



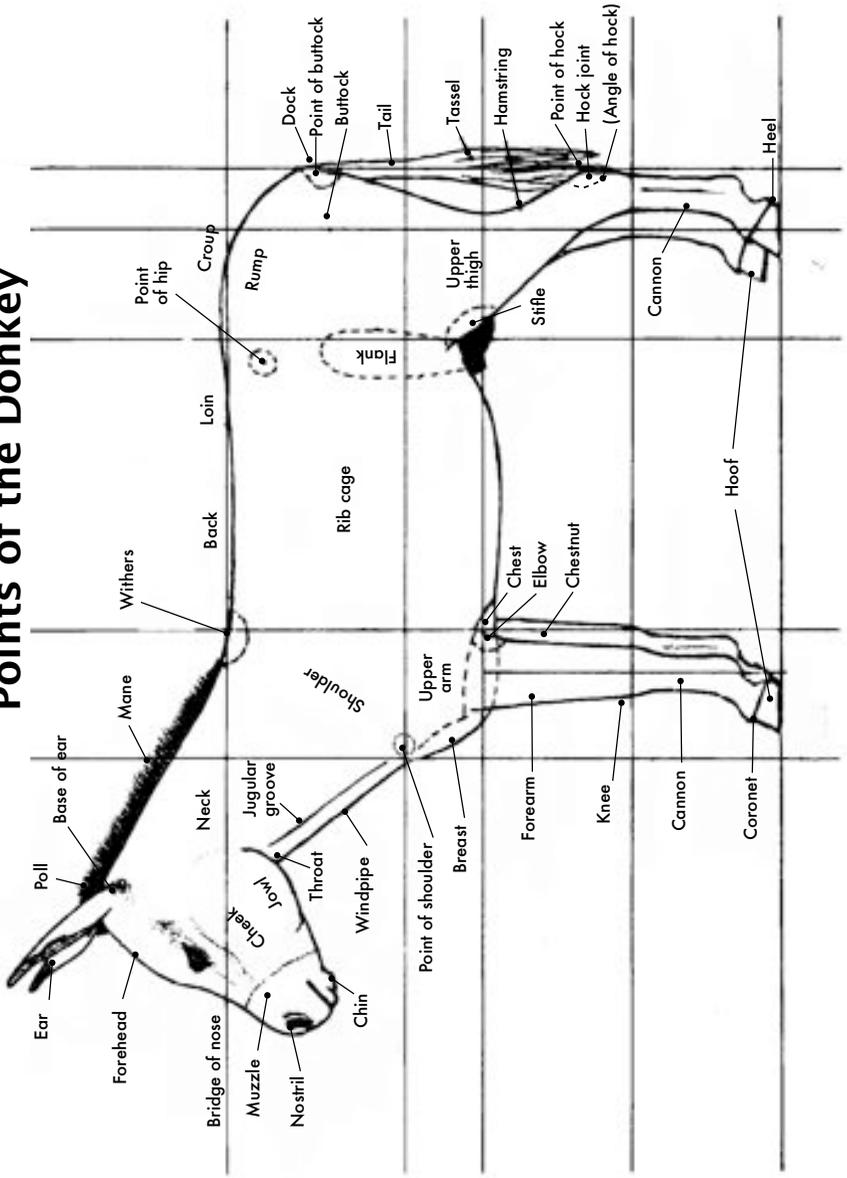
www.donkey-mule.org.nz

Standards of Conformation & Type for Donkeys



July 2009

Points of the Donkey



Introduction

These Donkey & Mule Society standards for donkeys were 33 years in the writing! The people who set up the Donkey Breed Society in November 1974 drafted breed standards and Pearl Wilson did a lot of the work. However, they were never fully agreed upon and were put aside.

In 2003 the Executive began the intrepid journey to produce breed standards for the Society. This was successfully achieved and the Executive presented the Donkey & Mule Society of New Zealand, Standards of Donkey Conformation and Type at the 2006 AGM. This is the second edition of the standards, the text of which largely remains the same; but we now have an example of our New Zealand breed the Ponui Island donkey and have also clarified the two different breeds of Mammoth Asses, the studbook American Jackstock Mammoth and the American Mammoth.

I wish to thank the original group lead by Pearl Wilson who created the first draft of the standards, and more recently the Donkey & Mule Society Executive and interested breeders, who provided input into their further development. Thanks also to Jo-Anne Kokas of the Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary, NSW, Australia who allowed us to use some of her personal line drawings. In addition, my grateful thanks to Lea Hullett who has done a wonderful job of preparing the text and photos (showing examples of the different breeds of donkeys in New Zealand) for final publication.

