

The harsh reality of nature Donkeys suffer when food and water are scarce

Some animals, including donkeys, are lucky enough to live and function in a protected environment where their needs and well-being are a priority for the humans responsible for them. Many donkeys, however, have to survive through their own abilities and are dependent on the environment for food, water, shelter and safety. We receive regular reports of areas where grazing and other vegetation dies off, the animals get weaker and nature takes its harsh course.

In Botswana where rain is seasonal, a donkey foal was separated from its mother, became dehydrated and died. The mother was rescued in time and given feed, water and care. In the same area a weak, dehydrated jenny aborted her foal. These are just recent examples that were brought to **Okavango Animal Welfare Trust** for help.

From Zimbabwe, **Matabeleland Animal Rescue & Equine Sanctuary (MARES)** reports “If ever there was a difficult year in Zimbabwe, it would be 2023. Although our rains started off very well, they abruptly ended on 5 February this year.” “We have started fodder schemes with moringa to supplement the pregnant and elderly donkeys through winter. Over the past five years the statistics on foal abortion and still-born foals has risen to 70%. This is a direct result of the mares not receiving enough nutrition during their gestation stage through the winter months.”

Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust (GHDT) reports that the combined effects of Covid, climate change and the war in Ukraine are causing a food crisis, resulting in the loss of equine lives in West Africa. “We are seeing an increase in the number of completely emaciated animals being brought to us for care, simply because their owners have been unable to source enough food for their animals. Often they are too far gone for us to be able to save which is heart-breaking for all involved” says GHDT. “If their animal becomes malnourished and unable to work, then the family lose their ability to earn an income and a vicious cycle of poverty is created” they conclude.

Conduct an annual SWOT analysis

These realities increase the burden on organisations supporting the animals’ welfare, and the livelihoods of the people relying on their donkeys.



The increased use of planned agriculture to offset climate change, to plan ahead for risk factors and evaluate animal welfare challenges should be an on-going principle for all animal welfare organisations.

Use the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) methodology to reflect and update the way your organisation is positioned to face these challenges. Then, share your findings with your colleagues, staff, funders and other stakeholders.

Go to World Animal Net’s website for SWOT advice. Click or copy-paste this link: <https://worldanimal.net/50-strategic-advocacy-course-new/advocacy-tools/254-12-swot-analysis-strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats>



<https://www.animal-kind.org>

RECIPIENTS OF THE AFRICA-BASED ANIMAL WELFARE 2023 GRANTS

Animal-Kind International announced that eight out of the 55 eligible proposals were accepted. We list them here for you to gain inspiration for submitting your own proposals.

Zimbabwe

Twala Trust Animal Sanctuary

Project: Doggy Tuesday, keeping the rural dogs in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe, fed and healthy. The grant will continue to provide food for the over 600 rural dogs from low income households who attend their weekly Doggy Tuesday free community veterinary clinic. Twala also has a mandate from the Veterinary Council to spay and neuter.

Matabeleland Animal Rescue & Equine Sanctuary

(MARES). Project: Bulawayo Matabeleland Cat Sterilization Campaign will trap 100 feral and unsterilized cats in the Bulawayo area to sterilise and reduce transmitted diseases, especially rabies.

South Africa

Blind Love Association provides a safe, forever home to horses and donkeys in need, while improving the lives of all animals in the surrounding disadvantaged communities through education and access to basic services for the animals. Their grant project, The Big Build Project, will erect field shelters for their equine residents.

SPCA Grahamstown

Project Vala will sterilize at least 70 dogs in an informal settlement while providing education and healthcare.

Morocco

Morocco Animal Project will provide shelter and medical care to 550 Moroccan street animals.

Tanzania

Tanzania Small Animal Veterinary Organization (TSAVO) will sterilize 600 dogs and cats and vaccinate 1 000 against rabies.

Voluntary Education & Relieve Initiative for Tanzanian Society (VERITAS) will implement their grant project for humane population control of stray dogs and feral cats in Western Tanzania.

Namibia

Bubu's Animal Haven will purchase and renovate an old caravan to accommodate the sanctuary's senior cats.

If a recipient of a grant builds up a good relationship with a funder, it could develop into a more long-lasting partnership relationship. An example is A-KI's partnership with *The Six Freedoms*. After very successfully completing two Africa-Based Animal Welfare Organization Grants, A-KI decided to make The Six Freedoms an A-KI Partner. The Six Freedoms is dedicated to the welfare of horses in Ghana and beyond.

Congratulations to the recipients. We await updates about your progress and may you be an inspiration to other animal welfare organisations. The next period to submit proposals will be in May/June 2024.

Transforming animal protection legislation - A constitutional imperative

Animal Law Reform South Africa (ALRSA) is a non-profit organisation established in 2014 by lawyers interested in animal protection. ALRSA envisages a society whose laws, courts, enforcement agencies and private entities advance the protection and flourishing of humans, non-human animals and the environment, and are held accountable.

They focus on a few key areas that will bring about the most change. These include Legislative and Policy Reform, Litigation and Legal Services, and Education and Research.

In line with the first of these key areas, the Animal Law Project presented three webinars which included the protection of Wild Animals, the Constitution and the Environment; Companion Animals and Society; Enforcing Animal Protection Laws and Farmed Animals.



The webinars generated lively discussion. Animal laws easily get forgotten or out-dated, are not considered a priority and the enforcement of such laws is a challenge. Find out what South Africans are doing about this.

