

Spring 2018

The Journal of RMLA

RMLA



Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association



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How to Make an Automatic Milk Feeding Bucket – Page 23

RMLA'S SHINING STARS!

2017 Youth Awards Program Wraps Up

by Marshal Rutledge,
Youth Chair

The RMLA Youth participated in events all year and recorded their activity on the website at the Youth Awards Program. Think about how 18 youth represented llamas and alpacas in so many states, with so many different types of activities: state fairs, county fairs, ALSA and ILR shows, packing trips, Fairplay Llama Event, nursing homes, preschools, day care facilities, school day events, FFA, 4H, church events, parades, town festivals, and on and on.

With these events the youth posted their activities on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and reached so many people. And the fun part is watching to see who all "likes" their photos and you know they are reaching out to each other. When a youth does well at a show, or completes the pack trials, you see activity on social media for a couple days, and then wait for it — there goes another post and you see our youth in action AGAIN.



The world is ever changing but what we do with our animals remains the same; we interact and play with them, teach them and train them and in return the rewards are two ways, the handler and the animal. I believe everyone in RMLA is looking forward to 2018 and seeing what will happen with the youth, the future and our camelid industry.

Congrats to the Belt Buckle Winners; good luck to all of you and let's get going. Send in those pictures with your activity, you never know when it will pop up in the RMLA Journal.


See Pages 18 & 19 to see the RMLA Shining Stars!




RMLA's facebook PAGE

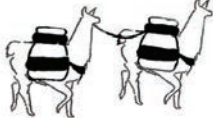
Hey, you Facebook-crazed-people out there. YOU!, yes YOU can post articles, pictures, what ever you'd like related to llamas and alpacas on RMLA's Facebook page. All you need is a Facebook account.


You got to spell it out: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROCKYMOUNTAINLLAMAANDALPACA



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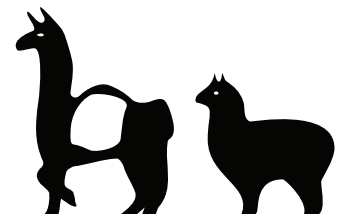
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Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates and Specifications

Issue	Submission Deadline	Mailing Date
Spring	February 20	March 20
Summer	May 20	June 20
Fall	August 20	September 20
Winter	November 20	December 26

Ad Type	Width x Height	Member	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5"x2"	\$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
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 10% discount.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR ARTICLE AND AD SUBMISSION:** Email all text and/or graphics content to: RMLAEDITOR@GMAIL.COM. 'Camera ready' ads and articles should be submitted via email in .PDF, or any text readable by MS Word. Images alone should be submitted in .jpeg(.jpg) or .tiff. Quality photos start at 1-2MB.
- We suggest ads and article graphics be submitted in color at 300dpi. Both will be converted to grayscale for printing.
- For ad design or graphics that require scanning: Use address: RMLA/Ron Hinds -5704 Canyon Trail, Elizabeth, CO 80107-7814 or email to AD-DESIGN@RMLA.COM. Phone: 303-646-1320.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAYMENT:** Send your check, payable to RMLA, along with a copy of the ad to:
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- Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

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The world of alpacas and llamas is just huge! There are so many aspects to learn about and to incorporate into our lives: feeding, healthcare, training, mentoring, and fiber. And there are so many things you can do with a llama or alpaca: take them to RMLA events, schools and parades; go on hikes and walks; go to shows and compete; go packing; and use their fiber to create lovely items. Llamas and alpacas are just so versatile.

Lucky for us, there is always more to learn and more avenues to go down. In this issue of the Journal, we hope we have challenged you to learn more and maybe add something new to your repertoire!

The Vets at CSU have provided us with a stimulating article on how camelid antibodies are being used in science and medicine. We have an update on the llama ban in Alaska compliments of Ron Baird who was present during the ban a number of years ago in Canyonlands. RMLA member John Fant writes about the importance of mentoring to pass on our knowledge. And there is more....

This issue is jam packed. And there has been so much new information that in several cases we have just given you a glimpse and then the link to the full information on the RMLA website, www.RMLA.com.

Not to be left out? We invite any and all of you to write about a topic of interest to you. Send it to rmlaeditor@gmail.com. We will respond.

In addition to our regular advertisers and as promised, we have included the business card ads from all of you who advertised in the 2018 RMLA wall calendar. Let's all thank our advertisers by supporting what they do.

Ron and Kathy



Cover Photo: Jon Barba enjoying the National Western Stock Show.
 Photo by Sarah Barba

Letter from Your RMLA Board

Winter is behind us, once again, we hope. Perhaps you are now beginning to plan for fun activities with your llamas and alpacas in the next few months.

The event schedule is filling up with exciting events. We thank those who are returning to help organize their event. And perhaps a new event or two will show up. When you plan to attend an event, try your hand at volunteering. Sometimes the smallest job can mean so very much to making the event a real, special event for everyone.

And look at those amazing RMLA Youth in the centerfold again this year. These are our leaders of tomorrow. These are the people who will continue the love of llamas and alpacas into the future when most of us have hung up the lead ropes for the last time. Can you believe they manage their own reserves by having auctions? The Youth Committee, on its own, a couple years ago chose to raise their own dues to \$25 with the mandate that \$15 would go into their reserves for their awards. It is working very well for them. All the awards were purchased and the committee has a good bit saved for next year's awards. Amazing work.

Fairplay is ramping up. Check out the volunteer registration form on RMLA.com. The day in Fairplay this July 28th will be a fun day for all. Many people will get to know a llama for the first time. And this year we are keeping our fingers crossed for a little bit more sunshine.

The end of the membership year is March 31. As of about February 1 about one half of the members had renewed. We are thankful for your support as we take RMLA forward. Every member is appreciated.

Just to remind you, if you have a question or a concern regarding RMLA, please contact ANY board member. The Board is committed to a positive and productive relationship with all Members!

Thank you all and keep up the awesome 'work' with your llamas & alpacas.



RMLA's Job Listings

Journal Advertising Manager You can design this position however you want. Bottom line: get ads for the Journal. There are no quotas, no rules. Spend as much time as you want when you want to. Contact Kathy & Ron at rmlaeditor@gmail.com for more information.

Journal Advertising Coordinator Using an Excel spreadsheet, keep track of new ads, renewing ads, and forwarding payment to the RMLA treasurer. This position requires under 10 hours per each issue of the quarterly Journal. Contact Kathy & Ron at rmlaeditor@gmail.com.

Welcome!

NEW RMLA Members

RMLA IS ALWAYS GROWING

Sawyer Hannon (Youth) - Steamboat Springs, CO
Carlos Gonzalez - Westgate, IA

NOTE: Before youth members under the age of 18 are listed on the website, a signed release is required from a 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*

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

THE HOPE PASS AID STATION

A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE

By Kelvin Eldridge - Crooked Wood Outfitters

For over 30 years, the run up Hope Pass and the Aid Station have been upheld by customs and traditions passed down through generations. Inspirational, influential, and dedicated men and women have built a foundation unlike any other for the pack llama community to stand united and humbled. Travis and I had never fully grasped how deeply rooted the "Hopeless Crew" was until we heard the many stories of what occurred on Hope Pass. Many of these tales would choke you up and some would almost make you pee your pants in laughter, but whatever the story was you felt a connection and a sense of belonging.

As Travis and I pulled into base camp early Thursday morning we were warmly welcomed by Gary Carlton and Vicky Foster along with the rest of the volunteers. We looked around at the 20+ veteran llamas and all the equipment that was to go to the top and thought to ourselves - this is going to be great!

Travis and I got our saddles and gear prepped for the excursion and as we saddled our llamas there was not much discussion amongst us. We knew what saddle went to what llama as well as the load out. Even though this was routine to us, the mind was reflecting on the stories told and the images seen of Hope Pass and all that goes on up there. We were both trying to gather exactly what we were about to embark on and most of all..."How will we ever fulfill the tracks of the people and llamas before us?"

We strung our 7 llamas together and stepped off on a new chapter of our lives. Travis and I, still under the age of 30, felt this was a noble promotion not only for pack llamas but the encouragement to the "old timers" that this passion and desire of pack llamas will continue! We eagerly made our way up the trail while anticipating the dreaded train wreck with novice llamas in the string. We passed a few hikers on our way and every so often you would pass a volunteer or runner that was part of the Leadville Race Series.

The many thanks and smiles that radiated from these people made it clear to us the importance of this aid station and gave even more insight to what has been accomplished in the years prior. We made our way into the basin nearing the summit of the pass and the scenery was overwhelming. Gary welcomed Travis and me and congratulated us on making it to camp. A sense of accomplishment started to come over Travis and me. As we unsaddled and lined our llamas out we took a moment to take in the view.

The rest of that day and Friday was spent setting up camp and the aid station. Numerous tents go up for medical, cooking, warmth, water purification, and food/beverage serving. As this progressed the camp



started to grow with more volunteers and medical personnel. Once camp setup dwindled down, people began to share their backgrounds. There were all types of people from family members of runners, runners that had failed to complete the 100-mile trek, backpackers and some people just passing through that decided to stop when they saw the array of llamas and large camp. I began to take in that this aid station and the service these llamas provide is known worldwide. This aid station is the hope for these runners and the llamas fuel some of that fire within as they come through.

The sun was now setting and the fire was a place of comfort and the tales of prior years were told and a common bond, regardless of our purpose or reason for being there, was very present. I stepped away from the fire for a minute to stare at the lights of Leadville, 45 miles away, and one thing Gary mentioned stuck in my mind: "When I wake up to start preparing for the racers they have been running for two hours and when I go to bed around 11 they will still be running". The mental fortitude of these runners is unfathomable to some but as they came into the aid station it was apparent how much hope the llamas and the "Hopeless Crew" brings to these runners. Travis and I will continue to trek our llamas to Hope

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THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS

BY JOHN FANT, HOWLING MOON FARM

I am not a professional writer by any means, but I like to write. I am going to start a series of articles about what I have seen and learned in the upcoming issues about llamas. For many of you it has been years since you have been in my shoes. I am going to tell the good and bad, the victories and failures. So please just stay with our journey. Here is my introductory article, so enjoy!

