

Turning Pointe Donkey Rescue

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2008

Methicillin-Resistant *Staph aureus* (MRSA) in Companion Animals

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There has been considerable media attention to the problem of methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* infections in humans. MRSA infections in companion animals, particularly horses and dogs, are also increasing in frequency, leading to concerns that zoonotic transmission of MRSA is an important public health problem.

MRSA bacteria are associated with companion animals in two ways. In some cases, the bacteria are causing true infections and in other cases the animals are colonized with MRSA but not infected. The distinction between colonization and infection is a clinical one.

Infection occurs when MRSA enters a body site and multiplies, causing tissue destruction and disease. Infection often presents with severe dermatitis, draining wounds, or debilitating post-operative joint infections and sepsis. These infections require aggressive clinical management. Culture and sensitivity results are critical to the selection of appropriate antibiotic therapy.

Colonization occurs when an animal has MRSA in or on a body site but has no clinical signs of disease. Animals may be colonized with MRSA for days to a few months, but most animals clear the organism when a source of re-exposure is absent.

MRSA isolates from horses are a different genetic type than those typical of MRSA in humans. However, the horse type of MRSA can transfer to humans, and persons with extensive equine contact are at risk for colonization. Veterinary health care workers who are colonized with equine MRSA may also spread the organism to their equine patients. MRSA isolates from dogs and cats are the same genetic types as are found in humans and are thought to originate in most cases from contact with a colonized or infected person. Transmission of these strains from human-to-animal and animal-to-human may occur within households. However, available evidence suggests that colonized dogs and cats become decolonized when the continuing potential for re-exposure from colonized humans is prevented.

Because of the potential for spread of MRSA between colonized companion animals and humans, veterinarians are increasingly being asked to "screen" pets for MRSA as part of the investigation of MRSA infections within households. Clients are approaching veterinarians upon the recommendation of physicians who are implicating pets in the transmission cycle. The advice animal owners are receiving can be as extreme as, "get rid of the dog," and therefore clients are often distressed when communicating with their veterinarian. So what do you do when presented with these questions?

First, client education is important and this article and additional information in the Bacteriology Section of the DCPAH website (www.animalhealth.msu.edu) may be of assistance.

Second, companion animals can be screened for colonization with MRSA by culture of oropharyngeal and perineal swabs. Enriched culture techniques are required, and these are available at DCPAH. However, such screening is only reasonable if there is epidemiological evidence to suggest that a pet is involved in transmission within a household or if there is concern about exposure of immuno-compromised persons.


Third, thought must be given as to what will be done if an animal is found to be colonized. The typical decolonization therapy used in humans, intra-nasal mupirocin, is not routinely effective and is difficult to deliver in animals. Parenteral antibiotics are also not very effective in eliminating colonization in dogs and cats. Hand hygiene and infection control practices are the most effective way to decrease transmission of MRSA. However, another strategy that may be considered is to remove the pet from the household for a 1- to 2-week period while household members are undergoing treatment. This is likely to break the cycle of infection to the pet.




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- Thanks to all who have new donkeys in their barn. We are deeply appreciative of all the new, and forever homes of our donkeys!

Adopter	Donkey's Name
Tracy Mikowski	Wilson
Lugthart Family	Woodchuck
Cathy Guthrie and her daughter Jill	Cooper
Robert and Susan Scharp	Harlan


- Do you have a desire to help and have some extra time?
 - Are you a great organizer with some extra time? There are always things to be done! Contact Sharon at akaminiaturedonkeys@michcom.net
- Donkeys available for adoption:
 - To see if your favorite donkey is still available for adoption, visit us at our website www.turningpointedonkeyrescue.com or at www.petfinder.com

Donkey name's	Pertinent comments
Leora and Pizazz 	Miss Leora is a young standard jennet who recently gave birth to Pizazz. She is shy and skeptical but has recently been coming up to her foster mom much quicker than when she first arrived. She loves treats and if you just give her a moment, she allows you to pet her. She wasn't real good for the farrier, but we are working on that! At this time of course Leora and Pizazz must go as a pair but if adopted after November 1st, they may be adopted separately. If you are interested Contact Toni Jones at 269-838-5551 or e-mail her @ bozbulldogs@yahoo.com

