There are over 116 million working equids* and they support over 600 million people

*Comprising horses, mules, and donkeys (1)

Despite the development of global standards, many working equids still experience poor welfare. In many countries, working equids, used for transport and traction, contribute directly and indirectly to households' livelihoods and benefit communities as a whole. Working animals are crucial for many families in low and middle-income countries, but their well-being is often at risk due to factors such as lack of veterinary care, mistreatment, and poor husbandry practices.

What are the concerns

- Welfare risks may be created by a lack of veterinary care, mistreatment, poor husbandry practices, lack or non-enforcement of appropriate policies and regulations, and various socioeconomic, and cultural challenges, among others.
- Poor welfare may result from factors such as injuries associated with poorly designed and improperly fitted harnesses, carts, poor farriery, overloading, lack of appropriate veterinary care or disease prevention, mistreatment and/or neglect.
- Consequences are often increased susceptibility to disease, reduced capacity to work, pain, distress, and early retirement or death, all of which result in poor animal welfare and financial loss to dependent, often economically constrained communities.
- Working equids suffering poor health and well-being may pose a biosecurity risk to other local equids and in some cases humans, spreading disease, such as African Horse Sickness, Glanders equine herpesviruses or other infectious agents.
**Improvements**

- **Promotion** of WOAH’s global *working equid welfare standards*.
- **Education and training** of those, including veterinary service providers, involved with working equids to **promote awareness** about animal needs as well as relevant **welfare regulations and requirements**.
- **Strengthening** state **veterinary systems**.

**How can you help?**

- **Advocate for Equine Welfare Standards**: Support the development and enforcement of equine welfare standards and regulations that adhere to international expectations.
- Enable access to veterinary care: Support initiatives that provide **veterinary care and disease prevention programs for working equids**. By ensuring accessible healthcare services, we can enhance the overall welfare and health of these animals.

- Promote research and innovation: Encourage research and innovation in the design of work equipment (tack, harnesses, carts, etc) with a focus on **improving safety and comfort for working equids** to mitigate the risk of injuries and associated welfare issues.
- Support funding and resources: Advocate for increased funding and allocation of **resources to address the welfare needs** of working equids in low and middle-income countries.
- Foster collaboration: With local communities, governments, training institutions, animal health practitioners, and organizations, to establish and implement strategies for improving working equid welfare. **By working together, we can leverage collective expertise, resources, and networks to drive positive change.**

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ICWE. Working Equid Standards Library of Information. URL: https://www.icweworkingequids.org/
https://www.thebrooke.org/our-work/data-working-equids