NAME: Rosie

CASE HISTORY: Rescued along with 160 other malamutes from a Montana puppy mill

EMACIATED AND WEAK, the malamute began giving birth one October evening in 2011. No one thought she’d make it through the night.

Just days before, HSUS rescuers had assisted the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office in the seizure of 161 sick and starving malamutes from a secluded mountainside property. The mother-to-be had been found huddled and mute in the back of a kennel. While most dogs were vetted and taken to an emergency shelter, Rosie and another pregnant female named Oprah went to Scott and Heather Hill’s 50-acre farm in Helena.

About 3 years old, Rosie weighed only 48 pounds—roughly half the weight of a healthy, non-pregnant malamute. “She was this skeleton-looking thing who looked like she’d swallowed three bowling balls,” remembers Heather. Oprah soon gave birth to seven puppies, and the next night, Rosie silently bore 13 puppies over a 24-hour period. Four were stillborn.

The Hills took turns clearing the puppies’ noses and keeping Rosie warm and comfortable. Despite being so frail, her motherly instincts kicked in. “She cleaned and licked them and let them nurse right away,” Heather says. “You could tell this wasn’t her first rodeo.” Rosie survived the night, and a trust in humans was born.

The Hills served Rosie small high-protein meals five times a day until she could digest regular-sized meals. She gained strength, though she had yet to make a peep. Soon, Rosie, Oprah, and their puppies were playing, exploring, even swimming in a pond.

Finally, after about two months, Rosie found her voice. “I always talked to the dogs when I fed them,” Heather says, “and I remember saying, ‘Are you still hungry, Rosie girl?’ And she went ‘Woo!’”

With that, the floodgates opened. Rosie wooed for more food. She wooed when disgruntled. “And she loved wooing at the moon.”

The HSUS provided the Hills with food and veterinary care. And as the court case dragged on, the organization paid for an assistant to help with the dogs. After the puppy mill owner was convicted of 91 counts of animal cruelty, all dogs from the case were spayed and neutered and either adopted or placed with rescues. The Hills ended up adopting Rosie’s puppy Francesca.

Now living in Pennsylvania with the Woolbert family, Rosie enjoys daily walks and carrying an old squishy ball around the house. Mostly, she loves lounging inside with her adoptive brother, Casper. “I think she spent enough of her life outside,” says Natalie Woolbert.

Rosie’s since reconnected with Francesca via FaceTime. The two wooed back and forth as Natalie and Heather pointed iPads towards the dogs. But then, Rosie’s known for being pretty chatty these days. “My husband says she is a typical woman.”
LOCATION: Gates County, North Carolina
ANIMALS RESCUED: 37 dogs and 9 ponies

THE TAN COCKER SPANIEL was elderly, his eyes glazed over with infection, his fur matted and soaked from the cold rain. When rescuers opened his muddy enclosure, he fell as he tried walking. He stood, tried again, and fell. Sheriff Edward Webb lifted the dog in his arms and carried him to a nearby veterinary table that had been set up on the property.

The late November rescue had been spurred by a complaint about an emaciated horse on the small farm. The Gates County Sheriff’s Office searched the property and sent photos to The HSUS: bony horses scrounging for food on bare ground and dogs with paltry shelter, no food, and fetid water.

One week later, HSUS rescuers worked in the rain alongside local law enforcement and staff from the SPCA of Wake County, marking North Carolina’s 15th puppy mill seizure since 2011.

About half the dogs were in various stages of heartworm disease, like Turnip, a Boston terrier so thin his backbone looked like a flight of stairs covered by a thin veil of skin and fur. The name rescuers gave him seemed appropriate, since “he’s big on the top and little on the bottom, and we pulled him out of the mud,” says HSUS North Carolina state director Kim Alboum.

Sadly, Joe the cocker was suffering from advanced heartworm disease and didn’t survive. But the horses and all but one other dog did. Turnip is flourishing in his foster home. “He’s proof,” Alboum says, “that it’s often just love and groceries that can bring these dogs back.”

ANIMAL RESCUE UPDATES

JOHN GRIFFIN wasn’t the least bit surprised when he arrived to help a homeowner who’d called about flying squirrels making all kinds of racket in her attic. The home had a cedar shake roof, which the Humane Wildlife Services director notes can look similar to tree bark, creating an irresistible invitation to these nocturnal, cavity-dwelling critters.

Sure enough, after an inspection, Griffin found a quarter-dollar-sized hole between two shingles just under the soffit, leading to a snug den in the eave. He also found evidence the squirrels had been nesting in the attic insulation.

After setting up a remote camera to determine if the entry point was active, Griffin installed a one-way door to kindly usher the squirrels out of the attic and disallow reentry. The cameras captured the squirrels’ brief attempt to return. When their efforts failed, “they moved on to one of their other known den sites in the area.”

THE HSUS HELPED RESCUE 31 dogs and puppies from three different properties of a suspected dogfighting operation during a joint effort in Tallapoosa County, Ala., in November. The dog’s living conditions were deplorable: Food and water were scarce, and many of the dogs were speckled with scarring. One dog, in shock and dripping saliva from her swollen muzzle, had to be carried off the property by rescuers. The dogs received emergency veterinary care and will remain in an undisclosed location while the case continues.