

Working Animals News

Autumn 2026 • Issue 205



**Working
Animals
International**

The new name for SPANA

INSIDE

**Support our silent
cries appeal**

**Inspiring children to
respect animals**

A close-up photograph of a brown horse's head, focusing on its eye and the bridle. The horse has a dark eye and is wearing a light-colored bridle with a yellow bell. The background is blurred, showing hints of red and yellow.

**It's time for
working animals
to be counted**



Tonk, India

Asha supports herself and her 14-month-old daughter by hauling sand from the Banas River in Tonk, India, with her camels.

She brings her camels to the mobile veterinary clinic of our local partner, Help in Suffering, regularly for checkups.

Asha says: “I’m grateful to have my camels. Because of their work, I can feed myself and my baby. Thank you, everyone, for keeping my animals healthy.”

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On the cover

A working mule waits patiently for a check-up at one of our regular mobile veterinary clinics in Imlil, Morocco. In this remote village, mules and their owners help guide tourists visiting the High Atlas Mountains.

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Hello and welcome to the autumn edition of Working Animals News. I’m delighted to be writing to you for the first time as Chief Executive of Working Animals International.

I’ve already been struck by the care and commitment to working animals across our organisation, our partners and among supporters like you.

I’ve been fortunate to spend time in communities where working horses, donkeys, oxen and other animals are an integral part of everyday life. I’ve seen first-hand how much people rely on them – supporting families, livelihoods and communities – yet their contribution and needs are too often overlooked. I’m proud to join an organisation determined to change that and ensure working animals are recognised, valued and protected.

I’m also grateful to Linda Edwards, who recently stepped down after five years as Chief Executive, for her leadership and the strong foundations she leaves us to build on.

I’m looking forward to building on those foundations and increasing our impact for working animals around the world. In this issue, you’ll see just some of what your support is already making possible.

Thank you for the warm welcome I’ve received, and most of all, for your continued support for working animals. I hope you enjoy the issue.

James Harcourt
Chief Executive
Working Animals International

Working Animals International goes... international!

Our new name and identity are helping more people understand the extraordinary contribution working animals make to communities around the world.

To mark our rebrand, our partners in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Morocco hosted launch events that introduced Working Animals International to new audiences and helped build support for improving the welfare of working animals.

In Ethiopia, schoolchildren from a local animal care club performed songs and poems celebrating working animals. In Zimbabwe, government and development leaders came together at the British Embassy in Harare to discuss the importance of recognising working animals. And in Morocco, where we've worked alongside our local partner for 100 years, colleagues, supporters and partners

gathered to celebrate the next chapter of our shared commitment to working animals.

Katie Crane, Director of Global Marketing, Communications & Advocacy at Working Animals International, said: "Our new brand is already helping us reach new audiences and spark important conversations about working animals. Our new name puts the animals we support at the heart of who we are and reflects our ambition to make working animals – and the extraordinary contribution they make to communities around the world – impossible to overlook."

Double anniversary celebrations!

Did you know that 2026 marks 30 years of supporting working animal welfare in Mali and 25 years in Mauritania?

Thanks to your support, we've made a significant difference to the lives of working animals in both countries over the years. In fact, in 2025 alone, we reached more than 100,000 working animals in need in Mali and Mauritania.

Key achievements with our partners include ensuring the donkeys who work on the rubbish dumps in Mali's capital city, Bamako, have access to quality veterinary services. Meanwhile, in Mauritania, working animals are now included in the country's national census thanks to our lobbying.



Making Zimbabwe's donkeys impossible to overlook

Donkeys have been included on livestock stock cards for the first time.

These cards are issued to record ownership, vaccination and treatment history, and to prevent theft.

The new version of the card will be rolled out as livestock owners buy their cards over the coming year.

Dr Keith Dutlow, Country Director for the Working Animals International programme in Zimbabwe, said: "This is a huge step forward for donkeys in Zimbabwe. Previous population counts have been based on numbers being submitted voluntarily. This very likely led to an underestimation of the number of donkeys in the country and, therefore, their value to the local economy. We'll now have a much better idea of the donkey population in Zimbabwe."

Find out more about why this is so important on p10.



Coming soon

- **It's World Animal Day on 4 October. Find out how you can get involved on social media and our website!**
- **We'll be putting the spotlight on working animals at the 10th Africa Animal Welfare Conference, in Zambia, on 5-7 October. The conference will focus on animal welfare in the face of a changing climate and more frequent extreme weather.**
- **We'll be representing working animals at the International Working Equid Colloquium on 21-24 October, in Mexico.**

Working animals don't cry out for help.

