

QUALITY OF LIFE ASSESSMENT FORM



**THE DONKEY
SANCTUARY**

INTRODUCTION

The Donkey Sanctuary has an increasingly geriatric population. A large number of donkeys have chronic conditions such as laminitis, arthritis, blindness, respiratory and dental disease. These cases often receive long term medication; attempts are made to group those with similar problems together to provide appropriate care such as dust free management, a padded environment or short chop fibre, for example. These donkeys need individual close monitoring for sign of deterioration to avoid unnecessary suffering.

MONITORING DONKEYS

Due to the stoical nature of the donkey, advice from the pain research project has been incorporated to provide indicators for monitoring. Diary notes taken as frequently as advised, depending on the acute or chronic nature of the donkey's condition, can be recorded by the grooms making observations, often without disturbing the donkey. These notes can then be assessed to show a pattern so that subtle decline shows up.

Diary notes would include:

- Recumbency
- Ease of movement
- Amount of movement
- Interaction with friend and/or group
- Demeanour and head position
- Ear position and movement
- Appetite
- Respiratory rate
- Interaction with grooms
- Senile state

KEEPING EFFECTIVE RECORDS

Over time the chronic cases need monitoring for slow decline which may not show even on a weekly basis. A form may be used and kept in a file on the farm for completion on perhaps a monthly basis to coincide with weighing. This also allows a new vet to come onto the farm in the absence of the routine vet and see at a glance the situation with a donkey which has been causing concern. This helps ease the decision of euthanasia on the basis of reduced quality of life. A sample assessment form is included on the following page.

Donkeys Name: Age/Year of birth:

Major conditions:

Minor conditions:

Interested owners:

End point (tick relevant box)

- Loss of condition despite increased feed Increased lameness on maintained dose NSAID
- Recurrence of laminitis Anorexia, dullness or colic

Date:	Wt (kg):	CS:	Feed:
Meds:		Rug:	Bloods:
Dental:		Appetite:	
Demeanour:			
Movement:			
Progress of condition:			

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Should you require further information please contact the Veterinary Department, Slade House Farm, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NU, by telephone on +44 (0)1395 579162, or by email to vets@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk