

KNOW YOUR DONKEY

Hiding pain is a survival technique

Humans are very familiar with pain – it hardly needs definition. Pain may be either physical or emotional. It can be difficult to decide which causes more anguish and hurt: a broken leg or a broken heart.

All sentient beings, including donkeys, experience pain. Over-worked, ill-treated donkeys suffer from broken spirits as much as humans would. Donkeys are instinctively aware of the possibility of death at the jaws of predators. The weakest animal in a herd will be the easiest to catch. Thus it is in the donkey's interest not to exhibit signs of pain or distress for as long as possible. This accounts for their stoical character and makes it difficult to identify or measure their pain.

Donkey welfare practitioners are regularly faced with donkeys that could be in pain.

In general, a donkey in pain will show reduced normal behaviour. Clearly, it is essential to know what is "normal" for

the donkey. The owner or carer knows the animal better than anyone else. Involve them in the assessment and discussion. Remember to note any physiological, environmental or husbandry conditions that could account for any of the observed signs, e.g. pregnancy, extreme weather conditions.

Owner communication, nursing and management

Once the professionals have treated and departed, it is up to the owner/carer to ensure the animal has the best chance of recovery.

Long-term measures

Is the owner performing procedures/mutilations that are painful and detrimental to the animal? What actions can be taken if this is so? In what way does the community feel that they benefit from adopting these painful practices? These are all important issues. It is beneficial to work with community development teams in order to address such matters.



Ill-treated donkeys suffer from broken spirits as much as humans would.

A volunteer veterinarian checks out a donkey in Darfur. The membranes of the eyes should be pink, the eyes clear, without any discharges. Image: Oxfam

Look for symptoms such as:

- general depression (a "dull" donkey)
- reduced interactions, self-isolation
- lowered ears, ears that fail to move independently to stimuli
- lowered head and neck: they may be held below wither height
- ineffective or sham ("pretend") eating or drinking
- inappetence
- anxiety
- abnormal aggression
- reluctance to move
- with abdominal pain, donkeys are less likely than horses to roll and kick at the abdomen.

Promote better care by advising on:

- Rest
- Water provision and best possible diet
- Assisted feeding/drinking: place food and water within easy reach, or feed by hand
- Comfortable environment (shelter, bedding, quiet, light, good ventilation)
- Regular removal of faeces and urine-soaked bedding
- A companion if appropriate
- Fly control
- Clean, dry equipment.

Studies addressing pain in donkeys:

- <https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/Professionals/Working%20Equid%20Veterinary%20Manual/WEVM-chapter-3.pdf>
- <https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/clinical-companion-of-the-donkey>

Equine Influenza declared in Nigeria

UNREGULATED TRADING OF DONKEY SKINS HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT



The International Coalition of Working Equids (ICWE), made up of Brooke, The Donkey Sanctuary, SPANA and World Horse Welfare warns of a potential disease epidemic in West Africa.

An outbreak of Equine Influenza, a highly contagious disease that affects all equines, has been declared in Nigeria.

The outbreak has infected 3 000 equines in the country and is attributed to the 'illegal movement of donkeys'. ICWE views this as related to the unregulated global movement and trading of donkeys for their skins. Neighbouring countries Mali and Ghana report donkeys with symptoms of the disease although these have not been officially confirmed.

ICWE is alerting at-risk countries of the threats of such an epidemic and offers support to governments and donkey-owning communities, including informing communities on prevention of further spread of the disease. ICWE believes the biosecurity threats and risk of disease spread are heightened in the unregulated global donkey skins trade – in live animals and

their skin-product. It believes the trade must halt until there is evidence to demonstrate that the trade is humane, sustainable and free from the risk of the spread of disease.

The coalition implores the at-risk countries to immediately prohibit movement of donkeys along trade routes and to tackle illegal movements.



www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/news/equine-influenza-epidemic-in-west-africa

EQUINE INFLUENZA

Equine flu is caused by strains of the influenza virus that affect the upper and lower respiratory tract of horses, donkeys and mules.

Once the virus has been inhaled, it inflames the lining of the airway, producing a sore throat and a cough. This causes the

membranes lining the airways to ulcerate, which disrupts the clearance of mucus and debris from the airways.

