

The Journal of RMLA



In This Edition

Exciting Changes Coming in 2020 to the RMLA	Small Town Fun	19
Youth Recognition Program.....	Keeping the Frustration Level LOW.....	20
2	The Winding Road to a Higher Ground.....	22
Editors' Corner	RMLA Annual Meeting	24
4	THE GEAR, Part 1.....	25
Building a Packing Community	From Veterinarian to Woodworker.....	28
6	We Get Letters.....	31
Betsy Bell's Llama Legacy	Cover Photo	4
8	Advertisers' Index.....	26
Ask The CSU Vet.....	Journal Advertising Rates,	
12	Specifications and Deadlines	4
Establishing Effective Antifungal Medication Dosing		
in Alpacas		
16		
Website Help Needed.....		
16		
From the Minds and Fleece of Alpacas.....		
17		
PacaBuddies - 9/ 7 & 8, 2019		
18		

Exciting Changes Coming in 2020 to the New RMLA Youth Recognition Program

By Jon Barba, Board Liaison, and
Morgan Barba, Chair, Youth Committee

As 2019 comes to a close, the RMLA Youth Committee wanted to take a moment to update the membership on some inspiring changes coming to the RMLA Youth Program in 2020. The changes are based on the feedback we have received from youth members and our observations of the fantastic work and effort put forth by our youth membership.

For many years RMLA has invested in its youth members through the Youth Awards Program (YAP) to recognize youth members for their accomplishments. Under the current YAP, awards are received by two youth members in each age group who had achieved the highest overall point totals. Winners of these awards were based on the criteria provided in the YAP. These youth members were awarded the High Point or Reserve High Point Awards, respectively. In addition to the age-specific awards, the youth member who achieved the highest number of points regardless of the age group are awarded the Overall High Point Award.

Over the past several years, there has been a steady decline in youth members. There has also been a decline in youth members participating in the YAP. When asked about the current YAP, the feedback received by the Youth Committee was reasonably consistent. In short, the YAP has become more about the competition and less about encouraging youth involvement within the hobby and the organization. With this in mind, the Youth Committee is working on rebranding the YAP as the Youth Recognition Program with a renewed emphasis on involvement as opposed to competition. Any youth member who chooses to participate in the Youth Recognition Program will be eligible to receive the items awarded.

Ultimately, the goal of the Youth Recognition Program is to encourage more youth members to join and become more involved within the Association. The purpose of RMLA is to provide educational opportunities so members can enrich themselves and others; the Youth Committee exists to support the RMLA mission and vision. The Youth Committee also recognizes today's youth members are tomorrow's leaders. It is the youth members who will grow our hobby and run the organization. The current Awards Program was developed to encompass several categories, and youth members were awarded points for completing and self-reporting these activities through the RMLA website portal.

The Youth Recognition Program will focus on three areas; participation in RMLA Events, Community Outreach, and Education.

While many people genuinely enjoy competition, this should manifest itself in the show arena at RMLA sanctioned events. The purposes of showing llamas, alpacas or any other livestock project are not only to expose youth to the industry but also to develop essential life skills. When a youth participant has to care for their animals, they are going to be more accountable and engaged. They will also have a better understanding of life than a young person who has not had similar experiences. The purposes of organizations like the RMLA, 4-H, and FFA are to develop leadership, life skills, and citizenship for its membership. Showing, competition, and winning/losing are essential life lessons that can and should be learned through participation in this hobby. Leading

continued on page 7



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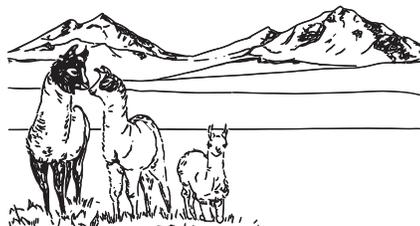
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Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates and Specifications

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" x 2"	\$15	\$18
1/4 Page Horiz.	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.
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- **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.
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EDITORS' CORNER

Back in late October when I began thinking about content for the Winter Journal, I had some concerns that we would not have enough content for a 32-page issue. Then the content and photos began to arrive; now we are 'overflowing'. I like overflowing.

A couple of articles have been saved for the Spring 2020 issue. And, the article about Therapy Llamas that appeared in the New York Times in November, has been placed on our website. It is excellent so please take a read. Look for it under the Education and Outreach tab.

In this issue we have some nice 'diversions' from the norm. An article on the life of Betsy Bell is on page 8. A fascinating woman. And Dr. Callan has combined his skills in woodworking with his skills as a vet. Surprise, surprise, your vet does have a life outside the office; see page 28 for a great story and photos.

Page 2 explains the beginning of a revised and new RMLA Youth Recognition Program. The Board and Youth Committee have come up with some great ideas for increased youth participation in all of RMLA! The RMLA Website needs your help and expertise. Be sure to read the article on page 16 and consider how you can help this Website committee. Maybe you even know someone outside of RMLA who can guide us into the future?

As always, it is a pleasure to bring you this issue.

Kathy & Ron



Cover Photo:

Cute photo from The Higher Ground Fair. For the story and more photos, see page 22. Photo courtesy Liz Young.

Letter from Your RMLA Board



As another year comes to an end, we in RMLA celebrate what RMLA has brought to us all. We are so thankful for all of the friends and family within RMLA.

All this could not have taken place without the hours and days of volunteer time on the part of our members. We are all grateful for those who roll up their sleeves and work together to educate the public about llamas.

We have learned that both 4H and FFA are promoting the use of llama fiber. This brings on another generation of people who will use and enjoy working with fiber. We continue to see camelid images on t-shirts, back packs, bumper stickers, coffee cups, etc. The public is excited about anything llama. With this we have seen a growth in the number of first-time camelid owners. We have another generation to educate about the care of these creatures. If you learn of a family new to llamas, please invite them to join RMLA so they have access to the website, eblasts for the latest information, and the RMLA Journal. Be sure to point out the RMLA publications, a 4H Manual and Caring for Llamas & Alpacas, so they can learn more about the care of their animals.

Volunteers are most important to the success of our organization. And this brings us to an important request. We are asking for one or two of you to step up, individually or as a team, to chair as lead volunteer for the Fairplay Llama & Alpaca Event on Saturday, July 25, 2020. We have volunteers who have stepped up again to fill key positions such as Llama Lunacy and on-line registration. And others are coming forth to help. But, without an overall leader it will be very difficult to continue this RMLA Event.

The Fairplay event draws thousands of visitors to Fairplay. Llamas and Alpacas are everywhere. By volunteering and bringing your animals you have the opportunity to introduce your farm to visitors, and tell people about llamas. If you really want to see what goes on at Fairplay please refer to the fall Journal and read the four-page layout which shows the schedule of the day. This event is huge and growing every year.

We have said this many times in the past. But, just in case you missed it we will remind all of you. The proceeds from Fairplay Llama & Alpaca Event pay for the RMLA insurance. The Liability insurance is FREE for all RMLA events to use.

By serving as Chair of Fairplay you will help all RMLA events continue to have the required liability insurance. Please step up. Call any BOD member and accept this awesome and responsible position.

Warmest regards to your family, friends and the llamas and alpacas. Have a kind and loving 2020.

Lougene, Jon, Geri, Ron and Linda.

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FAIRPLAY 2019

Another Successful Event

From the Fairplay Llama & Alpaca Event Committee

From the Fairplay Llama & Alpaca Event Committee

High were ash, trail designer, Tony Deafield, created a well-thought out trail for all participants that we had participants from 10 different states including California and Oregon on the West and all points in between.

A special Thank You to Mary Wickham, Llama Lunacy coordinator. This year she graciously took the time for the Lunacy event. Once the Mary Alpaca was back and ready to be shown for the Lunacy event, she graciously took the time for the Lunacy event.

Pack Race Winners

Women's Division

- Berna Shindler and Jerry
- Annie Kowal and Betty
- Dorothy Johnson and Boyd

Men's Division

- Jared Cooper and Jack Daniels
- Shay McMillan and Andrew
- Clayton Talbot

The Cheney Trophy

The Cheney Trophy is awarded to the first non-registered team to cross the finish line. This year's winner was Jared Cooper with Jack Daniels.

The Cheney Trophy is named after the man who conceived the race. He had a pack of llamas and alpacas that he named the Cheney. He was the first to bring llamas and alpacas to the fair. He was the first to bring llamas and alpacas to the fair.

FAIRPLAY 2019

Llama Lunacy

By Mary Wickham

Llama Lunacy was a success, the kids started lining up prior to the start of the event. One young lady was excited to be in the course, she came early and stayed for the rest of the event. The year was great to see my daughter (Fred Hugger) laughing in Taylor's (Hugger) llama (Dorothy and Fred Hugger). I started working with them in the past and they had a great time. We did not have time to show them, but we did get into our. They had not been away from home for a long time, but they did great.

I received an email from Jessica Storm a couple of weeks prior to the event asking if I could help with the Lunacy event. I was happy to help and I was able to help with the Lunacy event. I was able to help with the Lunacy event. I was able to help with the Lunacy event.

Thank you to all who helped with the Lunacy event. I was able to help with the Lunacy event. I was able to help with the Lunacy event. I was able to help with the Lunacy event.

On-Site Vet

The Cheney Trophy is awarded to the first non-registered team to cross the finish line. This year's winner was Jared Cooper with Jack Daniels.