Andrea Thomson
Show Secretary
July 2009

Overall Appearance

The donkey should be a compact symmetrical animal with no appearance of coarseness and be attractive and pleasing to the eye. The head should be carried moderately high, the expression to be one of alertness and kindness. The donkey should be proud and graceful in movement.

Temperament

The temperament of the donkey is most important. A donkey of good temperament is to be gentle, good humoured and intelligent. Any sign of aggression, bad temper or meanness should not be tolerated.

Jacks should have a bold masculine appearance, must be well muscled and have a proud carriage. A jack without both testicles will be disqualified from breed classes.

Jennies should show an elegant feminine character with sweet expression. Coarseness and/or masculinity about the front are faults. They tend to be longer in the body and finer in head, neck and legs than the jack.

Geldings will not usually look as masculine as a jack, yet should have a masculine appearance without being either too refined or coarse.

Heads

Quality shows itself first in the head. The length of the head should be in proportion to the overall size of the body. As in other animals the proportions of the head are considered a rather accurate index of the body proportions. The head length should not be too long and be approximately two fifths of the body length, nor should it be too heavy. This will give balance to overall appearance. It should be well set on the neck and be carried upright to balance the hindquarters. In the miniature donkey the head must be in proportion to the rest of the body, as an overlarge head can be a sign of dwarfism.

- **Muzzle** - small and tapering, the flesh soft and very delicate.
- **Forehead** - a good width between the eyes indicates plenty of breathing room (sinuses) and gives good attachment for the jaw muscles. It is also said to be a sign of intelligence and good humour.
- **Profile** - the head is to be straight or slightly concave (dished). Masculinity and femininity are important features. In some larger breeds such as Poitou or American Mammoth a slight to medium convex shape (roman nose) is acceptable.
- **Occipital bone** - (between the eyes) to be prominent to give good attachment to the suspensory ligaments of the head and neck.
- **Lips** - should be level and closed
- **Nostrils** - to be capable of good expansion to enable the animal to breathe freely; they are to be nearly parallel with the profile in repose.
- **Upper jaw incisors** - to meet the lower evenly. They may extend slightly beyond the lower, but no more than 1/8th inch. This can be

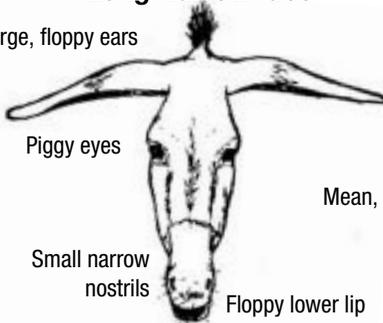
felt as a slight bump with the fingers. The top jaw, at the molars, to be the same width as bottom jaw, the lower jaw wide with well rounded cheek bones. The hollow under lower jaws to be wide and free from flesh to allow plenty of room for the passage of windpipe and gullet.

- **Ears** - are to be well set, not too wide, and tapering to a point. They are to be carried parallel, alertly, and to be in proportion to the head and general appearance. Mammoths should have long, well set ears that are carried erect.
- **Eyes** - large, slightly slanting, dark and clear with an expression of good humour and intelligence. They are to be placed low on the head, set wide apart and not protruding.

Undesirable heads

'Long Narrow face'

Large, floppy ears



Piggy eyes

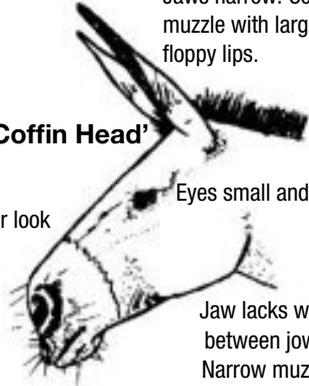
Small narrow nostrils

Floppy lower lip

No definition to head. Jaws narrow. Coarse muzzle with large floppy lips.

'Coffin Head'

Mean, sour look



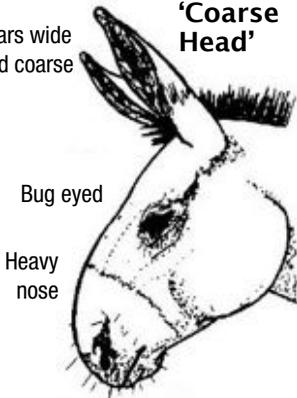
Eyes small and mean

Jaw lacks width between jowls. Narrow muzzle.

