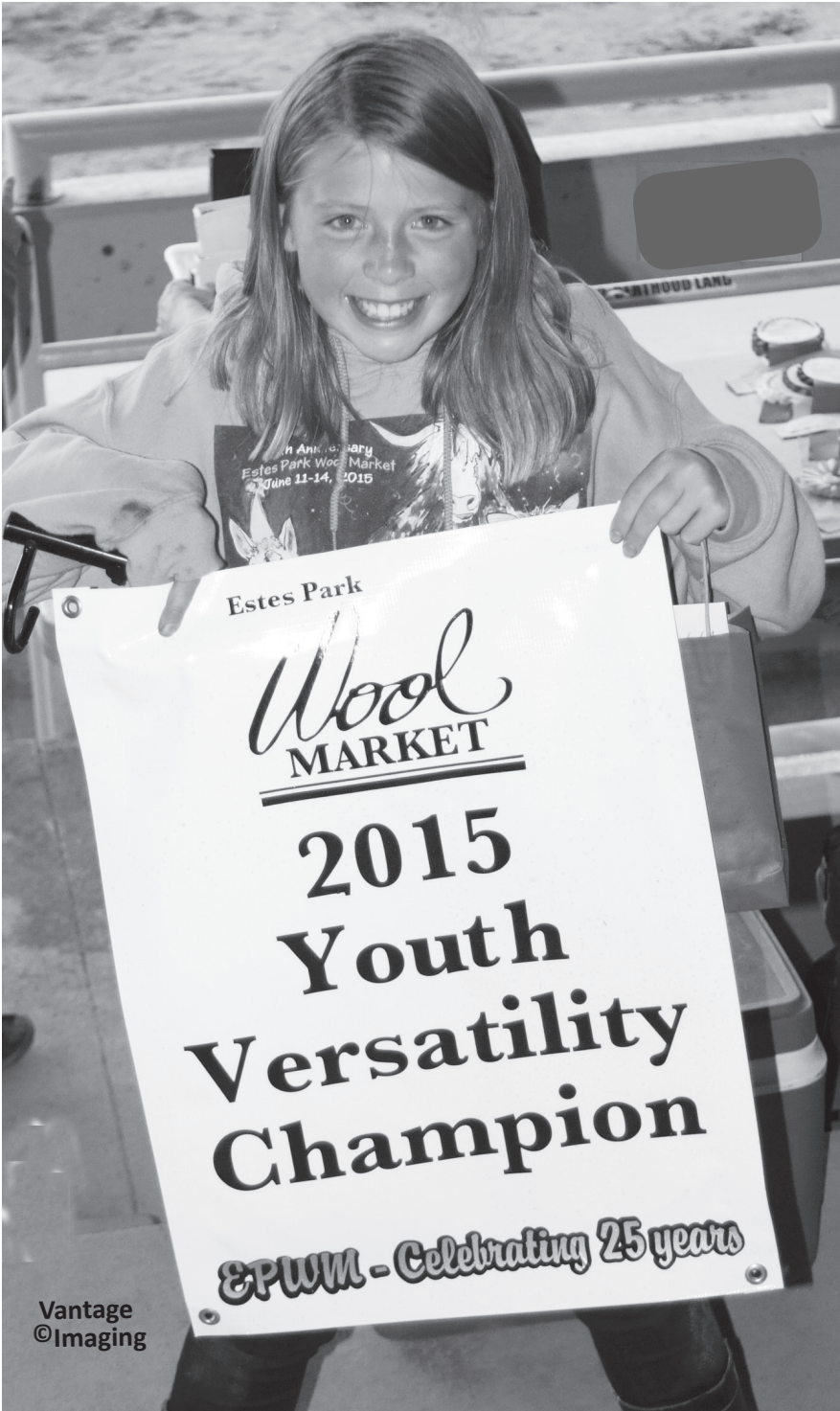


The Journal of RMLA

RMLA 

Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association



Vantage
©Imaging

In This Edition

Editors' Corner.....	4
From Your RMLA Board.....	5
Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award.....	5
Tularemia - It's Not Just For Rabbits.....	6
Announcements	7
RMLA Election Results	8
Llama and Alpaca Camp.....	9
RMLA Sponsors Appreciation Dinner for Members & Volunteers	10
New Committee Chair for Youth & 4-H	11
Ask The CSU VET Team	12
Becoming An Outdoorswoman Workshop - 2015	16
Vesicular Stomatitis in RMLA Region ...	18
From Rescue to Happy Trails!.....	19
Lamas Make Medical News	20
Advertising Angle.....	21
Retraining the Older Lama, and Possibly the Handler!	22
Learning to Clerk.....	25
Wrap Up: Hope Pass Aid Station.....	25
Wrap Up: Fairplay Lama Races.....	26
Celebrating 25 Years at EPWM.....	27
New RMLA Members	29
Basic Training!	30
Events Calendar	<i>Back Page</i>

Advertisers' Index.....	20
Journal Advertising Rates, Specifica- tions and Deadlines	4

Becoming An Outdoorswoman Workshop - Page 16



exploring
new ideas



premium
products
uniquely
formulated

perfecting
animal
nutrition



We know you take them seriously, which is why we keep working to help you meet your goals for breeding, growth and fiber.

For almost a quarter of a century now, we've partnered with zoo and veterinary professionals and conducted extensive research to improve the nutrition of the most unique animals around the globe. Our products are proven to support the health, longevity and fiber production of llamas and alpacas.



Sign up for our newsletter today at
MAZURI.COM
and be the first to learn about:

- **Latest Product Information**
- **Product Promotions**
- **Tradeshows & Events**



Mazuri[®]
A World of Good Nutrition

-- Board of Directors --

President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Member-at-Large
Lougene Baird P. O. Box 385403 Waikoloa, HI 96738 808-747-5023 lougenebaird@hawaiiintel.net	Dick Williams P.O. Box 1070 Plains, MT 59859 406-826-2201 bcllama@blackfoot.net	Geri Rutledge 2209 Rd 9 Waco, NE 68460 402-366-9304 buckshollow@wildblue.net	Brent Holt 4047 Bear Canyon Cir. Sedalia, CO 80135 281-250-2000 Brent.Holt@cfbmic.com	Linda Hayes 60 Meadow View Lane Glenwood Spgs, CO 81601 970-379-4576 llamas@skybeam.com

The Journal of RMLA© is a quarterly publication of the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association (“RMLA”). The RMLA Journal Committee and the Board of Directors reserve the right to select and edit all articles and advertisements submitted.

The information in The Journal is not intended to be a substitute for qualified professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult

with their own veterinarian, accountant or attorney regarding any questions concerning their animals or business operations.

RMLA is not responsible for any losses resulting from readers’ failure to heed this caution. The views expressed by the authors of articles are not necessarily those of the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association, Inc., its officers, directors or members.

Reproduction of Journal Articles: Articles may be reproduced after obtaining written permission from the author. The author and The Journal of RMLA must be given credit for the reproduction of the original work.

-- Committee Chairpersons --

Bookstore
Jan Adamcyk
303-621-2960
adamcyk@earthlink.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Bylaws
Lougene Baird
808-747-5023
lougenebaird@hawaiiintel.net
Liaison Linda Hayes

Calendar
Dick Williams & Pat Bradstreet
406-826-2201
bcllama@blackfoot.net
Liaison Lougene Baird

e-Communications:
Facebook, Website & E-mail:
Ron Hinds
303-646-1320
web@rmla.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Education
(open)
Liaison Linda Hayes

Events/Marketing
Mary Wickman
719-687-1423
Cell: 719-651-8871
mwickman1@gmail.com
Liaison Dick Williams

Fiber
Cheryl Juntilla & Jill Knuckles
970-640-8028 970-487-0223
cajwdj@aol.com
taltaillamas@bigplanet.com
Liaison Geri Rutledge

Finance
Marilyn Arnold
303-841-5126
arnold.marilyn@ymail.com.
Liaison Brent Holt

Journal
Co-Editors:
Content-Kathy Stanko
Layout-Ron Hinds
rmlaeditor@gmail.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Library
Dick Williams
406-826-2201
bcllama@blackfoot.net
Liaison Dick Williams

Membership
Dick Williams
406-826-2201
bcllama@blackfoot.net
Liaison Brent Holt

Nominations & Elections
Maggie Merrill Brown
970-667-7227
designer95@bluelinesite.com
Liaison Geri Rutledge

Publication Coordinator -
Lougene Baird
808-747-5023
lougenebaird@hawaiiintel.net

Rescue
Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay
406-586-1155
llamas@yellowstonesafari.com
Liaison Linda Hayes

Youth and 4-H
Marshal Rutledge
402-366-9303
mрут11@hotmail.com
Liaison Geri Rutledge



Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates and Specifications

Issue	Submission Deadline	Mailing Date
Spring	February 20	March 20
Summer	May 20	June 20
Fall	August 20	September 20
Winter	November 20	December 20

Ad Type	Width x Height	Member	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5" x 2"	\$15	\$18
1/4 Page Horz.	7.5" x 2"	\$24	\$36
1/4 Page Vert.	3.5" x 4.5"	\$24	\$36
1/3 Page Horiz.	7.5" x 3"	\$35	\$48
1/3 Page Vert.	2.5" x 10"	\$35	\$48
Half Page	7.5" x 5"	\$48	\$72
Full Page	7.5" x 10"	\$78	\$117
Back Cover	7.5" x 7.5"	\$60	\$90
Inside Cover Front or Back	7.5" x 10"	\$96	\$144
Two Page Spread	15" x 10"	\$200	\$300

- **Classified Ads**—Member \$10 for up to 50 words
Non-Member \$25 for up to 50 words. Ads must be related to the Camelid industry.
- 25 cents for each word over 50 for both Member and Non-Member.

- Ad rates are quoted per issue. Lock in the current rate by purchasing the same ad for four consecutive issues and receive a bonus of a 10% discount.
- For ads that require scanning: Mail ad copy to RMLA-Ron Hinds-5704 Canyon Trail, Elizabeth, CO 80107-7814 include a check payable to AlpacaGraphics for \$5.00 for each scan.
- For ad design, contact Ron Hinds at ad-design@rmla.com or 303-646-1320.
- We suggest ads be submitted in black and white/grayscale at 300dpi.
- Ads must be submitted via email in MS Word, jpeg, tiff or PDF files to RMLAadvertise@gmail.com.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR Payment:** Send your check payable to RMLA along with a copy of the ad (for clarity) to:
RMLA Journal Advertising Manager – Sonja Boeff
12920 W. 84th Avenue.
Arvada, CO 80005
You can reach Sonja at 303-257-6733 or the email address below.
- Email text and/or graphics content to: RMLAadvertise@gmail.com
- Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the chart above for dates.

Journal Staff:

Content - Kathy Stanko
Layout and Design - Ron Hinds } Co-Editors

Email - RMLAEditor@gmail.com

Advertising – Sonja Boeff, RMLAadvertise@gmail.com

Proof Reader - Marilyn Arnold

Kathy and I are beginning our third year as co-editors of the Journal.