You may not think mentoring is important, but to a newcomer into the llama industry, it is! My wife and I started a few years back talking about buying a llama to guard our hair sheep. We watch them go through the stockyard off and on. We never really were trying to learn anything about them. We just listened to what the owners who were selling the llamas would say. (We all know this—the quick-sale pitch!) At that time, that is all we knew about llamas. Oh yeah, that they spit! We actually watched the livestock handlers at a local auction get spit on!



Then in June 2014, I found out about a wonderful couple that were needing to get out of the llama industry or llama love (there is a difference) due to health reasons. I was shocked that they interviewed me and asked a lot of serious questions. I remembered doing the same thing when we were selling our wolf pups. Then I was asked the famous fifty-cent question “What

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The Hope Pass Aid Station, continued

Pass as we feel this was a rite of passage and will continue to promote the pack llama.

Nearing the age of 30 I didn't think I would have a role model, but if there was anyone I wanted to emulate it would be Gary and Vicky. These two individuals have dedicated years to RMLA events such as the Hope Pass Aid Station and the Fairplay Llama Race, where they have handed down more knowledge on llama packing than most people know what to do with. I know these two truly love and care for the pack llama and see to it that it carries on as much as Bobra Goldsmith did. We thank you, Gary and Vicky, again for this experience and are eager to see more involvement from the pack llama community adding to the tales of the Pass!



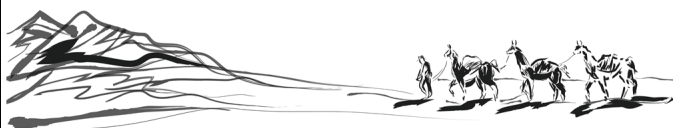
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PACK ANIMAL



Pack Animal Magazine is about the hiker's companion: the llamas, goats, and other pack animals that willingly haul our gear into the great outdoors. A quarterly print magazine full of color photographs, *Pack Animal* is for anyone who loves our wild spaces and our public lands.

Regular columns include:

Llama Packing.....Kristy Brown
Pack Llama Trail Association.....Lisa Wolf
Goat Packing.....Lawrence Robinson
Food for the Trail.....Sadie Squier
Navigation & Knots.....Phil Romig Jr
Poisonous Plants.....Shirley Weathers
Accessibility.....Topher Downham
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Hard News.....High Country News

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The Importance of Mentors, continued

were we going to do with them?” Originally, we were just going to use them as pets and guards. So, then Katy asked me which llama I wanted to have. Being as I just met the couple and had no clue about the llamas’ personalities, I made the decision to let her suggest which ones would work well for us.

I did not know at the time I was starting down a long road with all of this. I made the arrangements that night for the following Saturday to pick them up. I called my wife on the way home to let her know what I did. Shocked and happy at the same time, she forgave me for doing this without her permission first! That night after I got home, I started reading online about llamas. I wrote down my questions to ask the Murphy’s (Inca Llama – Boon-ville, Ark.). Two days later, I came across an article that talked a little about mentors.

So, being new I called the Murphy’s about this and asked what it meant to be a mentor in the llama world. They told me a short answer but would explain more when my wife and I picked up the llamas. The Murphy’s are a great help to us, and we still call for advice.

To shorten this article about all the knowledge that they had passed onto us, I would write questions down in my notebook to ask and then wrote the answers beside the questions. This was the best way for me to keep the questions fresh in my mind. I am up to four notebooks at this time.

The next mentor was a real surprise to me. I was at the Tulsa llama show, trying to learn some more about halter shows. There was a young lady leaning on the ring fence with a llama on a lead watching the show. I asked if she had a few minutes to explain some of the things the judges were looking for, etc. This young woman who is a published author of her own book (Inti, *The Very Helpful Llama*), answered my questions with a big smile. Honey Reese (now Fenn), has an astonishing amount of knowledge of current trends in the llama show world for such a young age. Also she has a very good breeding program that she

has great pride in and should be. We have spent many hours texting, etc., about llamas. So we have a separate notebook with her name on it of the various things she has taught us.

Then last but not least, a family of mentors that I am personally trying to be like. They opened our eyes to taking our llamas out in public. We have a great time

at farmers’ markets, parades, and schools. The family of mentors is the Halls of Simplicity Llamas. I realize it comes naturally to them, but they are the best ambassadors for llamas we have met. It was by accident we met. Phyllis and I were sitting and watching an obstacle course performance at NAILE (2014). Greg overheard us trying to figure it out. He gave us a crash course about performance classes and all that goes into it. That was worth the trip alone to us; to have someone explain and give us that knowledge and understanding for that type of show. We spent the rest of the day learning and watching Greg and Jessica (his daughter). Greg even gave us

the opportunity to harness his llama to the cart, plus, let Phyllis drive him around to get the experience of driving. The most important lesson Greg made sure that we understood is about the relationship between the public and the llama world. That lesson we have retained and practice often.

There have been several others who have given us advice over the last year, and we are thankful. The main idea of this article is just to remind us there are a lot of new possible owners that really need the help and knowledge that we have, so don’t be shy about being a mentor.

So next time someone asks if “do llamas really spit?” just look at it as an opportunity to educate that person to the world of the Wonderful Llama.

This article original appeared in the February 2016 issue of the Southern States Llama Association’s *Llama Journal* and also appeared in the March 2016 edition of the Pack Llama Trail Association’s newsletter.

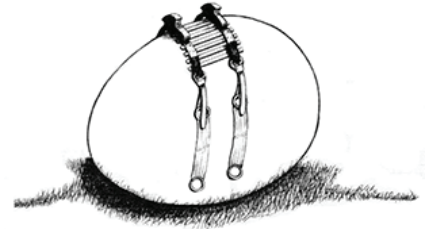


OLD WHAT'S-HIS-NAME

BY CHARLIE HACKBARTH, SOPRIS UNLIMITED

An excerpt from *Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining and Educational Guide to Using Llamas in the Backcountry* Reprinted with permission from the author

Sopris Unlimited



The extraordinary two-year-old was standing out in the field-or perhaps I should say, outstanding in the field. Tall for his age but well balanced, he was a physical specimen and when he moved it was with athletic grace. Dark brown eyes that sparkled with intelligence were set in a handsome masculine head. With pride I reflected that he was a genetic duplicate of his father, and an outstanding stud prospect. Yes, my son Andy was a joy to watch as he stood with arms outstretched feeding a handful of hay to newly delivered Llarry, our very first pack llama.

Five-year-old Llarry was a sharp contrast to Andy. Llarry grew up with horses and actually thought he was a horse. As a matter of fact, he even looked like a horse. His eyes protruded from sockets that were set in a large head that looked heavy and out of proportion atop his long neck. A long back (possibly his short legs just made his back look long) gave the impression of a weenie dog. Yes, that's it. Llarry looked like a woolly, long-necked horse with a weenie dog body. He was battle-scarred and had a fourth of one ear cropped off from tangling with some male llamas who still had their fighting teeth.

As it turned out, LARRY's looks were among his better attributes. I bought him, matched with a female, for use as a packer and a stud. Because I had to mortgage my house to buy the pair, I thought it prudent to have the vet check them out immediately after they were paid for and delivered. Only moments after the vet arrived, Llarry aged approximately seven years and developed a heart murmur. The heart murmur was possibly genetic, and Llarry had to be castrated.

The castration of Llarry was a huge loss for me and even more so for Llarry. However, I knew that we would both recover and that it was for the best. Llarry had packed in a commercial pack string the summer

before I bought him and it was comforting to know that the surgery, when healed, wouldn't affect his ability to pack. It was time to begin the process of learning about llamas. I am a quick learner (as you've probably already gathered) and Llarry turned out to be a very effective

teacher. This was typical of my luck-I would be taught by a pro who knew every trick in the book.

I had been told to build a small pen to catch my new llamas, so I did. However, trying to herd Llarry from an open field into a small catch pen was as fruitless as trying to push a logging chain into the pen. After reaching the gate, Llarry would turn and look at me as if to say, "Do you really think I'm that stupid?" Then he would wheel past me and travel the entire fifty yards to the far end of my spread, and we would begin the ritual again. A bribe of grain proved to be the solution, but Llarry would not enter the pen unless I left the grain and walked out. I would hide around the side of the barn until he started to eat, and then I'd rush to beat him to the gate. Of course I would have to feed him frequently in the pen without putting the rush on him so he could be assured that at least fifty percent of the time he would get the grain without being harassed. See how quickly I learn?

During the haltering process, Llarry would jerk his head away or try to outreach me. When he became bored with that game he allowed me to halter him and I began brushing. This was Llarry's cue to chest-ram me or swing his rear around to try to knock me off my feet. To counter this I anticipated the move and gave him a good strong "NO!" He would smile and wink at me, which was my hint to try something a little stronger. A well-timed knee to the chest earned me a measure of

continued on next page

respect. He would then stand, head forward and ears back, glaring at me out of the corner of his eye while I brushed.

It was time for my lesson in pack training. I stepped out of the house with the pack saddle just in time to see Llarry (who had been occupying his time throwing his head in the air and pacing the fence line) charge the fence in the direction of my neighbor, a cattle rancher, who was riding by on his horse. I was very impressed with Tom's ability to stay on his horse for as long as he did under those conditions. Tom must have been very impressed with my llamas also, because he offered to buy me out lock, stock, and barrel right on the spot. I refused the offer, and before long Tom's horse didn't pay any attention to Llarry.

The point of this digression is that the whole incident upset Llarry so much that he refused my offer of grain in the catch pen until I had completely hidden the pack saddle, which I found a little strange. In any case, with the saddle hidden I caught and haltered Llarry, tied him to the fence, and then brought the saddle out to put on his back. Either Llarry had forgotten everything he had learned about the commercial packing business or the saddle reminded him of something about the business that he didn't like, because he immediately removed the fence rail that I had just put the finishing touches on a few days before. After the dust settled, Llarry taught me how to train a llama to accept a pack. Then it was time to hit the trail.

