



Community Engagement Newsletter

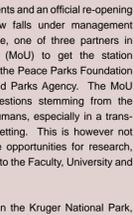
Faculty of Veterinary Science
Autumn 2011



Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station, Hluvukeni Animal Health Centre and Mnsi Community Programme

Dr Louis van Schalkwyk, Mr Jacques van Rooyen & Dr Greg Simpson

By now, most people would have heard the name Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station somewhere along the line. This rather lengthy name has been retained from the original Station that was built in 1983 on land donated by the late Mr. Hans Otto Hoheisen (1905-2003).



Mr Hans Otto Hoheisen

He was a keen conservationist and apart from the 37ha donated for the Research Station, he also donated his four Timbavati farms adjacent to the Kruger National Park in 1990 to the South African Nature Foundation (today World Wildlife Fund – South Africa), almost 14000ha in total! This was the biggest donation of its kind in those days, worldwide! Enough reason to eternalize a name in this way! Unfortunately, the Station fell into disrepair during the last 15 years.

After some much needed refurbishments and an official re-opening in 2010, the Research Station now falls under management of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, one of three partners in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to get the station functional again, the other two being the Pease Parks Foundation (PPF) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency. The MOU is aimed mainly at addressing questions stemming from the interface of wildlife, livestock and humans, especially in a trans-frontier conservation area (TFCA) setting. This is however not its exclusive aim, and it offers wide opportunities for research, training and community engagement to the Faculty, University and various other collaborators.

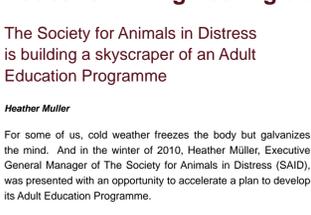
Situated very close to Orpen Gate in the Kruger National Park, Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station boasts a ninety seat auditorium, three large and two small laboratories, office space, storage space, a library and ten fully equipped self-catering accommodation units (as well as a swimming pool). It is an ideal base for research and sample processing as well as a unique venue for mini-symposia and continuing education/ professional development courses.



However, the Station is only one part of a much larger University of Pretoria (UP) engagement in the area. The Station serves as

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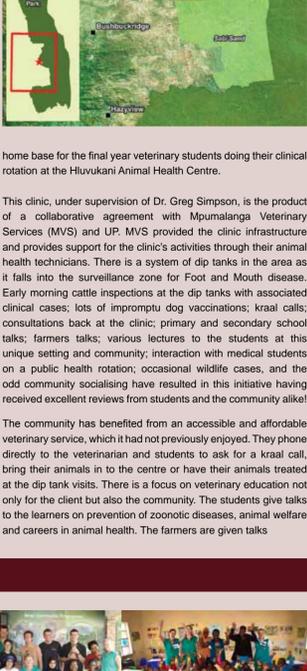
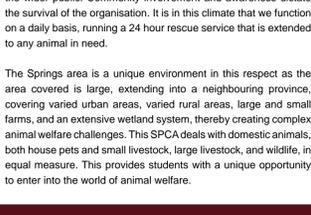
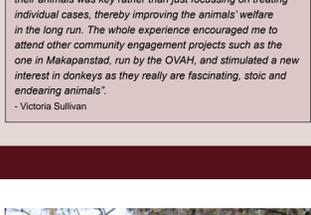
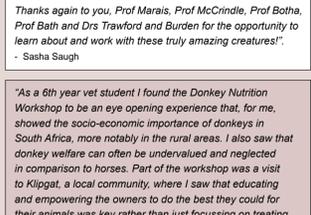
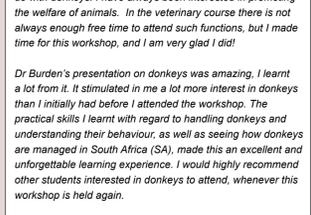
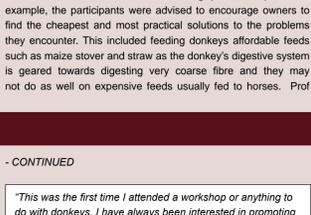
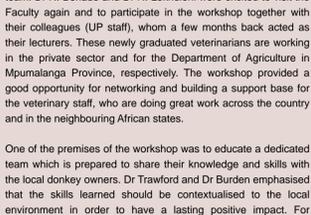
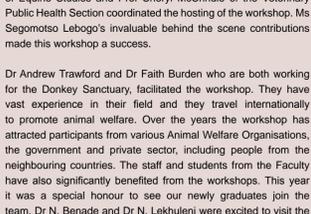
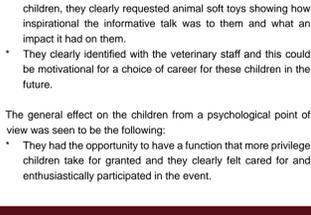
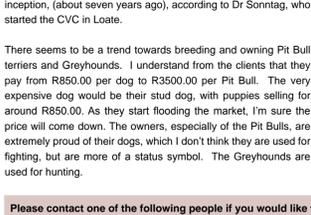
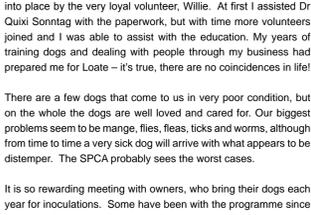
on breeding selection, wound management, common diseases, nutrition and other topics. The workload is fair and the students learn not only through practical experience but also through interaction and talks by veterinarians and other health workers in the area. The rotation will provide valuable training for upcoming community service and intends to be a long-lasting benefit to the community and the students that pass through it.