It is still a blast to put it together. I enjoy it and

I'm sure the rest of the team feels pretty much the same way. All-in-all it takes about 30-40 hours of my time each quarter to complete the page layout and design. Of course, these hours are spread out over a few weeks for each issue. And don't forget the computers, printers, scanners and the somewhat pricey software that is needed plus the knowledge of how to use them. Sometimes I think I know all of this, but other times I get just as baffled and frustrated with technology as everyone else! Hear me hollering? Kathy and I, just as so many of our volunteers, do NOT submit any personal expenses we have incurred to produce the Journal.

The Journal team is always looking for new articles, pictures and, of course, advertising to help offset the printing, stamps, and labels. And we can always use help in many small places. Not nearly 4 weeks a year, but just a couple of evenings every now and then would be very helpful. Usually there is no deadline involved, so whenever you get to it is just fine. So do you have a special area of expertise where you would like to volunteer? Let us know and we can 'put you to work...err, I mean play!'

RMLA also has a need for small simple pictures to high quality photographs. They can be used in The Journal, on the website and/or in email blasts that are sent out occasionally. You'll get credit where we use it.

Thanks for joining, volunteering and supporting RMLA, and attending the sponsored events.

Ron Hinds, one of the co-editors



Cover Photo Credit: The Youth Versatility Champion - Alexandra Leland. Alexandra was the youth earning the most points in the youth division for both shows.

Photo courtesy of Vantage Imaging

FROM YOUR RMLA BOARD

Over the past year your Board has been working with most of the committee chairs to develop written Guidelines, Policy and Procedures concerning how these committee function and their goals. Committee Chairs are not static. After a few years of serving as Chair, that person will move on to something else and a new Chair will assume the responsibilities of the Committee.

These written guidelines help the new Chair get started by having history and steps that are in place which have worked. Once finalized, the documents are forwarded to the Board to review and approval. Currently, guidelines are in place for RMLA.com and RMLA e-blast Newslines, Rescue, Elections, Events, Bookstore and Journal. The Youth Awards Program will be re-worked by the new Chair and his committee and Liaison to be easier to use in 2016. Also in place are the Guidelines for the Sharon Beacham Fiber Award and the Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award.

We want to thank Chris Switzer of Switzer-Land Paco-Vicuña Farm in Estes Park, CO for several donations made over the last year to the RMLA Library. The most recent is a copy of an article from Wild Fibers magazine titled 'Llama A La Cart' about carting with llamas. She has also kindly donated two copies of the 4th edition of her book – 'Spinning – Alpaca, Llama, Camel & Paco-Vicuña'. These donations of camelid related material are appreciated and can be checked out on the Library tab of rmla.com.

As the year is slowing to an end we should all recognize the very large number of volunteers who have worked together to make amazing things happen for the Association. Each year more events are coming on line and more members are volunteering to make them a success. At the core of all functions is the RMLA Mission Statement. In its unique way, each event sponsored by RMLA meets the organization's goal. Thanks to all who have given their time and efforts to the success of these events.



BOBRA GOLDSMITH LEADERSHIP AWARD From the RMLA Board of Directors

The **Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award** was originated to honor Bobra by recognizing an RMLA person, or persons, who have demonstrated a similar passion and a love for educating the community about llamas and alpaca.

Nominations are to be submitted to Jerry Dunn at beartrak@q.com by December 10, 2015. The nominee's level of commitment and involvement in activities centered on educating llama and alpaca owners, writing articles, hosting workshops, speaking at conferences, and participating in organized llama/alpaca events will act as the guidelines for the award.

Past recipients are Charlie Hackbarth, Wes and Mary Mauz, Karen Kinyon, Jerry Dunn and Gayle Woodsum.

The award will be presented at the NWSS Llama Show in January, 2016. Bobra, along with other RMLA members were instrumental in getting the first NWSS Llama Show off the ground in the early 1980's.



Tularemia - It's Not Just For Rabbits

Dr. Stacey Byers, DVM, MS, DACVIM
CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital

All the rain this spring and summer has been a mixed blessing: good for pasture, lawns, ponds and lakes, and waterfalls; but bad for my early garden unless I had planned to grow rice. The rain has also contributed to an abundance in our insect and rodent populations in various parts of the Rocky Mountain area, including the increased the number of cases of tularemia (also known as rabbit fever) reported in Colorado.

Tularemia is caused by the bacteria *Francisella tularensis*. The disease occurs world-wide, but there are variations in the bacteria strains and disease signs. The bacteria is capable of infecting a variety of species, including humans, so it is considered a zoonotic disease agent. Insects (mosquitos, ticks, fleas, biting flies) become infected when taking blood meals from infected animals and then pass the bacteria to other animals and humans.

Rabbits, hares, and some rodents are the primary hosts and the infection will kill them as well. Cats are also very susceptible and can transmit the bacteria to humans.

Humans and other mammals seem to be at a lower risk but can be infected by inhalation, ingestion, bug bites, animal scratches and bites. Several human cases have likely occurred from mowing over a dead rabbit with aerosolization and inhalation of the bacteria.

There are very few reports of tularemia in ruminants with no reports involving camelids. Range sheep have been considered the most at risk livestock species. Abortion was the most common sign in adults and listlessness and death in lambs. The prevalence of this disease appears to be decreasing probably due to increased awareness, decreased testing of dead animals, decreased range sheep numbers, and increased antibiotic and pesticide usage. Other livestock species appear to have a lower risk of disease, which may be due to increased resistance to the bacteria, lower exposure risk, or that infections are often not recognized. Even in humans, exposure does not necessarily cause clinical tularemia.

This does not mean we do not have to worry about our llamas and alpacas, pets, and other livestock. If there is an abundance of rabbits or hares on your property, just keep an eye on them. If you notice rabbits or rodents with strange behavior, appearing sick, clustering, or having a rough hair coat or death of multiple animals, extra caution is needed to minimize exposure to you and your animals. If you need to remove dead rabbits or other dead rodents from a pasture or enclosed area, minimize your exposure to the animals,



use a long handled shovel, wear protective outerwear, consider applying an insecticide to your clothing, and wear a dust mask.

It appears that most humans and animals (besides cats, rabbits, and rodents) become infected with the bacteria but do not develop clinical disease. If disease

does develop the signs are rather vague and can include a fever, enlarged lymph nodes, respiratory disease, muscle pain, or localized ulcer/papule. These can be difficult to recognize in livestock out on pasture, but if you have been finding dead or sick rabbits, and an animal appears to be "off" or "not right", it is recommended to contact your veterinarian in order to do a physical examination on the animal. This also goes for humans; if there is concern about exposure please contact your health care provider. Fortunately, the bacteria is susceptible to several broad spectrum antibiotics.

Tularemia is difficult to prevent particularly because it is spread by insects. Recommendations to reduce risk include minimizing exposure to wildlife; keeping pets especially cats indoors when the risk is high; and controlling tick and other insects. More information can be found at

<http://www.cdc.gov/tularemia/index.html>

(The symptoms) can be difficult to recognize in livestock out on pasture, but if you have been finding dead or sick rabbits, and an animal appears to be "off" or "not right", it is recommended to contact your veterinarian...



Safeguard Your Llama and Alpacas' Health for Just Pennies per Day

Cache la Poudre Minerals are free choice Vitamin and Mineral Supplements formulated specifically to balance your llama and alpacas' diet.

- ✓ Always improving to meet emerging standards
- ✓ Tailored to meet different feeding situations
- ✓ Palatable so the animals will consume them willingly
- ✓ Safer than pellets, which may cause them to choke
- ✓ Supplements do not add unnecessary calories or protein to the animals' diet



Supplement #1 Diet consists of: Late or non-irrigated summer, fall or winter pasture; feeding grass hay. Supplement #1 contains a 2:1 calcium/phosphorus ratio and additional vitamin E.

Supplement #2 Diet consists of: Late or non-irrigated summer, fall or winter pasture; feeding alfalfa or grass hay low in phosphorus. Contains additional phosphorus and Vitamin E.

To ORDER Local Call **800-758-0825**
303-420-1659 (NEW WEBSITE!)
www.CLPMinerals.com/rmla

DISTRIBUTORS IN COLORADO

SE Denver • Parker • Elizabeth • Aurora •
Franktown • Larkspur • Kiowa...

Cache la Poudre Minerals &
Arazzmatuzz Alpacas
Randy and Jody Sharp • Elizabeth, CO
800-758-0825 or 303-420-1659 (local)
www.CLPMinerals.com/rmla

Boulder • Niwot • Ft. Collins • Longmont •
Berthoud • Platteville...

Rocky Mountain Llamas
Mary Vavrina
Niwot, CO
303-530-5575
www.RockyMtLlamas.com

SW Denver • Littleton • Conifer • Golden •
Salida • Cañon City • Buena Vista...

Jefferson Farms Alpacas & Paco-Vicuñas
Jane Levene
SW Denver & Salida, CO
303-988-3080
www.JeffersonFarmsNaturalFibers.com



- The 2016 RMLA calendar is now available through the Bookstore for \$10 +s/h. Contact Jan Adamcyk at 303-621-2960 or adamcyk@earthlink.net to place your order.
- Questions for the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital Ask the Vet column are needed. Please send your questions or topics you would like addressed to Kathy Stanko at turkeytrots2@gmail.com
- Watch the CSU Vets read the last Dr. Seuss book "What Pet Should I Get?" See the video on the RMLA Facebook page. (use the Facebook link on www.rmla.com)
- RMLA advertising promotion extended to the winter issue. Get 3 new paid business card ads for the winter issue and receive a free business card ad in the spring issue. Contact Sonja at rmlaadvertise@gmail.com for more information.

Dear Members, as space allows, one column in each issue may be used for Board, Committee or event announcements. An announcement, limit of 50 words, does not take the place of an advertisement, committee report, article or calendar item. Send your announcement to rmlaeditor@gmail.com.

RMLA Election Results

In August 2015, RMLA members elected new board member, Jeanne Williams, and re-elected current board member, Lougene Baird. We thank both Jeanne and Lougene for volunteering their precious time on behalf RMLA and its membership.

Jeanne H. Williams, M.D., PhD

Jeanne has been an RMLA member since 1986, a few years after acquiring her first llamas in the early '80's. She is uniquely qualified and experienced to lead RMLA in many directions: packing; fiber (including spinning, weaving and knitting) and 4-H education. Also, with a PhD in Molecular Biology she also brings a significant understanding of the parasitic, physiological and metabolic issues faced by the camelid community.

Jeanne's goals for RMLA are to keep the Association on a sound financial footing; to encourage the exposure of the public to the many and varied uses for camelids, to facilitate as many events of various types as possible for the benefit of both the public and the membership; to ensure that the needs of the entire membership are addressed as equitably as possible; to work with the other Board members to keep the RMLA a strong and respected organization in the camelid community.



Lougene A. Baird

After years of enjoying llamas, judging, showing, packing and working with youth, Lougene and her husband have retired from having llamas in their everyday lives. And now serving on the Board is her way to give back to RMLA, and llamas for all the years of fun!

