

A road towards sustainable change



Image: The Donkey Sanctuary

Animal welfare workers know that it can be relatively simple to intervene, but much harder to convince owners of donkeys to adopt a lasting solution.



Donkeys for Africa asked two organisations based in South Africa what tactics are effective in getting commitment from donkey owners.

They work in vastly different conditions: **Cart Horse Protection Association** (CHPA) has been in existence for 25 years, working mainly in the metropole of Cape Town where they monitor and provide support to people making a living by hauling scrap metal and other refuse with equine-powered carts. **amaTrac Uluntu** was established in 2012 and has made a major impact in the rural Peddie area in the Eastern Cape.

Both organisations agree that the key to success lies in the manner of engagement with the animals' owners. Mutual trust leads to open communication. CHPA explained that getting to know the carties and taking an interest in their family and personal situation, as well as the challenges they face in their community, builds relationships and trust. CHPA provides for every aspect of their equids' welfare so there is no excuse for poor welfare and abuse. They told us "What is good for one is good for all. This is critical. We do not bend the rules for good or better owners and drivers. Consistency and regular interaction are important." Further essential components are: "Be fair, and crucially, amidst all the challenges, remember to enjoy what you are doing for the benefit of equines all over."

amaTrac Uluntu aims to uplift the status of donkey owners and donkey interactions in villages. They present donkey welfare in a holistic training programme that includes basic

business skills, money management, humane education, donkey traction for food security and the Powerset harnessing and hitching system. Training takes up to six months or longer to complete and they continue to visit the villages to mentor donkey owners for a year or so thereafter.

In the Business Skills component they highlight that the donkeys and equipment are business assets and it is good business practice to make sure they are cared for. The 'buy-in' comes when owners realise this and that they and their donkeys are also assets to the community.

They explain: "We discuss the work they do for their communities and they begin to realise how important they and their donkeys are in the community. We mostly let them talk. We also commend them on anything we find that is commendable. This gives them confidence and builds the bridge where we can develop mutual trust and open communication."

There is no quick fix

There are no instant solutions. The secret always lies in respect, open communication leading to trust, and making sure that the benefits of practices are clear and understood. If we expect people to change their ways they must see that it is worth the effort.

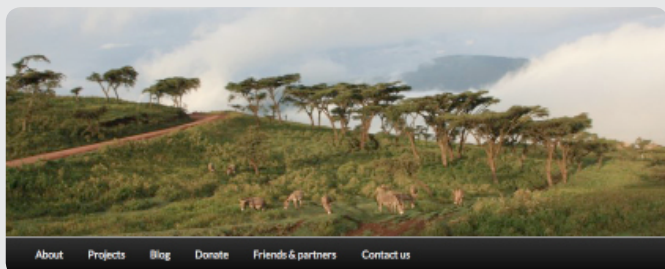
<https://carthorse.org.za>

<https://amatrac.wixsite.com/amatraculuntu>

INSIDE: DONKEY WELFARE SYMPOSIUM
2020 conference feedback and extracts
for the love of donkeys everywhere



Some donkey welfare organisations who achieve results against big odds:



Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO)

Tanzania Animal Welfare Society implemented a small project on donkey welfare in the Bujashi ward in Magu district in Mwanza region around Lake Victoria. The project was based on pack saddle making and involved donkey owners and Local Government Officials (Livestock officers and Village Executive Officers) in the area. The donkey owners' groups selected their leaders and were linked to Government Authorities in the area. The donkey owners will continue to make pack saddle harnesses and use them properly as trained. This will have a big welfare impact on the donkeys.

The project has been well received and there are many requests for presenting it to other donkey owners and Local Government Authorities in Magu district in Mwanza region around Lake Victoria. There are over 35 donkey owners' groups in this district.

www.taweso.org
tzanimal@yahoo.com

The Last Hope Community Based Organisation



Amos Supeet and Nicholas Mungiria are trained in harnessing, community development and management, animal health assistance and training of trainers.