The Cheney Trophy is named after the man who conceived the race. He had a pack of llamas and alpacas that he named the Cheney. He was the first to bring llamas and alpacas to the fair. He was the first to bring llamas and alpacas to the fair.

FAIRPLAY 2019

The Wedding Party

Photos courtesy of Rich and Charlene

Rich and Charlene have been participating in the Fairplay Llama & Alpaca Event for the last 5 years. This year was something special. They contacted RMLA very early in 2019 to ask what they needed to do to guarantee the availability of 2 llamas for a very special wedding experience.

They were married in Breckenridge on July 27th. On July 27th, the wedding party and their guests, about 30, made their way to Fairplay for the Public Sale. Many thanks to Jessica Storm, RMLA member, for providing two wonderful llamas, Opsy and Rolo.

From Rich, Charlene: Thanks for this awesome experience. We wish Rich and Charlene many more happy memories and of course love to Fairplay.

Rich and Charlene

Bride and Groom with their children (6 llamas)

FAIRPLAY 2019

OVERWHELMED!

Being over the world of these amazing animals, we decided to visit for an event. We attended and participated in the Llama and Alpaca Event in Fairplay, CO. We had an idea what to expect. We fully expected to just follow the signs and figure it out the way. That was the first part of our experience. We didn't see signs directing us to the action, we looked for a crowd and got instructions there.

As soon as we stepped off the trailer - a young woman emerged from the crowd and asked if the seal her family could borrow. After meeting the truck and trailer and talking away, we found that in the way it is that. Apply and find their center that we can help them.

We had a really good time, met lots of people, loaded up and went home tired and happy.

Sharing Our Llamas

It started with an email. Another llama friend suggested that I might be able to bring llamas to Fairplay. Two years ago, my sister and I did the walk with our llamas and had a great time.

This year when I got the email, we decided to go ahead and bring our llamas for the public to walk with. We've never had public visits with our llamas every year and the last couple of years, it seems interest and curiosity in llamas has grown.

The fact we could walk with the llamas during the event made us feel more confident to loan out our llamas, and if any more events, we would be more than happy to help out. The group had a great time with the llamas. We answered lots of questions and many llamas and alpacas were taken.

Building a Packing Community

By Alexa Metrick, - Pack Animal Magazine

When I was a kid, we'd kick off every packing season with a Pack Festival. All the llama packers from miles around would gather for a weekend in the mountains and we would share knowledge, make memories, and build community.

With so many of the old guard retiring and so many new people getting into packing, it's high time to re-instate the community-building get-togethers. This time, though, it would be great if we could include all sorts of pack animals (llamas, alpacas, goats, burros, camels, yaks, etc.) and all sorts of packers (recreational packers, commercial outfitters, guides, leasers, people who take guided trips, neophytes, experienced packers, etc.) in the gatherings.

We have been offered the use of some land up in Conifer, Colorado for a weekend this summer and I'm testing the water to see what everyone's level of interest and availability is. I've had a number of detailed conversations with various people and have heard suggestions such as building a non-profit coalition and having a series of events modeled after college courses (for example, the 100-level course could show examples of the different pack animals (llamas, goats, yaks, burros, etc.) and stations where people could learn about how these animals can help them get into the backcountry. The next day could have 200-level skills (staking animals out, trail-training them, care and feeding, etc.)

For both of these days, we could ask leaders in the industry who represent all the different groups (outfitters, leasers, recreational packers, etc.) to host different stations (training a llama to jump into a pickup, picketing out animals, first aid for animals, etc.) If all goes well, we could have 300- and 400-level days to cover the more challenging situations that come up during intense packing trips.

I realize that there are some in the llama packing community who are hesitant to team up with folks who pack with other animals. I understand this perspective, but I would encourage us to consider joining forces with other alternative packers to strengthen our voices. There are so few of us alternative packers that isolationism only makes us weaker, especially when facing bans on public lands. Incidentally, this would be a perfect discussion topic during the formation of a coalition.

I see a real need for mentors in our community, and I envision some sort of matchmaking service that would match people from the old guard who have a great deal of packing experience with newbies who want to learn more about a similar style of packing (hunters should mentor hunters, recreational packers with young families should mentor folks with toddlers, etc.).

Things have changed a bit since the early pack festivals and there's quite a bit more paperwork and regulations required to organize a gathering. Using private land would help with some of that, but we'd still need buy-in from our organizations for help with insurance and facilities. And we'd need people who are willing to volunteer their ideas, expertise, time, and work to make it happen.

If you would like to give your input on when a gathering happens and how it is set up and would like to participate in organizing it, please join the Pack Animal Community group on Facebook and make your voice heard. If you're not on Facebook, please email me directly at alexa@packanimalmagazine.com. 

HELP US BUILD A PACK ANIMAL COMMUNITY

If you would like to be involved, please join the Pack Animal Community group on Facebook and make your voice heard.

If you're not on Facebook, please email Alexa Metrick directly at alexa@packanimalmagazine.com



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Exciting Changes Coming in 2020 to the RMLA Youth Program continued ...

up to the big show and then inside the ring, youth members should be encouraged to work with their animals, show, and compete. Outside of the ring, they should be recognized for the courage it takes to step into the show arena regardless of the outcome.

Inside and outside of the show arena, we need to encourage youth members to become ambassadors for the hobby and the Association. The youth committee plans to recognize our youth members for their community and public outreach efforts. They should strive to educate and encourage others to become more involved in this enjoyable hobby and the Association. RMLA youth ambassadors will be recognized for interacting with young people and their communities in an inspiring and engaging way. RMLA youth members should be encouraged to share their passion, enthusiasm, and commitment to our hobby.

Finally, the Youth Committee will remain committed to organizational learning opportunities, education, and member development. Youth members should be encouraged to become lifelong learners. Lifelong learners are motivated to learn and develop because they want to: it is a deliberate and voluntary act.

Lifelong learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities, and improve our quality of life. Youth members will be recognized for attending educational and training opportunities. They will also be recognized for sharing their knowledge and experiences with the entire membership. These sharing opportunities can be in the form of presenting at workshops, journal articles, and photo opportunities capturing the essence of the hobby. They should be encouraged to have their educational articles and photos published in the RMLA Journal to educate others and should be recognized for their efforts.

The Youth Committee is currently working with the RMLA Board to finalize the details of the Youth Recognition Program. The Youth Committee is proposing points-based incentive programs where youth participants collect and redeem points for rewards based on the criteria outlined in this article. The Youth Committee values your opinion, and we would love to hear from you. In the interim, look for more details on the Youth Recognition Program towards the end of the year.



BETSY BELL'S LLAMA LEGACY

by Lynda Liptak - Albuquerque, NM

Betsy Bell was one of the first generation of llama owners in New Mexico. She was a cherished member of the llama community who gave her dedicated love to her llamas that continues after her passing. As a dear friend, Director of Southwest Llama Rescue, Pat Little says, "Betsy Bell is everything Good".

Born Elizabeth Rose Bell in 1938, she was the eldest of nine to Saul and Olive Bell. Her parents were the originators of the prestigious Saul Bell Design Award for jewelry design known worldwide. Betsy worked alongside her father in the jewelry shop who fostered her artistic nature. Betsy brought beauty into everything she did.

Betsy shared some of her story with me on a fall afternoon in 2016. What she did not share was that she had stage 4 cancer and at that time would only have another 6 months to live. Betsy was a bright-minded original. She was striking in appearance, in her conversation, and her demeanor. She was quick to correct anyone mispronouncing "llama" to make sure one did not mistake the origin of these wonderful creatures. Betsy did things her own way, and was a pioneer in understanding how to work with llamas.

In 1978 Olive saw an ad in *Sunset Magazine* showing pretty llamas that just said, "Llamas are Fun". That got Olive and Betsy excited and they wrote a letter to Kay Patterson (who owned 500 llama in



Figure 1. Betsy and Scheherazade ca 1989.

Sisters, Oregon and posted the ad) inquiring how to buy llamas. Kay directed her to her customer in Pojoaque, New Mexico, Scott McCullough and Chet Smith (Scott's ranch manager).

In 1978 Olive and Betsy got their first two llamas after some amount of cajoling given Scott's initial reluctance to talk with them. Betsy then joined the ranks of the first generation of llama owners in New Mexico, Chet Smith and

Don and Jodi Sleeper (Addis) and in Colorado, Bobra Goldsmith and Howard Kerstetter.

Betsy ultimately owned at least 26 llamas which she used for showing, training, fiber, driving, companions/pets, and breeding. She was the primary caretaker, trainer, and marketer.

Betsy's entrepreneurial spirit was unleashed with the opening of Campana Llama Ranch. She also began the Llama Lover's Association of New Mexico and brought llamas and their folks together for large events of llama showcasing. She organized and led the New Mexico State Fair Llama Obstacle course for 3 years. Betsy

designed wonderful logos for her Campana Llamas, Llama Lover's Association, RMLA,



Figure 2. Betsy with Copelia & Rumpelstiltskin, West Mesa Albuquerque Oct 1979.



