

All About DONKEYS!



Donkeys, [zebras](#) and [mules](#) all differ somewhat from horses in conformation. The most noticeable difference is of course the ears. Donkeys' ears are MUCH longer in proportion to their size than a horse's. The necks are characteristically straighter in the longears, and most donkeys and all zebras lack a true wither. The croup and rump are also a different shape in the donkey and its hybrids, lacking the double-curve muscled haunch. The back is straighter due to the lack of withers. Dipped loins or severely swayed backs are a conformation fault, unless in old animals or brood jennies who have produced many foals, and not due to genetic factors.

The mane and tail in the donkey are coarse. The mane is stiff and upright, rarely laying over and the tail is more like a cow's, covered with short body hair for most of the length, and ending in a tasseled switch. Donkeys do not have a true forelock, although sometimes the mane grows long enough to comb down between the ears toward the eyes. Because the mane is stiff and sometimes flyaway, many donkeys, especially show stock, wear their manes clipped short or shaved close to the neck.

Hoof shape varies as well, donkey hooves are smaller and rounder, with more upright pasterns. The legs should have good bone, but many donkeys of common breeding may appear to have long thin legs with tiny feet. Larger Asses such as the [Poitou](#) or Andalusian types may appear opposite, with huge, heavy shaggy legs and large round feet. Good legs and feet are essential for breeding Mules, as a good foot is much preferable to a large body on tiny stick legs and feet.

The vocal qualities are the frequently remembered differences in the long-ears. The donkey's voice is a raspy, brassy Bray, the characteristic Aw-EE, Aw-EE sound. Jacks especially seem to enjoy braying, and will "sound off" at any opportunity.

Although many donkeys are the familiar gray-dun [color](#), there are many other coat shades. Most donkeys, regardless of coat color, will have dorsal stripes and shoulder crosses, dark ear marks, as well as the "light points" - white muzzle and eye rings, and white belly and inner leg. Leg barring ("garters" or "zebra stripes") may be present as well. Small dark spots right at the throatlatch, called "collar buttons" are a good identifying marking and occur occasionally. These typical donkey markings may be passed on in part or whole to Mule or Hinny offspring.

Colors in the donkey range from the gray shades of gray-dun to brown, a rare bay (though not as red-toned as in horses) , black, light-faced roan (both red and gray), variants of sorrel (Registry term - RED), the blue-eyed Ivory (also called cream or white-phase), Frosted/spotted White, and a unique Spotted pattern. True horse pinto, horse aging gray, horse appaloosa, palomino and buckskin do not occur in the donkey.

The more unusual colors are the Dappled Roan, where the face and legs are light and the body is marked with "reverse" dapples (dark spots on a light background, as opposed to the horse dapple where the dapples themselves are light on dark), frosted gray (with light faces and legs and some white hairs in the coat) the pink-skinned, blue-eyed Ivory white, and the frosted spotted white. The frosted spotted is an apparent combination of a graying or roan with the spotted pattern, and can throw either more FSW, spotted, or frosty roan colts. The animals are best defined as a spotted animal where the skin is spotted but the color does not necessarily show through on the coat (it has roaned or "grayed"; out) . Frosted spotted white (FSW) can be identified from Ivory white by checking the skin around the eyes and muzzle. Ivory (creams) will have blue eyes and true pink skin, while FSW will have dark eyes, dark "eyeliner" and dark spotting on the skin.

Another unusual variant of the spotting line is the "tyger spot" pattern. These donkeys vary from the typical large spots over the ears, eyes, and topline. The body will be covered with small round spots resembling the appaloosa type.

Donkeys come in a variety of sizes from the [Miniature Mediterranean](#) (under 36 inches) to the elegant Mammoth Jackstock (14 hands and up). The rare French [Poitou](#) donkey, characterized by it's huge head and ears, and very thick, shaggy, curled black coat, can stand 14 to 15 hand high. (There are estimated to be about 400 purebred Poitous left in the world today.)

The types of donkeys are labeled by their sizes; 36" and under, Miniature Mediterranean, 36.01-48", Standard, 48.01" to 54" (jennets) or 56"; (jacks), Large Standard, and 54/56" and over, Mammoth Stock. There are no real populations of BREEDS of donkeys left, such as the Catalonian, Majorcan, or Andalusian. Modern donkeys can strongly resemble these ancestral breeds in TYPE, but are not classified as those breeds unless they have traceable pure-bred pedigrees to those lines.