Over the recent difficult economic times and during the past three years, Lougene has experienced great pleasure in working with other Board members to solidly bring back fiscal responsibility and stability to RMLA. Without this, RMLA would not be able to continue its function or to serve its membership.

Productive communication between the RMLA membership, Board members, and volunteers working in so many ways is a top priority for Lougene. She will continue to carefully listen to members' needs and concerns to ensure that all decisions are made with the needs of the entire membership at heart always guided by the RMLA Mission Statement.

During her next term, Lougene would like to take a fresh look at how RMLA can support and encourage its members to expand on the opportunities that each has to introduce their animals to friends, their neighbors and community through small events or workshops. She will continue to keep RMLA on solid financial footing by making certain that all Board decisions are soundly made.



hw

Llama and Alpaca Camp

JUNE 25TH AND 26TH 2015

By Camelidkids 4H Group
Polk County, NE



Another year of fun is done! The Llama Alpaca Camp is put on by the Camelidkids 4H Group of Polk County, Nebraska and all of their family members. This year's camp was action packed with kids from Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado. The purpose of camp is to learn, train animals and handlers and get into some craft projects. The craft projects are then entered at County and State Fairs.



This year we extended an invitation to St. Johns Summer School program in Seward, Nebraska. On Friday afternoon 36 students and 6 staff arrived on the school bus for an afternoon of education. The

chatty, and another 50 questions were asked of each of the handlers.

On Saturday, the Camelidkids 4-H group learned nuno felting made with silk scarves and fiber, using hot water, bubble wrap and some rolling. The group is entering the scarves in the Nebraska State Fair. They also got creative and felted dreadlocks; pretty cool idea. They also created a door sign on the pre-made plaques using the "waste" part of the fiber sent back from the mill. There is a purpose for every part of the fiber coming off the animals.



The group had free time to visit, play cards, and engage in water fights.

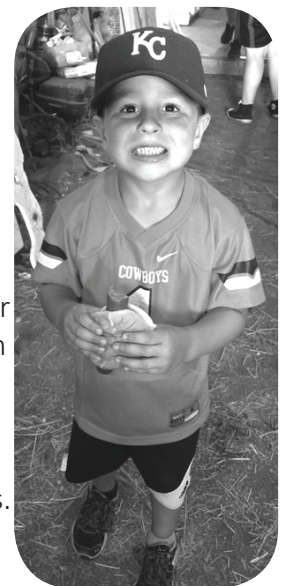
4H youth did the introduction, "Llama Alpaca 101", and answered roughly 200 questions in fewer than 30 minutes! A hands-on demonstration showed how to go from barrel shearing to roving to yarn to a finished product: a felted scarf.

The kids then went outside the barn to get their hands on raw fiber to which they added hot water and soap to 'smoosh' it into eggs. Each kid took home two felted eggs with the instructions for their parents to read about their day.

We then went on a llama alpaca trek into the pasture. This is always the best Kodak moment. With over 60 people on the trail....organized chaos.....we got them all together with the animals for a great photo. The St. Johns students were paired with our experienced kids and all had an animal to walk. Talk about being heard from miles away...this group was

Marshmallows were roasted for s'mores and the barn breakfast was once again the best. The smell of pancakes and breakfast just starts the day. All the food was excellent, grilled out and we had smoked chicken, and this year they wiped out the root beer floats! It was a great group, team building, new friends, and great projects. Thanks to everyone who helped plan, donated items, taught, and enjoyed the two days.

We give special thanks to our sponsors: Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association, Nebraska Llama Association, and Bucks Hollow Alpaca and Llama Ranch.



Eathan Morgan



RMLA Sponsors Appreciation Dinner for Members & Volunteers



The Estes Park Wool Market celebrated its 25th year this past June. The Llama Show has been known for being a great venue to share the joy of ownership of llamas with fellow owners, the general public and people from around the globe. The event has taken place in sun, rain, snow, sleet, mud and ice and smoke from nearby forest fires. Through all this the volunteers and exhibitors continue to return each year.

RMLA sponsored an evening Celebration of the 25th Year at the Estes Park Senior Center which turned out to be a comfortable, warm place for those of all ages to gather. Folks who attended in years past as well as those participating this year enjoyed a hot dinner served by Catering for All Occasions. There were door prizes donated by RMLA and llama related merchants.

Jerry Dunn was the guest speaker for the evening. She delved back into history to tell stories of all the



crazy and exciting things that have


taken place at the show through the years. She spoke while 'her kids' did a skit that reminded all that the weather is always a surprise. She recognized the people who served as Superintendent of the Llama Show in the past and how it developed into what it is today. Jerry also took a moment to remember those exhibitors and volunteers who are no longer with us.

A huge 'thank you' to the Celebration Committee Chair, Gayle Woodsum, committee members Geri Rutledge, Shawn Leland, Jill Knuckles, and Lougene Baird. Also another huge 'thank you' to Betty




Robertson for her generous donation and to Ron and Lougene Baird who donated the rental of the facility.

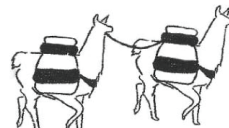




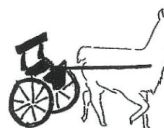
Jerry Dunn
Bear Track Farm
Llama Training Center
303-277-1129 beartrak@q.com



PACK'EM



STACK'EM



DRIVE'EM

Leave the city behind and head for the hills.

Rocky Mountain Llamas Outfit your packers with gear that's
Trail-Tested, Llama Approved.®

Niwot, CO - 303-530-5575
www.RockyMtLlamas.com

New & Used Ollie Llama and Timberline Pack Systems, Trail Gear, and the Best-Fitting Llama Halters

New Committee Chair for Youth and 4-H By Lougene Baird

Marshal Rutledge has stepped up to volunteer as the Chair for the RMLA Youth and 4-H committee.

Many of you may know Marshal. I first met him when he was a Junior show person in Laramie, Wyoming many moons ago. He was working with a little black and white llama – Kikaida. He had on his black pants that were covered in dirt and his white shirt that he couldn't keep tucked in if his life depended upon it. This was a young man that Ron and I both said "he is going to go places".

Marshal continued to show for 9 years straight as a youth member, and since has been showing in the Open classes. He still has Kikaida and the two of them are a forever team. Marshal won the RMLA Youth Award, he has earned his ALSA Degrees and even went on to be an ALSA National Grand Champion in every class: Showmanship, Youth Judging and all 3 performances with the llama Kikaida and his alpaca Picasso. He took both Alpaca and Llama National Grand Champions in 2011.

The most positive thing is that Marshal has always been willing to teach the other kids. He has

stayed friends with everyone with whom he has showed. He has continued to work with 4-H kids. He was never afraid to help the competition; he would offer information and cheer on his rivals. They could always be found in the barn walking in a big group, before and after the shows.

Marshal has accepted the Youth Chair position as it seems a natural fit for staying involved and keeping his continued teaching with the youth. He has already recruited two Senior Youth show persons to be on his committee. He figures the youth are the experts, let them guide how the program will work. Thank you, Marshal, for being an RMLA Volunteer.



Ask The CSU VET Team

By the Vets, Residents and Interns of the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital

This year we have two new interns and one new resident in the Livestock Service at the CSU VTH. A short introduction for each of them is below with their contributions to this edition of Ask The Vet. For this issue of Ask The Vet, we asked each of our new house officers to review some of the health literature published on llamas and alpacas in the last year and write a short review.



Dr. Amy Kunkel – Livestock Intern:

Amy is originally from northwest Pennsylvania. She completed a degree in Biology and Chemistry at Warren Wilson College, a work college in Asheville, North Carolina, and

relocated to Iowa to attend veterinary school at Iowa State University. She enjoys all aspects of livestock medicine with a special interest in ruminant health and field service. In her spare time she enjoys hiking with her dogs, horseback riding, and drinking craft beer.



Dr. Kate Huebner – Livestock Intern: Kate grew up on a grass-fed beef farm located in central New Jersey. She went on to study biology at McGill University in Montreal. Her upbringing on a farm and interests in science, animal welfare, and sustainable agriculture inspired her to pursue a career in food and fiber animal medicine. She attended veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania, and she is thrilled to have recently relocated to her favorite state of Colorado to do an internship in livestock medicine and surgery. When not working, Kate enjoys hiking, rock climbing, biking, cooking and travel.



Dr. Tanya Applegate – Livestock Medicine Resident: Tanya grew up in Southern California. She was an active FFA and 4-H member raising and showing dairy goats. She graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with B.S. degree in Animal Science. Tanya then went to veterinary school at the University of California, Davis and graduated in 2013. After she received her DVM degree, she worked at a mixed large animal practice in Sonoma County, CA providing both ambulatory and hospital care for livestock and horses. Now that she is a Large Animal Internal Medicine Resident, Tanya jokes that she no longer has free time to enjoy her hobbies of horseback riding, snow skiing, and

playing with her dogs (OK, she still does this).

Subjects Inside Include:

- ◆ **Toxoplasma gondii Infection in Llamas and Alpacas, by Dr. Amy Kunkel**
- ◆ **Acquired Urethral Obstruction in New World Camelids, by Dr. Kate Huebner**
- ◆ **Heat Stress in Camelids by Dr. Kate Huebner**
- ◆ **Bluetongue Virus in Camelids by Dr. Tanya Applegate**
- ◆ **Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus in Camelids by Dr. Tanya Applegate**

Toxoplasma gondii Infection in Llamas and Alpacas, by Dr. Amy Kunkel

Toxoplasma gondii is a parasitic protozoa found worldwide. Mammals, humans included, become infected by consuming food or water contaminated with T. gondii eggs or oocysts. Cats (both wild and domestic) are the main reservoir of infection, and cat feces contain the infectious oocysts. Research shows that most llamas and alpacas that are infected show

no clinical signs, and are considered moderately resistant to infection and disease, but information is limited. When symptoms do occur, reproductive issues (fetal resorption, abortion, stillbirths, neonatal mortality) as well as fatal infections have been reported.

A recent report documented a Toxoplasmosis associated abortion in an alpaca. The cria was born stillborn 2 days before the expected delivery

continued on next page

date. The dam remained apparently healthy but had a high antibody titer to *T. gondii*. The cria was necropsied and tissues submitted for histopathology. There were no definitive gross changes, but histopathology revealed protozoa cysts in different areas of the brain and kidneys. Another report details the fatal infection of a 13 month male llama. The llama had a two week history of weight loss and respiratory disease before dying suddenly despite treatment. Numerous protozoan cysts were found in the heart, diaphragm, liver, and stomach.

Since *T. gondii* can affect New World Camelids, it should be considered when animals suffer reproductive losses and/or weight loss with or without sudden death. If you have concerns that *T. gondii* infection may be affecting animals in your herd, please encourage your veterinarian to submit tissues from deceased animals (placenta, fetus, heart, diaphragm, liver, stomach) for histopathology, or collect serum for antibody evaluation.