Figure 3. Llama Lovers Association logo founded and designed by Betsy.

continued on next page

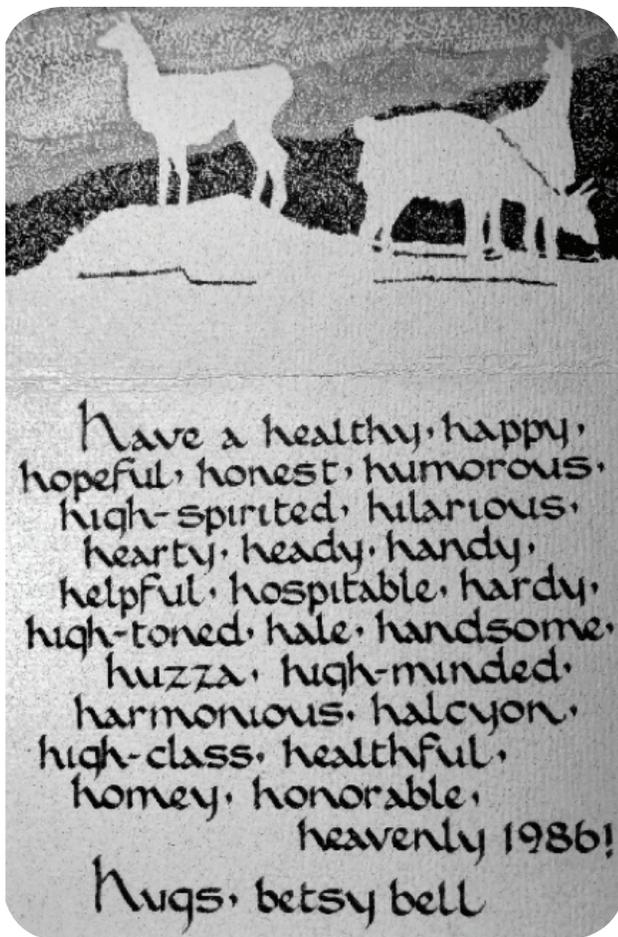
Betsy Bell's llama legacy continued ...

and made her own letter heading artwork and calligraphic letterings for her correspondence (she started Llamagraphics in 1985) and llama marketing.

Betsy was involved with llama rescue and she generously hand wrote every "Thank You" note to the donors of Southwest Llama Rescue (SWLR) for many years in her calligraphic hand.



Figure 4. Betsy's design on a letter to 1986 New Mexico State Fair to schedule an 'Exhibit of Llamas.'



All of her llamas were registered with the International Llama Registry and she gave operatic names to everyone starting with the first two: Rumpelstiltskin and Copelia. Other

wonderful names included Rigoletto, Oberon, Candide, Scheherazade, Parsifal, Don Giovanni, Peer Gynt, Micaela, and Escamillo. Proudly Betsy stated, "In 30 years, I have never shorn any llamas – only brushed them. This keeps all the guard hair in place for the llama and removes only the fine fibers, which are then aligned nicely into roving to be sold to spinners."

Betsy would add a photo of the llama and calligraphed name and short story with each bag so the buyer could request "more of that nice Scheherazade, please" as needed. Daily, Betsy would call each llama forward for their supplemental feed ("nibbles") to the brushing spot and they would eat while being brushed. This was also the routine for when they got their nails trimmed. Betsy was worried for the llamas who got sheared annually. She noticed that on even numbered years her llamas grew more wool than the odd years meaning they must have needed more wool then - perhaps for the harsher winters. So, automatic shearing might result in those llamas being cold for those winters where their bodies were generating more wool but it was being stripped off equally every year.



Figure 5. Betsy preparing Rumpelstiltskin for a driving cart.

Betsy used the repetition and discipline from her ballet training and classes that she gave to children for years. She created and taught a class she coined, "Talk to the Animals" and demonstrated the benefits of interspecies communication. Betsy once wrote down the entire vocabulary she taught her llamas and counted 83 words! "One day" Betsy said, "I told

continued on next page

Scheherazade (who kept playing with the water hose), 'go through the gate, into the Run-and-jump [name for one of the corrals], and get a drink of water from the bucket', and she did it! After that, I tested the other llamas to see if they would understand and most of them did."

Betsy also enjoyed being part of a highly energetic group she worked with, the



Enchantment Driving Society, who Betsy described, "were a thrill to be involved with; an event every month, in addition to their monthly meetings for 11 years! Rarely did they miss having something going on".

Figure 6. Betsy and Rumpelstiltskin in Betsy's handmade ear halter.

They drove llama carriages and organized events continually with energy and enthusiasm.

Betsy's devotion to animals included volunteering at the Rio Grande Zoo where she worked with the llamas and alpacas. She ultimately designed her

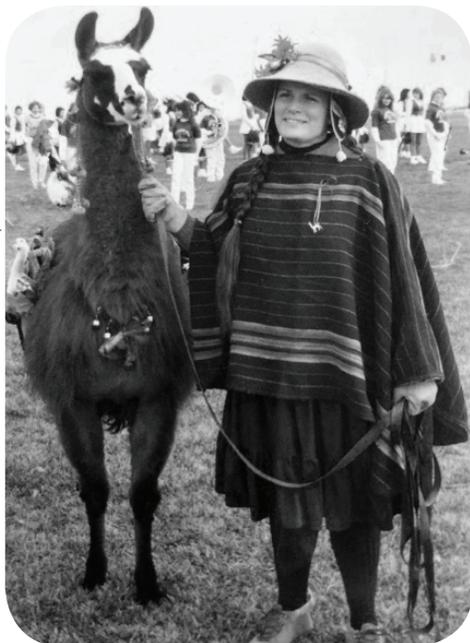


Figure 7. Betsy and Escamillo Christmas, ca 1993

own halter that showed off their faces and fit around the ears. To Betsy, "a llama's beautiful face should be shown and not covered by the halter". Her llama posters read, "Campana Llamas is one of New Mexico's oldest herds with the North American, 'Old Style', Tall and Elegant llamas with enough fine wool to look beautiful but not so much that you can't see their marvelous bone structure."

To some people, llamas are livestock to be used. To others, llamas are pets to enjoy seeing in the field. To Betsy, llamas are like relatives to care for and love -- up close and personally. The later generation of New Mexico llama owners that Betsy was involved with included the founders of Southwest Llama Rescue (2001), FE Baxter and Pat Little who became very close with Betsy. In her later years, as Betsy was caring for her mother, the time came when she needed to find care for her llamas. She surrendered her last twelve llamas to SWLR and sent funding to provide for their care and feeding and donated her trailer hand built by her brother.

Betsy's sister, Molly, managed Betsy's estate to her wishes which was to give generously to causes that Betsy was dedicated to. We at SWLR are deeply grateful that most of Betsy's estate was given to SWLR in a trust to continue the mission of caring, advocating, talking to the llamas and educating people on the highest quality llama interaction. Thank you, Betsy, for who you were and how you continue to help us even as you are gone.



Figure 8. Rigoletto and Betsy Bell 1991.

Editors' Note: Betsy was a founding member of RMLA and a life member of ALSA



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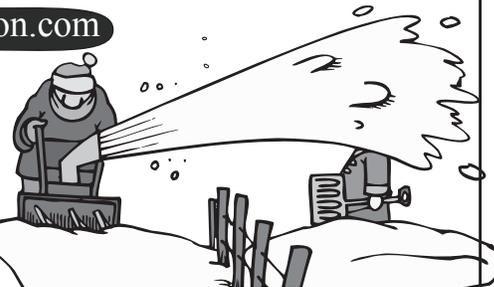
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Ask The CSU VET Team

Labor and Delivery in Camelids

By Caroline Benham, DVM, MPH - CSU Livestock Intern

The answers to the Ask The CSU Vet questions for this issue are contributed by the 4th year veterinary students in the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Livestock Medicine and Surgery Service: Lainey Slayter, Meredith Frey, and Shelbie Snow

Congratulations, your camelid is confirmed bred! Now what? The following article will review frequently asked questions and concepts regarding the gestation, labor and delivery, and potential complications associated with labor and delivery in new world camelids. The Spring Issue will address neonatal cria care and common problems associated with crias born following a dystocia (a difficult birth).

What is the normal gestation length for llamas and alpacas?

Gestation length in new world camelids (NWC) ranges from 335-370 days, with an average length of 340 days.

What if my llama is past her due date?

It is important to note that NWC are believed to have the ability to slow the development of the fetus under unfavorable conditions (called "embryonic diapause"). Because of the uncertainty surrounding exact due date, inducing labor in NWC is generally not recommended, even if a dam is past her "due date."

If you are concerned that the pregnancy is too far overdue, a veterinarian can perform a physical exam, complete with a rectal exam and vaginal exam to confirm pregnancy and normal health of the dam and fetus. Transrectal or transabdominal ultrasound may allow visualization of the fetus and assessment of fetal heart rate to ensure that the fetus is alive. In general, induced labor is only indicated when there is clear evidence of a compromised full term fetus or if the life of the dam is in jeopardy. If induction of parturition is performed, only prostaglandins should be used. Induction with steroids routinely results in death of the fetus.

What is considered normal birthing behavior for new world camelids?

Greater than 90% of births occur during daylight hours, with the highest number born

around 9:00 AM. This is thought to be due to the low nighttime temperatures in the Andes where NWC originated. However, findings from the teaching herd at Ohio State University indicate that 50% of their crias were born in the early morning and 50% were born in the late afternoon.

Labor and delivery (also referred to as "parturition") can be divided into 3 stages. It is important to be familiar with these stages and to understand what is normal and what is abnormal.

