

DARK DAY FOR DONKEYS

Kenyan Court lifts ban on donkey slaughter



Numbered for slaughter. Image: WTC



Watch a report from Voice of America: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX6LcsblWRM



Africanews.com reports that the High Court in Kenya has again cleared the way for the slaughter of donkeys. A ban had been imposed on the slaughter of donkeys for their meat and skins in 2020.

A slaughterhouse challenged the ban in court, saying that they were losing revenue. "The government has failed to sufficiently defend this case and this court quashes the Legal Notice 63 of 2020 as it violates the rights of Star Brilliant" said Justice Richard Mwongo in his ruling.

This in spite of opposition by government departments and the Association of Donkey Owners in Kenya.

Kenya has about 1.2 million donkeys compared with 1.8 million a decade ago. The value of an adult donkey has more than tripled in Kenya, and some slaughterhouses are buying the animals from neighboring Uganda and Tanzania.

This has also resulted in many gangs operating in donkey theft across the borders of these countries. **Brooke East Africa** Regional Director, Dr Raphael Kinoti said "This is a massive blow for donkeys, animal welfare, and especially for the hardworking people who rely on donkeys to

earn a living and provide for their families. This trade has had a horrific impact on them, with donkeys being stolen and sold to these slaughterhouses."

He further states that "Brooke East Africa together with all our partners will continue to advocate and lobby governments across the region to issue a total regional ban to curtail this illicit trade that is depriving communities of their livelihoods."

The trade in donkey skins was also discussed by animal welfare experts at the recent seminar for draft animals (see page two) with a consensus that information and pressure needs to be directed at all levels: Government, NGO's, business,

donkey owners, community leaders and the general public purchasing products containing ejiao obtained from donkey skins. "The fight is far from over and is also of concern in Tanzania with unregulated operations in this region" said Simon Pope, Tactical Response Head from **The Donkey Sanctuary(UK)**. "Along with The

Brooke we are re-grouping and we will be challenging this recent ruling. Killing donkeys for meat or for skin by-products is simply wrong and not sustainable for our planet let alone emerging economic areas."

Donkeys are too valuable to allow unscrupulous people to butcher them for short term personal gain.

Share your views about the donkey skins trade & slaughterhouses by commenting on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/donkeysforafrica or by emailing editor@donkeysforafrica.org

Draft Animals: past, present and future

Conference spans in knowledge from around the world about draft animals

In this virtual two day conference organised by Dr Claus Kropp <draftanimals2021@gmail.com> the most common species of draft animals were discussed.

The disparity between attitudes to draft animals in developed countries and in emerging communities was evident. For the former, reverting to draft animals is often an interesting experiment or a personal passion – in the latter it is a matter of survival.

Not many animals are as multi-functional as the humble but clever donkey.

Oxen are not as agile as donkeys in reaching places to collect water, and wood for fuel. It was said that many poor rural farmers in northern Ghana would prefer to own a donkey rather than a tractor as the donkeys can access parts of the bush that tractors can't, and they can plough, which some forms of mechanised transport can't do.

Draft animals often suffer welfare problems, particularly in poorer communities. One opinion was that organisations that

focus on welfare should not promote draft animal power, as this can lead to poor animal welfare. On the other hand it gives an opportunity for education to benefit both the animals and their owners.



One such example is amaTrac uluntu in South Africa. Director Michelle Griffith said “We also work with rural donkey owners to form donkey owner support groups to track missing donkeys and report skinning operations to us and the local animal welfare groups. Our main work is empowering donkey owners to realise their own and their donkeys’ value to their communities.”

The key seems to be to create policy solutions to present to decision makers, that will persuade them to recognise the value of these animals and their role in improving human life in all aspects, including economic and social factors.

It was heartening to see how many animal welfare organisations and individuals from around the world truly care about these beasts of burden, especially donkeys.

