

Camels are affected by several different diseases and the added stress of working hard can lead to minor problems becoming very serious. **Preventing** disease or stress saves time and money. Diseases and stress make animals under-perform and therefore reduce income. Early treatment using the correct medicine at the right dose in the right manner is recommended. **Remember:** a well fed animal resists disease better than an underfed animal.

Some of the commonest conditions found in working camels are mange, sores, wounds and sprains. Coughs and pneumonia can develop in stressed animals.

Mange is caused by a small mite that burrows under the skin. It is very infectious. The mite can infect an animal through contact with an infected animal, through sharing ropes or saddles or from a pen or environment with many camels. The symptoms include itching, scratching, hair loss, thickened skin, loss of condition and weight loss. The mites can be killed using acaricide - tick sprays (dips). The dip has to be scrubbed into the skin

using a hard brush and has to be done weekly until the symptoms disappear totally. Ticatraz, Tactic and other Amitraz based products work effectively as they are absorbed into the skin. Old engine oil, which can be obtained free of charge from many garages, rubbed into the skin works equally well, but has to be repeated for several weeks. Injections with Ivermectin (Ivomec, Cevomac) are effective but costly. Always follow the instructions on the bottles when treating camels. Dose rates based on those of cattle are recommended.



Photo: Chris Field

Camel suffering from mange

Sores and wounds caused by poor harnessing are common. Only use well fitting harnesses and do not

overload animals. Soft sisal sacks are better than nylon sacks for loading as they absorb the sweat and do not rub like the nylon sacks. Ensure all padding is thick and even and no sharp or hard objects are in contact with the animal. If sores or wounds occur the harnessing or saddles should be removed until the animal has recovered totally. Sores can be washed with warm salt water, dettol or other antiseptic and treated with healing oil, Stockholm tar or antibiotic spray. Small round sores may be caused by a fungus such as Ringworm or bacteria such as Contagious Skin Necrosis and can be treated with iodine, glycerine or sulphur powder. Hydrogen peroxide is good for washing sores, wounds and abscesses.

Bruised or sprained joints, swollen ankles, stiffness and arthritis can be helped by applying hot water. The water should not be too hot but warm enough for a person to put their hand in without scorching. Pour the water slowly over the damaged part. Alternatively soak cloth or rags in the hot water and wrap around the swollen or stiff

part. If there is a wound then add salt to the hot water.

Injectable antibiotics used for cattle can also be used for camels. There are special drugs for treating trypanosomosis in camels and the equivalent drugs for cattle should not be used. Berenil is highly poisonous to camels. Camels will die if injected with Berenil.

Camels should be de-wormed 3x per year - usually after the rainy seasons. Ticks should be controlled when necessary.

To keep a camel happy and healthy, it has to be well fed, treated kindly and not overloaded or overworked. A healthy happy camel will serve you faithfully and profitably for many years. **Always remember:** preventing disease is cheaper than curing disease.

Produced by **KENDAT** and **FARM Africa**

Other leaflets about camels that have been produced include:

- Selection and care of draft camels
  - Training draft camels

- Harnessing and saddling of working camels
  - Using camel power

Leaflets can be obtained from:



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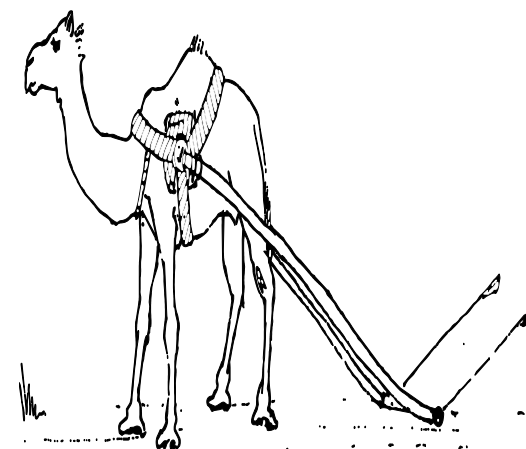
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## Common Diseases and Conditions of Working Camels

I can now see a  
healthy and  
happy future for  
me, unless they



Picture by Debbie Atkins

FROM THE CAMEL'S MOUTH