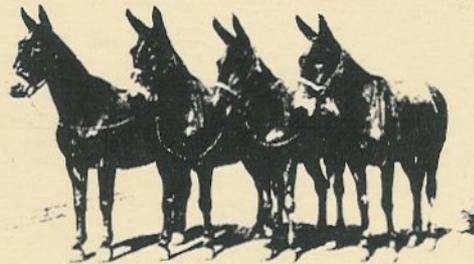


**JACKS  
JENNETS  
AND MULES**

HORSE AND MULE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.



**MULE  
PRODUCTION**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farmer's Bulletin No. 1341

## Jacks, Jennets and Mules

JACKS and jennets are names applied to males and females, respectively, of the domestic ass family. The Kiang of Tibet, and the Onager, of northern India, are existing wild ass forms.

The ass, compared with the horse, averages smaller, with shorter hairs on mane and tail, much longer ears, smaller, deeper hoofs, and there is an absence of the callosities on the inside of the hind limbs, The voice, called a bray, is louder and very harsh. Large Jacks are about 15 hands, 2 Inches, and will weigh 1100 Pounds, some even more, while some are no bigger than a small Shetland pony.

Biologists designate the ass as *Equus Asinus*: the horse as *Equus Caballus*. The mule is a hybrid sired by a male ass out of a female horse: the hinny results from the opposite cross, a male horse on a female ass. Both mule and hinny are sterile, or practically so; the rare exceptions only prove the rule. The Horse and Mule Association of America knows of only 2 well authenticated cases where female mules have produced living progeny, and none where male mules have sired living get.

In this country, asses seldom are used for work in harness or under saddle. Small ones, commonly called donkeys or burros, are used as pack animals in mountainous regions. From a practical standpoint, so far as the United States is concerned, most jennets are kept solely to produce young asses, while most jacks are used only to beget mules.

Jennets are notoriously poor breeders. One experienced breeder said he had to keep 50 jennets to raise 20 ass foals. This is only 40% pregnancy, whereas horses average 60%, and well managed studs achieve 80% pregnancy.

Part of the sterility in Jennets probably is due to inadequate nutrition, as they usually are poorly fed, and part to failure to test and breed them regularly when in heat: but regardless of cause, it is a fact that domestic jennets are notoriously shy breeders.

No one knows when the horse and ass were first used by humans, nor when mules were first produced. The ass is mentioned early in the Bible, Numbers, chapter 22, paragraphs 22 to 33, and the Job, chapter 39, paragraphs 5 to 8, inclusive; the horse, likewise, is mentioned therein, paragraphs 19 to 25; and there are numerous references to mules, early ones being in 2nd Samuel, chapter 3, verse 29, and 1st Chronicles, chapter 12, paragraph 40: but all three probably were in use long prior to Biblical times, evidenced by crude carvings on walls, stones and in caves.

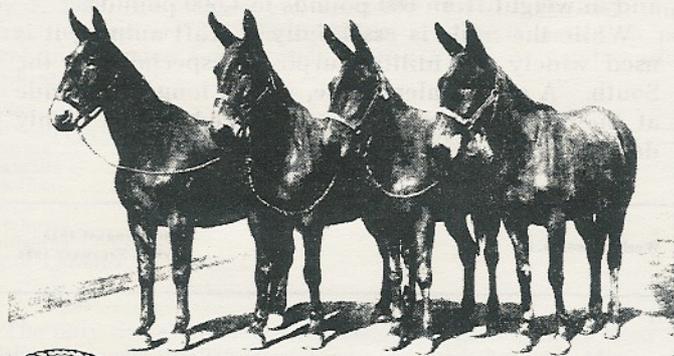
As both the horse and ass apparently were indigenous to Asia and possibly Africa, it is likely that the first mules were produced where horses and asses ran together in a wild state. Or it may be that some of the early nomadic tribes, actuated by curiosity, made the cross and, finding mules excellent beasts of burden, continued mule production.

Certain it is that mules long have been famous for their endurance and surefootedness as work and pack animals. Asses suited to beget good mules are considered valuable sires. The Spaniards, who traded freely with North Africa at an early date, became the great European breeders of asses and developed several distinct breeds, usually named after the districts where they developed.



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THE ABILITY of the mule to endure hardship and perform sterling service under adverse conditions has established him as a real asset in American agriculture.

The mule will give best service under favorable conditions of feeding and management.

Good, sound mares should be selected for breeding in order to be successful in producing high-grade mules. A very desirable "mule-mare" is one having about one-fourth draft blood and three-fourths light-horse blood.

The most practical feeds to use for mules are those which are grown on the farm or plantation so far as they provide the essential nutrients for a balanced ration.

The general form and appearance of the mule should resemble closely that of a horse, and in judging mules the same general points of perfection should be looked for.

Mules range in height from 12 hands to 17 1/2 hands and in weight from 600 pounds to 1,600 pounds.

While the mule is essentially a draft animal, it is used widely for utility purposes, especially in the South. A smart, alert mule, with a long, free stride at the walk and a snappy, balanced trot is highly desired.