The Past, Present and Future of Domestic Equines in Tanzania

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Equines are minor species in Tanzania’s array of domestic livestock. Attempts to use them for transport by early explorers from the mid-nineteenth century usually failed. Donkeys were used extensively as pack animals to complement human porters by both British and German forces in the First World War, but their advantages were often outweighed by slow progress and competition with troops and porters for water, and they died in huge numbers. The British had regular cavalry troops in their campaign and mules found limited use as individual mounts for officers. In modern times, there are very few horses in Tanzania but they find several uses. Exotic safaris are made on horseback, they are used as stock horses on ranches, there is a polo club in northern Tanzania and there are leisure riding activities around the capital city. Official census records for donkeys estimate numbers at under 300,000 with concentrations in the northern pastoral and agropastoral areas where they are used as pack animals with water being the main commodity transported. Elsewhere donkeys are used to a limited extent in transport and traction work. There is little interest in equines by the central and local governments or the general public and the status quo can be expected to continue.

Key words: animals in warfare, donkey, geographical exploration, horse, pack animals

Tanzania is located in East Africa with Kenya to the north, whereas Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi are to the northeast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west and Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique to the south (Fig. 1). The eastern boundary of about 900 linear km is fronted entirely by the Indian Ocean. The country has an area of about 945,000 km² of which about 60,000 km² is inland water. The estimated human population in July 2013 was in excess of 48 million. The recent history of the country that is now Tanzania began in the middle of the 19th century. A first exploration of the interior took place in 1848 by a German mission. This was followed by several British explorers who were in search of the source of the Nile or were missionaries whose hope was to convert the “heathen” to Christianity. The Berlin Conference of 1885 eventually resulted in most of the present area of Tanzania becoming German East Africa. Consequent on the defeat of Germany in the First World War (1914–1918) the newly formed League of Nations conferred a mandate on the United Kingdom to administer most of the area of the former German colony and this became Tanganyika.

Fig. 1. Outline map of Tanzania showing position in East Africa and locations of regions and other places mentioned in the text.

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Territory in 1920. Following the Second World War, Tanganyika became a United Nations Trust Territory under continued British control with subsequent years witnessing Tanganyika moving gradually toward self-government and independence which was granted on 9 December, 1961. Tanganyika opted to become a republic on the first anniversary of its independence and following the granting of independence to Zanzibar and a subsequent revolution there the two countries became the United Republic of Tanzania on 26 April, 1964.

Agriculture accounts for about half of national income (GDP is about USS 500 per person per year) and three quarters of exports. It is a source of food and provides employment for about 80% of Tanzanians. Tanzanian agriculture is dominated by smallholder farmers with 60% cultivating less than 2.0 ha and a further 20% cultivating less than 3.0 ha. Livestock are a common asset among agricultural households and animals provide livelihood support to 1,745,776 (or 37%) of the 4,901,837 agricultural households in the country: more than 99% of all livestock are owned by smallholders. Tanzania is home to the second largest population of livestock in Africa. Cattle are the most numerous quadruped followed by goats, sheep and pigs. Numerically, donkeys fall far behind the ruminant species and are fewer in number than pigs. In spite of small numbers, donkeys are important socially and economically amongst pastoral and agropastoral peoples in parts of the country: more than 99% of all livestock are owned by smallholders. Tanzania is home to the second largest population of livestock in Africa. Cattle are the most numerous quadruped followed by goats, sheep and pigs. Numerically, donkeys fall far behind the ruminant species and are fewer in number than pigs. In spite of small numbers, donkeys are important socially and economically amongst pastoral and agropastoral peoples in parts of the country [15, 16]. The very few horses mainly occupy a niche for “exotic” safaris in the tourist industry but have other minor roles. In addition to the domestic donkey and horse (there are no mules in Tanzania in the 21st century), Tanzania has a very large and widespread population of Burchell’s zebra (Equus burchelli).

