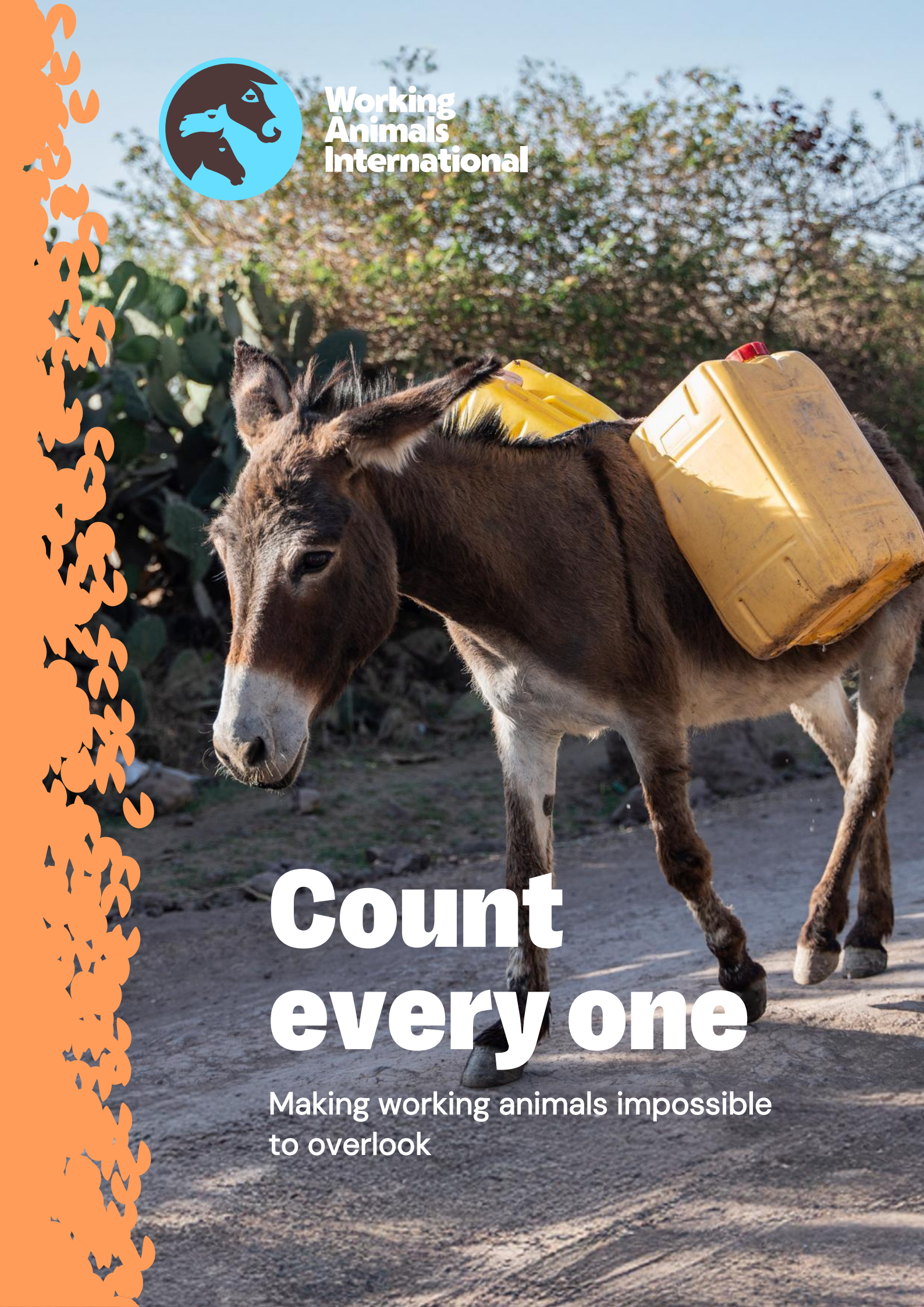
Working Animals International



Count every one

Making working animals impossible to overlook

About us

Working Animals International, the new name for SPANA, is dedicated to transforming the welfare of working animals in greatest need globally.

By increasing access to services, skills, knowledge and resources – and advocating nationally and globally for policy change alongside our network of partners – we're building a world where working animals are healthy and valued, communities are stronger, and livelihoods are more secure.

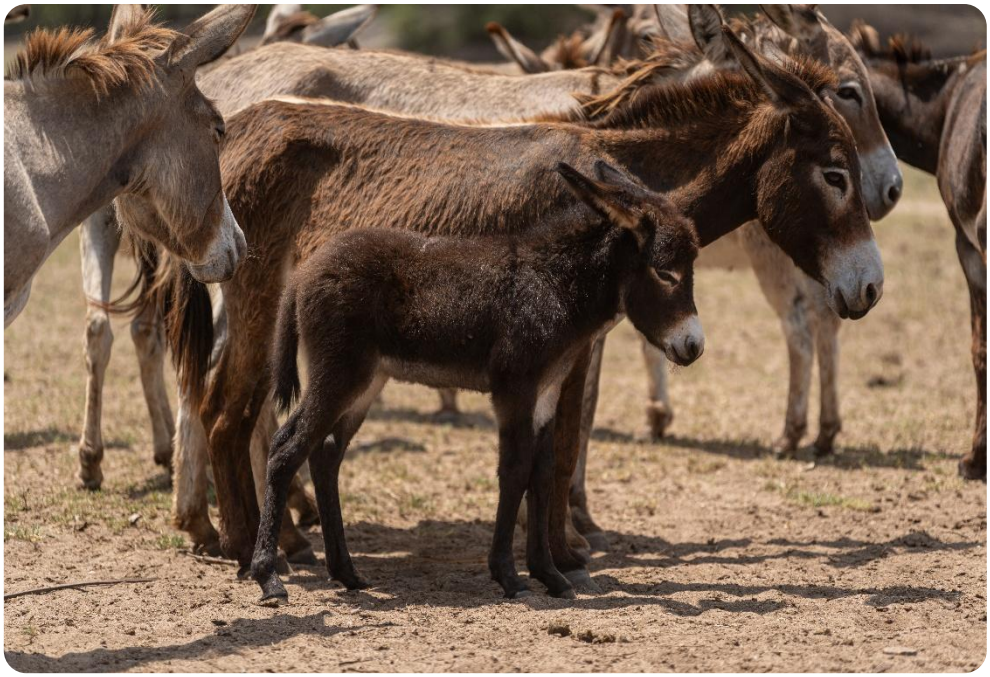
Working Animals International is part of the International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW), the International Coalition for Working Equids (ICWE), and the World Federation for Animals.

