



Llama Living

Hear What All The Humming Is About

March 2020

Michigan Llama Association

Volume 25, Issue 1

Snow?
I thought it was spring!



Contents

Llama Living
25 Years

- 6 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**
- 14 VET CORNER**
- 18 FARM HINT**



GRJax7@springcom.com

- 4 MLA Calendar**
- 8 A New Twist On Selling Your Fleece**
- 9 Don't Forget The MLA Fund Raiser At The Mid Michigan Show**
- 10 4-H Kids Four Times More Likely To Give Back To Their Communities**
- 11 2020 Fiber Shows In Michigan**
- 16 Improving Your Relationship With Your Camelids**
- 19 Web Site For Animal Control Personnel**
- 20 Why Does My Llama Or Alpaca Lay Down Instead Of Walking On The Lead?**
- 23 Happy 25th Anniversary To Llama Living!**

Michigan Llama Association

Web Site - www.michiganlama.org
Facebook Page - Michigan Llama Association

Cover photo submitted by Corky Dubois, Emeral Glen Farm/Team Effort

BITTERSWEET FARM



SUZANNE HOCKIN FRAMBES
KEN FRAMBES
(517) 857-4626

Michigan Llama Association 2020 MLA Board

President	Corky Dubois	516-902-2382
Vice President	Gary Surratt	517-457-3524
Secretary	Sheila Miller	517-645-2719
Treasurer	Pat Schneeberger	517-627-6562
Youth Representative	VACANT	
Immediate Past Member	VACANT	

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Year one of two	Bev Surratt	574-606-6138
Year two of two	Bev Souva	626-902-2382
Year two of two	Tim Douswma	517-547-3524

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Hillsdale Show	Tim/Stephanie Douwsma	574-606-6183
Lamafest	Corky Dubois	616-902-2382
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	Julia Tarsa	
	Sarah Wolf	
Membership	Pat Scheeberger	517-627-6562
Mid Michigan Show	Dave Thompson	616-606-6183
Newsletter	Suzanne Hockin Frambes	517-857-4626
Nomination	Jerry Miller	517-645-2719
Scholarship	Corky Dubois	615-902-2382
Spring Fund Raiser	Annette Aldrich	517-675-7705
Youth Fund Raiser.....	INACTIVE	
Web Master	Lifelines Media	
Michigan Fiber Industry		
Coalition	Sheila Miller	517-645-2719

NEXT

LLAMA LIVING

DEADLINE

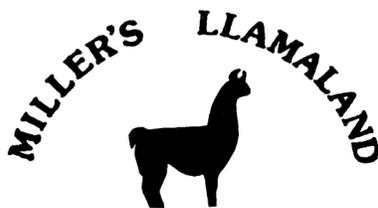
MAY 15, 2020

If you would like to fill any of the vacant or inactive positions or join a committee, contact Corky Dubois for information.

MLA Calendar

For those of you missed out on purchasing the 2020 MLA Calendar, you will have another chance to purchase next year's calendar (2021) at the MLA merchandise table during Lamafest 2020. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to see what MLA members have on their farms! There are limited supplies available each year so head to the MLA merchandise table early.

If you have a llama that you would like featured in next year's calendar contact Corky Dubois now for more information at 616-902-2382 or egflamas@yahoo.com. ☐



Jerry & Sheila Miller
4705 Llama Lane, Potterville, 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
show-stud-fiber-guard -soil enhancers

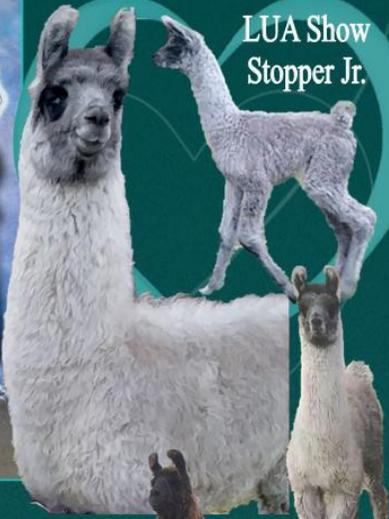


We'll see you in the Winner's Circle!
 Available for consideration 3 top, Show Quality males
 Sired by 3 x National Champion MSF Show Stopper

LUA The Showman



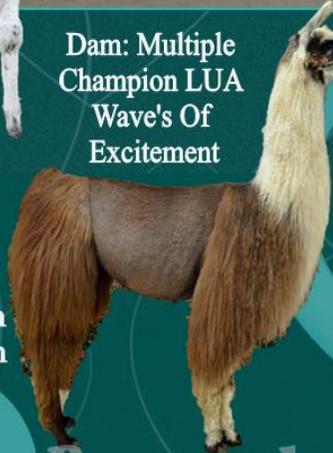
LUA Show Stopper Jr.