Visit www.animallawreform.org.za

Control worms in your donkeys

Intestinal Parasites (Gastrodiscus - flat worms) add to the plight of donkeys

Few caregivers of donkeys consider the possible occurrence of flat worms (in the class Trematoda called Gastrodiscus aegyptiacus) occurring in their subjects.

In fact, donkey caregivers are not alone - the 10th edition of Georgis' Parasitology for Veterinarians by Dwight D Bowman does not even give this parasite a single mention.

Case study of Cassie, an underweight donkey

My examination of Cassie (an underweight donkey rescued into a donkey sanctuary in Zimbabwe) indicated anemia and bile duct disease with the GGT test showing levels of 231IU/L - where values <25 are considered normal.

As liver fluke (*Fasciola* sp) are a possible cause we performed a fecal sedimentation test and uncovered 4 *Gastrodiscus* eggs. (NOTE to any labs doing worm egg counts: the normal floatation tests will not reveal these eggs and the difference between *Fasciola* and *Gastrodiscus* eggs needs a well-trained eye to tell them apart.) These parasites reside in the cecum and colon and not infrequently we lose horses from overwhelming infections too.

Cassie was treated with half a Nilzan tablet (Coopers). This is a drug containing oxcyclozanide and levamisole. None of the other registered liver fluke remedies for use in cattle and sheep are effective. Out poured about 1000 gastrodiscus parasites over the next 48 hours! Each one of these parasites will have left a small wound where it detached. These wounds leak protein into the gut and even red blood cells can be lost. But wounds are "two-way streets" as bacteria can enter the circulation too and this may be the cause of the elevated liver enzymes (we intend following this further). If a non-egg-laying, co-infection with *Fasciola* were involved our treatment will have cleared this as well.

Results of this case study

The take home message from this case is that there is a poor correlation between egg count and degree of infection and consequently the extent of the pathology in the gut. A radical improvement in body score is expected unless the damage caused comes with much scar tissue formation and reduced nutrient absorption.

Use of a lab with experience with liver fluke diagnosis is recommended for identifying this kind of infestation in underweight donkeys residing in Africa. We as caregivers for donkeys still need to track the full distribution of this parasite on the continent but it has already been recorded from RSA, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Ethiopia and Chad.



Dr Karl van Laeren (BVSc).

Dr van Laeren ran a veterinary practice in Zimbabwe for 40 years, and is renowned internationally as a consultant on internal parasite infestations in domestic and wild animals. He travels widely on veterinary matters throughout Africa.

Veterinary Internal Parasite Strategies (VIP Strategies)
Midrand, RSA
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Gastrodiscus require a small water living snail as intermediate host.



Faeces with *gastrodiscus* clearly visible.



Cassie before treatment.

International veterinarians eradicate rabies in Kenya Dr Julie Kelly DVM is based in Colorado, USA.

Since 2009 Dr Kelly has recruited volunteers to join her in conducting annual mass vaccination campaigns with the goal of eradicating human rabies in parts of Kenya by 2030. This will be achieved by combatting the animal-to-human rabies transmission rate.

In 2021 her team vaccinated about 8 000 dogs, cats, and donkeys in the Kenyan counties of Machakos and Taita Taveta. This year the campaign runs from August 11 – 25, 2023. Dr Kelly and a team of 19 volunteers will provide anti-rabies vaccines, parasiticides and dewormers to donkeys, cats, and dogs in the target counties. This project brings veterinary care to rural locations where financial restraints and accessibility would have been a barrier to domestic animal care.

This exercise is conducted under the Animal Care Program of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare, in collaboration with the various county veterinarians and local authorities.



Registration for the 7th Africa Animal Welfare Conference, Action 2023 is open Go to www.aawconference.org



Theme: Navigating the delicate balance of animal welfare, climate change and development: concerted actions towards a healthy and sustainable environment.

Date: 25-27 September 2023.

Venue: Sainte Famille Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda and virtual through a Zoom platform.

This annual conference is essential for participants with expertise and interest in areas cutting across Animal Welfare, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation and sustainable development. DfA will report on the proceedings.

Education is key to improving animal welfare

Download the new edition of the VETS UNITED Animal Welfare Teaching Modules.

The modules meet recommendations for veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessional students and have been peer reviewed by experts in science, academia and practice from all over the world. They include:

- Illustrated and up-to-date presentation slides
- Background information and teaching suggestions to prepare classes
- Suggestions for class exercises and field trips
- Additional materials
- Quiz
- Further reading suggestions

Register at www.teaching-animal-welfare.org

For questions, please contact vetsunited@welttierschutz.



World Horse Welfare Conference



The World Horse Welfare Conference will take place on Thursday 9 November 2023. This hybrid event (in-person in London and virtual) will explore the question *'Horses and the Environment: Friend or Foe?'*

Of course donkeys and mules will be included in this discussion – register to attend and find out.

Email conference@worldhorsewelfare.org
<https://int.worldhorsewelfare.org/>

From the Editor

Life is hard when resources are few. We regularly invoke the *Five Freedoms for Animals* but let us also remember that many humans live without experiencing these very freedoms. The problem is compounded when their asset – their working donkey – succumbs to the harsh realities of environmental and other challenges.

But there is also much cause to be hopeful. We see so many people doing 'small things in a big way'. Getting things done is more important than anything else.

The *One Health* movement expands to *One Welfare*: the well-being of humans, animals and the environment cannot be separated. You can make a difference in the small area where you function.



We applaud animal welfare workers who make lives better for working animals.


If you can remain confident and committed even when it seems that everything is against you, you will live the quote by Nelson Mandela: "We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in our hands to make a difference."

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