Acknowledgments

Working Animals International would like to thank our many programme partners for their contributions to this briefing, and their tireless dedication to transforming the welfare of working animals.

advocacy@workinganimals.org

Overview



Working animals[1] – including horses, donkeys, mules, camels, oxen and other animals - are the quiet driving force behind countless communities across the globe.

They are sentient beings and central to the survival and livelihoods of millions of people. Yet despite an estimated population of around 200 million working animals globally[2], many countries lack robust data about the size and distribution of their working animal population, their purpose, the value they contribute, and whether their health and welfare needs are being met. Many working animal owners also lack access to affordable and skilled veterinary care.

Although working animals are recognised in some international agendas, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction[3], and there is widespread acknowledgment in the One Health approach of the importance of animal health and welfare for both human and environmental health[4], they remain largely invisible within national and global data sets, making them easy to overlook.

This invisibility weakens the ability of governments to plan, monitor, regulate and invest in the systems that protect working animal health and welfare – and in turn, the welfare of the communities that rely upon them.

Working Animals International is therefore calling on governments to take one simple but powerful step: to explicitly include working animals in national censuses so their role and vital socio-economic contributions are recognised, they are fully considered in policymaking and planning, and their welfare needs can no longer go unmet.

The importance of working animals

Working animals are an integral part of daily life for millions of people, supporting livelihoods, enabling access to essential services, promoting food security, underpinning rural and urban economies, and building stronger, sustainable communities.

> *I do not go to bed hungry because I have him. He is my livelihood. I live by him; I support my children by him. I have no other means of support – he is my entire life.*
>
> Abera, horse owner, Bishoftu, Ethiopia

Working animals provide valuable draught power, supporting smallholders to maintain production; they take crops and goods to market, materials to construction sites, and carry feed for other animals. They enable livelihoods across industries as diverse as agriculture, construction, tourism, and rubbish collection.[5]

> *We use the mule in agriculture, for land work, to bring sand. For family matters. It plays a great role in our lives. Without it, there's nothing to do in the mountains, because it's hard to live here.*
>
> Abderahim, animal owner, Imlil, Morocco

In many communities, where formal systems are absent or lacking, working animals are the infrastructure, carrying water over long distances for households and daily use; providing essential transport to support access to health services, especially for those living in remote communities; and bringing libraries on their backs to support children's education.

Importantly, working animals are central to income generation, making a significant contribution to household incomes and livelihoods.

Studies of the impact of working animals have consistently demonstrated that working animal owners use the income generated from working animals to finance daily outgoings, school fees, the purchase of additional animals, savings, and investments in other businesses.[6] A single working animal can also support multiple households with essential tasks and transport where their labour is shared among communities, contributing to social cohesion.

Studies have shown that working animals play an important role in supporting gender equality, by assisting women in carrying out daily tasks such as water transportation, taking goods to market, and carrying heavy loads such as firewood; enabling them to build businesses and supporting their greater economic independence, and to gain status through their role in owning and caring for working animals.[7] The work that working animals do contributes actively to enabling children – and girls in particular – to access education through releasing them from domestic burdens.

Case study: Working animals sustaining water access in Nouakchott

In Mauritania's capital, Nouakchott, the water crisis shapes daily life. With many neighbourhoods lacking piped water, communities rely on working animals, mostly donkeys, to move this vital resource across the city. Donkeys pull carts carrying up to 400 litres of water, often travelling several kilometres with each load, over soft, unstable sand under extreme desert heat that can exceed 45°C. There are no shaded rest stops, so donkeys and owners work in direct sunlight and high temperatures without regular rest for most of the day. And, although the donkeys carry water for humans, they often may not have sufficient access to it themselves.