Dam: Multiple Champion LUA Wave's Of Excitement

LUA Show Stopper's Spirit

Dam: Multiple Champion LUA Wave's Of Victory National Champion Dam Multiple POD Champion



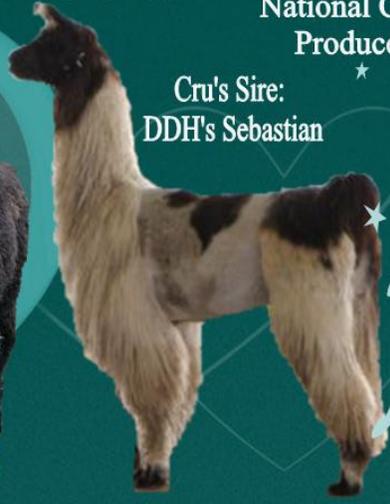
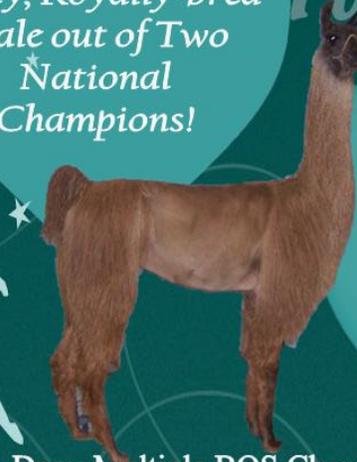
Dam: Multiple BOS Champion LUA My Darlin Status National Champion Dam National Champion Produce Of Dam

Offering an Extra Fancy, Royally-bred male out of Two National Champions!

Power In The Blood

LUA Sebastian's Cru

Cru's Sire: DDH's Sebastian

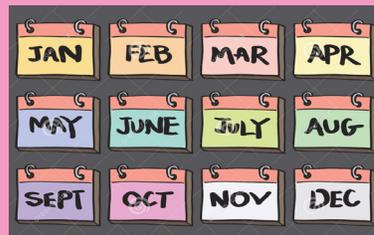


Dam: Multiple BOS Champion LUA Glowing With Glory Status

SOLD

National Champion Llamas & Little Aussies
 Lloyd & Tami Lash ~ www.LashsUniqueAnimals.com

Calendar Of Events



MARCH

APRIL

April 3-5, 2020

March Llama Madness

Cloverdale, IN

Information: www.solidrockllamas.com

April 11, 2020

Hillsdale Hobo Show

Hillsdale County Fairgrounds

Hillsdale, MI

Contact: Tim Douwsma

oldgloryllamas@comcast.com

April 25, 2020

Daffodil Classic

See ORVLA web site for more information

MAY

May 2, 2020

Mid Michigan Llama Show

Drawing and Silent Auction Fund Raiser

Eaton County Fairgrounds

Charlotte, MI

* Show Contact: Corky Dubois and Dave

Thompson - egflamas@yahoo.com

* Fund Raiser for Llama Living Contact: Annette

Aldrich - raaldrich@tds.net

May 15, 2020

Deadline for Llama Living

May 16, 2020

Llama Show

Coshecton County Fairgrounds

Sugarcreek, OH

See ORVLA web site for more information

May 30-31, 2020

Dr. Walker Parasite Clinic

Kettenum Center

Tustin, MI

Limited number of openings

Contact: Denise Fehrenbach

Denise@fehrenbachfarms.com

JUNE

June 6-7, 2020

Allen County Open

Allen County Fairgrounds

Forth Wayne, IN

For more information see their Facebook page.

June 13-14, 2020

John Mallon Level 1 Clinic

John Mallon Jackpot Obstacle Clinic

Fehrenbach Farm

Evart, MI

Contact Denise Fehrenbach

Denise@fehrenbachfarms.com

June 26-28, 2020

The Gathering

For more information: ILR web site

JULY

July 18, 2020

Dr. Norm Evan's Nutrition, Skin Parasites,

Repro & Genetic Clinic

Kettenum Center

Tustin, MI

Contact: Denise Fehrenbach

Denise@fehrenbachfarms.com

July 29 - August 9, 2020

Ohio State Fair

Columbus, OH

For more information check their web site.

It is almost time
Come as you are!

NO GROOMING NEEDED

Hillsdale Hobo Hootenanny Show
April 11, 2020
Hillsdale County Fairgrounds Hillsdale, MI
Show Entry and info
www.michiganllama.org

AUGUST

August 4, 2020
Fulton County Fair
Wauseon, OH
 For more information see ORVLA web site or
 Fulton County Fair Facebook page

August 7-9, 2020
Indiana State Fair
Indianapolis, IN
 For more information see their web site

August 12-16, 2020
Michigan Fiber Festival
Allegan County Fairgrounds
Allegan, MI
 Workshops with vendor days on Friday and
 Saturday. For more information go to their web
 site.

