

November, 2009

PROJECT SAMANA

Project Samana started in 1993 as a team of a few members of the MVMA who volunteered their time, knowledge and supplies to provide necessary services to the animals of Samana, Dominican Republic, the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Because of the response and increasing need for care, this grew into a semi-annual expedition of vets, techs, students, translators and ancillary volunteers. By neutering and spaying and training local practitioners in basic care and first aid, we have begun to help those who have not been able to help themselves.



Our mission is simple: To provide necessary surgical and medical services the animals of Samana; educate animal owners in the health, care and proper use of work horses and mules; provide training to local veterinarians and students from the Dominican schools in medical care; expand our team and increase awareness first hand the problems plaguing third world countries.



Over the life of the project, our teams have spayed more than 2000 dogs and cats and castrated close to 1000 stallions. We educate the people of Samana on animal care, nutrition, basic first aid, and parasite control and tick infestation. Team Samana has worked with ecotourism groups who, at our recommendation, formed a cooperative to sponsor seminars and keep records of those horses we feel are too sick or thin to work, and arrange and follow up with medical care. We have encouraged and facilitated a mule breeding program, as mules are hardier animals, adapt well to local climate and living conditions, and after they are gelded, make very placid work animals for the rest of their lives.

Our team has strengthened the human-animal bond in many ways and given the animals a chance at a better, healthier life. The most important legacy of the program is the influence it has had on the many vets, techs, and students who have made the journey, gotten back to the basics, and brought altruism back into their daily lives.

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Loma Atravesado, Dominican Republic.

Picture from Jay Merriam, June 2009 trip

We are pleased with the progress that's been made over the years. The horses are looking better now that they are receiving medical care once or twice a year, with follow-up care from local practitioners in between.

The Project will continue as long as there is a need, which appears to be quite a while. We thank those whose support we have received - clients, vendors, friends, volunteers, and anyone who has donated to the cause in the form of funding, supplies, time and knowledge. Because of the generous donors, we have been able to continue to provide a service and aid to the animals and people of the Samana peninsula and make a real, positive difference in the lives of the animals we all love!

November 2009 marked the 34th trip to Samana, Dominican Republic.....





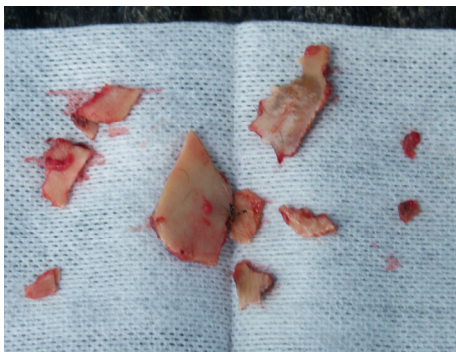
Day 1: Samana & Las Honduras

We began our trip in Samana, in the Zona Verda (Green Zone), where we dewormed numerous horses and mules (This area is the equivalent of the town green). We castrated only a few here because a cruise ship came into port and the horses and mules were needed for tourist rides to the beaches and waterfalls. Tourism is a significant part of the income and livelihood of the people and horses here—their lives depend on it.

We went onto Las Honduras where we performed a number of castrations and saw various other ailments. The horse below was hit by a car and had a draining tract on his hip for the past year. He was lame and has severe muscle atrophy (see picture below, right). Unfortunately he was not able to have any time off, as his owner needed him for transportation and to haul coconuts. We removed many fractured pieces of bone and packed the tract with antibiotic soaked gauze. We placed him on oral antibiotics and anti-inflammatories as well.



The report is that the tract has sealed up and stopped draining and his lameness has improved. His owner is grateful that his horse feels better.



Fractured pieces of bone removed from a draining tract in this horse's hip.



Day 2: Loma Atravesado & El Rincon

Each year we try to extend our reach to the farthest corners of the peninsula. This year we ventured to Loma Atravesado, a small town far in the hills near El Rincon, for the first time. There is an amazing population of mules in dire need of attention. This mare had an infection over her withers from the saddle rubbing through the skin into the underlying bursa. It is very important to educate the owners about making sure that the saddle fits ok and doesn't rub, as severe infection can get into the bursa and spine and can be devastating to the horse and family. We treated her and vaccinated her for tetanus.



Tetanus can be quite common in remote areas such as this. Unfortunately there are no telephones and no way to communicate with the people of this area for weeks at a time. This is why we focus on educating the people on how to best care for their horses and mules.

Initially some were resistant, but over the years the people have come to see the value and results of our efforts and services—a much better life not only for their animals but also their families.

Our clinic on wheels!

