

#Proudhorsevet, also in Egypt

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Horse Vets work in all parts of the world, with all types of Equids: from million-dollar racehorses to the working donkeys and horses in Third World countries. The veterinary work focusing on working equines might not get a lot of coverage in magazines and journals, but that says nothing about the importance of the work.

An NGO that has been working for more than 85 years on free veterinary care for working animals, is Brooke Hospital for Animals. After visiting Egypt in 1930, Mrs. Dorothy Brooke (founder of the organization) was heartbroken and outraged by the state former WW1 war horses were in. Instead of shipping the animals back to the UK the army had sold the animals to local Egyptian owners, who had no notion of proper animal care. The first former war horse Dorothy saw in Egypt – the animals were recognizable by a double arrow firing mark - was so emaciated that its “hips looked like hat racks” (quote from Dorothy’s diary). She sent a letter to a British newspaper, with a plight to help these animals. With the money the letter generated Dorothy was able to buy 5000 remaining war horses. Most of the animals were too weak to live and were put down. In 1934 the Old War Horse Memorial Hospital was established in Cairo. After the completion of the mission to help the old war horses, the hospital opened its doors to all working donkeys and horses in Egypt who needed veterinary help. This work has continued and expanded to different locations in Egypt, as well as India and Pakistan.



Today Brooke Egypt has five hospital centers, 25 mobile clinics and 28 veterinarians. On average, they reach 160.000 animals each year with free veterinary care and hundreds of thousands of owners and children (future owners) with education.

To keep the quality of veterinary care as high as possible (with the available means), the Brooke Egypt vets get yearly Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Normally, the vets travel to the Netherlands for this education, but during the Covid-pandemic this was not possible. Last summer, a new CPD has taken place, but for the very first time it was held in Egypt and Dutch Equine Vets traveled to Cairo.

For those of you who have never been to Cairo, imagine an extremely busy city with smog, millions of people, blistering heat and some the greatest buildings of ancient history. In the middle of ‘Crazy Cairo’, as some Egyptians call their capital, there is a veterinary clinic that can house about 50 horses, donkeys, and mules. Especially the sand paddock at the clinic seems to be an oasis of peace and rest. Animals that have been overworked and deal with lameness and debility issues are here to get back to their strength. While on the other side of the wall claxons are honking and people are screaming, the animals in the sand paddock are sunbathing, relaxing, and eating. Surrounded by their four-legged friends and pampered by the grooms of Brooke-Cairo.



The Brooke vets work with animals that suffer mostly from musculoskeletal problems, wounds, and debility. They depend strongly on their clinical examination to be able to come to a working diagnosis and treatment plan. To be able to increase their diagnostic abilities, the last CPD focused on the use of digital radiography in lameness and diagnostics for colic problems. Part of the diagnostics used at the CPD was the SAA-test, to measure the amount of Serum Amyloid A in the blood. The VMRD SAA-tests were sponsored by Grovet and proved to function well in temperatures of >35 degree Celsius, something that was not tested yet.

One of the interesting experiences we had during the CPD days, was that all horses that were measured had SAA-values that were far above the reference values. This seems to support the observation that a lot of the working animals have comorbidities and that it is very important to look beyond the problem the owner is initially consulting the vet for.

With the use of more diagnostic tools, we hope to come to more precise diagnosis and a better treatment plan, which will benefit not only the working animals but also the families that depend on them. And that is what makes the Brooke Egypt vets #proudhorsevets.



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