

ELPIDA 33

February/March 2013



Striving to improve the welfare of animals in Greece

Welcome to Elpida 33 – a round up of the highlights, achievements and memorable moments of 2012, as well as a look at our plans for 2013. Despite the economic struggles, the year began with the momentous news that circuses using animals would be banned in Greece - proving that hard work and determination, coupled with the backing of you our fantastic supporters, and collaboration with animal welfare groups in Greece, really does pay off.

We continued throughout the year to strive to improve the welfare of all animals in Greece and our main activities were:

- Conducting TNR (Trap, Neuter & Release) programmes for stray dogs and cats nationwide through our Mobile Neutering Team.
- Providing care and treatment to working equines nationwide via our Mobile Equine Outreach Team.
- Reaching out to welfare groups and the young with our Humane Education Programme to create an animal friendly future generation
- Lobbying the Agricultural Ministry as well as other relevant bodies to improve Greek animal welfare legislation, and to ensure its enforcement.
- Campaigning for farm animals as sole partner of Eurogroup for Animals in Greece.

This time last year we ran a survey in Elpida where we asked you a range of questions to help us evaluate our work and communications. We are pleased to report that the majority of you enjoy using our website and you are happy with the number of times you receive Elpida. Everyone was in agreement that our campaigns and work priorities (as listed left) are correct and it was interesting to note that the vast majority of you think that neutering and education are the most important areas of our work. A big thank-you to those of you who took the time to respond.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for continuing to support our work and enabling us to do our very best for the animals in Greece, who need us now more than ever. On their behalf, thank you.

The GAWF/Animal Action team

Our grateful thanks to our partners and funders...



**THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY**
WORKING WORLDWIDE



New Blog... Read our new blog to keep up to date with our news: <http://animalactiongreecegawf.blogspot.co.uk>
If you work in animal welfare in Greece or have an interesting story for our blog please contact gawf@gawf.org.uk

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Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR)



We all know that neutering is the only proven method through which the overpopulation of strays can be dealt with effectively and humanely.

Our veterinary teams regularly make trips to various locations all over Greece to neuter stray cats and dogs and we work with local animal welfare groups in these areas so we can neuter and treat as many animals as possible.

We are so grateful for the

funding we secured last year from Lush, WIND and the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, which enabled us to neuter more than 1200 cats and dogs across Greece.

We neutered in Milos (twice), Skiathos, Skopelos, Sifnos (twice) and Ithaki but the vast majority of our neutering took place in Athens during 2012. We also enabled the local animal welfare groups to neuter in their areas so, as ever, we reached into all the corners of Greece to care for stray animals.

Why is TNR so important?

GAWF/Animal Action believes in the value of neutering strays and placing them back into the neighbourhood where they were living, once they are fit again. This helps to control numbers of strays by filling the environmental “niche” the animal was using, preventing colonisation by new animals, which may reproduce.

This can only work if owners are also neutering their owned animals and not allowing fertile pets to roam the streets where they will certainly end up mating either with strays or other owned animals.

In order to raise awareness of this, and to promote responsible pet ownership, we speak to people during our TNR programmes, hand out leaflets, and encourage them to neuter their pets. By working together we will continue to see a decrease in the numbers of street animals roaming Greece.

Lush! funds neutering in Athens

Fresh handmade cosmetics company, LUSH, funded a stray cat neutering program in Athens during October, and we neutered an amazing 170 cats! All of the cats were health checked by our vets and one lucky kitty was even adopted.

GAWF/Animal Action Greece extends heartfelt thanks to LUSH for its generous funding and support for our work. We would also like to thank the local group, Nine Lives, and the 15 volunteers who helped us run this project. We couldn't have done it without you!

WIND TNR

The telecoms company, WIND, taking its cue from World Animal Day on the 4th of October, broadcast its message of love and care for our four-footed friends for the second year running.

Thanks to their support, we neutered 104 stray animals and contributed to the reduction of the large stray population in Athens, working with 20 animal welfare groups to achieve this.



Proudly neutered!

Donation from Animal Friends

We were thrilled to take part in July's Feel Good Park Facebook vote which is run by Animal Friends Insurance.

And even better was coming in 2nd place and securing £2000, which made a huge difference to our neutering programme.

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Education and raising awareness

In Greece, we have been looking at the most effective ways to get our messages across to the public. We are working with partner organisations and the media to help spread our messages more effectively – aiming to reach a wider audience than ever before. As well as social media, we are utilising TV, radio and print media to educate the public in Greece about animal welfare and tell it about our work.

