

Summer 2021



NEWS

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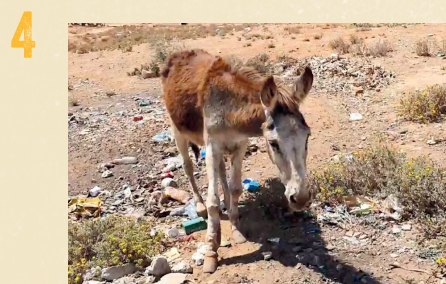


SAVING LIVES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Meet some of the
animals you've
been helping

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Help animals
facing abandonment

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Special appeal:
Animals facing abandonment



SPANA up close: Ethiopia



SPANA around the world:
Meet some of the animals
you're helping



Opinion: A moment of truly
unprecedented need

WELCOME

to your summer issue of SPANA News.



I want to start by saying a huge 'thank you' on behalf of the world's most vulnerable animals. During a truly unprecedented time, it has been heartening to see that these animals continue to inspire compassionate people like you in Australia and around the globe. It is only thanks to your generosity that we have been able to keep our veterinary centres open and continue treating sick and suffering working animals during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

You won't be surprised to hear that almost everything we've been doing since the last issue has been in response to this global crisis. Working animals are no strangers to hardship at the best of times. They work day in, day out, often in intense heat with poor equipment and very little rest. And when they become sick, they often can't get the treatment they need. But now they are fighting for their very survival as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Malnutrition, dehydration and abandonment are sadly all too common right now.

We know that you, like us, are committed to bringing about a better world for working animals. They need us now more than ever. It is no exaggeration to say that SPANA's support is the difference between life and death.

Our **special appeal**, on page four, is about abandonment, something we're seeing a lot of as impoverished owners become simply unable to provide food for their animals. If you can, please consider donating to this vital appeal.

Elsewhere in this issue you can read about how we've been helping animals through the crisis, thanks to your support. On page three we talk about the emergency relief programme we've launched in many countries to feed some of the hardest hit working animals. You can also read about just some of the animals you've recently helped around the world on pages seven to nine.

We are always grateful to our wonderful supporters, but right now your support is providing a real lifeline for the working animals of the world. Thank you for remembering them during this time of monumental need.

Geoffrey Dennis

Geoffrey Dennis Chief Executive

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SPANANA IN THE NEWS



The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt in the countries where we work. Lockdown restrictions have decimated economies and put a halt to tourism.

With diminished income, owners are struggling to feed their families and their animals. As a result, many animals are being let out to forage for food, where they risk eating rubbish and plastic or falling victim to road traffic accidents. Some are even being abandoned altogether.

At SPANA, we are committed to doing whatever we can to prevent animal suffering during this crisis. Thanks to your generosity, we've been able to launch an emergency relief programme across five countries with more to follow.

Morocco

With many working animals close to the SPANA centre in Chemaia already facing malnutrition caused by a long and severe drought, the crisis is having a catastrophic impact. Thanks to your support, we have been able to provide food for more than 1,269 starving working animals in Morocco through our emergency programmes.

SPANANA COVID-19 emergency relief programme

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, we are providing emergency veterinary care, food and water to animals in the districts of Basona Werana, Debre Birhan, and Shashamene. In two months alone we treated 4,078 animals.

Mali

On the outskirts of Bamako, groups of women who are among the most marginalised in this low-income country earn a meagre living collecting and selling wood, charcoal and forest fruits with the help of their donkeys. These animals are increasingly facing abandonment, so our emergency project is providing them with feed and supporting the women to care for them so that both will have a future once the crisis passes.

Mauritania

When the pandemic coincided with a long period of drought in Mauritania, there was an urgent need for support. Thanks to your donations, we set up emergency feeding programmes in Boghé, Rosso and Nouakchott. 255 working animals received 19 tonnes of grain – enough to feed them until the grass had grown back and they could graze again.

Tanzania

Our project in Tanzania is reaching almost 400 working animals that are in desperate need of veterinary care, feed, water and shelter in three communities. We are rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming abandoned, undernourished, severely ill and wounded animals, as well as providing advice to owners on animal welfare.

Thank you to everyone who donated towards our urgent appeal over Christmas. Your support means that we can continue to be there to support working animals throughout this ongoing crisis.

HELP SAVE WORKING ANIMALS FACING ABANDONMENT

Working animals are being abandoned and left to suffer and die in record numbers, following the onset of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. With their income lost, many owners simply cannot afford to keep their animals and are abandoning them to fend for themselves.

Although accustomed to lives of hardship, thousands of loyal working animals are now facing even greater challenges as they are left to fight for their lives, defenceless and alone. Without emergency feed, lifesaving treatment and expert care, they have little hope of survival. You can help save working animals faced with abandonment today.

