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NEWS RELEASE

'Little thinkers' on display at Miniature Donkey Showcase



These miniature donkeys from Windy PASStures, near Medicine Hat, are "very low-maintenance animals . . . quiet, personable and affectionate," says ranch owner Dennis Flundra.

Calgary -- Conventional wisdom says donkeys are stubborn. Judith Flundra has her own take on the subject.

"They're little thinkers," chuckles Flundra, who owns Windy PASStures with husband Dennis in the Medicine Hat area, and is one of the exhibitors involved in this year's three-day Miniature Donkey Showcase at the Calgary Stampede.

"They kind of like to know the reason why. They're cautious. They don't just rush into things -- they want to know why you want them to do something."

Adds Dennis Flundra with a laugh: "I read in one of the donkey magazines in the States that a horse has an IQ of about 90, and a miniature donkey has an IQ of about 125. I thought: 'Hey, that's a lot smarter than some of the

people I work with.' "

This year's Miniature Donkey Showcase, which runs through Sunday, July 5 in the Agriculture Barns, will feature a driving and trail demonstration at the Pengrowth Saddledome, as well as regular featured presentations at the Northern Lights Arena.

Meanwhile, top breeders in the industry will be on hand to answer questions about these little Jennets and Jacks. Miniature donkeys, while standing 36 inches tall or less, are known to possess some full-sized personality.

"I think what makes them popular is their faces, their eyes," says Wendy Lyon, who chairs the Stampede's Miniature Donkey committee. "People come in and say, 'Oh, they're so cute,' but what they don't realize is that they're so smart. They're highly intelligent animals.

"Once you spend some time with one, and see all the things they can do," adds Lyon, "they're your friend for life. They are so trustworthy, and they have a very sweet disposition."

Miniature donkeys are shown across North America in both halter and performance classes. They are also perfect mounts for small children learning to ride, make great pets for acreage owners, and are excellent stable companions for horses, thanks to their calming and soothing disposition.

"They're very low-maintenance animals," says Dennis Flundra, who raises miniature donkeys for pets and breeding stock. "They're quiet, personable and affectionate."



The miniature donkeys will put on a driving and trail demo at the Saddledome at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, with a hitching and meet-and-greet session to take place a half-hour earlier on Saddledome Lane.

The little animals will also take part in 30-minute presentations at 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, and 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 5, all in the Northern Lights Arena.

The Miniature Donkey Showcase is open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on July 3, 4 and 5.

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