



# Llama Living

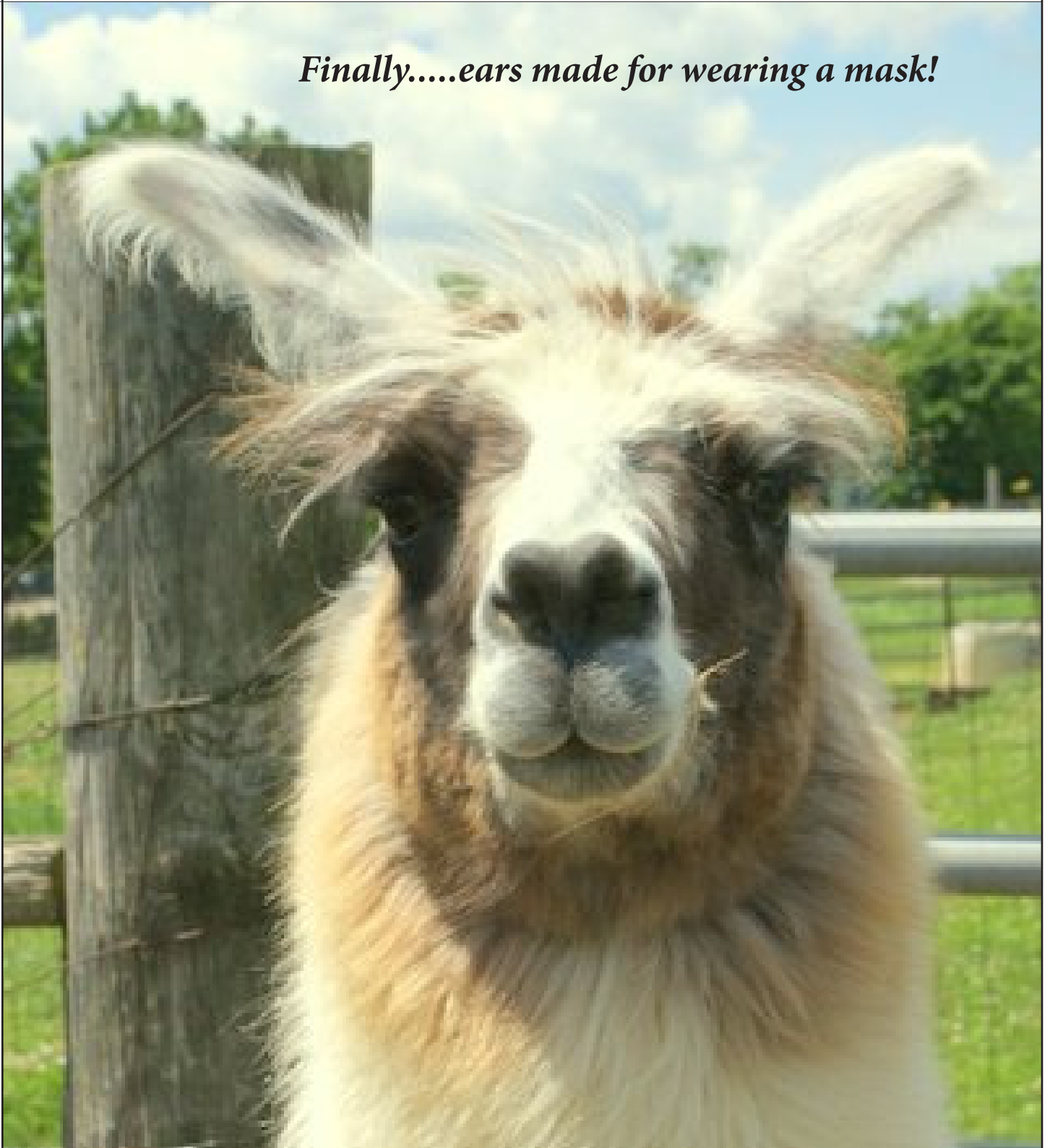
Hear What All The Hummng Is About...

September 2020

Michigan Lama Association

Volume 25, Issue 3

*Finally.....ears made for wearing a mask!*



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**Llama Living**



GRJax7@springcom.com

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## **Michigan Llama Association**

**Web Site - [www.michiganllama.org](http://www.michiganllama.org)**

**Facebook Page - Michigan Llama Association**

*Bittersweet Farm*



Suzanne Hockin Frambes  
Ken Frambes  
(517) 857-4626

**Next  
Llama Living  
Deadline**

**November 15,  
2020**

Winter is around the  
corner

Check your water bucket  
heaters.

Get your barn ready for  
winter while the weather is  
still nice.

## Michigan Llama Association 2020 MLA Board

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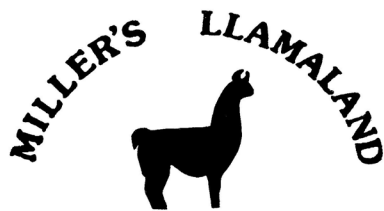
*If you would like to run for an office or work  
on a committee, contact Corky Dubois for  
information.*

# MLA ANNUAL MEETING

By MLA Board of Directors

The MLA annual membership meeting is usually held in November. At this time, due to the restrictions and the unknown future restrictions, we do not know if we can hold an in-person meeting. We are looking into holding a virtual meeting, but do not have any details right now.

Please watch your USPS mail, e-mail, MLA Facebook and MLA web page for updates.