Sources: Dubey JP, Casey SJ, Zajac AM, Wildeus SA, Lindsay DS, Verma SK, Oliveira S, Kwok OC and Su C (2014). Isolation and genetic characterization of *Toxoplasma gondii* from alpaca (*Vicugna pacos*) and sheep (*Ovis aries*). *Trop Anim Health Prod* 46(8): 1503-1507.

Dubey JP, Newell TK, Verma SK, Calero-Bernal R and Stevens EL (2014). *Toxoplasma gondii* infection in llama (*Llama glama*): acute visceral disseminated lesions, diagnosis, and development of tissue cysts. *J Parasitol* 100(3): 288-294.

Acquired Urethral Obstruction in New World Camelids, by Dr. Kate Huebner

Information about acquired urolithiasis in camelids is limited and is often extrapolated from reports in small ruminants, sheep, and cattle, yet there are many key differences that distinguish them. Similar to ruminants, camelids with urolithiasis commonly present with the clinical signs of straining to urinate, dribbling urine, and anorexia. The cause of urolithiasis is believed to be multifactorial, involving anatomic factors and dietary factors. While the types of stones that cause urethral obstruction are similar to other species, camelids tend to obstruct at the point where the penile urethra narrows before the glans penis, whereas in cattle they commonly obstruct at the

sigmoid flexure, and in small ruminants this occurs at the urethral process (the “vermiform appendage”). There is a paucity of information in the literature for this disease in camelids. Therefore, a study by Duesterdieck-Zellmer et al (2014), sought to define the clinical features, short- and long term outcomes, and prognostic factors in camelids with urethral obstruction by examining 34 cases from the University of California, Davis, Oregon State University, and Colorado State University.

Options for management of urolithiasis include either medical management or surgical management. The goal of medical management is to relieve pain and discomfort, correct fluid and electrolyte disturbances, prevent inflammation and infection, and to dissolve remaining stones within the urethra. Once the obstruction is relieved, treatments to acidify the urine with medication are often pursued with mixed success. The basic tenet for approaches to surgical management includes direct stone removal, or bypassing the obstruction. Surgical approach decisions are made based on the site of obstruction and the severity of tissue damage. Multiple procedures are described for llamas and alpacas, including tube cystotomy, urethrostomy, urethrotomy, and bladder marsupialization. Complications of surgery are common and associated with high morbidity and poor survival rate.

Since the prognosis is low and expense to treatment is high, prevention should be emphasized. Key risk factors include diets a high phosphorous:calcium ratio, high dietary magnesium, low fiber content of rations, low urine output, and an alkaline urine pH. While delaying castration timing may be associated with increased testosterone effects causing increased urethral diameter in sheep and goats, there are no data available in the literature to guide llama and alpaca owners or veterinarians as to whether this makes a difference in these animals.

Source: Duesterdieck-Zellmer KF, Van Metre DC, Cardenas A and Cebra CK (2014). Acquired urethral obstruction in New World camelids: 34 cases (1995-2008)” *Aust Vet J* 92(8): 313-319.

Heat Stress in Camelids, by Dr. Kate Huebner

New World camelids were domesticated in the mountains of South America, where they adapted to temperatures <60 °F. Their fleeces are specifically

continued on next page

adapted to retain heat in cooler, high altitude environments, and they have a coarse overcoat and fine undercoat which allows them to repel water effectively. When hot, camelids have limited capabilities to dissipate heat through “thermal windows”, which include the abdomen, axillae (armpit), inguinal areas (groin), and also through exhaled air. Sparsely haired areas contain greater concentrations of sweat glands and vasculature, allowing for greater evaporative losses. In areas of the United States where there is high humidity and temperatures, the environmental conditions pose challenges to thermoregulation despite these adaptations. When the animal’s metabolic activity and the ability to dissipate heat becomes overwhelmed, heat stress can occur.

Heat stress can be a primary disease or exacerbated by other conditions including parasitism, lameness, weaning, obesity, poor nutrition, decreased shade, high temperature, and high humidity. Most commonly, heat stress is diagnosed in unshorn camelids in the southern US. Clinical signs of heat stress included decreased appetite, reluctance to rise, inability to push, and lethargy. Heat stress is distinct from fever and is defined as a pathologic increase in the core body temperature without an increase in the hypothalamic (a portion of the brain that controls thermoregulation and several other homeostatic processes) temperature set point. Scrotal edema is a common clinical sign in male llamas and alpacas with heat stress. It is thought that increased temperatures cause the release of catabolic hormones and stress hormones that can cause decreased feed intake and therefore decreased albumin leading to loss of fluid from the blood vessels to subcutaneous tissues, particularly in the area of the scrotum.

A recent case series by Norton et al (2014) described findings in 15 camelids with no pre-existing illness that showed clinical signs of heat stress-associated illness following exposure to high environmental temperatures. The study was carried out at Texas A&M University. In previous work, it has been reported that heat stressed camelids show hemoconcentration (high concentration of red blood cells or high packed cell volume, PCV). New findings from this study included decreased packed cell volume and decreased serum albumin concentration, as well as mild degeneration of nerves in the spine. It is possible that the cases presented in this study represented a population of camelids that experienced more heat stress for a longer duration.

In the arid environment of Colorado, the lower humidity makes heat stress less common than in other parts of the United States. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the clinical signs and watch for them when extreme temperatures occur. Preventative measures include decreased handling during hot weather, appropriate timing for shearing, provision of shade, and moisture applied to the belly of animals using sprinklers or other systems.

Source: Norton PL, Gold JR, Russell KE, Schulz KL and Porter BF (2014). Camelid heat stress: 15 cases (2003-2011). *Can Vet J* 55(10): 992-996.

Bluetongue Virus in Camelids, by Dr. Tanya Applegate

Bluetongue virus (BTV) is a disease most commonly transmitted by *Culicoides* spp. (biting midges), as well as other biting insects, and may be transmitted during pregnancy from dam to fetus. The virus affects domestic and wild ruminants, as well as carnivores, and can have a high rate of disease and death in some species. Sheep exhibit the most severe clinical disease when affected with bluetongue virus, cattle have fewer clinical signs and are most commonly asymptomatic. Current evidence suggests that disease signs are rarely seen in camelids, although more research is required in this area.

In the late summer / early fall of 2013, two llamas were examined at Washington State University Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. In both cases, the llamas had acute onset of clinical signs including anorexia, lying down, and difficulty breathing (dyspnea) preceding death.. Neither animal survived and post-mortem findings showed changes in the respiratory tract, with lung congestion and pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs). The findings on necropsy alone were not specific for BTV, however specific PCR testing was positive for BTV.

In further investigation, four other llamas from the same farm as the initial case also presented to Washington State University for evaluation of dyspnea. Of these four animals, only one had antibodies for BTV by cELISA. Antibodies to the virus seem to rise between eight and eighteen days post-infection, which is similar to what is seen in sheep and cattle. Further evaluation of the index farm revealed a large pond, and irrigated grass pasture, both of these factors favorable to harboring the primary vector of *Culicoides*. Additionally,

continued on next page

during these cases, three sheep flocks in the region experienced BTV cases, demonstrating a possible reservoir and source of BTV.

This case report from WSU demonstrates some of the key factors with BTV, and highlights remaining questions for BTV in new world camelids. Importantly, owners and veterinarians alike should remember that BTV could present with non-specific respiratory signs in camelids including weakness, reluctance to rise, open-mouth breathing, respiratory distress, and acute death. The disease is transmitted by biting-insects, primarily *Culicoides* spp., with seasonal transmission in late summer and early fall. Insect control and minimizing local standing water are key principles for prevention of transmission. Specific diagnosis is difficult without confirmatory laboratory testing such as serology, PCR, or virus isolation. At this time, it is unclear whether BTV will become a significant cause of disease in camelids, but it appears that their susceptibility is more similar to cattle than sheep.

Source: Allen AJ, Stanton JB, Evermann JF, Fry LM, Ackerman MG and Barrington GM (2015). Bluetongue disease and seroprevalence in South American camelids from the northwestern region of the United States. *J Vet Diagn Invest* 27(2): 226-230

Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus in Camelids, by Dr. Tanya Applegate

Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus (BVDV) is a pestivirus that can infect domestic and wild ruminants, swine, and camelids. In cattle, the virus can result in significant economic losses by causing decreased weight gains, decreased milk production, reproductive losses, and death. BVDV can result in two forms of infection: acute infection and persistent infection. Acute infection occurs when an animal with a mature immune system is infected with the virus and may develop clinical signs. These animals mount an appropriate immune response and generally clear the infection. Persistent infection occurs when a developing fetus is infected with the virus during early stages of gestation when the fetal immune system is not yet fully developed and they become immunotolerant to the virus, allowing the virus to survive in the animal for life. When this animal is born, they may appear ill, unthrifty, or may look completely healthy and normal. These animals shed the virus for life and infect other animals.

Within the United States, surveys of alpaca populations suggest up to 25% of herds have animals with antibodies to BVDV. Many of these herds had unrecognized BVDV-related clinical disease, thus making the role of BVDV infection in herd disease difficult to determine, and control programs hard to assess. The pattern of BVDV infection in camelids seems to be similar to that seen in cattle with both an acute form and persistent infection possible. In camelids, clinical signs include diarrhea, respiratory disease, abortion, stillbirth, and failure to thrive. A persistently infected cria sheds virus via bodily fluids, and can serve as a significant exposure risk, which may result in acute infection in other newborn crias.

A study performed by researchers at the University of Nebraska, assessed acute infection with BVDV (type 1b) in twelve 6-24 month old alpacas to determine clinical signs, changes in blood work, development of antibodies, and post-mortem changes. The primary clinical findings were a slight increase in body temperature and low white blood cell count. Virus could be detected in the blood and nasal secretions. Post-mortem examination showed lymph node enlargement and a variable ability to detect viral antigen in tissues, making this a less sensitive test than PCR.

Ultimately, this study illustrates several key points for owners and veterinarians to remember about BVDV infection in alpacas: 1) Clinical signs may not be apparent. 2) Consistent leukopenia can be found on blood work from 3-7days post-infection (similar to cattle). 3) Immunohistochemistry for BVDV is likely a less sensitive viral detection method than the PCR assay on nasal swab and buffy coat (blood sample). 4) Nasal shedding demonstrates the potential for acute transmission through nasal secretions and aerosolized droplets.

Source: Steffen DJ, Topliff CL, Schmitz JA, Kammerman JR, Henningson JN, Eskridge KM and Kelling CL (2014). Distribution of lymphoid depletion and viral antigen in alpacas experimentally infected with Bovine viral diarrhea virus 1. *J Vet Diagn Invest* 26(1): 35-41.



BECOMING AN OUTDOORSWOMAN WORKSHOP – 2015

Dick Williams, Plains, MT



The Becoming an Outdoorswoman (BOW) program began with a single workshop in Wisconsin in 1991 and has expanded to programs in 39 states and 6 Canadian provinces, with 20,000+ women ranging in age from 18 to 80+ attending over 80 workshops last year. It is a program designed to introduce (and re-introduce) women to outdoor skills and to become more competent,

approximately 130 women about llamas and llama packing.

