



# news

For the working animals of the world

Spring 2015 • Issue 182

Thank you  
SPANNA WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT

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**Welcome to your latest SPANA News, packed with news about how you're making a difference to hardworking animals the world over.**

This issue it gives me great pleasure to introduce Francesca Compostella as SPANA's new veterinary director. We offer a warm welcome to Francesca in

her new role and I am certain she will enable us to help so many more animals in desperate need of our attention.

On page nine, Francesca reports from Jordan, at one of the numerous training workshops we hold every year for vets and other professionals from beyond the charity. Thanks to you, SPANA is able to provide treatment directly to many thousands of animals every year, but we are also able to expand our reach and improve the lives of countless more working animals across the world by sharing our knowledge and expertise.

In Jordan, as in so many other places, I've often come across traditional practices like firing that owners are convinced cure common problems. They're no such thing of course, and common practices such as nose slitting and pouring engine oil over a wound will only make a bad situation much worse.

Our appeal this issue highlights some of these traditional practices that our teams regularly face. We desperately need to put an end to these horrific 'cures' — but we need your help. Please, if you can, support the appeal and help us put an end to the suffering once and for all.

Also in this issue, find out more about the vital role played by half a million horses in feeding Britain during the Second World War. It's easy to forget that it wasn't so long since working animals were as common a sight here in the UK as they are in many developing countries today.

Finally, on behalf of all our teams around the world — and of course the many animals that you enable us to care for — I'd like to express our sincere thanks for your kindness and support. SPANA can achieve nothing at all without you.

**Jeremy Hulme**  
Chief Executive

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If you'd like to receive regular updates about SPANA's work, please sign up for our e-newsletter at [www.spana.org/news](http://www.spana.org/news)

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Registered charity no: 209015

# The calèche horses of Marrakech

**Travel to Marrakech and you can't fail to spot the hundreds of horse-drawn calèche carriages taxiing tourists around the bustling streets of the medina.**

Not so long ago these animals were in a terrible state: thin, lame, dehydrated and often in constant pain from untreated harness wounds.

Things are very different now. Working with the local authority, SPANA oversees a licensing scheme, and today calèche horses must be regularly inspected and passed as fit and healthy before they can be worked. They are well fed, well cared for and have access to farriery, dentistry and veterinary care.

They are micro-chipped too and have a numbered band around a fetlock, so that they can be properly identified and monitored.

**Thanks to your support SPANA has even built a network of water troughs across the city.**

**Together we really can make a difference.**



# SPANA IN THE NEWS

## SPANA Mauritania honoured with award from President



SPANA Mauritania director, Bebaha Hmeiditt, receives the award from the minister of agriculture

SPANA Mauritania has been named as the best NGO (non-profit organisation) in the country in 2014 for its work providing veterinary treatment to working animals and animal welfare lessons for school children. SPANA Mauritania's country director, Bebaha Hmeiditt, received the prestigious award — the first to be presented to an NGO — from the minister of agriculture on behalf of the president of Mauritania during a ceremony in the capital city, Nouakchott. Following the ceremony, dignitaries were taken on a tour of the SPANA centre.

SPANA has been working in Mauritania since 2001 and last year provided over 80,000 treatments to working horses and donkeys. The Mauritanian government and SPANA have also agreed a new partnership, in which the charity will help train new vets in the country, ensuring more working animals can receive the treatment they need in the future.

## New veterinary director

Francesca Compostella, SPANA's new veterinary director



### Francesca Compostella has been appointed as SPANA's new director of veterinary programmes.

Francesca, who has worked as veterinary programme advisor at SPANA since March 2014, will oversee all of SPANA's overseas veterinary work in her new role. Francesca grew up in Mozambique and qualified as a vet in 2005, after which she continued her training, completing a specialist surgery post (ECVS Residency). Chief executive Jeremy Hulme said: "We're extremely pleased

to introduce Francesca as our new veterinary director. She has shown tremendous ability and commitment to SPANA during her time with the charity. Francesca is well respected by our overseas teams and her expertise will ensure we are reaching as many working animals as possible with the highest quality veterinary care each year."



## Horse & Hound donates rugs to keep sick animals warm in winter

Horse & Hound supported SPANA, the magazine's chosen 'Charity of the Year' in 2014/2015, by donating more than 200 rugs to keep horses and donkeys being treated in our centres warm and comfortable as they recover during the cold winter months.

Although the heat can be sweltering for many months of the year in countries such as Jordan, temperatures can fall dramatically in the winter. The rugs made a big difference in January and February this year, as heavy snow fell unexpectedly in Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, with temperatures dropping below freezing.

SPANA supporters also generously donated to our Winter Warmer appeal, helping the charity to provide even more rugs to keep sick animals warm overseas.

