

THE TRUTH ABOUT P.E.T.A. & DONKEY BASKETBALL

“From the Donkey’s Mouth” By Jessica Cordell, Co-Owner, Dairyland Donkey Ball, LLC

Before reading the facts of donkey basketball, we would like to point out the animal rights organization P.E.T.A. (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is in no way an expert on animals or their care. P.E.T.A. is a terrorist organization aimed at targeting anyone and anything that may involve the “use” of animals for any reason. They use outright lies as propaganda and will take dangerous action to further their cause and end all animal use. P.E.T.A. has been automatically against us and all animal sports from their inception. This includes rodeos, circuses, horse racing, horse-pulled wagons, buggies, horse-driven farm implements, and much more. If P.E.T.A. had their way in our everyday lives we would not be eating meat, drinking milk, wearing leather shoes, coats or owning a pet. In their view, animals should not even be property of humans. It is important to realize P.E.T.A. does not hold typical American views on the ethical treatment of animals so be very cautious about being influenced by their propaganda. It is also pointless to argue facts with them, all they know are talking points fed to them by the leaders of P.E.T.A.

Second, it is important to recognize the difference between animal rights and animal welfare. We are proponents of animal welfare. *Animal welfare* is the belief that animals can be used in food and fiber production as well as research and enjoyment provided the animals are treated well and their basic needs are met. Whereas *animal rights* proponents believe a human life is equivalent to an animal life and that even “owning” a dog is exploitation of that dog. This is an extremist viewpoint. For example, the founder/president of P.E.T.A., Ingrid Newkirk, touts her belief that “a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.” While we will always protect and love our animals, human life is to be valued above any other.

My husband and I both have degrees in agriculture from Texas A&M University. I grew up with donkeys and horses and he with dairy cattle. We currently own a herd of 43 donkeys and care for them at home or on the road every single day and have for almost 20 years doing what we do! We are donkey experts. The business and sport of Donkey Ball in our family goes back to 1934. Not only are our donkeys our livelihood; but the love of donkeys and the study and daily husbandry of donkeys has been a major part of our family for generations. We desire them to be healthy, happy animals and are always working to put their needs before our own; they are fed and watered before we are, bedded down and made comfortable before we even think about it for ourselves. We care for our animals as naturally as possible, and they receive the best veterinary, acupuncture and chiropractic care. They are vet checked every thirty days while traveling and our own veterinarians (plus countless others) have even ridden our donkeys in our shows!

Our donkeys are professional show animals; they know what they are doing, and they love what they do each night to entertain the crowds. You will see this in our shows when one donkey decides to do his “trick” of rolling before the 2nd half of the show or braying when the buzzer sounds each night! This is all

their own doing! Donkeys are very intelligent animals, and it is a disservice to underestimate their intelligence and athletic ability by not allowing them to find something worthwhile to do. Most people know donkeys for their “stubbornness”, but they are actually, self-preservationists! A donkey cannot be forced to do anything he does not want to do. When our trailer backs into the barn our donkeys literally *run* to the gate to get into that trailer. This is proof that they love what they do!

Finally, we always encourage anyone with questions to come to a show for themselves, watch with their own eyes, SEE our donkeys in person, watch them interact with us, the riders, the crowd and put on their very own show, showcasing their unique personalities between the buzzers. Then during intermission each donkey quietly soaking up the attention of small children petting, hugging and loving on them during the kids’ rides. After the show, they will hear all the kids leaving the gym begging their parents for their very own donkey and riders and adults leaving with respect and awe of what they just experienced on these athletic, smart and kind animals. It is a night they will never forget! We know as we talk to “old-timers” that attend our events now and then and fondly recall the night they rode the donkeys decades ago and what a great time it was!

The next pages detail some of the false claims of P.E.T.A.

PETA CLAIMS based on the article “Cruelty on the Court” found at www.peta.org:

1) “donkeys are dragged, kicked and punched by participants”

- No abuse of our animals is tolerated at any time whatsoever. Normal people would never “kick or punch” an animal in the first place, *especially* in front of a crowd of 400-1500 people. If someone did abuse our animals in any way, they would immediately be removed from the show.
- This statement also shows P.E.T.A.’s ignorance and lack of knowledge about donkeys-you cannot “drag” a donkey anywhere because they are much stronger than a human, if he doesn’t want to go somewhere you surely will not get him to go by dragging him.