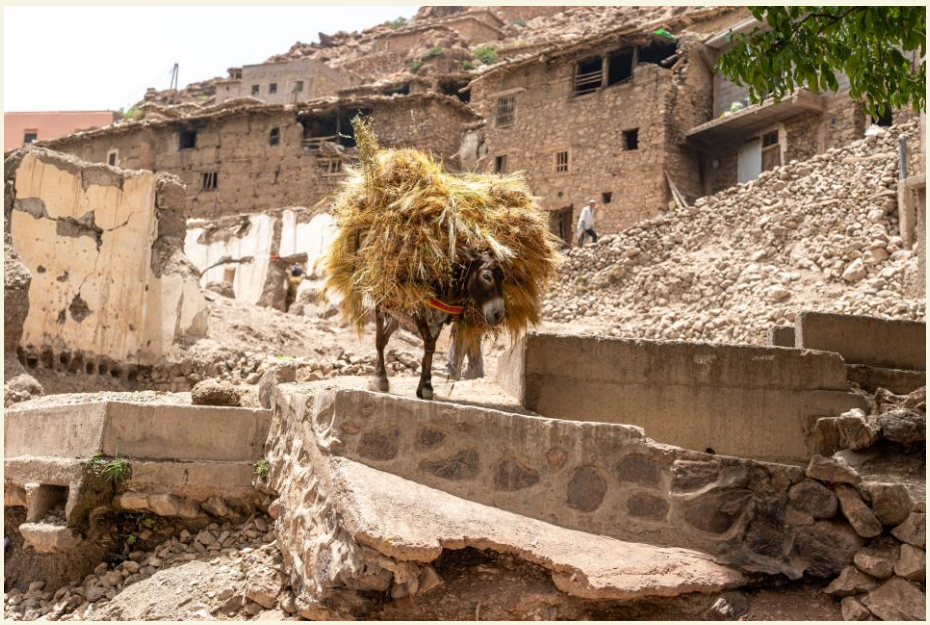
For water transporters Cheikhny, 30, and Hadrami, 40, their donkeys are more than working animals - they are lifelines. Their income and their families' wellbeing depend entirely on their animals' ability to work; and their work is indispensable to the city's informal water infrastructure. But long hours, harsh conditions, and limited access to veterinary services frequently lead to injuries, exhaustion, and preventable health issues.

Having access to animal health and welfare care through services like Working Animals International's mobile clinics means that Cheikhny and Hadrami's donkeys received the help they needed, and their owners have been able to build their skills to help prevent future injuries.

For families like Cheikhny's and Hadrami's, good welfare isn't just about protecting animals—it is about keeping water flowing through the city. As Hadrami explained, 'He's very important for me and for the people here because he brings water to them'. And in Cheikhny's words, 'Without him, I can't earn money. My children wouldn't have food. He's my partner in work.'

Working animals play a valuable role in the response to humanitarian emergencies and extreme weather events – transporting supplies, supporting survival and early recovery, and helping families and communities rebuild their livelihoods.[8]

Case study: Working animals matter in disaster response



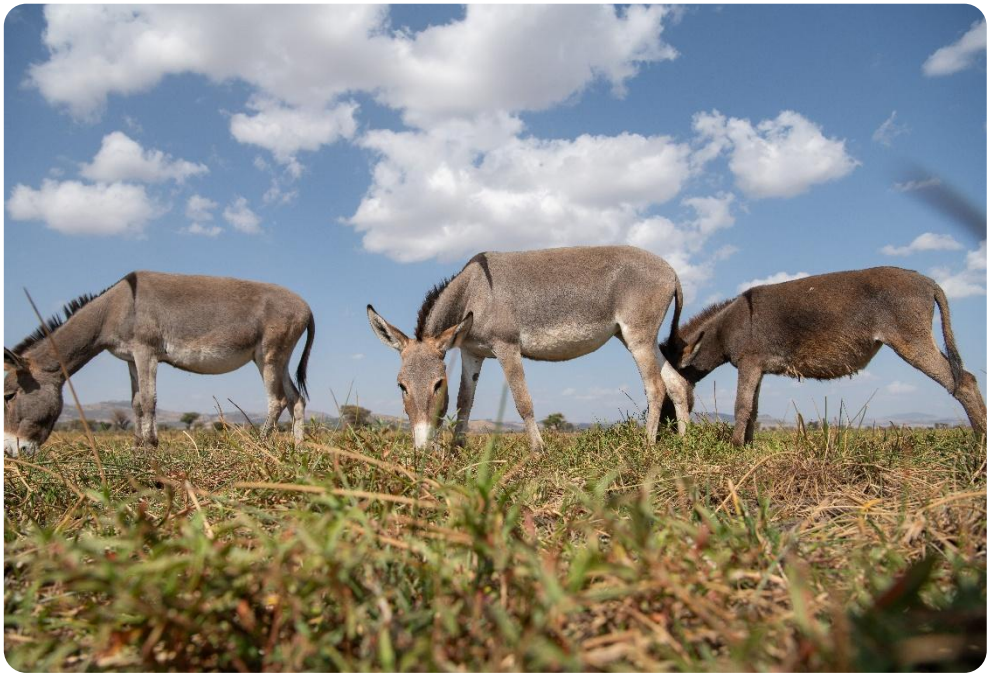
On 8 September 2023, Morocco was struck by a 6.8-magnitude earthquake centred in the remote High Atlas Mountains – an area where working animals are indispensable for transporting food, water and supplies to isolated communities. With more than six million people affected and thousands of lives lost, these animals became even more vital in the days that followed, carrying emergency aid across difficult terrain and helping families survive in the aftermath.

Local teams from Working Animals International travelled to the epicentre within days and treated thousands of injured and displaced animals. Their work demonstrated a critical but often overlooked reality: emergency response efforts depend not only on supporting people but also on supporting the animals communities rely on to survive. Keeping animals healthy and able to work safely helped ensure essential supplies - food, water, medicines and materials for shelter - reached people who would otherwise be unreachable.

In the village of Imi N'Isli, our team learned of a donkey trapped deep within unstable ruins. The animal had survived several days without water, unable to escape through the collapsed structure. His ability to work had been essential to the community before the earthquake – and would be just as critical to their recovery. Recognising the urgency, the International Search and Rescue team, already on the ground providing medical support, stepped in to help. After a two-hour operation, they freed and treated the donkey, then reunited him with his owner.

For communities like those in the High Atlas, recovery rests not only on rebuilding homes, but on protecting the safety and welfare of the animals that keep daily life moving. Protecting working animals in emergencies must be a critical part of the humanitarian response – enabling stronger, more resilient communities as livelihoods are restored.