Together, we can ensure they receive the care they deserve.

Support our silent cries appeal and help protect working animals like Dima from preventable pain and injury.

Day after day, Dima, an 11-year-old "gharry" (taxi) horse, works alongside his owner Kedo to provide the local community with essential transport to markets, schools and hospitals in the rural town of Adami Tulu, Ethiopia. They work under the blazing sun and travel for miles on dusty, uneven terrain. The income Dima helps Kedo earn also supports his wife and two young children.

Dima is malnourished. His rough harness digs into his skin. His agonising wounds have become infected.

Despite the pain and exhaustion, Dima doesn't cry out for help.

With your support, we won't let the silent cries of working animals be ignored. Our mobile clinic, run in collaboration with our local partner Addis Ababa University College of Veterinary Medicine, regularly travels to towns outside the city so that owners in more remote areas have somewhere to bring their sick and injured animals.

The painful sores on Dima's back wouldn't heal, and walking became painful. Kedo feared the worst. After hearing from a friend about the work of our local partner, he knew he had to act fast before his horse's condition worsened.

Without the mobile clinic – without you – he would have no way to help Dima.

As soon as the team examined Dima, they could see the distress that his makeshift harness was causing him. The sore on his back was red and raw, and he flinched when touched. The vet team cleaned and disinfected Dima's wounds, applied ointment and gave him pain relief to ease his discomfort. But treating Dima's injuries was only part of the solution. They also advised Kedo on how to clean the wound daily and continue the treatment at home, which was essential to his horse's recovery.

With further guidance from the team, Kedo learned how to fit Dima's harness properly, making it much more comfortable. Kedo and the team also added soft padding, made from locally sourced materials, to the horse's thin saddle. Kedo was also invited to attend a community training session, where he learned how to prevent harness wounds and improve his horse's overall health by providing rest, clean, fresh water, and a balanced diet.

We work to prevent the next injury.

Our work is about more than treating an animal when something goes wrong. We want to help prevent pain and injury wherever possible.

Working with animal owners, harnessing specialists, local partners and our international teams, we've developed practical training materials to improve harness fit and help prevent wounds.

By sharing this knowledge within communities, we can help owners make practical changes that protect the welfare of many more working animals.

For Dima, that means his wounds can heal – and Kedo now has more knowledge and practical skills to reduce the risk of them happening again.

You can help prevent working animals from suffering in silence.

Together, we can prevent unnecessary pain and injury, helping animals receive urgent treatment, and safer harnessing, and providing owners with training in practical animal welfare. Please donate today to make sure more working animals get the care they need to live healthy and valued lives.

Thank you.

To make your gift, visit workinganimals.org/silentcries, call 0300 033 4999 or use your enclosed donation form to respond. Thank you for caring!

Every donation counts. If you can, please donate today and help ensure that the silent cries of working animals are not ignored.



Your £15

could go towards essential medicines and equipment used to treat harness wounds such as antiseptic solution, anti-inflammatory pain relief, zinc oxide ointment and bandages – which protect wounds while they heal.



Your £45

could provide head collars for nine working animals like Dima, preventing painful injuries before they start.



Your £100

could help host community training sessions on harnessing and provide equipment so owners and animals can work more comfortably and safely.

scan to donate



You've helped working animals in Morocco, Ethiopia and Mauritania

Morocco

Bakir the donkey helps his owner, Aisha, transport agricultural produce to and from their remote village in the High Atlas Mountains. Aisha simply wouldn't be able to move her goods without Bakir's help.

She brought Bakir to one of our mobile clinics because he had injured his hoof. Our team cleaned the injury and gave Aisha some medication so that she could continue the treatment herself.

Aisha will care for Bakir's injury and ensure he receives plenty of rest until he has fully recovered.



Addis Ababa University College of Veterinary Medicine (AAU), our partner in Ethiopia, hosted a workshop to help carthorse owners develop their harnessing skills.

Thanks to your support, workshops like these help owners to build the skills and knowledge they need to look after their animals with confidence and care. By providing their animals with safe and well-fitting harnessing, they can reduce pain and prevent injuries. This is just one of the many ways we're working to transform the welfare of working animals globally.

Dr Reta Tesfaye, Working Animals International Project Lead at AAU, said: "We hosted the workshop because harness-related wounds are a welfare issue locally. We host workshops when our veterinary clinic is open and there are lots of people here. This workshop was about how to prevent harness-related wounds in carthorses. The people who attended also learned how to make and use animal-friendly harness padding."

