



BREED REGISTRATION RULES

American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey (AMMD)

OVERVIEW

American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey (AMMD) is the official name of a miniature donkey with American/Mediterranean bloodlines. The registry does not use the terms Sicilian and Sardinian because these donkeys are a mixture of animals from Sicily, Sardinia, Ethiopia (at least one foundation jack was imported from 'Abyssinia' - Ethiopia) and untraced stock in the United States. Since the foundation stock came from around the Mediterranean Sea and they have originally been imported from the USA the term American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey is used as the official breed name in New Zealand.

HISTORY

Miniature Donkeys originated in the Mediterranean area of Northern Africa in ancient times and more recently from the islands of Sicily and Sardinia off the west coast of Italy. Over time the distinctions between the two island populations blurred and they are now considered one breed properly called Miniature Mediterranean Donkeys. They are simply referred to as Miniature Donkeys in North America.

Purebred Miniature Donkeys in the Mediterranean area are rapidly disappearing, as the small donkeys are being bred with the larger breeds. For this reason, the Donkeys in North America have global genetic value. At the conclusion of DNA studies done by the Department of Veterinary Science, University of Kentucky, it was found that there is a biochemical signature (DNA) for the Miniature Donkey that is distinct from the Standard Donkey. Today in Sardinia, there are thought to be only a hundred relatively pure Sardinian Donkeys left. Fortunately numbers in the US and Canada are strong and are increasing since the first donkeys arrived in the United States in the early 1900's. Approximately 2,179 animals were registered in 1995 and the current population is estimated between 30,000 and 40,000 in the U.S.

The original Mediterranean Miniature Donkey was not miniaturised, but a proper miniature working animal, stocky, draft type, strong boned and well muscled. They have a sweet sociable disposition. At maturity (3years), it is able to pull a cart or carry a pack as it did in its native Sicily and Sardinia. Their average height is 34 inches with a maximum of 36 inches allowed for the breed registration. In the United States Donkey Breeds are determined by Size, not Lineage.

Robert Green, a New York stockbroker with a farm in New Jersey, first imported miniature Donkeys from the Mediterranean to the United States in 1929. He bought seven Sardinian donkeys, sight unseen, while on a trip to Europe. Dogs killed three of the imported Jennies only a few months after their arrival, but the three surviving Jennies, 'Miranda, Palermo and Suzanne', and jack 'Impheus', became the foundation stock for the Green herd. One of the Jennies was pregnant and on Columbus Day 1929, she gave birth to a little jack who was named 'Christopher Columbus', the first miniature donkey born in the USA.

Robert Green particularly enjoyed driving the donkeys to his extensive collection of vehicles, including sleds, chariots, woven baskets and imported Italian antique carts. He is quoted as saying "Miniature Donkeys possess the affectionate nature of a Newfoundland, the resignation of a cow, the durability of a mule, the courage of a tiger, and the intellectual capability only slightly inferior to man's."

In 1935 Green had a herd of 52 donkeys. He only sold a few of his cherished little donkeys when his herd became too large. Among his buyers were Mr. Richard Sagendorph, Henry T. Morgan and August Busch, Jr. (whose donkeys one can find in pedigrees with the 'Belleau' prefix, and whose stud still survives today). These families also imported more of the little donkeys as well and were the original developers of today's donkey stock.

In the early 1950's, Daniel & Bea Langfeld bought their first miniature donkey, Pepi, from August Busch, Jr. of St. Louis, MO, as a pet for their daughter who had cerebral palsy. The Langfelds established the Danby Farm in Omaha, Nebraska where they raised show quality Shetland ponies and Miniature donkeys. They were the first professional breeders of miniature donkeys in the United States, eventually having as many as 60 to 225 miniature donkeys in their herd.

Mrs Langfeld's concept of breed perfection was the original stocky, draft type animal with straight legs and head held erectly. She preferred jennies to be 32 inches or under and grey-dun in colour. Bea Langfeld established the original registry, The Miniature Donkey Registry of the United States in 1958. She turned the registry over to the stewardship of the American Donkey and Mule Society in Denton, Texas in 1987.

Early history of imported 100% American Miniature Mediterranean Donkeys (AMMD) registered in New Zealand

In May 1997, Jack and Maisie Hurst (Chateau Stud) imported the first three 100% AMMD donkeys into New Zealand from the USA. They were two in-foal spotted jennies, 'RCP Pocahontis' and 'Boone's Little Special' and one grey jack, 'Boone's Little Gray lad'. These were followed in 1999 by another jack and jenny 'Lil' Half Pint's Lil' Caesar II' and 'Lil'Half Pint's Tinkerbelle's Lil'Darling USA'. In 2001 Jack and Maisie imported a further three donkeys from Texas known affectionately as the TEXAN's, 'Country Music's Spade Cooley' and 'Country Music's Marty Brown' (two brown jacks) and 'Country Music's Billy Jo Spears' (a dark brown jenny).