Horses and donkeys are mentioned as draught animals in the Government’s livestock policy document [18], but otherwise are accorded little official recognition. This may in part be due to the fact that they are considered to be a poor substitute for oxen in the provision of farm transport and draught power (which itself is still considered a “backward” part of development in some sections of the public administration).

The historical and current status (numbers, distribution and use) of equines in Tanzania is not well documented. This paper aims to contribute to the knowledge of a minor, but important species of livestock in Tanzania by providing historical, current and new information on the country’s domestic equids through drawing together some of the sparse published information on them and complementing this with new data from the author’s personal observations and knowledge.

Materials and Methods

This paper is based on reviews of historical and current literature on equines in Tanzania (and its predecessors in name, German East Africa and Tanganyika). The information obtained has been supplemented by searches of the Internet and by the author’s own observations over a period of more than 50 years (from 1961 to 2013) and through unstructured interviews and discussions with many equine owners and users throughout the country in 1998 to 2013.

Results

Historical studies

Use by explorers/travellers. Karl Klaus von der Decken—a minor German nobleman and the first European to attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro (in the northeast of the country) and after whom a type of hornbill is named—had donkeys with him in northern Tanzania in 1862 [19]. He failed to reach the mountain’s summit and there is anecdotal evidence from remarks by David Livingstone (a Scottish missionary explorer) in his diary for 7 August, 1866 that some of his Arab retainers denied that von der Decken got on to the mass of the mountain and that all his donkeys and some of his men died from the cold [6].

On his last voyage, Livingstone wanted to test the use of livestock for transport in Africa. He arrived in Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa early in 1866 and on 19 March loaded six camels, four buffalo, two mules and four donkeys on a dhow and sailed south on the Indian Ocean on what is now the coast of Tanzania. He was beset by all kinds of problems including unloading his animals at Mikindani near to what is now Mtwara in the extreme southeast of the country. There were further troubles in getting them ready to travel. On 4 April, when about to start on his journey, a buffalo gored a donkey so badly that it had to be shot. On 17 April, he had more than full loads for two buffalo, two mules and two donkeys although his Indian sepoys assured him that the burden could easily be carried by two buffalo. As early as 23 April, one mule was dull and out of health, but Livingstone could not decide whether this was due to tsetse bites or because his (the mule’s) back was so strained that he could not lower his head to drink and could only eat the tops of the grasses. Livingstone noted on 30 April that tsetse flies had an apparent preference for the camel and did not seem to care for the mules and donkeys and on 4 May 1866, he recorded that there were no symptoms of tsetse in the mules or donkeys but that one mule had a sprained shoulder and could not stop to eat or drink. By 7 May, Livingstone expected one mule to die (a camel had died during the night and a buffalo was in convulsions). The next day, one
mule was very ill and had to be left behind two weeks later on 20 May and “Were I not aware of the existence of the tsetse, I should say they died from sheer bad treatment and hard work”. On 24 June, one of the mules was very ill and the last mule had died on 26 June.

On 2 July, Livingstone wrote in his diary that his poodle dog, the buffalo-calf and the only remaining donkey were greeted with the same amount of curiosity and laughter-excit ing comment as he himself. It is noted on 15 July that the sepoys, “retaining their brutal feelings to the last had killed the donkey which the havildar had been lent to carry his things by striking it on the head when it could go no farther in the boggy places into which they had senselessly driven it loaded [6]1.

There is no further mention of donkeys nor mules in Livingstone’s diaries for more than five years. On 27 December 1871, he set off from Ufiji, just south of Kigoma in the extreme west of the country on Lake Tanganyika with donkeys and other stock. As all his own donkeys were long since dead he must have obtained these new ones locally. Unfortunately, they suffered the same fate as their predecessors although they may have survived a little longer as on 10 November 1872, one donkey was recovering from the distinct effects of tsetse—the eyes and all the mouth and nostrils were swelled and another died at Kwihara with every symptom of tsetse poison fully developed [7]. Later explorers out of Zanzibar or the northern coastal towns of Bagamoyo and Pangani employed porters (usually slaves of the Arabs of the coastal areas) to carry their voluminous baggage but themselves often rode on donkeys [2].