<p>Simmone</p> 	<p>Simone is a young miniature mule, palomino in color. She is easy to catch, load and trim. She would do a lead in trail class beautifully! Simone has a lot of attitude though. She thinks she is awesome! She can get a little mouthy about treats, but is getting over that! Her foster mom just loves her! If you are interested contact Toni Jones at 269-838-551 or e-mail her at boyzbulldogs@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Siegfried</p> 	<p>Siegfried, a handsome Standard donkey, is little more than a yearling. When his baby coat is shed, he will be very dark brown/black. This young man had been sent thru three different auction barns in two states in TWO MONTHS! He was peddled from sale to sale with his friend Hasta Luago a BLM gelding also now with us. Siegfried was gelded on June 5th. and is available now for adoption. He has an issue or two. Was scared to death at the very sight of our stock trailer. We teach every rescue donkey that comes to us how load into a trailer. Well, he had taken several trips before coming to us, (the sale barns you know) and he was having no part of loading up again. He put up a valiant fight during several loading lessons. Kicking at us, and kicking the trailer once inside. The poor lad is improving though. As we have all castrations done at the veterinary clinic instead of here on the farm (giving our donkeys an opportunity to load & travel several times in one day) poor Siegfried had to load for his visit to the vet. He got in really very well. But as soon as the door closed behind him, the panic set in and he proceeded to kick the trailer. Luckily, his trip was a 15 minutes ride. He was a bit sweaty from worry, but none the worse for wear! He is a real fun guy to work with. Once he gets that it really isn't in his best interest to fight, he quickly adjusts his attitude. This boy will only be placed with someone that looks forward to investing their time, talents, and equine knowledge in this youngster. He is NOT aggressive, and not fearful of people either. It is all too clear to me that he has a history of being pushed around by a series of people that don't know anything about donkeys/horses. He ties up very well, and gets along well with his donkey buddies. As he is just a kid, he PLAYS all the time. It would be ideal to place him with another playful, somewhat busy equine. Siegfried and TPDR Jeffrey were recently moved to their new foster home with Brenda Moyer in Mason, Michigan. Siegfried and Jeffrey are becoming fast friends and Jeffrey especially has become devoted to Brenda's mom. Soon they will join the Big Boys (Brenda's Percherons) and her 3 TPDR adopted donkey boys to learn how to become acceptable members of a herd. The education process continues!!! If you are interested, please contact Brenda Moyer at 517-719-1370 or e-mail her at bmoyer@incorc.org or contact Sharon Windsor at 517-623-0000 or email her at: akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
<p>Muggsy</p> 	<p>Muggsy, a handsome standard gelding, is a very stout, strong youngster only five years old. He came to us from a very caring woman in Michigan. She had one miniature yearling gelding and was searching for a companion for him. Also, she is the mom of two very young children. She came across an ad for Muggsy and was told he was indeed a mini. Of course when she arrived to see the donkey, she discovered that he sure was no little guy. The seller wanted him gone. Thus the deception over the telephone. This surely was not the donkey she was looking for and knew that he would not be the proper addition to her family. She also knew that she was NOT leaving him where he was! He had been kept in the basement of a barn all winter along with numerous other animals. When he was put outside he was tied up on a rope and given beer. Evidently his owner thought that was quite amusing. I have no idea how long he was with that individual. Muggsy was purchased by the kind woman that had come to get a mini, and within a few days came to our rescue. Muggsy gets along very well with other animals. He is reportedly very difficult for farrier work. He is due to be trimmed so we will evaluate that issue soon. He loads easily. However, he is fearful when voices are raised when correcting his herd-mates and leaves the group as soon as possible. One can only imagine how he was treated prior to coming to us. He will</p>