Khadija's story

Khadija the carthorse was spotted wandering around unattended near our SPANA centre in Marrakech, Morocco. The grey mare was struggling with lameness and unhealed wounds, and she was visibly emaciated due to the lack of food in the empty streets.

On seeing Khadija, our veterinary staff were immediately concerned that she had been abandoned. Many owners believe that if they cannot

feed their animals, the kindest thing to do is release them to forage for themselves so, at the very least, they have a fighting chance of survival.

The SPANA team immediately came to Khadija's aid, carefully helping her into their truck to take her to the Marrakech centre for treatment. Once she arrived, the frail animal was gently coaxed out of the vehicle by the vet team. Khadija had a fresh, deep cut on her thigh, likely caused by a collision with a moving vehicle or cart. To make things worse, her

shoulders and chest were covered with painful sores – a sign that the cart harness used by her previous owner wasn't adequately padded.

Our expert vets got straight to work, cleaning her delicate skin and disinfecting the wounds to minimise any chance of infection. After fully assessing the situation, the vets decided that the mare would need stitches on her thigh. To calm Khadija, the vets administered a sedative and a general anaesthetic so they could carefully stitch the painful wound. Khadija was lucky to have escaped the ordeal without any broken bones or long-term issues.

During her recovery, Khadija was given nutritious feed to help rebuild her strength, as well as antibiotics and anti-inflammatories to soothe her discomfort. She will now recuperate at the centre until she is rehomed with a responsible and compassionate owner chosen by a SPANA vet.

Thankfully, Khadija will be found a good home, but for other abandoned animals the outlook is not so bright.

SPECIAL APPEAL



Khadija was found abandoned during lockdown, weak, emaciated and badly injured. After a week of expert care, she was in much better shape.



An abandoned donkey searches for food in the streets in Tunisia. Working animals across Africa are struggling to survive the crisis alone.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here's how your support could make a difference:

\$36 **Nutritious food** This gift could feed a starving animal for two weeks, at a time when no other food is available, and help them recover from a severe lack of nutrients.

\$110 **Medicine supplies** This gift could pay for essential medicines for sick and injured working animals that are suffering as a result of abandonment, including vaccines, anti-parasite drugs, antibiotics and painkillers.

\$275 **Emergency surgery** This gift could provide emergency surgery for an abandoned animal like Khadija who is suffering with life-threatening injuries caused by a traffic accident or an animal attack.

Across Africa, our teams have seen a rise in traffic accident cases since lockdown measures were put in place as more animals are roaming freely. One of the most notable issues has been the increasing number of animal attack cases, caused by stray dogs or abandoned equids attacking each other out of frustration and hunger.

Abandoned animals are being found and brought to our centres with sometimes life-threatening issues, such as colic caused by scavenging for food and eating inedible materials like plastic and rubbish. The spread of infectious disease and parasites has also increased due to animals gathering together and mixing where they normally wouldn't.

'Every day, we're getting a lot of calls about abandoned animals. We are rescuing all that we can.'

**Morocco Country Director,
Dr Hassan Alyakine.**

Without our help, working animals will be left to fend for themselves with little hope of survival.

With your support, we can distribute emergency feed to owners so that they can take care of their animals, helping to prevent abandonment in the first place. We can continue to reach abandoned donkeys, horses and camels that are in desperate need of vital treatment and emergency surgery, and protect them from the deadly threats they face. During this time, we are also taking all appropriate measures to provide extra accommodation and rehome animals where we can.

Animals like Khadija are at risk of dying, isolated and distressed, and we urgently need help to stop this happening. **Please, if you can, send a donation today** so working animals faced with abandonment can survive this crisis.

Thank you.

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



Once Khadija recovers she will be found a new home, but other abandoned animals still urgently need our help



Whilst the recent focus of our work has been in response to the global pandemic, SPANA has been making a major difference to the lives of working animals in Ethiopia since we started working there back in 2002.

SPANA OPERATIONS

Working animals are the backbone of Ethiopia. The country has over 12 million animals working in agriculture, and transporting food, water and people across rugged, mountainous terrain.

We have one very busy veterinary centre in Bishoftu and two mobile clinics, treating a total of 11,000 animals each year and reaching many more through our community training programme. The main problems for animals we encounter are wounds, lameness, respiratory disease and a fungal infection called epizootic lymphangitis (EZL), which can be fatal.

Our education project in Ethiopia is one of our largest. We have three classrooms and an education centre, as well as a growing network of after-school animal clubs, through which we reach over 7,500 children a year with the message of care and compassion towards animals.

PROFILE
ETHIOPIA

We also have a clinical skills centre in Addis Ababa, which allows us to train the next generation of Ethiopia's veterinary professionals.



