



TACK 'n TOGS 2005

STATE OF THE MARKET REPORT

A guide to trends in equine retailing.

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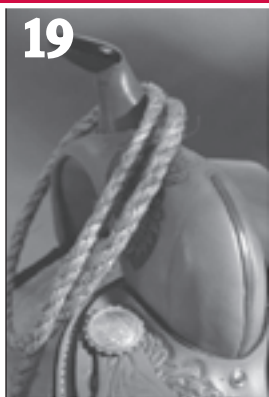
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How to Use This Report

OVER THE NEXT FEW PAGES, you will find one of the most comprehensive surveys of the equine trade industry, a 36-year tradition. Nearly 2,000 Tack 'n Togs readers—all of them retailers—were sent surveys and this year, a near-record number (540) returned them. That's an extremely high return rate. Thank you to everyone who participated.

The report is designed to offer something for everyone.

For retailers, it's a measuring stick by which you can gauge trends you're discovering in your business. For instance, if your store sells helmets, you'll be interested to note that nearly half of the retailers who responded said they believe they will be selling more helmets in the coming year. In Western stores, Western-themed gift items were pegged as the biggest growth category in the entire survey. Do you have a Western-themed gift section? Maybe it's time to create one or expand the one that you already have.

For manufacturers, the survey singles out the top performers in the industry in a variety of categories, and also gets them inside the heads of retailers. In this year's report, for instance, a number of Western retailers said they would be stocking fewer Western belts in

the coming year. That trend will be of great interest to belt-makers, who apparently will have to step up their marketing efforts or figure out why retailers project they'll be stocking fewer belts in the coming year.

Manufacturers will also be interested to note the findings of a first-ever asked question regarding advertisements in this publication. See what percent of readers surveyed said they respond to advertising in Tack 'n Togs, and what action(s) they said they took on page 26 of this report.

For suppliers, the report provides valuable information about customer satisfaction. It will tell you what's important to your customers, and how they feel you're doing at fulfilling your commitments to them. It also identifies problem areas that should be addressed in order to keep customers coming back for more.

The overall theme of this year's report seems to suggest a strong equine trade market with a great deal of optimism on the part of its retailers.

Barb Kastens

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