

Spring 2022

The Journal of RMLA



Welcome to RMLA!

--- Mission Statement ---

The mission of the Association shall be to educate the members and the public as to the breeding, raising, care and use of llamas and alpacas.

RMLA Board of Directors



President
Lougene Baird
Cottonwood AZ
808-747-5023
lougenebaird@outlook.com



Vice President
Nancy Wilson
Camp Verde AZ
928-220-5553
spinllama@msn.com



Secretary
Sandy Schilling
Chino Valley AZ
602-403-8166
Sschillig151@gmail.com



Treasurer
Geri Rutledge
Waco NE
402-366-9304
buckshollowalpacas@icloud.com



At-Large
Linda Hayes
Prescott AZ
970-379-4576
llamas@skybeam.com

Chairpersons, Active Committees

Bookstore

Manager: **Mary Vavrina**
303-726-9694
RMLAbookstore@gmail.com
Bookkeeper: **Marilyn Arnold**
Liaison Lougene Baird

Facebook

Morgan Barba
rmlayouthinfo@gmail.com
Liaison Sandy Schilling

E-Blasts

Sandy Schilling
602-403-8166
RMLAebblast@gmail.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Education/Events/Marketing

Mary Wickman
719-651-8871
Mwickman1@gmail.com
Liaison Linda Hayes

Fiber

Kathy Stanko
970-256-7716
rmlafiber@gmail.com
Liaison Nancy Wilson

Finance

Marilyn Arnold
303-841-5126
rmlaaccounting@yahoo.com
Liaison Geri Rutledge

The Journal

Kathy Stanko
970-256-7716
rmlaeditor@gmail.com
Liaison Nancy Wilson

Library

Sandy Lockwood
303-838-9554
Rmlalibrary3@gmail.com
Liaison Nancy Wilson

Membership

Sandy Schilling
602-403-8166
RMLAmembershipchair@gmail.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Nominations & Elections

Christina Abel
620-626-8743
luckyonyx81@gmail.com
Liaison Linda Hayes

Pack

OPEN
Liaison Nancy Wilson

Research

Ron Baird
808-747-5975
ronbaird1942@outlook.com
Liaison Geri Rutledge

Website

Content: **Kathy Stanko**
970-256-7716
Rmlawebbsite@gmail.com
Membership: **Sandy Schilling**
602-403-8166
RMLAmembershipchair@gmail.com
Liaison Lougene Baird

Youth and 4-H

Morgan Barba
rmlayouthinfo@gmail.com
Liaison Sandy Schilling

About the Journal

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

The information in The Journal is not intended to be a substitute for qualified professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult with their own veterinarian, accountant or attorney regarding any questions concerning their animals or business operations.

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Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates & Specifications

Issue	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
Spring	February 28	March 31
Summer	May 31	June 30
Fall	August 31	September 30
Winter	November 30	December 31

Ad Type	Width x Height	Member Rate	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5"x2"	\$ 7	\$ 15
¼ page horiz.	7.5"x2"	\$ 12	\$ 24
¼ page vert.	3.5"x4.5"	\$ 12	\$ 24
Half Page	7.5" x 5"	\$ 24	\$ 48
Full Page	7.5"x 10"	\$ 39	\$ 78

Ad rates are quoted per issue. Lock in the current rate by purchasing an ad for four consecutive issues and receive a 5th ad for free. You may change your ad once during the year.

To submit articles, ads or photo:

- All submissions go to rmlaeditor@gmail.com
- Documents in MS Word format
- Camera ready ads as a pdf file. **NOTE:** What you send is what we publish.
- Images/photos as .jpeg (.jpg) or .tiff files. Photo from a camera or phone are sufficient. Please check the background and lighting. RMLA will crop for fit and/or enhance the lighting.

Instructions for advertising payment:

Send your check, payable to RMLA, along with a copy of the ad to:

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Franktown CO 80116
303-841-5126

Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

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RMLA News from Your Board

Many RMLA members have renewed their dues for the coming year. We thank you for being an important piece of our organization. A big thank you to our first-time members, some who are international, who have joined us.

Please keep this in mind:

- Old-timey way – renewal of dues was due by March 31, with a short grace period, of course.
- New-timey way – and reflective of the new RMLA.com, a membership year begins on the day a person joins or renews. This new way makes it extremely easier for our volunteers and members.

RMLA PERK. Get your RMLA event liability insurance! This is a wonderful time to plan an RMLA event in your area. It is spring and time to get out again with your animals and share with your community the joy of lamas. Check out the EVENT tab on RMLA.com to learn more about how to organize an event. And remember, RMLA has liability insurance for your event and can provide a Certificate of Liability if required by the facility where the event will be held. Your event at any location is covered by the liability insurance as long as you apply and receive approval from the RMLA Board.

RMLA has a Youth program for youth in your community. Kids cannot just do this alone. Adult leaders are needed to bring our youth into the lama community, regardless if it is 4H, FFA or just a bunch of kids having fun. Have fun with them and make it an RMLA group of kids by asking them to sign up as a Youth Member.

A personal note from your President!

Beyond my family and career, I have enjoyed serving on this Board for an interminable number of years and found it to be a highly rewarding part of my life. I love being in contact with members, solving problems, keeping things organized and watching it all happen.

With this, I will admit that the last year has been amazingly special. As it turned out, we had a group of four who focused on the creation of your new RMLA.com website. Something was always happening — seven days a week, from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Holidays were no exception. As I look back, the most amazing part was being a part of the team and experiencing the determination, learning, sharing, developing, creating, doing, un-doing, being excited, being disappointed, being amazed. It was an exercise in Boolean logic day after day with an unfathomable number of ups and downs.

The chemistry of the team was a once in a lifetime experience. Never was there bickering, pouting, power struggles, lack of trust, or faltering team spirit, hurt feelings or lack of pulling one's weight. We had a job to do for our members and we were determined to succeed. It was all business all the time and we made some darn tough decisions. I am grateful for our Web designer, Charlotte Howard, who led us from inception to launch, for Kathy Stanko who assumed the lead position for content and for Sandra Schilling who stepped in to lead everything related to membership data. The three of us 'non-computer' women learned things we had no idea existed, no idea we could do it, and especially no idea we could not do it!

For this team effort, our members have a pretty neat and modern website. We on the team have something that can never be taken from us, the feeling of success and fun of working together on an awesome project. It will reside in our souls and be a part of us forever. As VOLUNTEERS, we did it!

Try volunteering, it really is cool!
Lougene

P.S. We have had communications from other llama and alpaca organizations that are amazed at the new RMLA.com.

From the Editor

It is an exciting time for RMLA. We have come into the 21st century! Our eJournal has received an enthusiastic response from many of you, even those of you who miss holding it in your hands. A side benefit of switching to an eJournal: the advertising rates for members have been cut in half! Check out the prices and how you can get a free ad with a year's subscription.

This issue begins with suggestions by Marty McGee Bennett to improve your performance and your enjoyment in the show ring. You will find handling tips to help you even when you are not in the show ring with your animals. Perhaps you are just taking a walk from the field to the barn... does your animal stop when you do? Now I know why that does not happen at my house.



After a long (actually very long) hiatus from the many activities we do in public with our llamas and alpacas, events and shows are going forward. Attendance at the National Western Stock Show was way over the top this year in all categories. For the numbers, see the article by Show Superintendent Judy Glaser.

This is the season for crias. We have an amazing article on how to help with nursing issues. And shearing... get those cutters and blades sharpened and see the article on the various styles of cuts. It is always good to have a plan. Life throws surprises at us no matter our age.

To get a full view of the options available to plan the care for all of your animals, see the article from Southeast Llama Rescue. You might even want to keep this information as a reference. Climate change is having its effects all around the globe. In a very interesting article, we get a view into the problems it is creating for alpacas in Peru. Severe weather is affecting their food supply.

And, the new website has launched. Ease of use and new features to promote your farms, ranches, animals, and products were goals in the development of the site and its features. The webmasters, in their article, have included ideas as to how each of you can easily spread the word about RMLA and the new website.

As your editor, I have two requests for you.

1. Outdoor activities such as packing are the foundation of RMLA since its beginning in the 1980s. With the lack of articles on how to pack, what to take on a hike, where some fun places to go, I have to wonder 'Is no one hiking or packing these days?' If you hike or pack with your llamas and alpacas, please share your experiences with our members. What food do you take, what are your favorite places to go, what packs system do you like and why? A 500-word article and a couple of photos is all you need to send.
2. What types of information and articles would you like to see in future Journals? Send me your ideas, your articles and questions for the Ask the Vet column.

Until the next issue, stay safe and stay well. Enjoy your animals, family and friends.

Kathy Stanko, Editor
rmlaeditor@gmail.com

Cover photo: Morgan Barba at the National Western Stock Show. See her article in this issue. Photo courtesy of Sarah Barba.

Welcome New Members!

RMLA is always growing! We welcome the following new members:

Charlotte Howard, Anthem AZ
Julie and Michael Hall, Elizabeth CO
Karen Freund, Chino Valley AZ
Keith Payne, Cheviot, New Zealand
Llama and Alpaca Association Nebraska, Osceola NE
Sean Magill, Parker CO

TRAINING

Leading with Precision!

Marty McGee Bennett
CameliDynamics

Teaching an inexperienced camelid (llama, alpaca, camel, paco-vicuna) to step out proudly on his own can be a challenge. The first trip to the show ring is almost always a scary event. While not as herd bound as alpacas, llamas are herd animals. Safety is all about sticking with the group and in having the freedom to run. Leaving the rest of the herd while tied to a human is a huge leap of faith. Trusting in the leadership of the handler has a lot to do with the kind of

leader the handler is! Lead with precision and the camelid is more likely to understand what is being asked. The more the animal understands the more likely he is to cooperate.