The third part of UP's involvement in the area is the research arm of the Mnsi Community Programme (MCP).

The "study area" of the MCP is unique in that more than three quarters of its boundary is shared with conservation areas, some private and some provincial. This makes it an ideal site for investigating the real interaction between people, their livestock, the neighbouring wildlife and the environment in which they occur. Jacques van Rooyen, from the Department Veterinary Tropical Diseases, coordinates activities of the Mnsi Community Programme to ensure that research opportunities are optimised, whilst research methods, outputs and feedback from projects optimally benefit the community.

There are numerous research opportunities available in a wide range of themes and disciplines, ranging from emerging/re-emerging diseases, zoonoses, vector-borne diseases, socio-economics of the people and livestock industry, food safety and security, disease ecology and epidemiology as well as animal health and management related studies. The use of ICT's



home base for the final year veterinary students doing their clinical rotation at the Hluvukeni Animal Health Centre.

This clinic, under supervision of Dr. Greg Simpson, is the product of a collaborative agreement with Mpumalanga Veterinary Services (MVS) and UP. MVS provided the clinic infrastructure and provides support for the clinic's activities during their animal health technicians. There is a system of dip tanks in the area as it falls into the surveillance zone for Foot and Mouth disease. Early morning cattle inspections at the dip tanks with associated clinical cases, lots of impromptu dog vaccinations; kraal calls; consultations back at the clinic; primary and secondary school talks; farmers talks; various lectures to the students at this unique setting and community; interaction with medical students on a public health rotation; occasional wildlife cases, and the odd community socialising have resulted in this initiative having received excellent reviews from students and the community alike!

The community has benefited from an accessible and affordable veterinary service, which it had not previously enjoyed. They phone directly to the veterinarian and students to ask for a kraal call, bring their animals in to the centre or have their animals treated at the dip tank visits. There is a focus on veterinary education not only for the client but also the community. The students give talk to the learners on prevention of zoonotic diseases, animal welfare and careers in animal health. The farmers are given talks

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(information and communication technologies) is continuously explored for application both in research and improved service delivery within these rural communities. The study area is very well located to study the impact of environmental and climatic changes and how these influence conservation, animal health and production as well as human livelihoods.

Research projects conducted from the Research Station are not limited to its 37ha fenced terrain or the Mnsi "study area", but include projects such as EPISITIS, which looks at the spatial epidemiology of Foot and Mouth Disease along the entire Kruger National Park's western and southern boundary.

The combination of the Research Station, Hluvukeni Animal Health Clinic, Community Research Programme and surrounding game reserves (all part of the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Park) which serves as reservoir for various endemic livestock and zoonotic diseases, provides the Faculty with an unequalled opportunity to be involved in community engagement, in all its forms – from saving a farmer's only cow from red water, to explaining basic pet care to pre-primary school children, to combating a rabies outbreak, to investigating wildlife's role in food security, or to offering courses to professionals such as veterinarians and even communal farmers. There is indeed an opportunity for everyone at OP, UP and many others to become involved.

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Education – Engineering a brighter future for animals

The Society for Animals in Distress is building a skyscraper of an Adult Education Programme

Heather Muller

For some of us, cold weather freezes the body but galvanizes the mind. And in the winter of 2010, Heather Muller, Executive General Manager of The Society for Animals in Distress (SAID), was presented with an opportunity to accelerate a plan to develop its Adult Education Programme.