Peter and Marion van Dijk (Clovercrest Stud) imported two jennies in 2001. From Canada the dark brown/black 'Hiwest Pizzaz' and from Vermont, New York, the sorrel, 'Ass-Pirin Acres Show Baby'. In 2003 Peter and Marion also imported the American bred sorrel jack, 'Riverside Sparky Magnito of Ass-Pirin Acres' from Tasmania. Sparky was imported to Australia in February 1996. He has the distinction of being the first American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey to be imported into Australasia. These three donkeys were followed in 2005 by a further importation of another three donkeys (a jack and two jennies) from Cyder Bay Farm, Mishicot, Wisconsin - 'Cyder's Spartacus', 'Cyder's Marmalade' and 'Cyder's Red Violet'.

In 2008, to further increase the AMMD bloodlines in New Zealand, Peter and Marion imported 'Splendor's Nestle Special Dark', a black no cross jack from Indiana, USA and 'Merry-Go-Rounds 4 Leaf Clover', a black with light points jenny from Michigan USA. They were followed in 2011 by a dark brown jenny, 'Frontier Legends Lillian' from Texas.

In 2019, Paul and Beth McVerry (Cherrybank Stud) imported a red jack, 'Ecclestone Valley Prince Harry' and a dark brown jenny 'Ecclestone Valley The Duchess' from Tasmania, both having full AMMD bloodlines.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey Register is a height as well as breed register and all AMMD's must be no taller than 36 inches (91.5 cm) at three years of age, as well as meeting blood requirements.

Jennies up to 38 inches (96.5 cm) can be registered as an over height AMMD for breeding purposes only. This is permitted only where the donkey has an AMMD pedigree with both parents registered as no taller than 36 inches (91.5cm). All over height donkeys will have an 'O' behind their registration number with the amount they are over height appearing under 'description' in their Registry record.

No foals can be registered from sires or dams with temporary registration.

For imported donkeys, the original overseas AMMD Registration Certificates must be submitted to the Registrar for verification of pure American Miniature Mediterranean bloodlines.

BLOODLINE REQUIREMENTS

Section A Pure American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey (AMMD)

- 100% AMMD**
 - A registered donkey showing 100% American Miniature Mediterranean bloodlines
 - OR**
 - Progeny of two permanently registered 100% AMMD's
 - OR**
 - Progeny of a permanently registered 87.5% AMMD and a permanently registered 100% AMMD

Section B Part American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey (AMMD)

- 87.5% AMMD**
 - Progeny of a permanently registered 75% AMMD and a permanently registered 100% AMMD
 - OR**
 - Progeny of two permanently registered 87.5% AMMD's

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- 75% AMMD**
 - Progeny of a permanently registered 100% AMMD and a permanently registered 50% AMMD
 - OR**
 - Progeny of two registered 75% AMMD's

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- 50% AMMD**
 - Progeny of a permanently registered 100% AMMD and a permanently registered New Zealand Miniature donkey
 - OR**
 - Progeny of a permanently registered 75% AMMD and a permanently registered 50% AMMD
 - OR**
 - Progeny of two registered 50% AMMD's

MATURITY CERTIFICATION

All AMMD donkeys under the age of three are provided a temporary registration certificate which lapses at three years of age. At age three years the AMMD will have reached its mature height and can then be measured for continued eligibility as an AMMD breed and receive permanent registration. If they exceed 36 inches (91.5 cm) they will lose their AMMD breed registration and must be registered as a New Zealand Donkey.

To obtain maturity certification please refer to the Registry Guidelines - Height and Maturity Certification section.

BREEDING

The Donkey & Mule Society of New Zealand strongly recommends a minimum height of 30 inches (76 cm) for jennies and 29 inches (73.5 cm) for jacks to prevent loss of potential reproductive fitness including foaling difficulties. Very small size may also adversely effect conformation and balance.

ACCREDITATION

AMMD foals born in New Zealand must be sired by an accredited jack to be eligible for registration as a Pure (Section A) or Part (Section B) AMMD.

PERMANENT IDENTIFICATION

Permanent identification in the form of microchipping is required for registration of an American Miniature Mediterranean Donkey.