They report: "We have engaged with the community in Kajiando towards the closure of donkey slaughterhouses in Naivasha and Mogotio, trained community donkey users on harnessing in Tanzania, trained higher education students in Mombasa on donkey welfare and engaged women groups in Naivasha on donkey welfare on several occasions.

If we can address harnessing related issues we can improve 75% of the welfare of working donkeys. Our work is to promote donkey welfare through educating donkey users and owners on harnessing, handling, donkey behaviour and general donkey welfare."



Vital cart building advice and training.

www.facebook.com/The-Last-Hope-CBO
lasthopecbo@gmail.com

Animal Welfare Resource Centre Society

This non-profit society assists donkeys in Kenya.

Wycliffe Khayega Gwatemba reports that they have done harness modification, teaching that a good harness should have breast band straps, saddle, belly band and breech straps, also that the donkey cart should be in good condition so that the donkey can pull it comfortably.

He explains that "Normal harness in Kenya is just a loop made of rope and sacks that the donkey puts its neck through, no saddle, no breeching, no breast collar. Resistance to

change here is high simply because it is so easy to use and cheap/easy to make. Because ALL the donkeys have always had wounds as long as can be remembered nobody notices them."

The government veterinary officer of the area does deworming, wound treatment and treats other diseases. Hoof trimming and related problems are then also attended to.

www.facebook.com/cicrcleoftrustdap



Education about proper harnessing is essential.



Global conference shares care for donkeys

The eighth Donkey Welfare Symposium organised by the University of California Davis took place per Zoom this year. DfA attended this event and took part in this important virtual conference (*at some late hours due to time differences, with a lot of coffee and chocolates consumed ...*)

Personal interactions and networking was missed, but the virtual event enabled many donkey carers to participate without the challenges of travelling.

Ben Hart, behaviourist from The Donkey Sanctuary, commented:

“The Donkey Welfare Symposium is a fantastic opportunity to share the latest research and thinking on all things related to donkeys.”

“If you have donkeys, protect donkeys or are trying to change the way other people treat donkeys, then this welfare symposium is an incredible learning opportunity.”

Dr Bojia Duguma from The Donkey Sanctuary in Ethiopia said “It is a pleasure and honour to be part of the Donkey Welfare Symposium 2020. I am much encouraged to hear that

there are also dedicated people out there who share our common goal – valuing donkeys’ nature and roles to our society; understanding donkey facts, investing in science, raising visibility, building their image in society and the development arena thus restoring their innate nature and value they deserve – demystifying negative tales and metaphors that prevail in society. Sustainable welfare impact follows recognition of their value.”

An illustrious panel of speakers included professionals from different countries. DfA shares some findings here in our report back.



Purchase all talks via Vimeo
<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/2020dws>



Methods for an ethical approach to donkey and mule training

Ben Hart, behaviourist at The Donkey Sanctuary www.hartshorsemanship.com

This recognised practitioner presented the wider vision that is often lacking in training. He emphasises knowledge of the science of equine behaviour rather than a ‘one-method’ mind-set.

Recognition and understanding of aspects of human behaviour is also crucial for successful and ethical training. “Taking the time to think consciously about how we treat donkeys and mules is essential in overcoming unethical training methods and handling.

Basing your handling methods on sound scientific principles is crucial if you want to set out the best practises for ethical handling” explains Ben.

We can all justify our own morals, and as such, we should all be able to consider ourselves ethical. He advised at this seminar that we should first look at how we do things and only then decide on how we act with clear understanding.

Decide on ethical training

- Consult your own moral compass: how do you make decisions?
- Think beyond yourself and your own desires or requirements.
- The best options ethically considered are methods that are the Least Intrusive and Minimally Adversive.

Understanding the principles of behaviour is crucial

Ben’s steps in shaping behaviour are simple but require thought, dedication and time. Often we are in a hurry to achieve a desired behaviour from our animals. Be gentle and take time, he advises.