Jerry & Sheila Miller  
4705 Llama Lane, Pottersville, MI 48876  
517 645-2719 ~ millerlama@aol.com

## Great Escape Llamas

Gary & Bev Surratt  
14919 Burton Rd  
Clayton, MI 49235  
(517)547-3524



[gasurratt@tc3net.com](mailto:gasurratt@tc3net.com)  
show-stud-fiber-guard -soil enhancers

# MLA 2020 Scholarship Awards

Attending college or any institution of advanced education has always had its challenges, but during this time there are many additional considerations for students. Colleges and Universities are making the decision to have classes on campus and/or online, but either way tuition still must be paid! The MLA is proud to announce the two scholarship winners for 2020.

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## The MLA Kathy Larson Memorial Scholarship Award



Avery Sims was awarded this 2020 MLA Kathy Larson Memorial Scholarship award. She reports that she is using the funds to help pay for her tuition and books. Avery is majoring in Human Biology with a goal of becoming a Physician Assistant and reports that the text books for this major are “rather pricey”.

Although Avery is very busy with school and her work as a Pharmacy Tech, she continues her involvement with llamas and supporting the llama community. Avery is attending Indian University at Bloomington, IN.

Congratulations Avery for receiving this annual scholarship award for 2020!

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## The Laurel Zechliniski Memorial Scholarship Award

The Laurel Zechliniski Memorial Scholarship is being awarded this year to Cooper Sims. Cooper has been involved with llamas for the past 10 years. He has achieved ALSA’s “Ultimate Youth” status, which is quite the achievement.

Although a “city kid”, Cooper’s involvement with 4-H and llamas has sparked an interest in agriculture. He is planning to pursue a degree in food science in the Department of Agriculture at Purdue University.

Congratulations Cooper for receiving this annual scholarship award for 2020!



***Just a reminder: Any MLA member may apply for the two annual scholarships. Please go to the website for details and forms. The deadline each year for applications is July 1st.***





## Solving Major Behavioral Problems in Thirty Seconds

I am only partly kidding. If you haven't paid very close attention to halter fit and you are having trouble with one of your llamas, you may be able to solve the problem in thirty seconds. I have worked with hundreds of difficult llamas that were difficult only because they were in fear for their lives every second they wore a halter. I have seen problems from kicking to kushing evaporate because I changed or adjusted a badly fitting halter.

Red, blue, black, brown, polypropylene, nylon, leather, Xstyle fixed nose band, three way adjustable...there are a lot of halters to choose from. It is CRITICAL you understand and appreciate how important halter fitting is to your llama. Your success as a handler and trainer depends on it. Paying attention to halter fit is easy and there are few other changes that can make such an immediate and dramatic difference in behavior.

The issue is not only what type of halter you select, but how it fits. Many owners believe that, if a halter can be attached to the llama's head, it fits. NOTHING could be further from the truth.

Llamas are semi-obligate nasal breathers. This means that they CANNOT survive if forced to breathe solely through their mouths. Anything that compromises the nostrils or the nasal passages is not only uncomfortable, it is life threatening. When compared to other animals, the nose bone in camelids is comparatively short and drops off sharply. Add this to the awesome leverage that a camelid's long neck affords and it is easy to understand why llamas are often reluctant to allow us to halter them. Haltering and halter fitting is further complicated by a camelid's horizontal head set. Because a llama carries his head with the nose oriented horizontally rather than vertically (like a horse) a halter that slips off the bone must literally overcome gravity to return to its original position.



*Llama skull showing nasal cavity.*

### The Elements of Halter Fit: The Big Three

**SAFETY:** A properly fitted halter's nose band not only rests on the bone, but stays there NO MATTER WHAT. It isn't enough for the halter to start out on the nose bone, it must stay there when the animal pulls back, bucks, rolls, grazes, steps on his lead rope, breaks away from the handler dragging his lead, or scratches his face with his foot. The smaller the animal, the shorter the nose bone and the trickier he is to properly fit.

It is particularly important to understand the dynamics of halter fit if you intend to use your halter for any type of restraint. It is incredibly frightening for an animal to be tied or restrained in a halter that feels as if it could slip off the nose bone. Animals that have been restrained in an ill fitting halter never forget the experience.

**COMFORT:** Preventing harm to your camelid is the highest priority of halter fit. From your llama's point of view, the second most important aspect of wearing a halter is comfort. Your llama should be able to do everything with his halter on that he does with his halter off. These activities would include eating and grazing, ruminating and yawning.

Well fitting halters do not rub raw spots or create calluses on your animal's head even if left on for a few days. Once the halter is adjusted properly, your llama should quickly forget that it is even there until you use it to communicate with him.

**EFFECTIVENESS:** The halter is the most important piece of equipment you own. Horse people have a variety of tools to communicate with their horses. They have a choice of bits and other tack as well as their legs and seat with which to signal their requests. Essentially, llama trainers have a halter and lead rope. It only makes sense to select a halter that is truly effective as a tool of communication.

## Types of Halters

When the camelid phenomenon first began, it was a challenge to find a halter - any halter - that would remotely fit a camelid. Many people had their own halters made or used modified sheep or foal halters. Now the reverse is true. It is just as frustrating these days to pick and choose from all the types of halters available. There are three types of halters with variations on these basic themes: fixed nose band, x-style and adjustable.

