



NEWS

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HELPING HORSES IN MONGOLIA FACING A DEVASTATING DROUGHT

Building a better future for working
animals through community training

SPECIAL APPEAL: Help animals
suffering from malnutrition



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WELCOME

to the latest issue of SPANA News.

I am pleased to tell you that, last year, SPANA's dedicated teams treated more animals, trained more vets and taught more children than ever before. As you are aware, these successes have been followed by immense challenges in 2020. From horrific bush fires to a global pandemic, the devastating effects of these crises have been felt by humans and animals alike.

SPANA is currently working hard to maintain our operations despite the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This unprecedented global health crisis and its economic impact will put increased strain on working animals in the developing world. But, rest assured, we are doing everything we can to ensure that working animals continue to receive the treatment and care they need.

Our **special appeal**, on page four of this issue, focuses on the terrible effects of malnutrition. Many of the animals that our vets see are undernourished and dehydrated due to harsh droughts and poor pastureland. As lockdown measures have been enforced in the countries where we work, the struggle for these animals has only intensified. If you can, please support our appeal so that our vets can treat more underfed and dehydrated animals that are suffering right now.

On page six we focus on one of our recent emergency projects in Mongolia, where we built and refurbished wells to supply horses with water during a long and sustained drought that has killed many animals. In times of crisis, SPANA's emergency projects can provide fodder, water, shelter and vital veterinary care, protecting working animals and securing a future for their communities.

I was able to visit some of our emergency projects in Ethiopia and India last year and I am constantly amazed by the positive effect they have on animals facing extremely tough times. We are now in regular contact with my previous charity, the International Red Cross, so we can work together in times of emergency, with us saving the lives of working animals and them providing healthcare to the communities that depend on them.

Thank you for sparing a thought for working animals during this difficult time, and for your continued support of this wonderful charity. I am very proud to be its Chief Executive.

Geoffrey Dennis

Geoffrey Dennis Chief Executive

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SPANA IN THE NEWS

Celebrating the successes of 2019

The enormous difficulties of 2020 follow an incredibly successful 12 months for SPANA. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters in Australia and around the world, we were able to help more working animals than ever before.

Last year, thanks to your support, we provided veterinary care to 388,702 working animals, trained 57,190 people in animal care, and educated 76,868 children about animal welfare.

Though this year presents significant challenges, we are committed to continuing our vital work helping working animals, easing their suffering and re-building hope for the future.

Read our 2019/20 Annual Review at www.spana.org/publications



Our new centre in Mauritania

At the end of last year, Geoffrey Dennis, SPANA Chief Executive, formally opened our new veterinary centre in Boghé, Mauritania.

Within three months of opening, the centre had treated 3,827 horses and 5,600 donkeys. Boghé, like all of our centres, has continued its operations as much as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a lifeline for working animals in desperate need.

A new partnership to tackle African horse sickness

Earlier this year, the first outbreak of African horse sickness was identified in the Asia-Pacific region for more than 50 years. This insect-borne disease is highly infectious with deaths rates of over 90 per cent.

The mortality of horses in Thailand, where the outbreak started, was very high and there were concerns about it spreading to neighbouring countries, such as Cambodia, which is home to approximately 30,000 working ponies.

SPANA and other members of the International Coalition for Working Equids teamed up with World Organisation for Animal Health and local partners to prevent this from happening. Together we organised a series of webinars featuring international experts on protective measures. With support from Cambodia Pony Welfare Organisation, we were able to reach remote communities to raise awareness and support practical prevention measures.

We are continuing to monitor the situation and we hope that, together, we can protect the working horses of South East Asia from this terrible disease.



Thanks to you...

A huge thank you everyone that has donated towards our recent appeal. At the time of writing this newsletter, we had raised more than \$90,000 which will help keep our vital mobile clinics in operation. Your kindness is helping us reach more animals in desperate need – thank you.

HELP ANIMALS SUFFERING FROM MALNUTRITION

Every day, working animals endure the horrifying effects of malnutrition. In developing countries, many animals struggle to sustain themselves on sparse pasture and little drinking water, especially during times of crisis. The lethal combination of malnourishment and dehydration can cause agonising colic and make animals extremely vulnerable to other issues, like infectious disease. But, with your help, the lives of malnourished working animals can be transformed today.

