

Succession advice for humans and donkeys

There are similarities between working donkeys and people in animal welfare.

Animal welfare workers, like donkeys, usually work in teams, and have similar workloads and often need to deal with similar challenges.

A few parallels with no disrespect to humans or any hard-working donkeys:

Workload

Factors to consider regarding what workload can be carried or hauled by animal welfare workers and donkeys:

- **the degree of fitness** – are your colleagues/donkeys healthy and physically and mentally prepared?
- **the training presented** - have you trained your colleagues and the working donkeys in a way relevant to the work required?
- **the distance of moving the load** - how big is the load or project, is it achievable?
- **the way the load is distributed** - is the work or load evenly shared and correctly distributed between the human team members or your willing working donkey team?
- **the harness (or equipment provided)** - does it make the work easier and help you / your donkey team?
- **the resistance or friction experienced** - are there obstacles in the way of you or your donkeys? How do you plan to remove such?
- **the efficiency of your team**, whether amongst your colleagues or your team of donkeys.

Leadership

Being at the head of an organisation has challenges:

Responsibilities for staff, salaries and funding, project planning and execution, dealing with competing demands for attention. Funders and our operating environment can be fickle and demanding. A project may have to be halted in midstream if funding is exhausted or removed for some reason. What is your back-up strategy? Covid is a good example.

Succession

The heartbreak of seeing years of hard work fall apart can be avoided with good succession planning:

identifying and developing new leaders who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die. This applies to working donkeys and your welfare teams.

Responsible donkey owners will select donkeys to ensure healthy animals that can work into the future, will give them time to mature and gradually make them fit for the required work. This is exactly what succession planning in organisations is also all about.

In your own organisation have a 'shadow' who could take over gradually. Never 'own' a project. Allow others to take an active role in planning and executing projects. Cross-training ensures

that employees are prepared to under-study key jobs when someone resigns, takes leave or becomes ill. (Have reserve young working donkeys that can work when needed and are ready to help.)

Ensure your work is documented and recorded - this includes regular back-ups of your computer data. Never leave a vacuum should you leave or be temporarily not available.

Donkey welfare is too precious to be in the hands of individuals. Use proper planning to leave a legacy of success and achievement. Make sure your good work is sustainable and that it will live on.

The heartbreak of seeing years of hard work fall apart can be avoided with good succession planning...

There should always be someone who has your back and can support what you do.

This applies to donkeys and humans alike.

* Disclaimer: Opinions below do not necessarily reflect those of DfA - we are not veterinarians.

Advice from donkey care practitioners

Thanks to TAWESO in Tanzania, Stephen Blakeway, amaTrac Uluntu in South Africa, Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust, Bam Animal Clinics in Uganda, Daniela Schrudde at WTG, and Peta Jones from Donkey Power. Contact editor@donkeysforafrica.org to share your donkey care solutions or for us to put you in touch with any donkey welfare organisation.

Deworming concerns

We asked a number of readers to comment on the question: “Should donkeys be tested prior to getting de-wormers, should one deworm routinely, and should donkeys be de-wormed at all?”

There is global concern about resistance to deworming medication. More resistant worm species are emerging to cause problems once the less resistant worms are out of the way. There is growing awareness of the interactions, most of them positive, between a host and the multitude of other organisms that live together in the gut. Healthy animals are able to maintain a healthy relationship with their parasites, and treat any imbalance as an indicator of dis-stress. Donkeys are possibly better protected with a light infestation of internal parasites than trying to get rid of them entirely. The consensus is that de-wormers should only be used after a definitive diagnosis that worms are in fact the underlying problem. There are huge differences between individual hosts in egg shedding, with some being super-shedders. If worms are considered a herd problem, it is best practice to take full herd faeces samples and then only treat the high-shedding individuals. Obviously lack of diagnostic equipment and practical considerations make it difficult to do this before mass treatments.

Broad spectrum antihelminth drugs like Albendazoles, Oxytocanides and Clorsulon combined with Ivermectin are commonly used states **Bam Animal Clinics**.