**FIXED NOSE BAND HALTER:** This type of halter features a continuous loop for the nose band that cannot be adjusted. The crown piece may be adjusted, but any variation in the nose band is achieved only by changing to a different halter in a different size.

**X-STYLE HALTER:** A halter in which the crown piece and the nose band form a continuous loop. It is not possible with an X-style halter to adjust the nose band and the crown piece independently from one another. Loosening the crown piece provides slack in the nose band; tightening the crown piece takes up slack in the nose band.

**ADJUSTABLE HALTER:** These halters feature adjustability in both the crown piece and the nose band. These two elements can be adjusted independently of one another.

Another important aspect of a halter is the way in which the possible adjustments can be made and how they fasten. Some halters have a slide arrangement, others feature buckles and holes and still others use fastex or spring loaded clips. Halters usually come in nylon, leather or polypropylene and in a variety of widths.

I want a halter that is safe, comfortable and is effective as a tool of communication. I use the following criteria to choose a halter that fits this bill:

- ◆ I want a halter that has a wide variety of small adjustments and can be adjusted easily without taking the halter off the animal.
- ◆ I want a halter with a short cheek piece and one in which the throat latch and the nose band travel through the same ring under the chin. These two features taken together encourage the halter to stay further back on the nose bone where it is safe.
- ◆ I want a halter that includes rings on the nose band allowing me to lead from the side ring and increasing the clarity of signal as well as leverage.

A two-way adjustable halter - a buckle halter with adjustability in both the crown piece and nose band - meets these criteria better than any other type of halter I have found. The proper halter is one thing, but how you adjust it on your animal is everything. The same halter on the same animal could be safe, comfortable and effective or it could be unsafe, uncomfortable and useless. The outcome is totally dependent on how the handler adjusts the halter.

X-style halters are fine for animals that already know how to lead. They are usually comfortable and do a good job of staying put on the nose once properly adjusted. They fit a wide variety of animals. On the down side, they don't convey signals from the handler to the animals as well as a halter with an independently adjustable nose band.

I do not like or use halters with fixed nose bands. They are more often than not unsafe, uncomfortable and do a poor job of communication as well. These halters are inexpensive to manufacture and are quite prevalent, especially for smaller or young llamas. This is very unfortunate in that a smaller head makes it even more important to have an adjustable nose band.

*Continued on page 8*

## Marty's Corner Continued

### Putting Your Halter On and Making Adjustments

Before putting the halter on the animal, adjust the nose band opening so that it is bigger than you think you need. A good rule of thumb is to open the halter to with one or two holes of its largest adjustment. Adjusted This way, the nose band will easily slide up the nose close to the eye and will still have slack available. If there is no slack available when you attach the crown piece, you are not allowing for normal movement of the jaw or mouth. It is quite common for owners to literally tie their animal's mouth shut. A nose band that fits this way is usually unsafe as well because it is prevented from sliding all the way up the nose bone.

Snug up the crown piece. The crown piece must be tight enough so that the nose band cannot slip off the nose bone - even when significant forward pressure is applied to the nose band.

Next, take all extra slack out of the nose band. Leave enough room for your animal to ruminate and eat comfortably. The most common adjustment I make on a halter, which is improperly fitted, is to loosen the nose band significantly and tighten the crown piece to take up the slack. The net effect of these adjustments is to cause the nose band to slide further up toward the nose on firmer bone. From a safety standpoint I would rather err on the side of adjusting the halter too close to the eye and a tad snug in the crown piece than to allow the nose band to slide too far down the nose. This is especially true if your animal has not been led before and you intend to use your halter for staking out, tying or restraint.



*Marty putting halter over the nose.*

### Dynamics Of Adjusting The Halter

Many llama owners are unaccustomed to seeing a halter nose band this close to the eye and are reluctant to adjust the halter this way. Concern for the eye is misplaced. Once on the face a halter cannot poke an animal in the eye and the graduated shape of the nose prevents the halter from slipping up over the eye.

For smaller or young llamas you simply do not have a choice. In order to be firmly on bone and to be safe, the halter must be very close to the eye. This is true for virtually all llamas under the age of six months. Halters high up on the nose bone disappear from the animal's view and are less obtrusive than when they are closer to the front of the nose.

It is my belief that llamas and alpacas are distracted and annoyed by halters that rest in what I call the danger zone - the middle area of the nose bone. When the handler puts forward pressure on the halter as in leading, it feels as if the halter could slip off the bone. The animal is literally waiting for the ax to fall. Animals wearing halters with the nose band in the danger zone may become extremely resistant to wearing a halter, kush when asked to lead or will bolt or panic suddenly as if for no reason.



When discussing halter fit owners always ask me to quantify how to do it. They want to know how to adjust the halter in terms of numbers of fingers or inches, how much room to leave in the nose band and the crown piece and where exactly on the nose bone the nose band should rest. I cannot make quantitative guidelines that will work for all animals. You must think about fit proportionately.

### **The Crown Piece**

The adjustment of the CROWN piece is what determines how far the nose band can slip forward. How much room you should leave in the crown piece is totally dependent on the length of the nose bone. This means that the crown piece can be looser on a big lama than it can be on a small or young lama. It also means that a very short nose bone requires a very snug, if not tightly fitting crown piece.

The length of the nose bone is different for adults versus weanlings or babies and for llamas and alpacas. The portion of the nose bone in front of the eye might be an inch long on a weaning alpaca and 3-4 inches in length on an adult lama. Young animals whose heads are simply too small to fit both safely and comfortable in any halter, need to grow some more. I think it is only fair to wait to put a halter on until you can satisfy both requirements.