Stage I: Stage I of labor consists of mild uterine contractions, initial dilation of the cervix, and repositioning of the fetus. This stage generally lasts anywhere from 2-6 hours and ends when the fetus enters the pelvic canal. A camelid in stage I of parturition may exhibit signs of

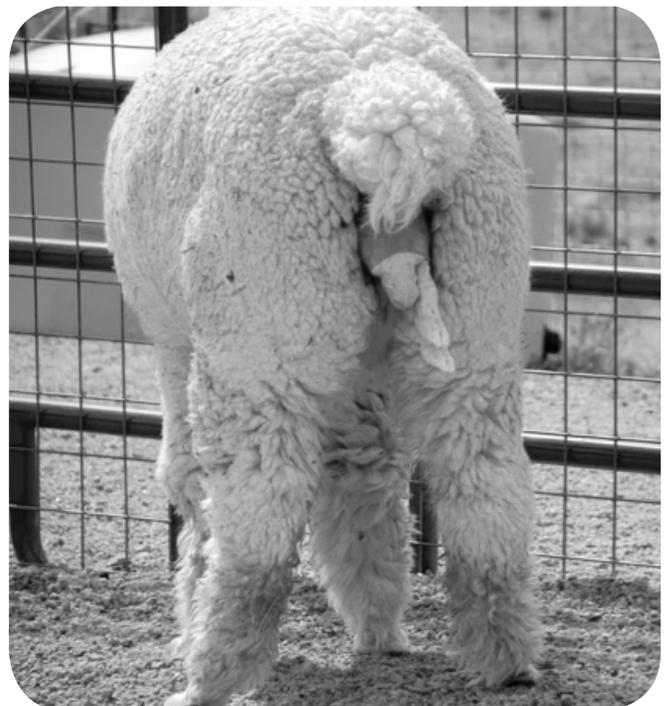


Figure 1: Normal Stage II labor: In this picture, the allantoic and amniotic sacs have both broken. The head and feet are presented normally (Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan).

continued on next page

abdominal pain (lying in an abnormal position, repeatedly getting up and lying down, kicking at the abdomen, and frequently changing position while down), restlessness, frequent urination/defecation, and vocalization. She might isolate herself from the herd. The first water bag (called the "allantois") may rupture during this stage as it is forced through the pelvis, a process referred to as "water breaking". Rupture of the allantoic sac is often noted as the end of Stage I and the beginning of Stage II labor.

Stage II: Stage II is the actual delivery of the cria. Unlike Stage I, Stage II should only last for 10 minutes – 1 hour. During Stage II, the fetus passes through the pelvic canal. Entrance of the head and both front feet into the vagina stimulates "true labor," which presents as abdominal straining along with strong uterine contraction. Normal presentation will



Figure 2: Stage II of Labor: Note the progression from Figure 1 with more of the head and legs appearing from the vulva. You should observe regular consistent progression as the baby is born. If that stops at any time, then assistance is indicated (Photo courtesy of Sharon Milligan).

demonstrate either the nose or the feet first, but within 30 minutes of the appearance of one or the other, the nose and feet should both be visible. Malpresentation of the fetus (abnormal positioning) may not induce true labor, so the

dam might not show signs of labor. This is classified as a "dystocia," or difficult birth (more on this later). During Stage II, the second water bag, or amniotic sac, may appear at the vulva as a translucent sac and will also rupture.

While the dam may lie down and get up frequently during Stages I and II, she will usually deliver her cria standing. Stage II culminates with the delivery of the fetus.

Stage III: Stage III consists of passage of the fetal membranes (placenta) within 2-6 hours following birth. If the placentas not been passed in 6 hours, it should be considered retained (see below).

How do I know if something is not right with the birthing process?

If Stages I and II do not progress within the time durations listed above, there is cause for concern. The dam may be experiencing what is termed "dystocia," meaning a difficult birth.

Veterinary intervention should be sought rapidly if:

- The dam has been in Stage I labor for 4-6 hours with no signs of progress.
- The fetus is present in the birth canal and visible, but no further progress is made in 15-20 minutes.
- Fetal membranes hang from the vulva with no fetus produced.
- If back feet are exiting the vulva (feet may appear upside down).

If you are unsure which set of feet (front or back) are presenting, it is not wrong to apply a large amount of lubrication to the vulva and your hand (wear a long glove/palpation sleeve) and attempt to determine if legs are present with the head. If no head can be felt, the front and back legs can be determined by the movement of the two joints above the foot. The two joints of the front limbs (the fetlock and carpus [knee]) should both bend the same direction, while the two joints of the hind limbs (the fetlock and hock) should bend opposite directions. While it may helpful to know which way the fetus is presented, it is important to remember to limit the time spent manipulating the fetus prior to veterinary intervention for the safety of the

continued on next page

fetus and the dam. If no head is felt, then either the head is bent back, or the fetus is coming backward. If the head is present and there are no legs or only one leg, then there is an abnormal position of the fetus. If the dam is in active Stage II labor and no feet or head can be felt, then there is a significant abnormal position. In all of these cases, assistance with delivery will be necessary.

What are common causes of dystocia?

Dystocia is uncommon in NWC, with an incidence of between 2-5%. When it does occur, the most common cause of dystocia is malposition of the fetus, or a fetus that does not present with head and front feet out of the pelvic canal first. Other causes include a fetus that is too large for the pelvic canal (especially in maiden dams), lack of cervical dilation, and torsion (twisting) of the uterus. Regardless of the cause, dystocia is a condition requiring rapid intervention to ensure the health of the fetus and the dam. A good rule of thumb is that if delivery does not progress naturally or with assistance within 30 minutes, then a veterinarian should be contacted to provide assistance.

Are there risks for the dam following dystocia?

Following a dystocia, the dam should be examined thoroughly for injury to the birth canal, including evaluation of the uterus and vagina for tears. Profuse bleeding from the vagina following delivery warrants veterinary intervention, as the dorsal vaginal artery may be torn and

require clamping or ligation. As mentioned above, the placenta should pass within 2-6 hours following birth. If the placenta is retained (has not been passed > 6 hours post-partum), low doses of oxytocin may be administered by your veterinarian to encourage passage of membranes and cleaning of the uterus.

Finally, the risk of uterine prolapse can be increased following dystocia in NWC. Uterine prolapse is considered an emergency and requires immediate veterinary intervention, as the weight of the uterus may cause rupture of the middle uterine artery and fatal hemorrhage. In the case of uterine prolapse, it is best not to travel but to allow a veterinarian to come to you. The safest position for the dam is the cushed position.

What can I do to minimize the risk of dystocia in my herd?

An important part of minimizing risks associated with parturition include keeping close record of breeding dates and due dates. Careful observation of dams that are close to their due date will help facilitate early intervention in the case of dystocia. Because many NWC will not progress through labor under direct observation, wall-mounted barn cameras may be helpful for monitoring.

In conclusion, it is important to be familiar with the three stages of labor, normal behavior of the dam during the birthing process, and to seek early veterinary intervention in the case of prolonged labor, malpresentation of the fetus, or any other problems that might occur.

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Establishing Effective Antifungal Medication Dosing in Alpacas

By Sean Andersen-Vie - Public Relations Associate Director - Morris Animal Foundation

Editors' Note: This past September, the Morris Animal Foundation Awarded \$940,000 for new studies benefiting horse and alpaca health. We are reprinting the study pertaining to alpacas.

Researchers will determine appropriate dosing for the antifungal medication fluconazole in alpacas, a treatment for coccidioidomycosis, or valley fever. Although the medication is used effectively to treat coccidioidomycosis in many other species, alpacas absorb oral medications less efficiently.

Operating as a non-profit, Morris Animal Foundation's mission is to bridge science and resources to advance the health of animals. Founded by a veterinarian in 1948, we fund and conduct critical health studies for the benefit of all animals. Learn more at morriscaninimalfoundation.org.



Website ~~Help~~ Needed

By Linda Hayes and Ron Hinds, Board Members

RMLA.com needs to get tech-savvy. We need a person or persons that can help us move our website to a new form. The website needs a new technological 'system' to enable individual RMLA leaders to create, read, approve and publish additions to the website without using a central 'webmaster'. The website may look good but behind the screen it incorporates very ancient methods to provide what you see.

The need for this major change was brought to our attention by the current web-manager, Ron Hinds. Ron knows the site's growth can't continue in its present condition.

The website itself needs the help of technologically experienced persons to redo it. It would be ideal to create a team of both RMLA members and outside technological help to begin this transformation. Ron would love to be part of the team but doesn't necessarily want to be the leader. The leader needs to have experience with websites and be knowledgeable of content management systems (CMS). We need several people to step up to the plate to determine the best direction to take the website into the future.

There are many programs that could be used. The most popular appears to be 'WordPress'. WordPress and similar systems comprise a CMS which is very capable of providing what is needed for RMLA, members and visitors. If you or someone you know is comfortable using such systems and can help in the effort, The RMLA Board would like to hear from you. We need your expertise.

The Board would like multiple RMLA members to volunteer to provide input as needed, however, this will not be a total volunteer project. We understand that we will probably need to hire someone to do the initial work.

If you are a young person that needs to build your resume this will be a chance to put your knowledge to work and get the credit needed for future employment. If you are already working with computer programs this is a chance to earn a little extra money or to donate time for the benefit of the llama world.

RMLA is an all-volunteer organization and it will not succeed in the future if our younger generation doesn't come forward and help keep it going. We need you. Please consider helping us. Please contact Ron Hinds at alpacaron@gmail.com or 303-646-1320 to volunteer your expertise.



