



Donkey and Mule Protection Trust NZ

NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANISATION INCORPORATED #1638328

www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz

Donkey and Mule Protection Trust N.Z.

Newsletter No. 1

December 2007

Welcome to the first issue of the Trust's newsletter.

This newsletter will be published three times a year to keep you up to date with the activities and progress of the Trust and its work.

Welcome also to our members who are making a valuable contribution to the work of the Trust by supporting its activities in a concrete way by becoming members of the Trust.

The Donkey and Mule Protection Trust N.Z which is a registered, incorporated and non profit charitable organisation was established in May 2006. It has been formed as a separate organisation by the Donkey & Mule Society of N.Z., so it can focus on rehabilitation and rehoming donkeys and mules; providing information and advice on donkey and mule care and supporting and educating owners effectively.

Individual Donkey & Mule Society members have rescued donkeys on a regular basis for years. By forming a Trust we hope we can develop a national group that not only comprises members of the Donkey & Mule Society but other interested people as well. There are 12 Trustees, seven of whom are selected by the Executive of the Donkey & Mule Society of N.Z. and the remaining five are elected by the other Trustees.

The current Trustees are:

Andrea Thomson, *Chairperson*

Wendy Macpherson, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Jaccy Creak, Joanne Hardy, Nancy Neal, Nick Page (*vet*), Jenny Parker, Joan Rabbitte, Susan Rogerson, Margaret Salkeld, Marion van Dijk and Robin Winter.

The Trustees meet only once a year at the same time as the Donkey & Mule Society AGM, but communicate regularly by email.

So far the Trust has rescued and taken into Protection Trust ownership 10 donkeys as well as providing lots of advice and support. The Trust does not plan to establish a sanctuary as it believes that the donkeys are happier where they can have more individual attention. All the donkeys have been adopted out and will have regular checks and annual reports and photograph from their caregivers to ensure that they are being well looked after. The donkeys remain the property of the Protection Trust and welfare of the donkey is the important element. The donkeys must have another donkey for company or another suitable equine companion as they need company and are unhappy on their own.

Besides the Trustees there are Trust Representatives who can offer advice and help locally. Many of these people are also Donkey & Mule Society Area Representatives who are also interested in welfare work. The Trust has a web site > www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz < which lists our policies, activities and contact people.

The most common problems we find are feet left untrimmed (unlike horses and ponies a donkey's feet do not break off when they get long), lack of shelter (donkeys coats are not waterproof) and obesity. .Bull donkeys are often overweight. Jacks can stop bulls from fighting and stop injuries. It is good for the bulls but bad news for the donkeys as the lush feed that is ideal for fattening cattle is the direct opposite from what donkeys need. Donkeys should be on dry, sparse, rough forage - similar to what Shetland ponies should be fed. Laminitis is a regular problem.

Trust Donkeys:

In this newsletter we have written about three of the Trust donkeys; We will give you progress reports on the Trust donkeys as well as more information about the other donkeys in future newsletters.

Fred of the Trust:

The first donkey surrendered to the Trust, Fred, is about 23 years old. Fred was a jack and had been without any company since being sold by his breeder at 6 months. When surrendered to the Trust Fred was almost unhandled and he had an absolute fear of having his feet touched, let alone trimmed. As you would expect Fred's feet were very long and because of this he had difficulty walking. Soon after becoming a Trust donkey Fred was gelded, he underwent intensive training to have his feet picked up, learning how to lead and be tied up and once we could handle his feet he underwent remedial trimming. Fred responded quickly to care and attention and once recovered from his gelding, his handling phobias were overcome. He was placed with caregivers near Masterton where he enjoys good health and has a friend, Jethro, with whom he plays and enjoys life. We have received his first yearly progress report from his caregiver who tell us:

Fred continues to enjoy the company of his special friend Jethro. So much so, it is hard for me to believe how sad Fred must have been before having him. They play most of the time, weather permitting: on bad weather days they can be found bickering over the same piece of straw or hay in their house. Fred is a dear little fellow with a mind of his own, especially when the farrier comes calling!

As an ex-jack, Fred enjoys the company of my two jennies, Jasmine and Honey (also Trust donkeys).

Jasmine is his favourite lady as being only 7 years old she can run and play alongside the boys. This is great as it also helps his tendency to put on weight quickly.

Honey, being the oldest and wisest, is content to watch and give advice. I am pleased to say that the wound on her rump has healed up completely and she is the sweetest little lady possible.

All in all I love my beautiful donkeys and could never imagine living without them.