The length of the nose bone also varies from individual to individual. I have palpated nose bones and found that they were much shorter than I expected them to be. In many cases these lamas exhibited extreme behavior related to haltering.

Also, halters tend to stretch when warmed up by the animal's body heat, changing the way a halter fits. On a big lama halter, stretch is of little consequence, but on a weanling lama, tied to a fence, it can be extremely significant.

### **The Nose band**

Adjusting the nose band has far more to do with comfort than it does with safety. The nose band must allow the lama enough lateral movement to ruminate, eat and graze unencumbered. Again, this varies depending on the size of the animal and his jaw.

Adjusting the halter so that it is close to the eye is not only safer, it also means the nose band is much closer to the hinge of the jaw. When the animal chews there is less lateral movement at the hinge of the jaw than at the front of the mouth. Have a look at your animal while he eats. Because of this fact you can snug up the nose band close to the eye a bit more and still leave plenty of room for eating and rumination. A snugger nose band is more effective for communication.

Many people complain that they have a certain lama that is much harder to fit - these animals usually have a very steep nose bone and a shorter nose. When haltered in the traditional way, the halter slides right down the nose bone like a car on a steep icy hill. Adjusting the halter as I suggest also solves this problem.



*Lama's chewing pattern.*

*Continued on page 10*

# Marty's Corner

## Continued

### The Halter Design

Many halters on the market are not proportioned to be worn as I describe. No matter how hard you try, you won't be able to adjust them as I have described. This is because the parts of the halter are not the right length. In some cases the nose band is simply not big enough to allow it to be worn close enough to the eye to be safe. Buying a larger halter with more room in the nose band may not solve the problem because the crown piece may be too long. Some halters have a cheek piece that is too long. A long cheek piece causes the crown piece to slip down the neck.

A low crown piece is not unsafe, but a halter is most useful for communication when it stays at the poll - immediately behind the ears. With certain halters if you tighten the crown piece so that it is up behind the ears (where it should be), a cheek piece that is stiff and too long forces the nose band down into the danger zone.

Some halters feature a fleece lining under the nose band ostensibly for greater comfort. A fleece lining inside the nose band is no substitute for proper fit. Fleece lining on a nose band that is already too small only makes it tighter and more uncomfortable.

### Adjusting A Halter

A properly fitting halter is safe and comfortable. The nose band rests firmly on bone and stays there NO MATTER WHAT. There is enough room in the nose band for the animal to chew without interference.

- ◆ Before you put the halter on always open the nose band so that it is larger than you think you need.
- ◆ Snug up the crown piece. Tighter for animals with smaller heads.
- ◆ Take the slack out of the nose band. Larger animals need more room.
- ◆ Always carefully examine the nose bone before you put a halter on an animal you don't know.
- ◆ Recheck halter fit after about ten minutes.

If you have doubts about animals you have haltered after reading this article, put your current halter on and adjust as usual. Really look at your animal. Does the halter interfere with the freedom of movement in the jaw? Does your llama have to struggle to get a mouthful of grain or hay? Do his nostrils flare more with the halter on than off? Take hold of both sides of the nose band of the halter and tug forward. If you can pull the halter forward off the bone, your animal can too and is in danger.

I did a clinic in Alaska some years back. We were working on leading techniques and one of the young males was impossible. He would walk along nice as pie and suddenly, for no apparent reason, go absolutely bonkers. He was difficult to halter and had a history of this type of behavior on the lead.

I thought the halter fit was marginal, but we were working in a field some distance from the barn. This guy took a while to halter the first time. It was close to the end of the day and I didn't want to go to the trouble of taking this llama back to the barn and change his halter. I remember thinking, "That llama has the brains of a gnat."

He was a young intact male and I thought he was a nervous, high-strung, llama feeling his hormones. I watched as this guy blew up with several different people. I finally decided to take the time to change his halter. When I brought him back, after changing his halter, the group thought I had switched animals. The behavioral change was unbelievably dramatic. I almost couldn't believe it. He was a puppy dog on the lead and not only with me. Five or six different people lead him over and under challenging obstacles.

This is one of many examples in my memory of positive behavior changes spurred by the seemingly simple act of equipping your llama with a properly fitting halter. If I have scared you about halter fit, it is for good reason. Paying attention to halter fit has a direct impact on the safety of your animals and your success as a handler. Use these guidelines and you can rest easy knowing your llama is comfortable and free from danger.

*Check out Marty's web site or her Facebook page using the tag name CAMELIDynamics. Marty also has CAMELIDynamics Zephyr halters listed there. ☐*



# CAMELIDynamics

**Sane, Safe Science Based Solutions!  
Understand the Nature of the Beast**

- Does your llama or alpaca plant his feet and refuse to come forward?
- Are you having trouble trimming toenails?
- Is teaching your llama or alpaca to lead like flying a kite or dragging an anvil?
- Is showing your animal a drama?

## Camelidynamics is:

- Empowering
- Uses the most positive, least intrusive methods
- Relies on an understanding of behavior and balance, NOT restraint and force
- Is a method that will work for you regardless of your physical ability.