August 15, 2020
Deadline for Llama Living

SEPTEMBER

September 5-6, 2020
Lamafest
MSU Pavilion
East Lansing, MI
 For more information see the June issue of Llama
 Living , the MLA web site or Corky Dubois and
 Dave Thompson egflamas@yahoo.com

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

November 15, 2020
Deadline for holiday issue of Llama Living

November
MLA Board and Election Meeting
 Date, time and place not available as of this printing

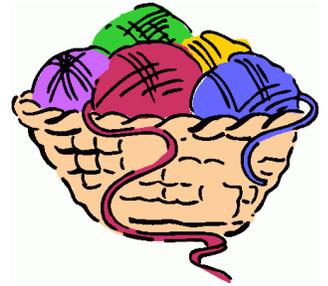
DECEMBER

A New Twist On Selling Your Fleece

By Linda Taggart

The co-op or fiber pool is a great place to sell your fleece, especially if you have a lot of it. There's relatively little work required and you get money or product back in trade. But, there is a whole other market open to the savvy camelid farmer - hand spinners!

Hand spinners enjoy turning fiber into yarn. They use everything from small spindles that weight less than an ounce to electric wheels that can churn out thousands of yards of yarn in a matter of hours. They haul their spinning wheels to fiber festivals, family vacations and even the coffee shop down the street. And they LOVE good fiber



Selling to hand spinners (and other fiber artist - but for brevity I'm going to refer to them all as hand spinners) is admittedly a lot more work than just sending your fleece to a mill or a pool. Plus there are not enough of us to take every fleece produced. But it can do wonders for your marketing. For one thing, if you have exceptional fleeces and get it into the hands of spinners, they will tell other spinners about how great your fiber is. (Believe me - when someone posts something pretty in my favorite spinning forum the first thing folks ask is "where did you get that fiber?") This author who has her own sheep and alpacas and has so much fleece she's tripping over it may have once or twice purchased fiber she saw in said forum because it was just so pretty). They share pictures of the process from fleece to finished product and often mention farm names. Sure, a championship in the show ring is great, but does it actually sell your fleeces? Word of mouth from hand spinners can make your fiber a (niche) household name.

But how do you reach this mythical group of hand spinners and what exactly are they looking for? Like most marketing, you'll want to provide something of value to them. Google your local spinning guild and offer classes on shirting an alpaca fleece. Advertise in your local fiber festival's program that you have farm tours and raw fleece for sale. Join online spinning groups and participate - NOT as a seller or in a spammy way, but by sharing what you're doing with your fleeces or asking questions. Sponsor a team for a sheep to shawl. In other words, network. I did say in the beginning it's more work than a fiber pool! But you do make a lot more friends and learn a lot more networking.

As to what hand spinners want, I did a small informal poll in my favorite online spinning group. Their top priorities were:

1 - Low/no VM* - I speak from experience that pulling out hay and other VM every inch or so of spinning is **exhausting** and makes for a miserable spin. If you have access to a tumbler it may be worth considering its use before selling your fleece, but the trade off is you don't get that perfect blanket shape like it just came off the animal.

2 - Low micron count/soft hand - now I don't know how many of the folks who said this are actually asking for micron count. And we all know that you can have a soft fleece with a good hand (good feeling/drape/etc.) with a higher micron count. So, let's just say that most hand spinners want something soft and silky to the touch.

3 - They prefer raw fleece to already processed roving. (This was interesting to me because I typically prefer to buy roving, and there were several who agreed with me, but the majority of respondents wanted a raw fleece.)

4 - They want to buy direct from the farm. Several people indicated that they enjoy going to the farm each year to pick up their fleeces, see the animals, etc. They valued the connection to the animals themselves. Fiber festivals and Etsy were of course also popular, but they like those as venues to try a fiber and then would go directly to the source for future purchases.

3 - They like color - unlike the pool that values uniformity and pale colors, hand spinners love a variety of colors. Some of us even (or especially) love multi-colored fleeces.

As with any other fiber endeavor, remember what you sell is your reputation. All the things we do for our animals - making sure they have good nutrition and stay healthy, finding a good shearer who doesn't leave a lot

Continued on page 10



Don't Forget The MLA Fund Raiser At The Mid Michigan Show May 2, 2020

Annette Aldrich will once again host the MLA Spring Fund Raiser at the Mid Michigan Show to help fund your newsletter, Llama Living. Llama related items can be sent to Annette prior to the show or brought to the fund raiser located in the pen barn the morning of the show.. The drawing/silent auction will be held at the end of the day.