Donkeys can be used just like horses under saddle and in harness, although donkey are

[Home \(Index\)](#)

[About donkeys](#)

[About Mules](#)

[NEW - BUYING MINIS](#)

[Zebra Hybrids](#)

[Mule Pix](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

[the BRAYER](#)

[Membership Form \(Dues\)](#)

[NEW ONLINE
MEMBERSHIP FORM](#)

(external, secure link)

[Renewal Form](#)

[About ADMS](#)

[FAQ \(frequently asked
Questions/Trivia\)
Includes info on FERTILE
MULES, twins, speed of
mules/donkeys, etc](#)

[Breeding Questions](#)

[About Jacks](#)

[VHOF \(Versitility Hall of
Fame\)](#)

[Lingo \(Terminology\)](#)

[Diseases in Longears](#)

[Foaling](#)

[What Can you Do
w/Longears?](#)

[Clubs and Organizations](#)

[Books \(Hee Haw Book
Service\)](#)

[Member Photos](#)

[Links \(Breeders and
Farms\)](#)

more laid back and self-preserving in nature. They prefer to do what is good for the donkey, which is not always what the human thinks is best (especially when it comes to getting their feet wet...). They are very friendly, and their nature makes them excellent for children. Donkeys can perform all the gaits horses or mules do (yes, some are even "gaited", exhibiting a single-foot gait), but galloping is usually not on the program unless dinner is being served.

Donkeys can also make wonderful guard animals - the right donkey gelding or jennet will take care of an entire herd of cattle, sheep or goats - the natural aversion to predators will inspire the donkey to severely discourage any canine attacks on the herd. Dogs and donkeys usually don't mix, although they can be trained to leave the house or farm dog alone!

Feeding Your Donkeys

Donkeys characteristically get by on less food than a horse of similar size, and need a lower protein content in their feed. Good grass hay and pasture is usually all a donkey needs. If grained, the protein should preferably be lower than 12%. Donkeys can founder on rich food such as alfalfa and lush spring grass. A fat donkey will develop a "roll"; on the neck, pones of fat on the barrel and over the hips that are quite unsightly. Once there, these are usually with the donkey for life. If the neck roll of fat gets too heavy, it will fall or "break over" to one side and never come upright again! Beware overfeeding these hearty creatures!

Your donkey should receive the same hoof care, worming and vaccinations that horses receive. Although some basic research has been done in independent studies on the results of vaccinations in donkeys, there is not enough conclusive proof to show that regular horse medicines, wormers and vaccinations are not effective in donkeys.

The hoof of the donkey is a little more round and upright than that of the horse, although individual hoof shape may vary greatly. Many farriers are nervous about working on donkeys - thinking the hooves are vastly different, or that donkeys are too stubborn and will kick - but a well-trained donkey can be just as easy to trim as any horse. Most donkeys don't need shoes - but if they do lots of work on hard surfaces, they might be needed. Regular trims to keep the hoof in shape are usually all that is needed. The ADMS has a hoof packet available (\$6 ppd) that can help farriers with their first donkey trims.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Donkeys bred to donkeys produced DONKEYS. Donkey, Burro, Ass, jackass, jennet, Miniature Donkey, Mammoth, Jackstock, standard, Mexican Burro - they are all terms for Donkeys.

A male donkey (Jack) bred to a female horse produces a [MULE](#). Mules can be either male or female.

A male horse (stallion) bred to a female donkey (jennet) produces a HINNY. Hinnies can be either male or female.