© Paul Hammond



## Record breaking marathon challenge

SPANA supporter Alice Burch is attempting to break a Guinness World Record by running a full marathon every day for 60 days in a row. Alice's incredible challenge is being run in aid of SPANA and she has been inspired to fundraise by the loss of a close friend in a tragic accident last year. Starting on 1 October 2015, Alice will run most of the marathons at her local sports centre in Southampton and she will need at least two witnesses every day to meet the World Record official terms. Please support Alice in her challenge. **You can find further information about being a witness for Alice and making a donation towards her fundraising target at [www.spana.org/60:60](http://www.spana.org/60:60) or call 020 7831 3999. Good luck Alice, we're all rooting for you!**

## New therapy riding saddle to help disabled children

A new therapy saddle has been developed that will make it possible for more disabled children to ride comfortably and safely at SPANA's riding schools. SPANA has provided support and funding for the saddle, designed and produced by SaddleAid, which will transform the lives of many children. SPANA's riding schools for disabled children, such as the one in Casablanca, Morocco (pictured), have been extremely successful in helping children overcome physical problems, as well as improving their confidence and quality of life. However, traditional saddles are generally unsuitable for disabled children to sit on. With additional padding, support and handgrips, the new therapy saddle — which is lightweight and adaptable — will ensure that even more children can take part in these beneficial sessions.



## New X-ray machine for Mali



A new X-ray machine in Mali — the first of its kind in the country — has transformed the way the SPANA team can diagnose and treat injuries in working animals. Following the delivery of the machine, the SPANA Mali team are now able to diagnose

internal injuries in donkeys and horses far more quickly and accurately, helping to improve treatment and reduce recovery times for these animals.

The machine allows SPANA vets to get a clear view of any internal damage an animal may be suffering, such as bone fractures, which are a common problem for working animals. It is portable, meaning it can be used during mobile clinic visits, preventing the need for injured animals to be brought long distances for treatment. Quicker diagnosis also means the team can help even more animals.

Funding for the machine was kindly provided by Vets with Horsepower, a five-strong team of top equine vets led by Professor Derek Knottenbelt, who travelled 3,000 miles by motorbike across Europe and Africa to raise funds for SPANA.

# Slitting, burning, firing. Put an end to traditional 'cures'

Picture a sharp knife slitting open your nostrils; or acid pouring into a gaping wound on your flesh. Can you imagine the searing pain? Tragically, this is what happens to thousands of working animals every day. Not because their owners are being cruel, but because they believe they're curing their sick or injured animal.

Please help stop this terrible suffering – by giving to our special appeal today.

Keyo works as a carhorse in Ethiopia, moving goods and people for his owner, Beneberu. One day, Beneberu noticed some weeping ulcers on Keyo's leg. He was limping and clearly in great pain. Desperate for his horse to recover, Beneberu used a traditional practice that he believed would seal the wounds and stop the spread of infection. First, he tied Keyo to a gatepost. Then he poured sulphuric acid onto the sores.

## The pain must have been unbearable.

It seems barbaric. How could someone treat an animal in this way? But owners like Beneberu are trying to cure their animals in the only way they know how. In many communities around the world, there is simply no awareness of animal welfare. No access to modern veterinary services. So, harmful practices continue to be passed down through the generations. And it's working animals like Keyo who suffer the brutal consequences.

You can change all of this. A gift from you could help pay for an education workshop that will reach hundreds of animal owners. That's hundreds of people learning about the dangers of traditional healing practices.

After being 'treated' with acid, the blisters on Keyo's leg only got worse. Now he was in agony. Now he could barely walk. Beneberu was so sorry when he saw the effect of his misguided 'cure' on Keyo. Fortunately, a friend told him about

SPANA. He brought Keyo to our vet who took immediate action to ease his pain.

The vet quickly diagnosed the cause of the ulcerated sores. It was Epizootic Lymphangitis (EZL), a serious fungal disease that eventually leads to a slow, painful death if not treated. Keyo had reached us in the nick of time, before the disease had become too severe and luckily, thanks to supporters like you, SPANA's vets were able to nurse Keyo back to full health. Just as important, Beneberu promised never to use acid on his animals ever again.

## You can help us end traditional 'healing'.

Acid isn't the only customary 'cure' that you could help to eradicate. Across Africa and the Middle East, many people still believe in 'firing'. This is where owners press scorching hot irons onto their animals' skin. They believe it will cure lameness and other conditions like ocular disease. But all it does is cause excruciating burns and potentially fatal infections.

Another grim practice is nostril slitting. Thinking that it will help their animals breathe easier – and work harder – some owners slice their donkeys' nostrils open with a knife. Sometimes their ears are slit too, so that they can be easily identified. Unsterilised blades are even used to castrate supposedly aggressive donkeys – without any anaesthetic.