Towards global recognition



Protecting and ensuring the welfare of working animals is an important enabler for UN Member States in making progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Efforts to implement the SDGs also have tangible benefits for working animal welfare. Beyond goals relating to 'life on land' (Goal 15), working animals and good working animal welfare make substantive contributions towards goals on eradicating poverty (Goal 1), quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), water and sanitation (Goal 6), decent work (Goal 8), and sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), among others.[9]

> *This donkey is very important to me. Without him I have no way to work.*
>
> Djibril, donkey owner, Mauritania

Working animals were first formally referenced as a distinct category of livestock by the UN in 2016.[10] This opened the way for greater recognition of their contribution within international frameworks and highlighted the need to embed working animal welfare as an integral part of effective livestock, agricultural, and sustainable development policies.

Subsequent global policy developments have further affirmed the relevance of working animals, with many UN Member States – including those with significant working animal populations – playing an important role in raising awareness of the contributions of working animals to communities, economies, and the environment, and emphasising the importance of protecting their welfare:

- In 2019, the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report acknowledged for the first time that protecting animal welfare is essential to achieving the goals.[11]

- In 2022, the "Nexus Resolution" agreed at the UN Environment Assembly acknowledged the strong body of science supporting animal welfare and held that 'animal welfare can contribute to addressing environmental challenges, promoting the One Health approach and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals'.[12] It encourages Member States to include animal welfare in livestock strategies, agrifood policies, and climate action plans.
- In 2023, the UN General Assembly emphasised the importance of animal welfare in the context of sustainable food and agriculture.[13]
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Framework for Sustainable Livestock Transformation (2023) explicitly identifies animal welfare as essential to productivity, public health, and environmental outcomes.[14]
- In 2024, working animals were embedded as a key consideration in disaster planning and response when the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution on sustainable development to the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. The Resolution explicitly:

  > *'…acknowledges the role of productive assets, including livestock and working animals, and the need to strengthen preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction…'*[15]

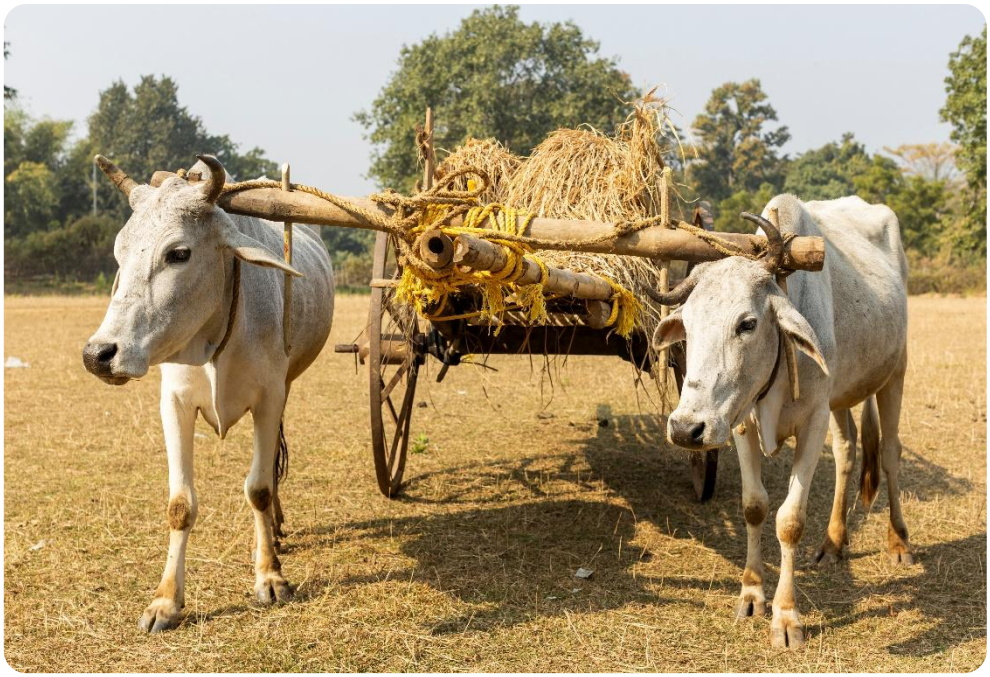
- In 2025, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Pandemic Agreement was adopted by the World Health Assembly, embedding the 'One Health' approach to pandemic preparedness and recognising the interdependency of human health with the health and welfare of animals – including working animals – and the environment.[16]

These are critically important steps forward.

However, despite growing global recognition, national and international data systems still rarely distinguish working animals from other livestock or have the necessary infrastructure in place to ensure working animal data informs planning and policymaking. As a result, working animals remain a long way down the political agenda.

> *Our family life depends on the income our donkey helps us generate.*
>
> Fikadu, donkey owner, Ethiopia

The data gap: Barriers to effective planning



Globally, national ministries report livestock data to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN.

Although nearly half of countries reported some official data to the FAO between 2020 and 2024 (latest available data), reporting was often confined to a single species. 81 of the 161 countries (50%) captured in the data reported no official livestock numbers and relied entirely on estimated values.

Many countries do undertake national agricultural and livestock censuses; however, these can be infrequent, inconsistent across nations, and rarely reflect the scale of national working animal populations. Animals are generally identified through broad livestock species classifications that can obscure an animal's purpose and role (i.e. identifying draught animals such as working oxen within numbers of cattle used for meat production or categorising certain working animals under 'other').

Many national censuses also focus solely on production animals[17] within industry and smallholdings and lack essential household-level detail on animal ownership, perhaps because working animals are not recognised as having a direct commercial value in comparison to animals directly within the food chain and kept and traded in higher numbers.