Most people teach a camelid to lead by pulling on the head. Using the head to pull the rest of the body where you want it to go seems logical. This “technique” works with a dog... often the only other animal with which many owners have experience. Dog owners will pull a puppy around using a collar around the neck. After a few sessions of dragging the pup figures out he is supposed to go with the human. Ironically the problem then becomes how to stop the dog from dragging the owner around.

When it comes to camelids, pulling an animal to teach him to lead comes with a price. The law of unintended consequences often produces an animal that cushes or throws his weight to the rear and grows roots as soon as he feels any pressure on the head. There are better ways to teach both dogs and camelids how to walk on a lead. Teaching a camelid to lead is not the topic for this issue but rather the related subject of “speaking” clearly through the lead once your animal knows enough to follow you on the lead.

Pulling on the head to direct the movement of the body might work for getting from point A to point B; the “technique” breaks down rapidly when you begin to ask for more specific behaviors. The problem with using the camelid’s head to boss the body around is that darn three-foot neck. With the exception of the alpaca, there are few if

any animals that are routinely led and shown that have such a long neck. You can lead the head quite nicely and the



In this photo, the alpaca is standing in balance. Her head is lined up with her neck, her neck is lined up with her body and her body is over her feet. Note the loose lead rope.

body can be doing something entirely different! If you are in the habit of using the head to make your animal go where you go and do what you do, your technique may leave you stranded when you arrive in the show ring or attempt to load in a trailer.

In the show ring our goal is to exhibit promote an animal's balance, carriage and grace. This requires that the animal carry himself in balance and listen and respond to signals from the handler. To do this well a camelid's head must be lined up and balanced over the neck; the neck must be in line with the body and the body must be over his feet. Using gross motor movement and big forceful signals will topple this house of cards in a New York minute! Judges must judge what they see and if your animal is all over the place in the show ring like he is just coming out of anesthesia... well that is what you are showing the judge. If you missed the part about teaching your animal to lead without pulling on his head so that you don't create leading problems and are now having some trouble with style, gait, balance, poise, and grace on the lead, this article will help bridge the gap.

First, a few reminders:

- The way you do anything with your camelid—from oral worming to toenail trimming— affects the way he will behave in the show ring. I could write a book about this—oh gosh I did! —but suffice it to say USE a catch pen! Specifically, move your animal in line with a panel to catch him, instead of grabbing and holding him

around the neck. Holding on to the neck as the body flails around creates the habitual response to throw the weight around to escape. This behavior WILL come back to haunt you as you prepare for the show ring.

- Make sure that your halter fits safely and comfortably. Without a properly fitting halter your attempts to truly communicate with your animal will be impossible. The halter will not work to communicate your signals. Additionally, the ill-fitting halter will distract the animal. **Editor's Note:** *I have had personal experience with the difference in handling that a proper fitting halter makes. My preference is the Zephyr halter.*
- Use a longer lead rope for your training sessions (6-7 feet). Camelids are frightened when they leave their pals and head out with you. Handlers mistakenly think that bringing the animal up close helps! I have news for you... you are part of what they are frightened of! A longer lead gives your camelid room to think and get far enough away from you to ease the pressure your presence creates. Getting away from your animal also gives him a chance to learn to carry himself without your interference.



- If your halter has a ring on the NOSE BAND you can try leading from this ring. See photo to the right. Leading from the side ring is like having power steering, makes it easier to understand the signals you give and it much easier to maintain contact (discussed below). You must use this technique as described with the kind of halter that supports the technique. Leading from the cheek ring will not work! Once your camelid is performing well you can switch back to the standard leading ring under the chin.

Now that you are out and about connected to your animal with a properly fitting halter and a longer lead, head out to the “playground for higher learning.” I have borrowed this wonderful phrase from my teacher and mentor, Linda Tellington-Jones. Set up a few very simple obstacles in your leading area. I like poles. I use a combination of wooden fence posts, drain-pipe (6 inches in diameter) and PVC pipe of various lengths. The obstacles I use are illustrated in the accompanying photos. You should have some easy obstacles and some that are more complicated.



The obstacles I use are illustrated in the accompanying photos. You should have some easy obstacles and some that are more complicated.

The main thing is these obstacles are used for you to give very precise signals NOT as a punch list to get it done. Dragging your animal over all of the obstacles DOES NOT constitute success. I like to stop before each obstacle and use that moment to ask my animal to stand in balance, then proceed slowly and deliberately one-step at a time. This teaches the animal to wait and listen instead of anticipating you.

The essence of leading with precision is to be connected to your camelid through the lead rope and using it to have a conversation. Speaking to

your animal with the lead rope is very much like talking on the telephone. Once the connection is established through the lead line, the process involves speaking and then waiting and listening. People who don't stop talking in order to listen to feedback from other people end up being ignored. The same is true with camelids if there is no give and take and no connection through the line.

A lead that is too tight or too loose will compromise the connection. A loose lead does not transmit signals leaving the animal to make up his own agenda and a lead that is too tight encourages the animal to use the lead for balance. The trick is to be able to move around and maintain this light connection at the same time.

You will notice in many of the photos the handler is carrying a white wand. This tool is useful to help maintain contact while keeping the animal slightly away from you as well as helping to slow an animal down and teach a balanced halt. Stopping together in balance with your animal is key to beautiful leading and successful showing. A balanced halt means that the handler and animal slow down and stop in unison. Too often the handler “thinks” halt and stops immediately **before** the animal “hears” the command and processes its meaning.



This sets the stage for circling. Circling is distracting for the animal and the judge. A balanced halt is achieved by giving an up-and-back signal to halt and slowing down **but** continuing to walk until the animal slows and stops with you.

Refined leading with precision is about imparting information through the lead, but it is also about using your body and body position to communicate as well. Your animal is highly aware of your body language. Your camelid knows when you hold your breath and interprets this as danger—this explains why your animal might be standing quietly and rears up just as the judge lifts his head from the animal next to you but before he takes even one step toward you. Your animal knows when you lose focus and are not paying attention—this explains why he picks this exact moment to sniff his neighbor or becomes distracted in the lineup.

Your animal also mirrors your posture and attitude. The following story is about an alpaca but it is just as true for llamas. I was doing some demonstrations and helping exhibitors at an alpaca show recently when a tall beautiful woman brought her alpaca to me for help in the ring. She told me, “This alpaca does brilliantly in the show ring for the person I bought him from. He is clumsy and slow and he won’t hold his head up for me.” I asked this woman to lead the alpaca for me in the aisle way of the arena. What I noticed as she led him, was that she was kind of clumsy and slow and didn’t hold her head up! I asked her to pick her feet up, stand up straight and become more animated. Lo and behold so did the alpaca! She brought him back by later proudly holding her first place ribbon and I hardly recognized either one of them as the downtrodden pair that asked for help earlier in the day!

Leading with precision shows off our animals to the judge AND shows off our industry to the public. Leading with precision in the show ring looks more interesting and professional to those observing YOU interact with your animals possibly leading to farm visits and sales. Leading with precision increases your chances of success in the show ring. Your animal looks better, is more balanced and feels safer, and is therefore more likely to stand well for inspection. And even if you don’t win, you will have had more fun.

RMLA EVENT

Pacabuddies 2022 – February 12th and 13th

Ron Hinds
El Zorro Colorado Alpacas
Elizabeth, CO

Our bi-annual event occurs at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Castle Rock, CO. Postcards and email reminders are sent to past visitors and friends and are used for promotions.

Booths and alpaca pens were set up on Friday, and even though it was a small group of Pacabuddies members, we all had a great time. The ratio of visitors to sales was actually up compared to the previous Pacabuddies event last Fall. The DC Fairgrounds is always busy for other events, so we had some of those folks visit us as well.





Things started to get real slow on Sunday afternoon, probably because of the Super Bowl that afternoon. So, we ended early, packed up, cleaned up and headed home. Pacabuddies will be back in September, 2022 for another edition.

Pacabuddies wishes to thank RMLA for their sponsorship and supplier of the liability insurance required by the Fairgrounds. Because of the RMLA banner display, past printed Journals and membership forms at the event, I understand RMLA gained a couple new members!



International Educational Event at Your Fingertips

The CAMELIDynamics Virtual Conference is a very special educational opportunity for llama and alpaca owners of all levels of knowledge. May 7th and 8th are the dates. Please check out the website <https://camelidynamics.vfairs.com/>. RMLA is excited to announce that we will have a virtual booth at this international event.



My Cria Isn't Nursing – Any Suggestions?

Dianna Jordan, Alpacas of Somerset Farm

Reprinted from Calpaca Connection, September 2021

The call came in while I was visiting with our daughter. I am so glad I decided to answer it. By the end of the call, I added valuable information to my “what do you do if” toolbox. The fact our daughter was there is a very significant part of this story.

The call was from a friend and fellow alpaca own-er looking for help. They had a newborn that had not begun to nurse, or even show any interest in nursing. We went through a series of questions and answers about the behavior of the cria and the dam. We discussed several possibilities and techniques. Based on the behavior being described, I suggested they might be dealing with a condition identified by Dr. Madigan as Dummy Cria Syndrome, so named after the behavior, and commonly known in the horse world as Dummy Foal Syndrome. The similarity between the cria's behavior and those of a dummy cria included apparent detachment from the environment and activities going on around it, failure to recognize its mother and no interest in nursing.

The theory behind the Dummy Foal and Dummy Cria Syndrome is that somewhere between the time the cria or foal enters the birth canal and the moment it emerges from the womb, a bio-chemical “on switch” must be flicked that enables the cria to recognize its dam, to nurse and to become mobile. It is suspected that the physical pressure of the birthing process may be that important signal.