Bullo's story

Life is tough for Balljoint, known affectionately as Bullo. The horse works eight hours each day, laboriously helping his owner, Mr Hamu, round up cattle in Maun, Botswana. Every day, Bullo walks for miles over rocky, uneven ground that has dried up from frequent drought.

Mr Hamu depends entirely on his animals for income and survival. When his trusted horse suddenly collapsed one day, unable to move and clearly in a great deal of pain, Mr Hamu was distraught. If Bullo couldn't work, he would no longer be able to afford to keep him. Fortunately, SPANA's mobile clinic was able to come to his aid.

When our dedicated vets arrived, they carefully examined the horse and diagnosed him with a severe case of spasmodic colic. Bullo was highly dehydrated and malnourished from the drought. He had been feeding on dry, dead grass and plants that are difficult to digest. The painful blockages in his intestines were causing his bowel to contract abnormally, creating excruciating spasms.

Bullo was deteriorating fast, becoming listless as he lay immobile. The vet team needed to get him to stand as soon as possible. If left on the ground for too long, Bullo would be at serious risk of damaged blood supply and even irreversible muscle or nerve damage.

The vets eased Bullo's pain with anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic injections, and fed him gradual, small amounts of fresh water and nutritious food. Bullo was still too weak to move, however, and his heart rate had increased drastically. The resourceful team fashioned a hoist to help support his frail legs, but he just couldn't stand on his own. After careful deliberation, they decided to let him rest and reassess him the next day.

While Bullo rested, the team provided him with blankets and water, and worked with Mr Hamu and his son to ensure the vulnerable horse was kept safe overnight from predators.

The following morning, Bullo's heart rate had decreased and he was breathing more easily. The vet team lifted him again and, thankfully, this time his legs were able to support his weight. Over the following weeks, SPANA vets continued to visit Bullo to monitor his condition. The horse was soon eating, drinking and having normal bowel movements again.

Mr Hamu was grateful for SPANA's work. *'Without your help, Bullo would have suffered and died. I don't know what I would do without my horse.'*



SPANA instructed Mr Hamu and his son to keep Bullo hydrated once he was back on his feet



Bullo had spent a prolonged amount of time lying on his side, which can cause serious health problems in horses. After giving him pain relief and nutritious food, the team fashioned a hoist to carefully lift him.

Our vets must continue their work, treating helpless working animals that are needlessly suffering from malnutrition. Animals like Bullo are now more vulnerable than ever as a result of the Covid-19 health crisis.

Malnutrition among working animals will inevitably increase. With depleted income, many owners can barely afford to provide food. Starving animals are forced to eat whatever they can find among the rubbish – sometimes even plastic bags. This can cause agonising colic and intestinal blockages. Already weak, they are even more susceptible to widespread issues such as infectious disease.

If left untreated, these malnourished animals will suffer gut-wrenching pain, debilitating exhaustion and the inability to eat or drink normally. Their deteriorating health can only lead to a life of misery and, in the worst cases, a harrowing death.

SPANA is committed to easing the suffering of malnourished animals through sustainable emergency preparedness schemes that help animals and communities in dire need. You can read about one of our recent projects in Mongolia on page 8 of this issue.

We provide high-energy feed for working animals and essential medicines such as rehydration, laxatives and pain relief. In more severe cases, lifesaving surgery is required to remove painful obstructions. We simply can't do any of these things without you.

To care for these poor animals, we urgently need your support. Your gift could help treat an underfed and dehydrated working animal and save many others from an agonising death. **If you can, please send a donation today** so animals like Bullo can receive the lifesaving care they need.

Thank you.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please donate today to help stop working animals needlessly dying from malnutrition.

\$36 could provide two weeks' supply of nutritious food for a starving horse, helping them to recover from a severe lack of nutrients.

\$110 could help six working animals like Bullo who are suffering from malnutrition, by paying for essential medication such as anti-inflammatories and anti-spasmodics.

\$260 could go towards the cost of lifesaving surgery to remove an intestinal blockage, as well as four days of post-operative care for a working animal in need.



