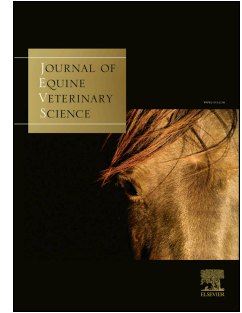


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“The current situation and trend of the donkey industry in South America”**Gustavo Ferrer Carneiro^{1*}, Jorge Eduardo Cavalcante Lucena¹, Lawrence de Oliveira Barros²**

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1. ABSTRACT

Donkey husbandry in South America is related to a social, cultural, economic and ecological heritage. Its use is mainly based on agriculture, but is also important in human feeding, production of hybrids and transportation. Mechanization of the agricultural sector may cause concern as the decrease in the number of these animals can result in a loss of genetic variability of the species, restricting the ability of adaptation and evolution of this species. With the largest herd of these animals in South America, Brazil hosts three types of donkeys brought from Europe or Africa recognized as: a) Northeast (Ecotype) Donkey, a class of highly rustic animals adapted to the adverse conditions of the Brazilian semi-arid region ; b) Brazilian Donkey, brought from Italy, with a close genetic relationship to African Donkeys; c) Pêga Donkey, of Iberian origin, a special type of Donkey developed mainly in the state of Minas Gerais for use in the mining industry. There are also researches performed in biotechnology for production of gate donkeys such as AI and ET using mules and mares as recipients. In the meat business, an abattoir for donkeys has been recently built in the Northeast region with capacity to slaughter 500 donkeys a day to export skin and meat to China. There are also projects to produce donkey milk, but still on a small

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