We castrated many mules in this area and had to turn some away as our schedule required us to move on to other patients awaiting in El Rincon.



Our next patient awaits!



Dr. Madera is advising an owner on de-worming his horse.

Day 3: El Limon & Las Terranas

Left: Every animal gets a physical exam to be sure they are healthy enough for surgery



Above: Trying to stay in the shade but still watch surgery in Los Cacoas

Below: This one wanted to wake up a little too quickly. Kim is trying to quiet the on lookers.



Dr. Madera castrating a mule in Los Cacoas.

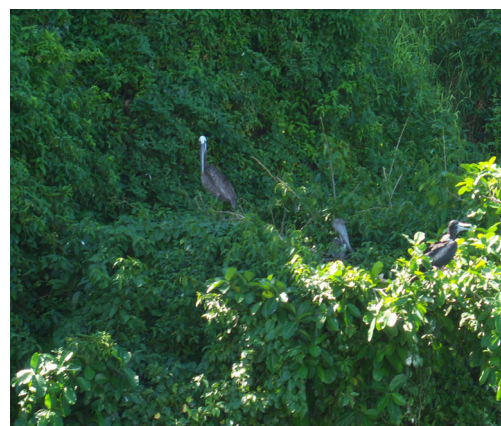
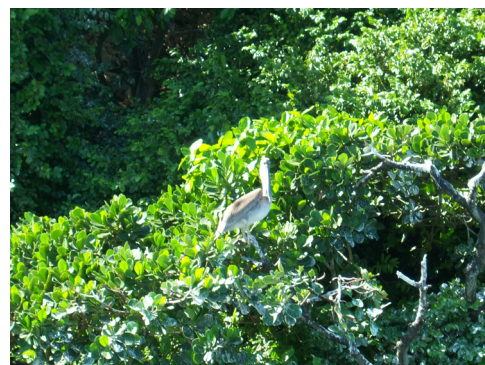


Above and right: Dr. Cimetti is overseeing V'10 student, Rebecca Bragg as she castrates a horse.

The veteran veterinarians also focus on teaching veterinary students and mentoring young doctors in the approach to handling these beasts of burden, as well as anesthetic and surgical techniques used on them.



Day 4: Day off The team opted to take a boat ride on Kim's whale watching boat to check out the Bubi and Pelican bird colonies on the islands around Los Haitisis.



We then went onto explore the mangrove swamps by kayak. These mangroves are hundreds of years old and some of the root systems are the largest in the world!





Day 5: Las Galeras

Finding shade lay a horse down can be difficult – we utilize whatever shade we can find! We did 4 or 5 castrations at this site, one of our favorite places to operate!



Dr. Amber Isbell castrated and recovered this horse all on her own!



Another satisfied customer!

The scope and fascination with the work and the communities we serve is ever growing and we have seen a vast improvement in the level of equine health through persistence and owner education over the years.



The November 2009 trip was very successful one. In 3 1/2 working days, the small animal facet operated on approximately 150 animals, not including vaccinating and deworming. The equine group de-wormed over 400 equidae, castrated 21 stallions, 5 piglets, and operated on 4 or 5 others (bone sequestra, urethral reconstruction, lacerations).



Project Samana Equine Team: Linda Cimetti, Kim Beddall, Jake Hiller, Jennifer Madera, Amber Isbell, Jose Madera and Baila, Kim's trusty companion

Project Samana November 2009 Team Members

Dr. Bob Labdon
 Dr. Linda Cimetti
 Dr. Fred Karotkin
 Dr. Susan Tanner
 Dr. Amber Isbell
 Dr. Jennifer and Jose Madera, CVT
 Dr. Dana Gleason
 Dr. Margaret Hoppe
 Cokie & Gregg Hamm
 Heidi Green, CVT
 Betsy Hensley, CVT
 Alanna Munzenmaier CVT
 Brie Allen, CVT
 Rebecca Bragg, TCSVM 2010
 Victoria Fields, TCSVM 2010
 Jake Hiller, Equine Vet Assistant

The whole team:



Special thanks to...

Millburn Equine for their generous donation of sedation, bute, banamine, antibiotics, lidocaine and numerous other products

Butler Animal Health for their donation of needles, syringes, suture, gauze and various other products that they collected from other practitioners

Boehringer Ingleheim for their donation of Sedivet, Surpass and other short dated products obtained by word of mouth

Fort Dodge for their donation of oral dewormer

With your support we can help animals and families have better lives! 2009 was another successful year!

Best Wishes for a happy, healthy New Year!



T-shirt worn by a student.