Painful and unnecessary nostril slitting

Your gift today could help stop these misguided practices – and save working animals from agonising pain and disfigurement.

In many remote areas of the world, a SPANA vet is the only one that impoverished animal owners ever see. That's why we're counting on your help to reach isolated communities. To save sick animals. To discourage traditional 'healing'. To show owners that there is a far more effective way to treat their animals. **Will you help with a gift today?**

Once people see that their animals live longer and are more productive, word will spread. From owner to owner. From village to village. From generation to generation. With your support, traditional practices like slitting, firing and burning with acid will simply die out.



Acid 'treatment' causes agony for Keyo



Keyo's owner believed he was healing his horse by pouring sulphuric acid over the sores on his legs

## How your gift will make a difference

Thousands of working animals are suffering right now because of traditional 'cures'. They urgently need your help. Here's how your gift today could relieve suffering – and help stop harmful traditional practices:

**£16** could pay for the medicine and bandaging needed to treat a wound that's been 'sealed' with acid or burning engine oil.

**£38** could pay for a surgical kit and the drugs used to treat an animal that has undergone a dangerous nostril slitting procedure.

**£50** could pay for an owner to attend an education workshop and learn about the dangers of traditional 'healing' practices.

Please support this vital appeal to stamp out the suffering caused by traditional healing practices.

To donate please use the enclosed donation form, call **0300 033 4999** or visit [www.spana.org/heal](http://www.spana.org/heal)

## A New Chapter for Working Animals



Education director, Diana Hulme, travels to Marrakech for a special book launch

**When I think back to the books I loved as a child, many feature a common theme: animals. For those of us who share a love of animals, tales such as Black Beauty often helped shape our attitudes and will always stay with us.**

But that culture of love and respect for animals which permeates so much classic children's literature isn't common the world over. In countries where working animals are often treated as little more than tools, compassion and respect can be in short supply. That's why I'm here in Marrakech, where today I'm launching our new children's book, Mensi.

The story focuses on a donkey foal, Mensi, who leads a happy life on a farm with his mother, a farmer and his family. The daughter in the family becomes ill and the father is forced to sell the foal to pay for her medical



treatment. The new owner is cruel and Mensi is overworked and abused. Thankfully the story ends happily as Mensi is eventually rescued and reunited with the family that had been forced to sell him.

Although many children in developing countries come into contact with working animals on a daily basis, their attitudes towards animals are generally very different from those of children in the UK. Helping children to develop feelings of compassion and respect for animals is essential and can result in real improvements in animal welfare.

**“I loved reading about Mensi's adventures...”**

Here at the SPANA centre in Marrakech there is great excitement as Mensi is handed out to the children for the first time; their smiles are infectious. The classroom quickly becomes silent as they start to read. It's lovely to see how engrossed they are in the story and how positive their reactions are.

After the class, one child, 10-year-old Lina, expresses her delight at the story: “I loved reading about Mensi's adventures. I could not stop turning the pages until I found out that Mensi was safe and was no longer suffering. I have drawn pictures of Mensi and I want to read about him again already!”

The book, which is aimed at primary school children between the ages of seven and 11, has been produced with the help of funding from Animal Friends Pet Insurance, the ethical pet insurance company. The original story was written by SPANA chief executive Jeremy Hulme, and the book includes beautiful illustrations by Alasdair Bright.

In years to come I hope that these children look back on this captivating tale with the same affection and fondness that I feel for those childhood stories which shaped my own love for animals.



© Dylan Thomas

## Helping animals worldwide through SPANA training



SPANA's new veterinary director, Francesca Compostella, reports on the importance of the charity's training for overseas vets and other professionals caring for working animals

**Around the world there are thought to be as many as 200 million working animals. Yet most will have no access to any professional veterinary care throughout their lives – if they are sick or injured, they will suffer.**

Of course, thanks to you, SPANA provides hundreds of thousands of free veterinary treatments each year – but free veterinary care alone will never be enough to reach all those animals that need our help. If we're to reach more animals in need, we need to improve access to high quality veterinary care around the world.

That's why, every year, SPANA provides training to over one thousand qualified vets and practitioners overseas. From Mauritania to Mongolia, SPANA's expertise is shared with government vets, student vets, technicians and veterinary assistants, as well as the charity's own vets and other professionals involved in the care of working animals, such as farriers.

I'm here in Jordan, at the SPANA centre in Amman, to assist with a training course for 30 vets who work with working horses and donkeys. The programme consists of four two-day training workshops held throughout the year, during which attendees progress from learning about carrying out a basic clinical examination and welfare assessment of an animal, to being able to diagnose more complex problems and perform minor surgery.