Padding is a simple way to prevent a horse's harness from rubbing against their skin. During the workshop, owners were shown how to fit harnessing and what padding material to use, like old clothing.

Dr Reta added: "Most people who attended our workshop were carthorse owners. At the same time, they were invited to bring their horses for vaccinations against African horse sickness, as well as other veterinary care."

Donate to our silent cries appeal on page six to help fund more workshops like this and create lasting change for animals and their owners.

Mauritania

Cheddad is an eight-year-old horse from the southern border town of Boghé, in Mauritania.

His name means 'strong' – fitting for a horse who transports equipment around Boghé every morning. This essential work helps his owner, Alhaj, support his wife and five children.

Alhaj brought Cheddad to our animal health & welfare centre in Boghé after his horse had hurt his eye on a tree branch. Cheddad's left eye was inflamed and weeping.

Our vets cleaned Cheddad's eye and administered a topical ointment to help lubricate and protect it during healing. The vets showed Alhaj how to apply the ointment so that he could continue Cheddad's treatment at home. Alhaj was also asked to bring his horse back to the centre the next day, and in the meantime to rest Cheddad away from direct sunlight.

Alhaj said:

"It's thanks to Cheddad's work that my family can meet its needs, including food. Everything depends on him. I'm very grateful to the vets and Working Animals International for all the efforts they make for animals in Boghé."



It's time for working animals to be counted

Did you know that there are about 200 million working animals globally?

We say “about” because no one knows exactly how many working animals there are. When animals aren’t counted, they’re often not considered. That’s why we’re calling on governments to take one simple but powerful step: to include working animals in national censuses.

Counting every working animal would help ensure that their essential roles in supporting households and communities are recognised, that they’re fully considered in policymaking and planning, and that their welfare needs are met.

Every working animal deserves to be counted.

Earlier this year, we released a report which showed that although many countries do carry out national agricultural and livestock censuses, these can be infrequent and inconsistent, and they don’t reflect the scale of national working animal populations.

Working animals are rarely visible in national and global data systems. Globally, national ministries report livestock data to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. But although nearly half of all countries submitted some official data between 2020 and 2024, 81 of the 161 countries reported no official data and provided only estimated values.

Without good data, working animals risk being overlooked.

Working animals are the quiet driving force behind countless communities. Horses, donkeys, mules, camels, oxen, buffalo and other animals support the livelihoods of millions of people

around the world. They help communities access food and water. They help plough fields and transport agricultural produce to market. They help people reach hospital and school. But if they’re not being counted, their value isn’t being truly recognised. And if governments don’t understand where working animals are and what they do, it’s impossible to plan for them, to invest in them, and to make sure their welfare needs are being met.

That’s why we’re calling on governments to:

- Recognise working animals as a distinct category of working livestock within national data systems, identifying their purpose so they are visible and accounted for.
- Commit to counting working animals every five years so that planning for services, infrastructure and livelihoods reflects the realities of the communities who rely on them.
- Include working animals in wider population and public health surveys to capture household-level information that shows how vital working animals are for helping families access basic things like food, healthcare and education.

With your support, we can ensure all working animals are counted. We’re already seeing what’s possible: thanks to our lobbying, working animals have been included in Mauritania’s national livestock census for the first time. And earlier this year, the Zimbabwean government included donkeys on the country’s livestock stock card.

We’ll continue to call for change until working animals are impossible to overlook. Sign up to our monthly newsletter for updates on our progress.



FIND OUT MORE:
workinganimals.org/blog/count-every-one

Focus on our education programme

Our global education programme is inspiring the next generation to value and champion the welfare of working animals, helping to shape a future where these animals are better understood, protected and cared for.

With support from our donors, partners and national governments, schoolchildren and young people are learning about the importance of treating working animals with empathy and respect. It's something we've done since the very beginning. In fact, we've been making an impact for over a century, working across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

2025 was a big year for our education programme. We launched our new animal care clubs resources which includes lesson plans and a teachers' guide. Our animal care clubs help children develop positive attitudes towards working animals and practical skills in animal care. And we don't expect children to just sit at a desk, either. Our clubs involve singing, dancing, role play, art, books, animations and more!

Children reached in 2025: 82,849



Meet Herminah Simoyi
Education Officer for the Working Animals International education programme in Zimbabwe

Why is it important for children to learn about animals?

