

A TICKING TIME BOMB

Donkeys, through the human greed for ejiao, are now contributing to the world economy in a way that is unsustainable and illegal, and could lead to their extinction.

Many countries celebrated World Donkey Day on 8th May, honouring the contributions made by these hard-working animals to global economies over the ages.

Just a day later a new in-depth report released by The Donkey Sanctuary exposed the frightening underground networks that promote the skins trade.

Global wildlife trade is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world. The report “The Global Trade in Donkey Skins: A Ticking Time Bomb” aptly describes the skins trade as “a Trojan horse for wildlife trafficking”. Seizure records maintained by customs authorities show that donkey skins are shipped alongside products from a wide range of wild animals, including endangered species. Examples are donkey skins shipped with elephant tusks, pangolin scales, abalone, sea cucumber, shark fins, tiger skins and fish maw. Connected to this is often the smuggling of weapons and drugs, and other heinous crimes.

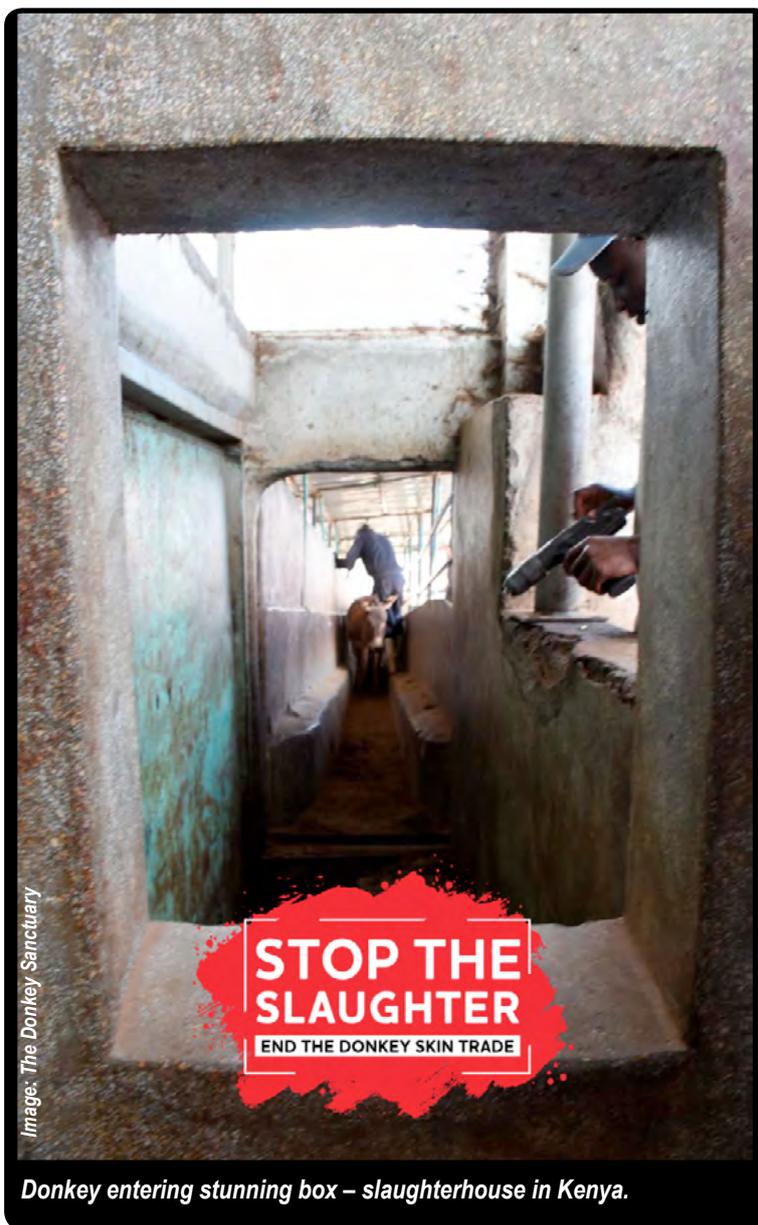


Image: The Donkey Sanctuary

Donkey entering stunning box – slaughterhouse in Kenya.

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce platforms facilitate the trade of products globally. The report found that traders registered on the B2B platforms offer far more donkey skins than the national donkey populations of the countries in which they operate. This implies that donkey skins may be being sourced and shipped from a much more diverse range of countries than previously realised. “Online trading platforms have a moral responsibility not to facilitate a trade that poses a significant biosecurity risk, which contravenes national bans, facilitates appalling animal welfare and which harms both people and animals.”