It's not uncommon for the vets undertaking the training to be inexperienced in treating working

animals and even nervous about doing so initially. The benefits are clear for these individuals, and they appear noticeably more confident and comfortable with managing working animal cases as the morning progresses.

This increase in confidence is confirmed by one vet, who tells me: “Prior to these workshops, treating horses was not an area I was experienced in. I feel very differently thanks to this training and the skills I've developed. I now welcome these sorts of cases.”

This aim of this training is to maintain and develop the knowledge, confidence and skills of vets and other professionals, ensuring that the practices, techniques and approaches they are using are as up-to-date and effective.

But the benefits of this training go beyond helping individual animals and professionals. By training government vets and students in a particular country, SPANA builds strong relationships with government departments, universities and other influential institutions, increasing the charity's standing and influence amongst key decision-makers and so helping to deliver a better life for working animals.

Thanks to your support, we're leaving a lasting legacy for animals right around the world.

**“Prior to these workshops, treating horses was not an area I was experienced in. I feel very differently thanks to this training and the skills I've developed. I now welcome these sorts of cases.”**



© Victor Kleive

# PROFILE **Morocco**

SPANA's founders Kate and Nina Hosali began working in Morocco in 1925 and — 90 years on — the work they started is thriving.

## SPANA OPERATIONS

SPANA has been working in Morocco since 1925 to improve the lives of hardworking animals, and the charity has more centres and clinics here than anywhere else. The treatment provided by our vets is vital, but educating owners in how to care properly for their animals is also an important part of their role.

In addition to our veterinary work, SPANA has a long-established education programme in Morocco. This programme is helping to build a better future for working animals by teaching children about the importance of treating animals with respect and compassion. Last year, almost 28,000 school children visited SPANA's education projects.

SPANA Morocco carries out a wide range of projects that are having a hugely positive impact on the welfare of working animals, including providing and maintaining a network of water troughs on main routes throughout the country. These troughs help to ensure that working animals have regular access to clean water.

• **Five veterinary centres** in Casablanca, Chemaia, Khemisset, Had Ouled Frej and Marrakech

• **One mobile clinic** in Marrakech, visiting smaller towns and villages, including remote communities in the Atlas mountains

• **Over 52,000 veterinary treatments** provided to working animals last year

## MOROCCO AT A GLANCE

Population **33,656,000**

Area **710,850 km<sup>2</sup>**

Location **North Africa**

Capital city **Rabat**

Estimated working animal population **1,593,900 horses, donkeys, mules and camels**



© Anne Heslop

## PERSONAL PROFILE Q&A Professor Hassan Alyakine, SPANA Morocco country director



© Dylan Thomas

### How long have you been working for SPANA?

I started working with SPANA in 1991, at a veterinary centre about 200 miles north of Marrakech. This was two years after graduating from the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, where I also worked as an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine and Surgery for equines and small animals.

I was appointed as Morocco's country director in January 2014 after having had responsibility for SPANA's Casablanca centre since 2008.

### What does your role involve?

I spend my time co-ordinating all of SPANA's charitable activities in Morocco. This not only means SPANA's veterinary work, but the management of relationships we have with other charities and third parties involved with the welfare of working animals.

Being involved with SPANA's projects across the whole of Morocco gives me a great opportunity to ensure it is working harmoniously.

### Is teaching a significant part of your role?

Yes, and it's important on so many levels. While it's key to teach owners and children, we also need to continually educate all staff working in the SPANA centres. This allows them to pass on the most current knowledge directly onto owners directly as they treat their animals.

### What are the challenges facing working animals?

There are obvious problems facing working animals, like harness wounds and lameness, but these problems are

often compounded by a lack of appropriate animal welfare legislation. SPANA in Morocco faces all of these difficulties, but we're making real progress.

### What are your main goals for 2015?

2015 will be a key year for our education programme, following a review in 2014. We will adapt our current programme and educate vets, staff, owners, and children to improve their understanding of animal welfare.

We will also be focusing on sharing knowledge and experience between SPANA's countries of operation through our regional meeting, helping to build strong relationships between people who are working to make a difference to animals in different countries.

### Are you optimistic about the future for working animals and animal welfare in Morocco?

We have to be optimistic in order to continue to achieve so much for the welfare of working animals. This optimism is supported by our strong reputation within local communities; hardworking and committed staff, and good relationships with authorities and education institutions.

# CASE FILE: **Morocco**

## Rescue for Chaimae the abandoned mule

When Chaimae was spotted eating from rubbish dumps half a mile from SPANA's centre in Marrakech, Morocco, our veterinary staff were concerned that she had been abandoned. The mule was visibly struggling with lameness and the materials she was eating from the dumps meant she was at real risk of life-threatening colic. SPANA made the decision to pick her up and bring her back to the centre for treatment.

