Engaging with academia
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is estimated that there are more than 200 million working animals (horses, mules, donkeys, camels, buffalo and oxen) worldwide, many of them found in low income countries where individuals, families and communities are reliant on them for income generation. Working animals have a direct impact on the lives of people by reducing the transport burdens of collecting water, firewood, building materials and goods, and are also used for the transportation of people and for agricultural purposes. However, working animals suffer from prevalent parasitic and infectious diseases, and diseases associated with poor management practices. Studies have shown that working animals are both economically and socially important to the livelihoods of millions of people, in creating employment opportunities, access to finance and providing local transportation.

Working animals contribute to food security, rural development, poverty alleviation and gender equity. The numbers of working animals are increasing in many low income countries as their importance is highlighted by increases in human populations, a changing environment and global economic issues. It is also acknowledged that there is a lack of recognition of the value of these animals amongst legislators and the international community.

Animal welfare organisations and some intergovernmental organisations are actively improving the health and welfare of working animals through different approaches (provision of direct veterinary interventions, veterinary skills training, capacity building, community development initiatives, advocacy, research and emergency programmes). Focusing on longer term approaches that improve the quality of existing animal health services and their affordability, availability, accessibility and acceptability to animal-owning communities is likely to lead to sustainable improvements in animal health and welfare.

Opportunities exist for SPANA and academic institutions to engage with each other through a variety of mutually beneficial programmes with the objective of improving the health and welfare of working animals worldwide.

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1FAO statistical database website. [http://faostat.fao.org.]
2. SPANA BACKGROUND

Founded in 1923, SPANA (Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad) is a British non-governmental organisation (NGO) working to improve the health and welfare of working animals worldwide. SPANA operates in a number of countries in Africa and the Middle East (Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe). In addition to these core programmes, SPANA also operates emergency and small grants programmes for partner organisations in other countries worldwide (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Mongolia, India and Zambia).

SPANA’s veterinary strategy (2011-2014) is based around five key themes:

- **Direct veterinary intervention**: provision of effective and appropriate evidence based primary veterinary healthcare
- **Veterinary training**: training and professional development for veterinary professionals, para-professionals and veterinary students
- **Community development**: programmes working to change the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of animal owners and users
- **Research**: generating the essential evidence needed to help inform our policies and programmes, leading to improvements in working animal welfare
- **Emergencies and Partnerships**: responding to natural and manmade disasters, and the provision of small grants and technical assistance to partner organisations

For further information about SPANA’s veterinary programmes visit: [https://spana.org/about-us/publications](https://spana.org/about-us/publications) to download a copy of our latest annual review.

3. WHY ENGAGE WITH SPANA?

Potential partnerships between SPANA and academic institutions can form mutually beneficial collaborations that lead to the improved health and welfare of working animals worldwide. A number of opportunities exist for academic institutions to engage with SPANA including: undergraduate student placements, visiting professional programmes and research programmes.

SPANA believes that there is considerable value in embedding learning about global and development issues (including the role of working animals and their importance in livelihoods, food security and poverty alleviation) into the curriculum of veterinary students. This objective can be met through providing veterinary students with external placements in organisations working in the international animal health sector. Allowing veterinary students to undertake external placements and research projects within international animal health organisations
encourages veterinary teaching institutions to focus on issues such as food security, international animal diseases, zoonoses and development.

The Visiting Professional Programme (VPP) aims to create practical links between academic institutions based in the Europe and the USA, and academic and research institutions based in Africa and the Middle East, with the objective of improving animal health and welfare through knowledge and skills transfer.

Research programmes are essential in assisting SPANA to provide the vital evidence needed to ensure that our veterinary policies and programmes have the greatest impact and efficacy possible. Working in partnerships with universities, international organisations and individuals globally, SPANA aims to produce pioneering research leading to improvements in animal welfare.

4. VETERINARY STUDENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH

Providing veterinary students with opportunities to undertake external placements and research projects within international animal health organisations encourages veterinary teaching institutions to stimulate learning about international animal health and global development issues. These organised placements can be structured to ensure agreed learning outcomes and experiences are both delivered and measurable.

SPANA currently operates veterinary programmes in a number of countries in Africa and the Middle East. These programmes consist of direct veterinary inventions (fixed and mobile clinics providing veterinary healthcare), veterinary training programmes (for government and private animal health professionals, university staff and veterinary students) and community development initiatives. There are currently opportunities for placements alongside of some these country programmes, which would allow visiting students the opportunity to develop an understanding of international animal health issues, gain invaluable clinical experience with diseases not presently seen in Europe and the USA and enhance the undergraduate student experience.

Please refer to Appendix A for an example 14 day placement programme.

5. VISITING PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME

Visiting Professionals are considered experienced subject-area experts and are usually placed for a specific short-term assignment. Assignments are usually between one and two weeks in length; however this usually depends on the needs of the host institution. SPANA initiates
assignments to meet the specific needs of local institutions, and these assignments can potentially be in any country where SPANA currently operates a veterinary programme. Potential areas SPANA may require a Visiting Professional include: Clinical veterinary specialities, epidemiology and infectious diseases and research skills/proposal writing.

SPANA is looking for technically skilled individuals who have proven experience in the requested area. In most cases, SPANA will cover applicable expenses related to the Visiting Professional assignment. This can include round trip airfare costs, visa fees and expenses (transportation, accommodation, meals and incidentals) relating to the assignment. Upon selection, Visiting Professionals will receive a document outlining the scope of the assignment, defining the specific needs of the host institution. The Visiting Professional will also create a list of recommendations for the host institution that will be reviewed with the institution and SPANA before leaving the country.