What is not ethical?

- Not treating the animal as an individual
- Not considering pain and the environment in the solution
- Not using or understanding scientific principles of learning

- Not taking into account the animal’s emotional needs and responses.

Train for the behaviour you want

But first remove pain, check and create the right environment and meet the animal’s needs.



<https://EquitationScience.com/learning-theory/>
provides excellent advice on ethical approaches, aimed at horses but much of it is relevant to donkeys and their owners.

Ejiao in Northern America

KILLING DONKEYS FOR A MYTHICAL CURE IS NOT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE

An alarming presentation on the trade in ejiao products in the United States of America came from

Alfonso Lopez, Senior Corporate and Government Relations Consultant at the legal firm Becker & Poliakoff.



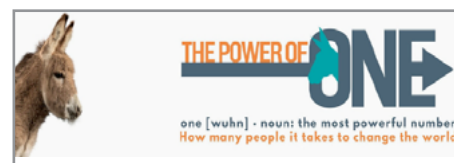
The United States is the third largest importer of ejiao products after Hong Kong and Japan. The vast majority of ejiao products are sold online in the United States.

Alfonso said "The growing sale of ejiao in our country deepens the crisis affecting donkeys and the communities who rely on them for their livelihoods. Moreover, the sale and trade of ejiao is completely unsustainable and hugely damaging to poor communities around the developing world.

The United States has the power to take a stand in the problems inherent in selling ejiao – from reducing the decimation of global donkey populations to the harm caused to global impoverished communities.

Brooke USA is working with the U.S.

Congress and Federal Administration to ban the sale of ejiao products in the United States of America. Online retailers such as Jet.com, eBay, and a number of other U.S.-based companies have already pledged to remove all products containing ejiao.



www.BrookeUSA.org
or contact Alfonso Lopez at
AH Lopez@beckerlawyers.com

The effects of mixed grazing in Kenya

Dr Wilfred Odadi, an ecologist at Egerton University in Kenya, discussed the findings of research examining whether or not donkeys can coexist positively with other types of large herbivores.

Cattle are ruminants while donkeys are hindgut fermenters. This means that donkeys per unit body weight have a higher through-put rate and a higher feeding rate than cattle, thus donkeys remove more vegetation.

A controlled study where donkeys and cattle grazed together, found that cattle and donkeys gained more weight when herded together than when kept separately. In addition the gastro-intestinal worm burden was reduced in the donkeys.



A further experiment including sheep with the cattle and donkeys in different combinations, found that such mixed species grazing companions also benefitted the sheep, translating further to enhanced economic returns for owners in faster growth of livestock and reduced expenditure on deworming drugs.

The studies show that grazing donkeys with cattle and other livestock, if properly managed, benefits both animal health and ecological health. Here is another good reason to preserve donkey populations.

www.egerton.ac.ke

No need to wash your donkey...

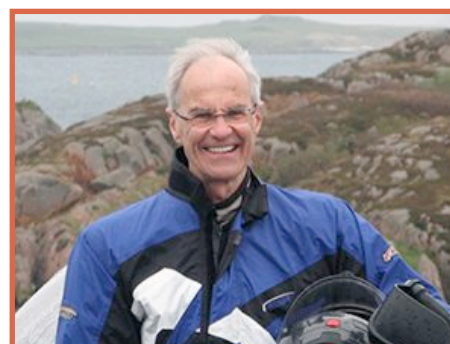
Professor Emeritus Derek Knottenbelt spoke on Donkey Dermatology, giving a comprehensive overview of this challenging speciality. Salient points from his talk included:

- Do no harm
- Do good

Derek believes that donkeys deserve respect and the best treatment.

He emphasised that the best road to avoiding dermatological problems is to keep a donkey healthy. Skin condition reflects the general health of the animal. A healthy donkey has a healthy skin.

Derek also pointed out the dangers of over-washing donkeys – they do not need it. Natural conditions and care are best.