At the trailhead, my family of four loaded up and began the trip to a lake about three miles in. It would take two trips because Llarry was our only pack llama (and by now I used this phrase loosely). The hike went really well for about two hundred feet. Then the trail narrowed and offered a steep drop off to the left, which presented Llarry with the opportunity to teach me how to trail-train a spoiled pack llama. The first few times he rammed me from behind, knocking me off the trail and over the embankment, I thought it was an accident. However, by the time we had reached the lake I was fairly certain that even with my luck, accidents couldn't possibly happen with that kind of regularity. My family stayed to set up the tent while Llarry and I went back to get the rest of the gear. On our return to the lake

I tied some extra rope to the end of the lead. When Llarry made his move I side-stepped, placed a foot on a pannier, and pushed him over the bank. The look on Llarry's face was worth a thousand words. The student had surpassed the master.



On only one other occasion did Llarry ram me, and that really

wasn't his fault. He hadn't taught me how to teach a llama to cross a stream without flying over it. But again, I'm a fast learner, and that only took one lesson.

Our next trip was a steady uphill hike of four miles with a three-thousand-foot rise in elevation. Llarry was carrying about eighty pounds in his panniers (the bags that hang on either side of the saddle and carry the gear); after a couple of miles he started to whine and then lay down in the trail. I pulled on the lead rope with all my might, which wasn't much because my legs were a little weak and I was still trying to catch



my breath from the steep hike. Llarry wouldn't budge. I dropped the lead and rushed toward him to scare him up. I got a heavy stick and tried to pry his back legs up. I goosed him, screamed at him, begged him, and even prayed that my wife Sandy would have the strength to carry that eighty-pound load out if Llarry refused to go any further. What was his problem?!

"Llamas aren't what they're cracked up to be," I thought. It was hot and I had worked up a sweat, so I sat down to take a drink of water. As I did, Llarry stood up. "These llamas are strange animals," I said to Sandy as we started back up the trail.

continued on next page

After a pleasant weekend we loaded up and headed back down the trail to the truck. Sandy was leading Llarly when I noticed that the pack saddle had worked forward on Llarly's back and was riding on his shoulders; it looked uncomfortable. Llarly's saddle didn't come with a breeching strap to help hold the load in place on steep descents. That could have been the problem, or maybe I just didn't get the load packed up right or the front cinch tight enough-these are things I couldn't expect Llarly to teach me. In any case, I hollered at Sandy to hold up for a minute, grabbed the back of the saddle, and gave a good, hard jerk to get the pack back in place. At that moment, two things happened. Sandy turned around to see what was going on, and Llarly spit his previous night's dinner salad. I tried to explain to Sandy that the chain of events was merely a coincidence and she should not blame Llarly, but she wasn't in the mood to listen. As she headed toward me with a large stick I pleaded with her not to strike at Llarly.

"Don't hit him," I said, "he doesn't know any better."

"You just don't get it, do you, Charlie?" Sandy said.

Now, you're probably wondering why anyone would buy a llama with so many things wrong with it. Keep in mind that this was in 1982. I'm a lot smarter now. And back then, there were less than two thousand male llamas in the United States to choose from, so I took what was offered.

As I look back, I realize that although Llarly had just about every bad habit a llama could possess, he was good for me. There was very little information on llamas available at the time, and even less on packing them. I didn't know of any commercial llama packers I could take a trip with and there were no pack clinics offered. Llarly was my educator and I couldn't have learned from a better source. I haven't run across a llama since that had so much to offer. And after all was said and done, Llarly wasn't all that bad of a packer. When the training was complete and he was in good physical shape, he went up the trail on a loose lead. Outside of walking on my heels and pacing on the picket line, he was usually more tolerable than my kids.



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Speaking of my kids, Llarly loved them. They could walk up to him in the field and he would stand right there and let them pet him. He let the kids ride him, and only dumped them on one occasion when a motorcycle came up behind him during a parade. My daughter Alexa was leading Llarly and Andy, her younger brother, was in the saddle. When Llarly bolted, Alexa was dragged across the pavement. She skinned herself up pretty badly before she let go of the lead and put Andy on automatic pilot. Andy rode like a Kentucky Derby jockey, but when Llarly took a sharp left on First Street, Andy took a sharp right and was tossed head-first onto Third Street. A scar on Alexa's knee is the only reminder of the experience for her, and although Andy is most always outstanding in his field, he does occasionally need a compass to find his way across town. And Llarly? Llarly died of old age. A local anthropologist had him at over twenty-five years old.

My family has enjoyed raising and packing with llamas over the years, and I'm not sure which I've enjoyed more, the raising or the packing. But one thing's for sure: I'll never forget old... old... I'll never forget my very first pack llama, old what's-his-name. 

JOIN THE EXCITEMENT IN FAIRPLAY

The RMLA-sponsored Fairplay Llama Event has a long history – in fact, more than 30 years of history. See Kelvin Eldridge's article on the next page. As is natural, the event has grown and evolved.

Our new co-chairs, Jeff Sandberg and Kelvin Eldridge, 'jumped out of the gate' in 2017 with an incredibly successful event. When it was all over, they said they had a blast and already had ideas in the works for the 2018 Event. For their energy and enthusiasm, RMLA is thankful!

The Fairplay Llama Event is held in conjunction with the Town of Fairplay's Burro Days. These two events happen annually on the last (full) weekend of July. The llama events are on Saturday; Burro Days are on Sunday. Go to www.burrodays.com for more information on the history of Burro Days and all of the wonderful activities.

This year the llama events will happen on Saturday, July 28th. So just what happens on race day?



Race day registration begins about 9:00 AM on Front Street and the races begin about 11:00 AM. You can pre-register by going to RMLA.com, click on the link on the main page. You can print the registration form or register online. If you don't see a Registration link, stop back later.

Three different races are run beginning at 11:00 AM and usually ending around 1:30 PM.

The first and oldest is the Pack Llama Race where all llamas must have saddle, panniers, and 30 pounds of gear. Beginning this year, only individual men and women with one llama will be allowed to participate, i.e. no teams. The object of this race is to make it through the 3-mile course to the finish line as quickly as possible. And trust us, this is competition at its finest!

The second race of the day is the Llama Rama. This event is sponsored by Rocky Mountain Rural Health (RMRH). This wacky race is completely run by RMRH. Each team of four participants, dressed in costumes with a medical theme, runs with a single llama. The main goal of this event is to generate awareness of the need for organ and tissue donation. Go to their website to sign up. http://www.RMRH.org/happenings/llama_rama.html.

- The third race is the Public Walk/Run along the three-mile course. Individuals or teams may participate in this event. This can be an enjoyable stroll with a llama just to get a feel for the wonderful world of llamas. Many llamas are needed for this part of the event.

The Llama Lunacy Course for the children is free and opens around noon. Each child who walks our gentle PR llama through the small obstacle course receives a ribbon and a coupon for an ice cream cone at the Silver Scoop Creamery.



**Questions,
contact Jeff Sandberg.
Likearock87@msn.com
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Kelvin.j.eldridge@gmail.com
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FAIRPLAY LLAMA EVENT – THEN AND NOW

By Kelvin Eldridge - Crooked Wood Llamas

Founded by Stan Ebel and Jim Hook 36 years ago, a race was established to set in place a pinnacle showcase for Ccara pack llamas. Years following, the race has been carried on by Wally White, Roger Miller and Gary Carlton as the Fairplay Llama Race. Their purpose: to ensure the legacy of the working llama. These men understood that the Ccara pack llama had its place: their endurance and sheer strength set them apart from other llamas.

These men also understood the Ccara pack llama industry is small and fragile, due to the lack of quality genetics that go into making an elite packer. So, they used the race as a stepping stone to show the community the advantages and magnitude of these animals to ensure a future.

Over the years I feel much of that has been lost and the perception of a Ccara pack llama has been misdirected and underestimated. These animals are titled the “Beast of Burden” for a reason. These llamas have been bred for thousands of years solely for their agility and stamina to pack heavy loads. Covering more than 15 miles in a go and at times carrying loads of 120+lbs, these animals are muscular and tall thus increasing stamina and stride length.

With this bit of history, we welcome you to Fairplay, CO on Saturday, July 28th for yet another fun filled race, crossing the finish line to complete 36 years! We will host 4 classes this year: men’s, women, team and walk. And do not forget the Llama Rama!! We cannot thank Sally Rucker enough for her tireless work to ensure llamas are present. And for children under 12, we will again have the Llama Lunacy obstacle course. Registration will be up at 9:00 with walk-up’s at 9:30. Race kicks off at 11:00 We look forward to meeting you all again and helping us to carry on this incredible tradition.

Thank you.



HERE WE GO AGAIN!

By Ron Baird

The last issue of the RMLA Journal contained an extremely timely article concerning the Bureau of Land Management's actions in Alaska banning the use of llamas as pack animals in the Fortymile District of Alaska. Someone, not necessarily wise, said "those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it". We have precisely that same situation developing now as it regards the Alaska action.

Back in ancient history, 1995 if my memory serves me rightly, the U.S. Department of Interior allowed the Superintendent of Canyonlands National Park to ban llamas. He had heard a CSU veterinarian professor say words to the effect "llamas carry John's disease". He ran home and immediately instituted the ban on llamas. What the vet probably said was something like "Llamas, like all three and four stomached ruminants are capable of getting John's disease". Capable is not the same thing as carrying, by a long shot.

For those who do not know what John's disease is, it is *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*, which is a contagious, chronic, and sometimes fatal infection primarily affecting the small intestine of ruminants. It is endemic worldwide. If you check the almighty source of all knowledge, Google, it describes it in cattle, sheep, goats, and experimentally in non-ruminant animals. Some official estimates are 68% to perhaps 100% of the U.S. dairy herd have at least one cow with the disease. It may be related to Crohn's disease in humans.

RMLA found out about the Canyonlands ban when, on a dark and snowy November night, a Salt Lake City newspaper reporter contacted me as chair of the RMLA research committee to get my reaction to the ban. Guess I was blown away by it and expressed that thought well enough to be quoted in the newspaper the next day.

