

# The Farrier's Corner: by Ray and Michelle Smith

## Donkeys - Part 1

Discussions of hoof care generally focus on horses. If donkeys are mentioned, it is often little more than a brief note. However, donkeys are kept on farms and small properties across America. Farriers and vets work on them daily. They are unique creatures with unique care requirements. They deserve individualized attention and should not be lumped together with horses as an afterthought. In light of this, we decided to devote a series of articles to donkeys.

Donkeys differ from horses in many respects including appearance, behavior and hooves. They are reputed to be more sure-footed, rugged and longer lived than horses. Even small donkeys are surprisingly strong and stout.

Yet, for all their ruggedness, even donkeys fall victim to certain hoof problems. Among the most common maladies of donkey hooves are: hoof abscesses, coronary band lesions, laminitis, white line disease and seedy toe.

### Hoof Abscesses

Hoof abscesses are painful infection pockets which start when bacteria invade sensitive tissues of the foot. Abscesses occur frequently in donkeys, particularly Mammoths.

They may develop following a sole puncture, severe bruising or other intrusions. One of the more common causes of donkey hoof abscesses are small, sharp or abrasive stones penetrating the foot at the junction between the hoof wall and sole (the white line). Owners should avoid continually keeping donkeys in paddocks with predominantly stony, gritty or abrasive footing. They should also avoid keeping donkeys in wet, muddy or unclean areas which encourage bacterial growth. Well drained turf pasture, with modest to sparse grass cover, is best. These recommendations may be difficult to follow in western Oregon.

If donkeys cannot be moved to more suitable footing, and gravel related abscesses are chronic, shoeing may be the best measures to protect the foot. Standard sized and mammoth donkeys, given good behavior and decent hoof walls, can be shod. Shoeing may not be possible on miniatures. Boots can be worn therapeutically for extended periods to aid in recovery from injury or infection. Some animals also wear them part-time for protection during turn out. They are generally not recommended for lifelong round-the-clock use.

Keeping hooves perpetually booted can lead to thrush infections and possible chaffing at the heels or coronary band. Even when used temporarily, owners should remove boots regularly to inspect the feet. Most boots are designed for horse hooves, which can vary greatly in size and shape from donkey hooves. Getting a good fit can be challenging. Fortunately, there are now some companies marketing boots specifically for miniature horses and donkeys.

Abscesses usually cause lameness and palpable heat in the affected hoof. Some abscesses may cause swelling in the pastern. While many abscesses will open on their own, others are more difficult. All abscesses require professional attention. If you suspect an abscess, consult your veterinarian and farrier immediately. A veterinarian can prescribe antibiotics if needed and may administer a tetanus shot if the animal is not up to date. Additionally, the veterinarian can attempt to open and drain the abscess. Some veterinarians will open the area themselves, while others prefer to have the farrier open the abscess. Once opened, the animal's comfort level usually improves. The drainage hole must

stay open and clean while healing. This may entail bandaging and/or booting with daily bandage changes.

Abscesses may open either through the sole or the hoof wall. Not all abscesses are easily located. If the abscess cannot be opened, medication, daily hoof soaks and/or poultice pads may be in order.

### Chronic Non-Healing Coronary Band Lesions

Some donkeys develop a condition known as chronic non-healing coronary band lesions. These lesions occur at the hoof hairline and resemble abscess eruptions. They may last for years and become more frequent. The only farrier recommendations found regarding this condition were to keep trimming intervals regular, maintain reasonably short toes and inspect and clean hooves regularly.

Little information is available on the condition. However, it is suspiciously similar to a condition in horses known as quittor. Historically, quittor was commonly seen in draft horses. Its occurrence today is infrequent. It is a chronic, septic condition of the collateral cartilages located on either side of the equine hoof. The upper portion of these cartilages can be felt just above the hairline of the hooves,

while the lower portion is contained within the hoof capsule.