Recommendations

The report ends with recommendations to the ejiao industry, national governments, the transport industry and on-line trading platforms. A ban or stricter control of the trade, adherence to national export regulations, and accelerated research into production of cultivated ejiao alternatives are mentioned.

The role of social media and e-commerce

Donkey skin traders are exploiting social media sites. Some openly acknowledge the illegality of their trade and provide potential buyers with information on ways to avoid detection of the shipment of skins and other illegal products.

Let us hope that this latest report will result in action at all levels, to halt this unsustainable trade that has such wide-reaching implications for donkeys, other species and humans.

DOWNLOAD AND READ THE FULL REPORT AT:

www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/donkey-skins-a-ticking-time-bomb.pdf



A fresh look at deworming donkeys

The trend has been to deworm all donkeys that are present at an outreach clinic. Now this is being questioned, with evidence of increasing antihelminthic resistance (AHR).

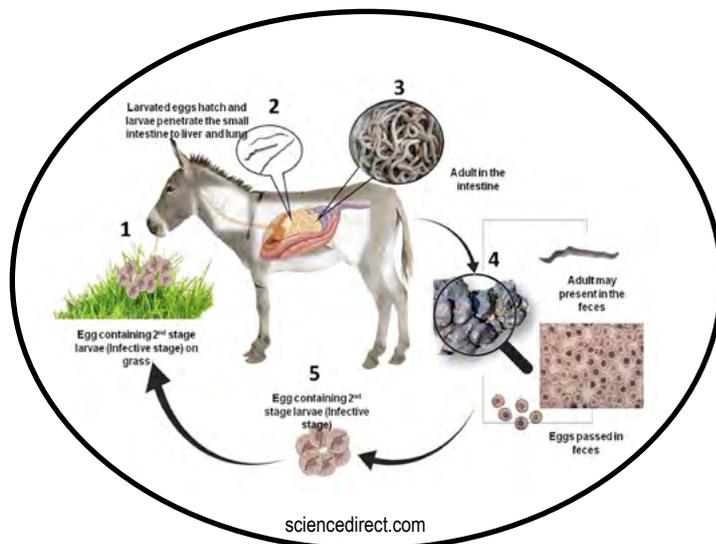
Dr Karl van Laeren says that “Basically the world is over-deworming and not understanding that animals have co-evolved with internal parasites and it is not in the parasite’s interest to disadvantage its host. So testing prior to deworming may not be what we grew up with, but is actually essential.”

An article in the UK VET EQUINE journal (see link) makes recommendations relevant to horses. While much of the information applies to donkeys, it recognises that donkeys face major challenges with AHR and more research is needed before making recommendations specific to them.

Dr Nora-Jean Freeman notes that “the term ‘broad spectrum’ is a misnomer. We are picking up a lot of resistance of different parasites to different treatments, e.g. panacur may work for ascarids, but not for strongyles; ivermectin may work for strongyles, but not for ascarids and tapeworms ... and so on. The Worm-Ex lab in Zimbabwe is seeing a lot of gastrodiscus in donkeys - in addition to the standard egg count.”

Rural realities

- When the donkeys are free-roaming, undernourished, and receiving little or no veterinary attention, should deworming be practised?
- How practical is it to test large groups of working donkeys that are only seen irregularly?
- If deworming, what is the best class of dewormer to use?
- Often organisations use whatever they are donated. These supplies may be close to expiry date, raising the question of when is an item expired? Can it still safely be used one day/one week after the expiry date?



In such rural circumstances it has been suggested that ivermectin once every one to two years may cover any gasterophilus (usually non-pathogenic) and is cheap and far better against bot flies than moxidectin.

Other recommended measures to control worms are to remove manure regularly, to rotate grazing, and to allow other species to co-graze. Except for the last one, the others may not be practical in a rural working donkey set-up.

Send us your experiences and thoughts on this topic.

<https://fliphtml5.com/icpyl/uwqp>

UK-VET_EQUINE_2019_EquineWormingRoundtableSuppCAFinal2

VIRTUAL LEARNING WITH THE DONKEY ACADEMY

www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/what-we-do/knowledge-and-advice/donkey-academy

The Donkey Academy is a Virtual Learning Environment, offering high-quality education and training resources developed by our professional donkey and mule experts.

Courses are open to all and are designed for donkey owners, individuals who work closely with donkeys and those looking to take their first steps in donkey care. These courses do not have any prerequisites for registration and are ideal for developing new or reinforcing pre-existing knowledge. Here are some of the courses on offer:

Donkey Behaviour and Safety (BEHV102)

This course explores the common causes of accidents when interacting with donkeys. The course focuses on increasing the learner’s understanding of donkey body language, observation of behavioural thresholds and simple methods of handling donkeys to reduce your risk of injury.

