

THE DONKEY ACADEMY

FREE ON-LINE TRAINING FOR DONKEY CARE PRACTITIONERS

The Donkey Academy has been established by The Donkey Sanctuary. This is a free online learning platform with carefully, professionally structured courses that you complete in your own time.

Courses open to all include Behaviour, Care and Welfare, Harness, Nutrition, and Health and Welfare Assessment Tools.

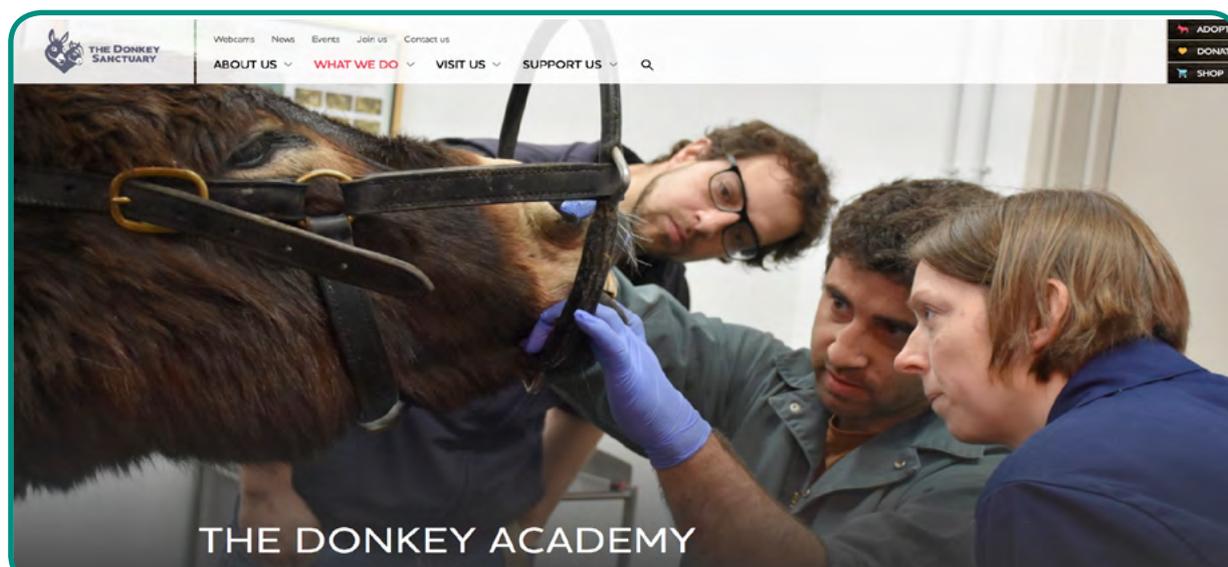
For professionals who work closely with donkeys and other equids, there are courses covering Clinical, Dentistry, Farriery, and Working Equids.

As an example: The harness course focuses on the different

parts, functions and adjustments of a harness, followed by specific aspects relevant to working equids.

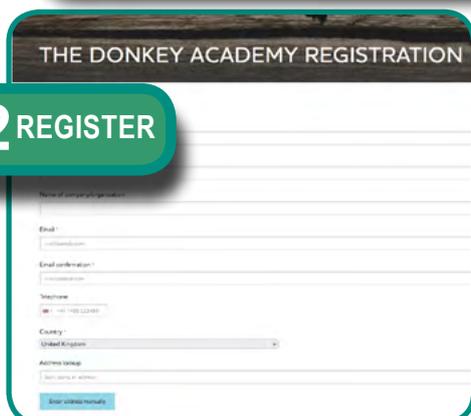
Harness is an aspect common to all working equids, regardless of the task performed. Its correct or incorrect use has a direct impact on their health and welfare. Through a series of 8 modules, organised in a methodical and systematic way, every aspect directly related to harness and the different activities working equids may perform using harness, are covered.

We encourage you to register and enjoy the topics most relevant to your situation. Please give us feedback on the courses.