Vet poster

Last year, we produced an A4 poster which is perfect for displaying on notice boards in shops, doctors' surgeries, local community centres etc. We have focussed on asking vets to display the poster, and so far the vast majority of those we have contacted have happily agreed. The aim is to promote our work and let people know that we can help them to help animals in need while they are on holiday in Greece, should they need to call us. We also feature our "text to donate" number, so that people are able to make a contribution quickly and easily. If you are able to display a poster for us, or know someone who can, please email gawf@gawf.org.uk. To donate £5 via our text service please simply text **GAWF12 £5** to 70070. Thank you.

TGI Friday's

In 2012 we collaborated with TGI Friday's and created two entertaining and informative place mats with a variety of animal-related games and activities that will help communicate the welfare message to children. Working with partners such as TGIs enables us to reach many thousands of people with very little expense incurred – which means more money can be spent where it is really needed – caring for the animals.

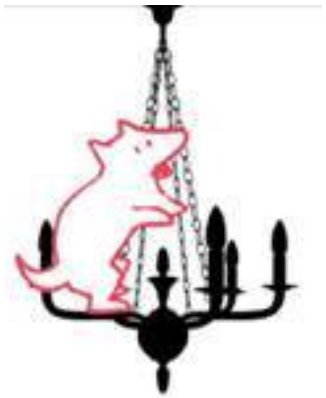
Later in the year, as a way of celebrating and publicising World Animal Day on October 4th, we ran the 'I love animals' photography competition with TGI Friday's, and received nearly 700 photo entries (see winners below).



We were delighted with the amount and quality of entries as it demonstrated how much Greeks adore their pets. We are very happy to be continuing our relationship with TGIs into 2013.

Humpy the dog

For the first time GAWF/Animal Action made the decision to launch its own animated film in order to promote one of the most fundamental principles of responsible pet ownership – that of neutering – to the Greek public. And that's how Humpy the dog came into being. He's a small-statured, cartoonish, unneutered male, full of the joys of spring, that mounts everything that moves – and quite a lot of things that don't. In his short career Humpy has collected more than 6,000 hits on YouTube, even though Greece's National Radio and TV Council rejected him on the grounds that he does not communicate a socially beneficial message!! If you haven't caught up with him yet you can enjoy his antics via this link (and please do share it): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvnPj3m_tJI



Plans to extend this initiative into 2013 include creating a new short film in similar style clearly showing the potential population explosion caused by leaving cats unneutered. Look out for this on our website!

Welcoming Animal Action Greece

After much thought and consideration, we decided to change our name in order to make a fresh start and attract new supporters. There was a need to appeal to a wider, younger, online market that required a more contemporary look, so the name **Animal Action Greece** was chosen because it reflects exactly what we do.

Our vision and goals for the animals remain unchanged, and we will continue to operate as GAWF in the UK.

We have also updated our leaflets and we have new Facebook pages in Greek and English as well as a dual language website. These tools enable us to reach out to the widest range of people with our messages.

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GAWF/Animal Action Equ

Our Mobile Equine Vet Team was as active as ever in 2012 providing:

- Veterinary Treatment
- Farrier Treatment
- Dental Care
- Seminars and educational material
- Advice for individuals and welfare groups

During the course of the year we treated 1200 donkeys, horses and mules during 14 outreach trips to 21 different parts of the country. We visited the islands of Santorini, Kasos, Kos, Rhodes, Symi, Andros, Paros, Amorgos, Folegandros, Sikinos, Hydra, Aegina, Skyros and Crete. On mainland Greece, we visited villages in Chalkidiki, Polygiros, Serres, Dadia, Mani and Arkadia as well as Athens. We are grateful to the Donkey Sanctuary for its unfailing support of this work. Below is a report from our team's trip to Hydra.



Equine Outreach visit to Hydra

For the fourth consecutive year, the team visited Hydra between the 11th and 13th of October 2012.

In car-free Hydra equines do all the transportation work and many people depend on them for their livelihoods. Our team treats the working equines and at the same time passes on knowledge and skills that allow the owners to go on keeping their animals in good health when

the GAWF/Animal Action team has left. During our three day visit, 110 equines were brought to Hydra's football field, our annual meeting place. There were 58 mules, 13 donkeys and 39 horses, who all received a veterinary health check and treatment, where necessary.

The teeth of 102 equines were rasped in order to remove the sharp edges that injure the cheeks and tongue and, if found, hooks, ramps and overgrown teeth were dealt with. 45 equines had their hooves trimmed in order to maintain the correct shape. Five horses were shod by our farrier principally so that we could demonstrate to their owners the correct way to fit shoes.