Attempts by the German administration to promote the use of donkeys for transport prior to the First World War were not successful [5].

Military use. Donkeys, horses and mules were used by both British and Germans during the First World War. The Germans maintained a breeding farm at Singida which, in 1916, had two horse stallions, a few Muscat donkey stallions and many country-bred jenny donkeys but the crossing of horse stallions on donkey mares produced no results and the general commanding the German forces could get no clear idea of the objectives of this operation [20]. Donkeys were used by the German forces at the beginning of the war in the northern area close to the border with British East Africa (Kenya) at Taveta to carry water to the troops [1] and for personal officer transport [14]. The German forces normally comprised companies of 200 askaris [native troops] and 16 Europeans but some companies were almost entirely European with two of these last being mounted units.

The British employed many thousands of donkeys throughout the country, not only in the north—whence, in addition to British East Africa, they presumably obtained most of their stock—but also in the south (Fig. 2) where conditions for equines are unfavourable. March 1917, saw heavy mortality of donkeys and porters as the army tried to maintain troops around Iringa. Dead mules, donkeys and carriers littered the road in various degrees of putrefaction. Animals died from exhaustion and thirst and from “horse sickness”2. Buried carcasses were often dug up by porters for food and eventually they had to be burnt. In late April, a column left Duthumi for Tulo (in the now Mikumi National Park to the south of Morogoro in east-central Tanzania) but it was “doubtful if there could be a worse piece of road in the country or even in the whole of Africa. The distance is not more than 12 miles, but for nearly the whole way the road led through the worst sort of black stinking mud, it was throughout knee-deep in water, and sometimes the water was above the waist. To make matters worse, large numbers of cattle and donkeys had died in the swamp, and having rotted, the stink was too bad for words”. The donkeys were “wretched little beasts [that] seemed to be a failure in those parts owing to the tsetse fly, from the effects of which they die at the rate of about a hundred a week”. Donkeys partly obviated the need for porters but were very slow on the march and greatly increased the water needed by a body of troops and—in an ironic twist—porters occasionally had to be sent back to help the donkeys by carrying their loads [3].

Although effectively a guerilla campaign the British used formal troops and strategies. At the outbreak of war, white settler volunteers in British East Africa formed two regiments, one of which—The East African Mounted Rifles—was mounted. By the end of 1916 the British had several South African Horse regiments (the main units of the Second South African Mounted Brigade) and one mounted infantry regiment of the King’s African Rifles in the field3. A further regiment, the 10th South African Horse, was raised in the Autumn of 1917 to track down

Fig. 2. Bringing up supplies at Ndanda (from Downes, 1919).
a German flying column. This unit evaded the British for much of 1917, travelling northwest from southern German East Africa to Lake Rukwa in the west-central part of the country, then due north via Tabora to the border with British East Africa, losing men in several encounters before it surrendered, being reduced by early October to 146 soldiers from an initial 600. Many “British” units were from the Indian Army, including the 25th Indian Cavalry (Fig. 3). Mounted units were used in classic cavalry roles and as protection for infantry but suffered setbacks as well as successes. By mid 1917, British mounted units comprised 200 Europeans (10th South African Horse, 34% of all horse-borne troops), 300 Indians (Indian 25th Cavalry, 50%) and 100 Africans (King’s African Rifles Mounted Infantry, 16%) (http://www.kaiserscross.com/40117/59401.html) [3, 12].

Current status

Horses. According to the National Census of Agriculture 2007/2008 [10], there was a total of 128 horses in Tanzania of which 71 were on small scale farms and 57 on large scale farms. There are thus very few horses in Tanzania. The total on large scale farms in 2007/2008 was only 34.1% (n=57) of the number in the census of 2002/2003 (n=169) [11]. A large scale farm is defined as being greater than 20 ha in area or keeping more than 50 head of cattle or 100 head of sheep or goats: under this definition, many specialist horse enterprises would not appear in the census.

