



The guide for good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of donkeys and donkey hybrids - Factsheet

## End-of-life decision making

Owners may face end-of-life decisions and should prioritise the animal's welfare to avoid unnecessary suffering.

### How to do it properly

- Be prepared to act decisively and consult a veterinarian if a donkey has a chronic or incurable condition that compromises welfare or is non-responsive to treatment.
- Ensure that the method of killing is humane and causes the animal to irreversibly lose consciousness before death.
- If the donkey is 'pair-bonded' to one or more other donkeys, ensure these animals remain together at time of killing and for a period afterwards – stress can be life-threatening for donkey companion(s).
- If considering transport for slaughter, the donkey must be fit for transport and the journey as short as possible.



*Allow donkeys sufficient time to accept the loss of a pair-bonded companion*



*Hyperlipaemia is a common reason for euthanasia and also a frequent cause of death afterwards in bonded-donkey companions*

### How to perform humane killing?

- Always consult a veterinarian about the methods available where the donkey resides and consider relevant legislation.
- Be aware of the need for accurate placement of a free bullet or captive bolt and the need for rapid exsanguination following the latter.
- Discuss chemical euthanasia using anaesthetic agents.
- Consider local regulations for disposal of carcasses.

Photographs used in this factsheet to illustrate some situations should not be considered to illustrate the sole solution to situations described.