Vet Elisa and farrier Aris had the chance to check on the progress of some old cases treated two years ago. The young, thin, female mule that we had saved from severe colic had now blossomed into a healthy and very fit adult. And the obese pregnant mare that we had diagnosed with acute laminitis arrived in ideal body condition together with her healthy foal. It was clear that their proud owner had followed all of our advice.

Vet Elisa rasping a working mule's teeth



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ine Outreach Programme



One mule had a small injury from its saddle girth. Another had been injured by the rope on its fetlock. Various older animals were found with arthritic joints. Some horses and mules had chronically foundered feet and advice was given to their owners on how to take care of them. One horse was treated for a foot abscess, while another's feet were very sore, and our team explained how an attack of laminitis could be prevented.

A number of animals were found with gasterophilus fly eggs laid among the hair on their legs and chest. These form stomach parasites at the larval stage. However this year, instead of our vet advising people to worm the animals after a few months, it was some of the owners we'd met in past years showing what they'd previously learnt and telling the other owners what they should do!

During the morning of our second day in Hydra, one of the owners brought us a mule that had been colicking since the previous night. Our vet examined the animal and administered the injections needed to help it get over the potentially fatal condition. However the mule did not show significant improvement. It clearly needed further intervention in the form of intravenous administration of fluids. We had to search all over the island for the many litres needed and by that afternoon, we had managed to locate and collect an adequate supply. The mule started showing signs of recovery that same evening and looked much better the next morning. Advice was given regarding feeding and management for the next week. The owner was so grateful to us for saving his animal that he made a generous donation to our funds and handed traditional sweets out to everyone in celebration!

This year we saw many returning animals as well as a

large number that we hadn't seen previously. All the owners once again expressed their wish for us to come back in 2013.

As you will see from this report, the beauty of our programme is that we are teaching the local people how to care for their animals themselves. These people proudly pass the skills they learn on to others and the benefits just keep rippling outwards. It is a sustainable programme and we employ Greek vets, dentists and farriers to carry out the outreach which fits completely with our goal of working within Greece to find practical and sustainable solutions to animal welfare problems there. Quite simply, it



Aris shoeing a horse in Hydra

works and we have an action packed programme ready to roll out in 2013, which includes 3 training seminars, the first one in March, and lots of outreach work. We know this will benefit thousands of working equines.

We would like to thank The Donkey Sanctuary and The Elise Pilkington Charitable Trust for funding outreach visits during 2012.

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Positive change—campaigning

Greece says goodbye to the circus (with animals)

In February 2012, after a relentless campaign, GAWF welcomed the ban on both domestic and wild animal circuses – a first in Europe.

Along with local groups in Greece, we had campaigned for the ban since 2006.

The ban not only marks a momentous victory for the animals but shows that even during its darkest hour, the Greek Government recognised the importance of eliminating cruelty to animals and protecting their welfare.



On behalf of
all animals
enslaved
in circuses...

Thank you GAWF!

**Thank you
Greece!**

Greece is the first country in Europe to ban both domestic and wild animal circuses. GAWF launched the campaign in 2006 and as a result of continued and coordinated efforts, Greek parliament voted a new law banning animal circuses in 2012.

Free Range Egg Campaign

Old style battery cages were banned throughout Europe by an EU Directive on 1st January 2012. However, many producers in Greece have not complied with the new law. Targeting the peak of egg sales just before Easter, GAWF/Animal Action launched a viral online campaign via social media to urge consumers – who have the collective power to shift the market – to choose free range, and to inform them of the meaning of the number codes printed on each egg – (0 = organic, 1 = free range, 2 = barn, 3 = cage) You can watch the animated short film we made here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLOjmuvbLs4>

Egg campaign plans for 2013

We will continue our campaign to educate the Greek public about the conditions suffered by battery hens into 2013, and urge them to choose free range and organic eggs. Consumers have the power to show the producers that battery eggs are simply no longer acceptable.

Plans for this campaign include another publicity stunt around Easter showing that free range or organic eggs are the only cruelty-free choice. We will also be urging celebrity chefs in Greece to use only free range and organic eggs in their recipes and restaurants. In addition to this we will be putting pressure on the Government regarding a new law it plans to introduce, which will impose hefty fines on those producers that continue to flout the law.



We made the difference!

In Soufli, Dadia (northern Greece) the team had to deal with a mare that was carrying a dead foal. The position of the foal was making the labour very difficult and it was touch and go as to whether the mother could be saved.

But after gentle but determined efforts over several hours, the foal was delivered, and the mother supported on her way back to regaining her strength. She has since made a full recovery.