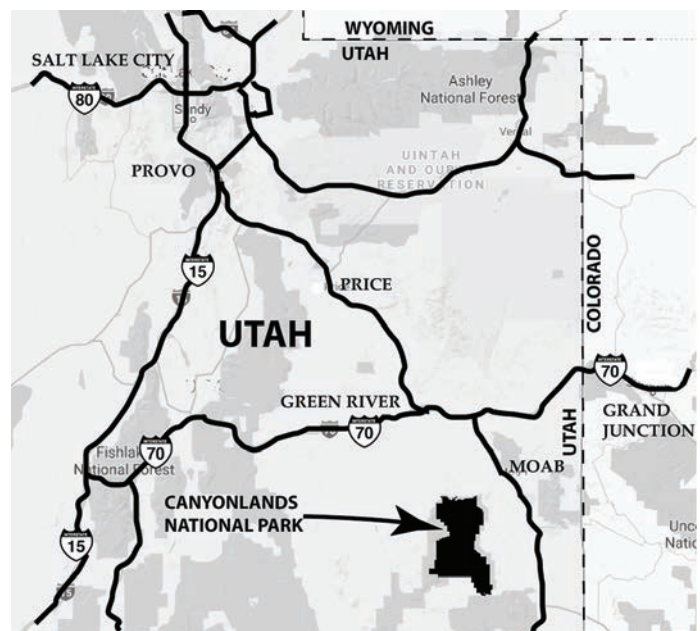
Quick phone calls determined nobody in RMLA knew anything about the ban nor John's disease. I got in touch with other members of the national Lama Medical Research Group (LRMG) and none were aware of the ban. In fact, I was told by the chair there was nothing to worry about because it would not affect the industry. Only when

I pointed out that other Parks might follow the ban (as did Zion NP, Saguaro NP, and within weeks ban proposals were being planned in Glacier NP, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Orange Cliffs Recreational unit BLM, and Kings Canyon NP) as could the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, then local fairgrounds and parade committees, did they suddenly become concerned.

To counter the federal action, a group of volunteers, including Scott Woodruff, Bob Riley, Stan Ebel, Lougene Baird and others filed a class action lawsuit against the Department of the Interior, et al. That suit was eventually settled by Interior lifting the ban.

In doing the research for this lawsuit, we discovered interesting facts pertinent to the current Alaskan situation.

- Many deer herds have John's disease, as do many Rocky Mountain sheep herds, and a herd of Roosevelt elk on a national reserve in northern California.



- Bison, antelope, goats, and literally any 3 or 4 chambered stomach ruminants, are susceptible to it.
- We discovered the USDA, at a South American research station, had succeeded in causing a llama to have

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Here We Go Again... continued

Johne's disease, by injecting perhaps 100,000,000 infected bacteria into one of its eyes.

Fast-forward to the present: Putting aside the "who said what" to cause this Alaskan ban, we need to acknowledge officialdom's ignorance is ruling the day. As I said in the beginning, but it bears repeating, those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it.

- It is doubtful the Alaskan authorities have tested their ruminant herds to determine if they are entirely Johne's disease free.
- It is doubtful they have done any serious investigation as to the remote possibility of the disease being transmittable in their area (the usual method of transmission is a baby animal ingesting the bacteria from its mother's milk or her fecal discharges).
- It is doubtful they have researched the many official sources such as USDA APHIS and discovered how very pervasive Johne's disease is all over the world.

As stated in the article by Susi Hulsmeyer-Sinay in the Winter Journal, we in the llama industry must inform and mobilize the national (nay, international, since Canada may become involved) public officials and others in the llama community. Accurate information dissemination about Johne's disease, the causes of it, and its widespread

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nature need to be recognized and used to the industry's advantage in reversing this action. Constant vigilance must be maintained in the future to prevent recurrences of the Alaskan situation.

Know the Facts

A group of llama owners have been working on a lengthy response to the U.S. Department of the Interior. They have compiled 'a book' of factual information related to the issue of llamas on public lands.

We encourage all members to share this information with others concerned about the misinformation that the public receives concerning llamas. It is important to the future of packing and hiking on public lands with our incredible animals that we all keep an eye on this situation and respond accordingly.

To read the information go to WWW.RMLA.COM/LLAMASONPUBLICLANDS.

If you have a question or concern, contact Beau Baty, WRTLBATY@GMAIL.COM

2017 Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award

By Ron Baird

Dick Williams, a RMLA Life Member, received the 2017 Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award at the National Western Stock Show Llama Show in January. The Leadership Award is given in Bobra's honor to llama industry members who exemplify her numerous educational contributions to us all. Bobra Goldsmith is well remembered as an early proponent and promotor of llamas. She was recognized as a leader in demonstrating how simple and easy llamas are to train – in the days when they were generally viewed as being unmanageable and untrainable. Her early videotapes of how to train llamas are still as pertinent today as they were decades ago when they were made. As a breeder, writer, educator, and ALSA Judge, Bobra spread the message of how valuable llamas were and are.

As did Bobra, Dick shares the same passion for the love of llamas and a desire to teach their beauty and easy-to-use natures to any person willing to listen. As did Bobra, Dick has done this quietly, without fanfare, and with the same dignity that these animals possess. Dick is an outstanding and extremely worthy recipient of the 2017 Bobra Goldsmith Leadership Award. We congratulate him on receiving this award and thank him for his long-time service to the llama community.

Dick has been an outstanding leader, his deep belief in RMLA and its mission of educating the public and owners about llamas, their uses, needs, and the joy of owning and working with them never wavering. While serving on the RMLA Board of Directors for ten years, Dick was always directed toward meeting the organization's mission – to educate. He did so upon every occasion as exemplified by the following examples.

He introduced his love of llamas to many folks in Montana and Wyoming at workshops, county fairs and other clinics. It is well known Dick's enthusiasm for hiking and camping with llamas inspired others to acquire and enjoy their llamas in the back country throughout the northwest.



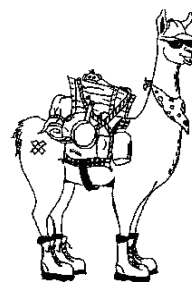
Dick wrote numerous articles on the joy of packing with llamas, not only as owner and editor of the Backcountry Llama magazine for many years, but for other publications including the RMLA Journal. Dick always has been a great supporter for the use of llamas as work animals for packing, guard, service, and companion animals.

Congratulations Dick!



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RMLA'S SHIN

2017 Youth Awards



Malachi Abel and Concrete, High Point Winner

My favorite event this year was Grand Nationals because that was the show where I did the best. I received a Reserve Grand Champion.

Christian Abel and Delilah, High Point Winner.

My favorite event this year was Grand Nationals because I learned a lot more training techniques that I was able to use to train more effectively.



Alex Leland

Thanks for a great year - again - in the youth program. My favorite event this past year had to be the Nebraska State Fair - since alpaca events are not a Colorado State Fair 4H event, it's nice to be able to compete with Absaroka Solstice, my alpaca, at the state level.

Kira Leland

My alpaca, Bluebird's Cooper, & I had a fun year. My favorite event was the Stars and Stripes show, in April, because I was able to meet up with many show friends that I had not seen for a while.



Garrett Pecka

My favorite activity this year was showing at Stars and Stripes show.

Mikayla Pecka

My favorite activity was Llama Camp and helping out the new kids.



Jessa Harms

My favorite activity this year was Llama Camp as it was my first time being involved with llamas.

Sam Harms

My favorite activity this year was learning about llamas at Llama Camp.



Logan Silman

My favorite activity is going to grandma Dorene's farm and helping with the llamas.

ING STARS!

Program Wraps Up



**Elliott Morgan, age 7,
High Point Winner**
My favorite event this past year was visiting the library with the llamas because we got to listen to the book Llama Llama Red Pajama and talk to the other kids about the llamas.

**Ethan Morgan, age 5
High Point Winner**
My favorite event this past year was the hike we led because it was fun hiking in the mountains.



Kale Morgan (Age 14)
My favorite event this past year was the hike we led with the hiking group in Colorado because it was fun to get out and hike and talk about llamas to the people on the hike.

Kyce Morgan (Age 14)
My favorite event this past year was the hike we led with the hiking group in Colorado because it was scenic and good exercise/training for my llama.



Kaitlyn Winters
My favorite event this past year was attending the NE State Fair. I was able to show my animals and be with friends and family.

Elyzabeth Winters
The best part of 2017 was spending time with my friends from different places that I only get to see at shows.



Whitney Winters
I love just spending time with my animals.

Candyce Kaup
My favorite activity this year was taking llamas to Wessels Living History Farm, because I got to teach and interact with a lot of new people.



Morgan Barba
My favorite event this past year was 2017 Estes Park Wool Market because I was able to hang out with fellow llama owners and help educate the public about llamas.

Camelid Antibodies in Science and Medicine

Dear Readers: you may need your 'thinking caps' on for this one. Dr. Callan explains the uniqueness of camelid antibodies and how they are being used in medical research.

Both old world and new world camelids produce a unique form of antibodies in addition to the more universal vertebrate antibodies. These unique antibodies have proven to be very useful tools in research, diagnostic development, and therapeutics.

Antibodies are proteins that circulate in the blood and tissues. To understand what is so special about camelid antibodies, we need to understand a little bit about antibody structure. One arm of the vertebrate immune system is humoral immunity and it is dependent upon B-lymphocytes that produce antibodies. Each B-lymphocyte produces a specific antibody that has the unique ability to recognize and bind to other molecules called antigens.

The specificity of binding for a particular antibody is determined by an area called the variable region and it is this variation or variability in the amino acids in this region that create the unique binding specificity. Antibodies can then bind to proteins or

other large molecules and interfere with their function. For example, antibodies can bind to surface proteins on bacteria or viruses and block their ability to bind and infect tissues or cells. They can bind to toxins and neutralize their toxic effect. They can bind to infected cells and result in antibody mediated cell cytotoxicity or antibody mediated complement fixation, both of which result in destruction of the infected cell and with it, hopefully the pathogen as well. So, antibodies are very important in preventing, controlling, and eliminating disease caused by infectious pathogens or toxins.