Our role is to create learning experiences so that children develop compassion and empathy for animals. They realise that animals are sentient beings and need to be treated with care. They also contribute to our lives in many different ways. Working animals are part of their everyday lives. If you look at rural communities, they help with chores like fetching firewood and water.

Tell us about your education programme.

Children visit our education centre in Harare. In 2025, about 16,000 children received animal welfare lessons at our centre. We also have our animal care clubs, with about 550 students in 30 schools taking part. Finally, our teacher training programme equips educators to deliver our animal welfare lessons. This is important because our educators are the backbone of our programme.

What's involved in animal care clubs?

Animal care clubs help children develop empathy and compassion for animals in a fun, interactive way. This can be through perspective-building or being exposed to different situations through stories, activities and role plays. We also help them understand the different contributions that working animals make to our everyday lives.

Do you see a difference in children through animal care clubs?

This is my favourite part of my job! When we've finished the sessions and we've seen their role plays, posters and presentations, we can really tell that the children have learned a lot. They're willing to talk about animal care to their families and friends. By the beginning of the following year, there's a huge number of children eagerly waiting for their turn to join their animal care club!

Healthy animals. Strong communities. Sustainable futures.

For millions of families around the world, working animals are a lifeline.

They carry water home, transport goods to market and help families earn much-needed income. But when these animals become sick or injured, entire communities can suffer.

That's where we can make a difference.

Working alongside local partners and communities, we support owners to develop the knowledge and skills to look after their animals with confidence and care. We also ensure access to quality veterinary services.

This work is only possible because of our generous supporters. Together, those who choose to leave a gift in their Will fund over half of our work every year.

Gifts in Wills help thousands of animal owners learn to provide the best care for their animals and give children the knowledge they need to become the next generation of compassionate animal owners. They also help fund veterinary treatments for sick and injured animals. This includes veterinary medicines, essential equipment and mobile clinics that reach animals in remote communities where veterinary support may otherwise be unavailable.

A gift in your Will can help ensure this work continues for generations to come.

The future of working animal welfare will be shaped by the choices we make today. By leaving a gift in your Will, your legacy could be a future where working animals are healthy, valued and able to thrive alongside the communities that depend on them.

What happens to my gift now that you've changed your name?

If you've already left a gift to us in your Will, you don't need to do anything. Our name has changed but our charity number is still the same, so your existing Will is still valid and your gift will still reach us.

Find out more

If you're interested in leaving a legacy or have questions about how legacies transform working animal welfare, please reach out to our legacy team at **020 7831 3999** or email **giftsinwills@workinganimals.org**



Supporter news

Working animals need you, and there are countless ways to help them.



Turn your passion and creativity into support that transforms lives. Some of our most successful fundraisers start by doing things they love. Whether it's baking, gardening, painting, selling or crafting, there's a way to support working animals in need.

You could host a **World Tea Party**, inviting friends and family to enjoy treats from around the world. Or you could take on a sponsored walk, run or cycle with our **Stride Out** pack. Setting up a sponsorship page makes collecting donations easy. Just visit **www.justgiving.com/workinganimals** to get started.

You could also be a voice for working animals by hosting a talk all about Working Animals International. With our ready-made presentation, it's as simple as pressing play – perfect for workplaces, community groups and schools!

Whatever your commitment, we hope you'll join us in raising funds for working animals and the communities who rely on them.



Thank you, Claire!

Claire Watkin and her seven donkeys took on a 50-mile adventure over three months, with a different donkey joining her on each walk! Together, they enjoyed the stunning Welsh scenery while raising £170 so far to support working animals around the world. Congratulations and thank you, Claire!

Feeling inspired?

There are so many ways you can support working animals. If you'd like to join our fundraising community, call us on **+44 (0)20 7831 3999** or email **events@workinganimals.org**

Gifts of Health & Happiness

Discover Gifts of Health and Happiness – inspiring ways to help working animals and bring care and relief where it's needed most.

Every virtual gift can help provide practical support, such as veterinary treatment, safe equipment, nutritious feed, clean water and welfare training for owners. Together, we can create lasting change for working animals, the people who depend on them and the environments they share.

With every gift you choose, for yourself or a loved one, you'll receive a special card with a story about an animal your purchase could be helping.



Visit workinganimals.org/gifts, call **0330 332 2530** or scan the QR code to make a Gift of Health and Happiness today.



Registered with



**Working
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Thank you for your support.

The new name for SPANA