From the Minds and Fleece of Alpacas

By Susan Unser - Unser Alpacas

This first year of being responsible for our small herd of alpacas was now in the rear view mirror and the road ahead looked smooth. Surprisingly we had survived it without any loss of blood from either them or us. Only exception was when Al, who has lived through numerous broken bones and surgeries from crashing into walls, got behind Sidney and received a good kick in the shin. The words that came out of his mouth warranted a medevac, but I rubbed some dirt on it and he was fine. Some lessons are just more memorable than others.

Many of our weekends are filled with friends who visit to share our little slice of heaven, whether it is on snowmobiles, ATV's, riding the train, or just sitting on the porch. One of the little friends, who was so anxious to come and see the alpacas, asked if they did anything other than walk around and eat. And I had to say, "No, that's it" but I began to wonder if they were able to learn more. A shake of the grain can brought them running to the pen at night and that implied they had memory.

A site on YouTube introduced me to Terry Crowfoot, and I was determined to begin "spring training" at Camp Unser. All our dogs and a couple of the cats have been able to be taught tricks to perform for treats. Thus, with a pocketful of carrots a new idea was born and with great confidence I informed my husband that before the hour was up, I was going to teach Sidney to ring the dinner bell located on a pole in front of the house. As he climbed the stairs to go inside he cynically said, "Sure you are". The gauntlet was down.

Editors' Note: Terry Crowfoot and her husband live in the south of England and have seven llamas. Her website is <http://www.llama-training.co.uk/> and it's a lot of fun.

Loaded with peeled-baby carrots, Sidney and I began. Now Sidney is a character, the strongest

willed of the herd, the alpha, a scalawag and my favorite. He tolerates me only because I have access to the carrots. I stood looking at that bell with a crisp carrot in my hand and the first time he looked at the rope he got the carrot. When looking at the rope didn't result in a carrot, I could see his brain working so hard to figure out what I wanted next. He touched the rope with his nose, got a carrot. Touched the pole with his nose, no carrot. Put his teeth on the rope,

Unser Alpacas



carrot. Rope in mouth, carrot. Pull on the rope, carrot. Make the bell ring, 2 carrots. Less than an hour later an amazed husband stood on the porch watching as a black alpaca who, has a mighty kick, was ringing the bell as often and fast as he could chew a carrot.

Spending an hour a day asking each of them to do commands, such as "turn around", "pick up a rope and hand it to me",

is time I look forward to, and I think they also enjoy the mental exercise. Garrett, the smallest, has been able to identify, differentiate and then target (put his nose) on pictures of either a dog, cow or bird. What has amazed me the most is the ability of other alpacas to learn these commands just by watching. We are not ready to take our little show on the road or to compete with Ms. Crowfoot, but they do provide good entertainment for our visitors and my husband.

Further entertainment came in the form of our first shearing day. When we received these guys, they had just been sheared and now, one year later our first shearing day arrived; friends from Chama and across the southwest arrived; bags at the ready, broom duty assigned; coolers filled with water for the team, vaccination meds and syringes at the ready, steaks ready for the victory celebration; weather was wonderful and all animals were haltered and ready. Well perhaps they were not as ready as I was.

continued on next page

From the Minds and Fleece of Alpacas continued ...

A year is a long time for them to still remember being stretched out on a table, having 2 strange men with very noisy equipment begin pushing and pulling and lifting legs and cutting nails. Then, if that was not enough, there was opening of mouths and doing things to teeth that makes heads vibrate and to add insult to injury the “carrot lady” is sticking needles in and squirting yucky stuff in mouths. Finally, up on all fours and ready to get back to the corral, the violation complete, they sensed a snicker coming from their herd and realized I AM NAKED.

The other project crawling around in my brain was what to do with all that fleece, 40 pounds the first shearing. Perhaps if I was able to sell it, I could persuade my husband to increase our herd. With a small bag of each color I traveled to Los Ojos, a small village that is anchored by Tierra Wools. The little bell on the door, the well-worn floor planks, the smell of wool and the explosion of colors in the hundreds of woven rugs and shelves of yarn told me I had come to the right place.

My little bags of alpaca fleece seemed ridiculous surrounded by all this. I wandered through the building with its tin-tiled ceiling and found a room where there were perhaps a dozen very large looms, most with pieces in progress. One of the weavers,

Charles, stopped and took the time to explain about this local Churro wool which is quite scarce as the Churro sheep have barely survived even with a deep history as the primary wool for native Navajo weavers. And the looms were called Rio Grande Walking Looms since the weaving was done standing and changing the heddle by stepping on the treadles. From another room came a small lady, Toni, whose waist length gray braid was topped by a well-worn black Stetson. Her role in this cottage industry was to color the churro yarns using only natural dyes. Her corner of this hundred-year-old building with its boiling pots and shelves filled with walnut shells, jars of cochénille bugs, dried flowers and hooks filled with softly dyed wool was enchanting.

I was enamored by this place; these people and I could see how that little project that was crawling around in my brain was about to come tumbling out. Before I knew it, I had signed up for a week long weaving class, taken a trip to the fiber mill in Taos, NM to deliver all my fleece and anxiously waited to create a woven rug from my own animals.

In the next edition of our journal I want to take you with me as I step back in time to when people actually made things and there was no Amazon. Al has been put to work in this project which has provided amusement. Until then keep that fleece coming. 



PacaBuddies - September 7 & 8, 2019

By Ron Hinds

Castle Rock, CO -- Douglas County Fairgrounds

PacaBuddies had enthusiastic visitors from 8 states during the two day event. At the door we asked people how they heard about the event. The overwhelming response was Facebook. This year PacaBuddies took a gamble and paid for Facebook to distribute our posts about the event throughout the area.

PacaBuddies had 17 farm displays with alpacas and llamas and their products. In addition, there were 7 vendors with their booths. Traffic was lively during the early part of both days. Lots of excitement. PacaBuddies had a booth with a colorful background setup for folks to have their photo(s) taken (with their camera or cell phone) of their favorite llama or alpaca at the event. A majority of the younger visitors participated along with their family members.



Small Town Fun!

By Linda Hayes - Prescott, AZ

I took two llamas to the 4th of July Parade in Dewey Humboldt, AZ. Joker, shown in

these photos, won the pet parade. That also meant we were on the front page of the paper. Small towns are great that way.



Debbie Anderson MD leading Joker, owned by Linda Hayes, won the Pet division of the Dewey Humboldt, AZ parade. Debbie represented the Arizona Llama Lovers.



It Tickles!

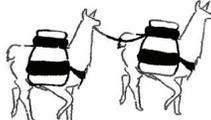
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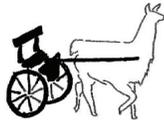
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Keeping the Frustration Level **LOW**

By Marty McGee Bennett - CAMELIDynamics

Animal handling and training is a skill that the HUMAN learns and gets better at with practice BUT you must practice what is working; not keep doing what isn't working hoping like crazy that it will suddenly work. Repeat something three times that is NOT working and you have just taught your animal what NOT to do!

Too often when it comes to working with animals, we blame the animal for what we cannot accomplish... "that llama is difficult or that alpaca was rescued and had a hard time or that one was just born difficult". There may be a kernel of truth in these assumptions but it really doesn't matter because the only thing you CAN change is your approach. It is your job as the human to lead the dance and to learn the skills and techniques required to accomplish what is needed in a way that is the most positive and least intrusive.

The following is my laundry list of things to do to stay focused, avoid frustration and learn WHAT IT IS YOU ACTUALLY need to learn. It does no good to remain attached to the old ways that aren't working.

Practice new skills using a training aid. The most powerful exercises that we do at a clinic are the people-people exercises; not only do they teach a new skill but they offer a powerful window into the mind of the animal. In my opinion everyone should have a blow-up training aid. These are portable, fun and the person holding the blow up can tell if the "handler" is squeezing or holding. They are hands-down the best way to teach any new handling skill that involves the head. Once you have practiced with a training aid, you can **move up to working with a VERY easy animal** for real life practice.

Avoid practicing with difficult or very young animals. These animals are not likely to help you learn the skills that you need because they are the ones that are the least equipped to have some patience with your learning process.

Be SAFE! Always have a good look around for anything that could be a danger to you or your animal student. For example, if you are worried that the animal you are working with might jump out of the pen, you will no doubt hold on tight to the rope which will frighten the animal. Holding on makes it more likely that the animal will not feel comfortable stopping and will more likely try to jump out.

Take notes. Not only will the process of writing things down help you remember what you did last time and what you want to work on next time, but it will help YOU to problem solve... the very act of writing something down changes the way you process it.

Feel free to back up to what WAS working. There is nothing lost and everything to be gained by backing up to what is working. It is much better to have a plan NOT a goal. If things are not going well, back up a few steps to what was working. This will give your animal more confidence for next time. Feeling comfortable retreating makes advancing safer, you can always challenge your animal a bit AND you can always back up to what is easier.

Focus on your set up. You are almost always outnumbered by your animals; investing time to set up a handling area benefits every animal you own. Even if you only have a few animals, working with them efficiently teaches them to be cooperative. Wasting time is a sure way for you to become impatient and the animals will feel it and be concerned.



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and sometimes painful learning tool.

