

Winter 2022



NEWS

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LIFESAVING SURGERY APPEAL

Celebrating 20 years
in Mauritania

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WELCOME

to the latest issue of SPANA News.

It's been a busy time for us all here at SPANA. Despite the ongoing challenges of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and civil and economic uncertainty in many countries where we work, we have continued on our mission to transform the welfare of working animals, and have successfully provided a lifeline for animals in the greatest need.

In this issue, our special appeal on page four focuses on the very sick or badly injured working animals we encounter that need surgical intervention. Animals like Bahira, a horse from Morocco who was involved in a serious road accident. Sadly, our vets regularly have to perform lifesaving surgery on working animals like Bahira. With your support, we can help working animals in a critical condition by ensuring our vets are equipped with the right medication, basic surgical tools and the expert equipment they need to save lives.

On page 10, Mathilde Merridale-Punter, our Veterinary Programmes Advisor, takes a closer look at our vital work with camels. Camels have an important role supporting people in low-income countries around the world, but rarely receive the recognition that they deserve. That's why SPANA is proud to treat thousands of camels every year and to train their owners in how best to look after them.

Elsewhere in this issue, on page 11, you can read about our plans to help even more working animals, and build a more compassionate future. Sustainable development and treating animals with respect go hand in hand. This was acknowledged in the recent United Nations (UN) nexus resolution, that recognised the link between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development. The UN's announcement is hugely significant and gives animal welfare the global recognition it deserves. It means we are one step closer to a world where every working animal is treated with kindness.

It can't be said enough how grateful everyone at SPANA is for your support. Our work has been a constant in a changing world, with the welfare of animals always at the forefront of everything we do. And, together, we will continue to work towards a world where every working animal lives a life free from suffering and is treated with compassion. Thank you.



Linda Edwards
Chief Executive, SPANA



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SPANANA IN THE NEWS

Ségou veterinary
centre update

More working animals are receiving the vital veterinary treatment they need as SPANA's plans progress to build a new veterinary centre in Ségou, Mali.

Earlier this year, we launched a fundraising appeal to enable us to build a permanent veterinary centre in Ségou. The town is currently served by SPANA's mobile clinic, which travels 150 miles from the country's capital, Bamako, once a month to provide lifesaving veterinary care.

Thanks to everyone who has donated so far, SPANA has set up a temporary clinic in Ségou to treat and hospitalise working animals in acute need. A new mobile clinic has also been purchased and stocked with essential veterinary equipment so that SPANA vets can help working animals in Ségou and the surrounding area.

With your support, SPANA plans to build a permanent veterinary centre that will help to transform and save the lives of approximately 60,000 animals per year in Mali. You can find out more about our appeal at spana.org/segou.



Education highlights

SPANA has secured major new education agreements with the governments of Zimbabwe and Mauritania.

In Zimbabwe, SPANA has signed a five-year agreement with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to run and support Promoting Animal Welfare in Schools (PAWS) clubs in primary schools throughout the country. The charity will also train teachers in humane education and animal welfare.

In Mauritania, SPANA has been selected as the animal welfare organisation for a new 'Green Schools' pilot project in 60 schools. Students will learn about topics relating to the environment, sustainable development, and the need for good animal welfare.

Linda Edwards, SPANA's Chief Executive, said:

'These key agreements will have an extremely positive impact on animal welfare and are a vital step forward on our journey to create a better world for working animals.'

Celebrating the
successes of 2021

Thanks to your support, last year we treated 291,527 working animals across 20 countries, providing 417,391 essential veterinary treatments. We also trained 87,614 owners in animal care and taught 71,204 children about animal welfare.

Our work is only made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters in Australia, New Zealand and around the world. Read more in our 2021/22 Annual Review at spana.org/publications

PROVIDE LIFESAVING SURGERY FOR WORKING ANIMALS IN NEED

When Bahira arrived at our centre, she was badly injured and could barely walk. With a deep wound running the length of her thigh, the poor horse needed emergency surgery. SPANA vets regularly encounter very sick or badly injured animals that need surgical intervention. In life-or-death scenarios, our vets have the expertise to perform lifesaving surgery. But this is only possible if they are equipped with the right medication, basic surgical tools, and specialist equipment. By making a donation today, you can help working animals in critical condition receive the lifesaving surgery and essential aftercare they need to survive.