<https://equinesarcoid.co.uk>

Compassion fatigue

Animal welfare workers are faced with the evidence of maltreatment (intentional or unintentional) of animals as well as the human factors involved.

Dr Michelle Kole, Clinical Psychologist from San Diego, California discussed the challenges facing welfare personnel.

All of us who work in care-giving settings run the risk of developing compassion fatigue, defined as profound emotional and physical exhaustion. This can negatively affect the work we do. Empathy, hope and compassion gradually become eroded. Ultimately it can lead to burn-out: the chronic condition of perceived demands outweighing perceived resources.

In her presentation Michelle pointed out that care-giving hurts! It is impossible to avoid the pain associated with professional or volunteer care-giving.

Various techniques were identified to address this, including accepting that we should focus on present behaviours to strive towards outcomes, and that outcomes are beyond our control. Your best is always good enough.

The importance of self-care was emphasized: health care, physical activity and relaxation, and the need for a spiritual component to life.

There is a free Professional Quality of Life Assessment at www.proqol.org. We encourage you to visit this website that is filled with useful information. Devote a little time to your own well-being! This will enable you to stay more effective in your work. You are needed by the animals as well as the people involved.

“Good mental health is a journey, not a destination” - Michelle Kole

www.proqol.org
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Identifying pain in donkeys

The biggest obstacle to treating pain in donkeys may be identifying the pain in the first place.

Emma Orth, Department of Animal Biology, University of California Davis

Challenges

It is well recognised that donkeys are more stoic and tend to express fear, pain, and discomfort in more subtle ways than horses. Thus it can be challenging to identify donkeys in a state of pain or discomfort until the animal has reached an advanced degree of disease, at which point veterinary intervention may be too late. Currently there is no evidence that donkeys have a different pain tolerance to that of other equines. Dullness and depressive-like-behaviours have been commonly reported as the only observable pain-related behaviours in donkeys, which is often accompanied by lethargy and reduced alertness, self-isolation or reluctance to contact with handlers.

Pain level measurement

This study presented by Emma Orth aims to identify signs of pain from both facial and body parameters in donkeys undergoing a surgical procedure. Scores were based on noted signs of discomfort/pain from the observed body language of the face, such as the eyes, ears, nose, nostrils, and muzzle, along with their overall body appearance.

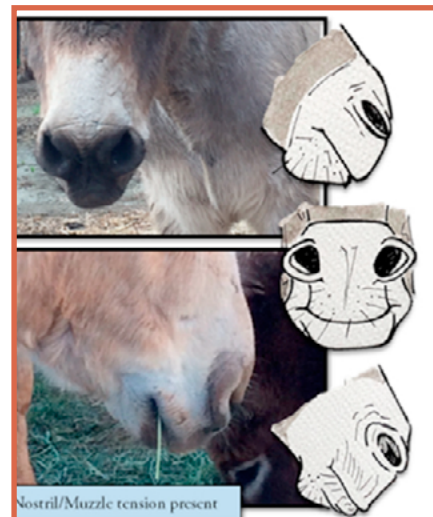
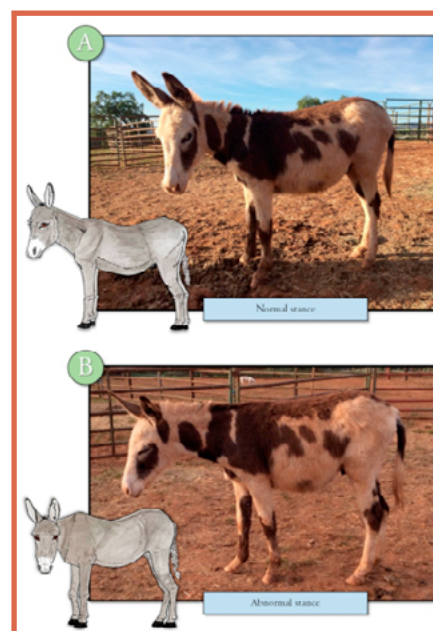
The study demonstrated that developing a scoring system donkey grimace scale proved to be accurate in identifying discomfort related to pain. However, the accuracy of the scale can be influenced by the observers' gender, level of donkey knowledge and experience.