Moreover, there is no single, agreed definition or classification of working animal that is consistently used for data collection purposes across sectors or nations, leading to significant variation in the extent and quality of available data, and the likelihood that some working animal populations are being underestimated.

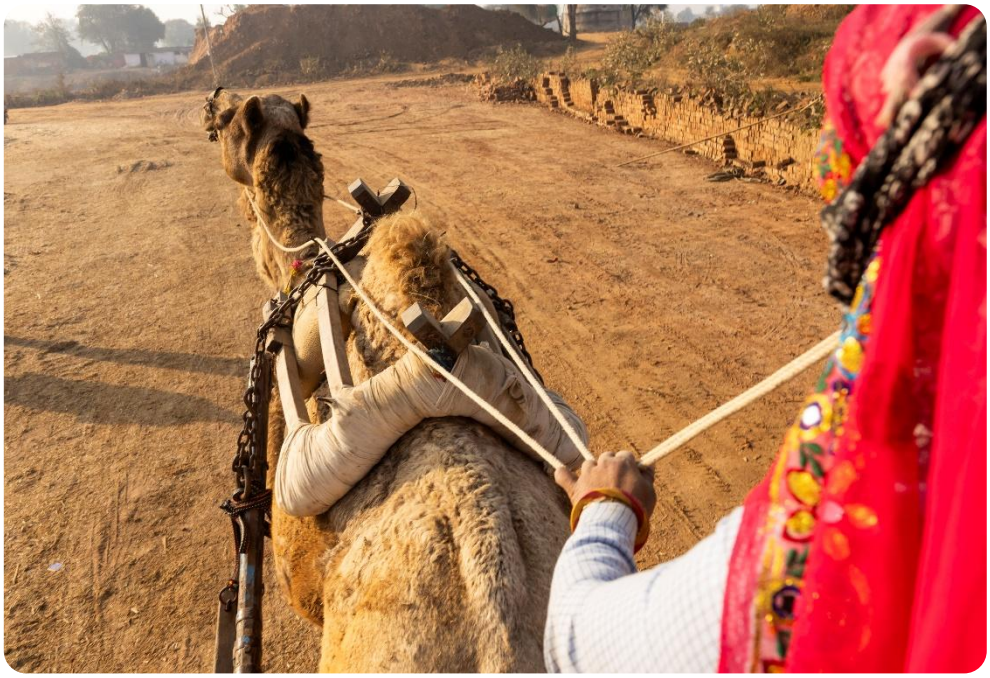
As a result, there is no robust and coherent picture of the number of working animals among national and global livestock populations, or of the nature of the socio-economic contributions they make.

> *We use bulls to plough our agricultural lands…The buffaloes, bulls and other animals we have are part of our family and they deserve care and respect. I have animals – I take care of them. I will ask others to do the same.*
>
> Rukmani, oxen owner, Odisha, India

This is a critical gap for policymakers and planners, especially when they are considering the rural, remote and marginalised communities where working animals are most relied upon.

The national public health and population surveys that do collect household-level data do not routinely incorporate information about working animals within the households surveyed, missing the opportunity to enhance our understanding of their contribution to livelihoods (with some notable exceptions such as the Pilot Agricultural Census in Kenya in 2024/25, supported by the FAO; Kenya's Population and Housing Census also includes data capture on livestock keeping by households and the regional distribution of animal drawn carts at species level – including equids). This is also a gap for other areas such as animal health service delivery, as it can limit our understanding of animal populations and dynamics, which can have important consequences for biosecurity, animal disease, the scope of vaccination programmes (where equids in particular may not be included), and cross-border animal movements.

A study exploring working equid population numbers in 2021 across 34 low- and middle-income countries found such data to be highly variable and often lacking, exacerbated by inconsistent approaches to agricultural and livestock censuses, and challenges in identifying animal ownership.[18] Notably, this was also reflected in the two high income countries used as comparators (the United Kingdom and the United States). The study concluded that these combined challenges obscure the economic and social importance of working equids and, as a result, they are 'urgently undervalued'.[19]



Case study: Counting working animals in India

The Livestock Census takes place every five years by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, in association with the State Animal Husbandry Departments. Through door-to-door surveys conducted by local livestock inspectors, data on animal populations is collected at household and community level, allowing a clear understanding of the geographical distribution of livestock. Information collected includes the species, breed, age, sex, population, and use of animals, and information about the production of meat, milk and eggs.

Census data is used for policy formulation, disease control programmes and breed improvement; census insights have led to improvements in animal health systems, vaccination coverage, and dairy and poultry production. However, working animals are included under species categories rather than being separately classified and production-oriented sectors continue to be the focus of policy, planning and investment, and there are not targeted policy or programmatic initiatives for working animals.

Working animals often live in remote and hard-to-reach areas, with many owned by marginalised or nomadic communities, which makes it challenging to accurately count livestock populations, especially horses, donkeys, mules and camels.

Measures applied to address such barriers include the introduction of a digital livestock census, using mobile apps for real-time data entry; geo-referenced data collection to improve location accuracy; and proactive efforts to engage local staff in data collection to increase coverage in remote areas.

Even where more detailed data about working animal populations and their use is collected nationally (for example, through the Livestock and Livestock Characteristics Survey in Ethiopia), there is significant inconsistency in what is collected across nations; and there are often limitations in how this data is analysed and applied within national policymaking. Data can also be fragmented across multiple actors, making working animals easy to overlook within legislative, policy, and programme design.

The FAO actively encourages Member States to make improvements in the quality of the data collected in relation to animal health and welfare, including through technical support programmes. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) also calls for better data-driven animal health and more comprehensive and standardised information across the globe.[20] Initiatives such as the FAO and World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) programme[21] and the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap[22] seek to improve the systemic collection of agricultural surveys – including household and smallholder level data - and are very welcome. However, while we can assume

they will, over time, also increase our understanding of the role of working animals, they are not yet implemented at scale.

