

Ahura's Calling





Schoolgirl **Ahura Suzette** represents Team Uganda at international swimming events. She's also an accomplished equestrian.

Now she has set the pace for a new mission - the protection of Africa's animals.

She explains:

“The magnitude of animal exploitation is beyond our comprehension. As a strong, young activist, I want to help Africa on the big issue of Animal Welfare.”

Here Ahura speaks to *Animal Voice* about what made her become vegan and why she decided to use her heart and voice to help achieve a measure of justice for Africa's animals.



Animal Voice:

You say it was your horse Star who nudged you in the direction of Animal Welfare?

Ahura:

Yes. I cannot put into words how much love I have for him. He is a soul that has completely changed my life and I would not be the person I am today if I hadn't met him.

I first took up horse-riding when I was 9. My first ride on a horse was absolutely horrifying, and I remember when taking my first trot, I said I'd never do it again! But that changed. In Grades 4 and 5, my school table was filled with pictures and stickers of horses. Everyone knew I loved horses. But the people who really saw my eyes glow whenever I saw a horse were my parents.

I remember the time my family went for a holiday during the past summer. One week into the holiday, I was crying to my mum that I wanted to fly home and be with Star. Of course we didn't book a flight home, but the stables was the first place I went to after we landed. Riding with Star is the best gift I could ever receive.



Animal Voice:

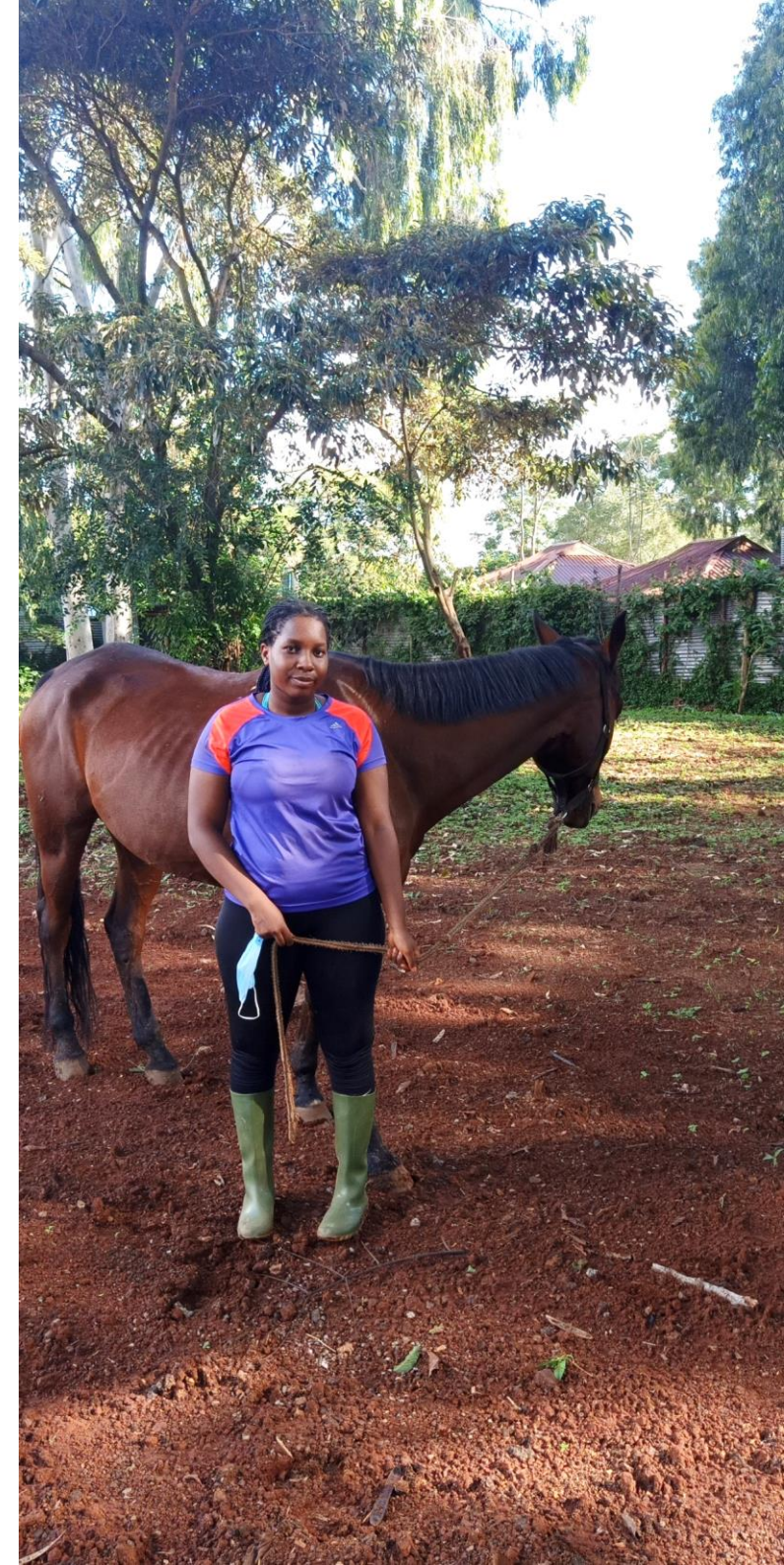
Was it Star who led you to veganism?

Ahura:

The day I decided to become vegan was a very interesting day. I had been to riding practice the day before and was upbeat. Then I happened to watch a famous horse rescuer on TikTok. When I saw how horses are treated and the conditions they experience in the slaughterhouses, I was very disheartened. It was at that moment that I knew that I wanted to play a role in protecting animals.

Although I was vegetarian for a year prior to this experience, it was this video that prompted me to research the milk and egg industries too and I made the decision to follow my moral values regarding the food I eat.

Making the transition has brought me a deep sense of composure that I am being true to myself.





I just want people to know
that life is our greatest gift.
And whatever species is gifted
with life, they all have
beautiful hearts that beat
just like ours.

Animal Voice:

We understand that you volunteer at the SPCA and have formed an Environment Club at your school?

Ahura:

Yes! This came about as a result of Steve. My school friends and I noticed this cat wandering around with an open wound. We'd catch glimpses of him at the cafeteria or at the swimming pool. We thought his wound would get better but it didn't. So I spoke to my head teacher and we made a plan for Steve's recovery.

Our first plan was to catch him and take him by car to a vet but when I saw how stressed this made him, I decided to ask a vet to come to the school instead. The vet came and a decision was made for Steve to go to the veterinary clinic for boarding recovery. The other students rallied to help me collect funds to pay for the vet bill. In fact, I ended up raising more than enough money, and that's when I was put in charge of taking care of animal wellbeing at my school.

Together we have formed an environmental club and Steve has become our very happy school 'charm'.