	<p>respond very well when placed in a home where kindness and patience are the rule. He will make a fine companion for a horse, or even several horses. But please only someone that will treat him with the love, patience and respect he deserves. For more information, contact Sharon 517-623-0000 or email her at akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
<p>Houdie</p> 	<p>Just how cute is he??? Houdie is just about as cute as a donkey can be and that is pretty cute! He and his mother were also auction donkeys. Both were in very good condition, and this guy's mom was really devoted to her baby. Well mom was sold one way and the kid came home with us. It was evident that the pair had come from someone that had cared very much for their donkeys. Mom and kid were very well fed, and their hooves had been taken care of as well. This standard baby showed me that he had lived with someone that knew donkeys and how to start a foal out the proper way. What a treat! Houdie knew how to lead, was a great guy for our farrier, and loaded well for his vet appointment for gelding. Our vet said "Wow, this is really a nice one, especially for such a young baby! I would think he is about six months old. He is WONDERFUL! It would be great to place Houdie with another young donkey so they can grow up together. He will need a playmate. He needs a home with someone that will continue to develop this great young guy. With his temperament, and willing calm nature he will be perfect for the person that wants to "Do Something" with their donkey! For more information, contact Sharon 517-623-0000 or email her at akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
<p>Owen</p> 	<p>Owen who was about 6-9 months old came to us from the exotic auction along with Stevie. Owen is a lovely gray miniature gelding. He has a little more self confidence than Stevie has, but keep in mind BOTH ARE BABIES, and likely other than coming to TPDR the only time they had left the security of their former home was to be taken to auction. Owen is a real sweetie that will flourish when he finally meets his forever family. Stevie and Owen will not be adopted as a pair. At this time, they are a bit too dependent upon one another. Understandably so!!! Once each boy finds his new family, they will then bond more with their people, and their new companion equines. Each will need a home with another donkey, mule, or horse. If you are interested in giving Owen a new home, please contact Sharon Windsor at 517-623-0000 or email her at: akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
<p>Stevie</p> 	<p>Stevie and his mother were taken to a large exotic animal auction along with another jennet and her foal. What a frightening experience for little guys that more than likely had never before left home. Yes, the sale barn is a noisy, chaotic place at best. People are constantly grabbing the donkeys, prying their mouths open to have a look at their teeth, then cranking their tails up to determine if the little animal is male or female. At least the babies had the comfort of their mothers. That was about to change. The two jennets were separated from their foals prior to entering the sale ring. The girls were sold as breeders so that next year there will be more unwanted foals to dump at yet another auction. We brought the little guys home with us. It has been almost a month of R&R for them. Both Stevie and Owen (his friend also listed) were gelded on May 28. TPDR Stevie is about 5-7 months old, and will be quite a small mini at maturity. Stevie needs a home with only one or two other equines. He will benefit greatly by being placed with someone that believes in making FRIENDS with their donkey! For more information, contact Sharon at 517-623-0000 or email akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>

