

## **Guidelines for adopting a donkey from Little Longears Miniature Donkey Rescue**

Thank you for considering adopting a donkey from us. Our criteria for facilities and care of our donkeys may seem a bit lengthy, but it's only because we know what it takes to take the absolute best care of donkeys, and we want every donkey that leaves here to end up in a wonderful home.

First of all, we only adopt out within about a 3 hour radius from our farm in Westminster, MD. Please do a map check from your property to ours (1558 Bollinger Road, Westminster, MD) to see if you are within that range. This range is a little flexible, but not by much. We personally drive out to check each potential home, therefore, we need to keep the distance from our farm, reasonable.

Donkeys are equines! They are not like goats, sheep, alpacas, cows, or any other type of livestock. They have different dietary, social and physical needs. They basically need to be cared for like a horse, so we are looking for adopters who have experience with horses, and knowledge of equine care.

We are often asked questions about what type of **facility/fencing** we require, so here, are some basics.

We **WILL NOT** adopt a donkey out into a home with thin, wire, electric fence, barbed wire, or high tensile fencing. We may consider other types of electric fence, such as safe, white electric braid or tape, or different types of vinyl high tensile fencing. But, ideally, we prefer either 3 or 4 board fencing, or wire mesh (no-climb) fencing. We personally do not feel electric wire fence is a safe fence to keep these little guys in. They can so easily slide under, and more importantly, dogs, coyotes and other predators can very easily get in.

\*\*\*\*\*Donkeys cannot have unlimited access to good pastures. They are desert animals, and are designed to sustain themselves on a variety of dry grasses

and scrub. In the wild, they travel great distances every day, burning lots of calories and eating very little. In our part of the country, there is simply too much rich grass for them. They can and do get dangerously fat. They get a thick, cresty neck that can eventually flop over resulting in what is referred to as a “broken crest”, they develop fat pads all over their body which are very hard to get rid of. They can founder and end up with metabolic issues such as Cushings Disease, Insulin Resistance, etc. **For these reasons**, every adopter **MUST** have the ability to regularly restrict their donkey’s access to unlimited grazing. The best way for this to be done in a way that still allows the donkeys to have plenty of exercise, is to create an area we refer to as a “dry lot”. It needs to be attached to their run-in shelter, or their stalls, as an area they can live in much of the time, typically with a gate that opens up to allow them into their pasture for parts of the day or night. The size of this dry lot can vary depending on your facility, but it still needs to be large enough for the donkeys to run and play. During times of the year when grass is very rich, the donkeys will need to have less access to grass, and other times of the year, such as the winter, they won’t have to be restricted at all. It really depends on the donkey and the quality of the grass.

They also cannot have unlimited access to grazing at a round bale with other livestock and horses. Again, unrestricted eating and standing still is going to result in an obese donkey. Donkeys really must be managed in much the same way that a pony or miniature horse should be. **Weight management** is one of the **MOST IMPORTANT** aspects to their care. A grazing muzzle can be used at times, but it is not always effective, and some donkeys will not wear them, so relying only on the use of a muzzle is not sufficient.

At the very least, there must be a clean run-in shed blocking the prevailing winds, providing shade, and protecting animals from rain.

A clean water trough that is heated in the winter is also required.

Almost all of our donkeys will be required to be adopted in pairs. They usually buddy up with another donkey while here, if they didn’t already arrive here with their buddy. We feel so strongly that donkeys have other donkeys to play with, even if there are other equines living with them. Donkeys are very playful, and

need and enjoy the company of another donkey their same size. Very occasionally, we will have a donkey here, who isn't bonded with another, and/or seems to really prefer the company of the horses. In these cases, those particular donkeys may be adopted out individually to a home with other donkeys or equines.

We hope this answers most of your questions about what type of home we are looking for. If you feel you meet the above criteria, and are interested in adopting, please go to the "available for adoption" page on the website where you can download the adoption application and read over the adoption agreement. Submit the application to us either by scanning it and sending it back to us in an email, or mailing it to us. Then we will want to schedule a time for you to come out here and meet our donkeys and us, and see if there are any that you are particularly interested in. Once we meet you, we generally have a very good idea which donkeys might suit you best. Next, we will call references you list on your application as well as your vet and farrier (please notify them ahead of time and give them permission to discuss you with us). And lastly, we will schedule to come out to your farm to do the home visit.

Though our adoption fee is \$400 per donkey, as mentioned above, we are generally going to require two to be adopted together. Please do not ask for a discount! These adoption fees are a mere drop in the bucket as compared with the expenses we have invested in each donkey. All of our donkeys come with a current negative coggins test, updated vaccinations, dental and farrier work.

Please remember, many of these donkeys came from an unknown background. Some have trust issues and are very shy, others may have issues having their feet handled, or being handled for the veterinarian. In these cases we really look for very experienced adopters, because these kinds of issues may last for years. In general, we find that donkeys are very forgiving, and learn to trust us and soon get over their fears. Most of our donkeys will easily become a loveable new member of your family.