

## **ENTERING HORSE SHOWS WITH LONGEARS**

Before you even think about entering, phone and talk to the show committee. Do not demand that you attend. Simply say that you are interested in attending their show and would like to support whatever group is putting it on. You can then say that your “horse” is actually a mule (or donkey).

It helps to give a brief rundown of your animal’s resume: where you have shown before, demos or parades you’ve ridden in, etc. It’s advisable to disclose any behaviour problems that your mule may have: for instance, if it gets anxious at the gate but calms down as soon as it enters the ring. You could also mention that your longears may bray.

Be ready for either answer. It is up to each show committee, so you need to accept their decision and move on without arguing. After all, they’re called “horse shows.”

Be prepared to show. Taking a mule to horse shows to get experience is a poor idea. If experience is what you need, trailer to some different facilities, take lessons, clinics, attend schooling days, etc.

Look the part, act the part, and be the part. Your turnout, tack, etc. need to be equal to that of your competitors if you want to be taken seriously.

Whether you win or lose, have a disaster or anything else, do not claim “It’s because I’m on a mule.” You have made a choice to be different, so be prepared for a different reception.

Once at the show, if a horse balks or is spooky of your mule, give that rider a chance to calm their horse and let the horse see your mule before proceeding.

Do not arrive with the attitude that “my mule is just as good as your horse.” Can a mule do everything a horse does? We all know that the answer is “no.” No mule has ever won the Kentucky Derby or competed in FEI dressage or show jumping.

A mule is a mule. Be prepared, be gracious, and realize your limitations. If you really want to reach the top at horse shows and be accepted as mainstream, get yourself a horse. But can you enjoy showing your mule every bit as much as a horse and at the same time promote the ability and usefulness of mules? The answer is a definite YES.