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Popular Article

## Donkey Milk: The Liquid Gold

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### *Abstract*

A donkey is a domesticated mammal belonging to the horse family (Equidae). It is also known as an ass or a burro, and is typically smaller than a horse. Donkeys have been used by humans for thousands of years as pack animals, for transportation, and for farm work. They are also kept as pets and are often used for leisure activities such as riding and cart pulling. They are known for their endurance and surefootedness, which makes them well-suited for traversing difficult terrain and are most commonly associated with arid and semi-arid regions. Donkey milk is obtained from female donkeys (jennies). It has been consumed for thousands of years and is believed to have numerous health benefits. The milk is similar in composition to cow's milk, but it has a slightly sweet taste and a lower fat content. The donkey milk has been traditionally used for medicinal purposes, and is believed to have anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, and immunomodulatory properties. It has also been used to treat skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, and is thought to promote healthy skin and hair. However, it is important to note that studies on the health benefits of ass milk is limited, and more studies are needed to fully understand its potential benefits and risks. Additionally, ass milk is not widely available and can be expensive, making it less accessible to many people. Moreover, the milk has become an important medium to save the dwindling population of donkeys.

### **Introduction**

#### **Donkeys - the animal athlete**

Donkeys are domesticated animals that belong to the horse family. They are known for their distinctive long ears and braying call. Donkeys have been used by humans for thousands of years for a variety of purposes, including transportation, agriculture, and as pack animals. They are highly social animals and thrive in groups. They communicate with each other through a variety of vocalizations, body language, and even facial expressions. Donkeys are intelligent and have excellent



memories. They can remember people, places, and other animals for many years. Donkeys are well adapted to living in arid environments and are able to conserve water better than most other domesticated animals. These animals have a strong sense of self-preservation and are naturally cautious. They will often stop and assess a situation before moving forward, which can make them excellent trail animals. Members of this livestock species are hardy and low-maintenance animals, and can be a good choice for small farms or homesteads. In summary, they are fascinating animals with many unique characteristics. They have played an important role in human history and continue to be valued for their intelligence, hardiness, and versatility.

### **Donkeys-a friend indeed for the children:**

Donkeys can have a positive impact on children in many ways, and they are often used in therapy and educational programs for children. Donkeys are gentle and affectionate animals that can provide emotional support and comfort to children. Children who have experienced trauma or emotional challenges may find solace in spending time with donkeys and building a relationship with them. They can be used in educational programs to teach children about animal husbandry, farming, and sustainable agriculture. Children can learn about the care and feeding of donkeys, as well as the role that donkeys have played in human history. Donkeys can be used in animal-assisted therapy programs to help children with a range of challenges, such as anxiety, depression, and autism. The presence of the donkey can help to calm children and provide a sense of security and comfort. Spending time with donkeys can encourage children to spend more time outdoors and develop an appreciation for nature. Activities such as hiking, camping, and trail riding with donkeys can provide opportunities for children to explore and connect with the natural world. Truly, the donkeys can have a positive impact on children in a variety of ways, from emotional support and education to therapy and outdoor activities. By incorporating donkeys into programs for children, it is possible to promote empathy, compassion, and a greater sense of connection to the natural world. In fact in the *“Infant feeding by artificial means: a scientific and practical treatise on the dietetics of infancy”* by S.H. Sadler (1895) the direct donkey udder infant feeding (Figure 1) is shown. It spread in Europe when the peril of infested wet nurses was known. However raw milk consumption is not advocated.





Figure 1: *Infant feeding through direct udder nursing of Donkey milk*

### **Donkeys and local folklore**

Donkeys have a long history of being featured in local folklore and traditions around the world. They are a symbol of stubbornness. In many cultures, the donkey is used as a symbol of stubbornness and obstinacy. For example, in European folklore, the character of Donkey in the story of "The Bremen Town Musicians" is portrayed as stubborn and unyielding. Similarly, in African and Middle Eastern folklore, the donkey is often used to symbolize a person who is unwilling to listen to reason. Also, the donkey is a symbol of hard work. In other cultures, the donkey is celebrated for its hardworking nature and its ability to endure difficult conditions. In Mexican folklore, the donkey is a symbol of the working class and is often featured in stories about the struggles of the poor. Similarly, in Chinese folklore, the donkey is seen as a symbol of perseverance and determination. The donkey is also featured in religious symbolism in many cultures. In Christian tradition, the donkey is associated with the story of Jesus' birth and is believed to have carried Mary to Bethlehem. In Hindu mythology, the donkey is associated with the goddess Sheeta & Kaalratri and is believed to be their mount (Vahan). In some cultures, the donkey is associated with superstitions and folklore. In Italian folklore, it is believed that touching a donkey's mane can bring good luck. Similarly, in Turkish folklore, it is believed that the braying of a donkey can ward off evil spirits. Remarkably, donkeys have played an important role in local folklore and traditions around the world, and they continue to be celebrated for their unique characteristics and contributions to human society.



### **Donkey Milk – the untold saga**

Milk of livestock animals has played an important role in human civilization for thousands of years. The domestication of animals for milk production, such as cows, goats, and sheep, allowed for a reliable source of food and helped to sustain human populations. It is a rich source of nutrients, including protein, calcium, and vitamins, which has made it an important part of human diets throughout history. Milk has played a significant role in the cultural and religious practices of many societies. For example, in Hinduism, cows are considered sacred and their milk is used in many religious ceremonies. The production and processing of milk has driven technological advancements throughout history, such as the development of dairy farming techniques, pasteurization, and milk packaging. The dairy industry has had a significant impact on the global economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing to international trade. In fact, milk has been an important part of human civilization for thousands of years, and its influence continues to be felt today in a variety of ways.