This will equip you to spot the subtle changes in donkey behaviour that could put you at risk. Having explored your own attitude to safety and examined which human behaviours



Registering for The Donkey Academy

Follow these steps to register for one of our courses:

- Browse the courses below
- Click 'Register for The Donkey Academy'
- Fill in your details and click 'Register now'
- You will be directed to our course catalogue page where you can select your course and enrol on it
- You will also receive an email confirmation

lead to accidents, you will be equipped to keep yourself and those around you safer in future.

Introduction to Donkey Care, Health and Welfare: Part 1 (CWEL101)

A course ideal for anyone looking to get their first donkey or for more established owners/carers interested in refreshing or improving their knowledge.

This course is structured to build up fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding when caring for donkeys. The common thread throughout this course is the donkey’s origins and evolution and how this influences their care and management.

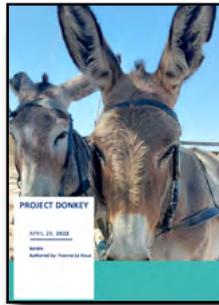
Updates from donkey welfare organisations around Africa



- [facebook.com/NawaAnimals](https://www.facebook.com/NawaAnimals)
- www.nawa.org.na
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Namibian Animal Welfare Association (NAWA) was profiled in our Dec 2021/Jan 2022 newsletter. Their report issued in May 2022 says that a drastic change of plan was needed from the original idea to start by purchasing harnesses from Zimbabwe. These became unobtainable through unforeseen circumstances so the next phase kicked in: the manufacture of harnesses by the local Namibian communities. "Change your plan, but never your goal!" After adapting materials and designs, outreach journeys were successfully undertaken, with a strong educational component. Humane harnesses, bridles and bits were distributed and villagers were educated about the dangers of outmoded harmful practices.



See www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/NAWA.pdf



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Bam Animal Clinics profiled in our February 2021 newsletter, is active in Eastern Uganda. They continue to educate about the use of humane padded sisal sack saddles, humane handling, care and feeding. They also provide free veterinary treatment. Challenges are overwork, overloading, poor nutrition, and poor health caused for example by parasite burdens. Wounds caused by donkeys fighting or purposely inflicted by handlers are also an ongoing problem. Facilities for safe handling would assist in more efficient and less stressful clinics, benefitting animals and humans.



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We profiled the **Liberia Animal Welfare & Conservation Society (LAWCS)** in our June 2021 newsletter.

They report that they continue providing services to the animals and people in rural communities in Guinea where working animals serve as a source of livelihood but are subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering.



LAWCS has an energetic education programme - where children are taught the value of caring.



- [facebook.com/gambiahorseanddonkey](https://www.facebook.com/gambiahorseanddonkey)
- www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk
- ghdt@gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk



Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust (GHDT) was our profile feature in October 2018. Their latest newsletter at www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk/spring2022.pdf

celebrates their 20th anniversary.

Since starting, they have built two centres, treated thousands of animals, provided bits and headcollars, trained farriers and equine dental technicians, harness makers and cart builders, worked in schools and provided practical training for over 1 000 students. The University of The Gambia has been exploring the possibility of establishing a Faculty of Veterinary Science and approached GHDT about collaboration for training students and providing them with practical experience.



- [facebook.com/workingdonkeyowners](https://www.facebook.com/workingdonkeyowners)
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amaTrac Uluntu in South Africa was featured in December 2018. Like many registered charities, they have to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to report on activities to their members and supporters. Apart from the usual prescribed reports such as finances and Director's reports, amaTrac Uluntu took the novel approach of including reports from trained owners of working donkeys, a report from the Agricultural Resource Hub and the presentation of certificates to identified Village Donkey Champions. This gives well-earned recognition to those dedicated people who implemented the training programmes for their donkeys and communities. See their latest Organisation Activity Report at:

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



Welcome to: OKAVANGO ANIMAL WELFARE TRUST



- <https://www.facebook.com/Okavango-animal-welfare-trust-108153448565417>
- okavangoanimalwelfaretrust@gmail.com
- +267 77 318 695

We welcome a new donkey welfare organisation, the Okavango Animal Welfare Trust, based in Samochima village in northern Botswana. They are a registered charity and held their first meeting on 2nd May 2022, with the following committee members: Chairperson: Keneilwe (Kenny) Disho; Vice Chair: Veronica Moshova Motama; Secretary: Galetlhope (Tops) Bolokang; Treasurer: Gabatwane Tunapo and Founder: Ansie Gildenhuys. Donkeys for Africa wishes you great strength and will follow your progress with interest.