Bahira's story

Bahira – meaning ‘brilliant’ – plays a key role in the lives of her owner, Rachid, and his family. The faithful carthorse works hard to help Rachid earn a modest income, transporting goods from Asni, a small, rural town in Morocco, to markets in the neighbouring city of Marrakech. It's long and gruelling work. Six days a week, Bahira navigates her cart through bustling, uneven streets that are densely packed with traffic. In hazardous environments like these, working animals are at real risk of being critically injured.

Rachid and Bahira were on their way home one evening when they were involved in a serious accident. Beside them, another cart, also leaving the crowded market, clipped Bahira at high speed. Before Rachid had time to react, the larger cart had already collided with his horse, badly wounding her leg.



Bahira could barely walk and was in a great deal of pain; she urgently needed surgical treatment.

Shocked, distressed, and in severe pain, Bahira limped to the side of the road, blood pooling around her feet from the deep gash across her thigh. Rachid feared the worst, believing that Bahira had broken her leg. Not only was Rachid very attached to his animal, but without her, he had no means of supporting his wife and children back home.

Bahira was losing blood and needed help fast. Thanks to a kind onlooker with a truck, Bahira was

rushed to SPANA's Marrakech centre alongside Rachid, who kept the startled mare calm during the journey. At the centre, the horse was carefully led into the treatment area, where the team staunched the flow of blood and gave her a thorough examination. They took X-rays of her leg to rule out any possible fractures. Luckily, Bahira escaped without any damage to her bones. But due to the size and severity of the wound, the vets decided they would need to operate immediately.



A road accident left working horse Bahira fighting for her life. She was badly wounded and suffering when she was rushed to our centre.



After receiving emergency surgery, Bahira was led to the comfort of the stables where she received follow-up treatment, medication, nutritious food and some much-needed rest.

Without surgery, Bahira's wound would not have been able to heal properly, and the long and painful process could have led to chronic damage. She would also have been at risk of developing a serious infection, which, in the worst cases, could have led to an agonising death.

Bahira was guided to the padded surgical theatre, where the team administered general anaesthetic before carefully cleaning, disinfecting and suturing the large wound. When the surgery was complete, Bahira was put on a course of antibiotics and painkillers to soothe her discomfort. To ensure that her wound healed properly, the team hospitalised Bahira, allowing her time to rest and recover from her ordeal. After two weeks of observation and attentive aftercare at our stables, her stitches were removed and she was ready to go home.

Rachid was deeply grateful for the vet team's intervention and said: *'Bahira is important to my family, it scared me to see her so badly injured after the accident. I am relieved that the vets could help. Without them, I could have lost her.'*

Unfortunately, Bahira is just one of the many working animals who require an essential, and sometimes lifesaving, operation. Whether they are enduring agonising and life-changing injuries as a result of an accident or animal attack, or facing problems like colic, tumours or congenital issues; without the necessary surgery, these animals are sentenced to a short life of pain and suffering. Unable to work, they may even be abandoned by their owners, who cannot afford treatment.

We must ensure that SPANA's dedicated vets have the right medicines, surgical tools and specialist equipment so that there will always be hope for animals like Bahira to live a life free of pain and suffering. In most instances, we are these vulnerable animals' only chance of receiving surgical treatment. But we can't do this without you. Please, if you can, donate today and help working animals in need of lifesaving surgery.

Thank you.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please donate today to ensure working animals like Bahira receive the lifesaving surgery they need.

\$36 could pay for the vital medication and anaesthetic needed to help save a working animal's life.

\$110 could provide essential care, food and stabling to help horses like Bahira recover from surgery in the safety of a SPANA centre.

\$275 could pay towards a lifesaving surgical kit as well as expert equipment, such as X-ray and ultrasound machines, to help our vets diagnose conditions that require surgery.

To make a donation, please use the donation form enclosed, call 1300 149 080 or visit our appeal page at www.spana.org/surgery

SUPPORTING WORKING ANIMALS IN MAURITANIA FOR 20 YEARS



Bebeha Ahmed, SPANA's Mauritania Country Director, on the far-reaching impact SPANA's work has had in Mauritania.