Bullo's colic was causing him agony; he was in desperate need of expert care

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

YOUR SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY

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

A horse named Naima was suffering from breathing problems when she was brought to the SPANA centre in Chemaia, Morocco.

Naima's owner, Fatima, supports her children and her sick husband by collecting plastic for recycling. The work, for which she earns as little as two Dirhams a kilo (around 75 cents), is only possible with the help of her loyal horse.

The team examined Naima and assessed that she had chronic respiratory problems and also required treatment for parasites. They dewormed Naima and advised Fatima on how to manage the issues with her breathing. They recommended that she should keep her horse away from dust and that she should stop using a plastic feedbag, which can force her to breathe in particles and aggravate the problem. Fatima promised to feed her horse from a trough from now on.

Fatima said: 'My animal would have died if SPANA was not here for us. I really appreciate SPANA and think they are doing a great service for me and the whole of the community here.'



Naima

MOROCCO

SPANA's mobile clinic arrived at Katarelo's remote farm in Botswana with emergency food and water for his horses, who were suffering as a result of the harsh drought.

As they treated one horse, named Munchy, for a painful eye infection, Katarelo told them the sad story of Munchy's young foal, Crunchy, who had been killed in a leopard attack a month earlier. With food and water becoming scarce in the dry conditions, these attacks were growing more common.

Luckily, the SPANA team knew an ingenious way to protect animals from leopard attacks. After applying ointment to treat Munchy's eye, they used non-toxic, reflective paint to draw a large pair of eyes onto the horse's side to help ward off predators during the night.

With regular treatment, Munchy's eye condition will improve, and thanks to a bit of creative thinking, Katarelo's horses should stay safe from wildlife attacks during the drought.

Katarelo said: 'SPANA has made all the difference for our horses. We don't know what we'd do without them.'



Munchy

BOTSWANA

Key: ● Treatment ● Training ● Teaching ● Emergencies ● Partnerships ● Outreach

TUNISIA

10-year-old donkey, Salma, has spent her life helping Eljiya and her husband work on a small farm in western Tunisia.

The couple were extremely worried when Salma began walking with a limp. Fortunately a SPANA mobile clinic was due to visit the village, so Eljiya took Salma along to be looked at by the vets. A life of hard work was beginning to take its toll on the donkey. Our vets diagnosed Salma with arthritis in her front legs. They gave her anti-inflammatory medication to help with her condition, and advised Eljiya on how to care for her properly, including letting her work for shorter periods and lessening the amount of weight she has to pull. With proper care, Salma should no longer have to work in pain.

Your generous response to our arthritis appeal earlier this year raised more than \$61,000 for working animals just like Salma. Thanks to your support, thousands of older animals suffering with arthritis can receive the treatment and care they desperately need.



Salma

MYANMAR

In the Sin Gu township in the Mandalay region of Myanmar, our mobile elephant clinic visited the Ohm Pune camp, named after the river that flows through the jungle there.

The camp is home to 32-year-old elephant Chit May Win and her two calves. When the vets found them, four-year-old calf Si Win Htay was healthy, but Chit May Win had also just given birth, and the newborn wasn't doing so well.

The calf was very weak. He was unable to stand up and walk about when SPANA vets found him, but thankfully they were able to help.

The family of elephants stayed in the Ohm Pune camp, where the vets gave the little calf food supplements to help build his strength. Day by day, he got a little stronger, and after a couple of weeks he was strong enough to get on his feet and walk about the camp.

Thanks to SPANA's mobile clinic, he is now a happy and healthy little elephant, and mother and calves have been doing well ever since.



Si Win-Htay

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PROTECTING ANIMALS AGAINST EXTREME CLIMATES IN MONGOLIA

Life on the Mongolian steppe can be hard and unforgiving for the horses that live there. They travel long distances each day, and in these high open plains there is no shelter from the elements. And things can become much harder due to a weather phenomenon known as the ‘dzud’.

The dzud can occur anywhere in the country, causing very hot, dry summers and extremely cold winters. The dry summers cause the grazing lands to dry up, which means the horses can’t put on enough weight to prepare them for the harsh winters, which can be as cold as -43 degrees.

