

## Cribbing and/or Wind Sucking Behaviors



### Cribbing and/or Wind Sucking By Meredith Hodges Lucky Three Ranch

This anxious behavior can usually be controlled by having a good feeding program, adequate exercise, a definite routine for your mule and proper fencing. To prevent cribbing from even getting started, it is wise to make sure your mule does not have access to wooden fences and buildings.



Lucky Three Cyclone resting comfortably in his run.

Mules will typically chew on fences or simply escape and that can become a real problem. They are very clever and can get out of just about any kind of fencing. I have found that what works well is to line the inside of your solid fence with a hotwire and make sure all gates are chained shut with snaps that do not have a protruding catch in them. I like the type of fasteners—called “snap-links”—that are often used by truckers. This fastener does not have a catch, so the mules can’t grab the fastener with their teeth. Things seem to work best when

you have secure fencing and adhere to a routine where the mules are kept in separate pens overnight for feeding times and then are allowed limited and controlled pasture time during the day. Mules that do not have the benefit of a reliable routine can become bored and develop bad habits, and will inevitably cause problems for you and each other.



Lucky Three mules in an all-steel loafing shed.

You can use just about any kind of fence as long as it is high enough (4 1/2 to 5 1/2 feet), but I haven’t used a fence yet that I didn’t have to line with hotwire to keep the mules and donkeys in. They’re extremely smart! I use vinyl fencing with a hotwire run through the posts at the top and between the first two rails—it is attractive and works well. The only fencing that you wouldn’t need to use a hotwire on is one that is made from portable stock panels. Tubed metal fencing is acceptable, but it must be four-rails high (at least five feet) and should not be spanned too

far from post to post without a solid post every 12 feet, because if the rails are spanned too far, the mules can bend them and escape. Electric tape fencing does not supply the security you would need with a mule or donkey—they have no problem escaping from this type of fencing.