



Donna Quick on her standard donkey Spider, competing in the Trail Class at the Alberta Donkey and Mule Club's annual Tees Longears Days Show.

Alberta Donkey and Mule Club December, 2012

The Alberta Donkey and Mule Club held its semi-annual meeting at Ponoka on October 28. Plans were discussed for 2013 activities.

Members will once again take part in demos at the Mane Event in Red Deer, the Strathcona Showcase near Sherwood Park, the Bruce Stampede and the Calgary Stampede. For the second year, the very popular combined horse/mule/donkey show will take place in Nanton, on June 15 and 16. This show gives horse owners in the area another chance to compete and to see mules and donkeys in action at the same time. The 24th annual Longears Days will be held on August 17 and 18 at Tees, just east of Lacombe.

With winter here once again, here's hoping all mule, donkey, and horse owners are providing the extra care their equines need over the frigid months to come. Although mules and donkeys are usually considered "tougher" than horses, there's no way they should be in a pasture or corral without an adequate windbreak and hopefully a roof to keep off rain and snow.

Donkeys in particular are very deceptive. While their coats may look shaggier than that of a mule or horse, they actually lack the undercoat of the other equines and can suffer more from the cold. Rain and melted snow will penetrate to their skin more easily and not run off, chilling the donkey. Be sure to avoid alfalfa as your winter feed for donkeys – their systems aren't built to handle rich hays.

Even though hooves grow more slowly over the winter, don't forget to check and clean them out periodically to catch any problems before they develop.

We often hear how equines can get along without water if the snow is adequate. In many cases they do, but if you've ever stood in a snowy field in the freezing cold watching a veterinarian trying to treat an impacted horse, you'll know that it's not worth the risk.

And remember – think spring!

Donna Quick