## Camelidynamics offers:

- The CAMELIDynamics Guild - online forum moderated by Marty, biweekly newsletter and training tip, and supportive online community
- Innovative, thoughtfully designed equipment made in the USA.
- Online Courses-self paced video lessons
- Hands On Courses:

 CAMELIDYNAMICS™

For a list of Marty's 2020 clinics, go to [www.camelidynamics.com](http://www.camelidynamics.com) and click on **LEARN HOW**.

# Kick The Covid

Group of articles were submitted by Renee` Hobbins

Article by Chartan Barrett

Thanks to our wonderful leaders of the Llama and Alpaca barn, we were able to get together court side for a “Kick The Covid Show”. Since there was no fair it was so nice to get this wonderful group of people together for a mini show. It turned out to be a beautiful day to work with the animals.

It started out with a costume category. Two of the kids participated and dressed up their alpacas and then themselves. The first entry was superheroes here to defeat Covid. The other entry was monsters here to scare Covid away.

The next event was the obstacle course. The kids and adults were all able to maneuver through different obstacles that were set up for both novice and advanced animals. It was set up with Covid in mind. Temperatures were checked at the start of the course. Part way through you, with your animal, had to kick a “Corona Virus” ball into a can. Then there were more obstacles to go through before you could ring the bell.

Finally, it was the pack. This was the first time a lot of the animals ever even had a pack on!! Some struggled, but it was fun to watch how each dealt with both the obstacle and their animal. We definitely need to work with our animals and water - they wanted no part of it, but we were not alone.

One of the best parts of the whole show was the end. The show was judged and placements were awarded with beautiful ribbons. A new member, who was hesitant to show before, participated and not only enjoyed it, but won several ribbons and was awarded Grand Champion. It was so nice to see someone else join the show and love it as much as the rest of us do. It was also nice to be able to do something fun and normal again. We could talk to the judge and ask questions. He had a lot of valuable information and pointers to give to all of us.

Before we left we were all awarded a beautiful hand painted plate or bowl. Not only did they put on a fun event, but awarded the participants ribbons and gifts. It was a close as we could get to the “fair experience” and definitely so glad we could do it.

Article by Bella Wolf

The “Kick the Covid” show was the perfect opportunity to go to a show with my llama this summer! I had a wonderful time and it was really fun with all of the unique and different levels of challenging obstacles. There were a lot of fun obstacles related to Covid that made the show very enjoyable such as someone checking your temperature and an obstacle called “Kick Covid in the Can” where you had to kick a ball into a trash bin. It was the perfect opportunity to get my llama off property for a fun show in both obstacle and pack!

Article by Miranda Ashley

This year Renee`Hobbins and Kathy Easter organized an obstacle and pack event for llamas and alpacas called, “Kick the Covid” show. Everyone participated - even some parents. One parent even got Grand Champion in both pack and obstacle beating out all of the kids! It was very enjoyable to watch and participate. It was a nice substitute for the fun of showing at a fair since the live event was cancelled. I appreciated the opportunity to be out with our llama/alpaca friends and have the fun of showing.

Footnote by Renee` Hobbins

Our Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council Virtual “Fair” happened and 3 llama show ladies spent their talent and time in participating in it. Bob Minto was our judge. In our Intermediate Class, Bella Wolf placed first and Marin Barrett placed second. In our Junior Class, Morgan Barrett placed first. Thank you to all for the patience and time it took to follow through with your 4-H projects and to those planning carrying it out!





*Bella Wolf and Superstar*



*Watson family getting their llama ready for the Kick the Covid show.*



*Miranda Ashley with Snickers*



*Morgan Barrett displaying her awards earned in the show.*



*Kinsley Crowther with Danny.*

*One of the awards presented at the "Kick The Covid" Show.*





# Your Lama Needs To Know How To Back Up

By Liinda Hayes ALSA, ILR & AOBA Judge

There are any number of reasons your lama needs to know how to back up. Around the ranch, getting out of a trailer or the restraint chute are prime examples.

In the show ring, knowing how to back just a few steps allows you to properly “square up” the lama to show off their best conformation.

Performance exhibitors are always asked to back up and often the backing obstacle is complicated and challenging.

There are four steps to training. As the lama learns your commands, you will not need to use them all. He will react to more subtle voice or body movements.

- 1 - Say the command, in this case “back”. Always use the same word and the same tone of voice.
- 2 - Move into the lama’s personal space. The end goal is to have your animal respond to your body movements or at least the movement coupled with a quiet voice command.
- 3 - Use the lead to pull back on the halter. Do this gently. No jerking allowed. One of the main ways to punish a lama is to jerk on their heads. So use a soft hand.
- 4 - Physically make the lama go where you want. In this case your first goal is just one step back.

Now, here is something that is very important. Don’t do all four things at once. Start by standing in front of the lama and saying “back”. Pause for a moment. Follow that by moving into their space and again pause.

Next, put pressure on the lead and give the lama time to respond, i.e. pause. When that doesn’t get a response, use the tickle or push to the chest. Repeat this over and over, always including the pause between commands.

I have seen people try to force the lama to back by stretching the lead rope across the lama’s neck and pushing on them. This is awkward and not very subtle. If you must put hands on, tickle them on the chest. When the chest moves back, the neck and head are sure to follow.

Your first goal is to get just one step taken backward. Once this is accomplished, give them a reward. Usually just a loose lead will do, but a bit of grain can also work. Sometimes they need to be rewarded just for switching their weight back without any foot movement at all. Training is a matter of taking small steps to accomplish your end goal. If you give a verbal reward like “good boy”, use the same tone of voice and same words each time.