Don't forget to stop by the fund raising table to purchase tickets for the drawing and/or to participate in the silent auction for even more great llama related items.

If you have questions regarding the fund raiser contact Annett at 517-675-7705 or raaldrich@tds.net.



Selling Your Fleece Continued

of second cuts, and improving pastures to keep out things that stick in the fleece - translate into the final product.

Reach out to the spinning world. Follow some of the tags in Instagram (#hand spinners, #spinnersofIG, #makingyarn, etc.) and see what folks are doing with fiber. Talk to your local guild and see what they want in a fleece. You may just find another revenue source for your farm!

*Just as a side note, there are places you can sell high-VM fleeces, seconds and the like. You won't get a great price for it, but it sure beats throwing a fleece in the compost if it's too messy to send to the pool. There are actually some spinners who enjoy cleaning all the bits out of fleece.

Reprinted from The GALA Newsletter, Volume XXXV, Number 4, November 2019.

On a side note, fly-tying people are also interested in fiber. □

4-H Kids Four Times More Likely To Give Back To Their Communities

By Amanda Radke

County fair season has passed and if you have 4-H kids, you likely spent any free time you had this summer in the barn working on livestock or at the kitchen table putting together indoor exhibits.

I'm a proud graduate of the 4-H program. I loved my years in 4-H where I showed cattle and hogs, judged livestock, exhibited projects such as baked goods, photographs and crafts and competed in the public speaking and demonstration contests.

Through 4-H I learned professionalism, competition, winning and losing gracefully, sportsmanship, interviewing skills, community service and so much more.

I'm looking forward to the day when our kids will participate in this youth program. In today's modern society where kids have so many activities to choose from, I still think 4-H truly offers the most value and teaches the sometimes considered "antiquated" lessons that simply aren't offered anywhere else.

To truly understand the value of 4-H is to see a kid blossom in the program. There is so much growth that takes place from the 8-year old first-year member to the graduating high school senior. It's really incredible!

But if anecdotal evidence isn't enough, consider this 10-year study conducted by Tufts University, which looks at the effectiveness of various youth programs.

Evaluating more than 7,000 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across 42 U.S. states, the study revealed that 4-H youth are four times more likely to give back to their communities, two times more likely to make healthier choices, two times more likely to participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities and two times more likely to be civically active.

According to researchers, "The 4-H Study is a first-of-its-kind longitudinal investigation that continues to yield important information about the bases and implications of personal youth development, information that can help launch young people into healthy and productive lives."

"The findings continue to be used widely by youth program professionals and, to an increasing extent, policy makers. These impacts on application move the 4-H Study toward its chief objective: To provide useful scientific evidence about actions that may be taken to enhance the lives of the diverse young people of America."

"One of the conclusions we have drawn from our findings to date is that youth programs cannot remain static; they must expand and change in order to address the diverse and changing characteristics, needs and interest of adolescents and their families," the study relates.



“We also have concluded that youth programs must address both prevention and promotion; contrary to popular belief, focusing on one does not necessarily affect the other.”

“We hope that in the future we can build upon and extend this longitudinal study so we can gain powerful and practical insights into what guides a thriving young person into a productive and successful adulthood.”

“With such additional research, we would also be able to determine which personal youth development assets are related to critical life events, such as completing high school, going to college, successful entry into the workforce, or embarking on military service to our nation.” the researchers say.

“Following the 4-H Study participants beyond high school remains an important next step that will provide novel insights into how youth development programs such as 4-H can help adolescents develop into productive and healthy adults. Such knowledge would be of inestimable value for science, for practitioners and for developing the social policy of tomorrow.”

Read the full report here at <https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/4-H-Study-of-Positive-Youth-Development-Full-Report.pdf>. Share with me if you were involved in 4-H or have kids and grandkids participating today, what do you value most about the program?

Reprinted from The GALA Newsletter, Volume XXXV, Number 4, November 2019. Originally printed with permission from the July 22, 2019 edition of Beef Magazine. For more information, visit Amanda's web site at www.AmandRadke.com. □

2020 FIBER SHOWS IN MICHIGAN

April 4-5, 2020

Fiber Expo

Washtenaw Family Council
5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI
Info: info@fiberexpo.com

August 28-30, 2020

St. Clair County Farm Huseum

36th Annual Harvest Days
Goodells, MI 48027
Info: info@fiberexpo.com

June 6-7, 2020

Tip of the Mitt Fiber Fair

Emmet County Fairgrounds
Petoskey, MI
Info: tipofthemittfiberfair@gmail.com

September 26-27, 2020

Northern Michigan Lamb & Wool Festival

Ogemaw County Fairgrounds
West Branch, MI
Info: jmprentice@charter.net

August 14-16, 2020

Michigan Fiber Festival

Allegan County Fairgrounds
150 Allegan, MI
Info: staff@michiganfiberfestival.info