The Student who came in from the Cold

After qualifying as an engineer, Angie Fairley surrendered to her true calling: building a future for animals transcended that of structural design, she changed course to study veterinary science. Despite her study demands, travelling from Johannesburg to Pretoria, taking care of an ailing pet and her husband, Angie visited SAID to accomplish her required community engagement activity for the module of Companion Animal Ethology (CPE 400). She methodically soaked up all the information given to her, absorbed the details of her brief and headed home.

An impassioned advocate of education as the solution to all ills, Heather wondered whether she had managed to adequately convey the essence of SAID's focused education ethos to Angie. And more importantly, had the Society's mission sufficiently influenced Angie to create what was needed to inspire others?

On a very ordinary day, Angie arrived back at the Society to present, almost self-effacingly, what she hoped would be an acceptable initial concept. One glance at Angie's dog of what it really means to educate, and Heather knew that every day that followed could be extraordinary for animals. Angie's complete understanding of SAID's work was encapsulated in a pencil sketch - simple in execution but powerful in its message.



If a picture paints a thousand words, then read this one . . .

The Heather-to-Angie Brief

- * Create "something" to capture the essence of animal care and engage people to consider sound concepts;
- * To convey a visual interpretation of everyday life that naturally focuses emotive attention on apathy and indifference;
- * To create the possibility for individuals in a group scenario, where many different opinions would be at play, to evaluate their understanding, choices and decision-making with regard to animal care through imagery, discussion and consciousness;
- * To create a platform where altered opinions would not be a result of being told what is right, but rather choosing and aspiring to want what is right.

Angie's concept and presentation is presently under further development. Psychologist and friend to the Society, Sarah Taylor, is investing her knowledge and expertise into a complementary imagery experience that will see The Society for Animals in Distress incorporate boardrooms around Johannesburg engaging people in the vital journey of embracing responsibility towards animals and their care in South Africa.

The Society for Animals in Distress is a veterinary care provider that ensures that every community interaction is professionally serviced with education and integrity. These are their highlights for the financial year of 2010:

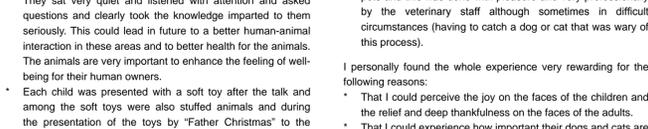
- * They provided 100,000 veterinary treatments.
- * Their formal Primary School Education Programme reached 14,000 children at 63 schools.
- * Their treatment-to-education ratio improved to 49% / 51%.
- * In 2005, 97% of their work involved veterinary intervention and only 3% comprised only education.
- * Their large numbers of hospital admissions revealed that only 370 animals in total were presented unvaccinated.
- * The choice by owners to sterilize their animals has risen and necessitates the services of 17 veterinarians- pro bono, employed and contracted.
- * Financial contributions made by the serviced communities towards the care and protection of their animals have increased from an average .50 cents per animal to R5.00.
- * Early detection of illness has reduced hospital admissions, and on-site treatment is by far more common.

Under one percent of all the animals that are in SAID's care die or need to be humanely euthanized.



The Society for Animals in Distress: "Protecting Animals, Healing Sickness, Fighting Ignorance, Empowering Others to do the Same."

Artwork Craig Bratman-Smith
www.craigbratmansmith.co.za



LOATE Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC) Soshanguve

Tania Quarmby

My first impressions of Loate were of the long queues of people waiting patiently for his very loyal volunteer, Willie. We first visited Dr Quixi Sonntag with the paperwork, but with time more volunteers joined and I was able to assist with the education they are used for training dogs and dealing with people through my business had prepared me for Loate – it's true, there are no coincidences in life!

There are a few dogs that come to us in very poor condition, but on the whole the dogs are well loved and cared for. Our biggest problems seem to be mange, flies, fleas, ticks and worms, although from time to time a very sick dog will arrive with what appears to be distemper. The SPCA probably sees the worst cases.

It is so rewarding meeting with owners, who bring their dogs each year for inoculations. Some have been with the programme since inception, (about seven years ago), according to Dr Sonntag, who started the CVC in Loate.