Potential benefits to the Visiting Professional include:

- Cultural enhancement: Experience different cultures leading to a better understanding of the socio-economic and political issues within the country visited
- Global awareness: Develop networks with faculty staff and students in institutions in Africa and the Middle East, gaining new insights into the relevance of global issues
- Professional development: An opportunity to broaden your professional knowledge with wider global perspectives

6. RESEARCH

Research programmes are essential in assisting SPANA to provide the vital evidence needed to ensure that our veterinary policies and programmes have the greatest impact and efficacy possible.

SPANA seeks to underpin all its veterinary programmes with evidence-based approaches and utilises numerous research methodologies to address specific problems encountered within our veterinary programmes. SPANA has unique access to large populations of working animals, owners and communities through its veterinary programmes, providing excellent collaborative research opportunities for academia in low income countries.

Please refer to Appendix B for a selection of recent publications.
7. CONTACTS

Please contact Dr Andy Stringer if you are interested in discussing any of these areas in further detail.

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Appendix A - Example 14 day placement programme (Ethiopia):

Agreements are in place between SPANA and a number of international animal health institutions based in Ethiopia, allowing placement opportunities for overseas veterinary students. These include:

- College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture (CVMA), Addis Ababa University: CVMA was the first veterinary school in Ethiopia and is the largest veterinary teaching institution in Ethiopia. Visiting students will have the opportunity of attending animal health clinics within the faculty, as well as participating in joint teaching and clinical sessions with veterinary students from CVMA.
- National Veterinary Institute (NVI). NVI is the principle vaccine research and production institution within Ethiopia.
- Ethiopia Institute for Agricultural Research (EIAR). EIAR is charged with the responsibility of providing the overall coordination of agricultural research within Ethiopia and with advising the government on agricultural research policy.

Example 14 day placement programme (Ethiopia):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning Programme</th>
<th>Afternoon Programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td>Arrival in Ethiopia</td>
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<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td>Introduction Seminar and attend SPANA clinic at CVMA, Debre Zeit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tour of SPANA-Ethiopia and CVMA facilities. Joint Seminars (1+2) with undergraduate students from CVMA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at Nazaret</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student project briefings</td>
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<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
<td>Visit to NVI and student seminar (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student shared clinical teaching – visiting students and CVMA students</td>
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<td><strong>Day 5</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at CVMA, Debre Zeit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit to EIAR and student seminar (4)</td>
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<td><strong>Day 6</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at Akaki</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student seminar (5) and student project work time.</td>
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<td><strong>Day 7</strong></td>
<td>Free day – Suggested tour of Addis Ababa</td>
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<td><strong>Day 8</strong></td>
<td>Free day – Suggested visit to Debre Zeit Lakes and Town</td>
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<td><strong>Day 9</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at CVMA, Debre Zeit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student shared clinical teaching – visiting students and CVMA students</td>
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<td><strong>Day 10</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at Nazaret</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student seminar (6) and student project work time.</td>
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<td><strong>Day 11</strong></td>
<td>Student Seminars (7 +8)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student project time.</td>
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<td><strong>Day 12</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at CVMA, Debre Zeit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student shared clinical teaching – visiting students and CVMA students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 13</strong></td>
<td>Attend and participate in SPANA clinic at Akaki</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student project presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 14</strong></td>
<td>Departure from Ethiopia</td>
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Appendix B - Selected recent publications

SPANA aims to ensure that all research is either published in peer reviewed journals (as open access journal papers and reviews), or otherwise made available publically through relevant websites and forums.

A selection of recent publications (SPANA staff as primary author/co-author):

- Outbreak investigation and molecular characterization of African Horse Sickness virus circulating in selected areas of Ethiopia. (Ayelet et al. 2013). *Acta Tropica*
- Evaluation of use of atropine sulfate, combination of butylscopolammonium bromide and metamizole sodium, and flunixin meglumine to ameliorate clinical adverse effects of imidocarb dipropanionte in horses. (Abutarbush et al. 2013 – in press). *American Journal of Veterinary Research*
- A community-based participatory study investigating the epidemiology and effects of rabies to livestock owners in rural Ethiopia. (Okell et al. 2012). *Preventive Veterinary Medicine*
- African Horse Sickness outbreaks caused by multiple virus types in Ethiopia. (Aklilu et al. 2012). *Transboundary and Emerging Diseases*
- Ocular disease in working horses in Ethiopia: a cross sectional study. (Scantlebury et al. 2012). *Veterinary Record*
- Improving working donkey (Equus asinus) welfare and management in Mali, West Africa. (McLean et al. 2012). *Journal of Veterinary Behaviour*
- The use of maggot debridement therapy in 41 equids. (Lepage et al. 2012). *Equine Veterinary Journal Supplement*
- A cluster-randomised controlled trial to compare the effectiveness of different knowledge-transfer interventions for rural working equid users in Ethiopia. (Stringer et al. 2011). *Preventive Veterinary Medicine*
- A randomized triple blind trial to assess the effect of an anthelmintic programme for working equids in Morocco. (Crane et al. 2011). *BMC Veterinary Research*
- Pack wounds of donkeys and mules in the Northern High Atlas and lowlands of Morocco. (Sells et al. 2010). *Equine Veterinary Journal*