Where can I find a saddle that fits my donkey? (See our [More Donkeys](#) page for more information)

[Answers to more FAQ.....](#)

[Measuring Equines](#)

[Tail-less Donkeys?](#)

[On Gelding \(Castration\)](#)

[Buyers Checklist
\(BEFORE you purchase!\)](#)

[SPOTTING PIX \(pinto-spotted donkeys\)](#)

[Dear John Henry \(advise from a Mule\)](#)

[BREYER Models](#)

[One tough Mule/Bad-ass Mule](#)

[New info -
Medical/Shots/Worming](#)

[FEES for ADMS Services](#)

[Microchipping Notice Sheet](#)

(to inform ADMS of added chip #s for your animals) **New 6-6-08**

[Need literature?](#)

[Visit Hee Haw Books](#)

[Proportions/comparisons](#)

[Measuring for Dwarfism in Donkeys](#)

[Registered Farm Names
A-E F-J K-O P-S T-Z](#)

[Farm names End 06 Feb-
June 07](#)

[July-Dec 2007](#) Prefixes
(working on it)

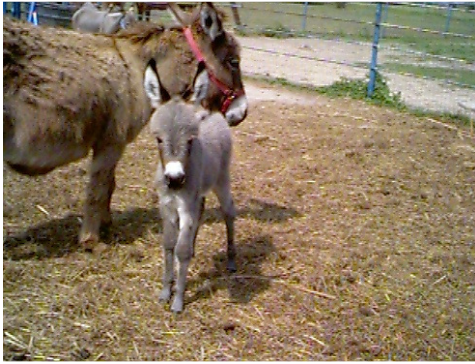
(Farm names added 8-20/21-08)

Prefix/Name Rules (see Rules)

Registration Info

[Registration Form](#) or
[NEW PDF VERSION](#)

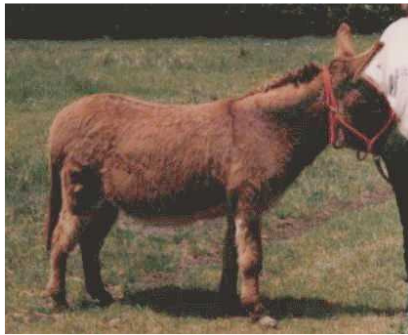




Miniature Donkey (foal)
Under 36" at the withers.



Light red Miniature Mediterranean
Donkey Jack, "Fame".



A small standard donkey, very round and fat. See the bulge of fat on the neck. And no, HE is not going to have a baby!



Standard donkeys - can be grouped as
Small standards (36.01-40") and Standard
donkeys (40.01-48")

Large Standard donkey (this is
Crimson, 52" tall). The height
range is 48.01" to 54" (jennets) or
56" (Jacks)

[***OR New Secure
ONLINE FORM ***](#)

[PLEASE READ HERE
before using online form
SEE NOTE ALSO RE
Update to FORM](#)

[Registration Rules 1](#)

[Registration Rules 2](#)

[Registry Checklist](#)

[Inspection Form](#)

[Transfer Form](#) or [NEW
PDF Version](#)

[Update Form](#) or [NEW
PDF Version](#)

[Stud Report](#)

[Breeding Certificate
\(on the reg form\)](#)

[Stud Contract](#)

[Sales Contract](#)

[Code of Ethics \(PDF\)](#)

REGISTRY changes 2009

[Permanent ID OPTIONS
2010](#)

The ONLINE Registration
form is up and running!

Please use it for new
registrations of donkeys or
mules of all sizes. Link is
above.

[VHOF/Versatility Hall of
Fame](#)

[NMDA or ADMS?](#)



Mammoth Jackstock - jennets are over 54" in height, jacks are over 56". Some will be in excess of 62", but they may tend to get too leggy and lose substance. Anything between 15-16 hands is usual. A VERY few have been over 17 hands.

New to owning a donkey? We recommend our book *The Definitive Donkey!* Available through the ADMS/[Hee Haw Book Service](#). We are the authors, publishers and distributors. Buy direct, don't be conned by huge prices on the internet!!!

\$25. ppd in the USA (Inquire for Canadian or overseas shipping). [Email us](#) or use paypal now!

Want to know more about Donkeys and Longears? Join the American Donkey and Mule Society and receive the BRAYER magazine. 112 pages bi-monthly (6x yearly), Just \$23 US, \$30 for Canada, \$45 for overseas members. Back issues from past years also available.

The information provided on this page and website is (C) by the ADMS. Permission is granted to copy for educational purposes (ie school papers, 4-H work, general education websites, fairs, expos) provided that the work is cited as provided courtesy of the American Donkey and Mule Society. (c) 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009