

Designation of Horse Industry Special Zone

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The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) announced that Jeju Province has been designated as a horse industry special zone in accordance with Article 21, Paragraph 1 of the Horse Industry Promotion Act through strict review process as of January 2, 2014. Jeju Province has a good natural environment required for raising, training and using horses. Jeju represents 67% of the total horse population being raised (approximately 20,000 horses) in Korea and has 50 horseback riding facilities and grassland of 17,000ha (45% of 38,000ha nationwide). The plan is to develop Jeju Province as the outpost for the horse industry by establishing a development system through connecting horse raising, fostering, training and use by leveraging such good conditions.

As a new horse industry special zone, Jeju Province will be provided with the budget of 5.7 billion won (Livestock Promotion Fund for 2014) required to build infrastructure such as horseback riding facilities, base training facilities, artificial fertilization centers, expert training centers and riding horse production farms. This designation was determined through the review procedure for legal requirements subject to the Horse Industry Promotion Act and the Horse Industry Promotion Plan conducted by the review group comprised of experts such as universities and research centers. MAFRA introduced the horse industry special zone program as part of the follow-up actions of the establishment and implementation of the Horse Industry Promotion Act (September 2011) and the Five Year Horse Industry Promotion Plan (July 2012). Jeju has been designated as a horse industry special zone in accordance with the Horse Industry Promotion Act.

MAFRA plans to form a special zone evaluation group comprised of experts from universities and other organizations to evaluate the progress of the Horse Industry Special Zone Promotion Plan and conduct evaluation at least once a year in accordance with Article 25 of the Horse Industry Promotion Act. If the result of evaluation is insufficient, MAFRA will advise the zone to improve its investment and project plan or limit policy support, reinforcing post management. In particular, MAFRA announced that it would increase the number of designated special zones by closely analyzing the performance of the horse industry special zone in Jeju Province, while in the mid- and long-term perspectives, designating approximately five special zones (one per region) across the nation by 2017.

MAFRA expects that if Jeju Province faithfully implements a specific execution plan according to the horse industry promotion plan, it would take the initiative in fostering Korea's horse industry and also contribute to the stabilization of horse supply and demand. As Minister Lee Dong-phil said, "In the current situation when the scope of FTA is being expanded, the horse industry can bring new income sources to agriculture and rural communities, vitalize urban-rural exchanges and develop into advanced industry such as tourism, leisure (horseback riding) and 'healing' industries." "Designating Jeju as a horse industry special zone is meaningful because it will lead to building infrastructure required to develop the horse industry."

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