Different theories exist
In chaos theory, the butterfly effect implies that a factor as delicate as the flap of a butterfly's wings can have great effects. The flapping wing represents a small change in the initial condition of the system, which leads to large-scale alterations of events.
Related to this is the domino effect or chain reaction which is the cumulative effect produced when one event sets off a chain of similar events.
The ripple effect occurs when an effect from an initial state can be followed outwards incrementally, like ripples expanding across the water when an object is dropped into it.

Our planet is under siege
In our February 2019 newsletter Donkeys for Africa examined the effect of global climate change on Africa and its inhabitants of all species.

The ripple effects of the trade in donkey skins are well known to us all. It goes much further than merely the slaughter of some donkeys. People’s livelihoods are affected, now and in the future.

A new threat
Early in March Africa reported cases of the new corona virus, ranging from Egypt to South Africa - including Nigeria, the continent's most-populous country. Nearly all countries in Africa have now reported cases.

The continent has close links to China, where the infection originated in late December, but the cases in Africa have all so far been linked to Europe.

The ripple effect of this pandemic impacts on all aspects of our lives and on the well-being of animals. Karen Menczer of Animal-Kind International: “Always, when things are bad for humans, we expect things to be even worse for animals, and this crisis is no different.”

Trade with Eastern countries is severely curtailed, as is all travel. This will result in the decrease of numbers of veterinarians and other volunteers travelling to work with animal welfare organisations. Support for donkey welfare that is dependent on visits by benefactors, will be suspended. There may be disruptions in the supplies of medicines.

It remains to be seen how this pandemic will affect the export trade in donkey skins: it could be temporarily suspended – or the ejiao industry could flourish if it is believed that its use combats the effects of corona virus.
Working donkeys in Hargiesa city, Somaliland

From research by Mohamed Hussein Jama, July 2018. The lack of understanding of the link between working animal welfare and human welfare, results in the health and welfare of working donkeys not being considered a priority. The aim of this study was to identify donkey welfare problems by using physical, feeding and behavioural parameters of working donkeys in Hargiesa city.

Working donkeys in Somaliland belong to the poorest members of the community. In Hargiesa city donkeys play a crucial role in delivering water to a city suffering from extreme water scarcities. This study revealed that 75% of the responding donkey owners had only one working donkey. This could result in the donkey being worked even when it is sick or tired, and thus it is less productive.

They face welfare problems such as wounds, lameness, systemic infections, dehydration and lack of resources such as feed, shelter and equipment. Other common welfare problems are improper harnessing, overloading and overworking the donkeys. Harness lesions are not only painful for the animal, but also increase the risk of secondary infections, which reduce the work capacity and longevity of the donkey. Starkey (1998) found the life expectancy of a working donkey in Somaliland to be 9-13 years. Absence of veterinary clinics add to the challenges faced.

The majority of donkey owners do not provide shelter for their animals and the animals are exposed to the extreme weather conditions, especially during the severe cold winter nights and high daily temperatures during the spring and autumn seasons.

Virtually no information is available on the economic impact of any donkey diseases. This lack of information hinders development of policy decisions on disease control and prevention. The acquisition of this type of data provides a challenge to both economists and veterinarians.

Expanding legal protection to animals and the environment

The well-being of animals is inextricably intertwined with the pursuit of social justice for humans. Activists and lawyers are increasingly recognizing that there is a connection between cruelty to animals and the violation of human rights. The expansion of the legal protection currently offered to animals, is being implemented worldwide. This area of the law is evolving constantly.

Germany amended its constitution to recognise that animals demand a level of constitutional protection. Switzerland recognised that all living beings have dignity.

In a 2016 judgment, the South African Constitutional Court recognized that the rationale for the protection of animal welfare lay in the ‘intrinsic value of animals as individuals’. The courts in India have started to recognise that animals may be protected by fundamental rights. There have been efforts in the USA courts and other countries to utilise the common law remedy of habeas corpus for animals in captivity.

This shift in law and practice has led to the ground-breaking conference to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa in December 2020 with the theme ‘Legal Evolution and the New Rights Revolution: Expanding the Sphere of Protection to Animals and the Environment’.

This conference will be presented by Animal Law Reform South Africa and the South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public, Human Rights and International Law, a Centre of the University of Johannesburg.

Call for abstracts

Abstracts must be submitted by Monday 20 April 2020 to amywilson@animallawreform.org. A decision about the acceptance of the abstract will be communicated by the middle of May 2020. The abstract should be submitted in WORD and be no more than 500 words. It should be accompanied by a brief bio of the presenter, of not more than 250 words.