There seems to be a trend towards breeding and owning Pit Bull terriers and Greyhounds. I understand from the clients that they pay for R850.00 per dog to R3500.00 per Pit Bull. The very expensive dog would be their stud dog, with puppies selling for around R650.00. As they start flooding the market, I'm sure the price will come down. The owners, especially of the Pit Bulls, are extremely proud of their dogs, which I don't think they are used for fighting, but are more of a status symbol. The Greyhounds are used for hunting.

Unfortunately, there are many Pit Bull terriers with white pigmentation around their eyes and nose, while their skin is also very pink. Much time is spent talking to the clients about using sun tan lotion and keeping the dogs out of the brutal South African sun. I'm sad to say that I also see some Pit Bulls with recent copper ears!

Our main focus is to sterilize, inoculate, deworm and dip the dogs in Soshanguve. Spaying or neutering Pit Bulls or Greyhounds is now becoming almost impossible, as the people of the area have begun to see the financial value of the dogs and are loath to sterilize. We also see many litters of Pit Bull and Greyhound puppies coming for vaccination. They will no doubt eventually be sold to homes, perpetuating the breeding problem.

Collars and leashes are being sold to the clients for a minimal charge. I could not believe my eyes a few months ago, when a Dachshund arrived with a chain and lock around his neck. His owner was soon talked into purchasing a harness and leash. Unfortunately, he could not buy both items at once (at R5.00 each), but within a month he was stocked with a very attractive, new harness and lead. Many dogs still arrive with wire collars. I hope with sponsorship, time and education, the use of wire around the animals' necks will become a sight of the past.

My dream is for every disadvantaged area to eventually become equipped with a brick and mortar Pet Education Centre, encompassing a veterinary clinic, library / theatre, grooming parlour, pet shop, dog training centre and petting farm.

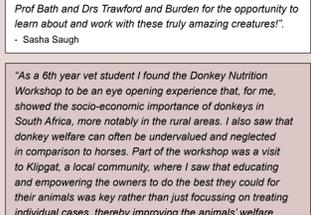
Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, baskets, or your time:			
Sr Sarah Sonntag	(012) 529 8387 / 079 183 1878	quixi.johnson@up.ac.za	
Dr Quixi Sonntag	(012) 529 8472 / 082 458 9345	sarah.sonntag@up.ac.za	
Mr Eugene Machimana	(012) 529 8100 / 083 687 0181	eugene.machimana@up.ac.za	

Danville and Hermanstad Community Clinic 2010

Sr Mandy Albertyn

What Community Engagement meant to me

I find community engagement extremely rewarding. There was no money unemployed, underprivileged people in South Africa, not only in black communities, but white communities as well, such



as Danville. The people we saw at this community clinic were so open and friendly. I think they were just so grateful to receive anything, especially before Christmas.



Veterinary Nursing Profession

As a Veterinary Nurse I feel it is my duty to educate the clients, not just treat the patients. So we tried to educate each client as best we could. We told them about sterilizations, rabies and the importance of vaccinations.

Interaction with the children

I especially loved this part of the day. Seeing the children's faces when they received a teddy bear and a balloon was heart warming. They were extremely well behaved. The three veterinary students gave them a very fun, spontaneous talk on pet care, which was entertaining. The Nursery School teachers work very hard there.

Impression of working at Danville and Hermanstad

It is such a poor community. The government housing was impressive. It is my wish that the law on the number of pets allowed on a property and according to owner's income should be stricter. It would also be a good idea to organise a "Spay Day" for these people.

Thank-you for this opportunity, my love for animal welfare is definitely a driving force in my line of work

Community outreach programme at Danville and Hermanstad 3 December 2010

Dr Louise Olivier

On Friday, 3 December 2010, the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria, in collaboration with Harnas Wildlife Foundation in Gobeabis, Namibia as well as other donors conducted an outreach programme in Danville and Hermanstad in the west of Pretoria. The purpose of the outreach programme was as follows:

- To present families in dire financial straits in these areas, identified by welfare services, with food packages to help them cope over the festive season.
- To conduct at two separate venues in these areas a Christmas party for underprivileged children and to, during these occasions give the children some important information about how to care for pets.
- To have the staff of Onderstepoort inoculate dogs and cats in the area against rabies.

