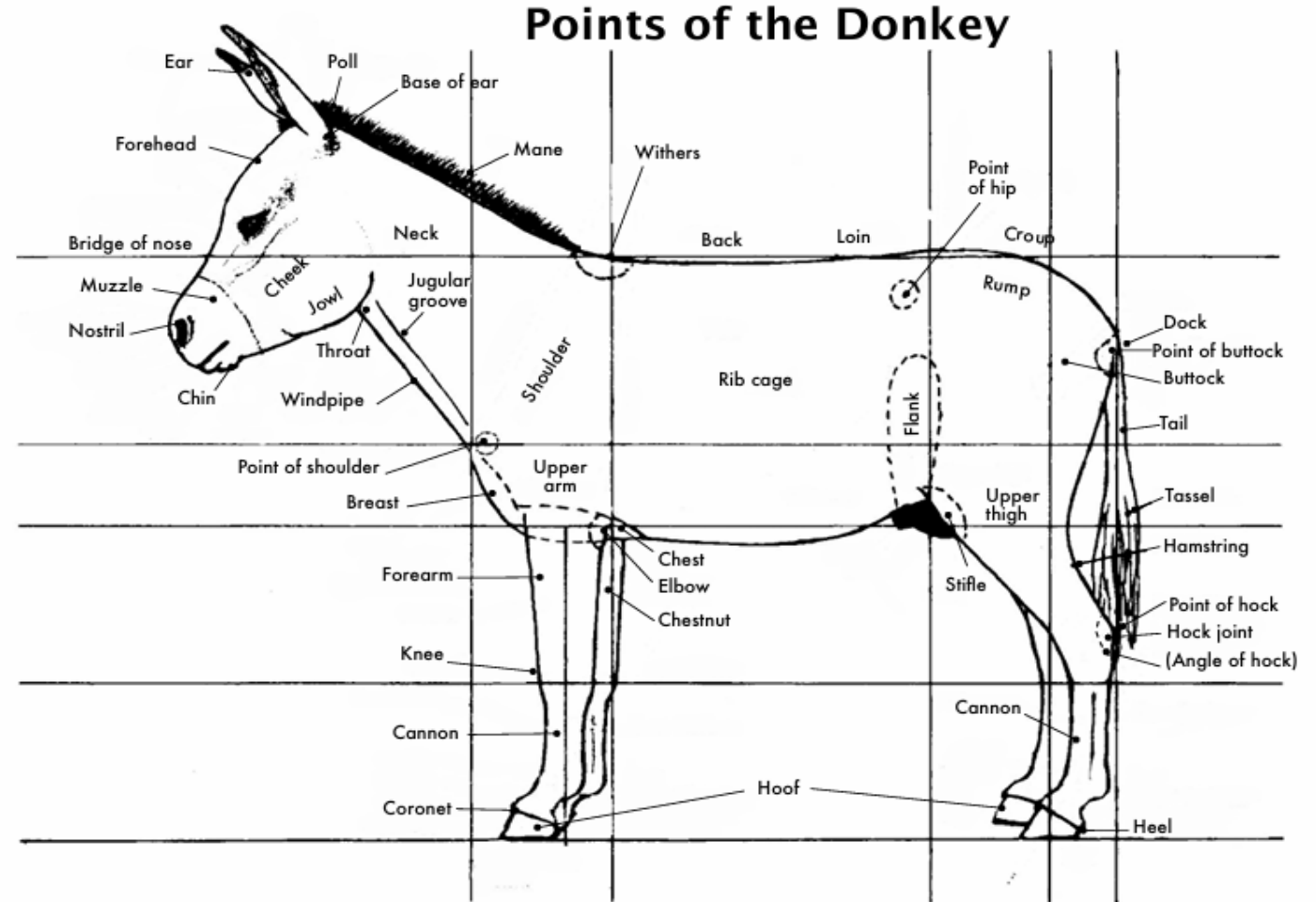

Standards of Conformation & Type for Donkeys



Overall Appearance

- Compact, symmetrical animal with no appearance of coarseness.
- Attractive and pleasing to the eye.
- Head carried moderately high with an alert, kind expression.
- Proud and graceful in movement.