I asked if it had been a fast birth. The owner did not know because they weren't there. All the while our daughter was listening to my part of the conversation. Finally, I asked a question I should have asked earlier, “Does the cria have a suckle response?” The answer was “No!!” I could hear the frustration and concern in my friend's voice. My reply was, “I don't know what to recommend when there is no suckle response.” After listening to my side of the conversation and hearing my comment, our daughter spoke up and offered her help.

Our daughter Jennifer is a registered nurse and certified IBCLC (International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant). She has over 20 years of experience supporting breastfeeding families, and 25 years of teaching in the health-care field. She has been nicknamed the “Baby Whisperer” because of her ability to turn around the most challenging situations when a baby does not latch on or nurse effectively.

She suggested the nerves associated with nursing needed to be stimulated. As noted above, these nerves are generally stimulated by the pressure and contractions during the time spent in the birth canal. This cria's nerves needed to be woken up so that natural instincts would take over. She instructed the owner to find the concave place between the ears at the base of the cria's skull (Illustration #1), and with the tips of her index and middle fingers, start gently massaging in a circular motion. This motion stimulates the cranial nerves (CN) that come together at the base of the skull. Pay particular attention to the descriptions (Illustration #2) about Cn5, Cn7, Cn9 and 10, and Cn12, and think about those nerves and their effect on the ability to nurse.

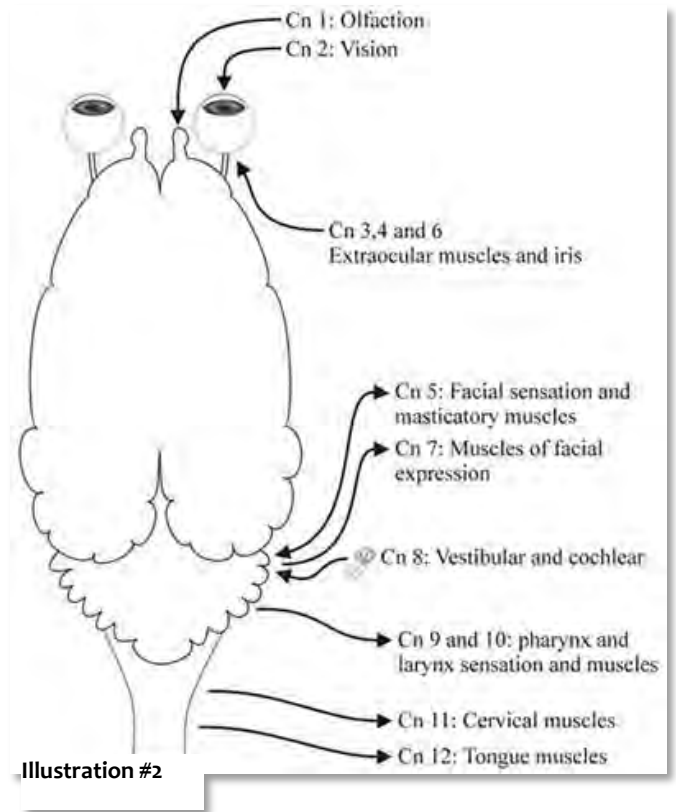


After a few minutes of massaging the space at the base of the skull, she instructed her to move her fingers to the sides of the cria's face, and massage along the top and bottom of the jaw line. After massaging the jaw line she was to insert a finger into the cria's mouth and massage the roof of the mouth.

After getting off the phone with me and feeling they had nothing to lose and a lot to gain, the owners of this cria used the "Madigan Squeeze" and our daughter's suggestions.

Editor's Note: search on line for more information about the Madigan Squeeze.

I am happy to report that after a plasma transfer, the massage treatments and the Madigan Squeeze, the cria started to engage with the world around her, to recognize her dam, and to start nursing. The proud owners have a healthy and thriving cria, and all of us have a new tool for our "What do we do if?" toolboxes.



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Climate Change in the Andes Affecting Alpacas

By Ron Baird

Chair, Research Committee

Global warming is causing unique local disturbances in climates, largely overlooked by the media. For example, scientists recently announced the discovery that drought in the Southwestern United States was much more severe earlier than the 1400's when many pueblos were abandoned by the Anasazi. They determined the Southwest now is in the most severe drought since the 800's (YES, 800 AD, not 1800 AD). In the Andes, changes in climate are affecting the estimated 3.8 million alpacas living in Peru and Bolivia.

In January 2017, Al Jazeera News Agencies reported cold weather in the Ayacucho region of south-central Peru was being blamed for the deaths of up to 180,000 alpacas. They seemed to have been made vulnerable to the cold weather by a drought that began the year before. Lack of rainfall had resulted in poor grass growth, the alpacas had poor grazing for months, weakening them and having a profound effect on their breeding.



Not just alpacas are affected; llamas, guanacos and vicunas also are affected.

Outbreaks of extremely cold air from the Antarctic, known as frigem events, occur during the winter months in the Southern hemisphere. The frigem of 2003 reportedly killed more than half of Peru's alpacas when temperatures plunged to minus 35 Celsius. The cold weather in 2016 reportedly killed 50,000 alpacas in the southern Puno region. Several reasons exist for this: alpacas are not super good at foraging in cold snowy weather, because they do not carry much body fat for warmth and their coats do not carry water-resistant lanolin (since they have fiber, not wool).

Several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Peruvian government have been working for the past decade or so to mitigate the damage being caused by global warming, its result is droughts and bitter winters in the Andes. This is a recognition that llamas, but particularly alpacas in Peru represent the major source of income for people living on the Altiplano. Government efforts include emphasizing the importance of alpaca fleeces and meat as a source of income.

An organization, DESCO, is a Peruvian NGO that has been working in different parts of the country for almost 50 years. Since 1985, it has been supporting farmers and families rearing alpacas in the country's southern Andes. Farmers in this area depend on the commercialization of alpaca meat and fiber. The southern Andean region is a part of Peru where poverty levels are highest and the land is suffering severe degradation.



Various studies have concluded the land degradation is mostly the result of disappearing vegetation cover, and a result of increasing population and animal pressure. DESCO began implementing water harvesting projects in 1996 in this region. Since then, it has funded the building of more than 135 dams to store water for irrigation and reducing the degradation of alpaca habitats. To some extent, this effort has offset the loss of water from drastically receding glaciers. Localities in the Ayacucho, Arequipa, and Puno regions have experienced improvements and benefits from this strategy.

In some areas, after about four years, plant density was more than 100% higher and biomass yields nearly 200% higher than before the dams and irrigation projects were begun. The number of plant species and the ability to spread them

had increased. Ultimately, the resulting improved pasturage meant healthier herds and the ability of the land to carry more animals per unit of forage. Villagers report their alpacas weigh more when born and that their survival rates are higher, all of which directly translates into higher incomes.

Practical Action, another NGO, has taken a different approach to saving alpacas and the local way of life in the high Andes due to the changes brought about by global warming. One of these is by building shelters for alpacas to protect them during extremely cold events such as frigidays. The second effort by this NGO has been the introduction of a way to grow barley in water and form the young sprouts into blocks in just two weeks for alpaca food. However, the third effort is probably the most important. The NGO has trained more than 30 farmers to recognize diseases and how to treat them. These farmers then share their knowledge with others, increasing the odds of animal survival and the survival of a way of life that is 6,000 to 7,000 years old.



GOOD WORK EVERYONE

Applause Please!

By F.E. Baxter
Southwest Llama Rescue

Southwest Llama Rescue, Inc. (SWLR) received \$412.60 from Amazon Smile during 2021. Ordering through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) does not cost more than ordering through Amazon.com. With the \$412.60, SWLR purchased 20 bales of orchard grass hay at \$20/bale of 2 strand bales, under 50 lbs. each.

Thank you to all who designate Southwest Llama Rescue, Inc. as the charity and use [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) when ordering from Amazon. Your use of Amazon in this way provided 2 weeks of hay for the sanctuary llamas and alpacas.

Southwest Llama Rescue, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of dedicated volunteers supported by private donations of time, talent, and funds. RMLA members continue to support rescue efforts in many ways. Applause please!



Transitions: Competing As an Adult

By Morgan Barba
Chair, Youth, 4-H, FAA Committee

And just like that, 2021 is behind us. January brought us a new year, which meant it was stock show time. Although there were a few times last fall when things looked bleak, 2022 rolled around, and we were FINALLY able to be back at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS), showing llamas and alpacas. I, for one, could not have been any more excited, and I think it was a sentiment shared by everyone, participants and exhibitors alike.



While the energy and enthusiasm of the participants and the spectators surrounding the show were the same, this NWSS certainly felt different for me. For the first time in my many experiences, I am no longer in the youth program, and this was my first time competing as an adult. It was great to visit with and support the youth participants, and I enjoyed showing as an adult. The judges were terrific, the obstacles were challenging, and I learned several new training skills that I plan to apply this spring as we work towards the Estes Park Wool Festival in June.

Showing in the adult category was an entirely different experience. For me, it was a lot less pressure and just a lot of fun all-around, especially when we were doing walk-throughs; these “old” people made me laugh! My favorite part of showing as an adult was getting to compete against my dad, especially when it came to the showmanship class. I'll let you do the guessing of who finished second and who finished third.

Showing as an adult was an entirely different experience. For me, it was a lot less pressure and just a lot of fun all-around, especially when we were doing walk-throughs; these “old” people made me laugh! My favorite part of showing as an adult was getting to compete against my dad, especially when it came to the showmanship class. I'll let you do the guessing of who finished second and who finished third.