It was clear that the informative talk to the veterinary staff to the children had the following effects on the children:



- * They sat very quiet and listened with attention and asked questions and clearly took the knowledge imparted to them seriously. This could lead in future to a better human-animal interaction in these areas and to better health for the animals. The animals are very important to enhance the feeling of well-being for their human owners.
- * Each child was presented with a soft toy after the talk and among the soft toys were also stuffed animals and during the presentation of the toys by "Father Christmas" to the children, they clearly recognised animal soft toys showing how inspirational the informative talk was to them and what an impact it had on them.
- * They clearly identified with the veterinary staff and this could be motivational for a choice of career for these children in the future.

The general effect on the children from a psychological point of view was seen to be the following:

- * They had the opportunity to have a function that more privilege children take for granted and they clearly felt cared for and enthusiastically participated in the event.



- * It was clear that the event gave them great joy and that the presents given to them at the different venues were cherished.
- * They tended to give "Father Christmas" and the other volunteers and veterinary staff hugs which indicated their appreciation and need for emotional support and caring which may not always be there in times of dire financial problems experienced by parents.

It was noted that the effect on the adults presented with the food parcels and the opportunity to have their dogs and cats inoculated was as follows:

- * Extreme thankfulness and relief to know that at least for a time they and their families are cared for.
- * They took the opportunity to ask the veterinary staff about health matters regarding their pets and were very eager to have their pets inoculated.
- * Many of them did not have transport and were thankful for the house to house service as many of them were unable to take their pets to the allotted points stipulated where inoculation is done.
- * That neighbours at homes where the food parcels were not delivered also requested the veterinary staff to inoculate their pets and this was done with pleasure and very professionally by the veterinary staff although sometimes in difficult circumstances (having to catch a dog or cat that was wary of this process).

I personally found the whole experience very rewarding for the following reasons:

- * That I could perceive the joy on the faces of the children and the relief and deep thankfulness on the faces of the adults.
- * That I could experience how important their dogs and cats are for the owners and how thankful they were towards the staff of Onderstepoort for safeguarding their animals and for making the effort to do the inoculation from door to door. It was clear to me that animals are also the life line of these underprivileged people as they find my love and their appreciation.

I would like to extend my greatest thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria as well as the donors and helpers in particular the Van der Merwe family from Harnas for their contribution to this memorable day (not only for the people who partook in the event but also for me).

Taking care of the forgotten worker

Eugene Machimana

A donkey Sanctuary, and husbandry workshop, sponsored by the UK Donkey Nutrition, was held at the Onderstepoort campus on 28 to 29 January 2011. Aimed at veterinarians, veterinary nurses, equine assistants and animal welfare officials, this workshop has been hosted by the Faculty of Veterinary Science for the past five years and is growing from strength to strength. Prof Johan Marais of the Equine Studies and Prof Cheryl McCrindle of the Veterinary Public Health Section coordinated the hosting of the workshop. Ms Segomotsi Lebogo's invaluable behind the scene contributions made this workshop a success.

Dr Andrew Trafrow and Dr Faith Burden who are both working for the Donkey Sanctuary, facilitated the workshop. They have vast experience in their field and they travel internationally to promote animal welfare. Over the years the workshop has attracted participants from various Animal Welfare Organisations, the government and private sector, including people from the neighbouring countries. The staff and students from the Faculty have also significantly benefited from the workshops. This year it was a special honour to see our newly graduates join the team. Dr N. Benade and Dr N. Lekhuleni were excited to visit the Faculty again and to participate in the workshop together with their colleagues (UP staff), whom a few months back acted as their lecturers. These newly graduated veterinarians are working in the private sector and for the Department of Agriculture in Mpumalanga Province, respectively. The workshop provided a good opportunity for networking and building a support base for the veterinary staff, who are doing great work across the country and in the neighbouring African states.

One of the premises of the workshop was to educate a dedicated team which is prepared to share their knowledge and skills with the local donkey owners. Dr Trafrow and Dr Burden emphasised that the skills learned should be contextualised to the local environment in order to have a lasting positive impact. For example, the participants were advised to encourage owners to find the cheapest and most practical solutions to the problems they encounter. This included feeding donkeys affordable feeds such as maize stover and digesting vs the donkey's digestive system is geared towards straining very coarse fibre and they may not do as well on expensive feeds usually fed to horses. Prof

Christo Bopha head of the Department of Practical Sciences, who is an expert toxicologist, gave a very practical presentation on poisonous plants that affect donkeys, using the "Toxic Plant Garden" at the Faculty of Gareth Bath, from the Department of Production Animal Medicine also demonstrated the grazing and browsing plants (forage) that could be fed successfully to donkeys, using the pasture plant garden and the indigenous Acacia species that occur on the Veterinary Campus.