Chaimae was given a full assessment, and a nail was found in the bottom of her front left hoof, along with some small wounds on her back and internal parasites. She was given painkillers, dewormed, and her wounds were cleaned and treated with antiseptic ointment. An X-ray was taken of Chaimae's hoof and, luckily, no major damage was found, so the nail was gently removed. Her foot was cleaned and bandaged with a special dressing to prevent the spread of any infection. Chaimae was also given an anti-tetanus injection.

After treatment Chaimae was stabled and given a good feed. She will recuperate with SPANA until her owner is found, or if



Chaimae is treated by SPANA vet Dr Boubker

nobody comes forward, she will be given to a caring and compassionate owner chosen by a SPANA vet.

If an owner does try to claim Chaimae, our vets will make sure that they properly communicate the importance of bringing her to SPANA for treatment if she is suffering from any kind of illness or injury. They will also educate them on proper nutrition and advise that she should only be left to graze on patches of proper vegetation. They will also provide comfortable well-fitting equipment to prevent any future harness wounds or bit sores.



Images © Dylan Thomas

# SPANNA AROUND THE WORLD

**Introducing just a few of the tens of thousands of animals we've helped recently, thanks to your kind support.**



**“This is a great help for us. We often have no money, so without this free treatment there would be no way for us to look after our animals when they become sick.”**

## ETHIOPIA

### Spoilt grain hard to stomach for Tirign

When Tirign the horse was brought to SPANA's mobile clinic in Adama, Ethiopia, his owner Emebet Woldeyohannes had strong suspicions about what was causing his stomach problems.

The SPANA vets diagnosed that six-year-old Tirign was suffering from diarrhoea and serious abdominal pain (colic). Emebet told the team that, four days earlier, Tirign had eaten some spoilt grain that had been left in a bag. Stored in the wrong conditions, grain can easily develop mould, and in this case, the grain was clearly the culprit.

Emebet, who is 39, lives three hours walk from the clinic and she brought Tirign on foot so that he could receive treatment. Tirign helps to support Emebet's family by working as a carhorse and transporting people. He works around eight hours a day, three or four days each week.

SPANNA vet, Dr Nigatu, gave Tirign anti-parasite medication and a medicine to help reduce his painful stomach cramps. He advised Emebet to be careful not to leave spoilt or unsuitable food within easy reach of Tirign and to ensure that there is fresh food and plenty of forage available for him.

Emebet said her family and their animals have been benefiting from the SPANA mobile clinic for four years. She expressed her gratitude about the care received: “This is a great help for us. We often have no money, so without this free treatment there would be no way for us to look after our animals when they become sick.”

## TUNISIA

### A nasty bite for Wissem the camel

Wissem the camel arrived at SPANA's mobile clinic in Douz, Tunisia, with a deep wound on his nose. The severe injury had occurred after six-year-old Wissem was bitten by another camel.

Wissem is very important to his owner Mohamed bin Salem, as he carries goods — including hay and forage for other animals — to the weekly souk (market) at Douz, which Mohamed can sell to gain an income. Camels are often used as pack animals in the area, which is on the edge of the Sahara desert, and are an essential form of transport for many local people.

SPANNA vet Dr Farah immediately set about treating Wissem. She cleaned his wound with antiseptic solution and applied a cream to the exposed tissue to keep it moist and encourage healing. Due to the nature of the injury, stitching wasn't suitable and the team decided that allowing the wound to heal naturally would be the best course of action.

**“I could see my camel had a bad injury and I would not know what to do without SPANA. I am thankful to them for helping Wissem.”**

## ZIMBABWE

### The healing process starts for Stimbok

Mkoba is an urban township in Zimbabwe's third largest city. Power cuts are frequent and people often use firewood as an alternative form of energy. Eight-year-old Stimbok is one of the many donkeys that carry firewood from forests 20 kilometres away for their owners to sell in the city. To earn a living, the pressure is on these owners to collect as many cartfuls of firewood as possible each day, but this can come at a major price for the donkeys that have to pull the heavy loads — including Stimbok.

Stimbok's owner, Killion Banda, brought him to SPANA's mobile clinic after wounds appeared across his donkey's chest. SPANA vet Dr Andy examined the painful wounds, which had been caused by an ill-fitting harness with poor padding that had rubbed constantly on Stimbok's skin. He cleaned the wounds and applied zinc oxide paste to protect them and promote healing.

Killion had tried to pad Stimbok's harness with old rags, but was advised to use softer material in future, such as soft cotton padding, which is available cheaply. The SPANA team



Given the complex anatomy of camels' nostrils, the SPANA vets were concerned about the long term impact of the injury once healed, and the possibility that Wissem may struggle to 'seal off' his nostrils to the sand and dust in the future, which could result in respiratory problems. The team instructed Mohamed to clean the wound daily and asked him to bring Wissem back to the clinic the following week to check that the healing was progressing well. Regular check-ups may be required, but it was a relief that Wissem's injury was treated so quickly.