Types of Donkey

- American Mammoth Jackstock
- American Mammoth
- American Miniature Mediterranean
- Australian Teamster
- English/Irish
- Ponui Island

Mammoth



Australian Teamster



English/Irish



American Miniature Mediterranean



Temperament

- Good temperament is essential.
- Donkeys should be gentle, good humoured, and intelligent.
- Aggression, bad temper, or meanness should not be tolerated.
- Jacks, jennies, and geldings should each show appropriate sex or type characteristics.

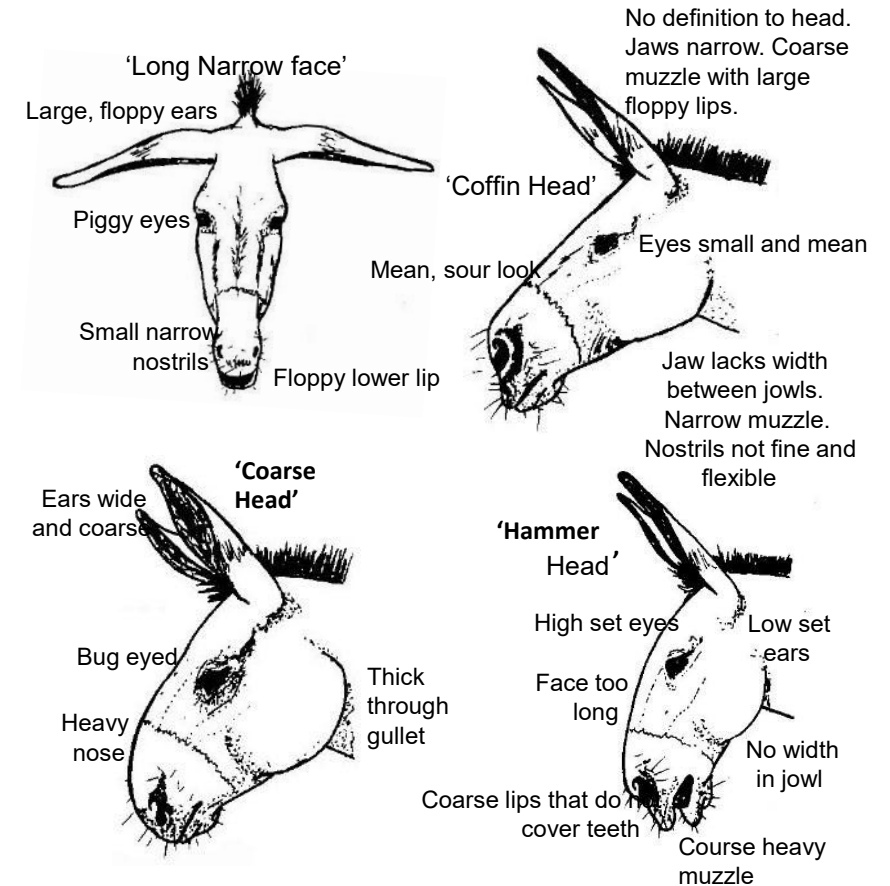
Head Conformation

- Head should be proportional to body size, balanced overall and consistent to the donkey type.
- Masculinity and femininity are important features.
- Profile straight or slightly concave; some larger breeds may allow a mild Roman nose.
- Ears well set and alert; eyes large, dark, clear, and expressive.



Faults of the Head & Mouth

- Undesirable features include heavy Roman nose, low-set or lop ears, and small or bulging eyes.
- Parrot mouth and monkey mouth are faults.
- Lips should meet evenly and jaws should align correctly.
- Faults may affect both appearance and function.