October 10-11, 2020

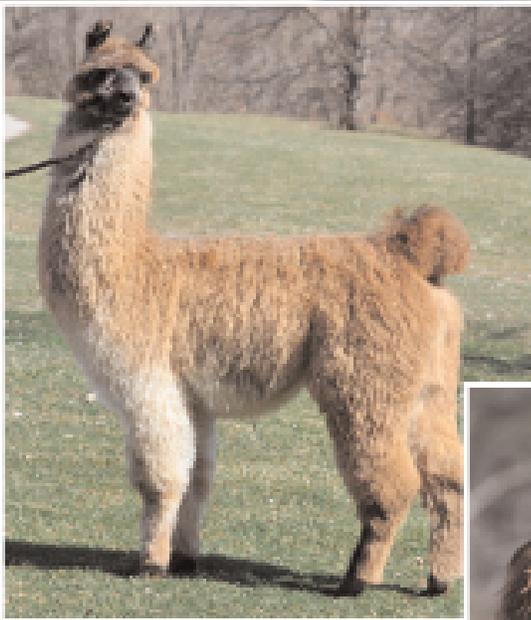
Fiber Expo

Washtenaw Farm Council
Ann Arbor, MI
Info: info@fiberexpo.com



Looking for a great new addition to your herd?

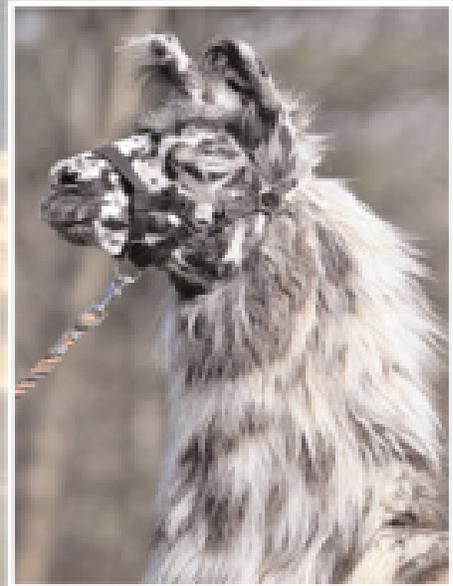
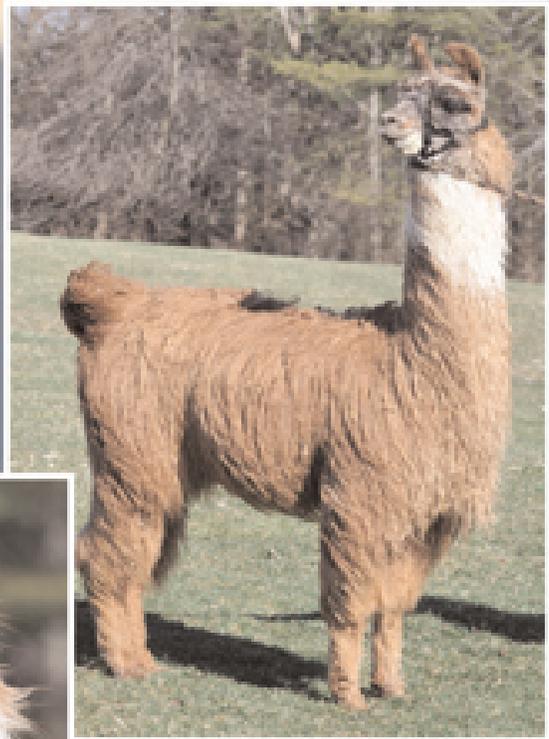
You will find a wide selection of young males & females, mature females - bred or open, and truly great stud prospects. These colorful suris & silkies are all 4-H trained and bred for correctness and people-pleasing personalities.



Glen & Margo Unzicker • 17740 County Road 14 • Goshen, IN 46528

You're sure to find it at Klein Himmel!

You will find great deals and packages made up of fine quality show, breeding and companion llamas. If you are looking for that perfect llama, contact Klein Himmel. Be sure to visit our web site for more pictures and information.



Klein Himmel
(LITTLE HEAVEN)

P: 574.825.4459 • E: glenunzicker@earthlink.net • W: www.kleinhimmel.com

BEFORE YOU BUY - PREPURCHASE AND BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMS IN LLAMAS

Bringing a new llama to your farm can be a very exciting time! There's many reasons you're bringing this new animal into your life. Maybe you've seen the animal in person and it's breathing, maybe you have studied its genealogy and love the genetics. Perhaps it's bred to a really cool stud, or has had some champion offspring on the ground. Whatever the reason, you know why you NEED this llama. We all expect bringing home a new animal will be a fun, positive experience, and it *should* be! Let's talk about how to MAKE SURE it is and what we can do so that everyone involved has the same expectations.