The importance of experience

Results of the study indicated that observers with more donkey experience and knowledge are less likely to miss indicators of pain. Practitioners and owners can become more successful at identifying when a donkey is in pain by spending more time observing and becoming familiar with donkey behaviour in general. Identifying the appearance of a normal donkey may assist in decreasing the number of donkeys that go untreated, due to the subtleness of their behavioural pain indicators.

Nostril and muzzle tension and stance are some of the pain indicators.

www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/8/1411/html





Ethiopia

An inspiration for other countries?

Dr Bojia Duguma is based in Ethiopia and works for The Donkey Sanctuary. He grew up on a farm in Ethiopia and his family owned and worked donkeys. As a result he has always been appreciative of the help they gave and still give to families like his across the country. Bojia's tireless work to bring together different stakeholders for the benefit of the hard working donkeys of Ethiopia, demonstrates how a willingness to have an open mind, to learn, and to listen can bring about agreements in a world that seems to be so full of discord.

National Equine Strategy

Dr Duguma outlined the National Equine Strategy (NES), recognising the need for a national policy to protect working equids. Their essential role in livelihoods is to be recognized and formalized, and national investment in equine development promoted.

Bojia says "We hope Ethiopia's NES will be an example for other developing countries who own equines and genuinely seek ways of optimizing the synergy between various development actors and equine welfare charities to devise a better quality of life for equines and the poor people whose livelihoods depend on them."

To ensure the success of a national policy, critical evidence is needed, proving that

life would be challenging for 80 million rural poor people in Ethiopia without these animals. Most of the research conducted to date is merely anecdotal.

The community in its own language has the following two sayings: 'No Donkey, No water, hence no community' and 'A farmer without a donkey is a donkey himself'.

Factors influencing policy may include, among others

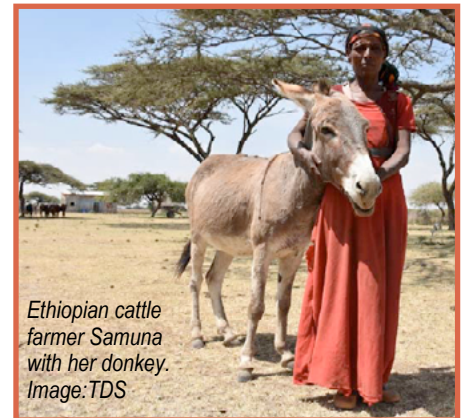
- working equines' socio-economic value (rural livelihoods, supporting agriculture, water access, market access and networking, women empowerment, etc)
- their share in the national GDP, and
- their role during emergency and relief during natural or man-made disasters.

Bojia pointed out that animal welfare, let alone donkey (equine) welfare, is still a top-down approach driven and supported by a few individuals and committed professionals with high moral values. It is not recognised in national livestock development plans. As a result genuine good animal welfare practice in Africa is lacking. National development strategies will pave the way to formulating a holistic, integrated and sustainable development plan for working equines.

This will create opportunities to diversify funds from global institutions desiring to transform rural livelihoods.

With the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture of Ethiopia, The Donkey Sanctuary UK together with various stakeholders including the academia, research organizations, development partners as well as equine welfare charities, has taken a big step to develop the National Equine Strategy (NES).

Bojia concludes that "We hope NES will ensure inclusion of working equines in national development, protect the national donkey herd from the irrational skin trade, as well as support in formulating a practical and sustainable welfare programme."



