



DONKEY SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

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KEEPING DONKEYS ON SMALL ACREAGE

Some points to keep in mind

By Leanne Davey

- A single donkey will become lonely and may begin to call for a friend. The neighbours may become upset.
- On small acreage you may not be able to rest the paddock during the grass growing season (spring and autumn) and paddocks under high use may become sour or quickly turn to dust or a muddy disaster. Having at least two paddocks will allow one to be rested.
- Worm burdens will be higher and worming should be done every 6-8 weeks year round. The active ingredient in your worm paste should be changed every year to prevent resistance developing.
- You will probably need to hand feed something like molo mix (which is a combination of chaff and molasses for most of the year – a quarter of a 10 litre bucket once per day depending on the size and condition of the donkey).
- Hay should be fed during the winter months because during the digestion of hay, heat is produced. (rugging helps keep them in better condition over the colder months but few horse rugs fit properly. Rugging is not critical unless the animal has inadequate shelter or is ill, old or in poor condition).
- An open fronted shelter should be provided with a floor of packing sand to keep them off damp ground – this helps keep their hooves sound over winter.
- If you allow the donkeys to roam around your garden for extra grazing they may eat ferns, bulbs, shrubs, trees etc. Not all these are safe for them to eat. Some plants that are dangerous for donkeys are rhododendrons, lilies, rhubarb, oleander, wisteria, bracken and dandelions; it also depends on how much is eaten. Garden trimmings may be given to them but keep in mind which plants may cause problems. Lawn clippings should not be given to donkeys as they ferment in the gut during digestion and cause colic.
- During the dry summer months the donkey droppings may smell and also attract flies. On small areas it is recommended to collect and dispose of droppings. Some people dig them in to the garden or compost or give away to use as fertiliser.
- A jack (entire male) donkey tends to be more active and noisy and he is not suitable for a small acreage. A jenny or gelding or two jennies or two geldings are a better choice.
- The smaller donkeys generally need less feed and are easier to handle.
- Feed should be kept in feed drums and hay stacked under cover. It is not good policy to locate donkey feed near the house or garage as rats and mice will be quick to colonise these areas.
- A mineral block should be provided for the donkeys at all times and when they are lacking in minerals they will use the block.