Global data on working animal populations[23]

Globally, national ministries report livestock data to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN. The FAO recommends that Member States provide species-level information in their submissions[24]; where national data is not sufficiently robust or is not provided, the FAO provides a livestock estimate for that country.

At the country level, over the last decade - 2015-2024 - a total of 173 countries and areas were included in the FAOSTAT dataset. Of these, 97 (56%) reported at least one "Official Figure," while 76 (44%) had no official data recorded and relied entirely on estimated livestock numbers.

161 countries and areas were included in the FAOSTAT dataset in the most recent five-year period - 2020-2024. Of these, 80 countries (50%) submitted at least one "Official Figure" in this period, while 81 countries (50%) reported no official data and relied entirely on estimated values.

For example, in the South Asia region, three out of five countries (60%) did not provide a complete set of official data across that five-year period, either relying wholly on FAO estimates or only submitting data for one animal species; across Africa, 28 out of 45 countries (62%) submitted no official data in same period.

Although nearly half of countries reported some official data, reporting is often sporadic and confined to a single species, rather than offering a comprehensive account.

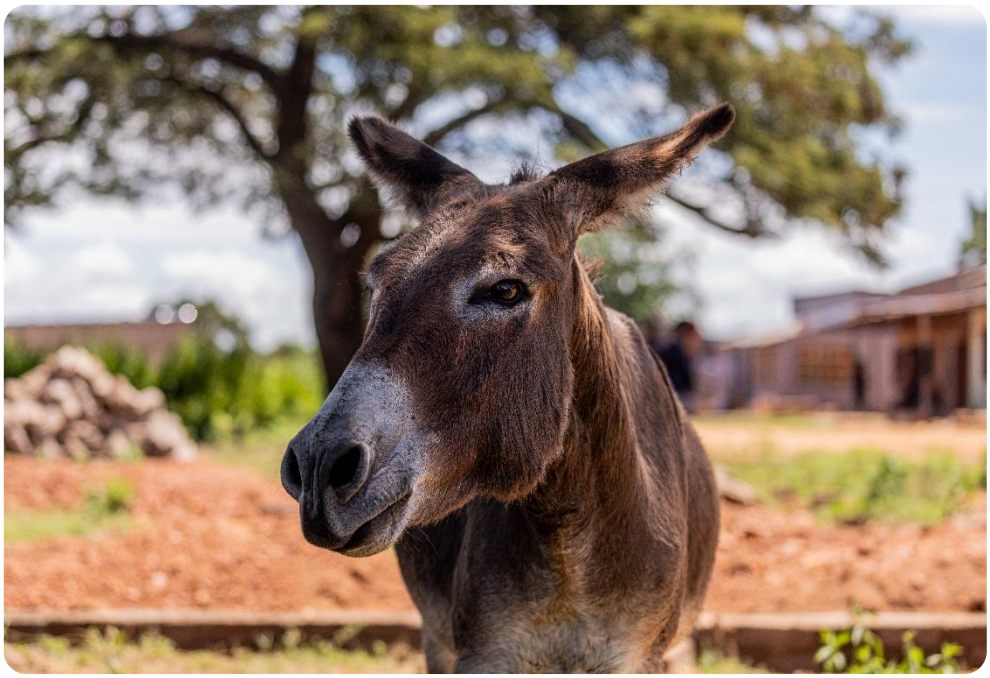
The data also reveals a clear hierarchy in species reporting, potentially linked to perceptions of the value of different species, or the prioritisation or ease of data collection for production animals. While camels have the highest rate of official validation (64%), horses (49%), donkeys (29%), and mules (24%) are significantly more likely to rely on FAO estimates rather than on official census data.

Importantly too, while certain species numbers (e.g. donkeys, horses, mules) collected by the FAO can be used as a proxy for the number of working equids in certain countries, this is not the case across all nations or for all species.

Making the case for counting working animals

Without good data, we can't see where working animals are making critical contributions towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

We can't see where donkeys reduce household burdens such as water collection to ensure girls can remain in school; where horses contribute to poverty reduction by driving and sustaining incomes, or enabling access to essential health and education services; where draught animals such as oxen play a role in sustainable food production; where working dogs protect wildlife; where mules deliver humanitarian aid; where camels may have a significant presence in a local area and require consideration in urban planning processes to avoid unnecessary injury.



Donkeys are important to our area... One time, I was injured, I used the donkey-driven cart to go to the hospital. There is a time when I was ready to give birth, I took the cart and went all the way to the hospital.

Patience, animal owner, Chivi district, Zimbabwe

Bringing visibility to working animals within national data systems is a first step to many benefits.

- Visibility enables governments to identify gaps in infrastructure, services, and systems, and recognise and plan for working animals' contribution to livelihoods, economies, and essential services.
- Visibility supports governments to identify and address gaps in veterinary education, professional training and workforce capacity.
- Visibility ensures communities have access to adequate veterinary services and welfare support, including during emergencies and public health crises.
- Visibility drives greater policy and community awareness of the importance of good animal health and welfare in building and maintaining strong and sustainable communities.
- Visibility supports governments in identifying and responding to the specific needs of women and girls, who in many communities depend significantly on working animals for their livelihoods and wellbeing, and are likely to be negatively impacted by a failure to address working animals' welfare needs.[25]
- Visibility strengthens disease surveillance and tracking, enables early detection and control, and allows us to identify where public health risks may emerge because of poor animal welfare or husbandry practices.
- Visibility helps in implementing effective vaccination programmes and other preventative systems for animal health, and enabling better planning for veterinary services to meet animals' health and welfare needs, supporting both livelihoods and public health.
- Visibility enables governments and local communities to embed greater effectiveness and responsiveness in national resilience and disaster risk reduction strategies, ensuring high-dependency areas can be identified, veterinary support allocated strategically, and animals essential to aid delivery protected from the outset – recognising working animals as an asset in short-term survival and long-term rebuilding of communities.
- Visibility helps governments and law enforcement to better understand and disrupt illegal activities and exploitation that impact working animals and their owners; for example, in addressing the global trade in donkey skins that is devastating donkey populations and people's livelihoods in many different regions across the world.[26]