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ng for the animals in Greece

Better Dairy Campaign—Happy Cows

GAWF/Animal Action officially became the representative organisation for Greece in the Better Dairy Campaign last year. Along with Compassion in World Farming, the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Ben and Jerry's and a number of other country representatives, we are working to improve the welfare of Europe's 23 million dairy cows.

Levels of animal welfare for dairy cows vary greatly across the EU. There are widespread health problems caused by inadequate care, poor housing, living conditions and diet. Common problems include lameness, mastitis, infertility and low life expectancy.

Better Dairy Campaign plans for 2013

There are major plans on the horizon for this campaign going into 2013 and you can sign a form to support it here: <http://www.happy cows.eu>

When you complete the form an automated email calling for a new Directive to protect European dairy cows will be generated in your name to reach the EU Commissioner. Your name will also be added to a letter that will be sent to the Commissioner, Members of the European Parliament and the Agriculture Ministers of the EU Member States. Thanks for your support and please spread the word!



Pig welfare campaign

Pigs and piglets can suffer immensely in intensive environments and last year we began our campaign to improve welfare conditions for pigs and stop the inhumane surgical castration of piglets without anaesthesia and painkillers, and replace it with non surgical castration. This campaign continues into 2013 and we are also focussing on the now illegal sow stalls.



Since 1 January 2013, pregnant sows and gilts must be housed in groups and cannot be kept in individual stalls, in line with Directive (EC) 2001/88.

Despite this important milestone for animal welfare, serious concerns remain as Greece is – according to the Greek ministry – 80% compliant and we know little of the real enforcement of the law – regarding the enlargement and enrichment of the pig environment.

We need to press the Competent Authority to get feedback on their efforts to make producers fully compliant with the Directive on Sow stalls. The aim is to continue the pressure and remind the authorities of the importance of the issue and the infringement procedures Greece risks if it does not implement the rules.

We made the difference!

Last February an animal welfare shelter in Karditsa was hit by severe flooding that resulted in dire conditions for the 140 strays that are cared for there. As if that wasn't bad enough, all the food was stolen from the store house.

Rescuers found many adult animals to be suffering from frostbite, while some of the puppies had developed pneumonia due to long exposure to the cold water. All needed veterinary care.

GAWF/Animal Action rushed emergency aid to the shelter ensuring that the cost of all necessary treatment was fully met and that food stocks for the hungry animals were replenished.

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Events and fundraising

During 2012, representatives of GAWF/Animal Action attended a number of events to raise awareness of our work and bring in vital funds. These are a few...

In March we took a stand at Brighton's Vegfest, a vegan event that attracted around 6000 visitors. We spoke to many animal lovers about the animal welfare situation in Greece, recruited new supporters and gratefully accepted donations.

In April we participated in the 2nd Annual Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility organised by Capital Link, which was held at the Hilton hotel in Athens. This allowed us to engage with big business and public sector executives, teachers and NGO representatives and we had the opportunity to share our ideas about animal welfare and caring for animals with the public.

In July we held a fundraising sale in central Brighton. Local business woman and animal lover Lauren Heston donated many of her preloved clothes to raise money and Brighton businesses offered fantastic raffle prizes.

Throughout the year we held **five fundraising collections at London train stations, and one in Brighton** and we raised just under £3000.

On 4th of October, World Animal Day we were invited by the Municipality of Athens to participate in their animal welfare information kiosk. This gave us a great opportunity to reach out to the Greek public and speak to them about animals, treating them with respect best possible welfare standards for them.

Later in October **we attended the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference**, which was held in Greece. We were given the opportunity to present our circus campaign to the audience, which was made up of representatives of many animal welfare groups from across the globe. We had the chance to discuss and share

ideas with many people, including a number of small animal groups from Greece.

On Sunday **4th November our representatives participated in an event organized by one of the most prominent Athenian schools, Moraitis School.** The event was a celebration of nature and animals and more than 20 groups attended in order to raise awareness of ecological, environmental and animal welfare issues. We spoke directly with both children and adults about how they felt about animals and offered advice to those with pets and those caring for street animals in their area.

November saw us hosting a **pre-Christmas curry and music fundraising night** which was a fabulous event, and just two days later, on 2nd December, we were pleased to meet many of the attendees at **Animal Aid's annual Christmas Without Cruelty Fair** in London, where we held a stand.

Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you...

We couldn't run these events, which are essential for raising both funds and awareness of our cause, without our fantastic volunteers. Huge thanks to those of you who give up your free time to bake cakes, run stalls, shake collection tins and even organise our train station collections – you know who you are!



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