During the course of this study, a total of 493 horses (more than four times the number given in the 2007/2008 sample census) was identified at 45 locations (Table 1). The use of horses for a “unique safari experience” (that is, game and wildlife viewing from horseback) is a major activity for the species in Tanzania. At least eight such operations exist to service the northern tourist area but these are of two types. The small specialized horse safari type has owners who are clearly horse enthusiasts (and provide detailed and loving descriptions of each of their charges) and offer rather simple accommodation and services. The second type consists of branches or franchises of larger, usually international, safari companies whose horse enterprise is subsidiary to the main business of viewing game from 4-wheel drive vehicles and whose guests are housed in luxurious lodges or tents at horrendously expensive daily rates. These types of operation have from 4 to 20+ horses and may arrange outings of up to 8–10 days.

The National Ranching Corporation (NARCO) has horses on five properties around the country that are used for livestock herding operations. The Tanzania Police Force has a Dog and Horse Unit but the number of horses has been drastically reduced through disease, deaths and cuts in funding. The National Agricultural University has a small herd of horses for teaching purposes and the privately-owned Dar es Salaam Zoo has horses so that the local population can see what these strange beasts really look like and has shipped about 10 horses to Zanzibar to tourist resorts over a period of years. The Zoo also sponsors a riding club as part of its relaxation and educational aims (Fig. 4). Most bizarre of all, perhaps, is that there is a very active polo club in the northern region of Arusha which has about 100 Thoroughbred “ponies” and which meets three times a week from June to March (Fig. 5). One business close to Dar es Salaam with 29 horses is a more traditional type of riding establishment that largely caters for the urban expatriate population—both adults and children—on short periods of hire ranging from one hour to one day. Also close to Dar es Salaam is one hobby farmer with nine horses which are not expected to do

Fig. 3. Indian cavalry crossing the Rovuma into Portuguese territory (from Downes, 1919).

Fig. 4. Information board for the Nguva Riding Club based at the Dar es Salaam Zoo.
Table 1. Inventory of horses in Tanzania, January 2013