So early on the morning of August 8th we loaded our big trailer up with 4 packers and a truck load of gear and obstacles and drove the 125 miles to Lubrecht. On our arrival the staff showed us to the site selected for our "camp" and we spent the next couple of hours setting up obstacles that

we had built for our 4-H program and preparing equipment and handout material. At this point we were also asked if we could put on a ½ hour presentation plus questions for the entire staff and participants during their evening program that night.

Our first group of participants arrived at one o'clock and we spent the afternoon introducing some



confident and aware in the outdoors. All workshops are divided into a minimum of 30% shooting sports, 30% fishing activities and 30% non-harvest sports like canoeing, camping, map/GPS, outdoor cooking etc.

After volunteering to put on an Introduction to Llama Packing class at the NW Montana regional workshop in Plains last summer, Jeanne and I were asked if we would put on the same presentation at the Montana BOW Workshop to be held at the Lubrecht Experimental Forest (University of Montana), about 30 miles east of Missoula. (This was a fitting location as this is where the University of Montana graduate students conducted a landmark study on the relative effects of foot, llama and horse traffic on backcountry trails in 1996).

Of course, we readily agreed and went to work on compressing what is usually a 6 – 7 hour block of instruction down to the required 3 ½ hours. In order to accommodate Jeanne's work schedule, our classes were scheduled for Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Over the course of these 2 days we taught

delightful ladies to the joys of llamas and llama packing. As none of the participants had any exposure to llamas in the past, we spent a short period going over the history, development and characteristics of llamas, along with the usual how much, how far, how fast questions.

Next, we covered different types of equipment such as halters, leads, pack systems and methods to picket llamas. Our third block consisted of demonstrating things like



continued on next page

foot care, grooming and conditioning. In the final segment, the ladies got to saddle and load up the llamas and much to their surprise (“we actually get to handle the llamas ourselves?”) spend some time negotiating a basic obstacle course and learning basic handling techniques – like ‘yes, the llama is now 2 ½ feet wider than he was’. The questions were continuous and we finally had to stop the class an hour after our allotted time was up so the students could get back to the meal hall for supper.

After a cup of tea and a bite to eat, we loaded up three of our packers, pigged them together and walked a quarter of a mile over to the pavilion for the evening program. After a quick 15 minute introduction to llamas and packing, we started taking questions which came rapid fire for the next three quarters of an hour. The only breaks came for general laughter when Drew, our lead packer would get overly interested in all the

had originally registered. We let the gals walk the llamas back to the mess hall – thrilled that we loaded all their camp chairs on the llamas – and checked out with the staff.



people and start humming at them. Finally, Liz Lodman, the program administrator, called a halt and told everyone that if they wanted to learn more they needed to take the class next time – but she had more business to address before they wrapped up for the evening!

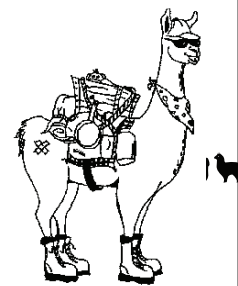
After a good night’s sleep, we repeated the class Sunday morning – again running over with questions until we had to get everyone back for lunch and to check out of their cabins. Our program the evening before must have been a hit as we had a 25% increase in attendees over those who

While we haven’t seen the written feedback forms yet, Liz came over to tell us that she had heard nothing but glowing comments from the gals attending the classes and the presentation Saturday evening. The staff’s most common question was to ask how far we’d travel to present at workshops and could we please come back for all three days next year – and that we had met and exceeded all their expectations.

We’d like to thank Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and outreach specialist Liz Lodman, BOW Coordinator, for inviting us to participate in their workshops.

Lothlorien Llamas

Dick & Jeanne Williams
P.O. Box 1070
Plains, MT 59859
(406) 826-2201
bcllama@blackfoot.net
Packing & Raising Llamas
Since 1983



Vesicular Stomatitis in the RMLA Region

As of August 20, 2015

By Karen Conyngham
Barton Creek Llamas

Vesicular stomatitis virus (VS or VSV) is making an appearance in the RMLA area. Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming have reported equine and cattle cases this summer. To date, the affected areas are:

- Colorado counties: Archuleta, Chaffee, Conejos, Delta, Gunnison, La Plata, Larimer, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose and Weld;
- New Mexico: San Juan and San Miguel Counties;
- Wyoming: Goshen County;
- S. Dakota also has cases.

Camelids have been experimentally infected with vesicular stomatitis and did show tongue lesions but the virus has not been found in llamas/alpacas during recent VSV outbreaks. Awareness of the existence of the disease in your county is important; watch your animals closely if cases in any species in your vicinity are reported in the media or by the state animal health authorities. USDA APHIS keeps weekly reports at: <http://tinyurl.com/kj3dce5>

Signs and Symptoms

- The incubation period ranges from 2 to 8 days, although small, fluid-filled blisters (vesicles) may develop in as few as 24 hours.
- Excessive salivation and drooling may be the first symptoms you notice.
- The animal may develop a fever.
- The vesicles may appear in the mouth, on the tongue, lips, nostrils, feet, or teats.
- Variable in size, some vesicles may be quite small while others may be large enough to cover the tongue.
- The vesicles will swell and break open. The

resulting ulcers are painful, making the animal reluctant to eat, drink or nurse.

General Information

VS is spread by insect vectors, mainly black flies, sand flies and can also spread by animals eating/drinking from feeders or water buckets used by infected herd mates. Use fly controls such as insecticide sprays and try to eliminate breeding areas for insects from your property.

VS is a zoonotic disease which means humans can catch it from an infected animal. One APHIS veterinarian did contract VS a few years ago and described it as being like “the worst case of the flu ever”. If you suspect VS in your camelids, call your veterinarian who can examine them and take fluid samples if needed. Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab is authorized by USDA to test for the disease and will do so in a short turn-around time.

See: <http://csu-cvms.colostate.edu/vdl/Pages/default.aspx>

Entry Requirements for Shows

If you are attending any shows in the above states, watch the entry requirements carefully! Many states with VS infected ranches impose a temporary SHORTER time frame for certificates of veterinary inspection (health certificate) for animals going to shows. Some could require a CVI to be dated within 5 days (or less) of show entry. Colorado has done this; see:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/aganimals/vesicular-stomatitis-virus-vsv>





Ron Hinds and Elizabeth Cline
5704 Canyon Trail
Elizabeth, CO 80107
303-646-1320
Cell 303-999-6103

WHERE QUALITY, COLOR AND PERSONALITIES ARE BLENDED WITH PRECISION.

BREEDING - HEALTH - CARING
BOARDING - FIBER AND ANSWERS

www.elZorroColorado.com
alpacas@elzorroc Colorado.com

From Rescue to Happy Trails!

by Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay
Yellowstone Llamas

Susi is the Chair of the RMLA
Rescue Committee

The happy story of Lupe the Llama

Things don't always end happily for rescued animals. Some arrive at their new homes with baggage of an unhappy past. Lucky for them, they escaped their situation. Some will go on to a full new life; others may just hang out and recover for the rest of their lives.

For Lupe the llama, however, life is good and getting better! When the email came around in the summer of

2013 that Lupe needed a home after his llama buddy was killed by a mountain lion and Lupe was relocated to the outskirts of Albuquerque where apparently he was not allowed to stay, I looked at his picture and thought "I would like to take this llama on hikes in Yellowstone!"

So I planned a road trip to Albuquerque with my dog, Cody, and off we went one sunny day in September of 2013 to pick up Lupe.

It was a wonderful trip with a stop-over in Moab, Utah where Cody and I went on a great hike into the red rock country, the last real hike we would do together. We drove through Navajo country and down to the far state of New Mexico where Laura McNamara had Lupe in her custody. After hooking up with Lynda Liptak of Llamas del Sol, we went to get Lupe who greeted us with a calm demeanor that I have come to value in this little guy. After a day of getting to know each other and some initial training, Lupe stepped into the trailer and his new life. He was now on his way to Montana and to becoming a packer with Yellowstone Llamas.

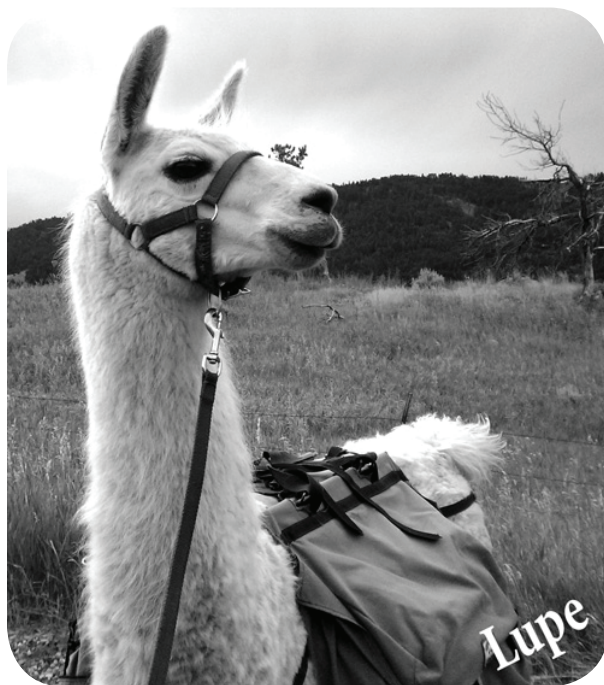
Back home, Lupe established himself within the herd and commenced a year of hanging out and

settling in with a few, gentle short lessons thrown in. Life was good. Among other things, Lupe learned that a big fleece coat can be shorn off. His llama buddies all accepted him over time and funny enough, Lupe, who is all white liked to hang out most with Candido who is all white also.

This summer, Lupe began the next chapter of his life. He embarked on a career. At 3 ½ years of age, he went on two day hikes with a blanket on his back and two different groups of humans he had never seen before. He greeted everybody calmly and took his role carrying the blanket very seriously. He seemed to sense that more exciting adventures may be in store for him. Sure enough, recently a saddle landed on his back together with a few soothing words, followed by pack panniers. Lupe took it all in stride as is his way.

On his first outing with full gear up the hill behind his home, however, a rattlesnake shook his tail and coiled up beside the trail. Lupe's calm demeanor went out the window and he raced back home, where he waited for me as I finally caught up with him. "Next trip without rattlesnakes, please", he seemed to say, a little indignant. Our next walk turned out better and Lupe held his tail and head high as he marched through the countryside and looked at all the new sights and views with curious wonder. Once in a while, when we stopped, his soft pink lips touched my face for reassurance. We are a team.

This Saturday, Lupe will go on his first 3-day trek, together with 8 llama buddies to the Northwest Corner of Yellowstone National Park. As I have seen again and again with young and newly-trained llamas, I know that a new world will open for Lupe and he will take his job as an important member of the pack crew very seriously. He will sleep under the stars and



continued on page 21

LAMAS MAKE MEDICAL NEWS

by Linda Hayes
Glenwood Springs, CO

AS IN LLAMAS & ALPACAS!

We have all had to answer the question “What do you do with a llama?” Now there is another reply to add to your collection of answers.

