

# Donkey welfare challenges associated with perennial floods in Kano plains, Western Kenya



AWAPH

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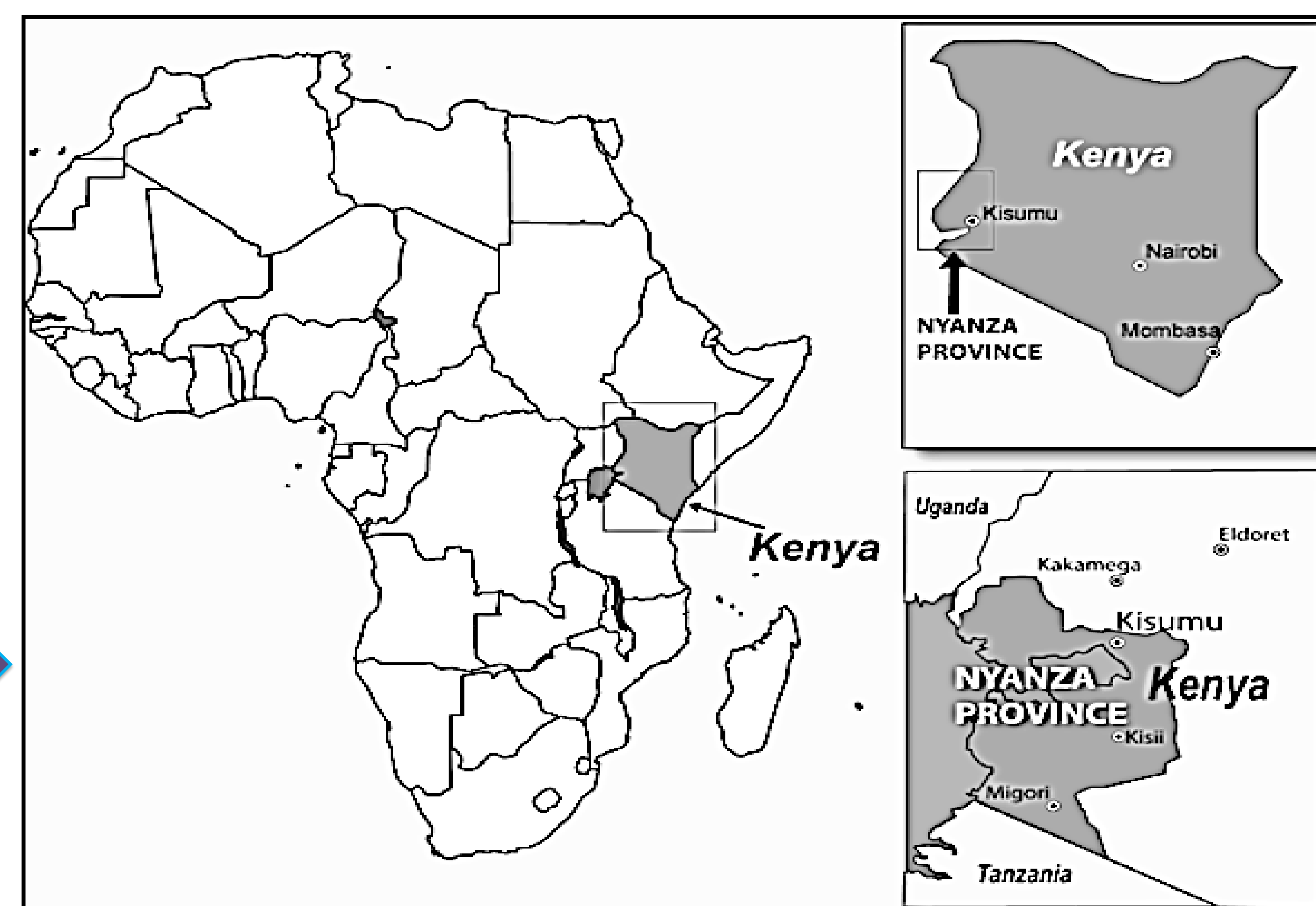


## Introduction

- Donkeys still play important livelihood roles in Africa despite mechanisation. This is because of poverty, limited infrastructure and their resilience to disease<sup>1</sup>
- Floods are a perennial challenge within the Kano plains bordering Lake Victoria in Western Kenya
- The effect of flooding on donkey welfare is often overlooked, as most 'humanitarian' efforts focus on people and other domestic animals
- We enumerated the challenges of perennial seasonal floods on the welfare of working equids within the Kano plains of Western Kenya (Figure 1)



**Figure 2:** A donkey in Kano plains that is unable to find suitable food following the floods



**Figure 1:** Map showing the location of Kano plains

## Methods

- 8 focus group discussions were facilitated with an average of 18–30 donkey owners, users and local service providers in Kano plains of Western Kenya
- A participatory rural appraisal tool was used called "If I were a donkey"<sup>2</sup>

## Results

Most people (63%) felt that floods interfere with the five freedoms. In particular, members of the focus group discussions reported:

- Loss of shelter (68%)
- Risk of death as a result of road traffic accidents (42%)
- Little feed available (74%) (Figure 2)
- Zoonotic disease flare-up: for example, anthrax spores in the soil are exposed, leading to outbreaks and death in donkeys and humans (89%)

## Conclusions and recommendations

- Awareness creation for county authorities on donkey welfare is necessary prior to the perennial flooding period in relevant areas
- Authorities and welfare groups should support equine welfare programs in flood-prone areas: for example, vaccination against anthrax as well as options for shelter and feed provision prior to flooding
- Additionally, disaster authorities should take responsibility for carcass disposal in these areas
- Preventive vaccination against anthrax can save lives of susceptible equids when done prior to flooding



Presented by  
Eric Ogola

**Acknowledgements:** The Brooke Hospital for Animals - East Africa for partnering with AWAPH on donkey welfare promotion in Kano plains

**References:** 1. Pearson et al. In Starkey and Kaumbutho (1999): *Meeting the challenges of animal traction*. Practical Action Publishing, London. 2. Van Dijk et al. (2010): *Sharing the load*. Practical Action Publishing Ltd, Rugby UK