



**MISSOURI ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION**  
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**RESCUES BEWARE**  
**AUCTIONS COULD BE A SOURCE OF BRUCELLOSIS**



Missouri Dog Auction

At a recent seminar, hosted by the United States and Missouri Department of Agriculture, commercial dog breeders were given a stern reprimand for selling dogs that are infected with Canine Brucellosis to rescue groups. Dr. Kessler, a private practitioner with almost 25 years' experience working with commercial dog breeders, told the audience that it is "morally wrong" for them to knowingly sell dogs with Canine Brucellosis to rescues via deceptive means. Dr. Kessler said that Brucellosis is a very painful disease for the dog and results in "heartbreak" for the family that would adopt a sick animal. Even worse, as a zoonotic disease, it can be transmitted to a family member.

Dr. Kessler stated that some disreputable breeders who owned dogs positive with Brucellosis were culling them by selling them to rescues – either directly or often times at auction. Dr. Kessler warned that rescues were being fooled by false negative tests for the disease. He further explained that unscrupulous breeders often administer high dosages of antibiotics prior to the sale and testing for the disease and such high dosages will result in a negative test. It can sometimes take 90 days after antibiotic treatment to acquire an accurate result from a culture test for Brucellosis. Dr. Kessler said some commercial breeders were rationalizing this practice by arguing that since the dogs are spayed and neutered by rescue groups that there was no fear of the disease negatively affecting the animal. He explained that while spaying decreases the risk of Brucellosis, it is no guarantee; and neutering does little to prevent the disease.

**Dr. Kessler went so far as to recommend that rescue groups should not acquire dogs from auctions** as there is no way to verify if a dog has Brucellosis. He stated that the disease is becoming

more prevalent in Missouri and a negative test does not guarantee that a dog doesn't have Brucellosis.

One of the attendees among the breeders was quite obnoxious to Dr. Kessler after his presentation during a Q & A session. Unbeknownst to many in the audience, this person had previously been fined \$10,000 and had his USDA license terminated for, among other things, selling dogs positive for Canine Brucellosis to rescue groups.



Dogs Awaiting Sale at Auction

Unfortunately, deceptive practices are common place among puppy mill breeders. Commercial breeders have for decades sold sick and genetically defective puppies to consumers via pet stores or, more recently, online. So it comes as no surprise to learn that some puppy mills are fraudulently disposing of diseased breeding dogs by selling them to rescues groups.

The good news is that Kansas State University has developed a new test that is not affected by high dosages of antibiotics. It is known as the PCR test and is different than the commonly used "culture" tests. In an apparent response to this new test, one of the largest dog auctions in Missouri will only honor its guarantee against Brucellosis if the purchaser can show a positive result from the "culture test." This auction service, as well as other auctions, will also only honor such guarantees if a positive test was performed within 7 days of the sale – a time frame that easily allows for false negatives. Such warranties seem only to guarantee that disreputable breeders can continue to sell dogs infected with Brucellosis with impunity. Sadly, dogs with Canine Brucellosis can develop painful inflammatory conditions and pose a risk to small children of the adoptive family as children are not as careful about washing hands after playing and handling the family pet.



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