Up until 1989, all vertebrate antibodies were thought to have the same structural form consisting of two heavy chains and two light chains bound together to form a Y or T-like structure (Figure 1A). However, a unique form of antibodies that consist only of two heavy chains was first identified in Dromedary camels and then in other species of the Camelidae family including llamas and alpacas (Figure 1B).

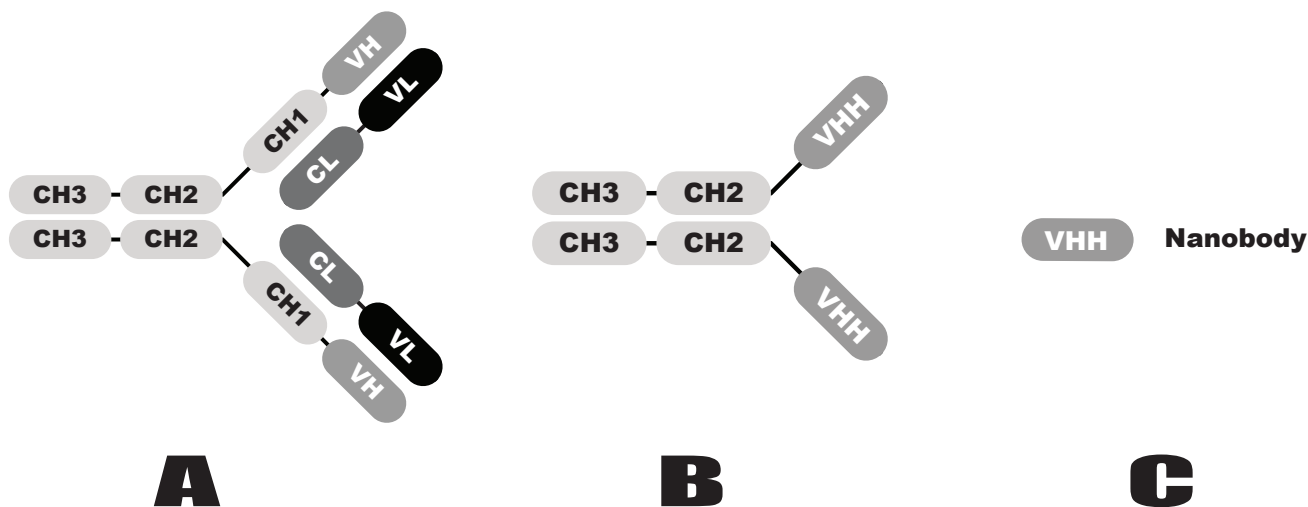


Figure 1. Structure of conventional Heavy and Light chain immunoglobulin compared with Heavy chain immunoglobulin. (A) A conventional antibody with two heavy chains and two light chains. (B) A camelid heavy chain antibody made of just two heavy chains. (C) A nanobody that is just the variable heavy chain domain of a heavy chain antibody.

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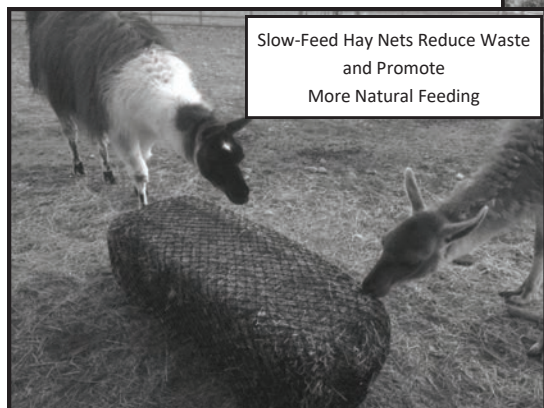
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About 25-45% of systemic antibodies in llamas and alpacas are the non-conventional heavy chain antibodies (Figure 1B). It is not really known why this type of antibody evolved in camelids. However, the antigen binding domains of heavy chain antibodies have special characteristics that make them particularly valuable for medicine and research. This binding area of a heavy chain antibody is labeled the VHH region. This smaller segment of the heavy chain antibody can be synthesized in the laboratory and in this form is called a nanobody (Figure 1C).

Nanobodies or VHH domains have several very special characteristics.

- High affinity for target molecule regions.
- Resist thermal and chemical denaturation.
- The antigen binding domain is much smaller than that of conventional antibodies and can recognize and bind to areas of proteins, such as concave regions, hinge regions, and catalytic sites

of enzymes, which are inaccessible to conventional antibodies.

- Can be expressed in bacteria like *E. coli* as well as in mammalian cells. Expression in bacteria is much easier and greatly aids the production of these molecules in the laboratory.
- They are generally nonimmunogenic in other mammalian species. Thus, when used as a treatment or medication, they are not rejected and destroyed by the immune system of the patient being treated.

There were numerous research papers in 2017 that utilized the special properties of nanobodies. One paper examined the ability of nanobodies produced against the hinge region of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) fusion protein (F protein).¹ RSV is a respiratory virus that infects humans as well as cattle. In adult humans, the virus typically produces mild disease similar to a cold. However, RSV can cause severe interstitial pneumonia in some infants infected with

continued on next page

the virus. Infant RSV can have a very high mortality and often requires hospitalization and intensive care. The fusion protein of RSV is part of the viral surface membrane and is essential for the viral lipid membrane to fuse with the host cell membrane, allowing the virus to enter and infect the cell. The fusion protein has a special hinge region that allows bending of the protein in the fusion process. However, conventional antibodies cannot fit into this hinge region and block the change in structure of the F protein. In this paper, heavy chain antibodies were produced by immunization of a llama followed by screening for specific antibodies that neutralized RSV.

These RSV neutralizing heavy chain antibodies were then used to identify and synthesize nanobodies that specifically bind to the hinge region of the F protein with very high affinity. When bound, they prevent the bending of the F protein during viral attachment to the host cell and thus prevent entry of RSV into the cell. Conventional antibodies are unable to bind to the hinge region due to the much larger size of the antibody binding region and thus are unable to prevent infection by this mechanism. RSV infection in mice was prevented when these nanobodies were administered intranasally prior to challenge.

This paper demonstrates the special properties of these very unique antibodies produced by llamas and alpacas. It is very likely that research, diagnostic, and medical applications of camelid-derived nanobodies will be developed further in the future.

Current areas of research of camelid nanobodies include:

- Influenza Virus
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus
- Rabies Virus
- Foot-and-mouth disease virus
- Rotavirus
- Human Immunodeficiency virus
- Hepatitis B Virus
- Protein misfolding diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and prion diseases.

Footnote

1) Rossey I, Gilman MS, Kabeche SC, Sedeyn K, Wrapp D, Kanekiyo M, Chen M, Mas V, Spitaels J, Melero JA, Graham BS, Schepens B, McLellan JS and Saelens X (2017). "Potent single-domain antibodies that arrest respiratory syncytial virus fusion protein in its prefusion state." *Nat Commun* 8:14158.



Christmas in Prescott, AZ

By Linda Hayes

Prescott Valley, AZ is the new home for Linda Hayes, formerly of Glenwood Springs, CO. She is settling in with her remaining llamas and her horse. She is active in the community and getting the llamas out in public. In December Linda entered them in the Prescott Christmas Parade.

The llamas were dressed to go along with this year's theme "Country Christmas". Although they did not win, their message was read several times to the thousands in attendance. This message informed parade-goers of the uses and benefits of llama ownership.

Barb Parquette of Glenwood Springs, CO helped lead the llamas. Karen and Bub Freund Chino Valley, AZ also joined in the fun with their llamas for a total of 7 camelids.



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How to Make an Automatic Milk Feeding Bucket

by Tawny Bott –
Abra-Cadabra Alpacas, Kiowa, CO

So you have a bottle baby. How many of us dread the thought? Whether from losing the dam, a mom that just won't accept her bundle of joy or one that doesn't have enough milk; it is perhaps one of the biggest challenges the camelid owner has to deal with. Not only does it take a lot of time and effort to get in all the feedings



needed to sustain life, but sleep is now a thing of the past. Zombies have nothing over an owner feeding an orphan cria. Yep, so many of us have been there.:



*Many of the photos used by this extensive article are best viewed in color, so the complete article has been recreated on RMLA.com. Go to **RMLA.COM - RESOURCES - HEALTH**. The link will be at the top of the table.*



STARTING THE YEAR OFF... 2018 NATIONAL WESTERN STOCK SHOW

Judy Glaser, Show Superintendent



As it has been for many years, we start the new year off with the llama show at the National Western Stock Show, which occurs during the opening weekend. According to the statistics from National Western, this weekend was one of the record breakers for attendance this year. Yes, the weather does play into that attendance and it was wonderful! The 'barns' were full of visitors getting to know llamas.

We had many new attendees and our loyal constant regulars. Thank you to all for your support!

New performance courses, designed by Michelle Chang, gave everyone some new challenges. Youth, novice, advanced and masters all met summer fun at Llama Glama Beach. Congratulations to Michelle for her hard work and undying enthusiasm for the love of performance!

Halter classes were small but still hanging in there. Stock Show is a premium pay out show, so even though classes are small, exhibitors still can get a return.



The Fleece show is also a constant, including walking fiber. I am working to get a premium for the walking fiber classes as well.

And, a crowd favorite is always an Afternoon with a Llama & Alpaca. For this event, the audience is invited to join owners and their animals in the show ring for a hands-on experience. Participants can lead the animal and ask questions.

Thanks to the RMLA Board of Directors and exhibitors for their sponsorships that helped support the Youth Performance buckles, sub junior awards, hospitality booth and the show in general.

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CUSTOM SUPPLEMENT BLENDED FOR YOUR RANCH?

BY RMLA MEMBER BOB RILEY, STILLWATER MINERALS

There is a certain logic to testing the grass in your pastures and hay that you buy from a known source and then format a supplemental feed for your precise situation. Then as the last step, have a custom mineral supplement to fill in any shortages. This has a certain scientific logic to it assuming you know exactly what each Lama (alpacas and llamas) requires. And to exactly tailor your supplement to each animal on your property you would need to consider the following factors: working male, pregnant female, cold or hot weather, quality of hay, stress from trailering or showing, quality of water, harvesting fiber, etc.