Fred of the Trust

Doris of the Trust:

Rescued donkeys are rehabilitated whenever possible, but we have already found in one case that despite our best efforts the donkey was in such severe pain, that we had no alternative but do the kindest thing, and have the donkey euthanased. Doris was the second donkey surrendered to the Trust, but sadly her chronic laminitis and other conditions resulting from severe neglect, meant that she was in constant pain that we were unable to alleviate. Our priority is the welfare of the donkey and if we were to stop her suffering the only thing we could do was have her euthanased humanely. While we were assessing Doris she had lots of love and attention for the few months she was a Trust donkey from her Trust Caregiver near Masterton.

Dillys and Lucretia of the Trust:

These two donkeys were rescued from the Upper Hutt area where they had been running wild for about 10 years. Dillys was 23 years old and gradually remembered her earlier training although she had a wicked sense of humour! Sadly Dillys died in July, a hard life and years of neglect taking their toll. But she had over a year of care and affection in Trust protection before she died. Dilly was a real character with the most beautiful soulful eyes you have ever seen and she quickly won the hearts of all who came in contact with her.

Her daughter, Lucretia was only about four years old but was quite wild and so she needed to be placed in a home where her caregiver had special handling skills. It has been quite a challenge to calming Lucretia who had bad panic attacks.

However, no matter how absolutely terrified Lucretia has been she has never kicked out. She has a very special personality. Her caregiver says in her annual report about Lucretia,

Lucretia has been living with us since September 2006. Last July she had to endure the loss of her mother Dillys, but thank goodness she had bonded well with our other donkeys so the loss was obviously more bearable for her.



She has learned to stand nice and steady for her regular trims with Pat our farrier. To start with, she used to fall over all over him, but he has been so kind and patient with her. Now she realizes what is required of her and waits patiently for him to complete the job. Yes she still has her moments of 'scary donkey behaviour', but her progress in this area has been wonderful. In fact at

times, I no longer need to get her into our yards to be handled. She is often first in line when competing for attention with my other 5 donkeys. I have got to the stage that I quite often forget it is Lucretia I am dealing with and more often than not I find I am cradling her head in my arms and talking to her before I realise this is Lucretia I am cuddling.

All good stuff!

Paddy of the Trust:

Paddy was about seven years old when he was surrendered. He had been ill treated at some stage and Paddy would not allow his legs to be handled; he was also grossly overweight. The Trust had Paddy retrained so he could be handled and trust people again. His overweight was a longer term management issue. Paddy was adopted by a lovely couple in Waiuku and has a large white horse as a paddock mate. The yearly report from his new Caregivers says:

Paddy (stable name now Dillon) is doing very well, he is a very happy, confident boy and has a paddock mate he gets on with very well. He is gradually shedding his excess weight, his hooves have had seedy toe which we have had the farrier working on for a while, and hopefully it will eventually disappear. Thankfully he has not been lame. We all love him very much, I walk him down the road, the people on the street come out to see him, and my grandchildren love to ride on him. We are so happy and lucky to have him.



Trade Me:

One of the successful things the Trust has done this year is to get Trade Me to cease hosting auctions of donkeys. Until May 2007 people could auction donkeys on Trade Me. This meant that the seller had no control over whether the donkey went to a good home or not; it went to the highest bidder. Trade Me does not allow horses or cats or dogs to be auctioned, but did allow donkeys to be auctioned. The Trust wrote to Trade Me asking them to cease the practice saying that, "Auctioning donkeys is not a responsible way to sell these animals. Owners who are concerned for their donkey's welfare should ensure that they are sold to homes that can provide at least the basic conditions a donkey needs. The Trust urged Trade Me, most strongly, *to act responsibly in terms of the welfare of donkeys and not allow them to be auctioned on their website.*

We also asked the Donkey & Mule Society of N.Z. to write as well to support our plea. In addition, our Chairperson rang Trade Me and spoke to their senior lawyer to further progress the issue. We were successful in getting their agreement to stop auctioning donkeys. Should an auction of a donkey slip through, Trade Me will pull it down immediately if they are advised. We keep a close watch on donkeys listed on trade Me. There is no problem if it is listed as a classified – it is the same as advertising the donkey in the newspaper, but it is not acceptable to auction them on Trade Me.

Promotion

We have been actively working to raise the profile of the Trust and have had an article published in the November issue of Organic Equine magazine. The Trust will also feature in the SPCA journal, Animals' Advocate, in February 2008. The Lifestyle Farmer is planning to run a feature on the Trust and its work in early 2008 and Rural Living, a publication distributed in the Far North is featuring the Trust in the Editorial of its next issue.

The Trust has a website at > **www.donkey-mule-trust.org.nz** < It has information about the trust as well as a list of our Trust Representatives (See over).

Christmas is just about upon us and the Donkey and Mule Protection Trust wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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