Antibiotics and the Purple Spray

Donkeys for Africa asked for comments on the widely used ‘Purple Spray’. Love it or hate it - there is surely no animal welfare worker who has not used this spray.

Why is it purple? A purple dye is included in the formulation so that the area treated can be easily identified to ensure full coverage (from a manufacturer).

What is in it? Check the can for full details. General antibiotic wound sprays should become a thing of the past. Some of the sprays only contain things like gentian violet and possibly a fly repellent.

From a veterinarian: “If you use this spray or wound powder, throw it away – please! Any powder or coloured spray will interfere with how we assess the wound. The colour of the tissues and any discharge is important in our decision making.”

What about thrush? Purple spray can be applied but take care not to use too many chemicals on the frog (*the V-shaped soft tissue area under the hoof*) as, although they kill the thrush, they also slow the growth of healthy frog.

Natural alternatives

Natural remedies are available with turmeric often used to heal wounds. Honey has also been recognised as being a salve for wounds - if available and practical.

Here are some other solutions shared with us:

- **amaTrac Uluntu** teaches donkey owners to make a plant based ointment which is safe and easy to apply to any external wound.

- **Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust:**

“Clean wounds with salt water and use Filtabac cream or local honey or Aloe Vera.”

- **From donkey expert, Stephen Blakeway:** “The way to treat most simple wounds is to remove the cause of the wound - correct the harness, stop the bleeding, keep the wound clean and keep fly free till it heals by itself. Where it is possible to keep the wounds checked and clean or lightly covered, it is best not to spray or tar them - they will heal much faster uncontaminated. However where re-checking is not possible, Stockholm tar and the antiseptic/fly repellent sprays can be useful. Healthy animals are generally good at healing their own wounds. Complex or chronic wounds eg furunculoses, hoof wounds, tooth wounds, EZL-type wounds - require more care. If that is impossible to provide, go back to basics: ensure nutrition and water provision are optimal, keep cleaning and other general nursing care, and rest the animal until it has healed itself as best it can. Of course many working animals do not have the luxury of any of these possibilities, which is why prevention is best.”

- **Peta Jones from Donkey Power** likes saline solution for cleaning wounds, and also recommends Stockholm Tar. “Once the wound is properly cleaned out, and if the tar is nice and thick, a generous covering may be applied. It keeps out bacteria and flies as well as the dust, and can be left in place until it shows signs of wearing off, whereupon almost always it reveals clean, healed flesh.”

- **Welttierschutzgesellschaft (WTG)** remarked: “Regarding the purple spray...oh dear...that is a never ending discussion. We even used it in human medicine. Then the discussions started whether it is carcinogenic. For humans it is no longer allowed in Germany. Traditional working vets still use it. Medicine is a compromise and there is not just this ONE answer. It would depend on the situation, the general health status of the animal, the age of the animal etc.”

Let us know your comments and solutions.



Wound healing after using turmeric.

The Lesotho Equine Welfare project

supported by World Horse Welfare (WHW)



WorldHorseWelfare

www.worldhorsewelfare.org



After completing a project to train community-based saddlers and farriers in Lesotho, World Horse Welfare investigated other key equine welfare issues.

In 2017 the Lesotho Equine Welfare project was launched.

A team from the Faculty of Agriculture at the National University of Lesotho now works very closely with district level government extension staff and district vets, as well as the Head of Equines from the Ministry of Food Security and Agriculture on this on-going project funded by World Horse Welfare. It has technical support from the BEVA Trust in the form of many volunteer vets. Operating in five districts, it has trained over 30 government extension staff, 18 local farriers and has delivered equine health and welfare services to over 13 000 working equids and more than 6 000 equine owners.

Sustainability through education

Farmers are shown how to treat wounds effectively by using affordable and easily available remedies such as salted water and Vaseline. Emphasis is on training and prevention education to avoid future equine welfare issues.

Annual Veterinary Clinic

Every year in September the Semonkong Hospital Projects Vet Clinic is held. Fifth year veterinary students from the University of Pretoria as well as several specialist equine veterinarians assist during this time. On average, nearly 100 equids are gelded, as well as other surgeries are attended to. This provides valuable practical training opportunities for the students who also assist in general education to owners.

