



The Mule

The mule is the offspring resulting from the mating of a jack and a mare. This animal has been employed for many purposes over the years.

In ancient times, the mule was held in high esteem. The Hittites valued mules three times that of a prized chariot horse. Kings of Israel and prelates of the medieval church rode mules because they preferred the slow comfortable pace to that of a horse. The people of ancient Ethiopia gave the mule the highest status of all animals.

In both World Wars, the mule was used to move heavy artillery over rough terrains that were inaccessible to motorized vehicles. During World War II, mules were used extensively in Burma and Italy.

In the forties and fifties, mules were used extensively by farmers in the Ozarks. They were used to cultivate hillsides where tomatoes and strawberries were grown. Fields were cultivated for other crops including family gardens.

Mules were also used to skid logs from area forests. These logs were used for lumber, railroad ties and staves. Now, mules are used for both recreational and work purposes. These include uses such as hunting, jumping, packing, pulling, racing, pleasure riding and ranch work.

One of the traits that enticed man to make use of the mule is the fact that mules are capable of sustained hard work to a far greater degree than horses. Also, mules adapt to heat more easily than horses and are better able to work in hot climates. They are sure-footed animals on mountain trails and have a smooth pace under saddle. A calm nature and a highly developed sense of self-preservation, or independent nature, make mule's beasts of burden that lend themselves to the more difficult tasks of man. Another trait that makes mules of greater value than horses is that mules can be created for specific purposes. This is done by selecting different types of mares to be bred to a jack. For instance, a jack may be bred to a Thoroughbred mare for a racing mule, or a Quarter Horse mare for a ranch mule, or a draft mare for a plow mule.

As one can see these traits, among others, make the MULE a truly versatile animal.

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