Follow it with a physical reward such as the loose lead. In time, just the words will be all you need to use.

I am sure the first time you do this, the lama is thinking, “This guy is nuts!” That’s why you pause after each command. You want the lama to have time to digest what is happening. Once he has taken a step back, give a reward.

You are also teaching him that if he obeys your first command (voice) you won’t touch him, get in his space or pull on his face (halter). It won’t be long before this soaks in. You can do a lot of damage to the training process if you forget and do them all at once or in the wrong order. Remember: voice, move, lead, and then touch.

After a while, you will find that the lama no longer needs to be touched and will back with just pressure on the lead. Once you get this far, work on increasing the number of steps taken. In the end, you want him to respond to slight movements of your body or quiet voice commands. In the performance classes, a lama that backs without pressure on the lead is sure to be a winner. In the halter ring and around the ranch, it makes life a lot easier.

It’s important to keep your training sessions short. Ten minutes twice a day is better than twenty all at once. It gives the lama time to think about what has happened.

You have heard the tem, “Let’s sleep on it?” I think lamas invented it because it seems to work well for them. You can spend all day trying to teach something that they simply refuse to do and then come back the next day and they do it like they knew how all their lives.

Okay, your lama now knows how to back. It’s time to use this same training in the halter ring. With a relaxed, responsive lama at the end of the lead, your would go through the following steps to make sure he is standing correctly.

- 1 - Be in a position where you can ask the lama to take a step straight forward. Sometimes you have to get out of line and move up into position again to make this possible. It's allowed, just don't do it over and over.
- 2 - Ask the lama to stop. A correct lama usually stops with the hind feet where you want them.
- 3 - If his back feet are not positioned correctly, move him forward or backward until the rear feet are side by side with weight equally balanced. Remember, always get the hind feet placed before moving the front.
- 4 - If the front feet are not in place, use your "backing up" training to get the lama to move each front foot ever so slightly until it is where you want it. With practice you will see the lama actually hold the foot in the air until your body language tells him to put it down.

I know this sounds nearly impossible to those of you who never show in obstacle classes, but as a performance judge, I can tell you these animals are amazing and with trust and training you can get them to do almost anything. Just watch the kids in the performance classes at the next show you attend. Many have totally trained lamas.

Once all four feet are correctly placed, the lama will be balanced for visual and hands-on inspection. Your time and effort will have paid off. Even if you don't win the blue ribbon, you can bet that your peers and the judge will have noticed what a great showman you are and how well trained your animal is. That's not a bad feather to put in your cap.

*Reprinted from The GALA Newsletter, Vol. XXXV, Number 4, November 2019. □*

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*Wear this button proudly on  
November 3, 2020.*



# Congratulations To Tom And Doris Schlemmer

## The 2019 President's Award has been presented to Tom and Doris Schlemmer!

### Alpaca Llama Show Association

Tom and Doris Schlemmer can easily be called icons of the llama world. Schlemmer's Critter Haven Farm in Hometown, Indiana is a 95 acre farm that is home to not only llamas, but also horses, emu, sheep, peafowl, waterfowl, chickens, dogs and cats.

The Schlemmer's first experience with llamas was over 55 years ago while vacationing in Florida. They knew instantly that llamas were perfect for them. It was nearly 25 years later that llamas began to appear in Indiana. Tom and Doris purchased their first pair in the summer of 1996. Since that time, their love for llamas expanded, as well as their herd size. At one time the farm was home to up to 89 llamas.

Tom and Doris have had a tremendous impact on their community while also sharing the joy of llamas with others. Doris was a 4-H leader for the Allen County Llama Lovers for 26 years. They enjoyed hauling their llamas and 4-H kids to local parades and nursing home visits. Throughout the years, the Schlemmer's have traveled the country attending llama shows. They have always had a team of 4-H kids and their families following along. Tom and Doris have certainly been responsible for helping to create the future of the llama world by sharing their llamas with so many youth over the years.

Schlemmer's Critter Haven Farm has numerous achievements in the show ring. In their years of showing, they have accumulated 13 ALSA Champions. They also have had 4 ALSA National llamas, including the first ever Advanced Performance Champion (first show held in 1998) and the first ever Master Performance Champion (show held in 2009). Many of these llamas have gone on to achieve multiple national titles to their name. A legacy to the performance ring is SCHF Fancy Doublestar, who has 31 Advanced performance grand champions, 13 reserves and has earned 988 ALSA performance points in her lifetime.

MLA Editor's Note: Tom and Doris Schlemmer are long time members of the Michigan Llama Association and have participated, along with their 4-H group in a large number of MLA sponsored shows over the years. We would like to add our congratulations to winning the President's Award! ☐

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## Calendar Of Events

### OCTOBER

October 10-11, 2020

Fiber Expo

Washtenaw Farm Council

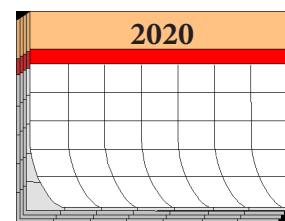
Ann Arbor, MI

Information: [info@fiberexpo.com](mailto:info@fiberexpo.com)

### NOVEMBER

November 15, 2020

*Deadline for holiday issue of Llama Living*



### DECEMBER

2021

May 22-23, 2021

Dr. Walker Parasite Clinic

Kettenum Center

Tustin, MI

This event was rescheduled from May of 2020.

