



EGSF Funds Mule Colic Study in Ethiopia



Tess examining a horse at a clinic

During 2003/4, a fatal colic condition was recognised for the first time in the draught mule population of the Amhara region of Ethiopia, by Tess Sprayson, MRCVS and colleagues.

This condition resembles a dysautonomia and has many clinical and gross post mortem features similar to those of equine grass sickness (EGS).

Major outbreaks occur after recent changes in weather although sporadic cases also occur throughout the year

The aim of this EGSF funded pilot study, which commenced in June 2005, is to carefully document the clinical, historical, gross pathological and histopathological findings of the disease. Field work will be carried out at The Donkey Sanctuary Clinic in Bahir Dar by Tess Sprayson, an independent veterinary surgeon from Devon. Dr Elspeth Milne, Division of Veterinary Pathology, Edinburgh University will perform histological examinations of the tissue samples.



EGS in Europe is currently thought to be associated with a *Clostridium botulinum* toxicoinfection. However, it is important that similar dysautonomias in other areas should be fully investigated since climatic and environmental conditions vary markedly from those in Europe and important information concerning the causal agent and epidemiology may be highlighted by such differences. The disease is of major welfare and economic importance as this region of Northern Ethiopia is highly dependent upon a draught equine based economy.