Nostrils not fine and flexible

'Coarse Head'

Ears wide and coarse



Bug eyed

Heavy nose

Thick through gullet

'Hammer Head'

High set eyes

Face too long

Coarse lips that do not cover teeth



Low set ears

No width in jowl

Coarse heavy muzzle

Faults of the head

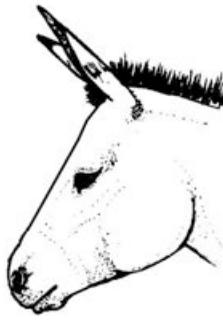
A pronounced convex profile (heavy Roman nose) is undesirable because of its plainness. Ears set too low make the donkey appear plain and unintelligent; ears set too far back made the donkey look sour and sulky, especially when accompanied by a pronounced Roman nose. Lop ears make a head look common. Eyes too small (pig eyes) bulging or prominent eyes (indicating short-sightedness) are faults. Mouth undershot (Monkey mouth) or overshot (Parrot mouth) are faults and obvious problems from a nutrition point of view. Lower lip which is longer than the upper is a fault.

Examples of desirable heads

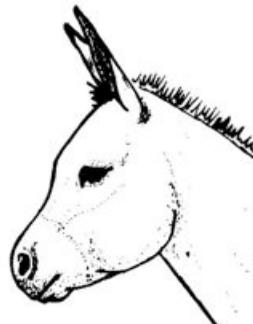
Jennies should show an elegant feminine character with sweet expression. Coarseness and/or masculinity about the front are faults. They tend to be longer in the body and finer in head, neck and legs than the jack.



Roman Nose



Straight profile



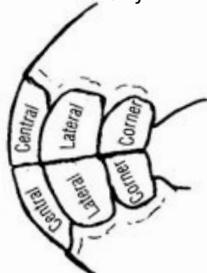
Dished Face

Faults of the mouth

'A'

Correct bite

Top and bottom teeth meet evenly



'B'

Parrot Mouth

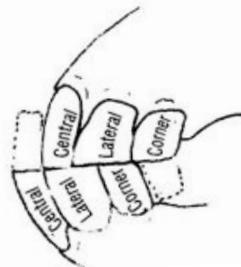
Top jaw overhangs lower jaw

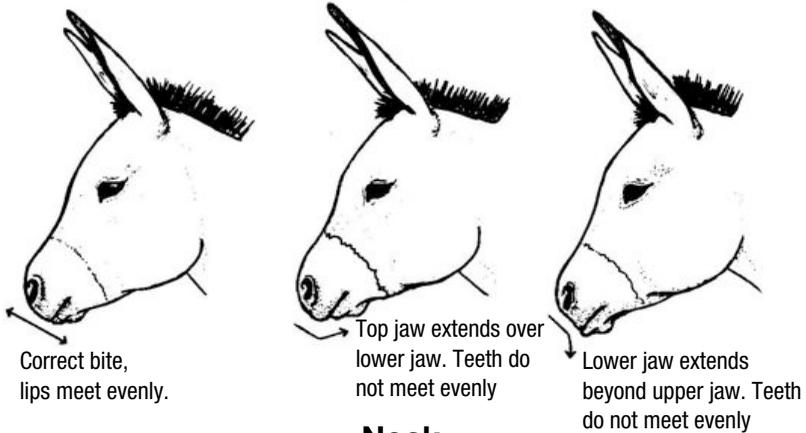


'C'

Monkey Mouth

Lower jaw protrudes beyond upper jaw.



