

KENDAT



## Rural Transport Services Project for Kenya

*Donkey Placement Response Unit in Kalama*

# KALAMA DONKEY PLACEMENT REPORT

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## ***1.0 Introduction***

The Rural Transport Services Project for Kenya aimed at improving access to facilities and resources through improved means of transport in the project areas, of which Kalama Division in Machakos District in Eastern Province of Kenya is one. In this project area, Kalama Donkey Users Club (KDUC) is the community-based group through which the project is implemented. The Club comprises of men and women (40 members) who are determined to improve the means of transport in the Division in order to meet the transport needs of the community.

One of the key activities in Kalama project area is placement of donkeys, which would be used for transport among other uses. Like many other areas in Kenya, before the start of RTS project Kalama had very few donkeys. However, through the project the first lot of 7 donkeys (6 males and 1 female) was introduced into the area in the year 2003, all of which are doing well. Each donkey is owned by one member of KDUC. The club is determined to have all her members own donkeys albeit the financial constraints they experienced, being in the marginal farming areas where agricultural productivity is low and mainly for subsistence.

This brief report focuses on the purchase and placement of the second lot of donkeys by the group with support from the RTS project.

## ***2.0 Pre-Purchase Preparation***

The members of the KDUC, through their regular meetings did comprehensive plans for the purchase of 10 more donkeys whose purchase price was estimated at Ksh. 40,000 (US\$ 500). The club members raised 30% of the donkey purchase cost and the RTS project would cater for the other expenses, which included the remaining 70% purchase cost, Ksh. 10,000 (US\$ 125) for transportation and Ksh. 15,000 (US\$ 187.5) for drugs and Veterinarian's fee. Prior to the purchase, members agreed on the ownership, care and management of the donkeys. It is noteworthy that the club has rules and regulations for handling, care and management of donkeys.

When all contributions were collected, an appropriate market day was identified, the hired Veterinarian notified (to accompany the club members to the market) and prior transportation arrangements done.

## ***3.0 The Donkey Market***

There are no donkeys available for sale in Machakos and Wote towns which are the nearest for people in Kalama Division. The nearest market place where donkeys are brought for sale is Kalawa town in the interior of Makeni District, which borders Machakos District. It is about 140km from Kalama's Kiatuni shopping center. Saturday is the weekly market day for Kalawa. On the material day (14<sup>th</sup> August 2004) there were 150 goats, 40 sheep, 50 heads of cattle and 12 donkeys in the market. Plate 1 is a photograph taken on the market day at Kalawa town. It is worth mentioning that there were 6 male and 6 female donkeys for sale in the market.



*Plate 1: A typical market day at Kalawa town. Donkeys and cattle can be seen in the market.*

#### **4.0 Market Transactions**

The process of purchasing the donkeys began by a selection process whereby the Veterinarian examined the donkeys in the market for physical and health fitness. The Veterinarian advised both the seller and the buyer according to the findings. Unfit donkeys (see Plate 2) are common in the market, but the Veterinarian was equipped with the necessary drugs to treat the purchased donkeys. On the basis of adequate knowledge of the physical and health fitness, price negotiations began (See Plate 3).



*Plate 2: One of the donkeys suffering from Mange, a skin disease affecting hairy animals and caused by parasites.*



*Plate 3: The Chairman of KDUC, Mr. Philip Kilaki (extreme left) negotiating the price of a donkey with a donkey seller in Kalawa Market.*

The pricing system was very rigid, most probably because the month of August is dry and the lucrative water fetching business using donkeys increases their demand and prices. Young males aged between 2 and 4 years went for an average of Ksh. 4,233 (US\$ 53) each, after bargaining. Female donkeys were in higher demand especially young stock aged about 2½ years, which went for an average of Ksh.5,800 (US\$ 72.5). The Club could not purchase 10 donkeys as planned due to the unexpected high market prices.

Once the buyer and the seller agreed on the price of the donkey, details of each donkey were recorded with the aid of the Veterinarian. Table 1 below shows the details recorded for each of the 7 donkeys purchase by KDUC.

**Table 1: Details Recorded for the Purchased Donkeys**

Seller's information				Donkeys' Information						Remarks
Name	Relations hip with donkey	Time spent with donkey	Reason for sale	Sex	BCS	Wt. (KG)	Age (Yrs)	Price Ksh	Best for	
Alexander Kinyae	Trader	2 weeks	Trade	M	3.5	160	4	4800	Carting Packing Breeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donkeys are more expensive during the dry season than in rainy season.</li> <li>• Donkeys thrive badly in dry season due to overworking and poor nourishment.</li> <li>• Veterinary needs for needy donkeys are not offered within the market area.</li> </ul>
Mutungu Musango	Local donkey owner	4 years	Raise money to buy food	M	3	158	4	4500	Carting Packing Breeding	
Kioko Muilu	Trader	3 weeks	Trade	M	2	102	1½	3400	Packing Rearing	
Dorcias Kimau	Trader / Broker	2 hours	Trade	F	2.5	118	2	5800	Packing Breeding	
Dorcias Kimau	Trader / Broker	2 hours	Trade	F	2.5	120	2	5800	Packing Breeding	
Mutua Kamanza	Local donkey owner	Over 8 years	Raise money to buy food	F	2	126	12	3400	Packing Breeding	
Mutua Kamanza	Local donkey owner	Over 8 years	Raise money to buy food	F	2	140	9	3400	Packing Breeding	

M = Male

F = Female

BCS = Body Condition Score

Wt. = Live Weight

## 5.0 Post-Purchase Activities

Once the donkeys were purchased the Veterinarian Tranquillized and de-wormed them and instituted preventive therapy against probable stress due to transportation and change of the habitat. He then supervised the entire transportation process and advised the buyer on donkey husbandry and humane use.

Transportation of the donkeys from Kalawa market (Makueni District) to Kalama (Machakos District) required the acquisition of a "No Objection Permit" from the Veterinary Officer in-charge of Kalama in order to allow the entry of foreign donkeys in the area and a "Movement Permit" from the Veterinary Officer in-charge of Kalawa to allow moving out of donkeys. The two permits were obtained.

An open truck was used to transport the donkeys (see Plates 4 and 5).



**Plate 4:** It was 'push and pull' as the donkeys were 'loaded' into an open truck for safe and faster transportation by road. Loading ramp was improvised from a nearby heap of sand.



**Plate 5:** All the 7 donkeys were finally in the open truck ready to be transported.

## 6.0 General Remarks by the Veterinarian

Making conclusions on the donkey purchase trip the Veterinarian gave the following remarks;

- In Kalawa market there are two types of donkey sellers. One, local farmers disposing their donkeys to raise money to cater for family needs, and two, animal traders from the neighbouring Machakos, Makueni, Kitui, Mwingi and Kajiando Districts.
- Although the interviewed community members did not recognize KENDAT, they were aware of the ongoing radio program "*Tunza punda akutunze*" aired by Radio Citizen.
- There is very little veterinary attention given to donkeys in both Kalama and Kalawa areas. For instance, only very few local farmers reported to have dewormed their donkeys albeit irregularly. Evidently, tick infestation is prevalent in the area.
- Donkeys play a significant role in the transport sector. For example, Sila Kikumbatu, a successful businessman in the Kalama, started off with a pack donkey and later used a donkey cart to ferry merchandise for his kiosk. Today, he owns a fleet of busy *matatus* (public transport vehicles) that play Machakos-Kiatuni route and his own shopping center named after him "Sila Kikumbatu Complex".

- Members of KDUC expressed the need to train a local animal health service provider particularly for donkeys. They need also need to be trained on proper donkey handling, husbandry and health programs.