

## A Case of Anal Prolapse in Donkey as a Result of Stress

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### Introduction

Donkey (*Equus asinus*, *Perissodactyla*) is one of the most important domestic animals in Northern Nigeria (Smith and Pearson, 2005), because the donkey can survive and reproduce under difficult environmental conditions. They constitute an important source of rural transportation, farm power and diversifying family income. Nigeria is estimated to have about a million donkeys (Uthman, 2009). The distributions of these donkeys are not uniform among the ecological zones over 80 % are found in the North. The variation in the

distribution of livestock is mainly due differences in climate and disease prevalence such as trypanosomiasis that limit livestock production in the South. The variation in livestock population between the North and Southern Nigeria have made livestock especially equines to become important articles of trade (Alaku *et al.*, 2002). The consumption of equine meat in northern Nigeria is not common due to religious, ethical and culinary considerations, this is not so in the South Eastern Nigeria where there are a number of devotees mainly for reasons of affordability and potential dietary benefits.

The trade in equids destined for slaughter poses a number of significant animal welfare issues. The animals are usually conveyed in overcrowded trucks and transported over long distances (over 1000km). It is therefore obvious that the transport of these animals rarely respected the basic requirement of good animal welfare or basic hygiene.

Prolapse of the uterus is known to occur in many species and rarely in donkeys was reported in Botswana by Hunter (1970). This report presents a case of anal prolapse in a trade donkey from Northern Nigeria destined for slaughter in South as a result of stress.

#### Case report:

A 3 year old donkey heifer was presented on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2010 with complete anal prolapsed, with a moderate body condition score 5 on a scale of 9 (Plate 1). Which becomes more visible while the donkey is standing (Plate 2). The prolapse was turgid about the size of a tennis ball, with a tear, dirt and manure had adhered to it (Plate 3 & 4).

The donkey was conveyed along with others in a truck from Geidam, Yobe State (Plate 5). They were destined for slaughter at Abakaliki Ebonyi State on reaching Bauchi the truck had a breakdown as such some of the donkeys were off loaded to allow them graze. History reveals that prior to this stop over the donkey were tied in a manner that restricted movement and could have caused straining of the abdomen (Plate 5).

#### Discussion

Protrusion of the rectum outside the body through the anal opening is sometimes seen in weak emaciated animals, following chronic diarrhoea and straining, and during parturition or dystocia (Kalla *et al.*, 2009). The degree of prolapse ranges from being limited to the protrusion of the rectal mucosa to the prolapsed of the whole layers of the rectum. The case of this particular prolapse is not clear as the owners did not permit the Authors to intervene nor did they follow up to the abattoir to observe the animal further. In literature certain factors such as grazing on



estrogenic plants or exogenous administration of estrogenic compounds, increase intra-abdominal pressure caused by increase size of the pregnant uterus are also possible cause. Transport of trade live donkeys from Northern Nigeria to the South is in standard lorries or pickups with no specific modifications, transport to local markets within the North is similar or on foot. Additionally, the long and often tedious route to slaughter is frequently compounded by poor transport and stabling lacking in basic consideration of animal welfare. Between leaving the farm and slaughter, animals are subjected to removal loading and unloading from vehicles, transport and holding in unfamiliar surroundings like markets or lairage (Warris, 1990; Weeks, 2002). They may be exposed to stressors such as noise, strange odours, deprivation of food and water, vibration and change in velocity, extremes of temperature, breakdown of social groupings, close confinement and overcrowding besides, the animals were exposed to intense sunshine for most part of the journey. From the foregoing the

authors strongly feel is as a result of transportation stress. All efforts to convince the owners on the need to correct the situation proved abortive as the donkeys were destined for slaughter. This case report poses a number of welfare concerns of the pains inflicted on the trade animals as the donkey will be conveyed with this condition (bleeding) over 700km.

The condition is managed by returning the prolapsed tissue to its normal position as soon as possible. Low epidural anesthesia is recommended to control straining. Before returning the tissue to its normal position, it should be thoroughly cleaned with mild antiseptic solution. Different methods of suturing of the vagina to prevent the prolapsed from re occurring have been described (Hunter, 1970). Experienced donkey farmers (37) in Bauchi area were interviewed on the case of prolapse and it appears it is a very rare phenomenon as none of them admitted to would have had such an event in the many years of their raising donkeys.

Financial implications often pose problems for animal welfare organizations that might wish to euthanize such animals on welfare grounds. It is impractical to prohibit the trade in equines, as they are cheap, at present in the North an average matured donkey cost 6000 to 10000 and a horse range between 40000 and 60000, on the other hand there is high demand in the southern markets as a cheap alternative to beef, mutton or chevon (Uthman,2009). The risk to public health and animal welfare are such that the relevant authorities should consider tighter control as is the case in a number of countries.



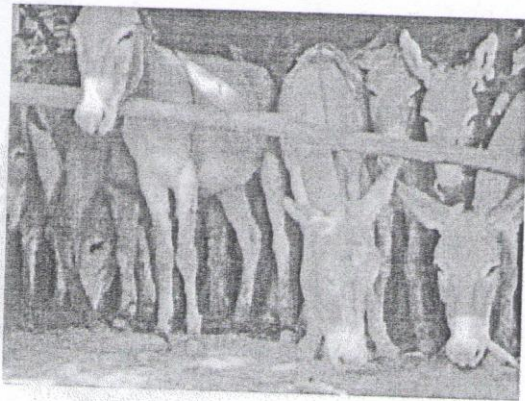


Plate V: Donkey transport From North to South of Nigeria

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