Assessment of donkey body lesions and work types using the Brooke’s Standardised Equine Based Welfare Assessment Tool (SEBWAT) in Kenya

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Background

Brooke EA is a branch of the Brooke UK; which is an international animal welfare charity committed to improving the lives of working horses, donkeys and mules in some of the world’s poorest communities.
Background

National donkey population is 1.8 million.

Works with 5 NGOs in 14 out of 47 Counties to cover over 200,000 working donkeys in Kenya

Three main objects:

- Positive change in KAP in equine owning communities
- **Strengthening access to quality health services to the working equids**
- Policy and advocacy on suitable laws and resource allocation to equids
Objectives

- To examine the frequency of body lesions and their severity in donkeys

- Identify the relationship between body lesions and donkey work type that can be targeted for intervention
Methodology:

- Training and standardization of assessors on SEBWAT (standardized Equine Based Welfare Assessment Tool) – a Brooke specific animal based welfare assessment tool that has fixed rubrics to identify and monitor equine welfare conditions that consists of 54 equine welfare indicators.

- 2 assessors worked together on same animal to reach a score consensus.
Sampling approach:

- 1,924 out of 200,000 donkeys were randomly sampled and assessed at key watering and job waiting points where majority of donkeys meet.
- All working donkeys were eligible for sampling.
- 65 out of 125 Data collection centres were randomly selected.
- Owner consent orally sought.
- Every fifth donkey was assessed.
- Assessed donkeys were marked with animal colour.
Donkey Handling

The trained assessors, with the help of the owner restrained donkeys in welfare friendly manner by fitting a standard head collar with a lead-rope to enable safe and comfortable handling during assessment.
Work Types

for the world’s poorest communities
BODY LESIONS SCORE

Severity Score 0
No Lesion:
Skin clearly not broken

Severity Score 1
A healed lesion.
Hairless unbroken skin
Severity Score 2

Skin and immediate subcutaneous layers broken

Severity Score 3

Lesions deep to show muscle, tendon or bone
Key Findings:

- 44% of working donkeys sampled had severe lesions (score 2 or 3). *P Value???

- Fisher’s exact test indicated an association between donkeys TGP and severe tail base (*p*<0.001)

![Donkey with severe lesions](image1)

![Detailed view of a donkey's tail base](image2)
Finding ........

- There was an association between donkeys TGC and Breast/shoulder (p<0.001) lesions, and severe neck lesions (p<0.001).

- In areas where the majority of working donkeys were TGC, severe lesions were predominately found on the neck region.
Discussion:

Body lesions are a welfare issue and they cause pain and discomfort to donkeys thus limiting their capacity to harness their potential to the maximum-resulting in low work output.
Discussion

Animal’s Work type may be a risk factor for body lesion site.
KAP of the donkey owners and users plus the degree of padding material play a role in body lesions site and severity. The owner knowledge is monitored through HBI tool.
WAY FORWARD

Negative attitudes and inadequate knowledge on correct handling.

Brooke EA using PRA tools “if I were a donkey” to educate owner/users.
WAY FORWARD .............

On wound management knowledge gaps

Brooke trains LSPs and donkey owners on causes, management and prevention of body lesions
Knowledge and skills on basic wound prevention and management are being conducted and linking donkey owners to Local service providers for wounds that are infected.
WAY FORWARD .............

Brooke EA train owners on harnessing using affordable and alternative locally available materials to address body lesions in the predilection sites.
WAY FORWARD

Other approaches employed by the Brooke include:

1. Formation and strengthening of donkey users and owners groups
WAY FORWARD ............

LAWS OF KENYA

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT

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Review of laws that promote animal welfare friendly practices
Support a community led monitoring system (by laws) that ensures the donkey users are putting the new learnings on handling, loading and harnessing practices into action for sustainability purposes.
Suggestions and recommendations from this audience will be highly appreciated to enhance the change of attitudes and practices amongst the donkey users in Kenya

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Thank you