To further explore this idea, let's look back how the Lama-Min formula was formulated in the late 1980's. Up to this point no real research had been done with three exceptions. Colorado State University is surrounded by lama ranches and when a lama was having a problem, the owner turned to the local veterinarian who had

little formal training and relied on common sense gleaned from working with other species. Many times, the results were unsatisfactory and the owner would turn to the local university specializing in educating veterinarians.



Dr. LaRue Johnson, CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, took the lead and discovered that lama nutrition was the cause of some of these hard to diagnose conditions. Dr. Johnson took on the task of developing a simple but effective vitamin and mineral supplement. The school had a herd of lamas as did Dr. Johnson. Dr. Johnson did not work in a vacuum and most likely reached out to his friend, Dr. Murry Fowler at the University of California Davis. The final formula is best represented by Lama-Min 101.

continued on next page

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by Clare Hoffman, DVM and Ingrid Asmus for RMLA 176 pages with over 60 illustrations. A Health and Management Guide. A good reference for the experience breeder and excellent gift for the new owner.

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Working with Dr. Johnson and animal nutritionists and research at other veterinarian schools, further improvements were made. The first was the addition of electrolytes in Lama-Min 102 for heat and stress such as trailering and showing. Copper was later added to form Lama-Min 103 and the Lama-Min 104 with Biotin for fiber growth and a vitamin B complex similar to brewer's yeast for fiber quality. The 103 and 104 were used at CSU and with Dr. Johnson's animals and later released to llama ranchers after proving to be safe and effective.

Two other nutritional studies were being conducted about the time Dr. Johnson was researching his formula. The first was conducted in South America where llamas evolved to determine what they ate in their natural environment. As it turned out their finding was in line with Dr. Johnson's feed with its high levels of vitamins and minerals and low in protein. These findings correlated with Dr. Johnson's research.

The second study was conducted by a statistician who was frustrated by the lack of prior research. He was from California and I spoke with him personally. His approach was to over feed his llamas with vitamins and minerals. The bodies of llamas and people as well will throw off excessive vitamins and minerals in the urine. So he would catch the urine and analyze it to see what amounts of vitamins and minerals were being discarded. At this point it was all I could take not to laugh with the vision of

someone following a llama with a cup at the end of a stick to catch the urine. But regardless of the methods used, the results were very similar to Dr. Johnson's.

So we have three studies all with the same goal coming to the same statistical conclusion although the urine test was by far the most entertaining.

In the research we also learned not all llamas have exactly the same needs. We also know that feeding an abundance of vitamins and minerals and letting the animal's body regulate what is retained covers all the variables. (The same cannot be said of feeding too little.)

The one glaring exception is copper. Copper can be truly toxic for llamas at levels considered normal for other livestock. Rarely can you rely on your county agent to tell you if your soil has enough vitamins and minerals and, in many cases, veterinarians don't have the experience or education needed to make that determination.

Another exception that may need to be addressed is heavy metals in the water blocking the absorption of zinc. I have consulted from time to time with veterinarians all over the country dealing with loss of hair on nose and legs. We have had good luck in adding more chelated zinc to their supplement and the condition goes away.

In summary, you can do the extra work or you can choose to use a supplement that has been tested and used for 30 years with great success.

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Prince Charming Goes Packing

by Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay, Chair, RMLA Pack Committee – Yellowstone Llamas

Candido was destined for greatness. Everybody could see that. He was born on a spacious ranch under Montana's Big Sky, bordered by deep forests and majestic mountains and with hundreds of other llamas grazing happily on green pastures. Candido was a beautiful baby: pure white, pure Argentine, pure sweetness. As Candido grew up among his relatives and siblings, people came to visit from time to time and looked at him adoringly. One day, when he was three years old, he was led into a fancy trailer and off he went on a trip

Charming's charm did not produce babies! While Candido basked in the sunny days of his new life, storm clouds were brewing on the horizon. And before he knew it, he found himself back in the fancy trailer on his way across the country again with destination, you guessed it, Montana.



across the country. When he stepped out of the trailer, he found himself at another ranch, this one had no forests and mountains but here, too, he was looked upon adoringly. To his delight, the long-lashed eyes of his admirers belonged to llama ladies! Candido liked what he saw. He had arrived to stay. Or so he thought!

Candido soon turned into a Prince Charming at his new home. He was a sweet stud with a fancy haircut, easy to handle and easy with the llama ladies. His job was to make them happy. And happy they seemed to be. However, the proof, as they say, is in the pudding! Prince

Whether Candido was happy to see his first home again or not, he had no say in the matter. In fact, he was not welcome to stay there either. Before he could adjust and reconnect with the other llamas, he was loaded into a not so fancy trailer and when he stepped out this time, instead of charming llama ladies, he was greeted by a group of posturing geldings! What was the world coming to? How could he apply his main virtue, his charm, to these guys, who certainly did not look at him adoringly, despite his fancy haircut. Oy weh!

Well, unbeknownst to Candido, he had finally come home to stay. I certainly was charmed by his sweet character, his gentleness and his beautiful bunny face. Even his ridiculous haircut! When I was told that Candido needed a job, I was more than willing to give him one and introduced him to his new occupation of packing in the wilds of Yellowstone.

On his first trek, it was no big surprise that Candido applied his charm to the ladies, this time the human kind! He received more kisses and hugs than any llama I have ever known. And unlike any llama I have ever known, Candido loves to be hugged and kissed! Or maybe he endures it with a sort of patient tolerance. In any

continued on next page

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Prince Charming Goes Packing, continued

case, he receives all affection standing still, with a gleam in his eye and a smile on his cute face.

Candido is a sturdy Argentine who carries his load with steadfast dignity. He is not the fastest or most graceful, but he gets the job done. After the first trial trek, it was decided: Prince Charming goes packing.

Candido will enter his ninth packing season in Yellowstone National Park this year. He is a seasoned packer among his llama buddies who explore Yellowstone's backcountry with us each year. But not only that. Candido has shown a remarkable talent to relate to humans, especially women and kids. While the other llamas go about their business with efficiency and aloofness, Candido is the one you can lean on, he does not shy away from an arm that wraps around his neck, a hand that reaches out for support, be it physical or emotional. He knows and accepts that humans are insecure creatures who need him to encourage them on their adventure.

And so, Candido's role beyond carrying things has evolved into caring about things - such as the emotional state of the humans on the treks that he is a part of. On a cold morning a few summers ago after the first night in camp, I watched Candido's charm working on the withdrawn Chinese lady who had never hiked in the woods before, let alone camped in the wild, and who probably regretted her decision to join her husband on this adventure as soon as she stepped on the trail. She was afraid of the wilderness, of animals that might attack us, of the cold night under the stars. As I watched that morning, she stood close to Candido, her arms wrapped around his neck, both of them enjoying

the glorious sunrise together. Her face was as happy as can be! She was a changed person for the rest of the trek, excited about everything. And she could always be found close to her Prince Charming.



On another trek, Candido sat patiently in a meadow next to a shy girl serving as her model as she drew his picture. He never moved until she was done with her drawing. Then he got up and joined his buddies who had not wasted a moment to graze after being turned out to the pasture. Candido always walks free in camp. I know I can rely on him. He checks in on those who may need his presence, then strolls back to his comrades.

continued on next page

Every summer season starts off with a training trek. I take as many llamas as I can fit in the trailer, so they all get out on the trail, remembering how it all works, improving techniques, testing saddles, training the rookies. We humans look forward to our time lounging and singing by the campfire. An important question, of course, is: who to entrust to carry the guitar? No doubt, only one choice except carrying it ourselves: Candido! With his steady gait, broad back and understanding the honor

and importance of this task, Candido qualifies as the guitar bearer each time.

We all have strengths and weaknesses and the world has expectations of us. Sometimes we can fulfill them and sometimes not. But, I believe that we reach and fulfill our true purpose one way or another, sooner or later. Candido's weakness turned him in a different direction, towards his strength, and in addition to him joining the ranks of our packers, he is "Prince Charming" to many trek participants. In our operation, all llamas

are valued for who they are: tall, small, athletic, timid, Ccaras, rescues. I do believe the llamas feel respected and appreciated and our clients love it. A pack trip, to us, is much more than just packing, more than performing. It is the enjoyment that comes from the camaraderie, adventure and encouragement through and within the group, both human and llama. And - it is always nice to have a Prince Charming along!

Candido was born for greatness. Anybody could see that. Or did they?

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THE ARGENTINE TYPE LLAMA

by Paul Taylor, Taylor Llamas, MT

originally published in the early 1990's - *with a 2017 postscript*

During the past decade awareness of the existence of a different type of llama, different in several ways from the llamas known to breeders in North America, has been growing. I first saw this type of llama in the herd of a man named Jose Bedano in central Argentina in 1990. I was traveling with a group of friends by road across South America from Buenos Aires on the Atlantic to Santiago, Chile, on the Pacific. We stayed the first night in Rio Cuarto, Argentina, and spent the next day looking at the animals of the Bedano herd near there.

There were more than 100 animals, and included among them were several llamas that were stockier and had heavier bone than we had ever seen in the US. The single trait that we found most unique was what we called "bigfoot." We noticed that some animals had feet that were almost twice the size of the llamas we were used to seeing, and the feet were covered with bushy wool. Almost all the animals that had this characteristic were reddish in color and had very heavy bone and heavy wool coverage. This package of characteristics was so unusual and interesting that several of my friends went together to buy ten of these animals from Bedano in the hope that they could import them sometime in the future. That importation never happened because of the existence in Argentina of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). FMD is a serious disease of livestock that has not existed in the United States since the 1930s, and USDA has strict bans against importation of susceptible animals, including llamas, from FMD countries.

The introduction to this type of llama turned out to be very important in my own search for great llamas in South America in the years to come. At that time, more than thirteen years ago, their existence was just another interesting fact about llamas that would be filed away for future reference. When we asked Jose Bedano where these animals could be found he offered a vague response about uniform herds of this type in the North of Argentina, but it would be several more years before I could learn about their exact location.