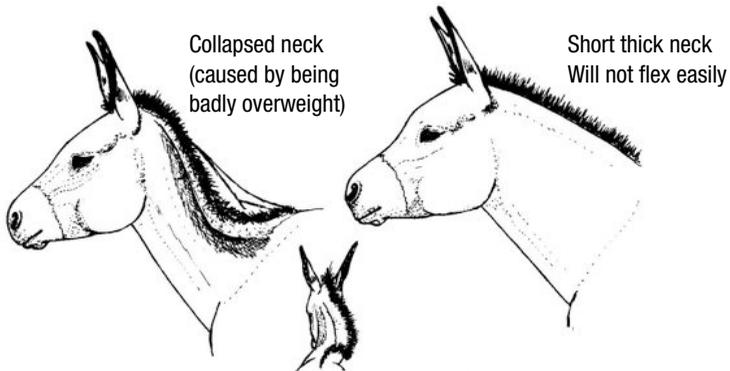


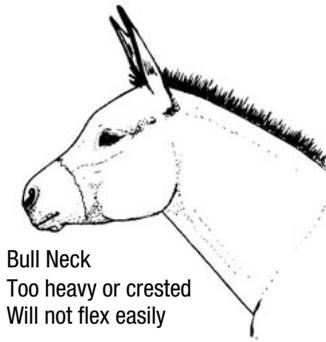
Neck

To be in proportion to the length of the foreleg. The neck muscles draw the foreleg up and forward. The longer the foreleg, the longer the neck. There is to be sufficient length for ease of foraging. The neck is to be flexible and not too thick as this puts more weight on the forelegs, i.e. geldings and jennies tend to have less front leg breakdown than jacks. The neck should be straight on both upper and lower surfaces, the whole to be well fleshed and carried without drooping. Jennies tend to be more slender in the neck than jacks.

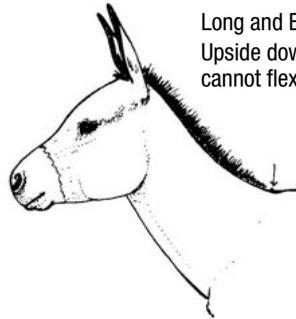
Faults of the Neck

Ewe neck, where the upper surface of the neck shows a distinct concavity. A **heavy roll of fat** along the upper surface is to be faulted. A pronounced dip in front of the withers is unsightly and is caused by lack of muscle development.





Bull Neck
Too heavy or crested
Will not flex easily



Long and Ewe neck
Upside down neck,
cannot flex.

Body

This is to be short. A great distance between fore and hind legs lessens the ability for them to work together and thus there is less rigidity of the back giving less ability for weight carrying. Jennies, however, tend to be slightly longer in the back than jacks. It is desirable if **withers** are fairly prominent as this gives good attachment of extension muscles of the head, neck and suspensory ligaments. **Shoulders** should be clean cut and as sloping as possible, although straight shoulders are normal in donkeys. **Back and loins** are to give the appearance of being as short and level as possible. There is to be good cover to the breastbone. A well rounded chest with ribs of good length, well sprung and inclined to the rear denotes good breathing ability. The lower line of the chest, behind the girth, should be parallel to the ground for at least half its length. The deeper the girth the better. All Mammoths should have at least 61 inches heart girth.

Condition: The donkey should be in good weight with ribs just palpable under the coat but without appearing ribby.

Sway back; concave or hollow between withers and croup. **Narrow breast,** bearing in mind that donkeys are narrower than horses. Narrow breast commonly accompanies lack of muscling and constitution. **Straight ribs,** i.e. vertical. Inclined ribs allow the back to be short but chest large for breathing ability. **Extremely wide chest** a fault. **High croup;** a croup that is higher than the withers places the hind legs too far under, giving an awkward gait because of excessive weight on the rear legs. This can also cause clipping, i.e. rear toe hitting front leg. **Roach back.** Convex; raised between withers and croup. Does not permit sufficient extension and flexion of legs in taking long and rapid strides.

The Loin Region

The loin includes the portion of the top which extends from the last rib to the hips. Short, heavy loin muscles are demanded because they furnish the chief means of support of the lumbar vertebrae, “coupled up good and close”.

Faults of the Loin Region

Wasp-waisted, herring-gutted and hound-gutted are all terms for the animal that has insufficient muscling of the loin.

Croup

This includes the region between the hips and the buttocks. The upper surface of the croup to be gently sloping with the tail high and well-attached, the tail neat and straight. Buttocks should be well fleshed. (Australian-Teamster donkeys tend to have a short croup, placed well back).

Faults of the Croup

Goose-rumped, tapering markedly from hips to head of tail. Tail set too low. This tends to give a pointed appearance to the rear end, rather than the correct gently rounded buttocks. Usually accompanied by weak hind-quarters.

