

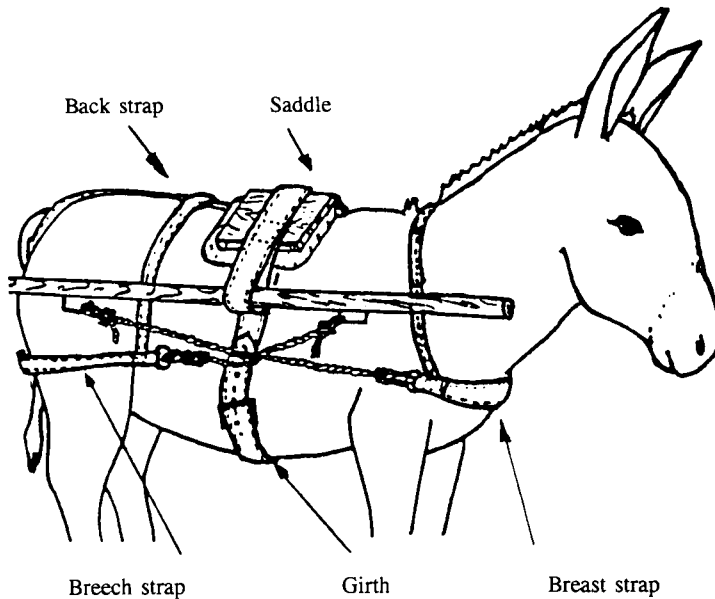
## CHAPTER 2. HARNESSING AND TRAINING

### 2.3 HARNESSING OF DONKEYS

#### 2.3.2 HARNESSING DONKEYS TO CARTS AND IN TEAMS

##### HARNESSING DONKEYS TO CARTS

The simple breast strap or the collar harness described in **Module 2.3.1** are designed for pulling only and provide no possibility of pushing in the opposite direction to brake a moving cart. This can be overcome by adding a breech strap which passes round the rump and under the tail of the donkey. The vertical load is carried over a saddle which is held in place by the girth strap. The shafts of the cart are attached separately to the breast band and to the breech strap on either side (**Fig.1**).



*Fig. 1 The arrangement of the breast band, breech strap and saddle for harnessing to a donkey to the shafts of a cart.*

*Source: CEEMAT/FAO, 1982*

An alternative design which can be made from old car tyres and heavy cloth is being promoted for its cheapness in Botswana (Fig.2) although leather is preferred if it can be afforded. The harness has no saddle and both the vertical load and the pulling force are carried by the collar resting on the shoulders of the donkey.

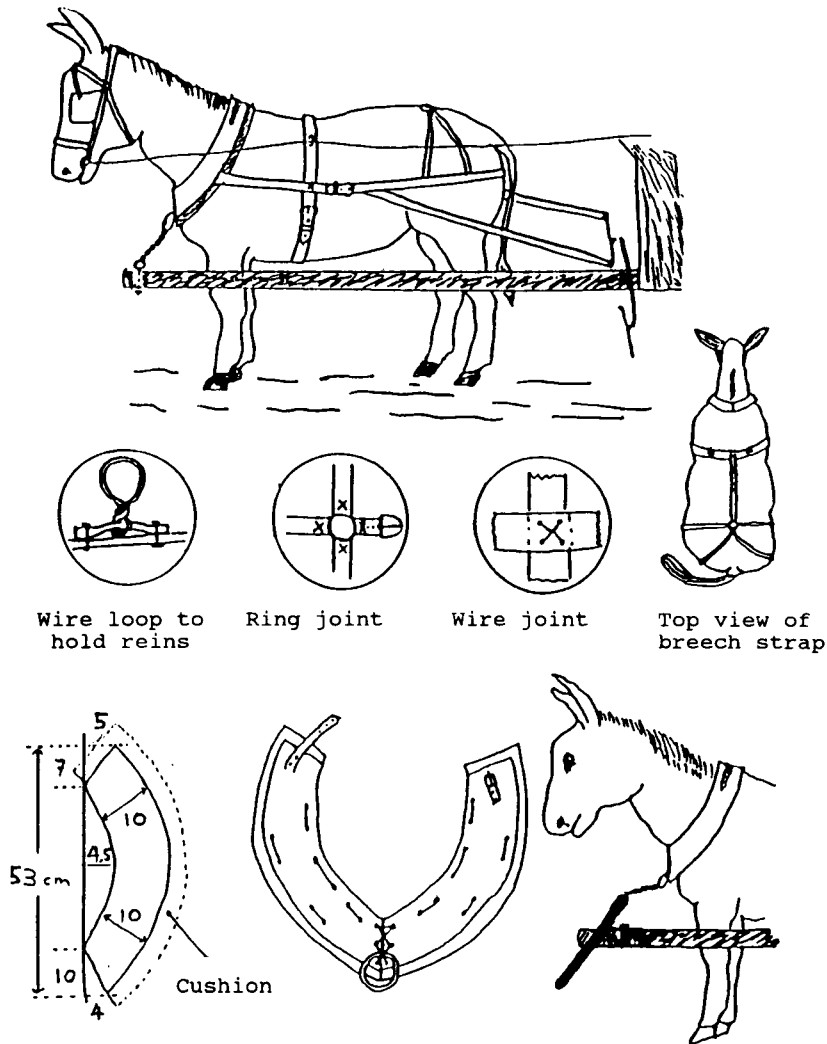


Fig. 2 Approximate design for the collar type donkey harness promoted in Botswana.