This is good news for all concerned about the future of animal welfare and deserves attention from all countries, especially in Africa.

Contact editor@donkeysforafrica.org for fuller information.
Over the decades The Brooke has grown from these humble beginnings into a leading global equine charity.

**Theory of Change:**
“In order to sustainably improve equine welfare we recognise the complex interaction between the equine, the equine owning communities, and the system within which they co-exist. We believe that change to human behaviour needs to happen at all levels in order achieve transformational change for the equines and the communities that rely on them for their livelihoods” says Brooke East Africa CEO, Fred Ochieng.

The Brooke emphasises the development of local skills. Vets, farriers and other animal health workers are trained to function within their own communities. As a result, equine welfare work by professionals tasked to do regional work in Africa, continues in communities in spite of restrictions on travel due to the spread of Covid-19.

The importance of providing fresh water and care is something The Brooke educates many donkey owners about throughout Africa.

**Skins trade from Kenya**
Brooke East Africa recently spearheaded the movement to stop the export trade in donkey skins from Kenya. The Donkey Skin Trade Conference in Nairobi in November 2019 had the powerful slogan “Donkeys are better alive”. This conference led to further action resulting in the government halting donkey slaughter in four Kenyan donkey abattoirs.

After announcing that there is to be a ban on donkey slaughter, Kenyan Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Hon. Peter Munya addressed donkey owners:

> “We want to stop that criminality and brutality to restore the donkey to its rightful place in our society; to that of supporting livelihoods.”

Fred Ochieng states “This result is testament to the tenacity of our team and the teams we work with at a grass roots level, who have listened to the concerns of everyday people and helped to amplify their voices to government.”

**Research is vital**
The Brooke International Research Group has also conducted research with multi-discipline international collaborators. This research review is available in our library.

**Research in Ethiopia, The Gambia and Senegal**
Epizootic lymphangitis (EZL) is a highly contagious infection caused by the fungus Histoplasma. It is a major risk to equids in Sub-Saharan Africa. Symptoms include skin nodules and abscesses along the neck and limbs. Led by the University of Liverpool, Brooke and SPANA field staff are sampling, diagnosing and treating cases in Ethiopia and Senegal while Gambia’s Department of Livestock Services and The Gambian Horse and Donkey Trust are coordinating the research programme in The Gambia. The research will explore how EZL is transmitted.
Bam Animal Clinics in Uganda has expanded its work to include the Bukwo District where every home has at least one donkey. The donkeys were found to suffer from harness wounds and health issues caused mainly by internal and external parasites. Bam implemented their new Animal-Kind International-supported programme “Treat for Free.” The animals brought to the Treat for Free clinics are de-wormed and wounds and injuries are addressed.

A new challenge emerged during February. Bam’s Director, David Balondemu, explained, “Swarms of locusts have invaded Eastern Uganda and they look unstoppable. The grazing animals will suffer the most as they will have no pasture to feed on since the locusts come in and wipe out all vegetation in their path. The swarm reached our project areas in Bukwo District and we are in total fear that many donkeys will have no pasture to graze.” Local governments are battling to stop them or to help the donkeys affected by loss of grazing.

Call for abstracts

1st June is the deadline for submitting scientific abstracts for consideration for the 2020 Donkey Welfare Symposium taking place from October 30 - November 1, 2020 at the University of California Davis, Davis, California.

Please refer to Donkeys for Africa February newsletter for full information, or contact acmclean@ucdavis.edu and ewdavis@ucdavis.edu.

Here is a chance to share your latest findings in donkey and mule research and/or novel case studies focused on donkey and mule medicine or clinical findings.

Successful networking

After workshops on donkey welfare were presented to a variety of organisations in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa, one organisation reached out to help another close by. Training sessions on harnessing and hitching presented by amaTrac Uluntu, included staff from two other organisations in the area: Amahlathi SPCA and Queenstown SPCA. All benefitted, especially local donkeys.

We encourage everyone to find out what is happening near you, and link up to share expertise where possible.

From the editor

The world is now focussed on the containment of the spread of the corona virus. Animal welfare, particularly donkey welfare, is not a priority. Kenyan journalist Waihiga Mwaura reflects on how the virus has influenced perceptions in his country. He states that “Despite the concerns around the spread of Covid-19, the greatest enemy is not the virus itself, but fears, rumours and stigma.” BBC.com/news 9th March 2020.

The challenges faced by donkeys and their owners do not disappear while the world is re-assessing its priorities. There will be difficulties in obtaining funding for donkey welfare, and restrictions on travel. We wish all our readers great strength and fortitude during this period of uncertainty.

Please share with us how your work is affected, and what measures you are taking during these difficult times.