The dzud in 2000 killed over eight million animals, and since then it has become more common – the winter of 2017/2018 was the country’s third consecutive year of dzud. With this extreme weather becoming more common and animals getting little respite, the horses of Mongolia needed SPANA’s help.

That’s why we launched an emergency project to help Mongolia’s herder families and their animals. Working with our partner organisation, CAMDA, we funded the construction of wells in the regions of Sükhbaatar, Khentii and Arkhangai – the parts of Mongolia that are most affected by this deadly weather phenomenon.

Before, herders had to cluster around the few working wells, which meant the land became overgrazed. Rehabilitating broken-down wells and providing new ones opens up new areas for grazing, meaning all of these horses will now have enough to eat.

‘The land around this well had been abandoned for many years because the well was unusable,’ a herder from Mujig told us. ‘We had to travel long distances with our animals to the nearest watering points, which were always overgrazed. Now the well is back in use and there is enough grass for all the animals – we are very happy.’

So far we have helped 65,374 animals, including horses, camels, cattle, sheep and goats, and we are providing ongoing support to the herders and their working animals.

‘I appreciate you for building a really good well for us and helping us to take care of our livestock and our horses. On behalf of all the other herders and our animals, I would like to say thank you very much.’



From the horse’s mouth

‘My name is Tuyama Ulziibayar. I am 39 years old, and I live with my husband and our son and daughter. We have around 700 animals – 600 sheep and goats, around 40 cattle and more than 80 horses. We love our animals, especially our horses.

‘My father was a herder. He wanted me to take care of his livestock after him, so I chose to become a herder. It feels great to look after these animals and see them grow. We go through a lot of things together.

‘Heavy snowfall happens a lot in winter. After it has snowed one or two times, it gets hard. When the snow falls, the most needed supply is hay. Unfortunately, it’s nearly impossible to supply enough hay for every animal.

‘During heavy snowfall, we spend most of the day outside taking care of our livestock. In 2002, we were young and just married. That year, the winter was really hard. We had to work hard and try not to lose many animals, but we lost a lot.

‘This well used to be filled with dirt and flood water. It didn’t produce enough water. Now it is the most usable well we have in this area. If this well wasn’t made, it would have been really hard for us and our animals. Last year, it didn’t rain a lot during summer, and many

herders had to move close to this well so their animals could drink. This summer there were many herders too. Many animals are brought here for water.

‘I appreciate you for building a really good well for us and helping us to take care of our livestock and our horses. On behalf of all the other herders and our animals, I would like to say thank you very much.’

Help in times of crisis

When disaster strikes, like the current Covid-19 pandemic, working animals are often on the front lines. Whether it’s the horses of Mongolia facing the dzud, the working donkeys of Botswana facing a horrific drought, or the working oxen of Odisha, India struggling to survive after a series of cyclones, there are animals around the world who are suffering as a result of devastating crises.

Thanks to your dedication and commitment to working animals, we’re able to fund projects that help these animals when they need it most, providing food, water, shelter and vital veterinary care.



A BETTER TOMORROW FOR WORKING ANIMALS

SPANA Chief Executive, Geoffrey Dennis, on how we're building a sustainable future for working animals

Although we have faced great difficulties this year, 2019 saw fantastic growth in SPANA's work, expanding our operations into new parts of the world. For example, having worked on a range of projects in Tanzania since 2013, we have now established a permanent presence there, while our operations in Ethiopia are growing rapidly. I was thrilled to open a brand new centre in Boghé, Mauritania, in October last year, and we're planning on expanding our operations in Mali. We also had new projects starting all the time – for instance, in Jakarta, Indonesia, where we're running a project to treat working horses.

Thanks to your support, in 2019 we've treated 81,988 more animals, trained 398 more vet students and professionals, and reached 2,423 more working animal owners with our advice and training than we did in 2018. Going into the new decade, we're doing more work in more places than ever before – and making more of a difference to the lives of working animals.

But spreading out geographically isn't enough to ensure that working animals across the world get treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. In some of our centres, around 70 per cent of all the conditions and injuries we see are preventable. That's why it's vital that as well as providing free veterinary care, we educate and train owners and communities on how to properly care for their animals. If we can prevent working animals becoming ill or injured, not only will it allow us to spend more time treating those that need it, but we'll also be creating lasting change – and ensuring that no working animals suffer unnecessarily.