Neck, Back & Body

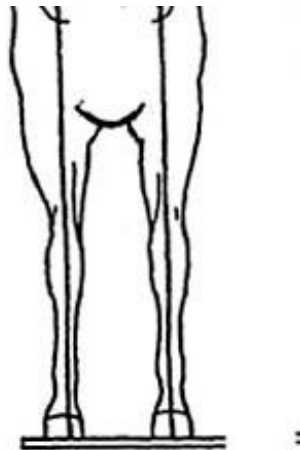
- Neck should be proportional, flexible, and well carried.
- Back should appear short and level, with good depth of girth.
- Chest should be rounded with well-sprung ribs for breathing capacity.
- The donkey should be in good condition, with ribs just palpable under the coat.

Loin, Croup & Tail

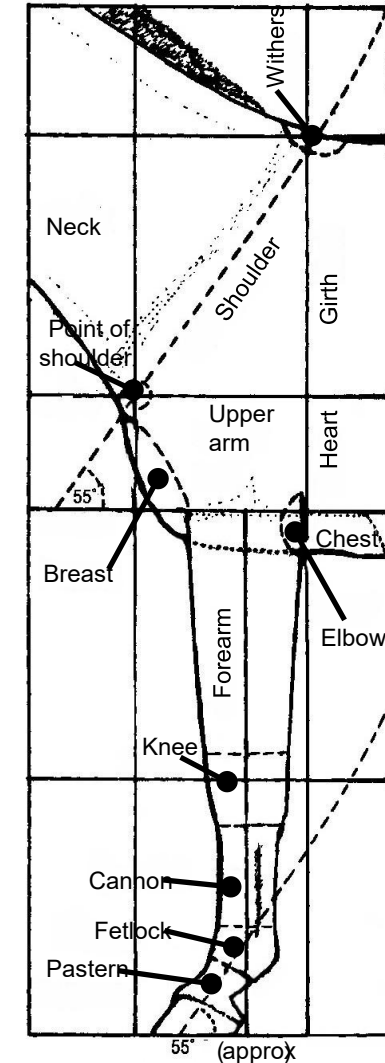
- Loin should be short, strong, and well muscled.
- Croup should slope gently with the tail set high and carried straight.
- Buttocks should be well fleshed.
- Faults include weak loins, goose-rump, and low tail set.

Forelegs

- Forelegs should have strong, proportional bone and well-developed muscle.
- Knees should be wide and flat; cannon bones should be short.
- Pasterns should be moderate in length and slope.
- Legs should be straight when viewed from the front.

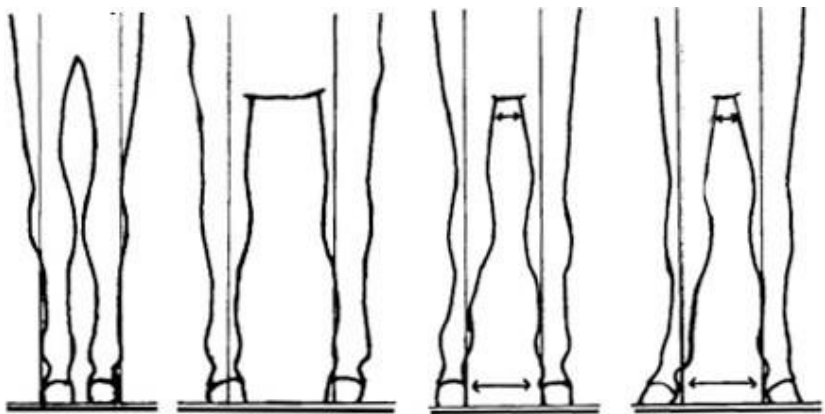


Ideal



Foreleg Faults

- Examples include splay-footed, pigeon-toed, knock-kneed, bow-legged, and bench-kneed.
- Other faults include over at knee, back at knee, tied in at knee, and calf knee.
- Incorrect placement of bones can lead to unsoundness.
- Movement faults often become obvious at the trot.