Source: FMDU, 1987

**MAKING THE COLLAR HARNESS**

The harness can be made out of two layers cut from the sidewall of a tyre for the collar and, using the tyre casing to make the straps.

- Strip the tread off the casing before cutting the straps. These should all be 5 cm wide except the back and hip straps which are 2.5 cm wide.
- Straps cut from tyres have a tendency to curve and so it is important to see which way the curve falls before joining the straps. This will make the difference between a good fit round the body of the animal or an uncomfortable and loose fit.
- Strap lengths should be made according to the size of the animal, carefully measuring the length required before cutting the strap. The adjustments provided in the design will allow different donkeys to wear the same harness although it will be convenient to make one for smaller animals and one for larger ones.
- Two collar pieces are cut from the sidewall of the tyre and placed so that the outside of the wall is against the animals body. The two pieces should be fastened together with wire, the hitching loop fixed in place at the base of the collar and a strap and buckle attached at the top to hold it in place. The pull straps are attached to the collar and to the girth straps. Fix wire loops on either side of the girth strap to guide the reins.
- A cushion is made from hessian cloth, cutting out two pieces 3 cm wider all round the shape of the collar to allow for the seams. Dried grass can be used for padding and the cushion sown into place.
- When fitting the harness, the girth strap should not be too tight and all the pulling load should come from the collar. The breech straps should not be too tight either so as to avoid rubbing but need to be held firmly in place for good control.

### HARNESSING DONKEYS IN TEAMS

The use of the swingletree and evener to hitch two donkeys abreast has already been described in Module 2.3.1. Other possible arrangements for hitching teams of two or more donkeys are

illustrated below in Fig.3.

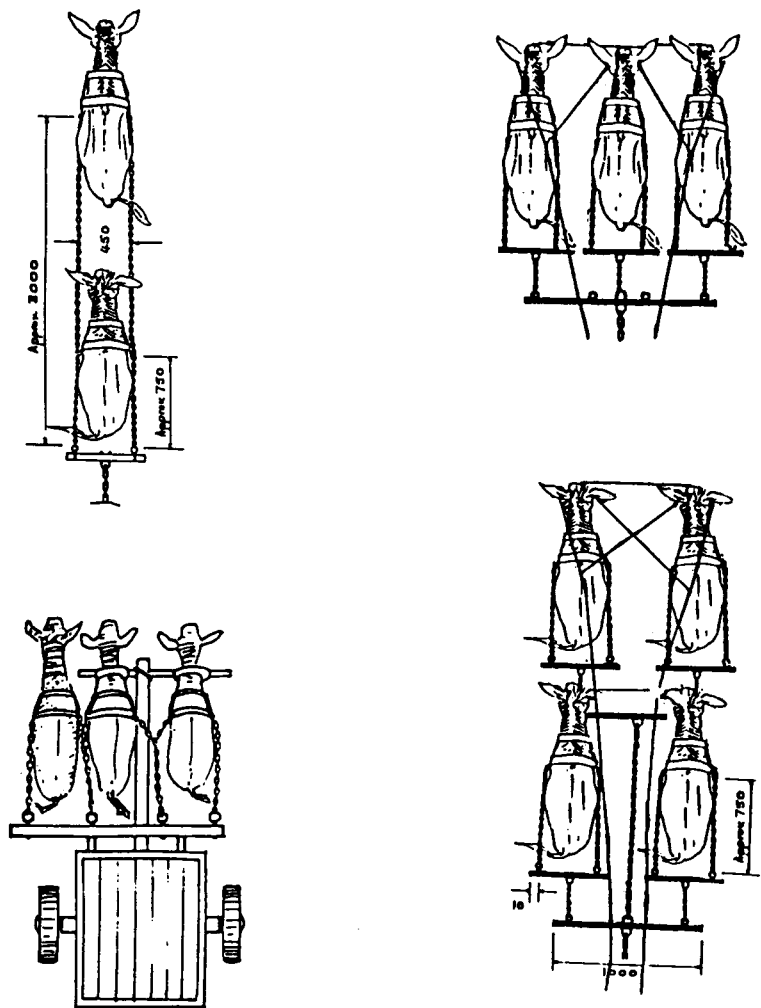


Fig. 3 Alternative hitching arrangements for teams of two, three and four donkeys