The tail should be straight without kinks – as this can be an hereditary fault or caused by injury.



a. ideal



b. weak dipped loins



c. peaked goose rump

The Foot, side view



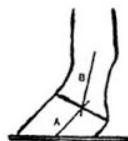
a. ideal



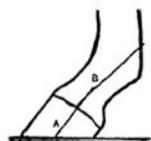
b. club foot



c. sloping foot



d. broken foot upright pastern



e. broken foot sloping pastern

Forelegs

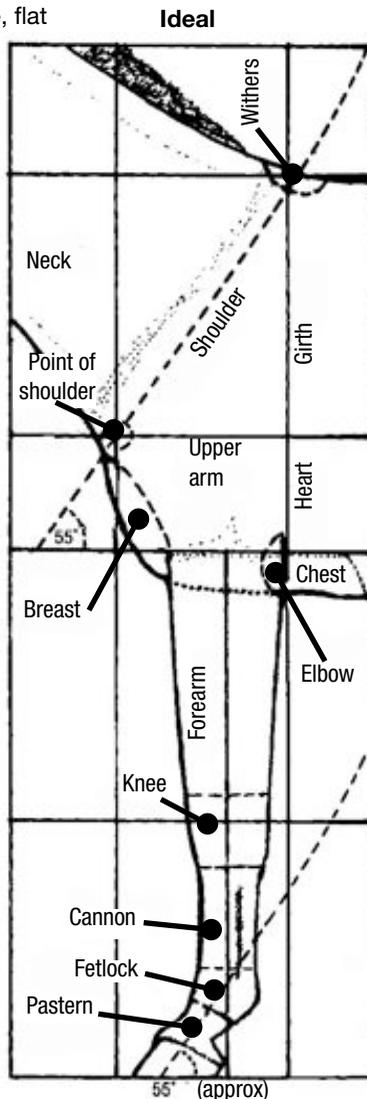
Limbs: bone to be in proportion to the type of donkey. **Shoulder bone** to be large for weight carrying and should be sloping or angled and well muscled. The **elbow** to be neat and not prominent, capable of being withdrawn away from side of chest, i.e. not tied to chest. The **forearms** to be strong and well muscled. **Knees** wide, flat

and slightly convex. The **cannon bone**, which connects the knee to the fetlock, should be short. The mid cannon bone circumference for mammoths should be 8 inches for jacks and 7.5 inches for jennies and geldings. The **tendons** being hard and clearly defined. The **pastern**, from fetlock to hoof, to be of moderate length and sloping. The **coronet** band at the top of the hoof and the hoof itself should be hard, strong and even surfaced. Strong bone is important, but thick, coarse legs should be avoided. For proportions of length of foreleg, heel should be level with elbow when the knee is bent right up. The forelegs should be straight when viewed from the front.

Ideal

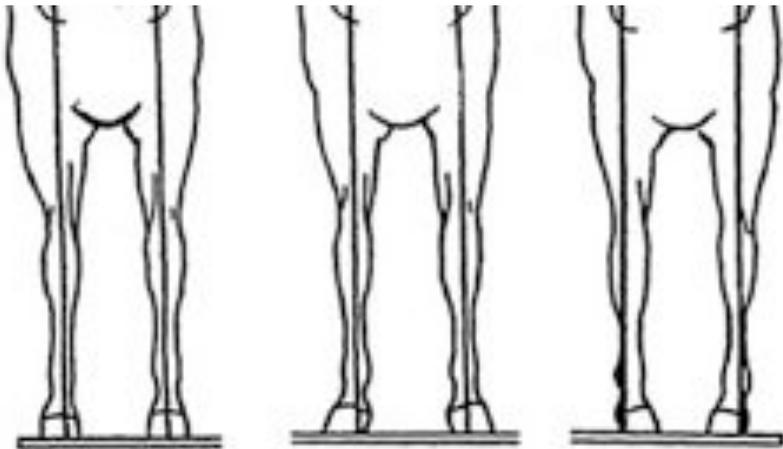
The vertical line divides the legs evenly, running through the centre of the forearm, knee, cannon bone, pastern and hoof. The gap between the forearms should be about the same as the distance the feet when the donkey is standing up square.

Faults of the legs are caused by incorrect placement of the bones. Deviation from the correct conformation usually causes unsoundness.