*Ethiopian cattle farmer Samuna with her donkey.
Image: TDS*

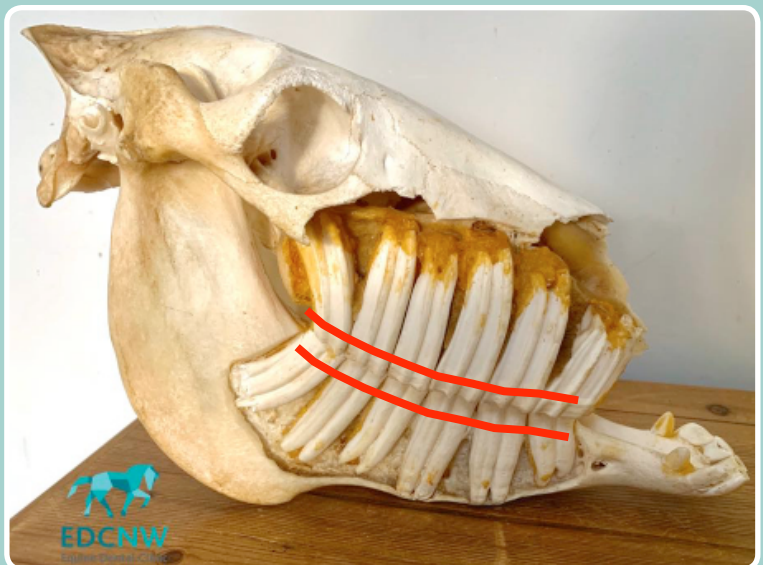
bojia.duguma@thedonkeysanctuaryethiopia.org

Dental disorders

Most working donkeys will never experience a dental examination. Some studies have been done to address this situation. One such was undertaken over four years in Egypt and is published in the Journal of Equine Veterinary Science, Volume 95, December 2020: **Highlights of this study:**

- The incidence of orodental disorders is 25.17% in working donkeys in Egypt.
- Sharp enamel points, buccal ulcers, and overgrown teeth are the most common acquired disorders.
- Displaced, deviated and retained teeth are the most common congenital disorders.
- The age and sex of the animal, year of examination, and geographic location are the risk factors for these disorders.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0737080620303658?fbclid=IwAR33dCHYAsI302NGZ5_AFWFuvyCh9XmpJKTVcYnVQZLgoNO9an_B4AxaxF0



What happens inside: Structure of a donkey's mouth by the Equine Dental Clinic North West (England). This shows how deeply the teeth are embedded in the bone structure. This donkey was five years old. The red line represents the gumline. www.facebook.com/EDCNW

World Animal Day in Cameroon



This was observed on 4th October by FAWCAM in Cameroon. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it may have passed unnoticed in many countries. However, **Dr Ben Fru Wara** of FAWCAM told Donkeys for Africa of their achievements in spite of the difficulties facing them.

Due to the prevailing crisis the government does not allow gatherings of more than five people. Consequently, only projects which involved very few people in a group could be done. Ben reports "We identified 44 farmers who use donkeys to plough fields. We dewormed 20 donkeys and treated five with multiple wounds. These farmers belong to a Cooperative Society - Common Initiative Group (CIG) situated in Pitoa, North Cameroon."

In addition, FAWCAM brought animal welfare under the attention of the Cameroon government through discussions with the Government Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries. *Well done, FAWCAM.*

Vet books for Africa

Vet Books for Africa is an initiative of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. They distribute veterinary textbooks, journals and other educational equipment and tools to veterinary faculties in several southern and central African countries. "We plan to use our passion for animals and medicine to find common ground upon which unique relationships between South Africa and fellow African countries can be formed. We hope to unite the veterinary students and faculties across Africa and contribute towards creating a sustainable world for animals and man alike."

An expedition was planned to take place to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi at the end of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a lot of obstacles, with the most significant being finances: during this challenging time sponsorships became few and far between. This venture will take place in the future, providing that cross-country borders are open, and finances are obtained.

www.vetbooksforafrica.org
info@vetbooksforafrica.org



Teaching children about dogs and donkeys

AWARE Trust in Zimbabwe believes that education is vital for all age groups. At their donkey clinics picture booklets containing compassionate stories about dogs and donkeys, are given out to children.