Limited number of openings

Contact Denise Fehrenbach at [Denise@](mailto:Denise@fehrenbachfarms.com)

[fehrenbachfarms.com](http://fehrenbachfarms.com)

# Crafting During Isolation

By Lee Ann King

Since our last issue of *Topline*, we have been “busy” self-isolating. What a crazy and historic time for us all! I hope you have been able to stay healthy and reasonably active. Thankfully, having animals and farms to care for makes us the lucky ones.

I know a lot of my ORVLA friends work with fiber and this extra time has given us the opportunity to bust into our stash and get our Christmas gifts started. I have been knitting a lot, which is my favorite craft! My run hooking group is cancelled and it seems I can't stick with hooking unless I'm with a group of hookers. My spinning has also gone by the wayside and was replaced with a bathroom remodel project. No matter what happens, I always have my knitting. It's portable, you can have several (8) projects started and no one judges you. I have enough yarn to keep me going for...well let's just say a *very* long time and if I get desperate, I can make more. But I still can't wait for fiber festivals and yarn shops to open again. I'm sure there is something I need.

I wanted to share a simple hat pattern with you. It works with pretty much any type of sport or dk weight yarn. The Beret pattern is a true stash buster as it only uses 150 yards. This is a knitting so I apologize to my crochet friends!

Stay well and I hope to see you all soon!

---

## Beret Style Hat

Designed by Lee Ann King

**MATERIALS:** US 5 X 16 circular needle

US 7 X 16 circular needle and US 7 double point needles

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Using smaller needles - CO 120 sts and join carefully. Place a marker at join.

Work in K1 P1 rib for 1-1.2 inches.

Change to larger needles and **Purl** around 1 Row.

Next Row: Knit and inc every 10 stitches all the way around (130 sts)

Continue knitting around for 2 inches.

Next Row: K2, K2 tog, repeat all the way around.

Continue knitting around for 2 more inches.

Next Row: K2, K2 tog, repeat all the way around.

Continue knitting around for 1 more inch. (Change to double points when needed)

Next Row: K1, K2 tog, repeat all the way around.

Next Row: Knit around.

Next Row: K2 tog around.

Continue to K2 tog until approximately 8 sts remain.

Cut yarn and draw through remain sts. Weave in ends.

*Reprinted from ORVLA Topline, June 2020, Vol 37, Number 2. □*

# Livestock Show Liability Considerations In Light Of COVID-19

*This article was written by Cari Rincker and Jill Ewing of Rincker Law PLLC. Permission was granted specific to Llama Living to reprint in their newsletter. Further reprint permission must be obtained by the author.*

Livestock show families have been hard at work in the barn while the world sheltered in place during the height of the pandemic. Now these families are chopping at the bit to get back on the show circuit. And, as a livestock show coordinator, you are probably anxious to host your next big show, but you are worried about liability in light of COVID-19. These considerations highlight means to manage risk when hosting a livestock show during the day of the coronavirus.

## **Liability Waiver and Hold Harmless Agreement**

Liability waivers are advised for activities like livestock shows even without the possibility of COVID-19 exposure. In today's current environment, livestock show organizers should consider requiring participants and attendees to sign a liability waiver that addresses both ordinary risks associated with the event and also risks in light of COVID-19. Each person participating in the show should fill out and sign a liability waiver and hold harmless agreement at the show or immediately prior to attending. If a participant is a minor, in addition to obtaining the minor's signature, the waiver should be filled out and signed by his/her parent or guardian. It is important to note that in some states, including Illinois, minors rights cannot be waived by the signature of their parent or guardian, however, it is still recommended that both the child and adult sign this waiver. See Meyer by Meyer v Naperville Manner, 262 Ill. App. 3d 141, 634 N.E. 2d 411 (2nd Dist. 1994). It is also recommended to post the release on your web site or e-mail it out to participants beforehand so that it can be readily reviewed.

Each state's laws and courts have certain requirements and factors that influence the value of the waiver, but in general to be effective, a liability waiver should have at a minimum clear, explicit, concise terms that adequately describe and limit the scope of the activities the participants will be involved in at the event. So for example, a livestock show liability waiver should identify the particular show including the name and dates of the show and all the activities that participants would be involved in while there. For example, activities may include the show itself and other things planned such as barnyard olympics.

## **Scope of Waiver and Additional Safeguards**

Please keep in mind that a waiver is a tool to protect someone from liability for ordinary risks associated with a livestock show, but it will not protect from liability for negligence on the show's behalf that causes an injury or illness; therefore, it is important that certain steps are taken to ensure an organization is following best practices and that it has clear written safety procedures. The organization can still be liable if negligent and it has a duty of reasonable care.

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, consider taking additional safety and sanitation steps including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1 - Providing hand sanitizer stations throughout the facility.
- 2 - Assessing each person present for COVID-19 symptoms, including taking each person's temperature prior to entry and keeping record of same.
- 3 - Providing Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to all attendees and visibly posting them at the facility.
- 4 - Encouraging social distancing practices such as remaining six (6) feet apart from other individuals.
- 5 - Encouraging or requiring anyone in attendance to wear a face mask.
- 6 - Limiting class sizes to allow for proper social distancing between exhibitors.
- 7 - Allowing participants to stall outside or at their trailer to limit the number of people in the barn at onetime.
- 8 - Considering holding the show virtually in whole or in part.
- 9 - Staggering or expanding show dates to limit the number of people present at one time.
- 10 - Limiting or prohibiting spectators that may be present.



