

Laminitis or Founder:

Laminitis is a severe inflammation in the feet and breakdown of the hoof wall and the inner hoof capsule. It will cause agony for the donkey. The first signs of laminitis are that the donkey will stand shifting its weight from one front foot to the other. Later the donkey is reluctant to move or will shift its weight onto the backs of its heels, to relieve the weight of its body on its toes. The feet may be hot and the donkey will take short, propped steps or be reluctant to move at all.

You should call the vet immediately.

If your donkey has suffered from laminitis in the past its feet may be misshapen. The foot will appear flat and protrude right out at the toe. You will need expert help to try and gradually correct the foot to the right angle.

When standing and viewed from the side, the laminitic hoof may appear concave with higher heels and corrugated bands around the hoof wall. The sole may be convex or flat instead of concave while the frog and heels will be contracted. A foot that has had laminitis will grow much faster than one that has not. Several months after a laminitic attack the hoof may also develop an abscess as dead tissue is expelled from the hoof.

A donkey may never recover from chronic laminitis. It may appear to recover, but with the slightest growth in pasture due to moist warm weather, or feeding of a grain supplement or rich hay, further bouts of lameness and pain will recur.



Cordelia of the Trust who had been badly obese and in danger of foundering at the time of this photo. However, her feet had been well trimmed.

Information flyers available from the at this time include pamphlets and a booklet:

> **What to Feed Your Donkey**

> **Improving The Lives of Donkeys & Mules in NZ**

The booklet > **Differences, Anatomy & Care—Donkeys, Mules & Horses** is available for \$2. plus P&P \$1.

Check on the **Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ web site** for a list of local contacts. They are happy to talk to you if you need further advice.



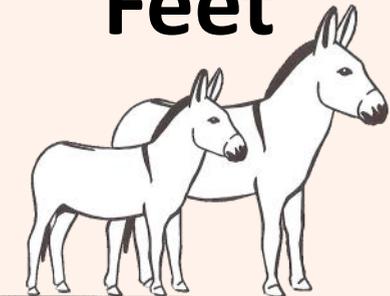
If you would like to support the work of the Trust, (\$20 family, \$15 adult or \$7 Junior), support fees, we have online forms and contacts on the Website, or contact Neil Cook, Treasurer, 551 Owhiwa Road, RD 1, Onerahi, Whangarei 0192. Phone 09 436 3623, or the Secretary, Lea Hullett, 673 Rolling Ridges Road, RD5, Timaru 7975. Ph 027 6860735



Dillys and Lucretia's feet were very long and uncared for when they came into the Trust. The donkeys had been roughly treated and were frightened of having their feet picked up. However, with kind, firm handling they soon learned not to be frightened and their feet gradually improved. Here they are finally with well trimmed feet.



Looking After Your Donkey's Feet



Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ

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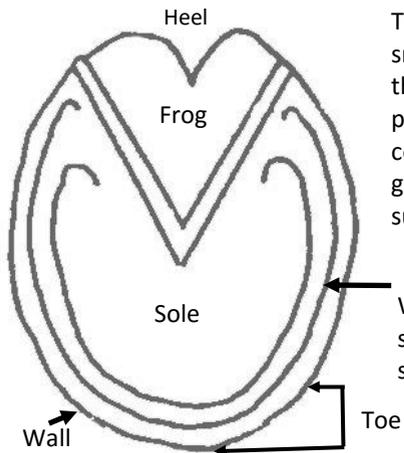
Looking after your donkey's feet

Regular hoof care is essential for the well being of your donkey. The health of your donkey is reflected in the health of its feet. (See the Trust's flyer *What to feed your Donkey* to find out what you should be feeding your donkey to ensure it is getting the right nutrients to keep it healthy).

The donkey originates in the desert so its feet are adapted for hard, stony ground. But in New Zealand, because of the climate, lush pasture and damp ground they become soft and moist, and natural wear is slower.

Your donkey depends on you to keep its feet trimmed, short, level and at the correct angle, so it can walk freely and without pain.

Diagram of the underside of the hoof



The donkey's frog is smaller and set higher in the hoof than that of a pony. It should only come in contact with the ground on uneven surfaces.

White transparent line or sensitive laminae - site of seedy toe

Below is a photo of really long feet which were actually on a Trust donkey when it was given into our care.



Neglected feet can be rehabilitated with expert trimming.

Flare

Care of the feet

The feet should be picked out regularly, preferably daily, but definitely once a week. Run your hand down the donkey's leg and pick up his foot, taking care not to lift it too high. Remove mud and stones and poke carefully along the rim of the hoof. Look for splits and gaps filled with hoof material that crumbles into grey powder as you scoop it out.

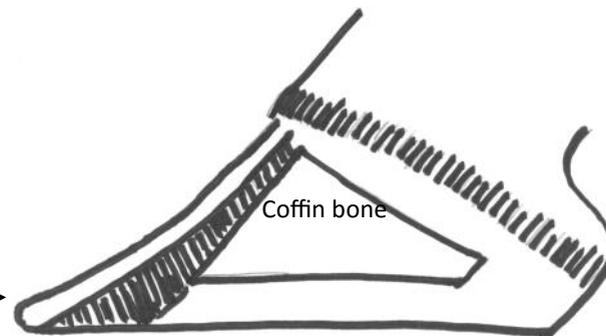
This chalky, light grey substance is a sign that your donkey has Seedy Toe. This is the most common hoof ailment in donkeys. Seedy toe usually occurs when the donkey is standing continually on wet ground, or your donkey is not getting a balanced diet, which includes added vitamins and minerals for good health. It is the breakdown of the area between the hoof wall and the sole.

Scrape out all the crumbling material. If possible cut away the hoof wall so that the infected area is exposed to the air and treat the healthy part of the hoof – there are many suggestions as to what to use, such as, a solution of Copper Sulphate and Cider Vinegar in water, Kopatox, Foot Rot spray and copper sulphate. If the rot is on the outer wall get your farrier to cut the hoof away to open up the area. This will help to kill the infection. The hoof will soon grow again. The hoof should then be examined and treated once a week.

The hooves need to be trimmed every six

weeks However, donkeys need more frequent trimming in Spring and Autumn, possibly every 4 weeks, but their feet may be able to go as long as 9 weeks in the winter, before they need trimming. Your farrier will advise you.

In some cases, where the donkey is in regular work on the road, their feet will wear down naturally, but even then they often wear unevenly.



A hoof left without trimming will result in a flare.



Left: Heel too high, angle on front of foot too steep.

You can rasp the donkey's feet yourself each week to keep them short, once you know how to go about it, but get a

qualified farrier until you have learnt. Your donkey's feet are absolutely vital to his well-being.

When misshapen hooves occur a farrier should be called immediately. If hoof problems arise, a good farrier charges less than a vet and often has the specialised knowledge to diagnose the problem.



Shoeing is not recommended.

The angle of the foot should be in line with the shoulder and pastern. This angle will vary according to the individual donkey but the aim should be to achieve a ground parallel coffin bone.

A well trimmed front foot