Meet before you buy. Whenever possible, view the animal in person prior to purchase. Pictures we see online and in advertisements are great - we can adjust the lighting and really get some beautiful poses of our animals. However, it is one small snapshot into the life of that llama. Photos taken from different angles can warp what we see. Don't forget it's easy to rotate a photograph to help hide a sloping top line (to an extent). Sometimes there are videos of the animal walking and interacting with people - this is great because you can somewhat evaluate the gait and temperament. But not always. Maybe the animal is slightly cow-hocked, but when walking uphill, you can't really tell because of how the weight is shifted. You get the idea. Sometimes we buy animals sight unseen, from online pictures. For most of us, this has been a positive experience. But it's never a bad idea to contact someone who can personally evaluate the animal in person before you buy.

Besides the normal stuff we worry about - conformation, gait, tail set, legs, and fleece - what else is important to evaluate before committing to purchase a llama? You can get a general pre-purchase exam done by a veterinarian, or if you intend to breed said animal, also request a breeding soundness exam. These types of exams are quite common in the equine world and are always a good idea no matter what the dollar amount involved.

Consider a pre-purchase exam. A general pre-purchase exam is an exam done by a veterinarian who is hired by the buyer to do a physical exam on the animal they intend to purchase. This could be something as simple as a thorough physical exam, which should include an exam of the eyes, ears, umbilical hernias, foot pads/nails, auscultation of the heart/lungs/gut, body temperature taken and a check over the skin to look for abnormalities. You can, of course, take this step further and have the vet also run a fecal sample on the animal. This would be a great idea considering the parasite resistance we face as an industry. If you want to get really fancy, you may request a basic blood panel to check organ function and blood cell counts, or even a trace mineral panel. In horse pre-purchase exams, a lameness exam and x-rays of the legs/feet is very common, due to the nature of their work. In our industry, this probably isn't something we would pursue unless there was reason to suspect an issue or if the animal will be working as a packer or carter. Any abnormalities on the physical exam would be reported to you by the vet and this may affect your decision to purchase the animal, to investigate a condition further, or to negotiate the price.

Breeding soundness exams. If your new llama is going to be a breeding animal, you may want to also consider a breeding soundness exam. These were awfully popular in the alpaca world when alpaca prices were at a premium. Then, as the market changed, so did a lot of our practices. This type of exam can be as simple or as complex as you'd like to go. One would assume the higher the price of the animal, the more extensive the exam you'd want. We've all had that beautiful animal who just could never get bred. There's no guarantee that you can find *every* problem in an exam, but you can at least rule out some major issues. Most breeders will offer some sort of reproductive guarantee with the sale of a breeding animal - know what exactly it entails. In males, at a minimum, the testicles is detected, the testicles can also be ultra sounded to look for cysts or nodules, and these areas can be needle aspirated for cytology if needed. Semen may also be collected for a sperm count and to look at structure and viability. The penis should be externalized from the prepuce and examined (hair wrapped around the tip of the penis can be a debilitating problem). In females, a visual inspection of the udder and vulva is recommended, as well as manual palpation. A vaginal speculum exam can be done to inspect the cervix and look

for damage or drainage, such as from a uterine infection. You can also have her uterus and ovaries ultra sounded to confirm pregnancy, but also to look for abnormal fluid, cysts, and other problems. Lastly, a uterine abnormality can be cultured or biopsied if you wish to pursue further testing.

Quarantine periods. So, let's say you found the llama you want online, you got it checked out by a vet and by a llama friend who lives nearby. The fecal test looked great. Everything's a go. Just trailer it on home and put it in the pasture, right?

Hold on just a minute. The ideal situation would be to quarantine your new animal in a separate pen/paddock for about 2-3 weeks and run another fecal sample prior to integrating them in with the herd. Besides intestinal parasites, other types of infections and illnesses could pop up in this quarantine period - perhaps something they were exposed to before leaving their farm, while in transit, or even at a show where they may have been picked up. This gives you time to recognize there's an issue and have your vet evaluate the animal before you expose the rest of your herd. There are some diseases that typically only occur in certain geographic regions of the country - for example -Anthrax, Vesicular Stomatitis, Liver Flukes, Blue Tongue, and Tuberculosis. This is because of differences in weather patterns and the types of wildlife and insects that inhabit those areas. In a world where we trailer animals cross-country on a regular basis, don't risk the health of your herd for sake of convenience. Alas, we know taking all the precautions isn't always possible, but when in doubt, keep them out (of your pasture for 2-3 weeks)!