Soon after that experience in Argentina, Sally and I launched the Temuco Project, with the goal of finding and importing the very best llamas available in Chile. Chile was free from FMD and Chilean llamas could be imported, although with some difficulty and considerable expense, directly to the US. During the first few years of that project we and our Chilean partners concentrated our search for great llama genetics in the far North of Chile, along the border with Bolivia. We were successful in this search, and imported a total of 50 or so great llamas that had a very positive impact on the US gene pool, but these were llamas of types that were relatively familiar to North American breeders.

Eventually, and largely because there were so many genetic defects seen in these llama herds in the far North of Chile, we organized an expedition to visit the herds in Chile's Second Region, about 300 miles to the south of the area we had been searching. Region II of Chile shares a border with Argentina, and here, near the border, we began to encounter some llamas with the same bigfoot syndrome I had seen years before in the herd of Jose Bedano in Argentina. There was more variation in these llamas, interesting color combinations and different wool types, but the heavy bone, heavy wool and big feet were there, and we asked the owners of these herds where this type of animal came from. They pointed eastward, toward Argentina.

Our Temuco Project shifted the search for

continued on next page



great llama genetics to the Second Region in Chile, to an area where small herds of unique and interesting llamas of this new type were hidden among the remote hills along the border with Argentina. We called this collection of small herds *Rebaño Escondido*, which means “hidden herd” in the Spanish language. All the llamas we imported to the US from this area had the registry identifier “*Rebaño Escondido*” in front of their given name or number. Eventually we began to refer to this package of characteristics as “Argentine-type” in our marketing back home. We are still very partial to the *Rebaño Escondido* animals, and we still have several of them in our small keeper herd today.

Our Chilean partners were not interested to pursue the search for this type of llama into Argentina, so Sally and I made contact with a group of Argentine businessmen who had collected a herd of about 300 llamas for fiber production. These people called themselves and their llama venture *Llamichos*, and they invited us to see the herd in person. Because these animals had been chosen only for fiber production, many were not very beautiful or interesting to us as breeding stock, but most of them were of the Argentine type. This was the first time we had seen a big group of these animals in one place, and we began to learn more about them and their origins.

The manager of the *Llamichos* herd, Guillermo Vila Melo, told us that almost all of these animals had come from Catamarca Province of Argentina. He had been involved in their selection and could take us to the herds of origin. He told us that there were no alpacas in Argentina, so the people of the highlands had bred this type of llama for centuries, primarily for fiber production (which explained their heavy

coverage with fast-growing fine wool) and for meat (which explained their size and stocky conformation). He said that the red color was

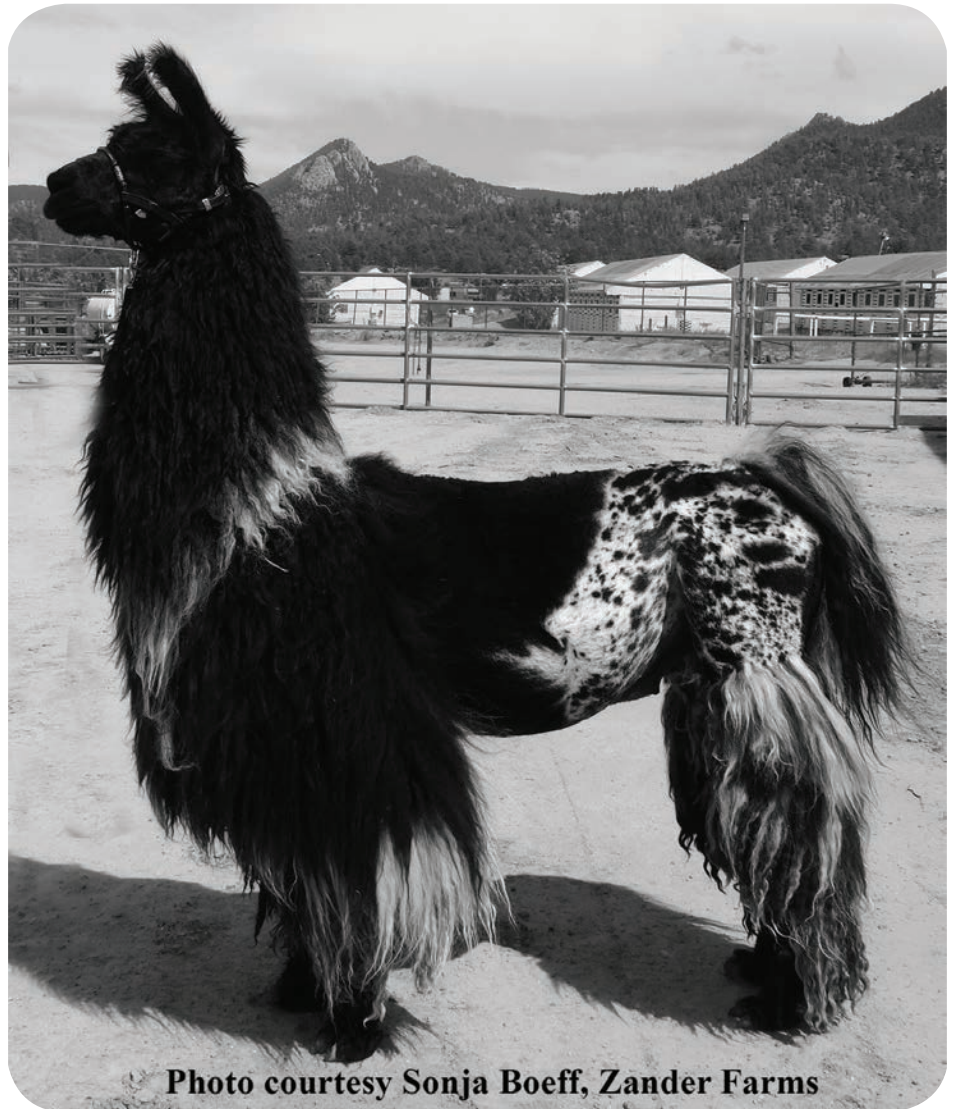


Photo courtesy Sonja Boeff, Zander Farms

dominant in this type of llama, but that there were also black, white and even a few blond and gray animals in this gene pool. Apparently the campesinos in Argentina had selected for solid colors in these llamas, just as alpaca breeders in Chile, Peru and Bolivia have for centuries selected and bred for solid colors. This is because the wool produced by solid color animals is more useful in spinning and weaving than multi-colored wool.

We began immediately to arrange an expedition to Catamarca Province. This trip was to be organized and guided by Vila Melo, and *Llamichos* would purchase up to 50 llamas selected by us. Beauty and presence would be

continued on next page

added to the list of selection criteria to target the US llama market.

We went to the remote areas of Catamarca and Salta Provinces on two different trips in the late '90s. Both times the vicuña research station at Laguna Blanca was our base of operations. We found thousands of animals of the type we wanted, and selected about 50 on each of the two visits. Overall, we looked at more than 100 llamas to find each one that met our very strict selection criteria. There were very few genetic defects in these herds, which indicated that good herd management and breeding practices had been exercised here for a long time.



Photo courtesy Sonja Boeff, Zander Farms

The llamas in the areas where the Argentine type animals were found sharing the range with vicuñas, and orphaned female vicuñas are sometimes incorporated into the local llama herds. It was not uncommon for us to see one or two obvious llama-vicuña hybrids in a large herd of llamas. This led us to the conclusion that a small percentage of vicuña genes are part of this package we call the Argentine type, which could account for the fine fiber and reddish color that is so dominant. Why vicuña influence would lead to big, robust and heavy-boned llamas is a complete mystery to me, but I believe it is so.

The full story of our last llama expedition in Argentina was printed in Llama Banner, Vol.11, No.6 under the name **“In Search of the Perfect Llama in Argentina”**. This story and related photos are posted on our website at: <http://taylorllamas.com/Stories.html>

In all of this long process we selected animals that were well-conformed and correct, with beauty and presence, but instead of choosing only solid colors we tried to get a balance of colors and patterns in this foundation stock.

After both of these expeditions to select llamas for Llamichos, the purchased animals were trucked back to the main Llamichos herd in the central Pampas of Argentina. We hoped to make an exportation from there to the ranch of our Chilean partners in Temuco, Chile. Because Argentina had been free from any new cases of FMD for more than five years, Chilean animal health authorities were receptive to this idea if we agreed to a 90-day pre-embarkation quarantine of the animals inside Argentina and transport of the animals by air from Buenos Aires to Santiago followed by a 60-day high-security quarantine in a special facility near Santiago.

In fact, we made two shipments of llamas from Argentina to Chile, the first legally sanctioned movement of camelids between these two countries in history. In all, about 50 Argentine llamas came to Chile. We were able to get permission from USDA to import the babies of these Argentine llamas to the US if they were born in Chile, and some of these were the first pure Argentine llamas ever to come to the US.

After a few more years we obtained special permission from USDA to import the remaining adult Argentines from Chile to the US, those who had been born in Argentina. We held an online auction sale from the ranch in Temuco, which resulted in approximately 35 pure Argentine llamas being sold to about 20 US breeders in every part of the country.

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Barn Tips From The 2017 (GALA) Conference

By Carol Millard - From February, 2018 Gala Newsletter

These tips are the outcome of a discussion at the 2017 GALA Conference and a compilation of many member ideas. These are not endorsements from GALA but our member suggestions to consider.

Electrical:

- Run extension cords through PVC pipes to protect them.
- Replace lighting with LED fluorescent strips or bulbs. Economical and BRIGHT.

Animal care:

- Pet Dremels work well on toenails
- Cowboy Magic and Miracle Groom are great for grooming the llamas.
- Use a small drag-along magnet on a pole for picking up nails and metal pieces around the barn/pasture. This is a great idea especially around an old barn or right after a new roof. Also works well for those staples that fling away as you are putting up fencing.