Forelegs, front view

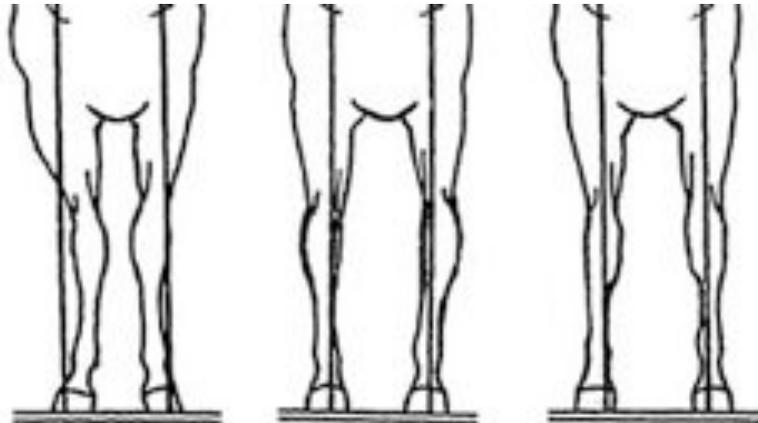
- a. **Ideal**
- b. **Splay footed:** tend to cross forefeet and liable to brush them.
- c. **Pigeon toed:** prone to stumbling and a paddling motion especially at the trot.
- d. **Knock kneed:** when severe the donkey will swing foot inwards when trotting and may knock the opposite knee.
- e. **Bow legged:** knees bent outwards, the donkey will paddle and throw front feet outward when trotting.
- f. **Bench kneed:** The knees are out of alignment with the cannon bone, it is likely that the donkey will plait, go close and cut itself. The donkey is prone to lameness because the weight does not travel straight down the leg and puts pressure on the inside of the cannon bone.
- g. **Narrow chested:** No width of chest, usually found in rangy, slab sided donkeys with fine bone. Causes a weak and unsound conformation.
- h. **Broad chested:** Tends to rolling motion at a trot, also has a short stride.
- i. **Base wide:** Feet too far apart with distance between the feet greater than the distance between the forearms. This problem will cause 'striking' the opposite leg at the gate. Toes may also be turned out.



a. ideal

b. splay-footed

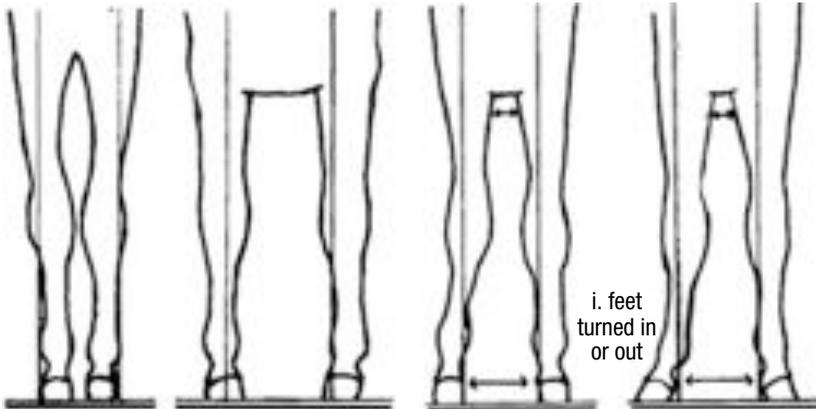
c. pigeon-toed



d. knock-kneed

e. bow-kneed

f. bench-kneed



g. legs too close,
narrow chested

h. legs too far apart,
broad chested

i. feet
turned in
or out

j. base wide

Front legs side view →

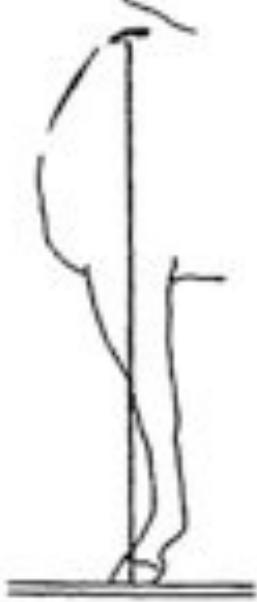
- a. **Ideal:**
- b. **Over at knee:** Muscles of leg less powerful.
- c. **Back at knee:** This is a bad fault, it causes excessive wear to the back tendons
- d. **Tied in at knee:** Inhibits free movement
- e. **Front leg slopes forward:** Disposes donkey to navicular disease
- f. **Calf knee:** Congenital condition, places greater strain on the tendons and ligaments can cause the forelegs to wear out prematurely.