Making these kinds of changes requires the involvement of local people – whether they're animal owners, veterinary professionals or children. By training local vets, we give them knowledge that they can then pass on to their successors, and their successors after them. By teaching children about animal welfare, we're creating a whole generation of adults who will come to see animals differently. And by providing community training to the owners of working

animals, we're ensuring that good practice is followed and avoidable conditions are kept to a minimum.

Making this a reality also means handing over real power and ownership to local people. In Simanjoro in Tanzania, a group of women have been trained as community donkey champions. It is amazing to see them in action. If they see an animal being mistreated, not harnessed properly or carrying too much weight, they are quick to intervene and let the owner know in no uncertain terms. Initiatives like this bode really well for the future.



A SPANA community training workshop

The free veterinary work we do is vital and will never stop – there will always be working animals that have accidents or get sick and need treatment. It also provides us with a unique perspective on training animal owners. Because we see animals every day, we know what common problems they are having, and this in turn informs what their owners need to know.

I remember being struck by how many donkeys in Mauritania had wounds above their tails from dragging carts that were too close to them. We built proper cart set-ups into our community training programme, and the next time I went back I was pleased to see how few donkeys were affected by this avoidable problem. Examples like this show how your support can help prevent working animals suffering in the first place, as well as treat those in need.

Despite the many challenges we face today, we are doing everything we can to be there for working animals. I can assure you that continuing our vital work helping these animals in great need will remain SPANA's number one priority, no matter what the future holds.



Vets Dr Erick and Dr Andy, and teacher Herminah Simoyi

THANK YOU FROM ZIMBABWE



In Zimbabwe last year, the SPANA team faced huge difficulties because of the unstable economy. Lengthy power cuts, high inflation and difficulty obtaining the necessary medicines to treat animals were just some of the problems they faced. Yet despite these daily challenges, our vets and educators managed to treat more working animals and teach more children than before. We are very lucky to have such dedicated people working for us. But perhaps even more than this, we know we are lucky to have you as a supporter.

In 2019, Dr Erick and Dr Andy travelled far and wide in our mobile clinics to treat over 66,000 working animals. Plus, nearly 12,000 children learned about the importance of being kind to animals – from something as basic as learning that animals feel pain, through to developing a compassionate and humane understanding of the physical and mental needs of all animals.

Without your support, none of this work would be possible and we appreciate every kind of gift, whether you send a donation to help an urgent appeal, buy

a virtual gift from us or make a regular donation through your bank. In these very difficult times, we are particularly grateful for your continued support for working animals.

Your donations today make an immediate difference and when we know that some people have felt able to include a bequest to SPANA in their Will, we can be confident that we will continue helping working animals long into the future. However you choose to support us, we are very lucky to have you. We never forget that your kindness and love of animals is behind everything we do to help working animals in desperate need. From Zimbabwe and all the other countries where we work, please accept a heartfelt thank you.



If you would like to find out more about how to leave a bequest in your Will to help working animals, please use the tick box on the bottom of the enclosed donation form. If you have recently included a gift to SPANA in your Will please do let us know, as we'd love the chance to say thank you for your kindness!

Helping working animals in times of crisis

At this incredibly difficult time, SPANA is committed to continuing its vital services in some of the world's poorest and most deprived communities.

In countries that are facing local government restrictions as a result of Covid-19, we are providing emergency cover and prioritising urgent cases.

We are doing everything we can to ensure that working animals continue to receive the treatment and care they need.

But now, as the world suffers from the effects of this global health crisis, working animals are in desperate need of our help.

So, this year, please can you spare an extra thought for the working animals of the world and give as generously as you can to SPANA?

With your help, we can make sure the working animals of the world are not forgotten during these terribly difficult and uncertain times.

Thank you for your continued support.



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Contact us

We are still able to handle any enquiries you may have by phone and email, and all letters and donations we receive are being securely processed. We would love to hear from you.

Call us on: 1300 149 080

Email us at: hello@spana.org

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