

Tips on Purchasing Miniature Donkeys

Zoning

Evaluate your situation, Is your property zoned per the local municipalities for livestock.



Amount of Land

Donkeys originated from Northern Africa and adapted to sparse vegetation. Large pastures of lush grass can be detrimental to their health. Particularly with Miniature Donkeys, obesity can be an issue. The amount of land depends upon your situation. In general, one acre per equine is recommended. However, in situations where foliage is lush, a smaller “dry lot” with a few hours of grazing on pasture may work.

Do Donkeys require shelter?

Yes. Donkeys do not adapt as well to a cold and wet environment as horses. Shelter is a “must” to provide protection from sun, wind, rain, and other weather conditions. At a minimum, your shelter should be 3-sided. Understand the weather patterns, and place your shelter allowing protection from incoming storms, wind, etc.

Will One Donkey thrive on my farm?

It is the belief of the American Donkey Association that a single donkey is a lonely donkey. There are people that feel a donkey adapts well with other equine (horses, mules etc.); however, experienced breeders feel a Donkey is the happiest in the company of another Donkey. The best scenario is two geldings together or two jennets together. Some geldings and jennets do well together, not all. Intact jacks are only for breeding purposes and must otherwise be isolated from other jacks and jennets.

Assess your Objective in Owning a Donkey

For your happiness and the donkeys, look for the right donkey personality and body type. Are your Donkeys to be farm companions? Is your interest to start a breeding program? Are your donkeys to be used for therapy work?



What Donkeys breeds exist in the US?

In the United States there are 3 recognized breeds depending upon size. Miniature donkeys do not exceed 36 inches measured at the highest point of the withers. Standard Donkeys are between 36 inches and less than 56.8 inches for jacks; and 56 inches for jennets and geldings. The Mammoth Donkey measurements as per the American Jack Stock registry. In a very limited number are Poitou donkeys which are registered through The Livestock Conservancy.



Do Donkeys make good livestock guardians?

The Number One donkey rescued is a livestock guardian donkey. Many farmers will put an intact jack in with livestock to guard against wildlife. Many Donkeys seek friendship with another Donkey and will resort to attempting to play with smaller livestock and harm them. Plus, Donkeys have different needs in regard to care and nutrition than other livestock species. American Donkey Association never recommends a Donkey for livestock protection. Livestock Guard Dogs are bred for that purpose.

What type of fencing is required for Donkeys?

Generally recommended is livestock fencing which does not allow for packs of dogs or roaming wildlife to enter. Many breeders will use “No Climb Horse Fencing” to protect Donkeys from exterior predators. Particularly with Miniature Donkeys, there have been many cases of dogs attacking defenseless donkeys. It is important to keep this in mind when installing fencing.

Seek Professionals

Farrier

Donkeys require on-going hoof care with farrier visits recommended between every 6-8 weeks. Locate a farrier willing to travel to your farm and familiar with trimming Donkeys.

Veterinarian

A good relationship with an equine veterinarian is highly recommended. There are routine protocols pertaining to vaccinations, worming and dental care to ensure proper teeth alignment. Although we hope this never occurs, emergency visits are sometimes required.

Nutrition

Donkeys originated from North Africa and their composition is acclimated to a sparser vegetation. Obesity is a genuine concern, and a diet high in sugars and protein is not recommended. Donkeys require a high fiber diet. Diet will vary depending upon your geographic region. In general, a mixed grass hay and mineral supplement is ideal for Donkeys. Some owners offer straw along with grass hay. It is advised to understand the availability of types of hay in your region and identify a supplier. Pregnant jennets have additional requirements and it is best to check with your vet.





On-Line Technology

The Internet has enhanced communication and awareness globally. However, scammers are a real issue. Unfortunately, many people have been scammed out of deposits for Donkeys, deposits for transport, etc. Get to know who you are purchasing from. Go to the farm and see the Donkey you desire to purchase. If that is not an option, ask for references, ask many questions, ask for videos of the animal. Always be cautious.

SUMMARY

Donkeys are highly intelligent, very personable and amazing animals. Owning Donkeys is a blessing, they deserve respect, top notch care and love.