Going to college and saying goodbye to showing in 4-H and as a youth participant was difficult. It meant my opportunities to show other livestock were now fairly limited. The transition was much easier because I could continue to show my boys. Unlike showing goats or lambs, I know I still get to do the same classes I did as a youth. It will be more challenging as I work up to the Advanced and Masters's classes. Also, it makes time working with my boys even more special as we have a goal that we get to work towards when it comes to shows.

I think one of the most challenging parts of showing as an adult will be the large class sizes and not letting that discourage me over time. I know that it can be challenging to get out of the Novice class due to the large class sizes and that it may be difficult to remain positive. Still, I am also beginning to realize that shows are just a way to spend time with my animals and with friends I don't get to see all that often. My parents have told me that winning is not everything and I should enjoy the ride for years. My last show as a youth participant was only six months ago, and I can also say the previous two years have certainly given me a new perspective on what matters most. I am starting to realize that buckles, banners, and ribbons fade over time, but the memories and friendships do not. Instead of focusing on winning, I plan to enjoy the time spent with my animals, friends, and family.





SOUTHEAST LLAMA RESCUE, INC.

...Because Things Change

In the Event of Accident, Disability or Death: What About the Animals?

If one day you were no longer able care for your camelid, who would take over the responsibility? Caring for camelids requires appropriate facilities and some degree of experience. This is usually a far more complex scenario than finding someone to keep your dog or cat. This might be a temporary situation or a permanent one. Regardless, you need to have a plan in place so your animals will not go without care for even a single day. Below is a high level guideto making the necessary arrangements.

Please note: *This is a high level guide intended to cover all possibilities. SELR does not have the capability as an organization to provide temporary care. If animals are surrendered to SELR, the arrangement is facilitated via a legally binding contract (SELR Surrender Form) which transfers ownership of the animal(s) to SELR in order to facilitate permanent placement into screened homes. This form can be completed and signed with a copy held by both parties until it needs to be initiated. In that case, a yearly review is necessary so that when the time comes for the transfer of animals, we can plan appropriately to secure the necessary foster space.*

Standard SELR surrender forms can be downloaded from the web site www.southeastllamarescue.org. For forms specific to 6 or more animals, contact your closest Coordinator or the SELR Facebook page to have a “Large Herd Surrender Form” sent to you.

Step One: Prepare an inventory and identify permanent or interim caregivers

Every animal owner should maintain documentation that lists individual animals, the address where they are located (if not your home address) and contact information for interim or permanent caregivers. You are welcome to utilize SELR’s standard Surrender Form for less than six animals to create your inventory or in the case of a larger number of animals, the “Large Herd Surrender Form” may better suffice for this purpose as it provides a more condensed format which you can modify as desired. Interim caregivers are those who would be willing to care for your animals in the hours, days or weeks after an emergency which results in your unexpected absence. You should identify at least two interim caregivers.

Provide these caregivers with the location of your camelid profile information (if you are using a livestock management application, make sure they have all access codes!), the name of your veterinarian and information about the long-term provisions you have made for your llamas and/or alpacas. Identify a date each year that is meaningful to you, such as your birthday or a holiday, when you will revisit your selection of caregivers as well as the inventory of animals currently on the property.

It’s also a good time to bring associated medical records up to date as well. Note any ongoing medical issues or medications, special supplements, etc. Emergency caregivers should also know how to contact each other, the feed store you normally buy from and the products you use. Animals in stressful circumstances don’t need a sudden change of feed if it can be avoided!

Step Two – Prepare a Written Long-Term Plan for Your Animals

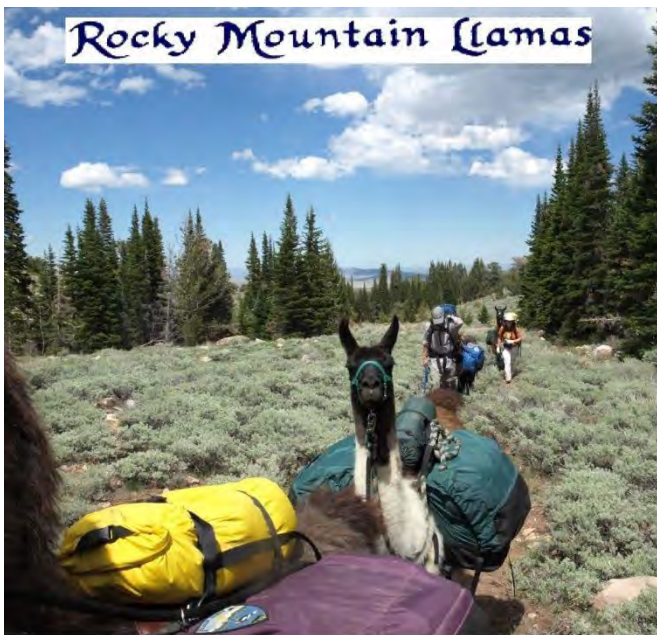
It is important to have a formal written plan detailing how you want your animals to be cared for in your absence. This plan should be formalized in a will, trust or other legal document. Legally animals are considered personal property and therefore, if they are not included in the estate planning process, they could be taken to an auction (particularly if livestock), given away to uneducated parties who will not care for them appropriately or even euthanized. Your estate plan should include, at a minimum, the following documents with mention of provisions for your animal in each:

- Durable powers of attorney for financial matters
- Durable powers of attorney for health matters
- Last will and testament and trusts.

Permanent Caregivers

The first step in making any plan is to identify options for permanent caregivers for your animals. Consider friends and family members who know your animals and understand the responsibility of caring for them. You must also decide if your animals must stay together or could be placed in separate locations. It is important to have alternate caregivers identified in case your first choice is unavailable.

Another option is to ask a rescue organization, such as SELR, to find a new home for your animals. This should be discussed in advance with the organization and specific instructions written into your estate plan. *If you are considering designating SELR as the permanent caregiver, the inclusion of completed SELR surrender forms is very helpful in ensuring we are able to act within the timeframes necessary and position ourselves to provide the necessary care which may be required by senior and/or compromised animals.*



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Medical records, even if very basic, help tremendously. If animals are transitioned to SELR among the very first things we do are body score and check eye membranes (FAMACHA). Then unless the animal is visibly compromised we provide a CDT shot, initiate Meningeal worm prevention (injectable Ivermectin), run a fecal test and worm appropriately. Depending on the location of the foster and/or adoptive home, we will often administer a rabies shot as well. Avoiding unnecessary meds, procedures and associated costs are preferable but we will err on the side of caution if we have no medical history to reference.

It is important to have someone designated to make funds available to provide for the care of your animals when permanent caregivers are being identified. You cannot leave property to your animal – funding must be directed to the interim or permanent caregiver.

SELR is an all-volunteer rescue organization funded solely by donations and adoption fees. While we are always working to find surrendered animals just the right home, costs associated with feed and supplementation during the time applicants are undergoing our screening process,

addressing any veterinary issues which may crop up, as well as transportation to new homes for numerous animals could stress our resources beyond a reasonable point and render us unable to accept other surrenders for a significant period of time.

Step 3: Options

Informal Agreements:

Many times, the above arrangements can be accomplished via informal agreements which do not require the assistance of an attorney. Generally, informal agreements include all arrangements for the care of your animals. Although they are not legally enforceable if you have a viable candidate to take over the care of your animals, this might be the perfect arrangement.

A “pre-surrender” arrangement with SELR would fall into this category although once the owner or their designee confirms the transfer by signing the surrender contract it is considered to be a legally binding contract transferring ownership to SELR. Without the transfer of ownership we cannot remove animals from the premises, provide any necessary veterinary care (including the gelding of all intact males as per our policy) or ultimately place them in pre-screened homes. An agreement of this nature may also be referred to as a “Legacy Arrangement”.

Powers of Attorney

Powers of attorney, which authorize someone else to conduct some or all of your affairs **while you are alive**, have become a standard planning device. Such documents can be written to take effect upon your physical or mental incapacity. It is important to include animals in these powers of attorney to authorize payments for care, including food, veterinary care, grooming, etc. These documents should also address where your animals are to be housed depending on whether you are at home and in the event you must be moved to a hospital or nursing facility.

Transports of large herds can be costly, time consuming and often cumbersome. Some owners choose to designate “pools” of animals with specific designations to aid in the decision of who should be moved out first or who can stay in their home environment with perhaps minimal care.

For example:

- Older and compromised animals requiring supplementation or other close supervision,
- Pregnant/nursing animals,
- Animals which are tightly bonded and should stay together, wherever that location might be,
- Animals which CANNOT be placed together for various reasons, usually due to aggression.

Powers of attorney should also give your designee the ability to make critical decisions about your animal’s medical care.

Remember, while a durable power of attorney can be used to designate someone to make decisions regarding the care of your camelids should you become unable, the person will only have the ability to make decisions about your animals

Chris Switzer, Weaver
1236 Glacier View Lane
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
chrisalpaca@aol.com
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during your lifetime. Consequently, you still need to consider a permanent arrangement for their future care.

Wills

Although a will is a necessary part of any estate plan, it has drawbacks when it comes to providing for your animals. A will takes effect only upon your death and will not be probated and formally recognized by a court for days or even weeks later. Should a dispute arise such as a conflict among beneficiaries, the final settlement of your property, including your animals, may be prolonged.

However, it remains important that your wishes for your animals be expressed in your will. This should include the identification of your pre-determined care givers as well as alternates. Your will should also provide detailed instructions about the establishment of sufficient funds to provide for all animal-related care expenses. Your executor or other identified individual should be given flexibility to make alternate arrangements if your original instructions cannot be honored.