Lamas may hold the cure for AIDS. Researchers at Harvard Medical School (USA), University College London and Argentina’s Center of Animal Virology have made a major discovery. It seems that llamas and alpacas are the only animals so far that can develop antibodies to the AIDS virus.

When animals, including humans, are exposed to a virus several things can happen. Their body may not react and no sickness develops or the virus can do enough damage that the animal becomes ill. Sometimes this can be deadly. In a best case scenario, the blood develops antibodies that react with the virus to neutralize it. This is why people are inoculated against mumps and measles. It is also why we give our llamas CD&T shots. Vaccination is a way to help the blood develop disease fighters (antibodies) that keep a person well. Up until now, there have been no antibodies that had an affect on AIDS. To find one that worked is a major medical discovery.

Lamas are able to develop antibodies which can neutralize more than 95% of the AIDS strains. Trying to produce the antibodies in other animals has not been possible because of characteristics in their protein. Antibodies produced in most mammals are made up of large proteins that don’t react with the AIDS virus. Those from llamas, however, are unique. Their antibodies have only one chain of smaller proteins which allows them to attach to specific viruses; HIV being one of them.

Researchers using the blood from three llamas found that each produced 4 smaller strands of proteins. Each strand of proteins affects different parts

of the virus and a combination makes it effective against most types of HIV. Scientists are cautious as they are just beginning their laboratory research. But the results look promising and hold the potential for developing a vaccine against HIV.



It will take much testing and experimentation before the antibodies can be used to fight AIDS in people. Pharmaceutical companies will be careful in evaluating the safety and efficiency of their products before they put them on the market. And it will take many years but it is a significant discovery and one that is opening the door to major research. It looks like we have more to thank our llamas for than just the peaceful feeling we get when we see them in the pasture.

Sidebar: No llamas were harmed in this study. A small portion of the AIDS virus was injected into the llamas. It was not enough to make them sick but it was the amount needed for their blood to produce antibodies against HIV. Once the antibodies were viable they were withdrawn from the blood and enhanced in the laboratory.

Dr. Callan at the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital has provided the following links to two scientific publications on this topic: <http://jem.rupress.org/content/209/6/1091.full.pdf+html> and <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0010482>

Editors’ Note: If you’d rather not type in those web addresses, go to RMLA.com go to RESOURCES and click on HOT NEWS.



Advertisers in this issue:

BackCountry Llama..... 21	Classified Ads..... 26	Rocky Mountain Llamas 11
Bear Track Farm 10	el Zorro Colorado Alpacas 18	Southwest Llama Rescue..... 29
Cache la Poudre Minerals..... 7	Lothlorien Llamas..... 17	Spinning Llama, Alpaca, Camel &
Caring for Llamas and Alpacas... Back Pg	Mazuri 2	Paco-Vicuña..... 21
		Zander Farm..... 26

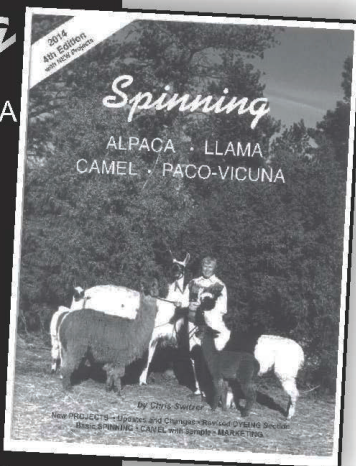
Thank You.....

Spinning

ALPACA • LLAMA
CAMEL • PACO-VICUNA

by Chris Switzer

4th Edition • 52 pages

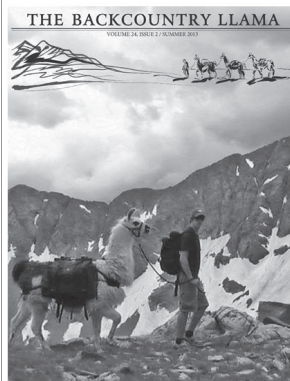
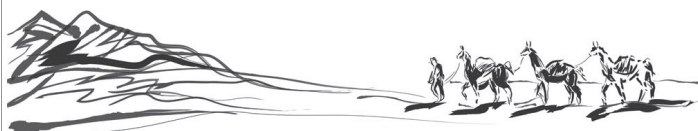


- NEW Projects
- Basic SPINNING
- Camel with Sample
- MARKETING
- Revised Dyeing Section
- Updates and changes

Chris Switzer
1236 Glacier View Lane
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
(970) 586-4624 • FAX (970) 577-0775
www.alpacaland.com

Retail
\$18.00 each
Plus \$3
Postage

THE BACKCOUNTRY LLAMA



Subscribe today
to the publication
written for the
outdoor enthusiast
who packs with
camelids.

\$20 1 year (4 issues)
\$37.50 2 years (4 issues)
\$25 (US) 1 year to Canada
\$30 (US) 1 year outside continental US & CAN

visit www.thebackcountryllama.com
for more information

From Rescue to Happy Trails!... continued from page 19
he may hear wolves howl in the early morning light. He may hear the call of cranes as they pass over the camp. He will cross creeks and hike up mountain sides, getting stronger on every trip. Children will bring him grain and stroke his pretty white fleece. The other pack llamas will look at him differently and he will know that he is now part of their club.

Lupe is looking forward to a life full of adventure and new trails to be discovered. As for me, I am happy that I went on that road trip to the far state of New Mexico to get Lupe the Llama up to Montana. He and I are now hiking buddies in Yellowstone!

Postscript: Lupe finished his first big trip and did very well. He was the first llama to spot the grizzly mama with her two cubs about 300 yards off. Go Lupe!!

Advertising Angle

Spread your wings while you spread
the word about advertising in The Journal.

It is easy. Talk to your feed & product suppliers, fiber mills, other ranches, and your friends. Get 3 new business card ads for the winter issue and you will receive a FREE business card ad in the spring issue! Contact Sonja at rmLaadvertise@gmail.com to get all the details



Let's see all
those lama wings
flapping towards
advertising in the
winter issue.

Photo courtesy of Rocky Mtn Llamas

Retraining the Older Llama, and Possibly the Handler!

By Marty
McGee Bennett

Camelids are all individuals. They don't all act the same way and it is not useful to treat them all the same as we work with them. One technique might offer the perfect solution for one animal and be totally ineffective on another. The best of all possible worlds is to have lots of tools and techniques available to you. But when retraining an older animal, I believe that desensitizing an animal to a human's approach is crucial.

I do find it helpful to categorize animals so that I can help their owners cope with them. There are distinct classes of difficulties and one of the most common is older animals who are difficult to halter. Animals that are difficult to halter are often difficult in general and because they are difficult they bring a lot of grief into their lives since they can't figure out that submitting to whatever procedure is being forced on them will be far easier than fighting the process.

In my experience difficult animals are usually born difficult. Difficult animals are usually very bright or very "not so bright." They may have trouble figuring out what is wanted or they may use their extra intelligence to subvert what they know is expected. Camelids are proud, dramatic and oppositional and like their kindred spirit — cats — they hate to be restrained. They don't like to be controlled and don't feel safe unless they can get away. These very bright animals develop coping mechanisms to help with their situation: screaming, spitting, kushing, or all of the above.

Often these difficult animals appear so distressed by any handling that owners will decide that the best course of action is to leave them alone. But can we leave an animal in our care alone? Camelids must be wormed and vaccinated. Toenails must be trimmed and we must help them if they are wounded or in the case of pregnant females if they have a difficult birth. We simply cannot leave them alone. Camelids do not distinguish between halter training sessions and a rectal exam or shots. Every time we are with our animals our behavior informs their attitude about us.

First, changing the way you CATCH an animal is the best way to avoid all the unpleasant buttons.

Well-intentioned owners feel they are giving their older difficult animals a big break by leaving them alone as much as possible, only handling them when it is necessary for herd management chores. From our point of view they are getting a 360 day vacation and they should be grateful and like us for that big break! The animal doesn't see it that way. From your camelids' point of view "The only time a human has anything to do with me it is unpleasant and stressful." In their experience humans never just take you for a walk or rub your neck or scratch your back, they always do annoying, unpleasant things.

In my opinion it is even more important to spend time with difficult animals doing things that ease the fear and create a different kind of expectation. It is also very important to do your very best to accomplish herd management tasks in the easiest, least invasive way possible and to minimize restraint whenever you can. My whole training and handling program is designed to meet these needs.

Imagine as you look at your camelid that he or she has a control panel just like the dashboard of your car. There are certain buttons you can choose to push or NOT. When you push

these buttons you will get very predictable results, just as you do when you turn your windshield wipers on or toot your horn. Difficult animals come equipped with a scream button, a kush button and a spit button. Most people want to avoid these behaviors, but do not understand what they are doing to push the buttons. If you push buttons the behaviors happen just as surely as if you had tooted the horn.

First, changing the way you CATCH an animal is the best way to avoid all the unpleasant buttons. Your problem child is expecting to be cornered, grabbed, held and perhaps dragged. So he or she responds by screaming, spitting or kushing. By catching your llama or alpaca differently, you avoid pushing these buttons as well as the unwanted behaviors. Here is what I recommend.

Herd your difficult llama and another calm animal friend into a catch pen (10 x10 or 9 X 9 feet square is ideal). Get yourself a wand, or pole, or light weight herding tool (about 4 feet long) and tie a lightweight

continued on next page

Retraining the Older Llama.... continued

rope (about 10 feet long) to it. You are going fishing for camelids. Maintain your body position behind the eye of the animal and position yourself so that you are always out of arms length. Hold on to the free end of the rope and use the wand to guide the rope over the animal's head beginning from behind the neck and end up in front of the animal. Use the wand to



In this photo, the llama has moved into the escape route & the handler is preparing to move the wand over the head & use the wand to bring the rope back to her hands.

bring the rope back to you and remain outside of arms length the entire time. Once you have both ends of the rope in your hands, untie or unclip the rope and put the wand on the ground. You have just caught your camelid! I know this might seem cumbersome but so is taking a shower every time you catch your animal.

NOTE: It may take several attempts to get your personal coordination down, but stay calm and patient. Do the best you can to catch smoothly, but don't repeat using the wand over and over in one session with the same animal. If you need to practice, then use other animals or even a fence post to get smoother at using the wand.

It has been my experience that if you use this technique for catching difficult animals, they will very quickly begin to stand quietly and allow you to simply walk up to them from behind the eye and hand yourself the rope around their neck. With this method

you need not corner them (very scary) and you can simply help them stand still with the rope as you walk up to them.

How you respond with the rope once you have it around the neck is your next opportunity to avoid the dreaded buttons. Use your rope to help keep your animal student in balance over all four legs, particularly the front legs. An animal standing in balance feels more in control and safer, particularly the difficult animal. Make a series of measured approaches and back up if your animal exhibits ANY small sign of being uncomfortable with your approach. Usually the first indication is a shift in balance.