Look for times when the lead is taut for several seconds and notice what the animal is doing. The most common difficulty with animal handling is applying steady pressure on the animal or on the lead or catch rope attached to the animal. This extremely common tendency causes the animal to pull back which starts the chain reaction that leads to all manner of difficulties.

The only way to learn when you are putting steady pressure on the animal is to trust the reactions of the animal (hard to do in the moment) or to watch yourself later and see it for yourself on a video. Only then you will be more likely to understand that the animal's behavior is actually a response to what you are doing.

Look at behavior and the conditions under which it occurs. Let go of the past and any theories you have about where the behavior came from; it doesn't matter and you can't change that anyway. Begin anew and figure out what is being reinforced and what is being discouraged and come up with a plan to reinforce the behavior you want.

For goodness sakes be as kind to yourself as a learner as you are to your animal learner. None of us gets to be amazingly competent at something immediately. Have Fun and enjoy the process as you both learn.

Spend time setting up a good system for herding animals to a central location so that you can manage them instead of chasing them around the pasture. Create various pens of different sizes to use for different management tasks. One size does not fit all when you are working with animals. Create at least one perfect pen (I love 9x9 feet square 5 feet high) that is safe, centrally located and pleasant to work in for you AND the animals.

Invest in your balancing skills Have someone take video of you working and watch it. In my early years I was determined to create training videos as soon as I could. I viewed hours and hours of video tape of me NOT doing what I wanted in order to find an hour of footage that showed what I did want. It was a powerful



Photos of good and tight connection through the lead rope.



hw

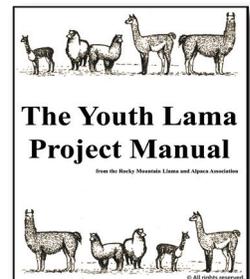
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The Winding Road to a Higher Ground

By Gayle Woodsum - Higher Ground Fair - All photos courtesy of Liz Young



It seems as though I blinked, and suddenly my long-time, misty dream of putting on a country fair like no other was about to happen in real life for its fourth year in a row. It was 3:00 a.m. on Friday the weekend of September 21 and 22, 2019, when I headed to my hotel room for a couple hours of sleep and a shower before the gate was scheduled to open at 9:00. Time on the clock and my capacity for functioning without sleep had once again run out. The Higher Ground Fair would soon be on its own.

I've been planning and putting on public events since 1985, including superintending llama shows in Colorado, Wyoming, and Nevada for the last 16 years or so. Regardless of an event's purpose, theme, or venue, the process of bringing it to life is always, always, always, more complicated, takes more time, and costs a great deal more money than I ever anticipate. I get comfort in hearing this same statement of fact from event planners around the globe.

But I do take full responsibility for my tendency to think big and unique rather than practical and manageable in just about everything I do. I know this about myself. So when 2016 rolled around and I decided it was time for the Higher Ground Fair to come to life with a concept of bringing all great aspects of rural Rocky Mountain living into one grand gesture of community-building and celebration, I tried to center it around at least a few things I was familiar with.

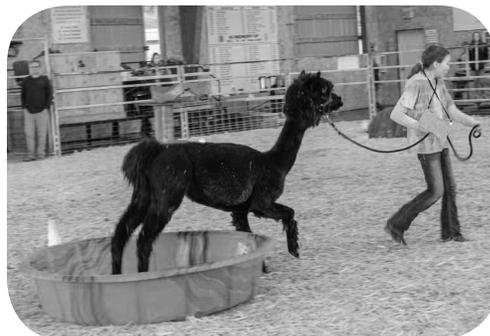
This ended up meaning that the inter-connected components of the Higher Ground Fair would revolve around music, food, ranching, traditional folk arts,

mountain environments, and llamas. To be perfectly honest, it was the llamas that popped into my head



first. On a regular basis, they teach me something new and important about relationships and life. They are how I practice my daily personal mindfulness. They are how I stay sane. Which means it just made sense to me that if I started the Higher Ground Fair by imagining an amazing llama and alpaca show right in the middle of it, everything else would naturally and successfully grow from there.

For the most part, I've been right about that. Every year, the fair has gotten bigger, more diverse, more extraordinary in what it offers the world from the funky and fine old fairgrounds in Laramie, Wyoming.



And every year, llamas and alpacas glow in a spotlight at the center of it all. The musicians want their band to be playing when the lama

parade makes its way past the main concert stage. The fiber vendors want their booths set up ringside to the performance show. When I met with the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribal members who had participated as vendors, presenters and dancers at this year's fair, their first feedback was about how much they loved having the llamas there.

The Higher Ground Fair is and isn't turning out to be what I imagined. So far, it isn't attracting the tens of thousands of fairgoers arriving with thousands of dollars in their pockets to spend, to support fair participants. It's not yet being the sustainable

continued on next page

fundraiser we need it to be for the nonprofit food security work of Feeding Laramie Valley. It IS providing welcoming space for farmers and ranchers; performers and speakers; educators; entrepreneurs; gardeners and homesteaders; artists and community organizers — some who are well known and lauded for their accomplishments, and many more who have a place at this affordable, accessible event when they haven't been able to participate elsewhere.



Over 4000 people attended, volunteered, or participated in the 2019 Higher Ground Fair – more than double any of the three previous years. People waited in line for up to an hour for regional and cultural foods offered by the food vendors. Internationally famous quilters exhibited at our second annual regional quilt show. The Kids Adventure Zone exploded with children fascinated by the dinosaur theme and the hands-on

fun that was not Internet connected. The llama and alpaca barn was not only full for the first time, it overflowed into half a dozen extra stalls.



Higher Ground Fair is charting its own course and I'm no better than I've ever been at making

the organizing of such a thing manageable. Llama and alpaca exhibitors had to make their own show numbers and staple together their own show books (which turned out to have a lot of typos from late-night printing errors). But like the animals they love, these lama people once again taught me more about event planning than my years of experience ever

have. In spite of my stumbling and exhaustion, it was laughter I mostly heard coming from the llama show, and hugs waiting for me when I had a rare chance to visit. At the end of the weekend, I ran to pay the judges, and make sure the volunteers had picked out their t-shirts. I apologized for my shortcomings, and promised to do better next year.

Then Rhonda Livengood, who along with her mother has clerked for years for llama shows I've put on, put a hand on my arm and looked into my eyes. "You know, Gayle," she said. "I could help with all of this. I could come a day early to make sure everything is the way we need it. I could put the book and the packets together for you."

"No, no," I protested, feeling the heat of my failure rise to my cheeks. "It's my job. I'll do better, I promise. You don't have to do that."

Rhonda squeezed my arm a little tighter, and smiled a little more. "I do have to do it, Gayle. I really do."



From over her shoulder, I could see that a small group of llama exhibitors had gathered to listen to our conversation. They too were nodding their heads and grinning at me.

I thanked Rhonda, and

moved on to catch Wally Juntilla, who had turned the jumble of obstacle pieces from my trailer into beautiful performance courses and fabulous games. I had a check for him for the hundreds of miles he and his wife Cheryl had driven to help make the show happen. When I got to him, he was bent over a clipboard and a long, neat list of something he was working on.

"You look like a very engrossed engineer," I told him.

"I'm just finishing up an inventory of all your obstacles," he said.

continued on next page

I looked again. Every item that had been crammed into my trailer was now lined up into exquisitely ordered, detailed descriptions of what we had to work with for next year. Speechless with gratitude, I handed him the check.

“Absolutely not,” he said, holding up his palm to block my reach.

“You have to take it,” I said. “We agreed on this.”

“But if I take it, Gayle,” he told me, “I won’t be able to be your friend.”

I’m 63 years old, and llamas and their people are still trying to teach me basic



life lessons, like how to receive love and help with humility and grace. Every year that RLMA sponsors the llama, alpaca, and fleece shows at Higher Ground Fair, they tell me I need to write a report for the RMLA Journal in return. And every year, I find myself writing essentially the same story I wrote the year before. I’m still not entirely sure what Higher Ground Fair wants to be when it grows up, but I do know llamas will always shine the brightest at this event, and llama people will always show me the way to make it work.



2019 RMLA Annual Meeting

By Lougene Baird

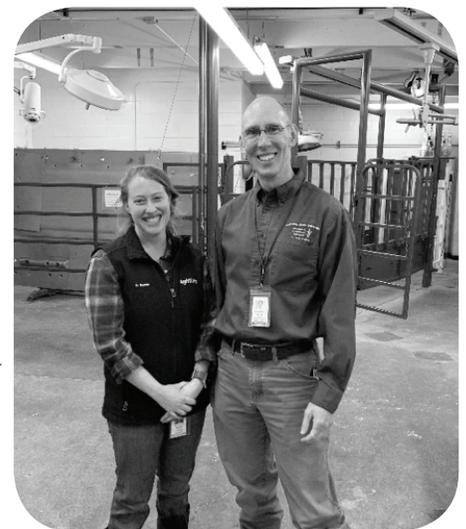
The purpose of the RMLA Annual Meeting is for members to come together to talk about the previous year and to plan for the next year. All members can benefit from this time together. Old business is reviewed and new business and ideas are discussed. Plus some years, like this year, we have a special educational event.

The annual meeting was held at the Colorado State University Veterinarian Teaching Hospital in Ft. Collins, CO. Those in attendance were treated to a tour of the Vet Hospital. We learned how the treatment of animals takes place from check-in to release.