Questions from our readers & advice from donkey care practitioners

From Animal-Kind International: Is there evidence that reflective collars on donkeys discourage predators?

Reflective collars are a cheap and simple way to make donkeys more visible at night, particularly on roads where they are often the victims of motor vehicle accidents. Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO) points out that they have never had a case of a collared donkey being attacked by predators, but it did happen to some non-collared donkeys. Further investigation is needed.

From Hanna Rhodin, National Director, SPCA Windhoek, Namibia: Are there any resources/info sheets/case examples of equines trekking for lengthy distances? (There are of course different perceptions of “lengthy distances”).

Peta Jones comments: The Silk Road started being used around the second century BCE and donkeys were a key element. Large caravans would travel for several weeks between cities, which would act as staging posts so that the donkeys could be left there to recover and be collected on the way back and fresh donkeys be taken for the next stage.

From TAWESO: In Tanzania there is a regulation which prohibits trekking of animals as they can cause road damage and also transmit diseases. But in reality there are many cases of donkey trekking as the animals are used to ferry goods to

markets sometimes over 20 km away. Traders moving donkeys for the skins trade would spend over a week covering about 200 kilometres.

Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust writes “We did loan out two donkeys to make a trek the length and breadth of the country with two explorers. We sent them off with locally made harness that we had designed and a local cart and they covered almost 1000 kilometres. They returned just a few days after we had held our annual show, but were in such excellent condition that they would have won a prize.”

In Europe Donkey Trekking is a well established tourist industry.



Image: Donkeywise

EMPATHY IN LIBERIA



The Liberia Animal Welfare & Conservation Society (LAWCS) provides humane education materials which nurture love, kindness, and compassion for animals, other people and the environment. The children are the future leaders, and care givers of animals and the environment and our humane education program helps to prepare them as compassionate citizens whose decisions will improve the health and welfare of animals.

LAWCS was founded in 2004 by Morris Darbo. In 2016 it became a partner organisation with Animal-Kind International (A-KI). It provides free veterinary care and treatments for animals in need, visiting remote communities daily where there is no available veterinary service. The staff live in the communities where they work. They are role models and their intensive, broad-ranging programmes create a deep understanding, kindness and compassion for all animals.

Outreach to Guinea

In 2018 animal lovers contacted LAWCS about the suffering and health needs of working donkeys in Guinea. There was no local organization there that could address this. LAWCS assessed the situation and at the beginning of 2019 sent a team to Guinea to provide free veterinary care for the animals in critical need.

That led to the establishment of a local presence in Guinea. Over 5,000 working donkeys and cattle in Guinea have benefitted and over 10,000 animal owners and children have learned about the welfare and health of the working animals.

There are two local staff - a vet and an educator who work under the direct supervision of LAWCS, who has also registered a local organization there.

Donkeys are used largely by children and women: for agricultural work, fetching water and firewood, and transporting foods, construction materials and waste. The major welfare

issues are lack of veterinary care, lack of proper diets for the animals, lack of sufficient fresh water during the dry season and lack of proper shelter.

Education creates change

As children interact a lot with the donkeys, great emphasis is placed on animal welfare education in schools and communities. "At LAWCS, we uphold education above all else. We believe that changing the way people think, and opening up their minds to other possibilities can truly make a difference. The most important and sustainable way of curtailing future cruelty to animals, people and the environment is through participatory humane education programmes that instil in the younger generation the values of kindness, empathy, love and compassion for all life."

The intervention by LAWCS has changed the attitudes to donkeys. People have started to value their donkeys and appreciate the work they perform.

LAWCS comments: "The COVID-19 outbreak has greatly affected our program. The outbreak has reduced the level of financial support we got from supporters and forced us to change some methods to reaching out to the communities. We have reduced the number of people and animals we meet at our sessions."



www.liberiaanimalwelfaresociety.org



www.facebook.com/LiberiaAnimal



lawcs001@gmail.com



Watch a video of achievements at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_B3M2_FCCa&t=18s

DONKEYS ARE PRECIOUS – EVERYWHERE

LAWCS has been promoting the positive effect of teaching children that all animals deserve respect and love - with amazing results. This organisation is also changing traditional ways of how donkeys are understood, cared for and used in rural areas.