Mohamed said: “I could see my camel had a bad injury and I would not know what to do without SPANA. I am thankful to them for helping Wissem.”



also taught Killion how to apply the zinc oxide paste and advised him to rest Stimbok until the wounds had healed completely.

Killion, who relies on Stimbok to help him earn enough money to feed his wife, three young children and send his younger brother to school, was extremely grateful for SPANA's help. He said: “I am happy that SPANA have taught me the importance of proper harnessing for the wellbeing of my donkey. The donkey is my only source of income and I would not want to lose him. Keep up the tremendous work you are doing for our community.”

**“Keep up the tremendous work you are doing for our community.”**

# Vet volunteers provide a boost for working animals



Cath treating a new patient at the SPANA centre in Marrakech



Vet Cath Spedding shares her experiences of SPANA's veterinary volunteer programme in Morocco

particularly bad cases I treated, the horses' intestines were full of plastic bags."

SPANA undoubtedly benefits from the time donated by the volunteer vets from the UK, but Cath stresses how beneficial the programme is for these vets, equipping them with expertise and skills that are invaluable when they return to practices at home.

"I learnt so much from the SPANA vets, like Dr Boubker in the Marrakech centre. Gaining four months of direct, hands-on experience under their guidance has been such a big help to me professionally. I went from veterinary school to being on the frontline, treating and managing cases, and with the practical skills I developed, I now feel completely comfortable in this area of the job.

"It was a great opportunity to give something back and the SPANA team really appreciated having an extra pair of hands. The other volunteer vets from the UK and I were able to pass on our knowledge to Moroccan student vets who visited the centre too – such as teaching them how to do proper eye examinations – so it was mutually beneficial."

Cath describes SPANA's work as "massively important" for working animals and the families they support. "People in developing countries depend so much on their animals and often cannot feed their families without them. There wouldn't be treatment available for these animals without SPANA though. The conditions are so different to those in the UK and the experience certainly gives you a sense of perspective. Clients in the UK will take their animals to the vets as soon as problems arise, but in Morocco working animal owners are so reliant on their animals being able to work they will often wait until it's absolutely necessary to bring them in.

"The volunteer programme was humbling, at times challenging, but so valuable. SPANA makes a profound difference, and it was a privilege to offer my skills as a vet to support the charity's work and help these hardworking animals."

**After graduating from Liverpool University's veterinary school in July 2014, vet Cath Spedding was looking for a rewarding challenge and SPANA's overseas veterinary volunteer programme offered the perfect opportunity.**

The veterinary volunteer programme gives qualified vets from the UK, particularly recent graduates, the chance to volunteer in SPANA's centres in Morocco. For these vets, it's a unique opportunity to apply and develop their skills and knowledge treating working animals. For SPANA, the benefits are considerable too – gaining help from expert volunteers that allows the charity to treat even more working animals in need.

Cath spent four months with the SPANA team in Morocco, based mainly in Marrakech, but with time at all five of SPANA's centres in the country. A typical day for Cath would start at 8.30am, when she would examine and treat the in-patients at the centre. Throughout the afternoon she would then handle emergency admissions and provide treatment to animals being brought to the centre by their owners.

"When I first started at the centre, I was performing tasks such as providing animals with their medication, cleaning wounds and changing bandages. The SPANA vets helped me to develop a range of skills however, and I was soon involved in other areas of treatment, such as stitching up wounds, administering anaesthetics and performing minor operations.

"Wounds, lameness, dental issues and colic were all common problems I encountered on a daily basis. Many horses suffered from colic from eating rubbish on the streets and, in some

## Small actions making a big difference

Seydou Camara visits SPANA's centre in Bamako, Mali, twice a day, six days a week. When he arrives, he takes Issa, one of SPANA's resident donkeys, from the stables, fits him with comfortable harnesses, and hooks him up to a cart approved by our vets.

They both then travel on Mali's back roads to find fields with the most abundant vegetation. Seydou cuts the down the long, lush grass, collects it up and brings it back to the veterinary centre where eager donkey inpatients line up to receive the fruits of Seydou and Issa's labour.

With every bite of nutritious food, every day of rest, and every veterinary treatment received, the health of these animals in need improves.

This small action is just one example of how the care and consideration of SPANA staff is helping to build a brighter, healthier and happier future for working animals.



A member of the Women's Land Army is trained in the traditional horse-drawn method of ploughing, 1940

# THE LAND GIRLS: Feeding the nation through horsepower in 1945

Seventy years on from the end of the conflict, chief executive Jeremy Hulme reflects on the crucial role played by the Women's Land Army and half a million horses that helped feed Britain during the Second World War.