11- Limiting the number of people allowed in the show ring or make ready area including only allowing one adult to be present with a child show side.

All of these steps and procedures should be widely advertised in all promotional activities as well as posted visibly at the event. It is imperative that livestock show leadership continually monitor and allow all federal, state, and regional safety guidelines and orders to remain in compliance. These procedures should be expressly followed in addition to the safeguards listed above. These requirements are constantly changing due to the state of the pandemic, so procedures should be adapted and changed if necessary to remain in compliance as of the show dates.

It is also encouraged to reserve the right to hold the show virtually in whole or in part in the event that the show cannot be held in person due to guidelines in place at the time of the show. If an organization does not follow federal, state and local orders, they may likely be found liable for injury or illness that may occur at the livestock show.

### **Signage**

In some states, like Texas, there are laws that specifically protect livestock show coordinators from liability for ordinary risks inherent to handling livestock if they either have participants sign a waiver or post signage each including specific language at the event. See Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 87.003.

If your state has a similar statute, it is important to follow it expressly to ensure liability protection. It is also important to understand exceptions to liability protection. For example, the Texas law cited above provides liability protection if a participant is injured, but does not extend that same protection if a spectator is injured while watching from the stands. If your state does not have an applicable law, it is still best practice to post liability waiver and safety language at the event to put all attendees on notice. By visibly posting and providing all liability and risk language to attendees, it will aid the organization's case in the event it is sued as a result of someone's injury, sickness, or death in relation to the event. Examples might include placing posters with the liability waiver language and safety tips located at high traffic areas such as doors, the show office, bathrooms, and show ring, as well as social distancing info graphics like floor markings indicating proper social distancing recommendations.

### **Liability Insurance**

Livestock show organizations should also obtain liability insurance and ensure that the policy covers liability for injuries and illness, particularly as it applies to COVID-19. It may be necessary to purchase additional riders to your policy to adequately protect interests. Keep in mind that if federal, state, and local orders are not followed, insurance policies will likely not cover if the organization fails to follow the law. It is also encouraged that the livestock show document compliance with the law.

### **Business Structure**

In addition to the use of liability waivers and taking additional steps to make safe and warn attendees of potential risks, livestock show coordinators should also evaluate current business structure to determine if it provides personal liability protection to individuals hosting and working the livestock show.

For example, if you are operating the show as an individual, you have unlimited personal liability exposure for potential lawsuits. This means you could be personally sued and your personal assets subject to judgement satisfaction. However, other business structures such as not-for-profit corporations, provide liability protection for its shareholders, officers, and directors assuming that the corporation is following corporate formalities. That being said, even if a business structure is established, a close evaluation of corporate books should be completed. This evaluation should make sure there are well detailed By-laws that include indemnification language and that the entity is holding at least annual meetings and documenting minutes from same.

Please keep in mind that these recommendations are best practices and, even if followed, may not prevent future legal action. But, these steps should allow a livestock show organization to more adequately defend its position should a lawsuit arise.

*Reprinted from Topline, June 2020, Vol. 37, No. 2 with the author's permission granted to the Llama Living to reprint. To gain the author's permission for reprint contact Cari Rincker at CARI@RINCKERLAW.COM. □*

# Ask The CSU Vet Team

## Labor and Delivery in Camelids

By Caroline Benham, DVM, MPH - CSU Livestock Intern

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 the 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 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 result 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 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 states. 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 end when the fetus enters the pelvic canal. A camelid in Stage I of parturition may exhibit signs of 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 “allatois”) 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 State 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 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: 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 in opposite directions. While it may be 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 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 postpartum), 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 kushed 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

*Continued on page 23*

MICHIGAN



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## 2020 MLA Membership Application

The following information will comprise your listing in the MLA Directory. \*Indicates **REQUIRED** information.

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\*FIRST NAME .....

ADDITIONAL NAMES .....

FARM/BUSINESS NAME .....

\*ADDRESS .....

\*CITY ..... \*STATE ..... \*ZIP .....

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\*E-MAIL .....

WEB SITE ADDRESS .....

SPECIALTIES .....

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Check it out at [www.michiganllama.org](http://www.michiganllama.org) or our Facebook page***

***For inclusion in the MLA Directory, send this form and check or money order payable to MLA, no later than January 31, 2020 to: MLA Treasurer, Pat Schneeberger, 11389 Broadbent Rd., Lansing, MI 48917. TX (517) 627-6562.***

# Labor and delivery in camelids

## Continued

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.

### RESOURCES:

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*Reprinted from The Journal of RMLA, Winter 2019. □*

*MLA election information for 2020  
will be coming soon in your mailbox  
and/or online*

## Advertisers in this issue of Llama Living

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**MICHIGAN**



**LAMA**  
ASSOCIATION

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The opinions and articles in the MLA newsletter, *Llama Living*, are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the MLA or the newsletter editor.

Newsletter deadlines for articles, classified ads, and traditional advertisements are February 15th, May 15th, August 15th and November 15th.

**Ads and photos may be sent by e-mail as an attachment in PDF format** to GRJax7@springcom.com. Ads appearing in the online version only of *Llama Living* will be in color.

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**Suzanne Hockin Frambes, Editor**  
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**Albion, MI 49224**

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