We've now been helping working animals in Mauritania for two decades. Bebeha Ahmed, SPANA Mauritania's Country Director, explains the far-reaching impact SPANA's work has had, thanks to your support.

Why is SPANA needed in Mauritania?

SPANA is needed here for many reasons. The majority of people depend on agriculture and livestock farming for their livelihood, and working animals play an essential role in agricultural activity. Animals are also used to transport goods and people

— particularly for delivering drinking water to poorer districts that are not connected to the water supply.

Despite Mauritania's dependency on working animals, we do not have a strong veterinary system and the few resources available focus on animals that produce milk and meat, rather than working animals. So, before SPANA, it was too expensive to care for working animals with illnesses and injuries, and their owners often had no other choice but to abandon them. At SPANA, we offer free veterinary treatment, so that every sick or injured working animal can be helped, without families having to worry about the cost. The intervention of SPANA is contributing greatly to animal welfare.

What has been the biggest positive change for working animals over the past 20 years?

In the past, a large number of sick or malnourished working animals roamed the streets of our capital city, Nouakchott. Today, thanks in large part to SPANA's intervention and our work educating communities, the mistreatment of working animals has significantly decreased and their state of health has improved remarkably. Instances of owners abandoning their animals have become very rare. Owners are now more aware of the interdependent relationship they have with their animals and attach great importance to their health and wellbeing.

What has been your favourite moment of the past 20 years?

I have had many unforgettable moments during my time with SPANA. That said, very recently, I was filled with pride and joy when the Ministry of National Education



announced that they would pilot animal welfare education at a 'Green School' in each district of Mauritania in partnership with SPANA. This project reflects the massive efforts and progress SPANA has made over the past two decades to introduce animal welfare education into the school curriculum.

Can you tell us about a specific instance where you or your team made a real difference for a working animal?

A few years ago, I was contacted late at night by someone reporting that a donkey had been hit by a vehicle. I immediately contacted Wane Baila, our

technician in charge of our SPANA centre in Nouakchott, who went out with the team in our mobile clinic to search for the donkey. They found him lying injured on the road leading to the port. Wane and his team provided first aid at the scene before taking the donkey back to our centre. The donkey was cared for at our stables for two weeks. During that time, we searched for, identified and contacted the owner. His donkey had wandered off while grazing and he had been searching for him ever since, so he was delighted and thankful to hear that his donkey was alive and recovering from his ordeal. It also gave us the opportunity to introduce the owner to SPANA and the help we offer working animals.

How would you sum up the impact of SPANA's work in Mauritania?

Before SPANA, the welfare of animals was a very low priority in Mauritania and animal welfare education did not exist in local schools. Thanks to SPANA, more and more people are aware of the importance of working animals and their role in the fight against poverty. Fighting poverty through respect for the rights of working animals and their wellbeing is no longer a slogan in Mauritania, but an irrefutable reality.

I would like to thank all SPANA supporters for making our work possible and I extend my gratitude for their unwavering support. They've changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of working animals and their owners over the past 20 years, and will continue to do so for many more years to come.



The opening of SPANA Road

We are delighted to announce that a road in Mauritania has been officially named in SPANA's honour, in recognition of our lifesaving work helping working animals across the country.

SPANA's Chief Executive, Linda Edwards, attended the inauguration ceremony for the new 'Rue SPANA', or SPANA Road, held in the capital city, Nouakchott, in June. The prestigious event was also attended by local officials, including the Mayor of El Mina and the Chief of Police, as well as hundreds of donkey and horse owners who have relied on SPANA's essential work.



YOUR SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY

TUNISIA

Issam was delighted when he brought Zaytun the donkey home to work on his small farm in rural Tunisia. Zaytun – which means ‘olive’ in Arabic – would be able to help Issam and his family transport sacks of olives from the groves so they could earn a living.

But Issam soon noticed that Zaytun was unwell. The seven-year-old donkey had developed a deep, dry cough and lost his appetite. His breathing had also become laboured. Seriously concerned, Issam took Zaytun along to SPANA’s centre in Siliana for treatment.

The vets diagnosed Zaytun as suffering from a viral respiratory infection that should improve in a few days with supportive treatment and rest. They administered anti-inflammatories to make him feel better and vitamins to boost his general health. They also applied a topical eye ointment, as they’d found Zaytun had a mild case of conjunctivitis. The vets then advised Issam to rest Zaytun in a clean and well-ventilated shelter until he had recovered.

