

#RealNewForest

How tame are the animals?

All the animals are managed, but most of them are not 'tame', since they live much of their lives on the Forest and are only handled when necessary. They are normally described as 'semi-feral', being neither wild nor tame. However, some animals have been handled more than others: ponies may be retired riding ponies, or been taken off the Forest and handled for showing. Some owners halter break their foals to make it easier to handle them when future need arises, while others are almost entirely unhandled.

The cattle have to undergo regular TB tests. New Forest commoners have agreed to a more stringent testing regime than in other parts of the UK in order to protect the New Forest herd and they are often taken off the Forest or given supplementary feed over the winter, since there is little food for them and the hard winter months make it difficult for them to stay healthy. Most of the ponies remain out over the winter, unless their condition drops and they have to be brought in for some TLC. Some owners do remove their ponies during the winter, though, because of the increased risk of road accidents. Also some cattle owners remove their cattle from the Forest during the Autumn to reduce the risk of acorn poisoning.

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