a. ideal



b. over at knee



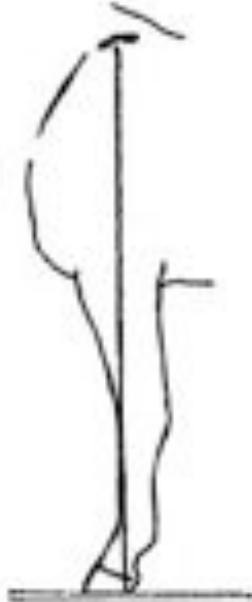
c. back at knee



d. tied in at knee



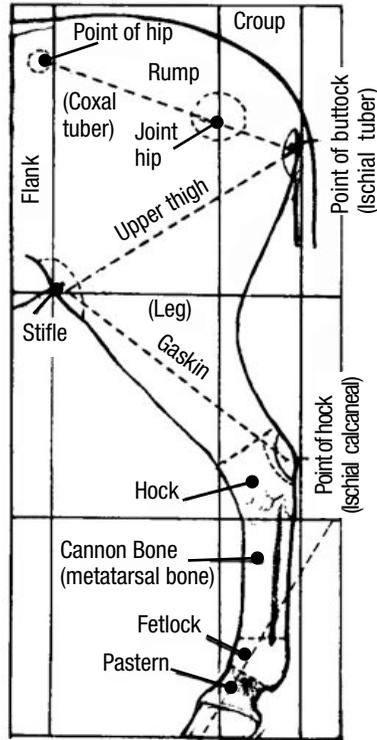
e. front leg slopes forward



f. calf knee

Hind Legs

The thigh is to be strong and muscular, the points of the hocks to be turned slightly inwards when the donkey is standing. The cannon bones to be in a parallel plane. No unsightly gap between the buttocks should be present.



Faults of the Hind Legs

- a. **Ideal:**
- b. **Sickle hocked:** Applies to hocks that have too much set when viewed from the side.
- c. **Camped out Behind:** Places too much weight and therefore strain on forelegs
- d. **Leg too straight:** An extremely straight hock as viewed from the side is usually accompanied by unsoundness known as campiness or stringiness. Allows only short strides
- e. & f. **Ideal**
- g. **Bandy Legged:** Indicates weakness in the hind quarters, especially when combined with a sideways twisting of the hock when moving. If the hocks are turned outwards in a standing position it is a defect known as limber hocks or rotating hocks.
- h. **Cow Hocked:** Applies to hocks which are turned inwards, with cannon bones not parallel and feet turned outwards. Hocks may turn in slightly but the cannon bones must be parallel to allow the donkey to move out straight.



The Rear Legs, Side View



a. ideal



b. sickle-hocked

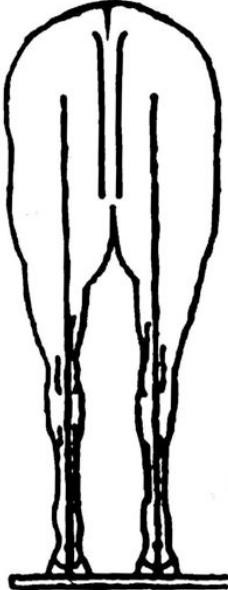


c. camped out-behind

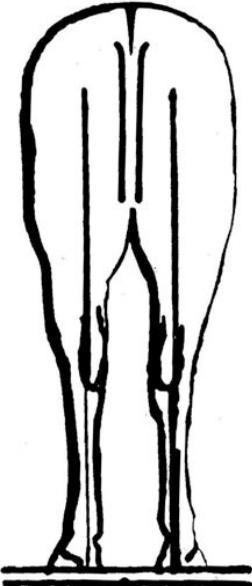


d. leg too straight

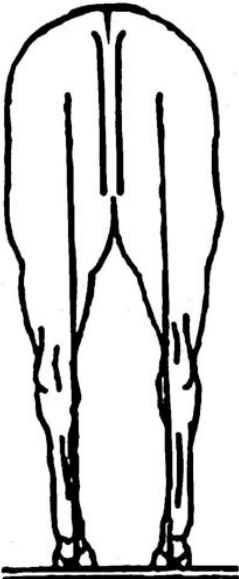
The Hindquarters, rear View



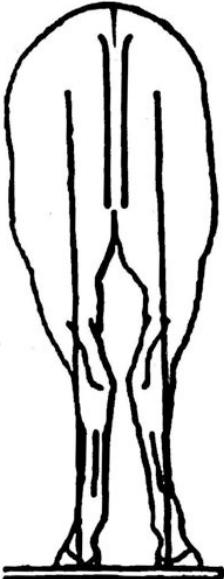
e. ideal



f. ideal-consistently slightly turned out



g. bandy-legged



h. cow-hocked

Examples of Type for Donkeys

Ponui Island



Australian Teamster



American Mediterranean Miniature



English/Irish



American Mammoth Jackstock



Mammoth



Action

Active, smooth, straight, free flowing and covering the ground evenly with a good length of stride. Level and true at all gaits. Smart, light and active.

Coat

To be in well groomed condition, not dry or staring. No clipping out other than tidying stray hairs.

