



## Choosing the Right Jack

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Once you have decided to breed your mare to a jack, how do you choose the right jack in order to get the type of mule you would like?

In today's age of shipped semen, we have the option of breeding any jack to any mare, no matter where the mare and jack are located. We are not limited to finding a jack in our neighborhood. This is a good thing as many people do not have a jack within driving distance. Jacks are not as common as horse stallions.

Most veterinarians are well equipped and experienced to inseminate your mare using shipped semen. It is an easy process, but requires constant communication between the mare owner or vet and the jack owner.

Breeding to a jack is like anything else, you get what you pay for. It is not always easy to get first class service and a great looking mule foal from a jack that has a low stud fee – just like with horses. But also just like anything else, breeding a mare to a jack without a breeding contract from the jack owner is asking for trouble.

A breeding contract will protect the mare owner and the

jack owner. Everything should be covered in the contract. Typically you can choose between bringing your mare to the jack to be bred live or insemination. A contract should have the requirements of the mare owner and jack owner in writing, all fees associated with breeding your mare and when fees are due, how the settlement of any disputes will be handled and finally, and a live foal guarantee will be in any reputable breeders contract.

Not all live foal guarantees are the same. Make sure the guarantee is acceptable to you. Most live foal guarantees have requirements from the mare owner to have the mare ultra-sounded by a veterinarian or the guarantee is void.

Next, before you look at any jack, you must make some decisions.

First, what are your plans for the mule? Will you be trail riding with your new mule, pulling a wagon, or showing? You can do many things with the same mule, so you are not limited to one, but it is harder to cut cattle and pull a wagon with the same mule. However, it would be easy to trail ride and work cattle with the same type of mule.

Next, you will need to look at your mare. There is no such thing as a perfect animal. Every animal will have at least one flaw. It may be a major flaw or a minor flaw. A jack will help with a minor flaw, but can not fix a major flaw.

If your mare is small, then finding a larger jack will add height to your mule. Most well-bred jacks will produce a mule taller than the mare. If you are looking at a jack with a large head, then your mule will probably have a large head.

It is very important to look at a jack's offspring. What a jack looks like is not always an indication of what his offspring will look like.

There are many jacks who have great conformation and disposition, but do not pass this on to his offspring, why? It is not how a jack looks; it is the genes he carries. A well-bred jack will produce a mule better than himself.

Your mule will be a result of your mare and a jack. Sometimes a mare and jack look like they will produce a great mule, but do not. Not all matches work. Many jack owners have websites; look at his brood mares and find a mare that has similar conformation, size and color as yours if you can. That may give you an indication of what type of mule you will get by breeding to that jack.

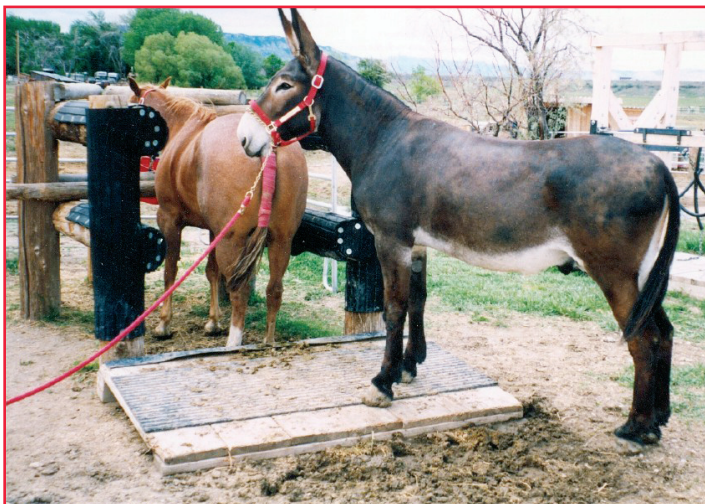
Also, be sure to look at the registration papers of the jack. If the jack is



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not registered showing two or three generations back, you will not know the generations of the jack. Is the jack a sorrel jack from gray parents? It may affect the color of your mule. Is the mammoth jack from a standard jack? That may affect the size of your mule.

Talk to the jack owner. No one knows his jack better than him. He will be able to provide you with his jack's registration papers, show you his brood mares and offspring from his jack. Do not be afraid to ask questions. There is no such thing as a dumb question.



How do you decide what jack to breed to?



What are your plans for your mule?



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*If you have a question or a problem you would like Tim to cover in an article, contact him by phone at (307) 899-1089 or by email at [bliss@wavecom.net](mailto:bliss@wavecom.net), or by visiting [www.diamondcreekmules.com](http://www.diamondcreekmules.com).*