Hopefully, this information helps you make a more informed decision when adding a new llama to your herd.

Reprinted from Topline, Volume 36, Number 4, November 2019. □



	<p><i>Color Dancers</i></p> <p>Alpacas and Fiber Cyndi Ernst</p> <p>(517) 861-9328 CynthiaRErnst@gmail.com Howell, Michigan 48855</p>
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Improving Your Relationship With Your Camelids

By John Mallon

Welcome to the column and thanks for taking the interest in improving your relationship with your llamas or alpacas. I will do my best to address questions and problems I most often encounter in my travels conducting training clinics around the world and attempt to leave you with a better understanding of the animals we have so fortunately chosen to spend our lives with.

- ♦ First, for the sake of simplicity, I will use “llamas and alpacas rather than “lamas” throughout these articles, but the same theories and techniques apply equally to alpacas, guanacos, and horses.
- ♦ Second, realizing that many new llama and alpaca lovers join us each month, I will start at the beginning as though we were all new to llamas and alpacas and refer back to the basics on a regular basis in order to keep us all up to speed.
- ♦ Third, I will venture outside the training arena from time to time to address topics which I feel are relevant to the industry as a whole



The well-being of the llamas and alpacas is always my primary consideration and my contributions to this column will be based upon that fact. My chosen path in life enables me to encounter thousands of llamas and alpacas, each with problems relating to their humans and my purpose is to share the benefits of my experience with you.

There are many ways of doing things and I've probably tried at least most of them in my 35+ years of training various species of animals. The ideas and techniques I'll share with you are only those which have worked in all cases, but if you are doing something different from what I suggest, and it is working for you, there is no reason to change it (“If it ain't broke, don't fix it...”). With that out of the way, let's talk llamas and alpacas.

What are llamas and alpacas, exactly? Why do they do the things they do? What makes them tick? What motivates them to alter their behavior? Why won't they do what I want them to do? Why do they seem to be afraid of me? Why are they so stubborn sometimes? Don't they know I'm not going to hurt them? The key to working successfully with llama and alpacas is understanding, because what is often misconstrued as misbehavior is simply misunderstanding on the llamas' and alpacas' part, brought on by inconsistent behavior and lack of understanding on our part. Once we begin to understand the animal, the animal can begin to understand us and learn to cooperate with us so that we may work safely and peacefully together.

When we wrote that check to purchase our llamas and alpacas, we signed a contract of care, we agreed to look after them, not just look at them. In order to properly care for these animals, we must be able to trim toenails, give shots, administer worming medication, groom, move from place to place for weighting, etc., and do it all as safely and stress-free as possible. This is where training comes into play. If a llama or alpaca is in serious trouble and our interference escalates his stress, raising blood pressure, heart and respiration rates then there is an increase chance that an animal that might otherwise have survived will die. Stress kills.

Unfortunately, some people have the idea that training is “icing on the cake”, not really necessary if we don't plan to show, pack, or drive the animal. Training is of the utmost importance if we are to have civilized relationships with the llama - relationships which are compatible rather than adversarial. With that in mind, let's take a look at what the llama or alpaca is from the inside out.

The llama or alpaca is a prey animal, the exact opposite of dogs and cats (confident predators/hunters with which we are always comparing our llamas and alpacas) that we are used to. Expecting or hoping that our llamas and alpacas will respond to us in the same general manner in which dogs do can only lead to frustration and failure - it just isn't going to happen.

Being a prey animal controls every aspect of the llama's life, a life that is filled with mistrust, suspicion, and self-protective behavior. Fear is the llamas's and alpaca's friend, his savior, for without it, he would become prey to the predator.

His ability to flee instantly from any perceived threat is what has kept him going for all these thousands of years and his instinct to do so has served him well. And although his need to be every-vigilant and protective has been diminished somewhat through domestication and a looked-after lifestyle, the instinct has not changed one bit.

Only through an understanding of the psychology of the prey animal can we hope to develop a trusting relationship with an animal whose job it is to be very highly suspicious of anything new or different in his life. The importance of this understanding cannot be overstated. These animals are very different, with a whole different way of looking at and experiencing the world.

Let's take a look at how the prey animal is physically different from the predator, specifically his eye-set and vision. One of the features that seems to attract people to llamas and alpacas are their big, beautiful eyes and there is no arguing the fact that they do have eyes that are big and beautiful. But they are not that way so that we'll love them. They are set wide in the head (as with all prey animals) to provide a very wide range of vision, their first line of defense. Their monocular vision operated like two separate cameras and their color and depth perception has been sacrificed in favor of highly specialized and sensitive motion detectors.

