THE PROBLEM

- The global working equid population is estimated at 100 million (1).
  Despite the recent development of global standards, many horses, mules and donkeys still experience poor welfare.
- Draft animals are a fundamental source of income for many families in developing and transition countries and understanding the relationship between human well-being and that of working animals merits consideration (2).
- Welfare risks are posed by a lack of veterinary care, mistreatment, poor husbandry practices, lack or non-enforcement of appropriate policies and regulations, socio-economic, and cultural challenges (3).

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

- Poor welfare may result from injuries associated with improperly fitted and designed harnesses and carts, a lack of appropriate veterinary care or disease prevention, and mistreatment or neglect. The consequence is often increased susceptibility to disease, a reduced capacity to work or early death, all of which result in poor animal welfare and financial loss to dependent communities that are economically constrained.
- Working equids in poor health may pose a biosecurity risk to other local equids and may spread disease, such as African Horse Fever.

HOW CAN THIS PROBLEM BE ADDRESSED?

- Promotion of global working equid welfare standards, such as those developed by the OIE.
- Education and training of those involved with working equids to promote awareness about local, regional and national welfare regulations and requirements.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Promote the development and enforcement of equine welfare standards and regulations that are consistent with international expectations.

Resources