2) “donkeys are deprived of food and water before games to prevent accidents”

- Completely false. Our donkeys are never prevented in any way of having accidents. In fact, having a “comedy cleanup crew” is actually part of the show!
- This statement has actually changed; back in the 70’s and 80’s P.E.T.A. used to claim donkey ball companies would “cork” their donkeys so the donkeys didn’t have “accidents” on the floor. That is an outlandish and sick idea we have never and will never consider. More recently, they claimed we didn’t feed or water our donkeys for days before a show to prevent accidents. This is even more disgusting.
- Our donkeys eat whenever they like-anytime they are not actually in the show they have access to as much hay as they would like. They are watered throughout each day.

- 3) "...send messages to kids that it's ok to abuse and humiliate those who are weaker than they are"
- #1-our donkeys are never abused! #2-it is the riders who are being laughed at-not the donkeys! The donkeys are revered and looked at with awe as being able to outwit and give the riders a hard time!
 - From our show, children gain a healthy respect for donkeys and learn what donkeys are capable of and see the lovingness of donkeys. It is good for children to learn the proper way to interact with animals and know that it can be done in a fun, healthy way.
 - This is a great learning opportunity for them to see how amazing donkeys are, where else will they be able to be up close and personal with donkeys as our society moves further away from rural/farm life?
- 4) "Children who are exposed to animal abuse are taught the dangerous lesson that cruelty is acceptable"
- Yes, this statement we would agree with! And it would be true, except that donkey basketball is not animal abuse or animal cruelty! This statement is completely subjective and misconstrued through an extremist viewpoint.
- 5) "Like many animals, donkeys who are mistreated or forced into loud, confusing environments can become frightened and may lash out to protect themselves"
- #1-again, our donkeys are not mistreated, #2-they are not *forced!* #3-a gymnasium is not a confusing environment for them; they are all properly trained through positive reinforcement and have learned a gym is a safe environment. Our donkeys love people and a gym means they just get more attention and petting! Again, come see for yourself!

OTHER RUMORS ...

- 6) "they use pregnant donkeys"
- Our donkeys that travel are geldings -castrated males.
- 7) "they use miniature donkeys"
- We DO NOT own any miniature donkeys, only Standard sized donkeys.
- 8) "they travel in dirty, cramped trailers"
- FALSE. Our animals have excellent accommodations. They love their trailer. Our trailer is an extra-wide, extra-insulated horse trailer with plenty of room for them to lay down stretch, roll, whatever they like. There is a hay manger in front of them which is kept full at all times and salt licks on the wall for them to lick at any time. The trailer is cleaned out every single day and our animals are well-kept and clean at all times.
 - They actually prefer their trailer after being overnighed in barns, they can't wait to get loaded up after an overnight stay!
- 9) "they use electric shockers on the donkeys"
- FALSE. NEVER are any electric shockers of any kind used on our animals. We do not even own one.
 - We reward our donkeys with positive reinforcement and treats for the natural behaviors we desire.

10) “the average-sized donkey is only able to bear a little over 100 lbs”

- FALSE. Donkeys are strong animals capable of comfortably carrying 50% and more of their own body weight depending on the conditions. See the university research entitled “Donkey Power” on our website. There is great and rampant error in applying horse standards across the board to all equines. All equines are not created equally. Horses cannot carry as much weight as a donkey and mules (horse X donkey hybrid) can carry even more than a donkey. Other considerations are terrain the animal is being asked to traverse (in our case-flat) and duration which the animal is being asked to carry the weight (in our case-a maximum of 40 minutes per day). Consideration of all factors is important when forming an opinion in any matter.

Visit our website, www.dairylanddonkeyball.com, for more articles on this topic found under the “Information” link. Thank you for taking the time to read this information and we applaud you for educating yourself on the truth of Donkey Basketball “straight from the donkey’s mouth,” as we say!

Please feel free to call us at 1-888-8DONKEY or email us at info@dairylanddonkeyball.com with any and all concerns or questions you may have. We are always available to talk about our amazing animals.