ETHIOPIA AT A GLANCE
Population: 105 million
Area: 1.13 million km²
Location: Horn of Africa
Capital city: Addis Ababa
Estimated number of working equines and camels: 12.2 million

PERSONAL PROFILE Q&A Teferi Abebe, SPANA Ethiopia Country Director



What particular challenges do working animals face in Ethiopia?

Though they are the breadwinners and the main method of transport for the majority of Ethiopians, their importance is overlooked. Working animals carry heavy

loads, work long hours and are often only fed leftovers. There is often no shelter for them and they are left out to graze in the blazing heat. When they get sick, their owners often can't get them treatment in time.

What has changed in the past few years, and what are you most proud of about the work you and your team have done in Ethiopia?

In 2019, we opened the first equine hospital in the country at our Bishoftu centre, which we are very proud of. We have also expanded out of urban areas to cover more parts of the country. This means we are reaching more working animals, especially more donkeys, as we

were mostly treating horses and mules before. We are also hopeful of partnering with a local NGO in the east of the country, where camels are the main working animal.

How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the working animals of Ethiopia?

Their owners' income has been seriously reduced, which means no feed and treatment for many animals. Our mobile clinics aren't allowed to travel, meaning that animals in more remote places won't be able to get treatment, and our animal welfare clubs can't run due to school closures. The national economy is also significantly reduced, and the little money budgeted to help working animals is likely to go to other areas.

How are you coping with these challenges?

We are providing emergency treatment in our centres, which are thankfully still open, and we are extremely grateful for the emergency feeding programme SPANA has launched. We are also looking at ways to reach children using educational TV shows while the schools are closed. This is a great opportunity for SPANA to reach more children, and even parents, than before.

CASE FILE

Ebo gets his breath back



'If I didn't have Ebo, there would simply be no life.' **Birtukuan**

Our mobile clinic based in Bishoftu was called out to a small farm to see Ebo, a two-year-old donkey who was struggling with his breathing. The poor animal was making worrying noises as he breathed and had discharge coming from his nose. His owner, Birtukuan, also explained that he was becoming increasingly lethargic and depressed.

Birtukuan, who is 25, lives on the farm with her husband and five small children. Ebo helps them harvest hay and transports goods and water. The family is totally reliant on this young donkey's hard work. Birtukuan said, *'If I didn't have Ebo, there would simply be no life.'*

When the vets arrived, they carefully examined Ebo and found that his lymph nodes were enlarged and his breathing was very fast. They also listened carefully to the sounds that the weary animal was making and became concerned that he might have fluid in his lungs.

The vets suspected that Ebo's symptoms were the result of a respiratory infection, even though he didn't have a temperature. They gave him anti-inflammatories to soothe any swelling and gave Birtukuan a course of antibiotics to give to her donkey. They also advised her to keep Ebo away from other donkeys to stop the disease spreading.

Thankfully, the antibiotics worked well. Within a few weeks, Ebo's breathing was back to normal and he was recovering his strength.

YOUR SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY

Key:

- Treatment
- Training
- Teaching
- Emergencies
- Partnerships
- Outreach

You're improving the welfare of working animals in the world's poorest communities. Here's a snapshot of the impact your support has had around the world over the last year.

MOROCCO

In April, Mabrouk, a two-year-old male donkey with a large wound in the nasal region, was admitted to the SPANA centre in Casablanca. Thankfully, the centre has been able to stay open to treat emergency cases, despite the lockdown rules put in place by the government.

Mabrouk had been wounded when he was bitten by a neighbour's donkey. Since lockdown, Mabrouk's owner hadn't been able to work and had no income, so he was forced to let his precious donkey out to graze. Unfortunately, because of the severe lack of food, allowing animals to roam has led to fights among them – another sad consequence of the pandemic.

As soon as Mabrouk was admitted to the centre the vets got to work treating his injury. They cleaned and disinfected the wound before administering a local anaesthetic to relieve his pain and stitching the wound back together.

Mabrouk was kept in the centre for a few days, during which his wound healed well, and he was soon allowed to return home.

Mabrouk is nursed back to health

TUNISIA

Our mobile clinic in Kasserine was called out to a small farm 80km away to see a four-year-old horse called Midou. His owner, Mohamed, became worried when he noticed that Midou was limping on both of his right legs. Midou helps around the farm, so Mohamed was devastated when he realised that his beloved horse was suffering.

When the SPANA vets arrived, they inspected Midou's wounds and the way he was limping. They realised that the lesions had been caused by sharp pieces of metal in his wire hobble. As well as causing a painful limp, if left untreated the wounds could worsen and lead to a dangerous infection and fever.

The vets got straight to work, cleaning and disinfecting Midou's wounds before applying an anti-inflammatory cream and bandages to stop any dirt getting into them. They then advised Mohamed to let Midou rest until his injuries had healed and explained to him why he shouldn't use the hobble again.