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

2 REGISTER



THE DONKEY ACADEMY REGISTRATION

Name of your organisation

Email

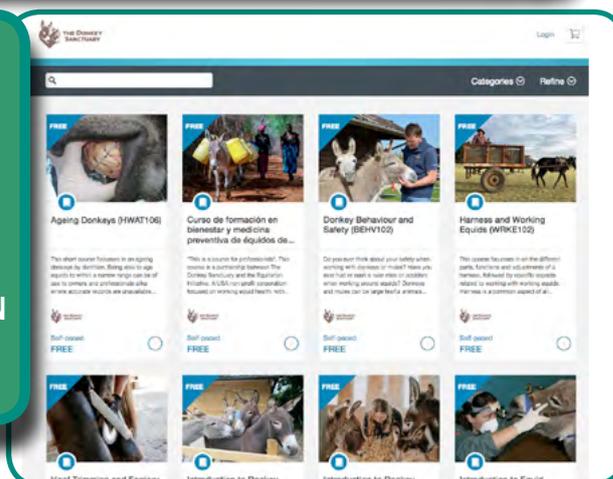
Email confirmation

Telephone

Country:

Address (optional)

3 CHOOSE YOUR COURSE & START LEARNING FOR FREE AND AT YOUR OWN PACE



Time to revise the traditional veterinary service

– to include all animal health workers, all of whom need to have their competencies recognised, with some needing to be registered and ideally regulated to a certain extent.

Traditionally interventions that involved veterinarians followed a “hub and spoke” model, with the veterinarians as the central point. The effort was described as “vet-led”.

Dr Stephen Blakeway, well known to many of our readers, believes that it is time to review this.

When asked about veterinary service delivery, he described the concept of a veterinary team: a network “meaning vets, animal health assistants, veterinary nurses, farriers, harness-makers, community-based animal health workers, traditional healers, community vaccinators, nutritionists, ecologists and any other associated allied professionals, all of whom need to have their competencies recognised, with some needing to be registered and ideally regulated to a certain extent...”

A familiar example to our readers would be visits to communities with working donkeys. We all know the futility of the veterinarian treating harness wounds, only to return later to find the same wounds being caused by the same harnesses.

“Farriers, harness makers, saddlers and equine vets (and increasingly equine dentists) work together in teams, each contributing specific expertise, the lead passing between them depending on the case.

These examples describe a network, not a hub-and-spoke model. They also highlight how allied professionals often work at the forefront of preventive medicine.”

The project to address EZL in cart mules in Ethiopia is an example of this approach.

www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/PEL.pdf in our library

This should then lead to identification of community leaders and welfare champions in different areas of interest, and empowering them to assume leadership in their own settings.



Ugandan example

BAM Animal Clinics in Uganda employs two animal husbandry/vet officers in Kween and Bukwo. These officers know every village and they speak the local languages. They arrange clinics and training and they are the reason that participation is always beyond expectations. They also follow up on donkeys and donkey owners to ensure correct practices are maintained.

Read the full articles by Dr Blakeway in our library at:

www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/vetled.pdf

and www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/vetled2.pdf

published as opinion pieces in the Vet Times of 13 April 2021 and 4 May 2021.

Harnessing remains a major challenge in donkey welfare across the globe and especially in Africa.

The Circle of Trust helps farmers in rural areas to modify and make harness using locally available materials, and adapt carts.



Circle of Trust

was founded by Chris Garrett who has worked with and trained hundreds of people across the world on behalf of major charities to ensure the welfare of working donkeys is upheld.

www.facebook.com/circleoftrustdap/

The Skins Trade

– a Chinese or an African problem?

Taking responsibility

Late in 2020 it appeared that the export of donkey skins from Nigeria would be resumed after an initial ban by that country. However the Comptroller General of Nigeria's National Animal Quarantine Service (NAQS) recently announced that the donkey skin trade was "banned and it remains banned. I would not encourage anybody to enter into the trade – anybody that does... will face the full wrath of the law."

The tide has turned

Ian Cawsey, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns at The Donkey Sanctuary, said: "The tide of opinion has very clearly turned against the trade in Africa. The growing message is that donkey skin traders are no longer welcome. ..The trade has been hit hard by this powerful message from Nigeria – other West African countries must not allow their donkeys to now become targets for traders instead."

This supports the statement by Dr Philip Mshelia of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria at the Brooke West African conference in 2021. Dr Mshelia saw Nigeria as the epicentre of the donkey skin trade in West Africa and posed the question: "*Is this a Chinese or an African problem?*"

His response was: "We can only get to the root of this when we see it as an African problem."

(DfA newsletter #27, August 2021)

The other side of the situation

We asked Dr Mshelia for comments on the current situation. He responded that there has been no change in 2022.

"Currently, at least 20 trucks loaded with donkeys are heading from northeast and northwest to various slaughterhouses and slaughter slabs in the north, south, and eastern parts of Nigeria every week.

There are lobby groups involved in supporting the donkey skin trade, and their tactics change frequently and eventually become difficult to monitor.

Government's strong commitment to ban the donkey trade is a positive step. However, charities need to take that opportunity to collaborate with local charities and other stakeholders to develop a unique and comprehensive program to address issues specific to that geographical location.