Common welfare issues

Being used as pack animals and being ridden bareback, leads to tack wounds and saddle sores. Local materials like rope, wire or chains are used for bits or tack, and cause injuries.

Status of donkeys

WHW reports: "Donkeys are perceived by farmers to have a lower financial value than horses and cattle. However, they have a livelihood value in that they play a critical role in livestock production."

If you own cattle, mohair sheep or goats in the highlands, it is essential to have horses and donkeys to enable you to herd the livestock as well as to provide transport for people and wool or other products to market and collection points."



Moleboheng Bolibe, NUL team member, consulting with a donkey owner at an equine welfare clinic in Ramabanta.



Thato Chabeli, NUL team member, helping a local donkey owner.



Testing the Working Equid toolkit with local donkey owners during a OIE training workshop held in Lesotho.

Data from FAOSTAT (2019) indicates that there are 117,000 donkeys and 57,000 horses in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Donkeys are ideally suited for the rugged terrain in this area.

Images: WHW

Unusual spotted donkeys

Seen in a remote area of Botswana was a herd of unique spotted donkeys, some with blue eyes which come from a rare recessive gene.



New resource material

Dr Peta Jones is widely respected in donkey welfare circles. She has published two new books, filled with practical knowledge. Visit www.stuvia.co.za and search 'donkeys' to find the details about Comfortable Donkeys, and the revised Donkeys for Development material.

Equine Veterinarians come in all sizes and shapes – and some ride motorcycles.

Vets with Horsepower is a group of specialist equine vets with a passion for motorbikes. They are presenting a webinar: online for a 25 hour continuous, live set of 30 lectures, on 29th April. The sessions will be of interest to vets, vet paraprofessionals and project staff. Visit www.vetswithhorsepower.com/ for full information and the talk schedule. They are supporting The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust through this event.

Fighting the illegal donkey skins trade

The Mooi River SPCA, the NSPCA and the South African Police intervened after tip-offs from local residents in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal and they intercepted a transport of over 120 donkeys en route to Lesotho, destined for illegal slaughter for the skins trade. The traffickers were arrested by the police. The farming community in Mooi River stepped in and helped these rescued

donkeys with the Mooi Mpfana Agricultural Association opening their saleyards as an emergency stopover for these donkeys to be checked and treated. They also fed and donated bales for them. Many donkeys had severe external parasite infections and open wounds which were treated. Chairperson of the Mooi River & District SPCA, Gaynor Lawson said: "We are

very proud to have been a vital part of the rescue of 101 donkeys from being skinned alive for traditional Chinese 'muti, an ongoing cruelty problem that seems to be rearing its head after being brought under control a few years ago. Our Phumlani Majola worked tirelessly to ensure the best for these poor creatures."



From left: Dr Thashia Reddy from Valley Vets, Mooi River SPCA field officer, Phumlani Majola, and SPCA inspector, Mpho Moekena. Image: Moeketsi Mamane.



Rescued donkeys at the Mooi Mpfana Agricultural Association saleyards. Image: Mooi River SPCA.

From the Editor

For many of us it is one full year since the measures to contain the spread of the Covid pandemic were introduced. Little did we know what the impact would be on everyday activities, on families who faced illness, the loss of loved ones and hardships caused by factors beyond their control. Animal welfare dropped low on the list of priorities for many funders.

Significance is attached to the roll-out of vaccination programmes. However it may take a while for many welfare priorities to return to a more informed level of understanding. We must keep faith and

continue as best we can to promote better welfare for animals and their human carers. The Covid pandemic has reminded us of the inter-connectedness of all life on our planet. Don't let our particular link in that chain – donkeys and their welfare – become a weak link.

In our June issue we will feature responses to some questions we posed:

- Are there any resources and examples of equines trekking for lengthy distances?
- Is there evidence that reflective collars on donkeys discourage predators?

Please continue to let us have your opinions and stay in touch with us. We value your interactions via this portal that aims to enhance donkey welfare by information and shared knowledge.

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