



Donkeys are an inseparable part of Bonaire. They are endearing animals that many people find easy to love.

Did you know that a donkey can live to be 50 or older, and that females remain fertile throughout their lives?

However, donkeys also cause problems. They wander onto roads and overturn rubbish bins in search of food. Digging for water contributes to erosion, which in turn affects the natural environment. Collisions also occur regularly, leaving both people and donkeys injured.

There are services available for people, but fortunately, for the donkeys, there is Donkey Sanctuary Bonaire. It currently provides a home for more than 800 donkeys. Another 1,100 or more roam freely across Bonaire, consuming vegetation and damaging the natural environment. Their numbers continue to grow, and they too need food. Yet nature is Bonaire's future.

This is a serious and growing problem. Some people continue to insist that donkeys should roam freely, despite the danger to people and animals.

That is precisely the issue: there are too many donkeys, causing considerable problems during dry periods. As traffic and the population increase, these problems will only become more serious.

For more than 32 years, Stichting Donkeys Help has provided additional care and assistance to donkeys. Everyone calls us when a donkey is in distress: the police, Bonaire residents and tourists who encounter an animal in trouble.

We are available 24/7 and have been for more than 32 years. That is why we explain the urgent need for the government to make decisions about catching all remaining free-roaming donkeys and accommodating them at LVV, to prevent further environmental damage, vehicle damage and animal suffering.

Anyone wishing to see donkeys can visit Donkey Sanctuary. The sanctuary will continue to preserve a donkey population to honour their historical significance. However, caring for the donkeys and maintaining the grounds requires income, which is why it charges an entrance fee.

We would therefore like to explain the costs of accommodating 1,100 donkeys, if there are not already more. A count conducted by a company hired by the OLB recorded more than 1,100 free-roaming donkeys.

Housing them on any site would present a major challenge. We would like to explain why.

What would be needed, every year, for at least the next 40 years?





A very large, fenced property, a fresh water supply through wells or pumps, staff and vehicles. Donkeys need food and water seven days a week, so staff must also be present every day.

Then there is the cost of feeding them. Supplementary feed would be needed daily, because no site provides enough grazing for so many donkeys.

Item	Estimated annual cost
Maintenance pellets: 1 kg per donkey per day, totalling 1,100 kg daily, at \$320 per day	\$116,800
Hay: 1 kg per donkey per day as supplementary feed	\$308,880
Water: 11,000 litres per day at \$9 per cubic metre	\$36,500
Four staff members: \$7,600 per month, excluding additional employer costs	\$91,200
Total estimated annual cost	\$553,380

These are realistic estimates for feed, water and staff alone.

In addition, two vehicles would need to be purchased, with further expenses for road tax, maintenance, fuel and other running costs. A small loader and/or front-end loader would also be needed, at an estimated purchase cost of approximately \$45,000.

Together, these represent a substantial recurring annual expense that would have to be covered by the government budget.

Taking everything into account, this would place an enormous financial burden on the population, many of whom live below the poverty line. We consider this irresponsible and therefore urge the authorities to involve us in all discussions as soon as possible, before the situation with the donkeys gets further out of control.

We hope everyone can and will understand this.

Marina Melis

Founder of Donkeys Help, established in May 1993`

