



DONKEY SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

INCORPORATED
ABN 82 148 300 307

Presentation at Shows for you and your donkey

When you attend a show, remember that we are trying to show the general public how useful and how much fun a donkey is. We want to show that a donkey is not a poor relation of a horse, but a great animal in its own right. This means if we don't want our donkeys perceived as inferior to horses, we should show them at the same standard of presentation as horses not necessarily the same traditions, but the same standard of cleanliness of donkey and gear, and the rider/driver/handlers should be appropriately dressed to show their animals to the best advantage.

The effort you put into the presentation of your donkey and yourself reflects your respect for the judge, the sponsors and the event, as well as pride in your donkey.

Preparing your donkey

Preparation starts several weeks before the show. Try to ensure he is in top physical condition, neither too fat nor too thin. He should be wormed regularly and his feet trimmed regularly to keep them in good condition.

Make sure your donkey will lead freely, preferably with you walking at his shoulder. He should halt on command and stand calmly. If ridden or driven, practice with the gear you will be using. Make sure it fits your donkey correctly and is comfortable for him and you.

Before the show, as well as working your donkey, you should be regularly grooming him to get his coat free of loose hair and healthy, also a good wash the day before and some conditioner does wonders for even the worst coats. Cheap human shampoo is fine for occasional use. We find that 'BewTee' cattle conditioner is excellent for producing soft, shiny coats, and is very economical. Also some kind of Show Sheen, or 'No Nots', is great for tail and mane areas. Don't put it on the saddle area, as it makes the coat very slippery! Tie him up to dry, and ,if possible, put a rug on overnight to keep him clean. If allowed to roll before he is dry the results are disastrous!

Clean his feet out and you should have arranged to have his feet neatly trimmed recently. If the mane is very uneven, trim it off to an even length. Trim the very end of the tail if it is straggly. Also make sure there are no untidy hairs hanging out his ears. It is OK to clip a donkey, but do not do it too close to the show - allow several weeks for the coat to grow back a bit. If you do decide to clip a shaggy donkey, remember that you will then need to rug him until the weather warms up and the coat is growing back.

Preparing your gear

You should also spend time cleaning your saddle/harness a day or so before the show. This is a good time to pull everything right apart and check buckles, stitching, places where leather is bent around bits or stirrups, etc.

Make sure you put your harness back together before the show, so no pieces are accidentally left behind

Safety is the most important thing. Next to that, everything should be cleaned with saddle soap and oiled if necessary. Clear boot polish can be used to give a shine to older gear. Metal parts should be polished. Saddle blankets and girths should be well washed and free of loose hair. Make sure you have a nice headstall for leading your donkey and a clean rope. Special leading bridles kept just for these occasions makes them look extra special. I bought mine second hand at a horse sale quite inexpensively

This is a good time to wash your grooming brushes; it is not much use grooming a clean donkey with a dirty brush. If you are using a harness vehicle, give this a good clean and check over also. Make sure that there are nuts on all the bolts and that nothing has worked loose.

Continued:

Make a list

Keep a list of all the things you need to take to a show. Put everything together a day or so before.

What YOU should wear

If you are riding, wear neat riding gear, either English style style jodhpurs, shirt, tie, vest or jacket, riding boots; or for Western, jeans, western shirt and boots etc. A neat V-neck jumper or sleeveless vest is fine. ASA approved hard hats are usually compulsory.

If you are just handling a donkey for led classes, the same gear is suitable, without a hard hat. A dress hat or akubra style hat can be worn, but make sure it fits well, matches your style of dress, and is not likely to blow off. It is also correct for led classes to wear a trouser suit, moleskins or neat dress attire. Wear neat clothes, preferably with vest or jacket, so that you do look dressed up for the occasion. Make sure you wear shoes you can run in, to trot your donkey out for the judge.

It is correct, but not necessary, to carry a dressage length whip in your left hand, to tap your donkey into a trot.

For harness events, correct gear in the horse world is to wear a jacket, hat, gloves, driving apron or knee rug, and carry the whip at all times.

The important thing in all this is to show you have made an effort, you can be a bit individual in your dress, but a Show is literally that, a place where you show your donkey and yourself off to best advantage!!!

On the day

When you arrive at the show, lead your donkey around to loosen him up after the trip. Offer him a drink of water. Give him a good brushing and wash any soiled areas. Blacken his feet with a water based hoof paint, or liquid boot polish. A square of cardboard to put each foot on makes this much easier. Wipe around his eyes and his nostrils. Arrange your gear in the order you will need it.

In the classes

Lead your donkey in a clockwise direction as you enter the ring. This means that you are not standing between the donkey and the judge. In general, riding classes also start this way. However, in all classes be guided by the steward and the judge. Keep an eye on them for instructions to change direction, pace etc. Smile, look like you are enjoying yourself, even if your donkey is not performing as well as you would like.

When sent to do a workout, listen carefully to the instructions, ask to have them repeated if you are not sure of it all. Where possible, travel directly away from, and back towards the judge, in a straight line, so that he gets a good view of your donkey's movement. Stop in front of the judge and smile and acknowledge him at the end of your workout. Be sure not to let your donkey run into the judge!

When lined up for inspection, try to get your donkey standing squarely on all 4 legs, to show him off to best advantage. Leave space between your donkey and the next for the judge. Stand aside to let the judge see the donkey clearly as he moves round him to inspect him. Do not chat to the judge. Be polite.

If you are lucky enough to win a ribbon, thank the judge as you receive it. Wait for the steward to write down the name of your entry. Congratulate those placed higher than you. When the class is dismissed, acknowledge the judge. It is usual to do a 'lap of honour' on the way out of the ring in order of placing.

Always remove your ribbon before you enter the next class.

A note about Judging

I find that the most usual comment made by new judges at the Geelong Show is that they are amazed at how friendly we all are to each other, and that we are all enjoying ourselves, and cheering others when they win. Please make sure that this is how it continues in our world of showing donkeys. A show is not only a place to hopefully win some ribbons, but also a place to have fun with your donkey and other like-minded friends. Also to show the general public what great animals donkeys are.

Pat Streefkerk