

Considerations for the donkey's needs:

Can you provide?

A suitable paddock. Allow at least an acre, but two or more is better providing you restrict grazing. You can use an electric fence to cut off a small area. Donkeys will chew wooden rails and ringbark some trees. They leave Kowhai and Dodonea alone. The paddock must be well fenced as donkeys are known to go under fences or through them if they are of the old and saggy variety. Never use barbed wire.

Fresh Water is essential. It must be available all the time, in a clean water trough or container that the donkey cannot push over and it must be kept clean.

Suitable additional feed Well harvested hay free from any sign of mould such as Timothy is relished by them. Avoid Ryegrass of the high sugar variety grown by farmers for fattening sheep and cattle. Fibre is essential for their health and Barley Straw for roughage is desirable. Donkeys should never be left without something to chew on. For more information see our flyer, **What to Feed Your Donkey.**

Shelter from wet weather or a waterproof cover, though both are best. Having originated in an arid environment donkeys lack the oils it's cousin the horse has in it's coat. A tree such as a native Dodonea, Pittosporum, or Kowhai, none of which donkeys eat, will provide shelter from the sun.

A companion for the donkey, preferably another donkey or a pony. Donkeys are gregarious and for their mental wellbeing, they need to have a friend.

Are you able to spend time with your donkey? Donkeys that have been socialised love human company. They enjoy going for walks, learning new things and being part of a family. They bond with their person or family and have been known to grieve when moved to a new home.

Donkeys need their feet attended to. Picking out your donkey's feet every day or so will help keep them healthy. They also need their feet trimmed every six to eight weeks depending on the time of year and whether they go for walks on stony ground. Their feet may wear unevenly. For more information see our flyer **Looking After Your Donkey's Feet.**

Every two years a vet will need to check your donkey's teeth as they grow continuously, wear unevenly and develop sharp points due to our soft diet. The coarser diet of an arid environment helps to keep the teeth worn down.

For more information check out the **Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ website www.donkymuletrust.org.nz**

There is a list of contacts throughout New Zealand who are knowledgeable and happy to talk to you for advice.

If you would like to help us make a difference to the donkeys and owners that need help and support, you can make a donation by going to the website and clicking the Donate button, or you can pay by internet banking or cheque.

The bank account # for the Trust is: 03 0633 0136784 00 (D&M Trust)

Please enter your name as the code and DON as reference.

If you would like a receipt (All donations of \$5 and over are tax deductible within allowable limits), advise the Donkey and Mule Protection Trust's treasurer: Judy Weild, 1096 Lakeside View Road, RD2, Milton, Post Code 9292 or ph: 03 417 4766.



Pemberton Angelotti, driven here at a competition by Andrea Thomson, is a Teamster.



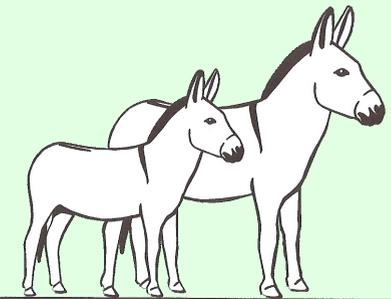
Cotswold Lavender Rose wearing a nicely fitting cover. Always cut off the straps that go underneath the belly as donkeys can get their legs caught in them.



Donkeys need a friend and these American Miniature Mediterranean donkeys are 'best buddies'

Before you buy a Donkey?

July, 2020



Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ

Non-Profit Charitable Trust CC21227
www.donkemunletrust.org.nz

Why do we keep donkeys and what do we do with them?

Those are questions all donkey owners are asked at some time or other.

For some people it is not so much what a donkey can do, but for the pleasure of just having them around as companion animals and so you may hear a response of "They make me smile." Their funny little ways and facial (yes facial) expressions are very human. Once you get to know your donkey/s and spend time with them, so they, get to know you, you will understand what is meant. It could take several months before a new donkey trusts you and his/her personality comes out. You may then hear lots of noises other than the bray as your donkey 'speaks' to you. Donkeys can be standoffish for some time. If they have been abused or not socialised it will take far longer, but soon you will be rewarded with a loyal companion animal that is always interested in what you are doing.

If you are a gardener, you are likely to look up and find two large ears and big eyes looking over the fence. That brings us to another point in favour of keeping a donkey. It was reported in various garden magazines that donkey dung was rated as the best in the world, from ten species of animals. Elephants were 2nd. Most donkeys have a toilet patch making it easy to collect the manure for your garden.

Donkeys, when trained, make safe children's first mounts. They are not likely to bolt if frightened. They tend to freeze in fear or if they do 'take off', only go a short distance. They are not stubborn, but if abused by being overloaded and then hit they will become frightened and refuse to move. They are known to sit down if overloaded.

The brain of a donkey is larger than a horse's. They will stop and think about something they are not sure about, so it is always best to give them the time to think.

Cotswold Minnie Moppet has a English/Irish father and a Ponui Island mother.



American Miniature Mediterranean jenny and foal



Three young quality English/Irish donkeys



*Zeta of Lynbri driven by Lynette O'Neill.
A well trained donkey who goes kindly in harness*

Some advice on buying a donkey:

You need to consider why you want a donkey and what type of donkey would suit you.

There are a number of breed types in New Zealand. Most of the early importations came from England and Australia when the first settlers arrived. In the 1970s as donkeys became popular, both the larger **Teamster** type and **English/Irish** donkeys were imported from Australia along with English/Irish donkeys from the UK. There are also donkeys known as **Ponui** from the Island of the same name. They are thought to be from English stock but, being isolated are inbred and of variable quality. Teamsters officially range from 12hh to 14hh.

English and Irish donkeys are really very much the same. There were a lot of working donkeys in England but they dramatically declined at the same time as the working horse. Later when the demand for them as pets took off, many were imported into England from Ireland. They come in miniature and standard sizes and are of all colours.

American Miniature Mediterranean Donkeys were imported first in 1997. Their height is under 36 inches to be eligible for the register, but most are smaller. **Mammoth** donkeys were imported from the USA, Texas and Canada from 2007. Mammoth donkeys are big and jacks (stallions) are used to breed mules as this is becoming more prevalent in NZ.

Whatever the breed type or mixture, it is very important that it has good conformation and a nice temperament. Most donkeys are friendly and quiet when treated fairly, but there are breeders who do not understand the importance of good sound conformation, or how to train a donkey.

If you are wanting a young donkey, choose from a reputable breeder who registers their donkeys and is a member of the Donkey & Mule Society of NZ (Inc.) It should be trained to lead, tie up and have its feet handled. Do not buy a jack (Stallion) even if a colt foal as it will require expert handling. They are not safe and only for very experienced breeders. Restrict your choice to a gelding or jenny.

Take your time in choosing. Ask questions about its training and history if it is an older donkey. Most donkeys are wonderful with children, but if they have been abused you need to know, as such a donkey might not be safe around children. It is a good idea to ask a knowledgeable person to help you. The Donkey and Mule Protection Trust have Area Representatives who can help you, listed on their web site.