Stall mats:

- Use crusher run gravel under the mats to allow moisture to sink through. Urine gets between the cracks of rubber stall mats. Crusher run is a semi-crushed gravel mix with gravel pieces sized less than 2 inches combined with gravel screenings. Not sure this works for under rubber mats that are laid on wood or concrete but does for dirt.
- Use a C-clamp on mats to help move or carry. Best implement for cutting stall mats is a heavy duty angled utility knife and 2x4 blocks. Check out YouTube videos of how to do it.
- There are many different pine shavings and pellets which can be used for bedding. A couple that were recommended to check out are EZ Equine wood pellet bedding and Mini Flake bedding that comes in different forms (also good for chickens)



Heated buckets:

Make sure heated buckets are rated in some way UL or CAS rated:

- UL: Underwriters Laboratories: Underwriters Laboratories® Inc. (UL) is an independent product safety certification organization that develops standards and test procedures for products, materials, components, assemblies, tools and equipment, chiefly dealing with product safety. UL

does not “approve” products. Rather it evaluates products, components, materials and systems for compliance to specific requirements, and permits acceptable products to carry a UL certification mark, as long as they remain compliant with the standards.

- CSA: Canadian Standards Association: CSA International (Canadian Standards Association) is a provider of product testing and certification services for electrical, mechanical, plumbing, gas and a variety of other products. Recognized in the U.S., Canada and around the world, CSA's marks appear on billions of products worldwide. CSA International certification marks indicate that a product, process or service has been tested to a Canadian or U.S. standard and it meets the requirements of an applicable CSA standard or another recognized document used as a basis for certification.

Barn hose:

- Zero-G is a soft, light but strong hose that is easy to manage even in cold. Found in most hardware or discount stores.

Makeshift halter/lead:

- Keep baling twine from hay bales near your fields/paddocks for easy catches. Can serve as a makeshift halter and lead in a pinch.

Feeding older animals:

- Many older animals have teeth or digestive issues. Some things to add to their feeding regime could be beet pulp, hay extender or a senior mix.

Blowers:

check out other brands however careful to note the power. Some are very strong.

- Replacement hose: Get long enough ones so the motor is far enough away to reduce noise
- Replacement switch/cord: Use a good extension cord

Water bucket cleanliness:

- Keep buckets covered during gypsy moth outbreaks. The droppings spoil water quickly.

Always a good idea:

- Leave a map of your property and what animals are supposed to be located just in case they get out and a friendly neighbor assists.
- Leave a picture book or poster with photos of animals.

continued on next page

Additional from The Journal editors:

When the temps are cold and it is damp and perhaps you have a llama or alpaca shivering, here are some ideas.

- Of course, the old standby: a coat. But, until we acquired an 'official' llama coat, we used one of the mesh show coats. They are incredible wind breakers which is sometimes all you need. And, you can take a wool blanket and stitch it to the mesh coat in 5 or 6 spots and voila you have an even warmer coat.



- Heat lamps, the kind used in chicken coops with a big clamp on one end. Our old guy, just backs himself up under the heat lamp and cushes for the night. The heat lamp helps to knock out the dampness in the air and the ground. Hang it high enough so as not to touch the animal when it is standing.



The Argentine Type Llama... continued

Shortly after we got the Llamichos llamas out of Argentina, that country suffered a serious outbreak of FMD, and all further exports to Chile were blocked. The process for USDA to declare a country free from FMD takes at least 5 years, and usually longer, so we don't expect any direct pathway for importation of llamas directly from Argentina to the US for at least several more years.

Now we are beginning to see the babies from crosses of the Argentine type llamas with other types in the US. The results are very impressive. These crosses have never been done before, except in the zone along the northern section of the border between Chile and Argentina. US breeders who have Argentines are very enthusiastic about these animals and about

the half-Argentine babies they are producing. The pure Argentine and half-Argentine llamas are getting a reputation in the US for mellow dispositions and high intelligence, in addition to their heavy bone and fine fiber production.

Here, at our ranch in Bozeman we have kept ten pure Argentine llamas, seven females and 3 males, to use in our embryo transfer program. By transferring early embryos from pure Argentine females (bred to pure Argentine males) to ordinary or even genetically defective recipient females, we are able to get at least three or four pure Argentine babies per year from each donor female. This is still a pitifully small number of pure Argentine llamas added to the US gene pool each year, but we are confident that their influence will be important in the decades to come.

POST-SCRIPT by the Taylors (November, 2017)

In re-reading this article, we found it to be quite accurate, but our take on the role of Argentine llama genes in North America requires this additional comment.

We always intended for the limited number of pure Argentine llamas we were able to bring into the genepool in the US and Canada to be genetic ingredients in long and serious breeding programs here in the North. These animals are productive outcrosses with virtually any of the llama types that were here when they arrived. We know the temptation to produce "pure" Argentine offspring here in the US, because we went that direction during the years when we used embryo transfer to amplify the production of the few Argentine llamas we retained in our main herd.

Toward the end of our llama-breeding career, we began using this unique ingredient and our seemingly unique use of embryo transfer to attempt interesting crosses with radically different high-quality genetics in this country. Our results from this time reinforce the exotic possibilities remaining in llama breeding. We still have a small herd of some of the most beautiful and exotic females we produced toward the end, but we no longer have a male and we haven't seen a baby llama for at least 6 years. We keep these last few animals as a pleasant reminder of our long adventure in llama breeding.



REMEMBER TO TAKE THAT STEP

By Marty McGee Bennet -- CameliDynamics

One of the basic tenants of my teaching is to 'help an animal find his balance'. I have been taking a variety of new aerobics classes as part of the Mayor's Fitness Challenge and am keenly aware of balance and form. Actually, I have been marveling at how I can be so balanced in one aspect of my life and struggle so mightily in another...

You would think balance is balance! NOT! However, it is true that keeping your balance IS what it is all about. You cannot adequately help an animal with his balance unless you are secure in your own. Especially when working with difficult animals the moments when you are not in balance are the moments when your animal will choose to move, jump, or change direction. This is not a coincidence. When you are not in balance you either lose the light connection that you have with your animal or you end up using the animal to keep your own balance. In both of these cases you provide or provoke an animal that is intent on avoidance or escape the opportunity and motivation to do one or the other. A lack of balance is usually a contributory factor to any difficulty in handling and remembering to take a step at the right moment in a training or handling process is a sure way to success.

The easiest and best way to stay in balance is to keep your weight over your feet. This means that when you reach out with your hand, take a step with the foot on that side of your body. In other words: reach out with the right hand, take a step forward with the right foot, reach out with your left hand take a step forward with your left foot.

Here is a partial list of tasks that require that you take that step! I am sure you can think of more once you start looking at your balance with more intent.

- Getting ready to put the nose band over the nose. It is common for a handler to forget to move forward to actually put the nose band on the nose. Staying behind the eye is useful for many tasks but to put the nose band up in front of the nose and remain in balance as you put it on requires that you step forward to the front of the animal. Not moving forward means that you will likely put some amount of pressure on the animal with your RIGHT hand causing the animal to pull to the right and away from you. Many handlers assume this is because the animal is resistant to the halter when

in fact it is a reaction to the pressure applied with the right hand.



- Putting the crown piece over the neck. Once you have the nose band on and you put the crown piece under the jaw and over the back of the neck with the left hand remember to take that crucial step forward with your left foot. Again, if you don't take the step, the tendency is to use the animal's neck for balance by either leaning on the neck with your right hand or pushing down on the head with the left. Taking that step will help you avoid this common tendency.
- Catching an animal with the wand and rope. To use the wand and rope for catching, remember as you reach out with the wand (usually with your right hand), step forward with the right foot. This will help you get the wand far enough past the neck that you don't hook an ear or move erratically as you try to keep your balance.
- Teaching an animal to lead. When teaching an animal to lead remember that when the animal takes a step forward you must take a step back not only to keep a safe distance between you (from your animal's point of view) but also to keep yourself in balance.

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www.Camelidynamics.com



Marilyn, You, Kathy, Ron

Postscript from the Journal Volunteers

People do not decide to become extraordinary. They decide to accomplish extraordinary things. Sir Edmund Hillary.



Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association
5704 Canyon Trail
Elizabeth, CO 80107-7814



EVENTS CALENDAR^{BY MARY WICKMAN,} EVENTS CHAIR

For more details and live links, go to www.RMLA.com, select Events and hover on the boxes.

- **May 5, 2018, Stars N Stripes Llama & Alpaca Show**, York, NE. Contact Geri Rutledge, buckshollow@wildblue.net or 402-366-9304. ALSA sanctioned show, halter & performance.
- **May 19, 2018 Grand Mesa & Kokopelli Classics**, Grand Junction, CO. Llama, alpaca and fleece shows. A returning fun RMLA event for everyone. Contact Cheryl Juntilla, 970-640-8028 or cajwdj@aol.com.
- **June 22 and 23, 2018, Camelidkids Llama & Alpaca Camp**, Waco, NE. Llama Camp for all ages. Learn safety, handling, training and ways to use the fiber. Contact Geri Rutledge, buckshollow@wildblue.net or 402-366-9304.
- **July 28, 2018, Fairplay Llama Event**, Fairplay, CO. Fun for everyone! Llama walk/races, Llama pack races, obstacle course for kids. Contact Kelvin Eldridge 720.556.6197 or kelvin.j.eldridge@gmail.com Or Jeff Sandberg, co-chair, 303.829.8144 or likearock87@msn.com.
- **September 22 & 23, Higher Ground Fair Llama and Alpaca Performance and Fleece Shows**. Albany County Fairgrounds, Laramie, WY, Llama & Alpaca Performance and Fleece Shows, Llama & Alpaca Demonstrations - Contact Gayle Woodsum gayle@highergroundfair.org or 307-399-3815 www.HigherGroundFair.org

Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars for 2018. Applications for review and approval have not been submitted yet, but the organizers & superintendents have indicated they will again organize the events and have provided the dates. More information will be provided as it is received.

- **June 9 & 10, 2018, Estes Park Wool Market, Estes Park, CO**
- **July 7 & 8 Because of the Economy Black & Blue Show**. Florissant, CO, Performance and Youth Judging & Halter

Do you have an event you are planning for 2018 but don't have all the 'paper work' completed? Send us the dates, name of the event, and location. We will add it to the list.