Rugare Munakiri (Dip Vet Sciences) is a Community Training Officer with Aware-SPANNA. "We persuade farmers to treat their donkeys as beasts that reduce their burden, not as a "beast of burden" says Rugare.

3 526 donkeys in Nkayi, Plumtree and Chivi were treated by AWARE-SPANNA vets at donkey clinics in rural Zimbabwe during a two-week period.



Recognition to MARES

Network for Animals (NFA) works worldwide in places where the local conditions often make it extremely challenging to help animals.



Their annual Brian Davies Award gives recognition to those who succeed, against overwhelming obstacles, in helping animals. This rewards organizations that work in dangerous environments, without any financial or logistical support, or meet with local or political interference or resistance.

A winner of the award this year is MARES: Matabeleland Animal Rescue & Equine Sanctuary in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. NFA explains: "Network for Animals has been helping MARES for three years, providing financial, veterinary and food aid for the donkeys. Claire Einhorn who runs MARES has impressed us with her absolute relentlessness in helping animals. Claire is indefatigable!"



<https://www.mareszim>
<https://networkforanimals.org/news/brian-davies-award-2020-and-the-winner-is-mares-donkey-sanctuary-in-zimbabwe/>

Now with added
HARNESS HELP
as a resource

Get help with harnessing NOW WITH A DEDICATED WEBPAGE

Harnessing is an on-going welfare challenge. Usually certain practices and equipment are common in certain geographic regions. Availability of materials and skills influence the end result.

Donkeys for Africa has hosted an additional webpage focussing on Harnessing Help. This provides a forum for discussion, presentation of ideas and sharing of successes and failures. Everyone who works with harnessing, is interested in harnessing or even just cares about donkeys, is urged to participate and share their knowledge.

Our regular Facebook Posts with abbreviated help from expert Chris Garrett about harnessing will also continue to spread this important information.



Gambia Horse & Donkey Trust

The Autumn 2020 Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust Bi-Annual Newsletter is available at www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk/autumn2020.pdf

Their motto says it all: **Fighting poverty – feeding families.**

This reinforces the concept of One Health, One Welfare – animal and human welfare inextricably linked.



A relative donkey

Did you know the Asiatic wild ass *Equus hemionus* or kulan (khulan) or Transcaspiian wild ass is a relative of the donkeys we know? Kulans are found in Central Asia and have been reintroduced to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

Dr John Linnell presented an interesting summary of efforts to relocate and “re-wild” small kulan populations to preserve this endangered species, at the recent Donkey Welfare Symposium.

Identifying donkeys - feedback sought

DfA has published regular newsletters since April 2017. Going back on some previous topics, we wonder if possibly some readers could provide some fresh input?

Dr Peta Jones raised the question of how effective reflective collars are in protecting donkeys against traffic at night. There has also been the suggestion that the reflective collars could deter predators. Does anyone have feedback on this?

The ongoing question of identification of donkeys: branding, hoof-marking, electronic micro-chips all have their advantages and disadvantages. We won't even mention ear mutilation. Any creative thoughts on this? Peta mentions the advantages of a good relationship with your donkey so that it will recognize its owner. This does not address the problem of finding owners of stolen donkeys, however.

Please email us your thoughts.



From the editor

Fatigue is common at this time of the year. It has been a year filled with unexpected challenges, as well as the usual ones of finding funding for effective projects. Donkeys for Africa focusses on the “little people” in this issue: those who persist in their work regardless of cuts in funding and difficult social and political conditions.

Remember that every donkey helped, and every owner who is better off with healthy animals, is a step towards improved welfare for all. One Health, One Welfare must be our goal. We wish every one of you good health, a safe year-end and a healthy and fulfilling 2021.

Stay safe and see you in February!

editor@donkeysforafrica.org

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