Letter of Instruction

A Letter of Instruction can be used to designate a future caregiver for your animal(s) and to leave specific guidelines for their care when you are gone. While it is a flexible way to document arrangements for care, it has limitations. For example, it does not have the same effect as other legal documents and if included as a supplement to a will, its implementation only takes effect upon actual administration of the estate.

Trusts

A stronger, more complicated, and more expensive legal option is to create a Pet Trust. With a pet trust you can leave your animal(s), money, and a legal obligation to care for them. If the caretaker fails to follow your instructions, he or she can be sued.

There are three main parties to a pet trust: the Settlor (owner) who establishes the trust, the Trustee or person who holds legal title to the trust property (usually cash), and the Beneficiary for which the trust is established (the identified animals). The funds can be distributed in any increments and time line as specified in the trust. The Trustee oversees the distribution of funds while another person (or entity, such as SELR) may be named as caretaker who actually manages the day to day care of the animal(s), In the case of SELR, that would extend until the llama/alpaca has been permanently placed into a new home.

The Trustee has a fiduciary responsibility to make sure the caretaker is following through with his or her obligations to care for the animals included in the trust. The trust remains in effect until the animal dies, or in the case of a herd, the last animal dies. Usually this includes animals transferred in utero so potentially, planning should consider that this could be 20+ years.

In the past, when owners tried to leave money to their animals in a trust, the trust failed because pets were considered personal property and as such, could not receive money via a trust nor be a beneficiary to the trust. Things started to change in the 1990's when the Uniform Probate Code (UPC) allowed the creation of pet trusts, followed by the Uniform Trust Code (UTC) making honorary trusts for pets enforceable. Now, all 50 states plus the District of Columbia have a pet trust law. Minnesota was the last state to enact a pet trust law in 2016. Unlike a will, a trust can provide for your animals immediately and can apply in the event of illness, incapacity or death. You determine when your trust becomes effective and specify a trustee to control distribution of the funds. Typically a trustee will hold property, usually cash for the benefit of your animals. Payments to a designated caregiver will be made on a regular basis.

The trust, depending on state law, will continue for the life of the pet or a specified number of years. There is specific wording that can be included to address longer lived animals, such as camelids and equines. Trusts are a more reliable vehicle for ensuring your wishes for your animals will be followed.

Note 1: Some states impose funding limits for pet trusts that permit the court to reduce and/or redirect trust property determined to be in excess of the intended use set forth in the trust instrument. Please consult your state's full pet trust statute or a licensed attorney for further information.

Note 2: Establishing a pet trust can be far more expensive than other alternatives. It is critical, however, that you utilize the services of someone who is very experienced in this area to ensure that the trust is viable and will withstand any possible legal challenges.

When setting up a trust, in addition to having trustees and caregivers identified, you will also need the following information:

- A method of adequately identifying your animals, such as microchips. While often helpful, pictures are not a reliable method of identification, especially in solid colored animals.
- A way for your trustee to regularly validate the care provided to your animals. In the case of animals surrendered to SELR, this would extend up until the point where animals are permanently placed (i.e. adopted).
- A reasonable estimate of annual expenses.
- A fee to be paid for the administration of the trust.
- A plan for the final disposition of your animals. *In the case of livestock, most do not go to this degree of specificity.*
- A named beneficiary should there be funds remaining in the trust after the animal's death.
- *These funds are often donated to SELR for use in supporting other needy animals.*
- Trusts can be funded in a number of ways, such as direct transfer of money or property, life insurance, funds from the property in your estate, annuities or similar retirement accounts.

Advantages to using a pet trust:

- They create a legal obligation to care for your animal(s).
- They provide accountability for the money that you leave to the caretaker.
- They allow you to set up a caretaking plan that will take effect if you become incapacitated.

Disadvantages to using a pet trust:

- They are expensive.
- They can be inflexible in some instances if circumstances change after your death.
- They are likely to be more planning and structure than you need if you trust your named caretaker.

Editor's Note: We want to thank Deb Logan, Interstate Coordinator & Organizational Liaison, Southeast Llama Rescue/Camelid Rescue Coalition for this valuable guidance and plan. But, the legal world changes very fast so you will want to consult a professional in your state for the most current laws.

Southwest Llama Rescue partners with Southeast Llama Rescue on many rescues and placement. Their website is www.Southwestllamarescue.org.



It's Truly Amazing!

...what the volunteers and contributors of Southwest Llama Rescue can accomplish together. Help is always needed, and your time and money go a long way! And when you designate SWLR as your charity when you shop at Smile.Amazon.com, a percentage goes to SWLR. It's automatic, doesn't cost you extra, and really helps SWLR! *Contact us* to find out other ways to help...

Website: SouthwestLlamaRescue.org

Email: SouthwestLlamaRescue@gmail.com

Facebook: Facebook.com/Rescue.Llamas

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FIBER

Wooly Tidbits

By Chris Switzer
Estes Park, CO

All fleeces are not created equal; all parts of fleeces are not equal either. Alpaca neck wool, for instance, is shorter. It can be wonderfully soft or very coarse, like a Brillo pad. Keep it separate. Lower leg wool is not to be used. It is thick, brittle, and wiry. Fleece around the tail is also poor. We usually cut that away, by hand, before shearing.

It's the BLANKET that's the best! This is the shoulder, mid-section, rump, and along the back. You definitely want to keep it separate.

Considerations for breeding include fineness, density, and color for fleece. Staple length depends on how often shearing is done; do you shear every year or every two years? Some older alpacas may have less length. Alpaca wool is soft, and warm with adequate strength. It doesn't have as much crimp (elasticity) as sheep's wool, nor does it have lanolin (greasiness). There are always exceptions -- some fleeces have quite a bit of crimp.

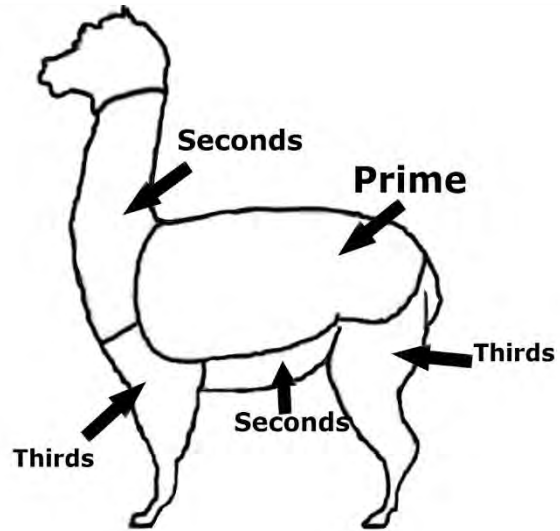
It's important to look closely at the fleece you might purchase. Be sure the fleece is clean, sorted, with little vegetable matter. Breeders need to know what spinners are looking for.

As a spinner (and weaver) I have brushed my llamas to get the soft undercoat. I use a flexible wire dog brush. Using the brush, very few guard hairs come out. In 10-15 minutes, I can fill a brown grocery bag. I take short breaks and stroke their necks, talking to them often. Using a chute or halter with lead rope tied to a fence (in the shade) works well also.

Shifting gears, one of the best things about camelid fiber is the wide variety of COLORS. There are many browns: beige, golden, dark brown, and even burgundy brown (purple-brown).

An unusual alpaca fleece we had was "heather brown" (grey-brown) We named this alpaca Nutmeg. On the lighter side, there is off-white and cream. (There is no true bleached white.) Then, there are greys: silver, grey, charcoal, and rose-grey (light grey with brown mixed in rather than black. Also, there is true black (no fading). A brown/ black animal will have sun tipped ends. Our finest fleece for her entire life came from Paloma, a rose-grey who lived to be almost 30. Her offspring also had very fine fleece. I suggest holding a bit of fiber up to the light to see the true color.

In addition, alpacas can be pinto, i.e., two colors. This fleece is great for blending or creating a variegated yarn. An exceptionally rare color is spotted or Appaloosa.



The diagram above identifies the main body areas of the alpaca that are considered when shearing.



From archaeology, we know that alpacas and llamas were domesticated about 6,000 years ago. It is with domestication that color selection and breeding is done. Color genetics in fleece is complicated. Keeping records is important. P.S. Although llamas don't have as many natural colors, they do have Appaloosa traits. In the Andes of South America, the carrying bags they wear are made from llama handspun yarns in traditional wide striped patterns.

Chris & Phil Switzer raised alpacas, a few llamas, and later Paco-vicunas in Estes Park for forty years. They are longtime members of RMLA. Chris is a full time weaver with two local galleries representing her weaving and artwork. Both Chris & Phil were on the founding committee for the Estes Park Wool Market.

Photos courtesy Nancy Wilson.

Defining the Cut

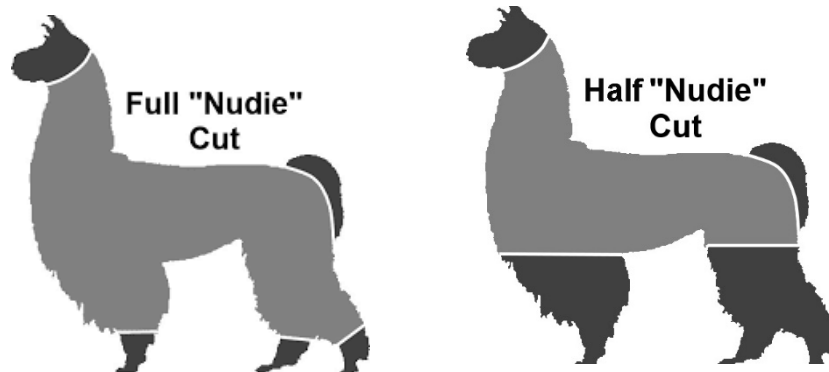
Llama Shearing by Midwest Shearing Company

Editor's Note: The following illustrations identify the various cuts for your llamas and alpacas. Whether you do the shearing yourself or have someone else do your shearing, the illustrations may help you define what cut you want.