<p>Jeffrey</p> 	<p>TPDR Jeffrey is four years old, a standard, and proving to be a great companion animal to be around. He really likes and trusts people, both adults and children as well. Jeffrey is well trained to lead, he trailers just fine, and has an outgoing, friendly disposition. He came to us from an auction, and fortunately I was able to get some information from his former owner. He had been kept as a pet, and also bred their jennet and produced a foal last year. As the family's life took on a new direction, both donkeys were sold at auction, with Jeffrey coming to us. After purchasing Jeffrey, he was left in Indiana with member Toby Lehman to be gelded and have his hooves trimmed. Ideally I would like to see this guy adopted by someone that would like to "Do Something Fun" with him. He is young, curious, and has a willing to please attitude that makes him very suitable to do therapy work, driving, showing, or even Parelli work! If you are interested contact Sharon Windsor at 517-623-0000 or email her at: akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
<p>Rudy</p> 	<p>Rudy came to us last fall along with former herd mates Sparky, Ben, and Speedy G. The boys have been in rehab foster homes since their arrival. Rudy, foaled in 2002 is a very sweet gelding that is about 36 inches tall. He has a very passive and compliant nature. He leads very well, learned quickly to load and is a gentleman for picking up all four feet. Rudy along with his three half brothers all came to us as a result of the passing of their former owner. The original herd numbered about a dozen donkeys. The family has kept several of the senior herd members, and that left the four geldings in search of new homes. The boys had a very loving home and had received excellent veterinary and farrier care. They were all gelded at a young age, so no left over jack issues to deal with. The ONLY difficulty we have experienced with Rudy (AND THE OTHER THREE BOYS TOO) is they are very difficult to catch. The previous owners son told me that his dad went out each evening, sat with the donkeys and fed them a bag of carrots. The only time they were EVER CAUGHT was for the farrier and vet visits. They had ONE halter for the entire herd! Sweet little Rudy will be a wonderful pet for someone willing to work on his CATCHING KINK! After all, he did learn early on NOT to be caught when he was chased. I have met many donkeys in my life, BUT NEVER ONE THAT A HUMAN COULD OUTFRONT!!! Things work much better when you teach your donkey to come to you! If Interested contact Toni Jones at boyzbulldogs@yahoo.com or contact Sharon Windsor at 517-623-0000 or email her at: akaminidonkeys</p>
<p>Ben</p> 	<p>Ben is almost 6 years old and spent a few months in our rehab center, before being moved to his foster home at Jackie Timmerman's. **Update from Ben's Foster Mom: 03-14-08** Ben has come along way since arriving at my house. He was great for the farrier. In fact he was the best one of all 4 including my own donkey. He stood there with his head on my arm and didn't mind at all. He leads well but still has to check out anything new since he has not been out of the pasture on any adventures yet. He is timid and shy but can be talked out of that with a few carrots. He is so careful about taking a carrot. We call him Gentle Ben After a couple of times of giving him carrots he is now the first one at the gate waiting for carrots. He is also the first one at the gate in the morning to greet me! If you are interested contact Jackie Timmerman at JTimmerman@hastingsmi.org</p>
<p>Sparky</p> 	<p>Sparky is almost 5 years old and spent a few months in our rehab center, before being moved to his foster home at Jackie Timmerman's. Jackie says: Sparky is the sweetest little guy. He loves to be brushed. After being brushed he won't leave my side. He still needs some work on leading. He will follow when one of the others are being lead. He was great for the farrier except for 1 front foot. The farrier thought that foot may have been injured in the past. He comes right up to me when I go in the pasture. He gets along with all of the donkeys. If you are interested contact Jackie Timmerman at JTimmerman@hastingsmi.org</p>

<p>Speedy G</p> 	<p>Although I don't have a long write-up, I'm coming along nicely since arriving at TPDR. Speedy came last fall along with former herd mates Sparky, Ben, and Rudy. The boys have been in rehab foster homes since their arrival See Rudy for our story! If you are interested in providing a "forever home" contact Sharon Windsor at 517-623-0000 or email her at: akaminidonkeys@michcom.net</p>
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➤ **Green Hints for you, your donkey and the environment!**

- Do you have "hints" that made your life, your donkey's life and the environment better? Please share your ideas or articles? Email your hints/articles to marteniu@cvm.msu.edu
- As fall seems just around the corner, make sure that your hay supply is ready for the blustery days of winter. It is always nicer to have the hay in your barn.
- Hoary Alyssum continues to be a concern in pasture and hay. For more information about this toxic weed to equids, visit <http://www.pestid.msu.edu/LinkClick.aspx?link=Factsheets%2FHoary+Alyssum+Bulletin+E2978.pdf&> (If you have contaminated hay that you need to dispose of, remember that ruminants can safely eat this hay.)
- As raw manure continues to be a concern, another option is becoming available. A Canadian company is heat treating and processing soiled bedding into pellets that can be recycled as bedding or fuel. For more information, visit <http://www.greenscenepellets.com>
- Get the most miles from each gas tank:
 - Keep tires properly inflated. Driving on underinflated tires may lower gas mileage by as much as 15 percent and may also reduce tire life by 15 percent or more.
 - Don't idle your engine for more than 30 seconds. Idling for 10 seconds uses more fuel than restarting the car. Also, with our modern cars, restating the car will not result in damage to the starter.
 - Travel the speed limit. Driving aggressively out on the highway can lower a car's gas mileage by 33 percent. Driving like a hotheaded teen around town can pull down vehicle's fuel efficiency by 5 percent.