| Owner | Location | Use/activity | Breed(s) | No. |
|-------|----------|--------------|----------|-----|
| NARCO (National Ranching Company) | Kongwa (Dodoma Region) | Stock work | Mixed | 7 |
| NARCO | Kalambo (Rakwa Region) | Stock work | Mixed | 21 |
| NARCO | Kikukula (Kagera Region) | Stock work | Mixed | 7 |
| NARCO | Ruvi (Morogoro Region) | Stock work | Mixed | 7 |
| NARCO | Miti Hill (Tanga Region) | Stock work | Mixed | 4 |
| NARCO (National Dairy Company) | Kitulo Dairy Farm (Iringa Region) | Unspecified | Mixed | 3 |
| Tanzania Police Service (Dog and Horse Unit) | Dar es Salaam | Ceremonial and crowd control | | 13 |
| Tanzania Police Service (Tanzania Police College) | Moshi (Kilimanjaro Region) | | Unspecified | 6 |
| Tanzania Police Service (Himo Police Station) | Moshi District (Kilimanjaro Region) | | Patrol work | 11 |
| Sokoine University of Agriculture (Dept Vet Med) | Morogoro (Morogoro Region) | Student demonstration/handling | Mixed | 7 |
| ASAS Group (Asas Dairy Farm) | Iringa (Iringa Region) | Leisure | Unknown | 7 |
| Famani Investment (T) Ltd. (FM Abri Farm) | Iringa (Iringa Region) | Leisure | Unknown | 4 |
| Victoria and Richard Phillips (Kibebe Farms Ltd.) | Taganenda, Iringa (Iringa Region) | Tourism/Riding stable | Thoroughbred X | 19 |
| Selous Farming Ltd. (Mark Myatt-Taylor) | Ilinden (Iringa Region) | Tourism | Unknown | 6 |
| Foxes Safari Camps (Highland Fishing Lodge) | Malinga (Iringa Region) | Tourism | Mixed, (Waler origin) | 23 |
| Ndumana Polo and Country Club (10 owners) | Usa River (Arusha Region) | Polo | Thoroughbred, Thoroughbred cross | 100 |
| La Casarina Stables | Olisiti, Arusha (Arusha Region) | Riding stable | T"bred X (1 5), Welsh pony (2), Welsh X (6) | 23 |
| Mia Fabro | Arusha (Arusha Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred X (3), Welsh X (2) | 5 |
| Monique Salaman | Moshono, Arusha (Arusha Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred (2), Welsh pony (2) | 4 |
| Janelle Doria | Kisona, Arusha (Arusha Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred x Pinto | 3 |
| Burka Coffee Estate (Saskia Rich Steinerr) | Arusha (Arusha Region) | Leisure | | 7 |
| The Manor Lodge | Karatu (Arusha Region) | Tourism | Thoroughbred X | 3 |
| Kaskazi Horse Safaris (Kilo Bravo) | Monduli (Arusha Region) | Tourism | Thoroughbred X | 4 |
| Jan Schobosbo, Uto Farm (Equestrian Safaris) | Oldonyo Sambu (Arusha Region) | Tourism | Thoroughbred | 37 |
| Equestrian Safaris | Manyara Ranch (Arusha Region) | Tourism | (Thoroughbred) | 5 |
| Ukuto Farm, Nabera | Simanjiro District (Manyara Region) | Tourism | Thoroughbred X | 3 |
| Raphael Baptista (Darakuta Ranch) | Babati District (Manyara Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred X | 3 |
| Makao Farm | Machame (Kilimanjaro Region) | Tourism | | 21 |
| Tanzania Planting Company | Arusha Chini (Kilimanjaro Region) | Leisure | | 4 |
| International School Moshi | Moshi (Kilimanjaro Region) | Leisure/Riding instruction | Thoroughbred X, Somali pony X | 5 |
| Simba Farm | Ngare Nairobi (Kilimanjaro Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred X | 3 |
| Hidden Trails (Ndarakwai) | Ngare Nairobi (Kilimanjaro Region) | Tourism | Thoroughbred X | 12 |
| Dar es Salaam Zoo | Kibada (Dar es Salaam) | Display/Education/Leisure rides | Mixed | 23 |
| Africafe | Dar es Salaam (Dar Salaam Region) | | | 2 |
| Horse Club | Kimbiji (Dar es Salaam Region) | Tourism/Leisure rides | Thoroughbred, Ethiopian, (Waler origin) | 29 |
| Ali Mungo | Kimbiji (Dar es Salaam Region) | Hobby farmer | Ethiopian, mixed | 9 |
| Josephine Siara | Mbuzi (Dar es Salaam Region) | Leisure | | 4 |
| ?? | Tegeta (Pwani Region) | | | 3 |
| ?? | Bagamayo Road (Pwani Region) | | | 2 |
| Njiu | Kibaha (Pwani Region) | Security/Leisure | American Saddle Horse | 7 |
| Juwanala | Masaki (Pwani Region) | Leisure | | 1 |
| Singita (Grumeti) Game Reserves | Sasakwa Lodge (Mara Region) | Tourism | | 18 |
| Carlos | Pangani (Tanga Region) | Tourism/Beach riding | Thoroughbred X | 4 |
| Amelia Korda | Tanga (Tanga Region) | Leisure | Thoroughbred X | 4 |

TOTAL HORSES (minimum) 493

Source: compiled by the author.
anything except eat and drink. Many private individuals, mainly expatriates, keep one or a few horses that have clearly not been recorded on the census and these may change hands through Internet sales.