Issam said: ‘I have not had Zaytun for long, so I was worried when he became ill. Thanks to the vets at SPANA, he should be better very soon.’

Introducing just a few of the working animals we’ve recently helped, all made possible thanks to your kind support.



Zaytun

MALI

Bemba works on the rubbish dumps of Mali’s capital city, Bamako. Six mornings a week, the five-year-old donkey pulls a cart laden with rubbish to enable his owner, Amadi, to earn a small income as a refuse collector.

One morning, Bemba halted suddenly after walking knee-deep through rubbish. Worried that something was wrong, Amadi checked Bemba all over and found an open and bleeding wound on his front leg. Amadi rushed Bemba to SPANA’s centre in Bamako.

The vets disinfected Bemba’s wound thoroughly, applied a soft dressing, and administered anti-inflammatory medication to ease any

discomfort. Bemba was also given a vaccination to prevent tetanus – a deadly bacterial infection that can enter the body through the smallest of wounds. The vets advised Amadi that Bemba would need at least two weeks of rest to allow his wound to heal and ensure Bemba made a full recovery.

Amadi said: ‘This is the first time that my donkey has been injured at the rubbish dump, and the first time that I have visited SPANA. Thank you, SPANA, for helping him so quickly.’



Bemba

INDIA

Kajala the horse supports his owner, Bilal, by transporting goods and participating in marriage and festival processions in Gujarpur, eastern India.

One night, a serious fire broke out at Bilal’s home. The flames spread quickly to neighbouring buildings, including Kajala’s shelter. With little thought for his own safety, Bilal battled through the smoke to save his eight-year-old horse.

Thanks to Bilal’s bravery, Kajala escaped with his life. The horse had suffered two painful burns on the right side of his body, so Bilal made an emergency call to SPANA vets, who raced to help. While the vets were on their way, the team advised Bilal to cool Kajala’s burns with a gentle cold-water bath.

As soon as they arrived, the vets gently cleaned each burn, and applied a cooling water-based ointment and a protective light dressing to encourage healing. The team then administered anti-inflammatories and pain relief to make Kajala more comfortable. The vets returned several times over the next few weeks to continue treatment until Kajala’s burns had healed.

Bilal said: ‘I will be forever thankful to SPANA for helping my horse. I would not be able to support my family without him.’



Kajala

BOTSWANA

Aboubaker works six hours a day to support his owner, Mr Bamotshabile – known locally as Mr Bam. The horse’s daily work includes rounding up cattle and ensuring they do not stray too far, keeping them safe from danger.

One day, Aboubaker was travelling through the bush when he became injured by a stick that appeared to have punctured his abdomen, causing a large, painful wound. Mr Bam called SPANA vets, who immediately drove out in their mobile clinic to help.

The vets examined his injury and found that, fortunately, the stick had missed entering Aboubaker’s abdominal cavity, which could have been fatal. The vets carefully cleaned, treated and dressed the wound, and administered soothing pain relief. Aboubaker’s wound would need to be cleaned daily for six weeks to stop infection. The vets showed Mr Bam how to do this and gave him all the supplies he needed. A week later, the team returned and were delighted with his progress and how well Mr Bam was looking after him.

Mr Bamotshabile said: ‘This is the second time my horse has been injured while herding cows. The vets at SPANA are always there to help. Thank you, SPANA.’



Aboubaker

- TREAT
- TRAIN
- TEACH

COMPASSION FOR CAMELS



At SPANA, we're proud to help all working animals in need. While the majority of the thousands of sick and injured animals we treat every year are donkeys and horses, we also help a wide range of other animals, such as mules, oxen, elephants – and camels.

Just like horses, camels have been domesticated for thousands of years. Over the centuries they have played a vital role transporting goods and people. Today, they remain just as important in the daily lives of millions of people around the world. For example, in Jordan they transport vital supplies, including water, across desert areas. In India, they continue to work in the brick-making industry to move heavy loads of bricks from the kilns.