Llamas are native to areas of high altitude and relatively cool climate with low humidity of the south American Andes. Even if you aren't interested in using or selling the fleece, the llama's health will benefit from shearing if you live where summers are hot. Llamas do vary considerably in fleece length and thickness, so the importance and frequency of shearing will depend on the individual animal as well as climate. It is important to leave at least a half inch of fiber for protection from weather and sunburn. The need for skin protection varies according to the llama's skin color. Light colored skin needs more sun protection. A llama typically will need 3 inches of undercoat for winter warmth. A llama sheared to half inch in the spring should grow an adequate coat by winter. Here in Missouri shearing every year or two is recommended unless the llama has an unusually light coat.

The Full "Nudie" Cut

This is the "head to toe" cut. Generally it runs from the top of the neck to the knees. We like to leave wool from the knees down for two reasons. One, it gives the llamas some protection from flies, who love those leg areas. And, two, they are terribly challenging spots to shear. Llamas are not all that happy having the shears around their legs. We have done it before. It's just not fun. When Llamas get feisty and don't want us to touch their legs, we can also do the Half "Nudie" Cut, which means we stop at the legs and taper it for a clean look.



The Barrel Cut

This is a basic shearing of the llama around its body between the front and rear vents (armpits). This basic cut allows the animal to get adequate ventilation across its belly as well as taking the majority of the prime blanket off of the back and sides. There are a couple of modifications to this cut as well. Modifications may extend the shear points forward to the withers and/or back toward the tail.



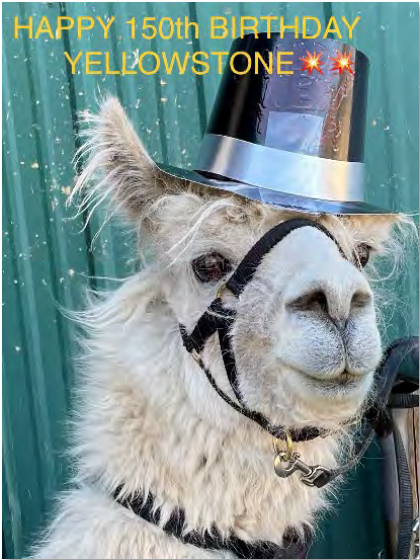
The Lion Cut

This cut starts at the llamas withers (where the neck and back meet) and removes all the wool from the back, sides, rump and rear legs. Options for how far forward you would like the cut to go on the front shoulders are available. The prime blanket on a llama generally extends from the withers straight down the front shoulder.



Happy Birthday, Yellowstone!

Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay
Yellowstone Llamas



In a monumental act, the United States Congress created Yellowstone National Park on March 1, 1872 following the reports of three exploratory expeditions. President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act, thus saving 2.2 million acres of wild country from future private development. Yellowstone, the world's first national park, was set apart due to its unusual natural splendor for “the enjoyment of the people,” mostly based on the geothermal wonders – “the planet's most active, diverse, and intact collections of combined geothermal, geologic and hydrologic features and systems - and the underlying volcanic activity that sustains them” (Yellowstone Resources and Issues Handbook).

Unfortunately, the enjoyment of the people involved excessive hunting, eviction of the indigenous inhabitants, near extinction of the bison, radical reduction of predators, eradication of the wolf and general lawlessness in the early years of its existence. The US Army arrived in 1886 to restore law and order and remained until 1918 when it turned over park management to the National Park Service created in 1916.

To this day, Yellowstone is at the center of many big issues and opposing opinions – such as wolf reintroduction and climate change - but remains a refuge for those who seek restoration of soul and body amid spectacular canyons, gorgeous waterfalls, quiet wilderness trails, spewing geysers, and the opportunity to watch wild animals such as wolves, bears, bison and more. Yellowstone is at the core of the Greater

Yellowstone Ecosystem, one of the last, largest, and nearly intact ecosystems in the temperate zone of planet Earth.

One of the big balancing acts of Yellowstone National Park is tourism and the impact on infrastructure, wildlife and natural resources. The emergence of COVID-19 tempered visitation only briefly. In 2020, 3.81 million people visited the park, only 200,000 visitors less than the year before. It soared to 4.86 million visitors in 2021, breaking the prior record set in 2016. Yellowstone's popularity for families has soared, and a tiny fraction of the millions of people streaming into Yellowstone for relief from their worries took part in our llama treks last summer. Even though high visitation is straining infrastructure and there is talk about putting limiting mechanisms in place such as are already applied in Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, the roads and trails in Yellowstone will be open again this year to all.





My advice is not to wait to make reservations for hotel stays and campgrounds. For more information, check this website: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/index.htm>. Yellowstone is expecting a busy year due to its 150th anniversary. An array of activities are planned to honor the occasion throughout the summer. Many Native American Tribes are expected to participate. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, park staff haven't scheduled large-scale events. But that could change as the year progresses. Consistent with CDC guidance as of this writing, visitors to Yellowstone National Park are NOT required to wear a mask indoors (visitor centers, gift shops, lodges, restaurants, etc.) or in crowded places (for instance: Old Faithful Geyser), regardless of vaccination status or community transmission levels. Masks are still **required** on commercial transportation.

Yellowstone has stood the test of time and survived wars, fires and tourism. Within its protected boundaries are the majority of the world's geysers and hot springs and it is home to the grizzly bear and the wolf and free-ranging herds of bison and elk. Centuries-old sites and historic buildings reflect the unique heritage of America's first national park. Its spectacular wilderness character draws me

year after year to its backcountry where my llamas' toes lay new tracks over last year's right next to elk and wolf and mountain lion on the trails that we love and will travel again this summer.

Happy 150th Birthday, Yellowstone!



A Look Behind the Home Page

By Sandy Schilling & Kathy Stanko
Co-Webmasters, RMLA.COM



Editor's Note: Time to grab a cup of your favorite brew, relax and digest the following information. The RMLA Webmasters have a lot of news to share with you. "A Look Behind the Home Page" will be a continuing column as RMLA and the new website grow. Enjoy.

Your webmasters are still working non-stop to get everything going on the new website. The focus is to let the world know who RMLA is and that our mission statement is education. As you no doubt have noticed, more eblasts than usual have been sent. This will continue for a while as we explain how to use the new features. You, our members, are very important to RMLA and we are committed to making your experience with the new website fun, enjoyable and educational.

Sandy Schilling has been working with our web designer to get our current members converted to the new website. Please login and check your Member Profile to ensure that your information is correct. While you are checking, please REVIEW the Interest List. We have added new categories. Below is the list as it now stands.

Boarding	Fiber	Research NEW
Breeding	General	Selling / Buying
Companion Animals	Guard Animals	Shearing NEW
Consulting / Mentoring	Leasing	Therapy
Driving	Packing / Hiking	Training
Events	Products	Veterinary
Farm Store NEW	Rescue	Youth / 4H / FAA

Visitors to RMLA.COM can now easily browse Members by Interest. Let the visitors find you! If you need to change your list in any way, let Sandy (rmlamembershipchair@gmail.com) know and it shall be done.

RMLA on FACEBOOK

For RMLA to remain a viable organization it must grow. We must reach out to educate every interested person about the value of being an RMLA member. Since the launch of the new RMLA.com, Sandy continues to reach out to llama and alpaca related Facebook sites and other areas and sends an invitation to visit our new website and Facebook pages. With the messages go an invitation to join RMLA. These activities have been successful but RMLA needs your help to get new members.

If you are a Facebook user, Sandy has probably sent you a Friend Request. She is not a stalker! She is asking for your help. Please tell your friends and other camelid folks that you meet on Facebook, at events, etc. about RMLA and share our amazing new website and Facebook page with them. Our RMLA members have so much knowledge to share with others. You can make a substantial difference. Please help build our organization’s future.

The chart below says it all! Since going live with the new website, our RMLA Facebook page has gone from 75 to 161 Followers – just from one member’s outreach. If all RMLA members shared the RMLA information with their contacts, we will easily grow our organization.



Visits to RMLA.COM

Our new website has been busy as well. Below are the top pages that visitors to our website have gone to in a 10 day period. Do these numbers seem low to you? They should! For an organization our size, they are. How can we improve our numbers and get more hits to our website? By sharing the RMLA.com website with all of our camelid connections and encouraging them to join us! If you have any ideas, suggestions or comments, please let Sandy know at rmlamembershipchair@gmail.com.

Totals		100% of total
1	Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association - Welcome! - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	271
2	My account - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	83
3	Featured Members - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	52
4	Browse RMLA Members by Location - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	48
5	RMLA Blog - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	43
6	Join or Renew - RMLA - Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association	32
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The Pop-Up box when you visit RMLA.com

This is also a method to identify interested people that visit our site for information. Website visitors will only get this message once a day. Members can click through this message when it appears. So far, RMLA has 34 website visitors that have signed up for more information. These interested people are getting eblasts with snippets of information about llama and alpaca care. This information is then also posted on our Facebook page so it is available to everyone.

Rest Assured


The website team is here for each and every one of you. We are available to answer any and all questions; guide you through the website; and listen to your ideas on what else we can do. This for sure is a total RMLA member-team effort. We are having so much fun and learning more than we ever imagined. Contact us: Kathy Stanko, rmlawebsite@gmail.com, or Sandy Schilling, rmlamembershipchair@gmail.com.