The breeds and provenance of Tanzania’s horses can only be described as eclectic. In the 1960s, there was at least one American Quarter Horse in the West Kilimanjaro area. Waler horses from Australia were imported by at least two of the owners listed in Table 1 in the late 1980s, in the very early days of the Waler breed being established and formalized. Horses currently in Tanzania include three Arab mares from Denmark (although one was born in Spain), a Trakehner × Achal-Tekke whose parents were successful endurance horses, a Trakehner × Arabian and a Bavarian Warmblood imported from Germany. There are “Warmbloods”, Welsh Ponies and American Saddle horses from various sources and directly-imported South African Boerperd. At least three owners have imported horses from Ethiopia (“Abyssinian ponies”). Most owners, however, claim their horses are Thoroughbreds, Spanish-influenced Thoroughbreds and Thoroughbred-Arab crosses that performed various earlier activities including high-goal polo ponies and being children’s riding ponies. In recent years, other horses—stallions, geldings and mares—have been imported, sometimes along tortuous routes from other African countries including South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and, as might be expected, Kenya.

Donkeys. According to the most recent agricultural census [10], the number of donkeys in Tanzania was 297,160, of which only a tiny proportion (353 head) was in the offshore region of Zanzibar and an even smaller proportion (147 head) was on large farms. Some 66% of donkeys are in the two northern regions of Arusha and Manyara where pastoralism is the predominant economic activity with another 17% in Singida and Shinyanga Regions where pastoralism and agropastoralism are also important life support functions. There are virtually no donkeys in the southern lowlands and in the west where tsetse flies, now as in historical times, result in sickness and death for equines [10].

Almost all of Tanzania’s donkeys are of the common grey type (Fig. 6). There are, however, some larger white donkeys, sometimes known as Muscat donkeys [8], on Zanzibar that are used as riding animals (this type of donkey was also used as a riding animal by commissioned officers on both sides of the conflict in the First World War).

Differences exist in the main use of donkeys in the various areas of Tanzania. In agropastoral areas, for example in the Southern Highland areas of Mbeya, Iringa, Ruvuma and Rukwa regions, they are used for general transport usually hitched as a span of two animals, although occasionally two spans are used, to a two wheeled cart (Fig. 7). In these areas, donkeys are also occasionally used for ploughing and weeding crops. It is generally considered, however, that oxen are superior draught animals and that donkey use in this role is restricted to poor households [9, 16]. The most typical role of donkeys, nonetheless, is as a pack and not a traction animal. Throughout the northern areas, it is used for back packing of sacks of grain and other goods. It is generally considered, however, that oxen are superior draught animals and that donkey use in this role is restricted to poor households [9, 16].

Donkeys are invariably found in households that also own other types of livestock with the association donkey-cattle being the most common [17]. Within a household consisting of a man and wife (wives), donkeys are usually

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**Fig. 5.** A polo game in progress at the Nduruma Polo and Country Club in Tanzania’s Arusha region (photo provided by Tony Sugden).

**Fig. 6.** A loose group of donkeys at Ngare Nanyuki on the lower slopes of Mount Meru in northern Tanzania (photo by Trevor Wilson).
perceived as the property of the man although many women also own donkeys. The number of donkeys owned ranges from 1–15 with a mean and standard deviation of 3.3 ± 2.3. In the northern areas, donkeys are rarely rented out but lending and sharing is common and this may account in part for the relatively large agglomerations of animals seen either at work or when out at grazing. Within the donkey population as a whole males represent 51.3% of the total herd and females 48.7%. The herd largely comprises older animals, mature males accounting for 35.6% of the total, mature females 31.3%, younger males 9.8%, younger females 6.9%, male foals 5.9% and female foals 9.6% [17]. The preponderance of mature animals underlines the work role, but the male:female ratio emphasizes the fact that males are used for transport although females are also expected to be beasts of burden (as well as lactating mothers).