In the last SPANA News I wrote about the invaluable contribution horses made to the struggle in the First World War. In the Second World War they were no less important – though thankfully not on the battlefield. The Germans still used horses in huge numbers – hundreds of thousands suffered and died on the Eastern Front – but luckily most British horses were involved in the struggle to provide food

for a besieged nation. And it certainly was besieged. In the bleak years of 1941 and 1942 so much shipping was sunk by German U-boats that the country came very near to starvation.

But help was at hand. Men were desperately needed in the armed forces, so women stepped up to take their place, as part of the Women's Land Army (re-formed as in the Great War). And, as tractors were still few and far between, they had to get used to working with farm horses very quickly. There had been a time when people thought women too weak and incapable to handle the massive Shires, Clydesdales and Suffolk Punches, but they very soon showed themselves just as adept in horsemanship as their male counterparts – and often formed a very strong bond with their charges.

Such was the success of the Women's Land Army that, by 1943, it is estimated that they were producing 70 per cent of Britain's food – an astonishing contribution.

A recruitment poster for the Women's Land Army



© IWM.

When I first worked on farms in the '60s and '70s, although the working horses were long gone, there were still plenty of horsemen and women around (though the latter had often become farmers' wives), and I loved hearing their stories of the hard toil of farming during the war.

They talked of picking beet and sprouts in freezing winter weather, feeding livestock before dawn in pouring rain, struggling in muddy fields with heavy, antiquated machinery, but mostly the joy and pleasure of the horses that took on a human quality to many lonely souls, missing their families and loved ones.

Many big horses prefer to doze standing up, but one lady told me of her horse, a Suffolk called Ben, who liked to lie down for his lunchtime nap, and she would snuggle up beside him to keep warm and dry out of the wind.

Rations were as short for animals as they were for humans, and the field beans with their protein were reserved for dairy cows, but a pride in the condition of your horse drove many to make a night-time visit to the barn where the hammer-mill worked, to scrape up the bean dust and waste – believed to give any horse's coat a deep shine of health.

In 1945 there were half a million horses still at work. We who still live in a free country owe a major debt to that work, and the 80,000 women of the Land Army, that made it possible.

There are certain parallels with SPANA's work in developing countries today. Working animals are still vital in food production in the poorest countries – pulling ploughs, doing the job of tractors and transporting produce. Tractors and other machinery are also scarcely available, unaffordable and impractical (the lack of fuel to run them echoes the situation in Britain during the war) and working animals are therefore crucial.

Like the Land Girls, women in developing countries also play a key role, primarily looking after the family's livestock and working animals in many cases. The bonds these women have with their animals are often very strong, just as they were seventy years ago in Britain, and the consequences are profound if their animals are ill, injured or unable to work. That is why the veterinary treatment SPANA provides, thanks to your generous and unflinching support, is so important.

New Women's Land Army recruit, 19-year-old Iris Joyce, drives a horse-drawn hay rake in Northamptonshire, 1942



© IWM.



**Najia the mule was brought into a SPANA centre in Morocco by her worried owner Naim Ahmed. She was dangerously ill – thin, unsteady, with pale jaundiced mucus membranes, and the SPANA vets soon discovered her blood count was critically low. Immediately, the team performed an emergency blood transfusion. Using a practical, simple and inexpensive technique they were able to act without delay to save Najia's life.**

After three week's care Najia's jaundice had gone, her blood count was normal and she returned home full of energy. Her owner said "Najia has been mine for 10 years. She is almost a family member and we were all very worried when she developed this mysterious illness. I never imagined that a blood transfusion was done for animals too. When this was done for Najia, I realised that her illness was serious. I thank the SPANA staff for all their efforts that saved my mule's life."

Day after day, week after week, SPANA vets help sick and injured working animals like Najia. Whilst your kind donations to our appeals enable us to build new centres or intervene in crisis situations to help animals, it is the funding from gifts left in Wills that helps to pay for many of our ongoing services. We know we are very lucky to have such kind supporters who share our passion for helping working animals. The legacies left to SPANA by our supporters ensure that we are able to continue our work saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of animals like Najia year after year.

If you would like to help animals like Najia with a gift in your Will call 020 7831 3999

**A gift in your Will, of any size, can make a real difference and we are grateful for every legacy we receive. What may seem like a small amount can go a really long way overseas and smaller gifts soon add up to make a big difference. If you would like more information on how a gift in your Will can help our projects continue in the future, please get in touch.**

**You can speak to one of our friendly legacy team or request a free copy of our SPANA legacies guide by phoning 020 7831 3999 or emailing: [legaciesnotification@spana.org](mailto:legaciesnotification@spana.org)**

**A GIFT FOR THE FUTURE**

# Supporter News

Get involved, have fun and help working animals worldwide!



