

From the desk of
Mark S. Meyers
Executive Director
Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue

I received a very distressing email yesterday, one that I have taken some time to research and digest before I responded and decided to share.

As many of you know, the Chinese people hold strongly to herbal remedies, many of which are decimating the populations of sharks, African anteaters and even the one species I hold most dear; donkeys.

Before I go any further, I should address my use of terms: you will see me use both the term “donkey” and the term “burro” sometimes even in the same sentence. Let me assure you that they are the same species. There actually are no species called donkey or burro, they are all “Equus Asinus” the terms donkey and burro are common names used in the English and Spanish languages. I personally use “donkey” to refer to domestic stock and “burros” to refer to wild stock.

One of the Chinese Herbal Cure-alls is called Ejiao, a gelatin made from boiling down donkey hides. According to Chinese beliefs, Ejiao is used for treatment of a variety of conditions including bleeding, dizziness, insomnia and a dry cough.

The Chinese Ejiao market is responsible for the destruction of 4,000,000 donkeys worldwide each year, a number that the Donkey Sanctuary of the UK has proven is unsustainable. In fact, several African nations have banned the export of donkeys to China because their own donkey populations have reached extinction levels. It should be noted that Ejiao is made in China, therefore it is the salted hides that arrive and not the final product. This is important when looking at the slaughter rules of the exporting country.

So...when I received an email from a recently formed LLC in Washington State looking to procure donkey hides, the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. After some research I learned that this was a real company, they filed the proper paperwork with the state of Washington and they have deep ties to China.

As many of you know, I stand firmly against auction houses that have rebranded themselves as “Kill Pens”. These places use Facebook and co-perpetrators to offer “bail” to donkeys before their “ship date” presumably to slaughter. THESE ARE A SCAM. I stand behind that claim and the USDA export reports support my position. As is all too real in the horse world, no matter how many horses are “rescued” from a “kill pen” the EXACT same number of horses are exported each year to Canada and Mexico for the sole purpose of slaughter. Right now, our United States donkeys have not entered into the Chinese Ejiao market, at least not yet.

No company based in the United States can legally slaughter donkeys for their meat without USDA inspections and currently there are no USDA equine meat inspectors. Instead of banning equine slaughter outright, our government kicked the can down the road and simply pulled funding for the inspectors. This funding can return at anytime, but what if this company has no intention of shipping donkey meat but only their hides? I do not think that this will fall under the “human consumption” rule of slaughter. Therefore they could easily kill as many donkeys as they desire, pull their hides and dispose of the carcasses.

Another point I would like to make is that it is proven that a donkey hide in poor condition is worth as much as a donkey hide in perfect condition. This does not bode well for the donkeys waiting to be killed as their condition on the kill floor is not a benefit to the ones doing the killing.

Now to put things in perspective...

My most recent book dealt with the many problems facing the Donkeys of the Caribbean. There are extreme overpopulation problems on many islands and the government officials are scratching their heads as to a remedy. Might not shipping a few thousand donkeys to a slaughter house in South America or Africa solve many of the problems they are facing?

In our country, the BLM's own Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Committee advised the destruction of tens of thousands of horses and burros on storage facilities, might this not present itself as a win-win?

We caring humans must protect those who cannot speak for themselves!

I am working on a five year plan to protect all of our wild burros, I will be presenting this plan at our Trustee meeting in Las Vegas in early March. If approved, the Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue will ensure the protection of America's Wild Burros and pledge to keep them safe. I will however need your help to prevent this scourge from coming to our country and look to find profit at the expense of these magnificent creatures.

Either all donkeys count, or none of them do.

www.donkeyrescue.org
www.wildburros.org
www.caribbeandonkeys.org
www.donkeyslaughter.org

Hide Inquiries To:
Michael Cheng
Stellar Products LLC
Seattle, Washington
StellarPLLC@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Michael Cheng <StellarPLLC@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jan 25, 2018 at 12:41 PM
Subject: Donkey Hides
To: info@owcheng

Hello,

My name is Michael with Stellar Products LLC, an export company in Seattle WA area. I'm looking for donkey hides for export. I would like to know if you know anyone has donkey hides for sale. Any information will be greatly appreciated!

Sincerely yours,

Michael Cheng
Stellar Products LLC
Email: StellarPLLC@gmail.com