**Future prospects**

Horses will continue to be on the periphery of Tanzania’s livestock sector. They are mainly used by some outshoots of the tourist industry but it is unclear if there is room for expansion or even if the present level of activity can be maintained. The public sector has had horses in the past in both the police force and on some livestock research stations but these have died and not been replaced and it is extremely unlikely that they will be. The horse in Tanzania will continue to be present in small numbers and carry an “elitist” cachet maintained by a small number of (mainly) expatriates or settlers of European origin.

Donkeys are of importance to some sectors of the rural areas. They have received little to no support from government in the past and are not likely to receive any in the future. Some international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) have promoted the use of donkeys for transport and traction in the past and will probably continue with isolated and small scale projects in the future. At least two national NGOs have nominal programmes that aim to improve the welfare of donkeys, but these are perennially short of funds and their impact will be minimal. In the rural areas, donkeys will continue to work in their current roles and will continue, for the most part, to lead miserable lives.

**Discussion**

Equines were uncommon or unknown in much of what is now Tanzania before the middle of the 19th century when early explorers started to use them for transport. This contention is supported by Livingstone’s note of 2 July 1866 to the effect that his donkey excited as much astonishment among the natives as he himself did.

The susceptibility of donkeys to trypanosomosis is subject to much discussion. Livingstone for long considered them to be not infected by the disease. He maintained, based on his own observations, that donkeys could be taken through districts in which horses, mules, oxen and dogs would certainly perish. He had, however, to change his opinion when his last two donkeys died of tsetse-transmitted trypanosomosis towards the end of his journey in November 1872. Later studies, mostly in The Gambia, have shown both donkeys and horses to be infected with trypanosomes but perhaps the most important one confirms earlier observations by other authors that donkeys, which are exposed to a similar tsetse challenge as horses, are significantly less infected with trypanosomes than the latter [4].

‘Surra’ is included on List B of the World Organization for Animal Health (Offie International des Epizooties, OIE). List B is “transmissible diseases that are considered to be of socio-economic and/or public health importance
within countries and that are significant in the international trade of animals and animal products”. In view of the very few horses and public lack of interest in donkeys, coupled to little knowledge, lack of personnel and chronic under funding, equines are not a priority for public veterinary services and attempts to control disease will only be made by the very small number of private veterinarians in Dar es Salaam and Arusha and periodically by some international donkey charities.

Some studies have shown that investing in donkeys for transport provides greater financial returns to a rural household than the provision of rural roads [15]. This is unlikely to convince central and local governments that they should encourage greater use of donkeys at the expense of building roads, a classic symptom of “rural development”.

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**Notes**

1 Livingstone is not very logical nor punctilious in his writings: it is not clear, for example, if this donkey was killed before the “one remaining donkey” to which he referred on 2 July or whether this was indeed the last remaining donkey. There are similar problems with regard to the deaths of the two mules.

2 This was presumably trypanosomosis rather than African Horse Sickness. ‘Surra’, a disease of horses and camels due to *T. evansi* is not transmitted by tsetse but by biting flies of the family Tabanidae outside the tsetse belt and most Tanzanian horses (but not donkeys) are given regular prophylaxis against it.

3 The South African (Light) Horse was not, as such, composed of South Africans but was part of the Imperial Yeomanry and was initially raised from British volunteers to fight in the Boer War in South Africa.

4 The 25th Cavalry (Frontier Force) was raised in 1849 by Captain Robert Fitzgerald but has been manned throughout its history mainly by natives of the Indian subcontinent. It was amalgamated with the 22nd Sam Browne’s Cavalry (Frontier Force) in 1922 to become the 12th Cavalry (Frontier Force) which today is an armoured regiment of the Pakistan Army. The current regiment has “East Africa 1917” as one of its battle honours.

5 To emphasize scarcity a 30-year old Tanzanian female colleague of the author has seen horses only once.

6 The author of this paper was the first to introduce horses to ranching work in Tanzania in 1967 when he managed NARCO’s West Kilimanjaro Ranch in Kilimanjaro/Arusha regions: this ranch is still extant but no longer has horses.

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