Case study: Representing working animals in Mauritania

Mauritania completed its first General Livestock Census (RGE) in 2024. The census aimed to strengthen rural planning and food security and provides the most comprehensive snapshot of Mauritania's livestock population to date. Led by the Ministry of Livestock and supported by the National Agency for Statistics and Demographic Analysis (ANSADE), the World Bank and the FAO, the census was designed to reflect Mauritania's highly mobile livestock system.

Fieldwork was conducted in two phases by 1400 data collectors in 363 teams, covering modern, urban and peri-urban farms, urban and rural households, and transhumant herds counted at watering points and border crossings over a specified period. Species data is disaggregated by administrative district and production system, and analysis explicitly includes donkeys, horses and camels.

While working animals and their roles aren't specifically identifiable, the census captured significant populations of donkeys (562,996) and horses (113,727) with most located in settled rural households. The data also shows that equids in rural households accounted for around 72% of the national equid population, underlining their importance to the local economy.

The census highlighted the importance of livestock mobility in Mauritania, both between regions and across borders. By mapping livestock distribution by wilaya (district), the census was also able to identify areas of high livestock density, offering useful information for policymakers and planners.

The resulting data enables better targeting of animal health services, including adjusting mobile clinic routes to reach animals in remote and pastoralist communities; and demonstrates that working animals can be meaningfully represented within national census systems. In future, by evolving the census to specifically capture working animals and their roles, this data could become an even stronger evidence base for accounting for working animals within livestock policy, animal welfare planning and rural development across the region.

Case study: Capturing the contributions of working animals in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a significant livestock population, and the largest equid population in the world. Working animals - particularly equids such as donkeys, horses and mules - have a central role in many livelihoods and are fundamental to Ethiopia's rural economy and food systems. While national policy and data systems primarily focus on production animals, information on working animals is collected through existing livestock data mechanisms.

Livestock data is gathered through the national Livestock and Livestock Characteristics Survey as well as through routine reporting by development agents and animal health professionals at kebele (village) level. The Livestock Characteristics Survey records species, age, sex, breed and geographical location. It also usefully identifies explicitly the roles of animals in transportation, draught, and 'other' uses for donkeys, horses, mules, camels and cattle. Information on vaccination, treatment, disease and deaths is also collected for working animal species, though it is captured in greater detail for production animals.

Despite limitations such as reliance on small samples and estimates based on previous years, the data nonetheless provides valuable insights into the size, distribution and purpose of Ethiopia's working animal population. The 2020/21 Livestock Characteristics Report highlights the essential role of working animals in cultivation, crop threshing and transporting people and goods.

Livestock and working animal data is mainly used at local level to plan vaccinations and animal health services. Nationally, however, working animals are not yet sufficiently visible in policy decisions and livestock development strategies, which prioritise production animals. The Animal Health and Welfare Proclamation 2025 (Article 10) provides a legal basis for registering and identifying all animals – including working animals.

If combined with action to strengthen existing systems through more consistent data collection intervals, stronger sampling methods, community engagement and reassurance, and the inclusion of equids in the National Data Livestock Standard (2025), there are real opportunities for significantly enhancing data quality and ensuring working animals are better recognised and supported in Ethiopia's livestock and sustainable development agenda.

Policy recommendations

By counting every working animal, we make them impossible to overlook.

Working Animals International is calling on governments to take one simple but powerful step: to explicitly include working animals in national censuses so their role and vital socio-economic contributions are recognised, they are fully considered in policymaking and planning, and their welfare needs can no longer go unmet.

Governments should:

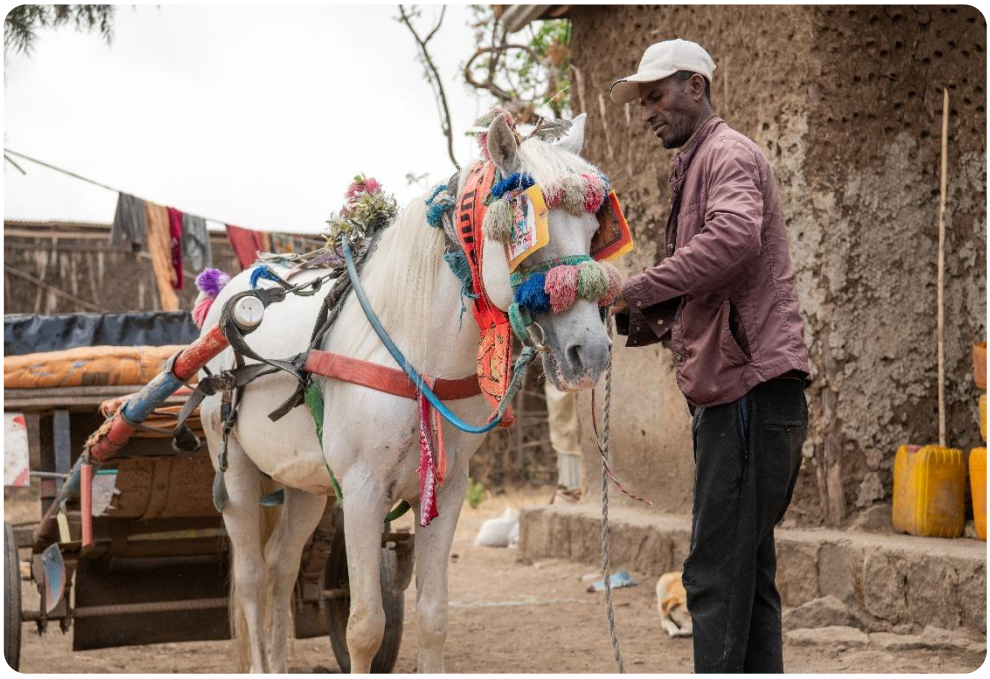
1. Include working animals as a distinct category of 'working livestock' within national agricultural and livestock census and data collection systems, under each recorded species.