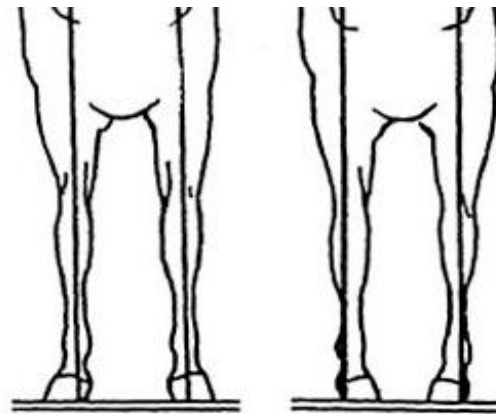


Narrow chest

Broad Chest

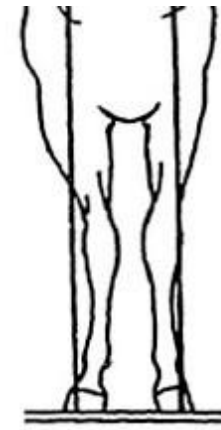
Feet turned
base wide

Feet turned out
base wide



Splayed feet

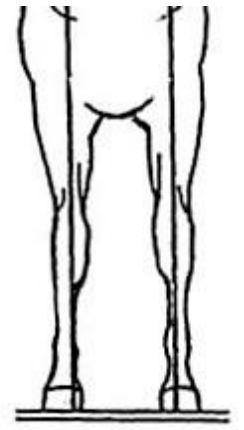
Pigeon Toed



Knock kneed



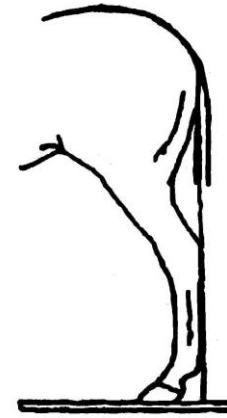
Bow kneed



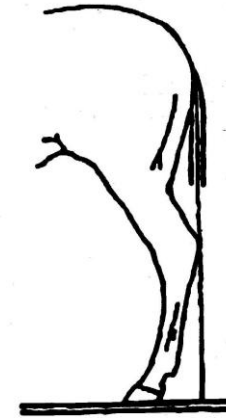
Bench kneed

Hind Legs & Hindquarter Faults

- Hindquarters should be strong and muscular with parallel cannon bones.
- Minor inward turning at the hocks may be acceptable if movement remains straight.
- Faults include sickle hocks, camped out behind, overly straight legs, bandy-legged, and cow-hocked.
- These faults can reduce stride quality and soundness.



Ideal



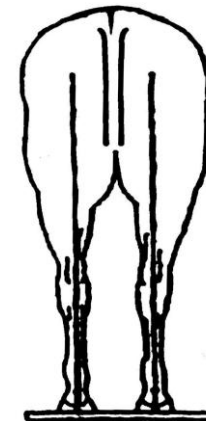
Sickle Hocked



Camped out



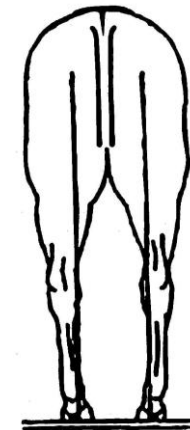
Too straight



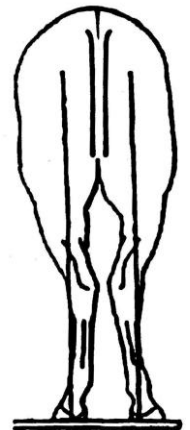
Ideal



ideal-consistently slightly turned out



Bandy Legged



Cow hocked

Action

- Action should be active, smooth, straight, and free flowing.
- Covering the ground evenly with a good length of stride.
- Level and true at all gaits.
- Smart, light and active.

