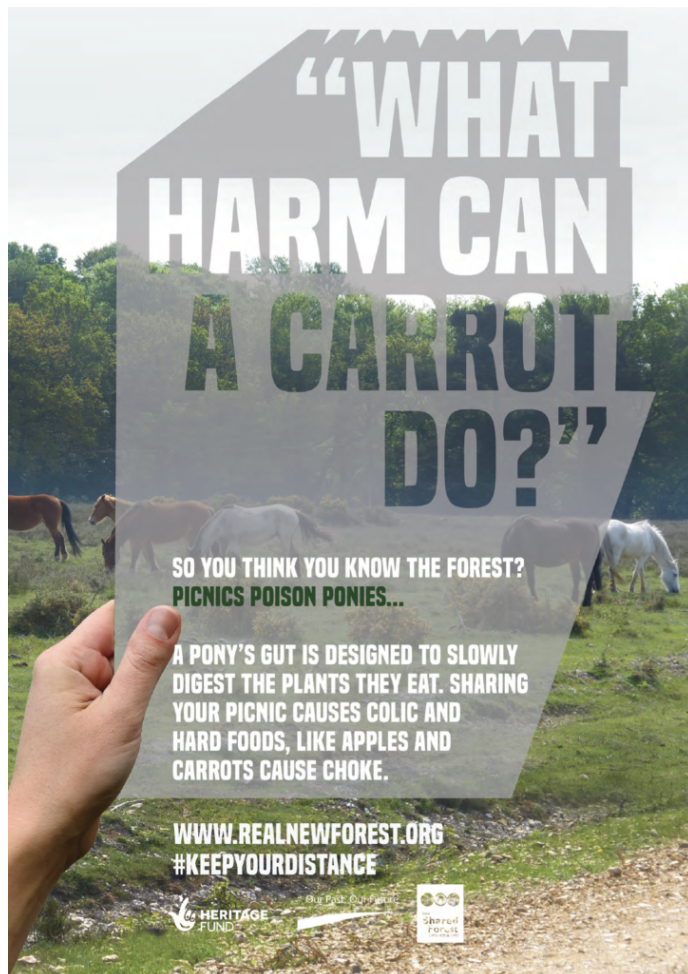


#RealNewForest

What harm can a carrot or apple do?



Not only is feeding commoners' animals an offence under the byelaws, and

antisocial as no-one welcomes strangers feeding their animals, but it is also very harmful. Contrary to common view carrots and apples are not safe for New Forest grazing livestock.

Anything in any quantity and any change in the normal diet can cause deadly colic. This is a very painful and is [the most common cause of equine fatalities](#). In a domestic animal, under constant observation, treatment may be possible. For the semi-feral animals grazing the New Forest spotting the problem in time is unlikely.

Hard foods, like apples or carrots can cause choke. Equines have long, narrow guts and small stomachs. If a hard piece of feed gets stuck in its journey along the gut it causes a condition known as "[choke](#)". The symptoms may emerge some time after eating the item. In the case of semi-feral New Forest ponies and donkeys it is unlikely that this will be spotted, and timely treatment provided. The build-up of fluid around an obstruction can also cause aspiration pneumonia.

Feeding disrupts healthy grazing habits. Ponies and donkeys are creatures of habit. They will quickly learn to hang around for treats if someone feeds them. When this does happen not only is it often beside New Forest roads, drawing them to danger, but it badly disrupts their grazing habits. The grazing livestock must be able to nourish themselves all year round, grazing for much of the day on the varied diet of what the New Forest offers naturally. Feeding leads to them waiting around in the hope of hand-feeding, they gradually lose condition, and are then unable to survive on the New Forest and have to be removed.

Feeding harms the grazed habitats. The New Forest is designated a National Park largely because of the continuously grazed habitats, upon which rare species depend. Feeding disrupts the natural movement of the livestock around the habitats, according to the weather conditions and vegetation growth.