Recognised by the UN Committee of Food Security in 2016 as 'working livestock', equids – donkeys, horses and mules – are critical to the livelihoods and resilience of millions of families throughout the developing world.

Their contributions enhance resilience through:

- Poverty reduction and income security
- Better access to nutrition and water
- Continuity of agricultural supply chains

Despite their critical value, these animals are often overlooked in national and regional livestock planning and policy framing. This brief provides a fuller picture of the contribution of working livestock, identifies the challenges and threats of poor welfare, and makes the urgent case for their protection and support in line with guidelines such as OIE standards.

By recognising the critical role of working equids as livestock in programming, and supporting them through policy, regulators can better support their own national economies.

Brooke works within the ‘One Welfare’ framework which sees human and animal welfare as inextricably linked: in a development context, working animals are central to supporting the livelihoods, well-being, and resilience of communities who depend on them.

"Livestock are an engine for the development of the agricultural sector as a whole."
8 ILO, pgs10

RESEARCH: WORKING LIVESTOCK

Working livestock are a critical asset to their owners because they directly and indirectly support income generation. They provide direct income across a wide range of sectors including agriculture, construction, brick kilns, tourism, mining and public transport. They also enable economic savings in the transportation of people and goods. This has been shown in Brooke’s Household Economy Analysis (HEA) on the contribution of working equids to Senegal’s national economy, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was on the panel of experts for this study. An example of indirect income generation can be seen in Pakistan where through draught power, working equids enable farmers to buy livestock and hence increase their income.3

Moreover, if the UN office, Fund and Programme or other subsidiary organ or organization of the United Nations System has its own specific logo, the latter should be requested (see page 19). However, for reporting purposes, DPI should be informed of events and information materials for which the SDG logo and the icons are being used including, and 17 SDG icons in accordance with the requirements outlined below and provided that each entity submits the required documentation.

The United Nations has commissioned seventeen (17) icons and the SDG logo, including the colour wheel, to graphically promote awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Member States of the United Nations by resolution A/RES/70/1 of the General Assembly of 25 September 2015.

I. DESCRIPTION

United Nations offices, Funds and Programmes and other subsidiary organs and organizations of the United Nations System may use the SDG logo and 17 icons without obtaining prior approval from the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), except for when uses other than those described in these guidelines are uploaded on the internet. Whenever the SDG logo and/or icons are uploaded on the internet, these guidelines must be uploaded on the same page.

Access critical inputs and services, for example drought resilient fodder and healthcare services.

Working livestock play a central role in agriculture and food production, including in soil tillage, producing manure fertilizer, transporting feed and water for livestock and households, transporting goods to market and transporting livestock to health providers. They also support the transport of perishable farm produce from inaccessible areas, thereby saving on post-harvest losses. This contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 2 as working equines support enhanced food security, nutrition and sustainable agricultural development.

Working livestock also act as water service providers for communities where government water services have yet to reach. Studies of water use must take into account the impact that equids have in enabling communities to have access to water. This contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 6.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

WE ADVOCATE FOR:

- Recognition of working livestock within livestock policy definitions, censuses, databases and their inclusion in animal health strategies and services
- Technical capacity building to ensure national level implementation of the OIE Standards for the Welfare of Working Equids
- Consideration of draught power within livelihoods and development programming, sectoral value chain analysis and livelihoods baselines
- Inclusion of working livestock considerations in disaster risk reduction and emergency response planning, including in the roll out of Livestock Emergency Guidelines
- Protection of citizens from the theft of their donkeys in response to the unregulated and growing demand for their hides. Brooke specifically calls for;
  - Evidence based research on the impact of donkey theft on community resilience, that is shared, publicised and reflected in policy and programming decision making
  - A coordinated multi-disciplinary network combining efforts to tackle the growing threats to livelihoods of this trade

PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

Working livestock represent an important social protection mechanism, boosting community resilience in the face of disasters and climate shocks by enabling communities to collect water or food from greater distances, helping families to relocate when needed, even helping to rebuild infrastructure. With our Special Consultative Status at UN ECOSOC and UN FAO, our work with AUIBAR and the EU, Brooke has an active presence in regional and national spaces that promote initiatives and public policies. Brooke contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 13 by inputting to governmental talks on climate change and resilience, especially in the Central America region.

For example, Brooke Senegal’s partner Union des Groupements Paysans de Meckhé (UGPM) – a farmer’s union group, has worked with rural communities to create an animal welfare assessment tool which helps them identify issues early on using a traffic light system, increasing resilience through supporting these livestock. The same system is used in Brooke India, this innovative approach is sustainable and has empowered the community to be able to assess their animals together and find a mutually acceptable solution to improve welfare in the long term. Furthermore, the communities we work with face multiple, often interrelated challenges to their lives which impact their capacity to ensure the welfare and associated long-term productivity of their working equines. This provides the basis for Brooke to adopt a holistic approach to community development, partnering with other stakeholders, including farming cooperatives, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 17.

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12 AllAfrica.com, Kenya Donkey slaughterhouses blamed for drop in numbers, [online], 11 September 2017 https://allafrica.com/stories/201709110474.html accessed on 14/08/18

Brooke

5th floor, Friars Bridge Court, 41-45 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NZ
Tel: +44 20 3012 3456  email: external.affairs@thebrooke.org

www.thebrooke.org
Registered charity No: 1085760

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