Donkey milk is lesser-known milk that has been used for centuries for its nutritional and medicinal properties. Despite its benefits, donkey milk remains an untold saga in many parts of the world, including India. In ancient times, donkey milk was considered a valuable commodity, and it was used by the Greeks and Romans for its medicinal properties. It was believed to have a soothing effect on the skin and was used in the treatment of various skin ailments, such as eczema and psoriasis. Donkey milk was also believed to improve digestion, boost the immune system, and promote overall health and well-being. Despite its long history of use, donkey milk is not widely consumed in many parts of the world today. One of the reasons for this is the limited availability of donkeys, as they are not commonly raised for their milk. Additionally, donkey milk production is not as efficient as cow or goat milk production, which makes it more expensive to produce.

However, donkey milk is slowly gaining popularity in some regions of the world, particularly in Europe and Asia, where it is being used in skincare products, such as soaps and creams. In India, donkey milk is still a relatively unknown product, but there may be opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurs to explore its potential as a niche product. Largely, the story of donkey milk is an untold saga that deserves more attention and appreciation for its unique nutritional and medicinal properties. As more people become aware of the benefits of donkey milk, it may become more widely available and appreciated in the future.



### **Donkey Milk – the Liquid Gold**

Donkey milk has been called "liquid gold" due to its potential health benefits and unique composition. It is the costliest milk. It is rich in nutrients, including vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, C, D, E, and K, as well as minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. Apart from it, it is lower in fat than cow's milk, making it a good option for people who are watching their fat intake. The proteins in donkey milk are smaller and more easily digestible than those in cow's milk, making it a good choice for people with sensitive stomachs. It contains a protein called lysozyme, which has anti-inflammatory properties and may help reduce inflammation in the body. Donkey milk is high in vitamins and minerals that can be beneficial for the skin. It has been used for centuries in traditional beauty treatments to moisturize, soothe, and protect the skin. The donkey milk is a highly nutritious and potentially beneficial food that has been enjoyed for centuries. While it is not as widely available as cow's milk, it is gaining popularity as more people discover its unique properties.

In India, cow milk and buffalo milk are the most commonly consumed types of milk, and they are regulated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Other types of milk, such as goat milk and sheep milk, are also consumed in some regions of India, but they are not as widely available. Donkey milk is not commonly consumed milk in India, and it is not included in the list of eligible milk products regulated by FSSAI. As a result, there are no specific regulations or standards for donkey milk in India. If a company were to produce and market donkey milk in India, it would need to comply with the general food safety and quality regulations set by FSSAI. These regulations include requirements for hygiene and sanitation, labeling and packaging, and microbiological standards. However, because donkey milk is not a commonly consumed product in India, it may be difficult to find or produce on a commercial scale. Additionally, there may be cultural or religious factors that discourage the consumption of donkey milk in some regions of India.

Donkey milk can be an interesting opportunity for agricultural entrepreneurs who are looking to diversify their products or add value to their existing operations. Donkey milk is considered a niche product with potential health benefits, and it may appeal to consumers who are looking for alternative dairy products. However, donkeys produce much less milk than cows or goats, and it can be difficult to scale up production to meet demand. Also, the donkey milk is not well known in many countries, and it may take time and effort to educate consumers and build awareness of the product. Therefore, producing and marketing donkey milk can be a challenging but potentially rewarding



opportunity for agricultural entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in production, product manufacture and marketing to develop a market for this unique product.

### **Donkey milk - a tool towards woman empowerment**

Donkey milk production and marketing can be an opportunity for woman empowerment in several ways. Its production can be a source of income for women in rural areas, who may have limited opportunities for employment. Women can be trained in donkey care, milking, and processing, and they can work in donkey milk cooperatives or start their own businesses. Donkey milk production requires specific skills and knowledge, such as animal husbandry, milking, and processing. Women who are involved in donkey milk production can develop these skills and become experts in this area, which can lead to increased self-confidence and empowerment. Donkey milk cooperatives or small businesses can provide opportunities for women to work together and build supportive networks within their communities. This can help to increase their social capital and provide a sense of community belonging. Its milk is known for several health benefits, and women who are involved in its production and marketing can help to promote its consumption and improve the health of their communities. Thus, donkey milk production and marketing can be a way to empower women in rural areas, by providing them with income, skills, and community involvement. By promoting women's participation in the donkey milk industry, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equitable society that benefits everyone.

### **Donkeys-need of conservation efforts**

Recently, the donkey populations have experienced declines due to various factors, including changes in agriculture and transportation technology, overhunting for their hides and meat, and the use of donkeys in the production of traditional Chinese medicine. In some regions, such as Africa, donkeys are also threatened by the spread of infectious diseases, which can lead to significant population declines. For example, the African equine sickness virus, which is transmitted by insects, has caused widespread mortality in donkey populations in some regions. Despite these challenges, donkeys remain an important and valuable species for many communities around the world. They are used for transportation, farming, and as a source of milk and meat in many regions, and they continue to play an important role in human societies. Efforts to conserve and protect donkey populations are ongoing to promote the welfare and well-being of donkeys around the world.

### **Conclusion**

Donkey milk is believed to have anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, and immunomodulatory



properties. It has also been used to treat skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, and is thought to promote healthy skin and hair. However, it is important to note that studies on the health benefits of ass milk is limited, and more studies are needed to fully understand its potential benefits and risks.

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