On-line training for Paravets sought

An appeal from Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust for information on training courses – this must be of interest to many of our readers. “We would like to establish or find an online course with a focus on equines and small animals that would suit Paravets all over the world, in association with a recognised vet school or college that would give them an internationally recognised qualification. If anyone has any knowledge of how we could go about this or knows of an existing course we would be very interested to get feedback.” Please let us know at contact@donkeysforafrica.org



Read about news from The Gambia: www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk/spring2021.pdf

Did you know?

Donkeys were found to have been first domesticated around 6 000 years ago (about 1 500 years after cats were first used to catch mice). Donkeys initially started helping people to carry water and goods. Six hundred years later the first chickens would lay eggs for humans.

As a perspective it took around another 4 000 years for man's next best friend to come along and be domesticated.



Image: Musicians of Bremen, a Grimms' Fairy Tale (1819).

Jack problems

The issue of whether to neuter (geld) jacks is a difficult one. Ungelded males can be aggressive towards each other and jennies in season, even to the point of causing death.

This unfortunate jack had his tail bitten off in a stallion fight. The resulting wound care and pain control affects the donkey and the owners, and the behaviours persist. Gelding should be done by a qualified veterinarian, which is a challenge in remote areas.

Community attitudes also play a role. Any solutions?



Donkeys are better than horses in rough terrain

The answer lies largely in the anatomical differences of the hooves: in donkeys the hooves and hoof pastern axis are more upright than that of the horse.

A donkey's hoof is smaller and more oval shaped allowing for better hoof placement. The traction and grip in the rear portion of the hoof is better and donkeys and mules have much thicker soles, making them less susceptible to sole bruising and tenderness. www.facebook.com/EquitarianInitiative



Funding opportunity

Animal-Kind International's 4th Annual Africa-Based Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program opens today! The grant application, guidelines, and FAQs are available at www.animal-kind.org/grant-program-2021. The deadline to submit a proposal is June 21. Grants will be announced on 1st August 2021.



Zambezi Working Donkey Project (ZWDP)

This organisation has, during a difficult year, completed many local community outreach visits to clinics, local markets and individual homes, while also helping donkeys from their own workshop and rescue centre at their Maramba Farm base in Livingstone.

An essential aspect, according to Sarah Harvey, was developing a network of Community Livestock Officers in key villages: “Growing local village participation, and educating how donkeys that are cared for can then be more productive is essential” she said.

Get their full report by emailing zambezworkingdonkeyproject@gmail.com



OXPECKERS
Investigative Environmental Journalism

Stay updated about the Donkey Skin Trade

Bookmark and follow Oxpeckers. They are supported by The Donkey Sanctuary for their donkey skin investigation expenses that disclose the latest atrocities against donkeys from around the world.

<https://oxpeckers.org/investigations/donkeytrade/files/>

From the Editor

When faced with deliberate cruelty it is extremely difficult to manage the situation in the best way. Intervention is required, yes – but how to address the root cause? We are pleased to see the reactions of some welfare organisations when called to help donkeys suffering at the hands of youngsters. The donkey is taken to a safe haven for treatment and rest and the youngsters have to report in at specific

times to be taught proper handling and care, along with respect for the animals. Only when the organisation is satisfied that their attitudes have changed, are they allowed to take the healed donkey home. To quote LAWCS: Education Creates Change. Our respect to all of you who invest in humane education, formal and informal.



editor@donkeysforafrica.org



www.donkeysforafrica.org



Donkeys-for-Africa



Supported by
THE DONKEY SANCTUARY
www.thedonkeysanctuary.org