Equine flu is very contagious. With an incubation period of one to five days, it spreads rapidly. The disease is spread by the virus being released into the atmosphere by infected animals. It is mainly acquired through inhalation of virus from ill animals coughing and spluttering but also can be obtained from external

Signs of Equine Influenza

- A high temperature of 39-41°C which lasts for one to four days
- Harsh, dry cough that can last for several weeks
- Clear nasal discharge that may become thick and yellow or green
- Enlarged glands under the lower jaw
- Clear discharge from the eyes and redness around eyes
- Depression and loss of appetite
- Swelling of the lower limbs.



factors such as shared buckets or even humans working with infected animals.

Infected animals should be rested. Antibiotics have no effect against the virus, but can be useful to control secondary bacterial invasion.

Veterinary care, strict hygiene and isolation procedures should be immediately implemented.

Botswana donkey population drops drastically



The number of donkeys in Botswana has dropped to 140,000, a three-decade low and the first official estimate of the impact of rampant unregulated slaughter and trade.

Mbongeni Mguni of MmegiOnline reports that an authoritative report from Statistics Botswana (SB) has given the first concrete evidence of the devastation

ascribed to the skins trade. According to SB's agricultural survey, donkey numbers increased between 1979 and 2013, starting the period off at 127,000 and ending it at 310,000. Their numbers peaked in 2003 at 493,000.

However, the numbers also show that from 2013 they began dropping: to 227,000 in 2014, 178,000 in 2015 and eventually 140,000 in 2017, the lowest

population since 1984.

SB researchers believe several factors are involved. "The fall in the population of donkeys might be due to the exportation of their skins, increase in local consumption and the general decline in their use as a source of draught power especially for ploughing and planting, with tractors being used instead," the experts said in a survey.

Animal welfare starts with humans



The **Welttierschutzgesellschaft**, or **WTG** for short, is a non-profit organisation based in Berlin (Germany). In accordance with their German name, the charity focusses on the protection of animals worldwide. They cooperate with local partners in almost 20 countries.

VISION:
“A world in which animals are appreciated and treated according to their needs”

In Africa this includes Tanzania, South Africa, Malawi, The Gambia and Uganda. Following the mission “animal welfare starts with humans”, WTG always involves people in their work – local communities, children and animal owners as well as government representatives from all levels. Country-specific problems necessitate the creation of individual solutions.

WTG in Tanzania

One example with outstanding success is WTG’s action in the rural areas of Tanzania where more than 70 percent of the population lives and works with animals, their daily life being based especially on donkeys. The animals carry water from sources to the village, children to school, and harvest to markets. Without the loyal help of donkeys most people, in particular women, wouldn’t be able to handle these tasks.

But in the last years of growing instability due to droughts and floods, the pressure on these animals grew exorbitantly. The animals are often loaded too heavily, they wear ill-fitting harnesses and their wounds or injuries are not treated.

Furthermore, the massive lack of well-educated veterinarians in Tanzania, especially in the rural areas, reinforces the problem: only 250 veterinarians and 1,700 para-veterinarians are responsible for caring for over 40 million livestock in Tanzania – an impossible task.

Fixing the problem’s root cause

WTG is addressing the core of the problem by educating future vets and para-vets. Their programme **VETS UNITED** offers comprehensive educational material on animal welfare and animal health. This is available for free online and is already used in many countries all over the world.

The Tanzanian partner **Meru Animal Welfare Organisation** has already implemented the **VETS UNITED** Animal Welfare module at six colleges. After intensive training for lecturers by the programme’s local coordinator, Irene Wairimi Gichingiri,

the module is now offered for students of animal production and health studies, integrating animal welfare topics through lectures and practical sessions. Thereby the future vets and para-vets are better prepared for their professional life.

As a second step, the NGO aims to introduce the module into the national curriculum, aiming for it to become mandatory for all colleges offering animal-health-related courses. In addition to promoting veterinary care in Tanzania, animals benefit directly from weekly hands-on practicals where the students assist mobile clinics.

By the end of 2019, the programme will have reached nearly 1000 students in Tanzania, thus making a significant contribution to improving the living conditions of over 40 million farm animals in the country.