American Mediterranean Miniature



English/Irish





Coat, Markings & Colouring

Coat

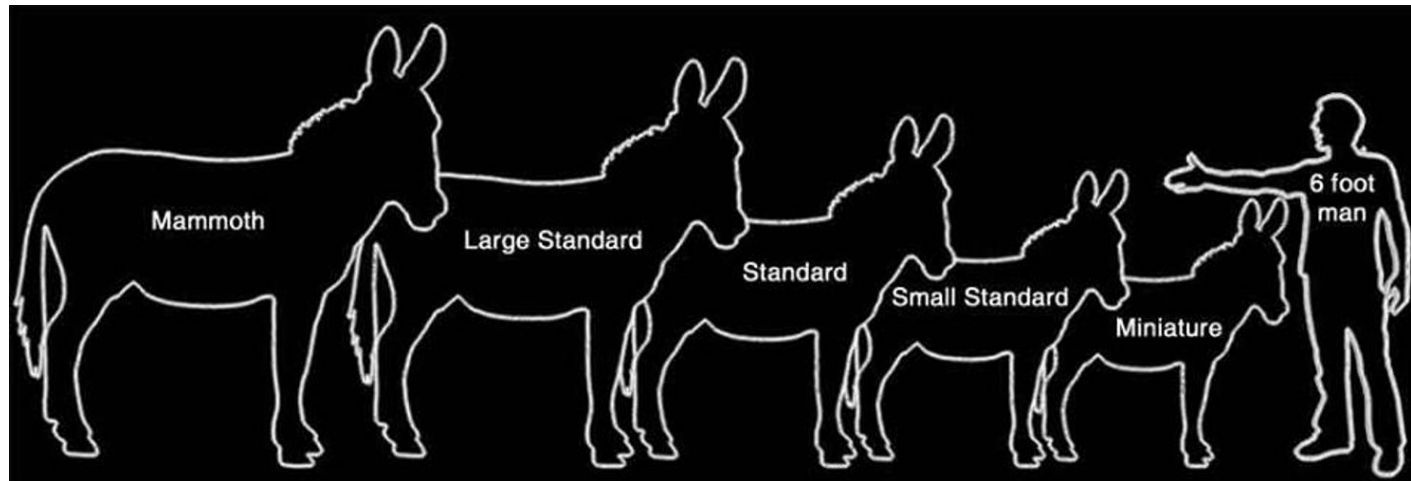
- To be in well groomed condition, not dry or staring.
- **No clipping out other than tidying stray hairs.**

Markings & Colouring

- All colours are determined in the summer coat. Winter coats, clipped coats (not allowed in the show ring) and foal coats will be deceptive as to colour.
- Recognised colours include grey dun, brown, black, white, broken coloured, red, and roan.
- Some coat markings, skin patterns, and crosses help distinguish colour types.
- Breed-specific colour rules may apply, such as for Australian Teamsters.

Height Categories & Breed Measurements

- Good conformation is not determined by height alone. It should not matter what the height of the donkey is when considering whether a donkey has good conformation.
- Miniature, small standard, standard, and large standard categories are defined by height at the wither.
- Specific measurement standards apply to American Mammoth Jackstock, American Mammoth, American Miniature Mediterranean, Australian Teamster, English/Irish, and Ponui Island donkeys.
- Heart girth and cannon bone circumference are important in larger breeds.



Key Takeaways

- Good donkey conformation balances structure, soundness, movement, and temperament.
- Breed type matters, but quality and functionality remain central.
- Faults should be assessed in relation to health, movement, and usefulness.
- The standards provide a practical guide for breeders, owners, and judges.

NOTE: This is a summary of the full standard which is available on the Donkey and Mule Society of New Zealand's website [Home | The Donkey and Mule Society of NZ Inc.](#)

