***How to Choose a Driving Llama***

So you show up with an appropriate animal (or two from which to choose).

Susan Gawarecki

The suitability of a driving llama is more a matter of its attitude and personality than its size and gender. A driving llama can be male or female and of any fiber type.

The first requirement is that it be a full adult (although ground driving can begin about age two), because the stresses require full physical development. More importantly, a mature attitude is needed to deal with the unusual psychological demands and distractions during driving excursions.

Geldings tend to be calmer than intact males, but the latter can be used if they are otherwise the best prospect. Four years old is the recommended minimum age for training a llama to drive with a cart; there is no maximum age, but consider that you will invest a lot of effort and time into training an animal that you would like to utilize for years to come.

Physically, the llama should be structurally sound (especially pasterns) and have suitable conformation to support sustained movement on hard pavement, for example, not post-legged or sickle-hocked.

A llama with energy and athleticism is desirable. Size is not typically an issue, as long as the llama is not far below average. The psychological makeup of the llama is the trait that will most influence its success or failure as a driving llama.

Choose an animal that seems independently minded, is not herd-bound, that doesn't mind being off by itself, perhaps even the one that has never seemed to fit in with the rest of the herd. The llama that wants to surge in front of you when you are walking it on lead is often a good prospect.

If the animal already has a PR or packing background, all the better, as desensitization to distractions such as traffic, dogs, and eager admirers will be part of its training.