## Vets take on the challenge

SPANA was extremely proud to be a part of the Vet Charity Challenge again in 2014 and would like to say a big thank you for the £12,000 raised. Over 200 vet professionals took part in the team challenge event in Pewsey, Wiltshire, by hiking, cycling, kayaking and more to raise funds. The money raised will help save the lives of hardworking animals in Tunisia by funding a specially-branded mobile clinic.

**Stop the press: SPANA has been chosen as one of the beneficiaries of the Vet Charity Challenge again in 2015! Be sure to tell your local vets that they can sign up now at [www.vetcharitychallenge.com](http://www.vetcharitychallenge.com)**



**VET CHARITY CHALLENGE 2015**

## Recycling raises money

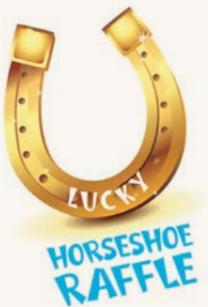
Thank you to everyone who has been recycling for SPANA. We're thrilled to report that you raised over £5,000 from the special appeal in the summer 2014 issue of SPANA News. You'll find another freepost envelope enclosed, so if you or your friends and family have any old or broken jewellery lying around then send it in to help raise even more for working animals. Old or foreign banknotes can be enclosed too. A fantastic £1,200 was also raised last year from stamp and postcard recycling, so don't forget to collect them up and send them on to:

**Used stamps:** Alan Gray, 7 Rookery Close, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5FX

**Old postcards:** Miss J E Webb, 18 Hammonds Way, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO40 3HF

## Lucky Horseshoe Raffle

SPANAs autumn 2014 Lucky Horseshoe Raffle was the luckiest yet for working animals. With over 84,000 tickets sold, the funds raised will save the lives of thousands of sick or injured working animals. Thank you so much to everyone who took part and well done to our winners.



*"It was such a wonderful surprise to find out that I had won £150 in the autumn 2014 Raffle. I always enter SPANA's raffles because I know how much they raise for working animals." Alma Parfitt from Swansea.*

## Horse ride marathon

Jenny Blakiston and Helen Tegg from Pembrokeshire in Wales organised an epic 26 mile horse ride across the county in autumn last year. With 27 other riders joining in they raised a fantastic £1,300. Huge thanks to everyone that helped to make the day such a success and to all the horses and riders who took part! You have made such a big difference to the lives of less fortunate horses around the world.



## You are cordially invited to SPANA's Summer Tea Party

**Where:** Goodenough College, London  
**When:** Saturday, 11 July from 12.30pm

We'd love for you and a guest to join us for afternoon tea. It's a great opportunity to meet up with your fellow SPANA supporters and hear from the SPANA team about our work around the world, all in the lovely surroundings of the Great Hall at London's prestigious Goodenough College.

**Numbers are limited so call today to book your place on 020 7831 3999 or email [events@spana.org](mailto:events@spana.org)**

This year we're also appealing for our supporters to host their very own SPANA World Tea Party to raise vital funds for working animals across the globe! Turn the page to find out more about this fun, new campaign.

To book your place at SPANA's Summer Tea Party call us on 020 7831 3999  
**Tickets: £20 per person**



# Let's get together for working animals

## July 2015



### Could you get together with friends, family, colleagues and neighbours for a tea party with a twist?

This year we're launching the SPANA World Tea Party and asking you to host your very own British, Moroccan, Ethiopian or world-themed party of your choice. If you aren't joining us for our party on the 11th July (see previous page for details) you could have your party that day, or choose any date that suits you and your guests. The best part is that every penny raised will help working animals in need around the world.

**Get your free pack now** for everything you need to host the perfect party. With special recipes from the SPANA teams in Morocco and Ethiopia and top tips on how to theme your party, you and your guests are sure to have a wonderful time!



Follow in the footsteps of SPANA's founders, Kate and Nina, with a **British Afternoon Tea Party**.



Help the many working horses, donkeys and mules in Morocco with a **Moroccan Mint Tea Party**.



Pay tribute to the donkeys in Ethiopia who carry coffee beans on their backs with an **Ethiopian Coffee Morning**.



*"I'm thrilled to be supporting the SPANA World Tea Party – a tea party with a difference! Whether you're inspired to hold a Moroccan mint tea party, an Ethiopian coffee morning or another global destination takes your fancy, amaze your friends and family with your own world-themed tea party and let the exotic colours and flavours whisk you away."* **Joanna Lumley**



**Call 020 7831 3999, go to [spana.org/teaparty](http://spana.org/teaparty) or tick the box on the form enclosed to order your pack today!**