

# A homage to Jo Ballade

Philippe Lhoste



*Georges Ballade, co-presenter at the Draft Animal Congress, known to many as Jo, passed away on the 8th of May 2022, surrounded by his family and following a long illness. In honor of his continuing work we want to share a Homage authored by his colleague and fellow co-presenter Philippe Lhoste:*

Jo was a farmer and trainer in working with donkeys, the designer of the "Kassine" tool carrier together with the association Prommata. He was one of Jean Nolle's close friends when Prommata – the association "for the promotion of modern animal-drawn equipment" – was created at the end of the last century. Since that time, he worked very actively in promoting animal draft and in particular donkey draft in France and in developing countries. As President, he was especially dedicated to the Prommata International Association, which contributes to supporting and developing ecological, small-scale, and sustainable agriculture in the world, by encouraging small farmers to use draft animals equipped with suitable equipment (<https://www.prommata-international.fr/>).

Jo Ballade trained many young farmers in using donkey draft in France and in Africa (West Africa, North Africa, Madagascar), where he carried out numerous projects to assist farmers in working with adequate harnessing and blacksmiths in making the Kassine. Donkeys,

in particular – the animals of the poorest farmers – were still too often used only for transport (packs and carts). In the countries concerned, Jo Ballade demonstrated, with conviction and competence, that donkeys, despite their modest size, could relieve peasant families of very tiring work, often carried out by women, in the fields; this is possible thanks to well-adapted equipment: the simple and versatile tool carrier called the Kassine. Jo was convinced that farmers could thus significantly improve their food production and living conditions.

A tireless promoter of the use of draft donkeys, the "Kassine" tool-carrier, and agro-ecological practices, Jo Ballade leaves behind many who are keen to follow in his footsteps; with his work, he enabled a large number of farmers and market gardeners to operate in a different way, by passing on the techniques and values of ecological, small-scale and sustainable agriculture.

We honor his memory and his commitment to the small farmers of the world, for whom he played an essential role in relieving them of exhausting manual labor.