Mohamed was extremely grateful to the vets for travelling such a long way to help his horse and for the quality of the care they provided.

Mobile clinic gets Midou back on his feet

INDIA

In Rajasthan, India, a nine-year-old camel, Radu, was brought to see SPANA vets because he hadn't been eating well for almost three weeks. Radu had been off his food and had a high temperature, and his owner, Ramkishan, had started to worry for his beloved camel.

Radu supports Ramkishan by giving rides to tourists and transporting building materials for local construction projects. He works hard to provide for Ramkishan and his family. When Ramkishan phoned SPANA, our vets advised him to bring Radu in right away so they could examine him.

When Radu arrived at the clinic, the vets gave him vitamin B12 probiotics and a special Himalayan powder – a safe and beneficial local remedy that camel owners love – to further ease his symptoms. They suspected the cause of Radu's illness was a parasite called trypanosomiasis, which is a common problem for camels in this part of the world. To kill the parasite, they gave Radu an injection.

Shortly after this treatment Radu's temperature started to go down, and the vets explained to Ramkishan how to care for him until he had fully recovered. Ramkishan told us,

'My camel is very important to me. The clinic is very useful – it provides a good service so I am very grateful and happy that it's available.'

Radu recovers his appetite

Your support made this work happen – thank you.



A MOMENT OF TRULY UNPRECEDENTED NEED

SPANA Chief Executive, Geoffrey Dennis, on how we're coming to terms with the COVID-19 crisis.

It's safe to say that the COVID-19 crisis is by far the most serious situation I have encountered in my time at SPANA, with consequences that could last for years to come. The impact of the emergency lockdown measures on working animals really can't be overstated. Animals who struggle at the best of times are fighting for their very survival right now, facing abandonment, malnutrition, dehydration and traffic accidents, and developing deadly conditions such as colic as a result of eating plastic out of hunger and desperation.

We're doing everything we can to ensure that working animals don't suffer as a result of this crisis. Our veterinary centres remain open to treat emergency cases, while our mobile clinics continue to run a reduced service. Wherever possible, we're working with government veterinary agencies to ensure animals in more remote locations get the help they so desperately need. We're also continuing to support all of our partnerships with other organisations.

I'm extremely pleased that we've been able to set up our emergency relief programmes, which will go some way to combatting the immediate impact of the crisis.



I am keeping in extremely close contact with our country offices to ensure we're aware of the situation on the ground and doing everything we can to help working animals in their time of need.

Many of the countries we work in are still facing local restrictions that continue to severely affect animal owners who are already among the poorest people in the world. The economic effects of the crisis are likely to last for years to come, and the fact that countries like Mauritania and Morocco have been battling harsh droughts is a stark reminder that, even beyond COVID-19, the challenges that working animals face are very serious.

At a time when companies and whole industries are suffering, we are extremely grateful for the loyalty of our supporters. It is only thanks to your kindness, compassion and generosity that we have been able to keep going and provide emergency support to the working animals of the world. To everyone who has donated to our COVID-19 crisis appeal, thank you. It will mean the difference between life and death for many of these poor animals.

This crisis also provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the sustainability of our projects. In the

last issue of SPANA News I talked about the value of community training projects. At times like this, when we are unable to reach remote communities as we would like, projects that embed knowledge and responsibility in the community are more important than ever in ensuring working animals have people who will stand up for their welfare. In Ethiopia, the local community is taking over ownership of the emergency water programme we set up. Through making and selling goods and asking for very small donations from beneficiaries, they are able to keep their wells running sustainably.

The crisis should also make all of us reflect on the role of animals in human welfare. Hopefully, an increased focus on the movement of animals and animal products around the world will attract more global attention to the devastating donkey skin trade, which has cruelly taken the lives of so many working donkeys across Africa.

I wish I was writing this in better circumstances, but I am confident that, together, we can navigate the current crisis and ensure working animals don't bear the brunt of it. We must hope that the world that emerges on the other side will be a more caring and compassionate one.



THANK YOU FOR REMEMBERING THEM

Amari the donkey supports these two boys who were born into poverty and hardship in Ethiopia. Luckily for all of them, we can offer hope for a better, kinder future.

In these very difficult times, we are incredibly grateful for your continued support for working animals. Every gift you have so kindly given to SPANA has helped to bring care and compassion to working animals.

Today, through our network of centres and mobile veterinary clinics, SPANA treats hundreds of thousands of animals and teaches their owners how to properly care for them. This is a wonderful achievement and it is thanks to you! Without all your gifts, none of this lifesaving work would be possible.

For the journey ahead, including a bequest to SPANA in your Will would be a very special way of ensuring we can continue to help working animals long into the future. Your bequest could give comfort and hope to many more animals – animals like Amari, pictured above.

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.

Thank you for your support.



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!



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