



SAVE OUR DONKEYS

The Cape Animal Welfare Forum (CAWF) is an umbrella body, which speaks advocates and lobbies on behalf of its member organisations, to address pressing animal welfare issues in the Western Cape and is the officially recognised link between Animal Welfare Organisations, the City Of Cape Town, and the Western Cape Government.

Following reports regarding the inhumane and mostly illegal slaughter and export of donkey hides to China, CAWF, invited Mr Jonathan Sherwin of the Karoo Donkey Sanctuary to present his findings to the CAWF following his attendance of a recent equine auction held in Hartswater where he purchased 200 donkeys and 50 horses, saving them from certain death to satisfy the demand of this abominable trade.

Mr Sherwin's presentation was gut wrenchingly forthright and spoke to the horrors of this trade including the cruel manner in which many of these unfortunate animals are stolen, cruelly transported, kept in unacceptable conditions, and skinned alive amongst other atrocities.

He also mentioned the very real possibility (which we now know to be fact) of the commercial farming of donkey's for their hides to satisfy the demands of the Chinese market, which would result in the senseless death of millions of these humble animals and the profound negative effect this would have on rural communities who are completely dependent on their donkeys to carry goods and plough the lands upon which their owners subsist.

Upon conclusion of his presentation the Forum felt repulsed and shocked and collectively vowed to raise its formal objection to the wholesale destruction of these animals.

The Forum felt that Government should take serious note of the suffering these animals would endure and the potentially devastating effect this would have on rural families – many of whom have already lost their donkeys to theft by callous greedy thieves intent on making a quick profit as the value of donkey hides is on an upward trajectory – reportedly fetching as much as R7000.00 per hide. This leaves all donkeys vulnerable to being poached and owners without the capacity to survive – donkeys are not pets in a rural context – they are an invaluable and indispensable part of rural life.

Even if the industry were to be regulated, the demand is so high that local donkey populations would be subjected to the many horrors associated with poaching and theft and it is very likely that our current viable herds would be decimated in well under 10 years as the dice is loaded in favour of those seeking to make a fortune from their destruction.

The Forum's plea is not based on sentimentality. It is based on sound predictions and current concerns which if left unchallenged would almost certainly spell disaster on all fronts – for both our people and these humble, loyal animals which have served man since the beginning.

We will not rest until reason prevails and an end is put to this barbaric trade. This is an impending tragedy of epic proportions that we can and must halt.

To add your voice to our collective objection, contact:

North West Premier Supra Mahumapelo; Hon. Mec For Read, Manketsi Tlhape; Hon Mec For Finance, Enterprise & Economic Development (Feed) Ms Wendy Nelson.

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