

WVA Factsheet

WORKING EQUID WELFARE

THE PROBLEM

- **The global working equid population is estimated at 100 million (1).**
Despite the recent development of global standards, many horses, mules and donkeys still experience poor welfare.
- **Draft animals are a fundamental source of income for many families in developing and transition countries** and understanding the relationship between human well-being and that of working animals merits consideration (2).
- **Welfare risks** are posed by a lack of veterinary care, mistreatment, poor husbandry practices, lack or non-enforcement of appropriate policies and regulations, socio-economic, and cultural challenges (3).



- **Poor welfare may result from** injuries associated with improperly fitted and designed harnesses and carts, a lack of appropriate veterinary care or disease prevention, and mistreatment or neglect. The consequence is often increased susceptibility to disease, a reduced capacity to work or early death, all of which result in poor animal welfare and financial loss to dependent communities that are economically constrained.
- **Working equids in poor health may pose a biosecurity risk to other local equids and may spread disease, such as African Horse Fever.**

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?



HOW CAN THIS PROBLEM BE ADDRESSED?

- **Promotion of global working equid welfare standards**, such as those developed by the OIE.
- **Education and training of those involved with working equids** to promote awareness about local, regional and national welfare regulations and requirements.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Promote the development and enforcement of equine welfare standards and regulations that are consistent with international expectations.

Resources

1. FAO, 2016. World equid aggregate live population estimates for 2014. Available at <http://faostat.fao.org/beta/en/#data/QA> [Accessed 21st October 2016]
2. Tadich, TA, Stuardo Escobar, LH. 2014. Strategies for improving the welfare of working equids in the Americas: a Chilean example. Rev. sci. tech. Off. int. Epiz., 2014, 33 (1), 203-211.
3. FAO-BROOKE, 2011. The role, impact and welfare of working (traction and transport) animals [online]. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3381e.pdf> [Accessed 21 October 2016].
4. OIE, 2016. Terrestrial Animal Health Code Welfare of Working Equines, Chapter 7.12 [online] Available at http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_aw_working_equids.htm#article_aw_working_equids.13. [Accessed 10th October 2016]