Are we responsible users of medicines?

“There are pharmaceuticals that can do environmental harm – mainly by killing off mini-organisms in the soil and water and so harming the whole food web. We therefore need to change our relationship to all drugs with an ‘every molecule matters’ approach to dewormers (no more mass deworming or tick spraying), non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, antibiotics (we all know about antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the mind-altering drugs used primarily in sedations and anaesthesia which are also highly polluting, and all the packaging they come in” says Dr Stephen Blakeway.



www.saludsindanio.org



The value of donkeys in Africa

In Ethiopia, a donkey costs at least half the annual family income.

They are considered the most important possession a family can own. If not for the donkey, most families would not be able to support themselves. Their contribution to subsistence farming and the basic economy of the particular population of these and other countries is enormous. The donkey is the workhorse that powers the subsistence based agricultural industry that supports the populations of these nations on every inhabited continent in the world.



Image: The Donkey Sanctuary

burden, whereupon they weaken under the work load and often sicken and die, devastating or completely destroying the family unit. In Ethiopia, when a donkey dies, the women cling together and weep.

by Linda Purdy & Stephen R. Purdy, DVM, University of Massachusetts, Hadley Farm. srpurdy@vasci.umass.edu



Devastating drought in Kenya

The Circle of Trust working in Kenya, reports scenes of dead animals in Laikipia due to the drought in the area. Donkeys are suffering as most of them are worked around the clock to provide water for the few remaining livestock, without extra feed or time to rest.



Laikipia.

Image: The Guardian

As the world becomes a smaller place, there is a call for better care for one of humanity’s greatest allies in the struggle for daily survival. Healthy donkeys mean healthier children to the families who incorporate them in the cultivation of their land. Reproduction of the donkey is an important part of donkey ownership. Donkeys are carefully bred to produce strong, long-lived work animals that are un sentimentally valued as contributing members of the family within which they live. Nutrition and basic husbandry are also important as the welfare of the family depends on the health of the donkey or donkeys owned.

It is interesting to note that the donkeys owned by a rural family are most often cared for by the women. If not for the donkey, the women become the beasts of



One Health, One Welfare workshops in South Africa

Eseltjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary is resuming their One Health, One Welfare workshops after a two-year pause caused by Covid regulations.

The workshops are supported by The Donkey Sanctuary (UK) and accredited by the SA Veterinary Council for CPD points.

If you are interested in such workshops, contact info@donkeysanctuary.co.za

One Health, One Welfare Animal Welfare workshop

Your workshop is supported by The Donkey Sanctuary (UK)

Saturday 23rd July 2022 10:00am to 2.30pm
at Obiqua, Duikersdrift (6km from Tulbagh)

The content focuses on donkeys but the principles are applicable to all animals. Learn to look at the entire life situation of an animal and learn from, and exchange ideas with colleagues.

10am: Theory session
 12:30pm: Lunch
 1.30pm – 2.30pm: Practical assessment

The workshop is open to professionals, animal welfare workers, animal lovers and all people concerned about animal welfare.

If you are registered with the SAVC, full attendance at the workshop earns you three CPD points. **SAVC**

Space is limited so please reply by 30th June to reserve your place. Let us know of colleagues, friends or acquaintances who may be interested so that we can contact them directly. Reply to: info@donkeysanctuary.co.za or call 023 625 1593

Eseltjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary www.donkeysanctuary.co.za

From the Editor



An old saying is that “The more things change, the more they stay the same”. Often changes do not affect reality on a deeper level. A change of heart must take place before lasting change occurs.

The latest skins trade report by The Donkey Sanctuary clearly shows that traders are chasing money with no thought of the ramifications caused by their trade.

The inclusion of donkey skins alongside all the other illegal activities has “elevated” the skins to a desirable

commodity. The scarcer a commodity becomes, the more valued and higher priced, thus pushing the illegal trade to new levels.

It is clear that reaction to the donkey skins trade needs to be brought to the same level of urgency as trading in endangered wildlife and plant resources.

Interventions are needed at every point in the process: from educating communities and donkey owners about the value of their working donkeys, to governments about banning the trade to preserve donkey populations, to traders

and governments about heavier penalties for illegal trading, to the processors and users of the end products. This is a problem that each one of us can help to address. Let us know what you are doing to protect the future of donkeys.

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www.donkeysforafrica.org

Donkeys-for-Africa

DfA is supported by **THE DONKEY SANCTUARY**

www.thedonkeysanctuary.org