All of this takes 'what it takes' and it might be a week or it might be a month. The animal is really in charge of deciding when he or she trusts you enough to allow an approach and put aside the idea that running away is the better option. It is not a linear process. It isn't step by step where you have to have total success before going to the next step, particularly in the case of adult animals that you are rehabilitating. That is, you don't have to have an animal that accepts



In this photo the handler is using the rope to maintain a light connection through the rope and will use the rope to help the animal maintain a neutral balance and accept her approach. Notice the handler is still behind the eye and the llama has an escape route.

catching without the wand BEFORE you can proceed to haltering. The wand makes the start of the process, i.e., THE CATCHING, much less scary so that everything that happens after goes better.

continued on next page

My suggestion is that you use the wand each time you need to catch your llama or alpaca. Then do what you intended to do whether it is to put on a halter, go for a walk or give an injection.

When it comes to putting the halter on, give your animal more room than you would normally. Most people are in the habit of pulling their camelids up close as they put the halter on. Try giving your llama or alpaca almost the full length of your arms instead. In this way you will be able to see your animal student's feet and can tell if he is standing in balance.

Using a corner to catch animals has been the industry standard and has done more to limit the relationship we can have with these animals than any other single practice. You will be amazed at how making a commitment to changing how you approach your llama will change your entire relationship. Your animals will be more settled when you are around and handling will be easier whether or not it is shearing, putting a pack on or trimming toenails.

SPITTING: To be sure it is unpleasant to be spat on. On the other hand the difficult animal has developed the spitting habit probably for good reason. Yelling, hitting, spraying with water, or spitting back may temporarily suppress the behavior but is probably not the best way to change your woolly buddy's mind about people over the long haul. The catching method outlined above in my experience eliminates most of the problem as spitting is usually a response to being cornered. This method will also allow you to control the head early on in the catching and haltering process and turn the head away from you if the spitting persists. I think turning the animal's head is all that is appropriate in terms of a direct response to the behavior. If you engage in very intermittent eye contact and remember to breathe, it will help greatly. Let go of thoughts like "Don't you dare!" Thoughts like this will be reflected in your body language and your animal will react negatively.

MAKE ABSOLUTELY sure that the halter you are using fits correctly. Most camelid halters (particularly alpaca halters) are prone to slip down the nose bone. Loosen the nose band as much as you can and tighten

the crown piece of the halter more than you would normally even at the risk of feeling it might be a bit too snug. The halter should fit right up by the eye. This is the safest place and your camelid knows it.

As you work with your difficult camelid, remember



This halter fits perfectly. It is high up on the nose bone but still offers room in the nose band for chewing and will be comfortable

that TRUE INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AND EXPECTING TO GET DIFFERENT RESULTS. If you keep pushing those buttons you will keep getting the behaviors that go with them. Time spent with these animals doing things that are easy and fun like going for a walk is not a waste of time and will benefit both you and your animal. Working this way with your difficult animal will make you a better handler and trainer and your effort will change the mind of a troubled animal.

Watch for future articles in The Journal from Marty McGee Bennett. Or contact her at www.camelidynamics.com.



Learning to Clerk

By Mary Wickman



Clerking for a performance class can be tricky; every judge has their own scribbles and there are many levels of performance. In May, six students gathered at Sally & Jeff Rucker's ranch to learn about clerking performance classes. I taught the class as I have been clerking these classes for more than 10 years.

We began the workshop by examining and discussing the score cards. Then we looked at the many ways errors can and do happen on the score sheets and discussed how to resolve them. The class learned how to figure grand and reserve champions.

Following the discussions, we had a mock scoring example to practice the skills learned during the class. Completing this 'example', took more than an hour.

As always it was a beautiful day to spend time outside socializing with friends, even some people we had not seen in a couple of years. We had a great meal with the main dish supplied by Sally Rucker and side dishes brought by everyone else. Thank you to all who took the class. And thank you to Sally and Jeff Rucker for use of their beautiful home. And now we have several more skilled people able to clerk our performance classes.

WRAP UP: HOPE PASS AID STATION

By Gary Carlton
Strasburg, CO



From a runner's perspective, the sign says it all: approximately 700 courageous runners made the 100 mile round trip from Leadville to Hope Pass.



About 3000 pounds of gear went up to the aid station on 29 llamas and four mules. How much food was served? Well, enough to feed 700 runners and we did not run out. We pumped and filtered 600+ gallons of water from our pumping station in Willis Creek and hauled it the 1/4 mile to the aid station on the backs of llamas at 90 pounds per load.

We pulled off what everyone is saying was the best aid station ever with 33 volunteers from 5 countries: Holland, Belgium, South Africa, Canada and the United States. The whole week went very smoothly. These volunteers gave a whole new meaning to the word hard work. WOW !!! Half of the volunteers were former runners of this race and really gave it their all to help those running this year.

Thank you to the Leadville Race Committee who made the sign this year. We took it to the Hope Pass aid station.



WRAP UP: FAIRPLAY LLAMA RACES

By Gary Carlton
Strasburg, CO



Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the 33rd annual Fairplay Llama Races the biggest and the best ever. We had more than 20 volunteers helping out this year. Plus we had more than 120 llamas available to race. These are significant increases over previous years. And, we could not have accomplished this without each and every one of you. Seriously, pat yourself on the back: your contribution was huge! Oh, and to relive this great experience, a video of the beginning of the race has been put on the RMLA website, www.rmla.com



And race results from Fairplay 2015 Pack Races are:

Men's Division

Jerod Cooper, Grand Lake, CO 26 min.
Ryan Height, Castle Rock, CO 29 min.
Mike Sanchez, Lake George, CO 32 min.

Woman's Division

Dani Fitch, Castle Rock, CO 30 min.
Molly Erdle, Castle Rock, CO 33 min.
Janni Cooper, Grand Lake, CO 35 min.

Team Pack

Casey & John Richards, Broomfield, CO 35 min.
Katy Purdy & Tiffany, Colorado Springs, CO 36 min.
John Ahern & Kira Kalkins, Littleton, CO 37 min.

Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who participated.



Zander Farms
Arvada, Colorado
303.257.6733 czandera@yahoo.com
"Specializing in Argentine Llamas"
www.zanderfarms.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

CUSTOM HAND SPINNING

Hanging on to past SHOW FLEECES? Get your favorite llama or alpaca fleece hand spun! Call or email Judy Glaser for more details. 303-646-6311 or judy.glaser@yahoo.com

Your Ad Here!
Just \$10 for 50 words.

FOR SALE

Llama or alpaca scale \$300. Two llama cart harnesses; \$150 each. New!!! Free Shipping It is easy to train your llamas to pull a cart. When you train 2 together, they learn even faster. Contact Linda Hayes Lindahayes@skybeam.com or 970-379-4576

CUSTOM KNITTING

Let me knit you a hat, scarf or handwarmers from your llama yarn or mine. Great gifts. Reasonable prices and satisfaction guaranteed!

Also, I can custom blend your fiber with silk, cashmere, Angelina, or something else. Contact Kathy Stanko at turkeytrots2@gmail.com so we can talk about your options.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AT THE ESTES PARK WOOL MARKET

By Jill Knuckles

Pictures courtesy of Vantage Imaging and Wally Juntilla

June 12, 13 and 14 was once again a beautiful weekend in Estes Park, Colorado and it was the place to be to celebrate the 25-year anniversary of the Estes Park Wool Market. Many llama and alpaca owners were excited to be part of the celebration, spend a wonderful weekend with friends and participate in the ALSA sanctioned llama and



alpaca show. RMLA sponsored a Saturday Night Dinner Celebration of members participating in the Wool Market for 25 years. The dinner brought together new exhibitors and exhibitors from years past in an evening of conversation about the wonderful memories we have all shared in past years at the Estes Park Wool Market. Thank You to RMLA and the hard work of the committee for this wonderful evening.

The ALSA sanctioned show took place with the Gold show on Saturday and the Silver show on Sunday. This gave exhibitors the opportunity to show under two different judges each day in halter, performance and showmanship. Our judges for these events were Margaret Drew and Kim Yates, both joining us from California. Exhibitors of all ages were able to challenge themselves, llamas and alpacas each day through 3 performance courses – obstacle, public relations and pack. A model packer halter class was offered which Jerry Dunn judged.



This class provides exhibitors and the audience a chance to learn what qualities make a good pack llama.



The ALSA sanctioned fiber show continues to grow each year offering an outstanding display of llama fleeces and finished products. Cynthia Ernst joining us from Michigan had a very challenging and exciting job judging the competition. There were 25 shorn fleece entries, 32 walking fiber entries and 23 finished product entries. This was the first year that the finished product entries were an ALSA point class. The finished product classes were broken down into 5 classes: knitted or crocheted, woven, felted, handspun yarn and other. Each class was also broken into 3 divisions: youth, novice and advanced.

All exhibitors showed many beautiful and very talented llamas and alpacas through out the weekend. Many well deserved awards were given in each division and some Honorable Mentions:

The Youth Versatility Champion was awarded to Alexandra Leland as the youth earning the most points in the youth division for both shows.

The Llama Best of Show was awarded to RM Gunsmoke, owned by Patti Morgan. The Best of Show was chosen from all Halter Grand Champions.

The Llama Versatility Champion was awarded to RM Gunsmoke, owned by Patti Morgan. The Versatility Champion was awarded to the llama earning the most points in halter, performance and fiber.

The Overall Fiber Finish Product Champion was awarded to Karen Kinyon for beautiful hand knit shawl.

The Sharon Beacham Fiber Award was awarded to Robert Knuckles.

continued on next page

Thank You to all of the wonderful volunteers helping throughout the weekend to ensure the show ran smoothly. Rhonda Livengood and Nancy Jamnick



our outstanding and dedicated announcer and clerks, Sandy Nolan did an exceptional job as our fiber show clerk, Wally Juntilla, Ann Bruhn and Mary Wickman for all of your help in "keeping the show on track". Larry Lewellyn and Wally Juntilla for all of their work on the performance courses. And to Everyone, who jumped in throughout the weekend when help was needed. We all know that our volunteers keep the show running! My greatest appreciation and gratitude to all of the sponsors and their much-needed support. And of course, Thank You to all of the exhibitors!!! It talks all of us to have such a wonderful show!!!!

RMLA Fiber Booth – Joining in the 25 Year Celebration of the Estes Park Wool Market

The RMLA FIBER BOOTH was once again a vendor in the Wool Market Vendor Barn. Thank You to Cheryl Juntilla for serving at the booth chair and dedicating very long hours throughout the weekend to run the booth. Thank You also to Lisa Blidar for her help on Saturday and to those who help to set up the booth on Friday. The Wool Market was very well attended this year and the booth welcomed visitors from many states outside of the Rocky Mountain region, including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Georgia and New York, and from as far away as New Zealand and Germany. Several new and prospective llama and alpaca owners came into the Booth seeking information about health, nutrition, shelter and fencing questions. Two

gentlemen from Pennsylvania who were particularly interested in information about leasing pack llamas were given the link to the RMLA website. Dozens of people took copies of the RMLA brochure and many also took copies of past issues of the Journal. We signed up one new RMLA member and enjoyed talking with several former and current members who stopped by to visit.

