

Climate Change Hits Donkey Hard

Hi, I'm Roscoe, a rascal of a donkey living in the Ozarks. Mom asked me to honk a few words about how hard it's become to find hay and pasture for me and my buddies, Josie, my sweet donkey friend; Fat Abby, the mule; and Sierra, the old mare who heads up the herd. In the winter, we're burdened by the presence of Rosie, a fast-talking, greedy fox trotter who's taking some R&R from riding trails.

This summer was so dang hot and dry even for us hardy donkeys. Why, Mom had to settle for hay not as tasty as last year's and short of what she'll need for us equines to eat this winter. We went for 60 days without a drop of rain, and the pasture was so dry even the buckbrush wasn't fit to eat. It's been hot and dry in the Ozarks before—I well remember the summer of 2012—but this climate change is bringing on the heat and dry a good month early and lasting longer. My eating is suffering! I know the horse and cows across the blacktop were so short on pasture that their dad had to start feeding them what little hay he had put up. What are those poor critters gonna eat come January?

Mom's also paying a lot more for our oats, which must have dried up wherever they grow, and her garden didn't produce a single carrot this year. She tells me that the smart folks now predict the Ozarks will have lots of high triple-digit days. And dry, dry, dry. There's no way even a donkey can survive such heat. And guaranteed there won't be no pasture or hay. All those folks with lots of critters are gonna be in a world of hurt. The Ozarks will be a desert!

I sure hope Mom and her friends can do something about this climate change. I remember back in 2012, folks around here had hay to spare and trucked it Texas to feed the starving cows and horses—donkeys, too—down there. I'm afraid we may need someone truckin' hay to the Ozarks before long. Where's it going to come from?

Farmers and donkey-lovers like Mom are beginning to take notice of this climate change, but it's gonna take a lot more attention and action than that. Everybody's got to pitch in or there ain't gonna be anything to eat for donkeys or the folks who love them. Just brayin.

Jennifer Ailor, Ozark Society member