Field trip to Klipgat

On Saturday, 29 January some of the participants from the workshop visited Klipgat community to practically implement what they had learned during the workshop. This was an exciting journey for a group of about twenty people coming from different backgrounds. The team met ten donkey owners, who had owned over a hundred donkeys between them. On average each owned eight donkeys and they were generally in a good condition.

It was interesting to see the participants implementing what they were taught during the course. One of the highlights was the interaction between donkey owners and the participants when assessing the medical history of the animals. This showed that the participants valued the knowledge of the owners as encouraged in the workshop. "The owner knows more about their donkeys", said Dr Trafrow.

The common challenges for the donkey owners are high mortality rate, worms, fleas and ticks. The donkeys are mainly used for business by this impoverished community including transport services and ploughing fields for subsistence farmers.

The team comprised people with varying experience including students as mentioned before. There were two students in particular, Sasha Saugh and Victoria Sullivan, who were first-timers at community engagement. Both enjoyed and learned so much that they offered to volunteer in other community engagement projects that are facilitated by the Faculty. Subsequently they have volunteered at the Makapanstad project and enjoyed the exposure there.

A few verbatim comments from participants on the benefits they obtained from the workshop are quoted on the following page:

"This was the first time I attended a workshop or anything to do with donkeys. I have always been interested in promoting the welfare of animals. In the veterinary course there is not always enough free time to attend such functions, but I made time for this workshop, and I am very glad I did!

Dr Burden's presentation on donkeys was amazing. I learnt a lot from it. It stimulates in me a lot more interest in donkeys than I initially had before I attended the workshop. The practical skills I learnt with regard to handling donkeys and understanding their behaviour, as well as seeing how donkeys are managed in South Africa (SA), made this an excellent and unforgettable learning experience. I would highly recommend other students interested in donkeys to attend, whenever this workshop is held again.

Thanks again to you, Prof Marais, Prof McCrindle, Prof Botha, Prof Bath and Drs Trafrow and Burden for the opportunity to learn about and work with these truly amazing creatures!"
- Sasha Saugh

"As a 6th year vet student I found the Donkey Nutrition Workshop to be an eye opening experience that, for me, showed the socio-economic importance of donkeys in South Africa, more notably in the rural areas. I also saw that donkey welfare can often be undervalued and neglected in comparison to horses. Part of the workshop was a visit to Klipgat, a local community, where I saw that educating and empowering the owners to do the best they could for their animals was key rather than just focusing on treating individual cases, thereby improving the animals' welfare in the long run. The whole experience encouraged me to attend other community engagement projects such as the one in Makapanstad, run by the OVAH, and stimulated a new interest in donkeys as they really are fascinating, stoic and enduring animals!"
- Victoria Sullivan

"Well done...! The workshop on donkeys has shown me factors such as 'recognise the value' of the 'forgotten worker' and that the 'worker' should be given his/her reward by being fed and being taken care of all the time!"
- Mashudu Maroge, Department of Agriculture Limpopo.

"When assessing the nutritional requirements of a donkey, look holistically. Consider the condition of the teeth, the time the donkey is available for feeding (in the case of working donkeys) and appropriate environmental factors. 'You are what you eat' applies very much to donkeys!"
- Dr Johan van Zijl, Eskiljesrus Donkey Sanctuary.

The participants were given materials that they will use for reference when continuing with their work in their various communities. They were also assured of the continued support and advice from both the Faculty of Veterinary Science and The Donkey Sanctuary.

The workshop highlighted a few important and interesting issues, among them the following:

- * It is important to advise donkey owners about practical and affordable nutrition
- * Veterinarians should have a holistic approach when attending to cases
- * Solutions must be locally available and affordable
- * Educating donkey owners is the key in solving problems
- * There must be an advantage to the owner and the donkey when any diet change is introduced

The donkey is a much neglected beast of burden globally - "a forgotten worker". Yet it is a valuable aid to rural transport and job creation for the poorest of the poor in South Africa. Dr Trafrow pointed out the need for information on the total number of donkeys in South Africa and their role in the rural economy. He particularly praised the University of Pretoria and the Faculty of Veterinary Science for their role in disseminating knowledge of donkey management, diseases and nutrition throughout South Africa over the last 5 years.

