



Donkey Rescue
Wild Animal Refuge
Animal Science Center
Forgotten Animal Sanctuary
Compassionate Learning Center



FEEDING and TREATS

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Donkeys must be kept on a low-protein diet in order to ensure good body weight and healthy hooves and joints. Spoiling donkeys with alfalfa and oats will ultimately lead to much hardship for you and your donkey. Rich diets are the leading cause of obesity in donkeys. Fat deposits on the sides, rump and neck are unhealthy. High protein levels can also lead to deterioration of the bones within the hooves, which can cause the donkey's weight to bear down on the sole of the hoof. This can lead to lameness and the inability to stand because of extreme pain.

Grass Hay comes in many forms, including Bermuda, Timothy, Orchard and Bromegrass. All grass hay has a lower protein level than alfalfa and other legume hays. Since it is a desert animal, a donkey's metabolism cannot handle the high protein and such a diet can result in health problems. Donkeys should be fed 1% to 1½% of their body weight each day, divided between 2-3 feedings. This is approximately 8 pounds of hay per donkey each day for a standard donkey.

Cool, clean water is very important for a donkey's digestive tract. Be sure to check the water supply each day and protect it from freezing in the winter months.

Treats should be given moderately. Carrots, cut into 3" pieces, work nicely since they are easy to chew, are nutritious, and have natural de-worming properties. Treats should only be given by hand and never included in the daily feed routine. Do not make a habit of bringing treats each time you visit with your donkey. You need to build a relationship of trust and love, not one in which treats are expected.

Protein levels in hay/feed

It is important to keep protein below 5%

Alfalfa	+/- 15%
Bermuda	3.7%
Bromegrass	5.0%
Timothy	2.9%
Oats	13.9%

Don't feed alfalfa!

Don't email me and tell me that a little alfalfa is OK!

Don't email me and tell me that your donkey will not eat anything but alfalfa!

We have successfully changed the diets of hundreds of donkeys, you can too!