a cultural landmark, hosting premier events such as the BC Derby.¹⁶ As interest in horse racing has declined, both venues have blended tradition with modern entertainment in an attempt to maintain their relevance. Once described as the "Sport of Kings", horse racing in BC has become a sport for everyday people as owners are more likely to have regular jobs, than be independently wealthy.¹⁷

¹² Travel British Columbia. (n.d.). Horse racing in British Columbia, Canada. <https://www.travel-british-columbia.com/things-to-do/sports/horse-racing/>

¹³ Government of British Columbia. (n.d.). Horse racing in British Columbia. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/horse-racing>

¹⁴ BC Sports Hall of Fame. (n.d.) Hedley Woodhouse - BC Sports Hall of Fame. https://bcsportshall.com/honoured_member/hedley-woodhouse/

¹⁵ BC Sports Hall of Fame. (n.d.) Dan Jukich - BC Sports Hall of Fame. https://bcsportshall.com/honoured_member/dan-jukich/

BC Sports Hall of Fame. (n.d.) Jack Short - BC Sports Hall of Fame. https://bcsportshall.com/honoured_member/jack-short/

¹⁶ Vancouver Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). Hastings Park Race Course. <https://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/place-that-matters/hastings-park-race-course/>

¹⁷ Interview with breed association representatives.

5.2 Case Study #2

Low Barrier Employment

The horse racing industry in BC offers employment opportunities to a diverse workforce, including individuals who may face barriers to traditional employment. This includes those who have mental and physical challenges, non-native English speakers, or individuals without a high school diploma.

Many industry workers, such as grooms and hot walkers, develop specialized skills over years of hands-on experience, including equine handling (leading and calming high-strung racehorses), injury detection (spotting lameness or swelling) and post-exercise care (cooling down horses after training or races).

While these roles can be physically demanding, they offer accessible employment opportunities with a low barrier to entry for those who may struggle to obtain employment in other industries.

Despite the sometimes challenging working conditions, such as long hours and low wages, these jobs continue to be a critical source of income for many individuals who play essential roles in the industry, including grooms, hot walkers, exercise riders and stable hands. Seasonal work opportunities help the industry manage costs while providing flexibility and low-barrier experience for workers, including high school students and others seeking temporary employment.

In addition to providing low-barrier employment opportunities for marginalized individuals, Hastings Racecourse provides on-site accommodation to support its workforce. In 2024, 44 of the 55 sleeping rooms were in use by grooms, exercise riders, jockeys, trainers and maintenance personnel. Additionally, 14 personally owned or rented trailers house more workers, including grooms, trainers and exercise riders. Accommodation is a significant benefit for many of these employees who may otherwise be at a higher risk of housing insecurity. On-site accommodation not only offers stability and reduces commuting challenges but also may make it easier for staff to quickly respond to emergencies involving horses.

6.0 Conclusion

The horse racing industry in BC has a rich history and continues to play a role in the province's socio-economic landscape. Horse racing is facing challenges such as declining interest that is leading to fewer race days, reduced breeding activity and fewer horses. Despite these challenges, horse racing remains a vital source of employment and housing for those who may struggle to find alternative work and face housing insecurity.

In 2024 horse racing's economic contributions in BC were:

- Between \$101.3 million and \$111.5 million in total economic output, consisting of \$81.4 million to \$85.5 million of output attributable to racing, \$11.8 million to \$14.7 million of output attributable to breeding and \$8.1 million to \$11.3 million of output attributable to aftercare.
- Between \$51.5 million and \$57 million in total economic GDP, consisting of \$41.0 million to \$43.5 million of GDP attributable to racing, \$6.1 million to \$7.5 million of GDP attributable to breeding and \$4.4 million to \$6.0 million of GDP attributable to aftercare.
- Between \$13.4 million and \$14.7 million in total revenues for all three levels of government, consisting of \$6.4 million to \$7.1 million in federal tax revenues, \$4.9 million to \$5.5 million in provincial revenues and \$2.1 million in municipal revenues.
- Between 1,690.9 FTEs and 1,748.9 FTEs of total employment in BC, including 1,410.3 FTEs to 1,435.8 FTEs of direct employment.

The majority of these impacts occur in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region where the two racetracks are located and where the majority of horses are stabled throughout the year.

Appendices

Appendix A – Economic Impact Methodology

MNP's approach to economic impact modelling is based on published Statistics Canada multipliers and input-output modelling. A step-by-step overview of our approach to estimating the economic impacts is provided below.

Step 1: Estimate total expenditures for each segment of the industry

For each segment of the industry expenditures were estimated as follows:

- Breeding expenditures = expenditures on the care of horses + breeding expenditures
- Racing expenditures = expenditures on the care, training and racing of horses + track operations
- Aftercare expenditures = expenditures on the care of horses

To estimate expenditures related to horses, MNP used data gathered from the survey of owners, breeders, and trainers. An expenditure profile for basic expenditures associated with a horse was developed and then additional expenditures associated with active racehorses were estimated for each breed. The estimates were validated through comparisons with reported expenditures for horses from public sources and were shared with each of the breed associations. Adjustments to training expenses were made based on feedback.

Total expenditures were estimated as follows:

- Number of horses in each segment X expenditure per horse.

The expenditure profiles used are provided in Appendix B.

Expenditures on track operations were provided by GCE.

Step 2: Assign expenditures to relevant industry classification based on the North American Industry Classification System

Each category of expenditure on goods and services from Step 1 was mapped to the appropriate industry.

Step 3: Apply industry multipliers to expenditures

Industry multipliers from Statistics Canada were applied to each expenditure category to produce economic impact estimates for output, GDP, employment and tax revenues.

Direct GDP was estimated as being equivalent to wages and salaries as the industry is not producing an operating surplus in aggregate for industry participants.

Direct employment was estimated as follows:

- Breeding and aftercare employment was based on 300 hours of care per year per horse which was derived from information collected through the survey of owners, breeders and trainers. This was then converted to FTEs using 2,000 hours per year.
- Racing employment was estimated based on the number of unique licences provided by GPEB and employment information provided by GCE.

Appendix B – Assumptions

The table below shows the assumptions that were used to estimate the expenditures on horses.

Expenditure Category	Basic Annual Expenditures per horse	
Veterinary Care and Medical Costs	\$1,480	
Farrier	\$250	
Tack and equipment	\$250	
Feed	\$2,600	
Boarding (includes bedding, manure disposal, property maintenance and other costs associated with facility the horse is stabled at)	\$3,520	
Other	\$590	
Salaries and wages for care	\$5,748.75	
Basic Annual Expenditure	\$14,438.75	
Monthly Cost	\$1,203.23	
Additional Expenditures for Active Racehorses		
	Thoroughbreds	Standardbreds
Training costs	\$10,500	\$6,300
Jockey/driver fees	\$900	\$725
Race day caretaking	\$280	\$280
Transportation	\$470	\$470
Farrier (additional)	\$530	\$530
Insurance	\$460	\$460
Additional Annual Cost	\$13,140	\$8,765
Total Costs per Active Racehorse	\$27,578.75	\$23,203.75
Monthly Cost	\$2,298.23	\$1,933.65

Breeding costs associated with stud fees and foal registration fees were incorporated based as follows:

- Stud fee per mare = \$1,800
- Registration fee per foal = \$400



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