



**“The Society for the Protection and Welfare of Donkeys and Mules in Egypt”
(SPWDME): An overview**

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Abstract

“SPWDME” is a non-governmental charity society in Egypt. It intends to improve the health status of the working donkeys and mules. It promotes the concept of animal welfare between different population communities. “SPWDME” was established in 2002 in order to meet the requirements of the suffering donkeys and mules in Egypt. “The British Donkey sanctuary” is the partnership and the financial supporter of all the activities of the “SPWDME”. Every year, “SPWDME” provides free treatments, care, facial mask, and hooves trimming for hundreds of working donkeys and mules. One of the most important achievement of “SPWDME” is the promotion of the donkeys and mules welfare concept between communities and pupils. The “SPWDME” provides also training to the student of the colleges of veterinary medicine and veterinarian in practice.

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Introduction

There are an estimated 59 Millions of donkeys and mules in the world (International Day of the Donkey, 2011). Developing countries have the majorities, of these animals. Egypt alone has about 3.000.000 Millions of these working donkeys and mules. Both, rural and urban areas use the donkey and mules as draught and pack animals in Egypt. Probably, the first domestication of the asses were in Egypt or Mesopotamia around 3000 BC, or 4000 BC, and had been distributed around the world (Rossel *et al.*, 2008; Nowak, 1999). However, the actual wild progenitor of the domestic donkeys is still controversy. Bökönyi, (1991) argued that the domestication took place in Egypt but, Clutton-Brock, (1992), have noted that the skeletons of three domestic donkeys found in an Egyptian tomb dated to 4500–4000 BC. The donkey or ass, scientifically *Equus asinus* (*Equus*

africanus asinus), is a domesticated member of the *Equidae*. The classification of donkey appears in Figure (1).

“SPWDME”An overview

In Egypt, the donkeys and mules are used for everyday tasks. They are carrying goods and people as well as work in brick kilns. The majorities of these working animals are continuously suffering (Figure 2), and this led to establish “*the Society for the Protection and Welfare of Donkeys and Mules in Egypt (SPWDME)*”. “*SPWDME*” was established in 2002 as non-governmental charity society to meet the requirements of the suffering animals and being promote the welfare of animal concept between the population communities. “*SPWDME*” aims to improve the health status of donkeys and mules and find solutions to improve the quality of animal’s welfare. In addition, “*SPWDME*” serve the communities through its educational programs and research centers and provide practical experience for the student of the colleges of veterinary medicine and veterinary practitioners.

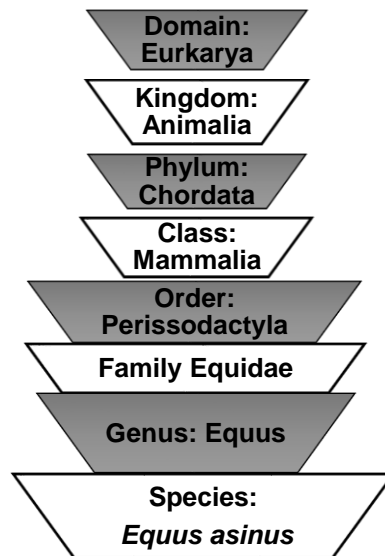


Figure. 1: shows the classification of donkey (Don E Wilson & Dee Ann M Reeder ed. 2005; International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, 2003).

“SPWDME”Location

The “*SPWDME*” is located in Faisal, Giza, 20 km southwest of Cairo. “*The Donkey sanctuary*”/ *Uk* is the partnership since 2003 and the financial supporter for all activities of the “*SPWDME*” ([.http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/view/Egypt](http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/view/Egypt)). The “*SPWDME*” mobile clinic and educational unit move throughout the towns and villages of “*Giza and Kalubia. Their activity includes Aouseem, Warden, Kenana-Toukh, Kaha, El Desemy, El Saf, Nazlet El Saman, Abo Ghaleb, Sakara and El Kebabat*”.

In “SPWDME” works 3 veterinarians, 5 veterinarian assistant, 2 specialists in educational project, 4 drivers and other administration officers.



Figure 2: shows the suffering of working donkeys in brick kilns.

“SPWDME” activities

Since 2002, “SPWDME” has acted to treat hundreds of donkeys and mules in different villages and brick kilns in Egypt every year. However, the promoting of the animal welfare concept between the owners of these working animals is the most important goals of the “SPWDME”. The educational strategy of “SPWDME” is creating the passive based community promoters. Those based community promoters act to promote what they have learned actively to the other people that live in the same geographical area. The educational program includes also the pupils that help actively in the promotion of the animal welfare concept between the different people communities. “SPWDME” promotes also the animal welfare concept between pupils in collaboration with the ministry of education. Pupils consider as a very active group that help actively in the promotion of the animal welfare concept between the different populations communities. The “SPWDME” provides also training for the student of the colleges of veterinary medicine in Egypt. In addition, the “SPWDME” establish a research path with colleges of veterinary medicine to document the cases and data, to be used for future studies. The “SPWDME” is working with a protective mask project. The face protective mask produce locally to prevent the eyes infection. The protective mask provides to the villagers freely. The “SPWDME” is treated different clinical cases freely. The “SPWDME” team is usually treating donkeys that suffer from foot problems, eye infections and open wounds caused by poor harnessing. In addition, donkeys beaten by their owners, are also common cases. The team has regular visit to the villages and the brick kilns and offer free routine veterinary care. They help owners to improve the working conditions for their animals. The “SPWDME” team approaches the working donkeys in two locations, the brick kilns on the outskirts of Cairo, and Nile delta rural villages. The working donkeys in these locations are doing hard work. They are pulling the carts laden with bricks to and from the firing ovens of the brick kilns along the day, in addition, to the lack in the food and water supply and rest. Many donkeys suffered from the ill-fitting harness, which led to open wounds from constant chafing of makeshift. The continuous beating of the donkeys by their owners (uneducated young boys that drive the charts) with sticks, if the donkeys work slowly, lead usually to develop open injuries. Donkeys live, in the rural farming, communities along the Nile delta, have

less difficult life in some respects. However, flies and parasites are annoyed these donkeys with inadequate basic veterinary care. Poor hygienic stabling is commonly leading to incidence of hoof abscesses. In general, open wounds, colic, hoof abscess (Figure. 3), skin diseases, internal parasites, external parasites, respiratory diseases, eye infections, emaciation, malnutrition, teeth diseases (Figure. 4) and fractures, are the prominent reported cases. Routinely, “SPWDME” team deliver trimming of the hooves for the majorities of working animal and providing training for the local farrier.



Figure 3. Shows hoof abscess in donkey



Figure 4. Shows teeth and gum conditions.

Seminar and workshops is continuously delivered to the villagers and worker in the brick kilns (Figure. 5). Learning methods are the strategy that used in the workshop. The scenarios create from the routine daily work experiences with these working animals and their owners. Then, the scenarios present to the owners to develop awareness about their animals. The drawing competition between pupils is one of the educational and promoting projects of the animal welfare concept.

Conclusion

The “SPWDME” is a non-governmental charity society in Egypt. It is established in 2002 to meet the requirements of the suffering donkeys and mules and being promote the welfare of animal concept between the people communities. *“The Donkey sanctuary”/Uk* is the partnership of all the activities of the *“SPWDME”* since 2003.



Figure 5. Shows workshop delivered to the villagers and workers in the brick kilns

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