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Creating the Yarn You Want

Nancy Wilson
Camp Verde, AZ

I recently spent two days in Tucson taking a spinning class with Amy Tyler, “Creating the Yarn You Want.” The class was sponsored by Joan Ruane from Southwest Corner, and Joan sat in on the class as well. Amy has published articles in both *Spin-Off* and *Ply* magazines, and if you are ever able to take a class from her, it would be well worth it.

So, what did I learn in class? First was learning an awesome way to make a long ply-back sample. You may ask why a long ply-back sample is important. A ply-back sample is when you pull out a bit of your freshly spun yarn and let it relax back on itself. This can be used as a reference as you spin to help with consistency. Typically, a spinner will pull out 6-8” of yarn for a ply-back sample. So, you’re really getting the last few inches of your spinning, which may or may not be indicative of your overall spinning. A long ply-back sample allows you to compare new samples of your yarn over a longer length of yarn. It’s also easier to keep track of a longer piece of yarn. (Spinners with cats, you know what I

mean.) To get that long ply-back sample, pull the freshly spun yarn off the bobbin and draw your arm back shoulder distance and extend it out. Then take your orifice hook and place it on the yarn at the orifice. Bring the hand holding the end of the yarn so that it is perpendicular to the floor instead of parallel to it. Allow the orifice hook to spin while the yarn balances itself. Break the yarn, and tie the ends in an overhand knot, and you have a long ply-back sample.

Another take-away was the importance of wheel maintenance for comfortable spinning. Amy demonstrated how a spinner should be able to get the drive wheel spinning and allow it to slow down. This should take several revolutions on a well-maintained wheel. I tried this with my wheel, and it didn’t even make one additional revolution. Amy graciously asked if she could use my wheel to demonstrate maintenance; she made me feel oddly happy to have a wheel in need of such attention. She pointed out the importance of removing any accumulated gunk prior to applying new lubricant (she uses engine oil). Use a cotton rag to clean the bobbin shaft, the bobbin bushings, the footman attachment, and any other areas that might accumulate dust. Proper cleaning made a big difference in how my wheel performs.

We completed many interesting exercises in class. We made samples comparing the same treading and drafting and changing the wheel ratio (see Figure 1). In another exercise we compared the same drafting style using carded and combed preparation. We spun samples using

the same fiber and preparation but adjusting the take-up tension and practiced spinning a thicker and thinner yarn than our default yarn. We even had to match the yarn spun by our neighbor, first concentrating on the thickness and then concentrating on the twist.

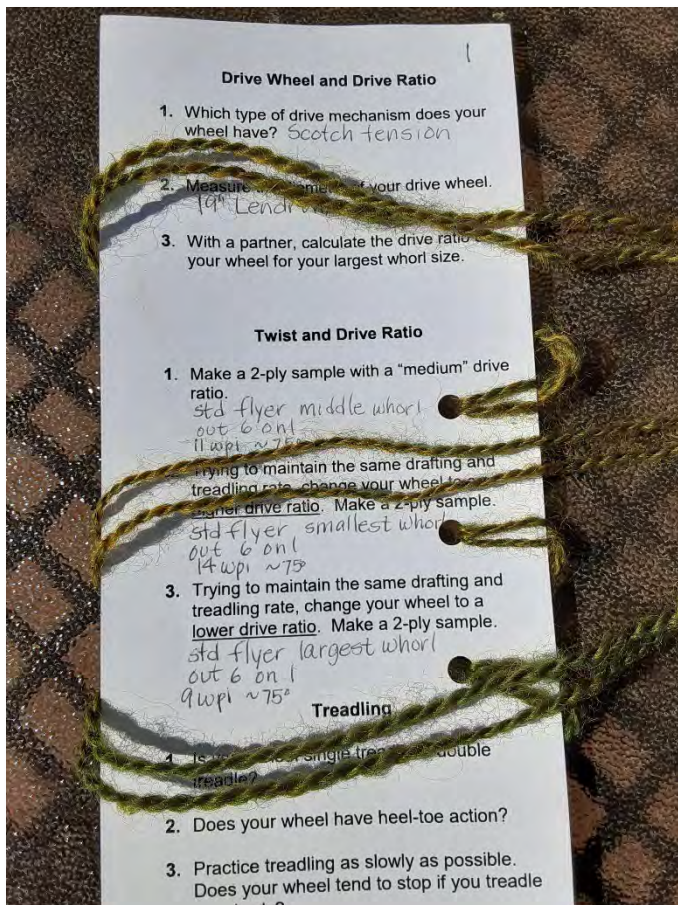
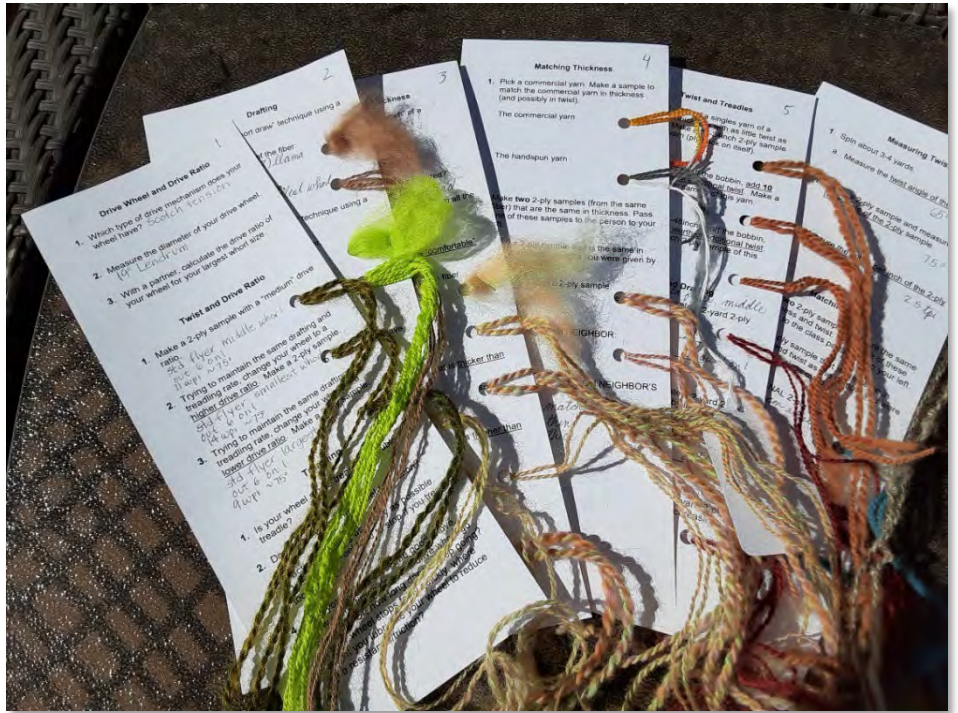


Figure 1

One exercise that I particularly enjoyed was where we spun our default yarn and added additional twist. To do this, we spun 5-6 yards of our default yarn and made a ply back sample. Then we pulled out another length of yarn, added more treadles to it and then made another ply-back sample. We continued like this, adding 10 and 20 additional treadles to the yarn. I had enough yarn that I went on adding twist up to 75 additional treadles. What a difference! We put our samples on the cards Amy provided as we made them. None of that “Oh, I’ll put them on the cards when I get home.”

Another nice aspect of the workshop was that Amy brought samples from new suppliers, which is always a treat, especially since there haven’t been any in-person fiber events to go to (and shop at!). While in Tucson, we made a point of visiting Grandma’s Spinning Wheel. They were kind enough to stay open so we could come over after class, and I came home with some interesting blends: Polwarth and mohair and some lovely blue Targhee, silk, bamboo blend. Oh, and a book on rigid heddle weaving (yup, another rabbit hole!). Plus, I’ve already have another yarn planned using the fibers we got at the workshop. Spin on!



RMLA EVENTS

Upcoming RMLA Events

By Mary Wickman, Events Chair

July 30, 2022 Llama Lunacy, Fairplay CO. Yes, Llama Lunacy is back again joining the fun of Burro Days in Fairplay. This event educates children and adults about llamas and alpacas while going through a fun and easy obstacle course. Volunteers are available to help the children and answer questions. Contact Mary Wickman, 719-651-8871, for more information. Volunteers are needed!

To plan an event go to the Events tab on RMLA.COM for the planning packet. Contact Mary Wickman, mwickman1@gmail.com if you have questions.

Save the Date: Planning an event, but the paperwork is incomplete? Send information to rmlaeditor@gmail.com so we can let members know to Save the Date.

Ask the Vet

Catherine Krus, DVM
CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital

What is wry face and how does it affect my llama?

Wry face is a congenital defect (present from birth) that may have a genetic component. It is defined as an abnormal deviation of the upper jaw (maxilla) that can cause a misalignment with the lower jaw (mandible) and can be seen to varying degrees. Mild cases may be managed, and those animals can live a relatively normal life.



Doesn't look pretty, but our guy does just fine on pasture and is able to scoop up his kibbles. So adaptable!



However, most are too severe and necessitate human euthanasia shortly after birth because the cria cannot nurse properly and will starve. Wry face is often seen in conjunction with another genetic facial malformation called choanal atresia, where an abnormal barrier of either soft tissue or bone in the nasal area makes it difficult to impossible for the cria to breathe. Although wry face is commonly thought to have a genetic component (meaning it can be passed down to offspring), inheritance patterns have not been studied to this date.

To summarize, wry face is a misalignment of the jaw that can cause an animal to have significant problems eating and can be seen in conjunction with other genetic malformations. Affected animals are born with the defect and because they may pass it to their offspring, affected animals that survive to breeding age should not be bred.



