

# WHO IS FEIF?

FEIF unites people in their passion for the Icelandic horse

FEIF is the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, composed of Icelandic Horse associations in 21 countries. FEIF, from the German Föderation Europäischer Islandpferde-Freunde (Federation of European Icelandic Horse Friends), was established in 1969 in Switzerland. As a federation of national associations, FEIF is also the sum total of the members of these organisations. That means: FEIF really is you – and about 80,000 other people who love, ride, breed, care for, and passionately enjoy the Icelandic horse, wherever they may live, from Iceland to New Zealand. Phew – that is huge! But does it really help to answer the question? This series of FEIF leaflets on breeding, education, leisure riding, sports and youth work will explain the work of FEIF, and how we achieve our goals.



International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations

[www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org)

find us on  and  @feiforg

Photos: Christiane Slawik, Gundula Sharman, Neddens Tierfoto



LEISURE



# FEIF

International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations

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## FROM PLEASURE TO FEIF LEISURE

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# FROM PLEASURE TO (FEIF) LEISURE

## Regulating the unregulated

In 1998, FEIF invited a new member to the board with responsibility to look after leisure riding. However, very quickly the new director saw himself faced with an impossible task. On the one hand, leisure riders make up by far the greatest proportion of Icelandic horse riders, on the other hand, almost by definition, leisure riders do not like to be organised, to follow rules, and to follow a set of competitive goals. Is it not one of the greatest pleasures to take your horse out into nature alone, tune into your environment and leave everything else behind? And at moments, when we seek greater social engagement, to go out in (organised) group rides – is that not more easily done at local or regional level? How then would a department of pleasure riding function at international level? Very soon, the attention turned to education, by what is meant the training of trainers, and seeking a comparable standard across the Icelandic horse world, and the FEIF Education Department was born in 2002.

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Is it not one of the greatest pleasures to take your horse out into nature?



**Leisure riders are, by far, the largest group of riders within the membership of our 21 associations.**

## Bringing people together

In 2012 the FEIF Board started the (newly named) Leisure Riding Department again. This time the focus was less on literally bringing together non-competitive riders in joint events, but rather on providing services to the sector. This included projects regarding maps, and long-distance routes, and of course the work on the horse profile, identifying strengths and areas for development in individual horses so to find the best horse to match the needs and preferences of a buyer. <https://www.feif.org/LeisureRiding/RidingHorseProfile.aspx> More than any other department, the leisure portfolio shows up both the strengths and the challenges faced by the ambitious project that is FEIF, and our stated mission of: uniting people in their passion for the Icelandic horse. It is (relatively) easy to bring together sport riders, who are driven by demonstrating their skills, and those of their horses, in competition with others. It is also (relatively) easy to bring together breeders with the shared goal of protecting and improving the breed. Youth work focuses on a clearly defined group, and training trainers to the highest possible shared standards is completely goal-orientated. But what about the rest of us?



## Sharing (virtual) pleasures

Of course, as leisure riders (and do we actually not ALL ride for pleasure?), we share the passion for the Icelandic horse, and we engage in community at local and regional level. But what about 'uniting people' at the international FEIF level? The 21<sup>st</sup> century has not removed physical distances, and only makes somewhat fumbling attempts in overcoming language barriers, but communication technology is making a huge difference. With that in mind, the virtual ride <https://www.feif.org/LeisureRiding/VirtualRide.aspx> and the newly launched Instagram initiative, [@feiforg](https://www.instagram.com/feiforg) will help share our pleasure in the horse, and motivate us to come together at big occasions such as the World Championships or Landsmót and use the opportunity to turn virtual contacts into real friends. The future will tell.



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The leisure riding portfolio shows up both: strengths and challenges faced by FEIF.