2. Undertake a count of working animals every five years, so that planning for services, infrastructure and livelihoods reflects the realities of the communities who rely on them.

3. Collect and report data that can be disaggregated to identify every species of working animal and clearly document their purpose within the community.

4. Consider the inclusion of working animals in wider population and public health surveys to capture essential household-level data, especially within rural and remote communities, recognising the integral role working animals play in facilitating access to essential services.

5. Work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and the World Organisation for Animal Health to agree a shared definition and common data fields to make working animals visible within livestock data, for use in national and global systems.



Endnotes

[1] At Working Animals International, we define a working animal as one that is intended for, used for, or formerly engaged in activities such as transport, traction, and income generation, reflecting the definition of 'working equids' in the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE 2022) Terrestrial Animal Health Code. This excludes animals kept solely to produce meat or milk, or animals utilised in sport or leisure activity.

[2] World Horse Welfare and The Donkey Sanctuary (2021), *One Health and One World: Working animals to help achieve a safe and sustainable world*

[3] UN General Assembly (2024), Sustainable development: disaster risk reduction https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/205

[4] World Organisation for Animal Health (2024), Vision Paper

[5] See, for example, FAO (2025), *Animal welfare for production and working animals: evidence and need for action*; Brooke (2015), *Invisible Workers;* World Horse Welfare (2015), *Removing the Blinkers*

[6] Cameron A, Freeman SL, Wild I, Burridge J, Burrell K. *Scoping Review of the Socioeconomic Value of Working Equids, and the Impact of Educational Interventions Aimed at Improving Their Welfare*. Animals. 2026; 16(2):165

[7] Merridale-Punter et al, CABI One Health (2024), *'The health of my donkey is my health': A female perspective on the contribution of working equids to One Health in two Ethiopian communities*; Geiger et al (2020), *Understanding the attitudes of communities to the social, economic, and cultural importance of working donkeys in rural, peri-urban and urban areas of Ethiopia*

[8] C. Clancy, T. Watson, Z. Raw (2021), *Resilience and the role of equids in humanitarian crises, Disasters Journal Volume 46 Issue 4*, October 2022

[9] See International Coalition for Working Equids, *Achieving Agenda 2030: How the welfare of working animals delivers for development*; Stockholm Environment Institute and New York University (2025), *Integrating animal health and welfare into the 2030 agenda and beyond;* Keeling et al (2019), Frontiers in Veterinary Science, Volume 6 – October 2019, Animal Welfare and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

[10] https://www.thebrooke.org/news/un-recognises-working-animals-role

[11] United Nations (2019), *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*

[12] UN Environment Programme (2002), UNEP/EA.5/Res.1, Animal welfare – environment - sustainable development nexus https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999162?ln=en&v=pdf

[13] UN General Assembly (2023) Resolution 78/168 https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/78/168

[14] Food and Agriculture Organization (2023), Strategic Framework for Sustainable Livestock Transformation

[15] UN General Assembly (2024), Resolution 79/205, Sustainable development: disaster risk reduction, paragraph 28 https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/205

[16] World Health Organization (2025), WHO Pandemic Agreement https://www.who.int/health-topics/who-pandemic-agreement#tab=tab_1

[17] Animals kept primarily to produce meat or milk, usually in the context of smallholder or large-scale agriculture.

[18] F. Allan (2021), *A Landscaping Analysis of Working Equid Population Numbers in LMICs, with Policy Recommendations*

[19] Ibid

[20] World Organisation for Animal Health (2025), *The State of the World's Animal Health 2025*

[21] LSMS-ISA supports African governments to collect and analyse data supporting investment in the livestock sector, and to integrate livestock data into national statistical systems. While it does not have a working animal focus, it seeks to deliver nationally representative household surveys to explore the links between agriculture, non-farm incomes, and socio-economic status. Data is publicly available in the World Bank's Microdata Catalog.

[22] The 50x2030 initiative is a 10-year multi-agency partnership that seeks to bridge the agricultural gap by improving data systems in 50 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America – https://www.50x2030.org/

[23] Working Animals International analysis of FAO STAT data 2020-2024 https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/

[24] FAO STAT data is disaggregated at species level into asses, bees, buffalo, camels, cattle, chickens, ducks, geese, goats, horses, mules and hinnies, other birds, other camelids, other rodents, rabbits and hares, sheep, swine/pigs, and turkeys. Not all Member States submit data against all categories.

[25] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2025), *Animal welfare for production and working animals: evidence and need for action*

[26] The Donkey Sanctuary (2025), *Stolen Donkeys, Stolen Futures*; (2022), *The Global Trade in Donkey Skins: A Ticking Time Bomb – Biosecurity Risks and Implications for Human and Animal Health on a Global Scale*

Contact
advocacy@workinganimals.org

workinganimals.org

Working Animals International