The Saga of COVID-19 and White-tailed Deer Continues

Ron Baird, Chair
RMLA Research Committee

A just-released, non-peer-reviewed study by 32 scientists in Canada has produced new evidence of white-tailed deer constituting a reservoir for the COVID-19 SARS-CoV-2 virus lineages. The original article appears in bioRxiv, the preprint server for biology.

A multidisciplinary research collaboration for SARS-CoV-2 surveillance in Canadian wildlife identified a new and highly divergent lineage of SARS-CoV-2. This lineage has mutations associated with non-human animal hosts, many of which were not previously reported in deer. There were also mutational signatures of host adaptation under neutral selection. This new branch of the SARS-CoV-2 family tree has some 79 gene changes that set it apart from the original Wuhan, China strain. About half of those changes have been seen in animals, but 23 of them have never been identified in deer.

J. Scott Weese, a professor at the Canadian University of Guelph, says “It’s actually a pretty significant study, I think, because we’re seeing potential evolution of the virus in an animal reservoir.” He specializes in studying infections that jump between people and animals. He went on to say that before SARS-CoV-2, viruses had been seen to pass between animals and people but then stop. (One that comes to mind is the 1918 Spanish Flu, which has been shown to have originated on a hog farm in southwestern Kansas.)

But the current virus has persisted and changed in an animal population – white-tailed deer. It apparently originated a year or so ago in humans and mink in Michigan and altered its gene structure. Analysis revealed an epidemiologically linked human case from the same geographic region and sampling period. Together, the findings represent the first evidence of a highly divergent lineage of SARS-CoV-2 in white-tailed deer and of deer-to-human viral transmission.

The authors quote a study by Hallmaier-Wacker et al. in 2017 that pointed out “establishment of an animal reservoir of SARS-CoV-2 through viral persistence within a susceptible species may lead to repeated spillback events into the human population, with the risk of sustained human-to-human transmission.” The SAR-CoV-2 virus was shown earlier this year to be capable of infecting at least 29 non-human species of mammals. This number was arrived at by observation and experimental studies in farmed, wild, captive, and domestic animals. Numerous studies since the virus was first confirmed in the United States have focused on its occurrence in the white-tailed deer population, which inhabits more than 30 states. Chandler et al. found that in 2021 40% of the free-ranging deer population they sampled in Michigan, Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania had SAR-CoV-2 antibodies.



White Tail Deer



Mule Deer

Other studies determined “spillover infections” from humans to deer and deer to deer. The type of virus subspecies found

were quite like those circulating in nearby human populations. This may suggest as new variants of Covid have emerged (and probably will emerge) that continued back and forth infections and re-infections occur.

Why this is significant is that the virus can exist in wild animal populations, not necessarily killing them, but enabling them to be a reservoir for the virus, constantly mutating (as we have seen in humans thus far). It raises the specter that the virus has the potential to mutate into a form that, when transmitted to humans (as the “swine flu” has over the years) could be more virulent and dangerous to humans.

While vaccines have been developed to combat the SARS-CoV-2 virus in humans, little research and development has been done on vaccines for animals. Weese commented that what would be needed is an animal vaccine that is better than vaccines for humans. He went on to say animal vaccines are an older technology and to develop them “... would be a pretty high bar to set.”

Lama owners should continue to be aware of the possible interspecies transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, especially owners who live in human wildlife corridors as many do. It is becoming ever more apparent the virus freely “jumps” from species to species among mammals. Monitor your herds and animals for signs of illness, talk to your vet about what to be on the lookout for, and, importantly, stay healthy yourselves!

RMLA EVENT

National Western Stock Show, January 2022

Judy Glaser, Superintendent
National Western Stock Show

After a long eighteen plus months of no shows, we started the year with a bang. Even though the actual attendance numbers of visitors were down, understandably, the llama show was strong. A new online registration worked well although all new systems have need of tweaking. Livestock management was on top of it all and with the help of all the superintendents, updates will happen.

Exhibitors from the Colorado Western Slope, Nebraska, Wyoming and all of the Colorado front range were in attendance. Performance classes on Saturday, opening day of Stock Show, are always a thrill. The youth go first and have always fascinated the audience. When our youngest exhibitor, a Sub Junior, navigated her llama through the obstacles, there were cheers.

Halter classes saw a big increase in numbers. Fifty llamas were in attendance with some classes completely full. A great feeling for the superintendent! Walking fiber had forty llamas entered, which, of course is another record. With an overall attendance of 67 llamas, it was the best show of camelids that National Western Stock Show has had in quite a while.



Ashley Clements, 16 years old, Champion Performance, Senior Youth

Making a show run smoothly and seamlessly is an undertaking of many things. I am blessed with numerous people that give unselfishly of their time to help wherever needed. This is the "llama family" that people need to know. Many thanks to RMLA for their generous support.

Looking forward to 2023! Stay well and llama on!

Letter of Gratitude

Lougene,
It feels like a dream that we are finally able to be at events that we have all been so passionate about. Some things have changed and we all have become keen as to what is important to us in this life. One thing is our constant, llamas and alpacas! Hopefully they will bounce right back into what we ask them to do.

Our other constant for NWSS is RMLA. As I have said the past years as the Llama Superintendent: we cannot do without the RMLA support. I find no other organization that supports a show as much as you all do.

With that said, please support the 2022 NWSS. This year, the kids are really making their presence known. Those classes have been the first I see registered. I can't help but get so excited for them.

Respectfully,
Judy Glaser
2022 Llama Show National Western Superintendent

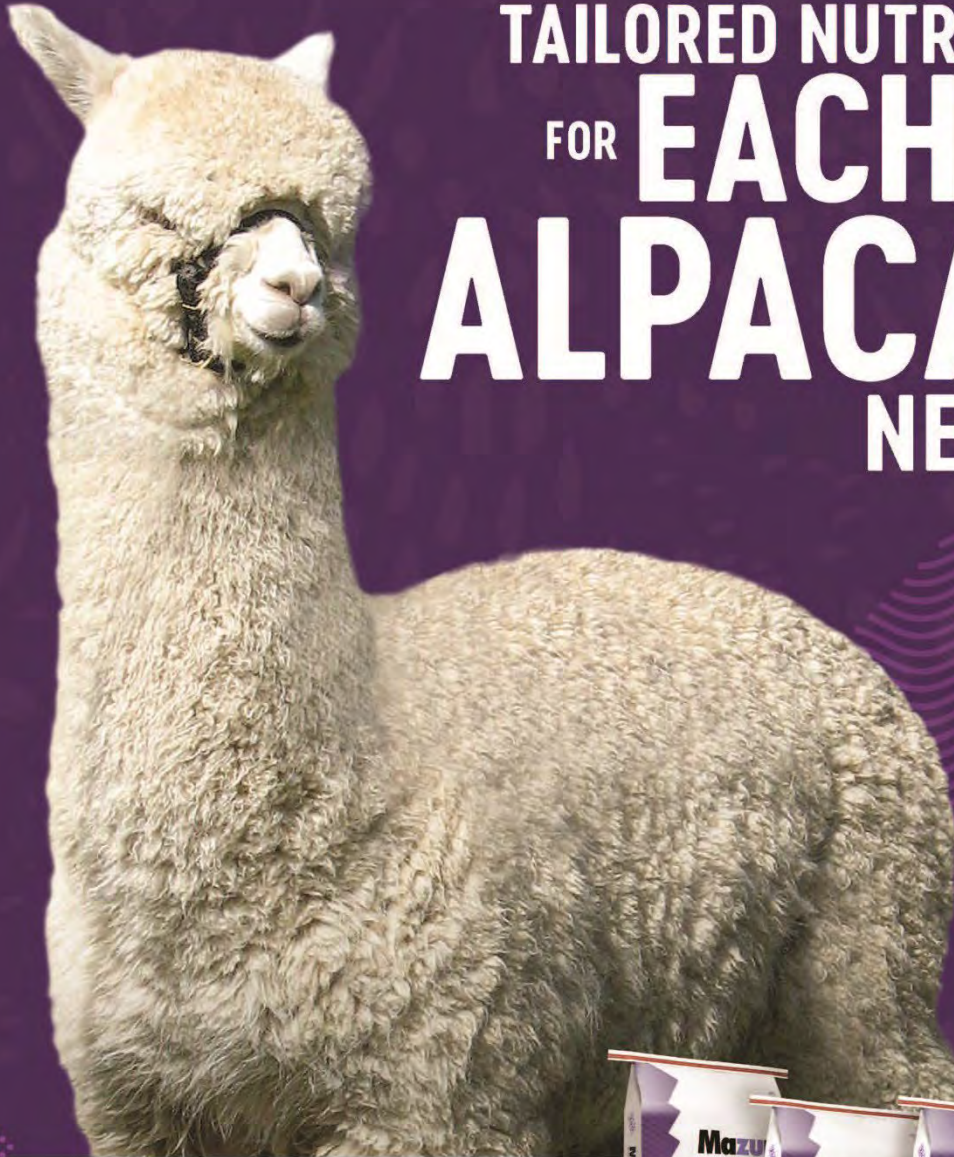
Some history about the National Western Stock Show Llama Show

The National Western Stock Show Llama Show was one of the first three ALSA shows. RMLA members in the event's early years stood outdoors with their llamas in freezing January weather in the railroad track stock pens. It was RMLA that negotiated with the NWSS Board to have llamas added to the livestock show. RMLA has sponsored the show financially from its beginning with funds going to youth premiums and awards. The llama show is one of the largest spectator draws of the NWSS livestock show. Supporting it is in line with our mission statement "... to educate... the public as to ... the use of llamas and alpacas."



Ashley Clements with her llama Peaches. Ashley was Champion Senior Youth Showmanship, Champion Senior Youth Obstacle and Champion Senior Youth Public Relations.

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