Robert Callan, DVM, along with Dr. Caroline Benham, Livestock Intern, gave the members an exciting tour of the Livestock Veterinary Hospital area. Large animals are treated here for anything and everything. One interesting fact that Dr. Callan pointed out is that every animal is checked at least once every hour for its wellbeing, progress and treatment.

He covered the different types of procedures and surgery that can be performed on animals as large as Clydesdale horses and Bison. In some detail he discussed the treatment being provided for a premature alpaca and its mother.

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital is an asset of great value to the owners of livestock in Colorado and the surrounding states. And let’s don’t forget the veterinarians, both large animal and small animal, graduating each year from this extraordinary facility. The State of Colorado is fortunate to have this highly-ranked Veterinarian Teaching Hospital.

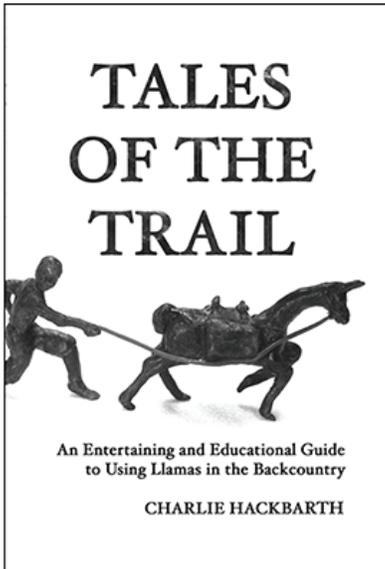


THE GEAR, Part 1

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*

Let's say, for the sake of my continuing on, that you have read and have acted upon almost every word that I have written so far. Some of you have



gone against my advice and bought a couple of untrained, untested llamas, but that's OK. I realize that while there may be enough proven pack llamas out there to supply the people who do follow my advice, the fact is that both proven packers and people who follow my advice are in short supply. In any

case, you have found a pair of llamas that show every indication of being great packers. You have followed the advice given in the training books and/or clinics and found some things that worked for you and some that didn't. It's nice to know that neither you nor your llamas were messed up for life because of something you did or didn't do. You have pirouetted your way through at least one successful "Curly and Moe boot camp" and now there is no question about your character, which is something that those who bought trained pack llamas may not have yet had the opportunity to test. Basic training is over, you feel confident and in control and ready to join the few . . . the proud . . . the llama packers of the world. It's time to talk about packs.

SELECTING THE SADDLE

Selecting a pack can be almost as confusing as selecting a llama for packing. Most pack outfits have basically two parts: the saddle and the panniers. The saddle (with pad and rigging) is the most important piece of the outfit because it is the foundation for the load. The load is carried in two bags, called panniers, which attach to the saddle. That sounds simple enough, but there are some things you need to know and some questions you'll need to ask so that you can choose the outfit that best fits your needs—and, more importantly, best fits your llama.

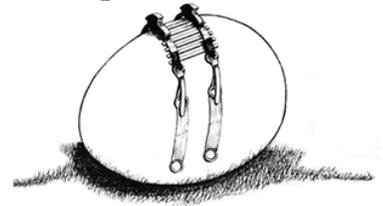
The questions most commonly asked before purchasing a pack outfit remind me of the questions I asked before I bought Larry, my first pack llama. The most common, of course, is this:

Which saddle type is the best?

There are many llama saddle designs being used on llamas today, but when all is said and done it boils down to two basic types that I classify as "costal" and "frame." Within these two broad saddle types there are varying degrees of fit, comfort, and convenience.

Webster's Dictionary defines costal (kos' t'l) as being of or near a rib or the ribs. Add "and spine" to the end of that and, for our purposes, you have it. Probably the best example of a costal type saddle is the South American costal, which no doubt has been around longer than *Webster's Dictionary*.

Sopris Unlimited



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The costal pack consists of a large sack woven from llama wool that is draped over the llama's back and tied on with a wool rope called a sogá. South Americans have not deviated from the costal for many, many years, probably because the materials and the means of making it have been available for many, many years. The advantage of the costal is that it is uncomplicated, lightweight, and inexpensive. The disadvantage is that it limits the amount of weight that can comfortably be carried because the weight is draped directly over the llama's prominent spine. Pressure on the spine is uncomfortable and, because the load is hanging on the back muscles on each side of the spine rather than being supported by them, the llama has to work harder to carry it. The load is also hard to keep in place, which tires the llama as well as the handler, who must constantly adjust it. A llama saddle remains a costal type until it has a framework capable of supporting a heavy load on the back muscles without allowing a collapse onto the spine.

An example of a frame-type saddle is the cross-buck pack saddle used on more traditional pack animals in North America. However, as far as I know, it isn't a requirement that a frame be made of wood or a rigid material—only that it be substantial enough to support and carry the load on the back muscles without collapsing on the spine. This means that at least a semi-rigid form will probably be necessary. The advantage of a well-designed, well-fitting frame saddle is that heavier loads can be kept more stable and are easier and more comfortable to carry. The disadvantage of a poorly-designed frame-type saddle, especially

one made of rigid materials, is that it can be more uncomfortable than a costal-type saddle and just as hard to keep in place.

The saddle that best fits and most comfortably supports the load on the back muscles is the best saddle. Beyond that, durability and convenience are important considerations.

Things you may want to ask yourself and the manufacturer are:

- Are the materials used in the saddle dense enough? Is the spacing above and beside the spine more than adequate enough to keep the saddle from touching the spine under a heavy load?
- Is the area where the saddle contacts the llama's back large enough to support a heavy load without causing discomfort, bruising, or sores? If rigid frame materials are straight, the saddle will bridge across the curve of the llama's back, making contact only at each end of the bridge and creating pressure at those points. The more contact the frame makes with the supporting back muscles, the more evenly the weight is being distributed. The better the saddle fits, the more comfortable it will be and the better it will stay in place.
- Will the llama's shoulders move freely when the saddle is loaded, and do rigid materials curve away from the llama to prevent digging and bruising?

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Rocky Mountain Llamas.....	11	Caring for Llama & Alpaca	30

- ✿ Assuming the frame fits properly, is the pad that goes under the frame adequate? Is it dense enough to cushion the load and absorb the shock during a jump?
- ✿ Do you have the option of buying a functional chest strap and breeching with the saddle? This rigging will help keep your saddle in place going up and down steep inclines while carrying a full load. Although some packers get by without using the chest strap and breeching, if you are going into steep country I recommend that you and your llamas learn to use them—especially if you are in your first years of packing. A chest strap is also important when you are leading in a string from saddle to saddle—it will keep the saddle from being stripped off the rear of your llama.
- ✿ Is the saddle durable enough for the uses that you have in mind?
- ✿ Is there any kind of guarantee offered if, after having checked out the saddle, you are not happy with its comfort factor or performance?
- ✿ How much does it cost? I've heard people express on occasion that they paid more for their pack outfit than they did for their llama. If you are one of these people, you either got a good deal on your llama or you bought an untrained llama or a llama of poor quality. A proven pack llama generally will be more expensive than one that hasn't been proven. The same is true of a llama pack, or anything else for that matter. Most llama pack manufacturers are honest people who have spent a lot of time and money doing something that they believe in and enjoy. They are llama owners who think very highly of their llamas. Their businesses are small, and I'm pretty sure that no one gets rich from the sales of llama pack equipment. Changes in design and materials need to be made in order to improve any product, and each change is an additional expense.
- ✿ Some packs on the market are very good, some are satisfactory, and some are cheap copies or poorly thought-out designs that should not be used because they could seriously injure a llama. If you can't afford the pack outfit that you have

determined to be the best for you and your llama, purchase it piece by piece until you have the complete outfit. That makes more sense (cents) than buying an outfit that is not suited for packing and then having to replace the outfit, or possibly even your llama.

- ✿ How much does it weigh? As with the llama, you'll want to be aware of extremes. I would suspect an extremely lightweight pack saddle of not having enough substance to comfortably support the load being carried. At the same time, as saddle weight increases, the amount of weight that can be carried in the panniers decreases. Most saddle, pad, and pannier combinations designed for overnight packing weigh in the neighborhood of ten to fifteen pounds. However, I would rather carry fifty pounds on a comfortable functional pack outfit that weighs thirty pounds than carry seventy pounds on an ill-fitting pack outfit that weighs five pounds and is soring my llama and wearing me out trying to keep it on his back. Ask yourself whether or not the outfit is within reasonable weight limits and whether it could comfortably support a hundred-pound load if need be.
- ✿ How much will the outfit carry? Usually what is meant by this question is: How big are the panniers? A llama is only capable of carrying so much weight or bulk. In general, if you are looking at a llama from the side, a full pannier should hang within the area of the llama's trunk.

Panniers that are too big or the wrong proportion or do not hang properly from the saddle will affect the way the load rides, which will affect your llama's comfort and efficiency. Ask yourself:
- ✿ Are the panniers sized to fit a llama, and are they designed so that the load within them can be carried as efficiently as possible? More specifically, are the panniers designed horizontally to match the trunk of the llama's body? If the panniers have too much vertical length or they are hung too low, the load will sway or rock from side to side.
- ✿ Is the pannier design so wide that the load will be hanging too far away from the center of gravity?

continued on the top of page 30

From Veterinarian to Woodworker

By Robert Callan, DVM Complementary Activities

Editors' Note: After learning about Dr. Callan's woodworking hobby we asked him to share his story with all of us.

