

Developing Plans for Horseback Riding Industry in Korea

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The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) announced the “Horseback Riding Vitalization Plan” as a joint project of relevant authorities and agencies at the Sejong Government Complex on November 19. According to this plan, the horseback riding vitalization project will be implemented as a collaborative project among MAFRA, Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) as it makes a large contribution to creating jobs, improving rural income, supporting young people to build good character, and establishing sound leisure culture.

This plan focuses on identifying short- and long-term policy tasks in the three project areas required to vitalize the horseback riding industry: “expanding infrastructure” (MAFRA), “improving systems” (MAFRA) and “expanding demand” (MOE, MCST), and systematically creating a horseback riding boom through inter-ministry collaboration.

Expansion of infrastructure

MAFRA is planning to make the foundation for everyone to enjoy horseback riding easily by expanding riding facilities and fostering riding trainers as follows:

For expansion of riding facilities, MAFRA will support the installation, improvement and maintenance of riding grounds of differentiated sizes in areas neighboring downtown as well as rural areas, considering the forecasted demand for horseback riding. However, such support will be provided preferentially in metropolitan cities, downtown and on the outskirts of cities. A large riding ground (20 horses or more) will be installed in areas neighboring downtown, and a small riding ground (three horses or more) in rural areas. Budget for installation, improvement and maintenance of riding grounds will be increased from 5.5 billion won in 2013 to 9.5 billion won in 2014. Supported facilities include indoor and outdoor riding grounds, horse stables, lounges and training facilities such as walking machine.

For training of experts, the current five designated horse industry expert training centers will be increased to 10 training centers by 2017. It will also intensively train experts including horseback riding trainers through national qualification tests.

For training of professional riding horses, MAFRA will designate one horse industry zone by the end of this year, and designate approximately five horse industry zones by 2017. It will also install a total of five horse training facilities, one for each zone, and supply more than 1,000 riding horses per year through the development of specialized horse farms (100 farms).

Expansion of horseback riding demand

To change the thought that horseback riding is a noble sport is an urgent task in order to

vitalize the horseback riding industry. In this regard, there will be efforts to expand opportunities for people to experience the educational and cultural effects of horseback riding and make horseback riding easier to access.

For expansion of student riding experience, MOE and the Korea Racing Authority will expand support to increase the population that experiences horseback riding from 20,000 to 30,000 people per year, and increase the number of schools participating in the Saturday Sports Day campaign from the current 37 to 100, in an effort to make horseback riding as school physical education.

For expansion of horseback riding competitions, MCST will increase the number of horseback riding competitions held per year from 24 to 30 by 2017, especially increasing competitions available for general clubs as much as possible. For adoption of horseback riding as an event of the National Junior Sports Festival, MCST is also planning to adopt horseback riding as a pilot and official event of the National Junior Sports Festival.

For Vitalization of horseback riding tourism, government will develop tourist courses (tracking course, etc.) that will link tourist spots and riding grounds across the nation (nationwide horseback riding tourism network) and implement horseback riding classes in downtown and a happiness sharing class for socially neglected people. For rehabilitation riding and healing, government will train rehabilitation horseback riding trainers, expand horseback riding healing centers from 3 centers in 2013 to 13 centers in 2017, and develop standardized models to establish rehabilitation horseback riding.

Meanwhile, the Korea Racing Authority is planning to expand riding grounds where national and international riding competitions can be held, and allow the people to easily access riding by providing convenient information such as the location of riding grounds, online application for riding class, and establishing and operating a riding grounds map and a riding portal site.

Improvement of systems

The government has decided to improve institutional conditions that may hinder the vitalization of horseback riding and provide consulting and other support to riding grounds suffering from financial problems. Administrative support for legalization of riding grounds will be provided to undeclared riding grounds (153 grounds) so that they can be operated legitimately. Mandatory insurance will be introduced, which is to buy insurance on all horses possessed by a riding ground so that users can enjoy riding with peace of mind. Support for consulting, improvement and maintenance for riding grounds will be provided.

Expected effect

The government announced that vitalizing the horseback riding industry would present various effects including vitalization of the leisure industry, creation of jobs, vitalization of rural economy and development of good character among the youth. In addition, MAFRA, MOE and MCST will launch a horseback riding development council participated in by relevant authorities, the Korea Racing Authority and experts, and review and evaluate the

performance of the project on a quarterly basis. Developing the horse industry into a complex cultural industry that contributes to improving the quality of life of the people through horseback riding will have the effect of 'killing three birds with one stone': vitalization of rural economy, building of good character of youths, and development of leisure culture. Particularly the government expects the realization of synergy among various areas including horse rearing, sports, leisure and education, through inter-ministry collaboration in this project.

Date submitted: December 8, 2013

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: December 11, 2013