Markings & Colouring

All colours are determined in the summer coat. Winter coats, clipped coats and foal coats will be deceptive as to colour.

Grey Dun: The most common of donkey colours. It is the original 'wild' colour. Body colour is some shade of grey or tannish grey ranging from very light oatmeal or light silver colour, to a very dark charcoal colour. Cross dorsal stripe, ear marks and often leg stripes (garters) or black dots on the lower part of the neck below the jowls are found. Grey-dun donkeys may have black muzzles and no light points (belly and legs as well as muzzle are usually lighter than the coat in all donkeys) and still be the grey dun colour.

Brown: (Light, Dark, Very Dark)

Black: (with cross, no visible cross). Black is sometimes a difficult colour to determine. There are two kinds of black, a raven black, which is easy to determine and a duller black, which could often be a very dark brown. If the donkey is 'jet' black or 'raven' black with no visible cross and stripe it can be listed as black. If the coat appears black but the cross, stripe and lower legs are visibly darker black it is called **Black with a cross:** (smoky black). Dark brown describes donkeys whose coats are very dark brown in appearance with darker cross, stripe and lower legs. This applies especially for foals. **Charcoal** is not a shade of black but the very darkest shade of grey-dun.

White: (Frosted spotted white, or Ivory/Blue eyed White). Due to many factors White is not always snow white. Often it is yellowish. If a donkey has blue eyes and pink skin it is registered as **White* (Bew) Blue-eyed white.**

Although there is no true pink-eyed albino in equines, the term albino- white is accepted in equine circles. The descriptive term is Ivory. Dark-eyed white donkeys with mottled skin are spotted and not true white.

Broken Coloured: This is always listed as whatever the base colour is first, then 'and white broken coloured' e.g. Grey 'and white broken coloured' or 'brown and white broken coloured'. The eyes are dark. The skin (especially around the eyes, muzzle, and genitals) is broken coloured pink and black.

The body may actually show mottled (patched) grey and pink skin, but the colour does not appear on the coat. A dark or partial cross, coloured ear tips, tail-tip, striped hooves, dark spots may be present in the foal coat, which fades out in the adult coat, leaving the broken coloured skin as the only indicator of the broken coloured pattern.

Red: For all the red shades that are not bay, red roan or reddish brown. The description should be "sorrel". The majority of red donkeys have extensive white points as adults. If they are clearly frosty or dappled red roan it should be noted on their papers.

Roan: Chocolate roan. Dark chocolate and white or fawn hairs mingling, dark predominating on the body. Light on face and legs. Mane and tail unusually dark. Blue roan: As above, but grey hairs replacing dark chocolate. Pink roan: As above, but fawn or chestnut hairs replacing the dark. Roans do not usually have a cross.

Colour relating to particular breeds

Australian Teamsters: Any colour except broken coloured.

Height

Good conformation is not affected by height. It should not matter what the height of the donkey is when considering whether a donkey has good conformation.

Miniature

36 inches and under at the wither (9 hh), measured at 3 years with a strong recommendation of a minimum height of 30 inches for jennies and 29 inches for jacks. This is to prevent loss of potential reproductive fitness. Small size may also adversely affect conformation and balance.

Standard

Small standard height	Over 9 hh, but under 10.2 hh
Standard	10.2 hh to 12 hh
Large standard	12 hh to 14 hh

Measurements for specific breeds

American Mammoth Jackstock:

Jackstock Jacks at 5 years of age must be:-

- No less than 14 2 hh at the wither
- At least 61 inches around the heart girth
- At least 8 inches mid cannon bone circumference

Jackstock Jennies at 5 years of age must be:-

- No less than 14 hh at the wither.
- At least 61 inches around the heart girth.
- At least 7.5 inches mid cannon bone circumference.

Mammoth Jacks at 5 years of age must be:-

- No less than 14 2 hh at the wither.
- At least 61 inches around the heart girth.
- At least 8 inches mid cannon bone circumference.

Mammoth Jennies and Geldings at 5 years of age must be:-

- No less than 14 hh at the wither.
- At least 61 inches around the heart girth.
- At least 7.5 inches mid cannon bone circumference.

American Miniature Mediterranean:

- 36 inches and under at the wither (9 hh) at 3 years. With a strong recommendation of a minimum height of 30 inches for jennies and 29 inches for jacks

Australian Teamster:

- 11 hh to 14 hh by 5 years of age.

English/Irish:

- 11 hh and under at 4 years of age.

Ponui Island:

- No height requirement.

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