Some of you know that when I am not working as a livestock veterinarian, I try to spend some of my free time doing hobby woodworking. Two of the main projects that I work on are building handcrafted handsaws and turning pens. For the most part, I donate my products for a variety of fundraiser auctions. I often get asked, what is the story behind your saws and pens? Well, here is my story.



The basement slackline in use. Behind me are the doors to the shop.

When my wife, Cindy, and I decided to finish the basement to our house, I was lucky to be granted about 250 square feet of room for a small shop. For the first 10 years or so the shop served as my place to make things for the basement job, and some small projects, like music boxes for my nieces. The turning point was the 2012 Super Bowl half time show with Madonna that included

I gave my wife a 50-foot slackline. It was not on her Christmas list! Oh well. I put it up between two trees in our yard and over the next year, found it extremely challenging and fun. Then came the following Winter

and I wanted to make a short slackline stand to put in the basement. So, I drew up some plans, got some 2x6's and started building.

The plan called for a tenon on two of the supports for the slackline. I went to my trusty hardware store homeowner's handsaw and gave it a go. It was a miserable process. The saw was awful. It was dull, cut slow, and

for the life of me, I could not get it to cut straight. So, I must need a new saw!

I searched for a higher quality wood saw that could be hand sharpened when needed and was shocked at the price of a worthy handsaw. At that time, my wife was visiting her parents and I told her to look in her parent's garage and see if there were any old "real" handsaws that

she could bring home. Cindy gathered up a few saws, got permission from her dad, and sent them home. Now, these were old, bent, dented saws with broken handles and all kinds of problems, but they taught me how to refurbish a saw blade, sharpen it by hand, and either restore or make a new saw handle. And that was the beginning of "Build Something Saws".

The name, well that came

from my parents who instilled in me the drive that no matter what I did, try to build something that made a difference.



The first two totally new saws that I made from scratch for the CSU AABP Nutfry.

some amazing slackline acrobatics. Stay with me, my woodworking and slacklining are connected. After seeing this show I thought, what a great activity to help maintain balance as I get older. The next Christmas,

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My first new saw project was a matched pair of crosscut and rip panel saws for our CSU AABP Nut Fry Auction that supports students by paying for travel to externships and educational meetings. Once completed, I was hooked. These saws were wonderful. They were



A more recent CSU AABP Nutfry auction saw with a split nut driver. The medallion nut reads Aliquid Aedifica, which is Latin for Build Something.

unique, handcrafted, beautiful, and most importantly, cut wood very well. They allow me to be creative, focus on detail, practice shaping and carving skills, and simply do something other than veterinary medicine and teaching. So far, I have made 11 original handcrafted saws and restored about 10 saws. Many of these have gone to fund raising auctions in support of veterinary student activities and scholarships. My next goal is to start incorporating some string inlay into the handles and I have a couple of refurbished back saws waiting for new handles.

One of the unique aspects of these handcrafted saws is that they use split nuts for holding the handle to the saw. A split nut is a special type of fastener where the bolt threads all the way through the center of the nut that is recessed and will fit flush with the surface of the handle. Since the bolt shank extends through the nut and the nut is recessed into the handle, you cannot use a wrench, or a normal screw driver to unscrew it. So, I needed to include a split nut driver with the handsaws for their future owner. That meant I needed to make handles, and that meant I needed a lathe to turn the handles. Making handles is basic spindle work and I have made handles for these split nut drivers, file handles, and even some chisel handles. That led to turning pens on a lathe.

Pen making kits are readily available. Basically, they consist of the ends and guts of a pen and you use a lathe to create the barrel of the pen, usually from blanks of wood or acrylic. While learning how to make these pens, I wanted to find a way to personalize them. After trying a variety of ideas, I came up with a method using printable decals and a cyanoacrylate finish on the pen barrels to add text and images. So, now I make pens that I donate for student fund raising auctions and for recognition and gifts for CSU coworkers. Currently, I am finishing up a set of 24 pens for each of the project team members that have worked so hard and been so instrumental in our launch of the new medical records system at the CSU VTH.

So many woodworking projects and so little free time. That is my challenge these days but a very nice challenge to have. My woodworking is a great way to relax in the evening or over a weekend.

But it also contributes in a variety of ways to my work as a veterinarian. It has required me to continue to learn new methods, be innovative, research a variety of topics, develop a better eye for form and symmetry, and even learn to sharpen most hand tools including hoof knives, necropsy knives, Newberry blades, hoof nipper blades,



Some pens donated as auction items or used to support student scholarships. The top two are made from reindeer antler from one of our local patients

and S-curved suture needles. One of the refurbished back saws is now part of our livestock service equipment and is used for a variety of things including foot trims on overgrown feet or trimming horns. So, from veterinarian to woodworker, they are both a very big part of my life.



This means your llama will have to work harder and your load will not ride as solidly as when it is compressed closer to the llama. Some panniers have compression straps that pull the load in closer to the llama.

- Is there a means of tying the panniers down to keep them in place when your llama takes a jump? This will also help stabilize the forward and rearward motion of the panniers.
- Are the panniers durable? Most panniers are made of materials that will hold up under normal outdoor use if they are sewn properly.
- What colors do they come in? I suppose this is a perfectly valid question. If you are concerned about your physical health, you might be interested in knowing whether the odds of survival are greater outfitting your pack string in camouflage to appease the visual pollution advocates or in neon orange in hopes of surviving the upcoming hunting season. Actually, you do have an option here. You can buy more subtle colors and accessorize

with neon orange rain covers and/or neckbands for your llamas during hunting season and the odds are fifty/fifty you will survive both seasons. If you're concerned about your mental health, consider getting each outfit in a different color to avoid confusing yourself when packing up several different pannier sets for the same trip. Also, some colors show dirt more than others, although most panniers can be washed.

- Is simpler better? Don't buy a llama pack just because it looks simple to use. There is a learning process that has to take place in order to get a fully loaded llama to the top of the mountain with the least amount of effort, and putting on the pack is just the first step. It may seem complicated and take longer at first to try to figure out where all those straps go, but before long you will realize that there is a reason for having them and you will save yourself frustration and time by learning to use them.



Editors' Note: Part 1 covered selecting a pack system. Part 2 to appear in the Spring 2020 issue will discuss Accepting the Saddle, Chest strap & Breeching, and the Panniers.

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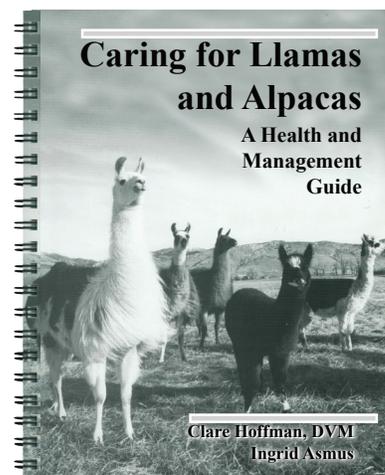
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We () Get Letters.....

From Mary Wickman, Sept 25, 2019

Hi. I just wanted you to know that I just got my journal (was up in Laramie). I love the way you did the articles on the Fairplay event. Really made it easy for people to see the different things that were going on. Great job.

From Linda Hayes, November 20, 2019

Dear Editor, in reading the Vet column in the Fall issue of the Journal, I noticed that the answer on how often to worm did not mention that in areas with white tail deer they need to worm monthly with Ivomec. This keeps the llamas from getting the Meningeal worm which can cause paralysis and death. A snail carries it between the deer and llamas. Mule deer do not harbor the parasite.

Response from Robert Callan, DVM, CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital:

Meningeal worm of camelids, *Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*, is a significant problem in some parts of the U.S., mostly areas east of the Mississippi river. The primary host for the parasite is white-tailed deer. Generally, infected deer are asymptomatic or have mild clinical signs.

The parasite lives in the meninges of the spinal cord in deer where they lay eggs that develop into larvae. The larvae migrate to the lungs, are coughed up, swallowed, and passed in the feces. The larvae then infect snails or slugs where they continue to mature. These infected snails and slugs are consumed by livestock when they graze. Llamas, alpacas, sheep and goats are all susceptible to infection and the larvae can migrate to the spinal cord of those animals causing damage and progressive neurological signs.

The life cycle of the parasite requires the snail or slug, without which, the parasite cannot persist. While we do have plenty of white-tailed deer in the Rocky Mountain region, the environment is generally too dry and not suitable for the snails and slugs that serve as intermediate hosts.

Monthly deworming for this parasite is something that contributes to anthelmintic resistance for other nematode parasites and thus is discouraged in the Rocky Mountain region unless *P. tenuis* has been previously diagnosed in the area and high moisture conditions are present for survival of the appropriate snails and slugs to support transmission to livestock.



Postscript from The Journal Volunteers



“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.”

Douglas Adams, writer, 1952-2001



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



EVENTS CALENDAR

MARY WICKMAN, EVENTS CHAIR

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

- **January 10,11 & 12, 2020, National Western Stock Show, Llamas & Alpacas. Denver, CO. Youth and Adult classes in Performance & Showmanship open to llamas and alpacas. Llama halter classes. Contact Judy Glaser at judy.glaser@yahoo.com.**

Save the Dates

Planning an event, but, the ‘paperwork’ is incomplete? Send us the information and we will let members know to Save the Date.

February 8 & 9, 2020, PacaBuddies, Douglas County Fairgrounds, Castle Rock, CO Alpacas, Llamas!, Fiber, products, seminars and demonstrations. See www.pacabuddies.org