In 2021, thanks to your kindness, we were able to provide essential care to 16,962 sick camels requiring our help in India, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Our dedicated vet teams treat camels suffering from



Mathilde Merridale-Punter – SPANA's Melbourne-based Veterinary Programmes Advisor – explains how your support is helping thousands of camels every year.

all sorts of worrying conditions. Common ailments in these animals include skin conditions and wounds. They are also quite often infested with parasites, so we administer a large number of deworming treatments.

Parasites can cause unimaginable suffering for working animals in the countries where we work. A huge thank you to everyone who has donated towards our recent parasites appeal.

Crucially, as we treat each camel, we also improve their ongoing welfare by training owners in how best to look after their animals. It's heartening to see that just a few simple fixes can make the world of difference. For example, we're working to reduce the reliance on traditional wooden nose pegs, which some owners use to help control their camels. Traditional pegs are a significant cause of injury, because they can splinter and cause infections. Last year, we replaced 1,286 traditional nose pegs with more humane alternatives.

To prevent road accidents, we fit reflectors onto the carts pulled by camels. Last year, 778 reflectors were fitted onto carts to make sure that camels and their owners are visible on the road at night.

In some locations, we operate regular mobile clinics specifically for camels. In Marrakech, for example, we provide regular check-ups for tourist camels and treat those who need veterinary assistance. In India, we visit the vast annual camel fairs to help ensure the welfare of animals.

Camels are a lifeline for so many people, but rarely receive the recognition they deserve. Thanks to your compassion, we're helping these hardworking and loyal animals. From all our vet teams, thank you for your support.



Linda Edwards, SPANA's Chief Executive, reflects on her initial months in the role and looks forward to exciting times ahead.

Time flies! The months have simply raced by, and I've now been Chief Executive for a whole year.

I would like to thank you – our supporters – for all the kind welcome messages I have received since joining SPANA. Your dedication to helping working animals is truly heart-warming and not a day goes by when I do not reflect on how grateful we all are for your devoted support.

In my last column, I promised to keep you up to date with our progress. I've been spending the last few months really getting to know SPANA, examining our global projects to build a real understanding of how we are helping working animals. It is clear that we are making a huge difference to the lives of these animals – and it is only thanks to your support.

Working animals are almost certain to need our help more than ever in the months and years ahead. The long-term effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the Cost of Living crisis will likely hit low-income countries hardest of all, and will continue to have a devastating impact on the lives of working animals and their owners. Sadly, in many areas where SPANA works, working animals are also threatened by economic and political unrest. The growing impact of climate change will have further disastrous consequences, as we've already seen recently in places like East Africa, where this year was marked by a deadly drought.

But despite these heartbreaking challenges, there are a wealth of opportunities – opportunities

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR WORKING ANIMALS



where our teams can use our almost 100 years of skills, expertise and frontline action to improve the welfare of working animals.

One immediate opportunity for us is our centenary. In 2023, we will celebrate 100 years since our founders Kate and Nina Hosali embarked on their life-changing journey to North Africa that led to the formation of SPANA. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reflect on our achievements, but more importantly, to build on everything we have achieved and draw closer towards the vision we all share – of a world where every working animal lives a life free from suffering and is treated with compassion.

The care and commitment of you – our dedicated supporters – is invaluable. That's why I want your help in shaping our work in the years to come. I am very excited about the enormous difference we can make for working animals, together. I hope you are, too. Thank you so much for your support.

Become a Stable Sponsor for working animals today

Hundreds of working animals are treated every day at SPANA's busy stables. Now, more than ever, there is constant demand for food and veterinary supplies. That is why we urgently need more Stable Sponsors.



Our stables provide a haven for working animals, where they can receive expert veterinary care, and rest and recover in peace and comfort. By sponsoring our stables with a monthly gift, you will play a special role in helping sick and injured animals make a recovery.

As a Stable Sponsor, you can offer more working animals the best chance – often the only chance – of a life free from pain and suffering.

Receive a personalised Stable Sponsor certificate and welcome folder, with a lovely fridge magnet gift. Plus, you will receive exclusive updates from our stables and get an inside look at how your sponsorship is making a difference!



Could you support SPANA in this special way? To help working animals as a Stable Sponsor, complete and return a Stable Sponsor sign-up form, visit our website or call us on the number below. We'd love to hear from you.

Visit www.spana.org/stablesponsor
or call 1300 149 080