Quittor is characterized by a necrosis of these cartilages. It often develops following a trauma to the pastern. Trauma leads to localized sepsis in and around the cartilage followed by abscess formation. Eventually the abscess erupts, draining at the coronary band. Primary treatment involves surgery to remove the necrotic tissue. Without this procedure, the condition rarely resolves and often worsens. It can result in recurrent abscesses at the coronary band and chronic lameness. Eventually, the sepsis may spread, infecting deeper tissues and/or the joint. At this point, the prognosis for successful treatment is poor.

It is reasonable to suspect that donkeys with chronic non-healing coronary band lesions may actually have quittor. Any history of trauma to the pastern should be noted and the potential for quittor should be discussed with a vet.

In our next article we will cover laminitis, white-line disease and seedy toe in donkeys. We hope you'll enjoy this venture into the world of long-ears and look forward to seeing you next month!

# Americans need money, not Washington: by Glenn Mollette

American's median income was \$51,939.00 in 2013. In 2012 our median income was \$51,759.00. In 1999, the pre-recession peak median American income was \$56,436.00. Five years ago the United States Treasury took in 2.1 trillion dollars.

Last year our federal government collected a record amount of taxes, just over 3 trillion dollars! (Wikipedia, Household Incomes in America) Struggling Americans sent more money to Washington than ever before in our nation's history. As Americans' incomes have struggled, stagnated and stalled good old Washington is rolling. What is wrong with this picture? Americans are poorer but Washington is richer. Washington is getting more of hard working Americans' money so they can determine our lives. Washington now determines our health care, our retirement and care for all of the people who do not want to work. The average American could not survive in retirement without Social Security.

Americans need more money, not Washington. Americans are spending their money on food, utilities, mortgages, rent,

gasoline, car payments and health care. Granted, recent gasoline prices have helped. After these expenses, there is not much money left over for family excursions, clothes and saving for retirement. The American dream used to include owning a house, two cars, sending the kids to college and a two weeks vacation each year. By the age of 62 you retired to do what you wanted to do with your life. That's not happening today because Americans don't have enough money. Go to Walmart or McDonald's and you'll see lots of seniors working. People who are 75 years old and occasionally even 80 are working minimum wage, 30 hour a week jobs. A few do it because they need something to do. Most Americans are in those jobs because they need the money - desperately.

Here are some stats: 19 percent of middle-class Americans have zero retirement savings. 34 percent are not currently saving for retirement. 41 percent of Americans between the ages of 50-59 are not currently saving for retirement. Based on the numbers, most retirees will be unable to even retire on 70 percent of their working income. The median

savings across all age groups was only \$20,000. Housing, healthcare, food and transportation make up about 65 percent of Americans' spending. (Huffington Post: posted, 10/27/2014) Combine this with falling incomes over the last decade and you have a poorer America - but not Washington. What's wrong with this picture?

Americans could always cut out a few things to save money, but what? Some Americans polled by Daily Finance said they could curtail eating out and buying fewer clothes, taking fewer vacations, giving fewer gifts, buying fewer groceries and cutting back on entertainment. 12 percent of those polled said they would not make any cuts and are spending like there is no tomorrow.

Americans need better jobs that pay more money. Working at fast food restaurants and retail has never provided us with comfortable incomes. We need progressive industry. We need to continue on our path to being the world's energy provider. However, we must lead the world in clean energy. We can learn how to use fossil fuels cleaner but we are not there yet. We should learn how because we have a lot of oil

and coal. However, we must become the world leaders in using wind and solar energy. We are on our way and this is not the time to stop. We must go back to making everything that China makes from clothes, to furniture, to electronics. The auto industry exports our cars to other countries and then brings those earnings back to America.

We have to go back to work in this country. We have to sell our products to the 95 percent of the world's population who do not live in America. We have to stop penalizing people and corporations for being successful. It is time to cut the corporate tax rate to 15 percent and lower taxes for all Americans. Washington does not need more money, Americans do.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is a syndicated American columnist and author. He is read in all 50 states. The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily representative of any other group, organization or this publication.

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