Remember, to solve a systemic problem like the donkey skin trade, you'll need to develop an equivalent system that addresses each aspect of the problem. Despite the fact that it is

incredibly simple to declare a ban, the difficulty in enforcing it has cast a shadow on the resolve of government officials in Africa to deliver on their promises, since the effect and not the underlying cause is being addressed.

A ban of this nature is ironic in that the government waits for stakeholders to create a program that can be supported, or at least built upon. Animal charities await government action. Consequently, momentum is lost, which becomes a mirage.

In view of this, the big animal charities have a lot to do. There is a need to establish similar sanctuaries, breeding centres, or programs with measureable outcomes to mitigate donkey skin trade and replenish the African landscape with donkeys. Therefore, reviewing funding and partnership criteria may be a smart idea, if not we will be flirting with the illusion of victory.

Engaging stakeholder dialogues, providing alternative businesses, and assisting people in discovering compassion intrinsically instead of only teaching about it could be a few of the measures to be taken.

The plight of African donkeys has received worldwide sympathy, attention, and funding. However, the effect is not felt yet in Africa.

"We can only get to the root of this when we see it as an African problem."

I wonder how we can end this skin trade by neglecting to empower non-profits at grass roots and key geographical areas in Africa. Solving this problem will take time but the solutions are not far-fetched."



Donkey being dragged onto a truck. Almost as many die during the brutal transport conditions as at the Slaughterhouses. Image: News18

FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Thank you to all who indicated their preferences for topics to cover in our newsletters. The most frequent request was for reports on the skins trade, followed by information on conferences, webinars and symposia. The profiles on organisations/individuals are popular. Information on welfare issues, wound care and training seems less urgent: possibly that is available elsewhere or in our library but we will feature this from time to time or point you towards sources.

BRAVE UNDERTAKING

Recently two young veterinary students from Onderstepoort Vet Faculty in South Africa planned a journey by donkey cart that would take about a week.

The donkeys were borrowed from Dr Peta Jones and had been working donkeys. Peta pointed out to the students that “...it is not a question of you getting to know the donkeys, but much more a question of them getting to know YOU, as well as your voice. If they like and trust you, negotiation is a lot easier.”

After the first day the students discovered that the donkeys preferred to graze along the way, progress was much slower than they had expected and it would take a lot of time and effort to build the necessary relationship with the animals to ensure smooth progress.

The journey was abandoned but is nevertheless an interesting concept that could be tackled in the future with more time and preparation available.

FRIENDLY AUDIT SYSTEM

The Animal-Kind International annual report for 2021 is available at www.animal-kind.org/aki-reports



It is fascinating to see all the projects they support in Africa and congratulations on producing this review so promptly!

Is their Friendly Audit system unique?

Many animal welfare organizations do excellent work but experience a gap in administrative and technical skills. The Friendly Audit process links volunteers (mentors) with organizations. The mentors help with website creation and editing, social media posting, proposal writing, preparation of documents

(brochures, forms, etc.), financial management, and whatever else the organization needs and the volunteer can provide. It remains difficult for animal welfare organizations in resource-poor countries to gain visibility and the confidence of donors, and this support from A-KI addresses that and helps the organisation to gain independence.

It would be wonderful if more international organisations would facilitate this sort of support, rather than turning down funding applications that are promising but inadequate. Let us know if you provide such a service. Be part of the solution to provide improved welfare, not part of the problem by turning down pleas for help!

BRAZIL BANS EXPORT OF DONKEY SKINS



In February 2022 Brazil reinstated a countrywide ban on the slaughter of donkeys for the export of skins to China.

Export of donkey skins from Brazil had been taking place since 2016. The trade was banned at one stage, but when that was overturned in 2019, “the estimate is that more than 60,000 donkeys were slaughtered every year in Brazil, with thousands more dying while being transported to slaughterhouses” according to The Donkey Sanctuary. Let us hope that this time the ban will be permanent and effective.



From the Editor

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Desmond Tutu

The words of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu could be inscribed into the mission statement of every welfare organisation in the world. There is so much need around us that it is easy to feel overwhelmed and think that our efforts are insignificant. Even more so when

we work for that lowly, often neglected species that we care for so passionately: donkeys.

The status of donkeys remains a challenge. During the recent Open Forum presented by the University of California Davis, Dr Derek Knottenbelt repeatedly asked “How can we improve the status of donkeys?” Let us make this a priority through different avenues, in everything we do.

We want to examine different ways to achieve this in coming editions of our newsletter. Please send us your thoughts on this.



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