An exciting addition to the Wool Market this year was the Woolly Wonder Fashion Show. Chris Switzer was the master of ceremonies for the Fashion Show, which featured many beautiful garments made from various natural fibers. Four items from the RMLA Fiber Booth were included in the Fashion Show and well-



received by the audience. Several audience members came to the Booth the next day and one of the four items was sold. The combination of the larger space and interest generated by the Fashion Show had a very positive effect on sales, which increased by almost 93% over last year. Consignors paid RMLA a total of \$368.51 in commissions. Total expenses were \$269.36 for a net profit to the Fiber Booth Reserves of \$99.15. The Booth also collected \$40.00 in membership dues.

The RMLA fiber booth continues to be an outstanding venue for members to market their llama and alpaca fiber products. It also continues to support the RMLA mission statement of providing education to the public. To those consigning products to the booth, please consider volunteering at one of the many events that we attend. The booth cannot operate without help.

Silent Auction – A happening place during the Estes Park Wool Market Llama Show

RMLA members also organized a silent auction during the llama show to benefit the RMLA Youth Award Program and the RMLA Fiber Booth. This was

continued on next page

Celebrating 25 Years at EPWM.... continued

the 2nd year the auction was held along with the Estes Park Wool Market Llama Show and once again proved to be a wonderful venue. Donations were made by RMLA members and exhibitors and were designated by the donor as to which RMLA program they wished the proceeds go to. The auction was



fun for all – exhibitors and spectators attending the Estes Park Market. Thank You to Dave and Willow Kauffman, Gerald and Tracey Pecka, Shawn Leland and Jim Rutledge for all of their hard work in setting up the auction and collected the proceeds from the highest bidders. The auction brought in \$378 for the Youth Award Program which will go towards the awards presented to the RMLA Youth and \$524 for the RMLA Fiber Booth which helps to cover the cost of event entry fees and gas for the individual hauling the trailer to the various events.



NEW RMLA Members

RMLA IS ALWAYS GROWING

Heather Corcoran, Kremmling, CO

Stephanie Parks, Albuquerque, NM

Stacey Byers, Ft. Collins, CO

Lisa & Deena Rice, Florissant, CO

At the Estes Park 25th Anniversary Celebration, RMLA donated three one-time annual memberships to expire on 3/31/2016 to be given as door prizes. The winners of the three door-prize memberships are:

- Shawn & David Leland, Ft. Collins, CO
- Cindy & David Ruckman, Mt. Vernon, OH
- Larry & Deanna Lewellyn, Sedalia, CO

Additional information, farm name, phone, address, etc. can be found on the website under **MEMBERS**.

NOTE: Before youth members under the age of 18 are listed, they require a signed release from parent or legal guardian. You can find a link for further instructions and that form at the top of the members page on the website. *Thank you*

Help SWLR with your Amazon.com Purchases!!

Here's how:

- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible **smile.amazon.com** purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
- **smile.amazon.com** is the same Amazon you've always known. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at **smile.amazon.com**.
- Log in to your Amazon account. A 'pick your charity' screen is displayed. At the bottom, type in **Southwest Llama Rescue**, then click on search. **Southwest Llama Rescue** will appear on the next screen, click on select. Now, each time you purchase through **smile.amazon.com**, SWLR will benefit!



==== Keep that **smile.amazon.com** bookmark handy!! =====

F.E. Baxter, SW Llama Rescue, Inc.

BASIC TRAINING

Saving the best for last!

an excerpt from Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining and Educational Guide to Using Llamas in the Backcountry by Charlie Hackbarth

By Charlie Hackbarth Sopris Unlimited

You place your pack saddles on the fence rail, enter the catch pen, and close the gate. Curly and Moe, your new llamas, give you their complete attention. They have been through the catching process just often enough to know that it is something to be avoided.

They stand alert, wide-eyed, and motionless. Like their previous owner, you take a halter in your hand, spread your arms wide, and amble toward them. Seeing this giant albatross in motion, Curly and Moe retreat to the far end of the catch pen. You work them into the corner and slowly tiptoe up for the catch. They charge past you to freedom. You pursue them to another corner and they charge by again. This continues until your blood pressure rises to the level at which your fear of being run over subsides.

You let Curly fly by, but with the reflexes of a cutting horse you step in front of Moe. He changes direction and you cut him off again. In a tremulous voice you tell him to stand; for an instant nobody moves while you both catch your breath. Moe makes a few more escape attempts, but you've got his number and he knows it. You move closer and cautiously put your arm around his neck, then slowly raise the halter toward his nose. He leans away from you and elevates his nose out of your reach. You place your hand along the other side of his face to bring his head toward you and scoop his nose into the noseband. But after an accidental head butt, Moe wheels away from your tentative grip and spins you into a staggering pirouette. Dazed, you complete your performance with a bow to one knee, whispering, "Toto, am I in Kansas?"

You might be in Kansas, but more likely you're only in a state of ignorance. You just brought the packs out a little prematurely, that's all. Llamas do make great pack animals, but there are some things that you and your llamas need to learn before packing can happen. If you're up for an encore, you can stay in the ring and continue to train your llamas the hard and fast way. If you survive the full fifteen rounds, you will be a competent, confident llama wrangler, able to handle any situation that comes up on the

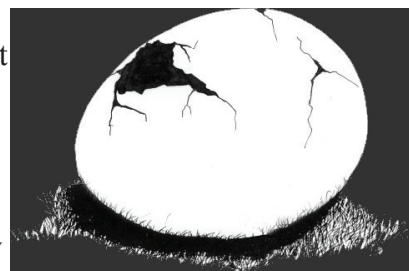
trail. Or you may be thinking, "There's got to be an easier way!"

Of course, if you are a complete novice, the quickest way to learn is to buy a book on the how-to's of llama packing and then sign up for a pack clinic to get some hands-on instruction about the process. If you have purchased older llamas that lack basic training or if you are starting off with young, completely untrained llamas, you will need to educate yourself so that you can properly train them. Although llamas are very intelligent, training any animal correctly takes time and patience, especially for the beginner.

If I am the only source of basic llama training information that you can afford, that is unfortunate. I am from the old school, where pirouettes and face plants in the training pen are considered character-building prerequisites for the trail, and I still believe that there is some merit to that school of thought. However, I must admit that the older I get the more valid the modern methods seem to be.

I've heard so many people say things like, "I don't put the breeching strap on my llama" or "I don't touch him here or there because he doesn't like that." If your llama is afraid of something, all the more reason to show him that he has no reason for fear. If you let your llama have his way because you lack the courage to confront the problem, you will most likely end up with more behavioral problems. Good pack llamas are capable of amazing things, much more than most people realize. Don't baby them.

No matter what method of training you use, it is important to work with your llama on a regular basis. In other words, don't put your llama through basic training school and then turn him out to pasture until it is time to vaccinate. The more you work with your animals the more they will trust you, which means they will become better companions and easier, safer animals to care for.



Sopris Unlimited
www.SoprisLlamas.com

continued on next page

You might feel overwhelmed after you receive your training manual, so to help keep you on track, I'm going to give you a list of what I believe your llama should know before you bring out the pack equipment:

- Desensitize the head. If you can put your hands on your llama's head, face, and ears, you have taken a major step in building trust and you will eliminate possible catching and haltering problems later on in your training.
- Train your llama to lead on a slack lead. You are defeating your purpose if you have to drag a lazy pack llama up the trail. It is tiring and frustrating, and sometimes stems from poor early training practices. Use an obstacle course when training your llama to lead, simulating things that you might encounter on the trail such as going around trees, over bridges, and through deadfall.
- Desensitize the body. If you can put your hands on your llama's back, rear, and sternum (the callused area between and slightly behind the front legs) and

belly area without him moving around, kicking, or lying down, then the saddling process will be a "cinch."

- Desensitize the legs and feet. Training a llama to allow you to pick up his legs and feet is probably the most time-consuming part of the basic training process, which explains why this step is so often neglected. If you take the time to leg-train your llama, he won't kick, lie down, or move around when you are trying to saddle. In addition, toenails can be trimmed without having to use a chute, and foot and leg injuries on the trail can be treated without a rodeo.
- Train to load in a trailer and/or a pickup truck.
- Train to the picket (tie-out) line.
- Have a competent Boy Scout teach your llama to read a compass. This usually takes longer than leg training, but it's well worth it if you can't master the skill yourself.

When you have completed these steps, you will feel (and be) confident and be in control. Then it's time to bring out the packs.

Excerpt published with permission from Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining & Educational Guild to Using Llamas in the Backcountry by Charlie Hackbarth.
— Further reprinting by others is NOT permitted. —



A POSTSCRIPT FROM THE EDITORS

It is Autumn: a time to enjoy our bounty and to thank those who have helped. The Journal volunteers want to thank each one of you who have contributed in some way to creating each issue of the Journal. The wealth of articles, photos, information and cooperation is at times overwhelming. Thank you all.

Jim Fisher with his llama, Flo, at the register and Courtney Pecka with Vulpes at the counter as a customer

Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association
P O Box 1070
Plains, MT 59859-1070



EVENTS CALENDAR

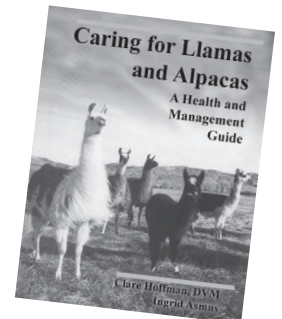
BY MARY WICKMAN
(EVENTS CHAIR)

- **October 3 & 4, 2015 Taos Wool Festival, Taos, NM** - Contact the RMLA Fiber Co-op. Cheryl Juntilla cajwdj@aol.com - 402-366-9304 or Jill Knuckles talltaillamas@bigplanet.com - 970-487-0223

For more details and live links, direct your browser to the RMLA website event calendar and hover your cursor on the event.

Caring for Llamas and Alpacas

Buying an Animal ♦ Restraint ♦
Traveling with your Animal ♦ Newborns
♦ Herd Health ♦ Wounds ♦ Mastitis ♦
Lumps ♦ Skin Disorders ♦ Lameness ♦
Nutrition ♦ Digestive Problems ♦
Respiratory Problems ♦ Down Lama ♦
Poisonous Plants ♦ Reproduction and
Birthing ♦ Giving Injections ♦ Teeth ♦
Passing Stomach Tubes ♦ Normal Llama
and Alpaca Vitals



Only \$29.95 (+\$6.00 p&h) \$35.95
(CO residents please add \$1.17 sales tax = \$37.12)

THE STANDARD IN THE INDUSTRY

Caring For Llamas and Alpacas- A Health and Management Guide by Clare Hoffman, DVM and Ingrid Asmus. Now in its Third Edition, 172 pages—with many updated comments by the authors. Spiral Bound 8 ½" X 11" for easy reference in your barn. Larger type with over 60 detailed illustrations. An excellent gift for new owners of llamas and alpacas and serious visitors to your ranch..

A sample Chapter, more information & order online at www.RMLA.com - click on Print Publications