Emergency assistance

WTG provides rapid emergency assistance in life-threatening situations such as droughts and floods. Thousands of animals’ lives are saved by the provision of food and water supplies as well as medical treatment through the actions of several partners around the country, facilitated by WTG. Furthermore, the organisation has just started two projects in Tanzania to prevent animals’ suffering in extreme weather events.

Theft of donkeys

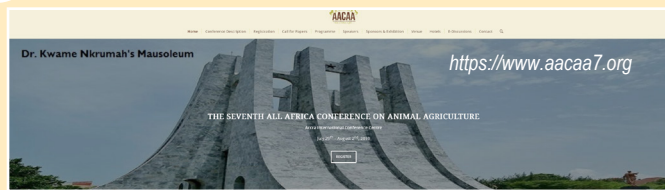
The organisation also provides a long-term solution for the short-term crisis of donkey thefts in the country. Together with its local partners, WTG built shelters for the animals and educated communities. Since setting up emergency protection in many villages no new attacks on donkeys have been registered there. WTG is still working hard on measures to ensure donkey thefts in Tanzania and neighbouring countries are stopped.

Tanzania is just one of many examples where WTG’s work for donkeys and other animals is visibly successful.





Diarise the All Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture to be held in Accra, Ghana at end July.



In the Malian capital of Bamako, donkey carts driven by young men play a vital role in battling the fast-growing city's waste problem.

The Independent



Making friends in Morocco.

A centre established by a British couple provides more than just love and care for donkeys.

See more via:
<https://www.news24.com/Green/News/watch-this-is-where-donkeys-go-to-retire-20190206>



Eseltjesrus Donkey Sanctuary in South Africa has extended their training outreach to the Eastern Cape.

Sponsored by The Donkey Sanctuary, this training includes an updated Guide. (Available via the DfA web library)



DonkeyQuiz

TEST YOUR DONKEY KNOWLEDGE

Q: Do donkeys need shelter from the elements?

A1: They should be cuddled, if possible, under a blanket.

A2: Donkeys need basic shelter from wind and rain.

A3: Donkeys are hardy and can survive anything.

Email editor@donkeysforafrica.org your answer.

Our previous Q was: *How often should donkeys eat?*

A: At any time, donkeys are trickle feeders and eat as necessary.

A lighter moment

Most working donkeys will be envious of this lucky little one!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUxZV_aq8E

Recommended reading

from The Horse.com



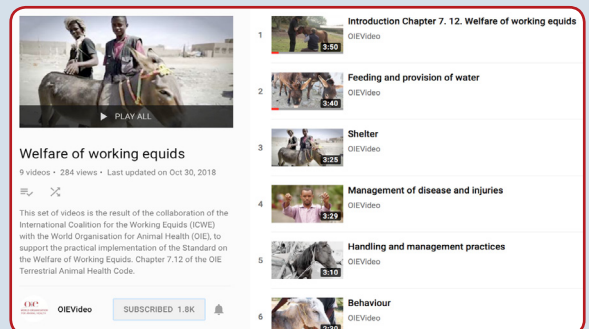
Stephanie L. Church, Editor-in-Chief for **The Horse** has published a brilliant interactive web article about the beasts of burden in Africa. (Available via the DfA web library)

A valuable link and worth reading.

<https://thehorse.com/features/beasts-of-burden-african-working-horses-and-donkeys/>

OIE has produced a range of instructional videos available in English, French and Spanish. (Available via the DfA web library)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkBRx6XRUMCic2mcwcs9RpXR81pW3Go1C>



Editorial

Challenges to the well-being of humans and animals in Africa keep recurring. Disasters caused by extreme weather conditions happen repeatedly: long-lasting droughts cause great suffering; floods and the resulting chaos are more immediate. Many parts of our continent are currently reeling under the effects of these events. Apart from the loss of human lives, there has been a devastating loss of infrastructure, and this includes the deaths of animals, including donkeys. These animals are vital in subsistence living and their owners are helpless without them. As one farmer pointed out, "I am alive but my donkeys are dead. Now I am no longer able to start my life again without them." Recognition of the role of donkeys in Africa particularly, is increasingly important, as is the role of the many unsung heroes looking after donkeys and educating people. Your work is critical. Be strong and be inspired by your colleagues in donkey welfare across Africa.



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