The predator, on the other hand, have eyes set in the middle of their heads for greater depth perception, enhancing their ability to make the killing strike at the right moment, (hand/claw-eye coordination). Our ability to see around us is diminished, but we see in front of us just fine. If you ever wonder about whether an animal is prey or predator, remember this...."eyes to the front, they hunt. Eyes to the side, they hide".

The monocular vision also explains why prey animals must be taught everything twice - once on the left, then again on the right, as if he were two different animals. Imagine sitting in a car that had only side-view mirrors - no rearview. As someone walks behind the car, you spot them in your side view mirror and then they disappear from view, only to appear a moment later in the other mirror. This is what the llama or alpaca experiences when we walk behind him, or reach over to position a pack or harness on him or reach around his neck to adjust his halter. Different, isn't it? This is the llama's and alpaca's perception of the world and, like it or not, there is no changing it.

I welcome questions, comments and suggestions. E-mail me at learning@mallonmethod.com. 'Til next time, Happy Trails

Reprinted from The GALA newsletter, Volume XXXV, Number 1, February 2019. □

It isn't that far off until
shearing season. Have your
shears sharpened now, before
the rush!

Farm Hint

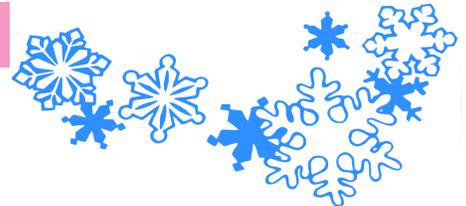


Grass is greener on the other side. Jeff Westmoreland scatters llama beans on the outside of the fence to keep the llamas from sticking their heads through the fence to get that green stuff on the outside.

Reprinted from the Llama Lletter, February 28, 2002, Volume 17, Number 1.

Winter Highlights

Submitted By Lorraine Kilmartin



It was a long, boring winter. Our grain-lady would rush out to our barn, put grain in our bins, refill the hay rack and hurry back to her own barn. Yes, she'd greet us and do that funny thing where she rubs our necks. But I swear she couldn't have spent more than 20 minutes a week with us! Every single time she came in the door, she would comment on the cold. Not just occasionally, but every single time. It got old pretty quick.

It's not that we were lonely for her. We've never entirely trusted her anyway, but we were bored silly. These were the parameters of our life: our barn, our side-porch, conveniently close to the barn bean pile we were building, and a small paddock area which was so deep in snow we couldn't enjoy even a short stroll.

So it was great interest, and even delight, that we noticed something different about our grain-lady one snowy day - she had a brand-new gait. It was because she had some big, flat things on her feet. For two days we'd been waiting for the noisy-truck-guy so we could watch him push the snow around, but he never showed. So we were desperate for some diversion. Holding herself steady with two poles, our grain-lady slowly made her way through deep snow to our barn.

She must have gotten the idea for the pole from us; you know - four feet. But when we heard her arrive outside, instead of opening the door, she began banging on it. And to be honest, she was swearing the whole time. It was so interesting!

Next, she came around by the back gate, which was quite a novelty in winter, but she couldn't swing it open because the snow was so deep. We crowded up to the gate, fascinated, as she unbuckled some halters on her feet and removed the flat things. She showed us what they were. Not that they made any sense to us, but they smelled a little like a new grain bin.

Then, and this is the best part, we watched as she actually climbed over the gate. We were enthralled, but she wasn't happy. She said, "I am too old for this sh*t". In fact she said it a number of times.

Finally, she was in our barn and she sat on the waterer for a while. Another first! We got to smell her hat. When her breathing got back to normal, she began struggling to get that door free of the ice buildup.

We watched carefully to see if maybe we could learn how to open the door ourselves, but she mostly used her hands so we knew we were out of luck on that account. Once the door was unstuck, she doled out grain and filled the hay rack. So she was back working with those harnesses on her feet and she showed us how she could walk on those flat things. We didn't like that, but still it was interesting to see. She showed us the poles too, but we liked those even less.

Then she said goodbye and told us what good boys we were and she was gone. We all went out to our side-porch to watch her heading back to her own barn, tromping along with the grace of a Guernsey. It was definitely the highlight of our winter and I dreamed about it several times.

Reprinted from the Mid West Lama Association Newsletter, Summer 2019. □

Web Site For Animal Control Personnel

The ILR Board of Directors is pleased to announce the creation of a web site aimed at helping people catch or rescue llamas and alpacas - sponsored by the ILR and funded by the ILF.

It will most helpful to those with no knowledge of camelids. Frequently police or animal control agencies are called upon to rescue abandoned llamas or catch alpacas that have gotten loose. The site will give basic information as well as lists of people and organizations that can help.

Using photographs and short articles, the format is easy to use. It gives quick access to basic health requirements and common sense tips on control. Check the site out at the following addresses:

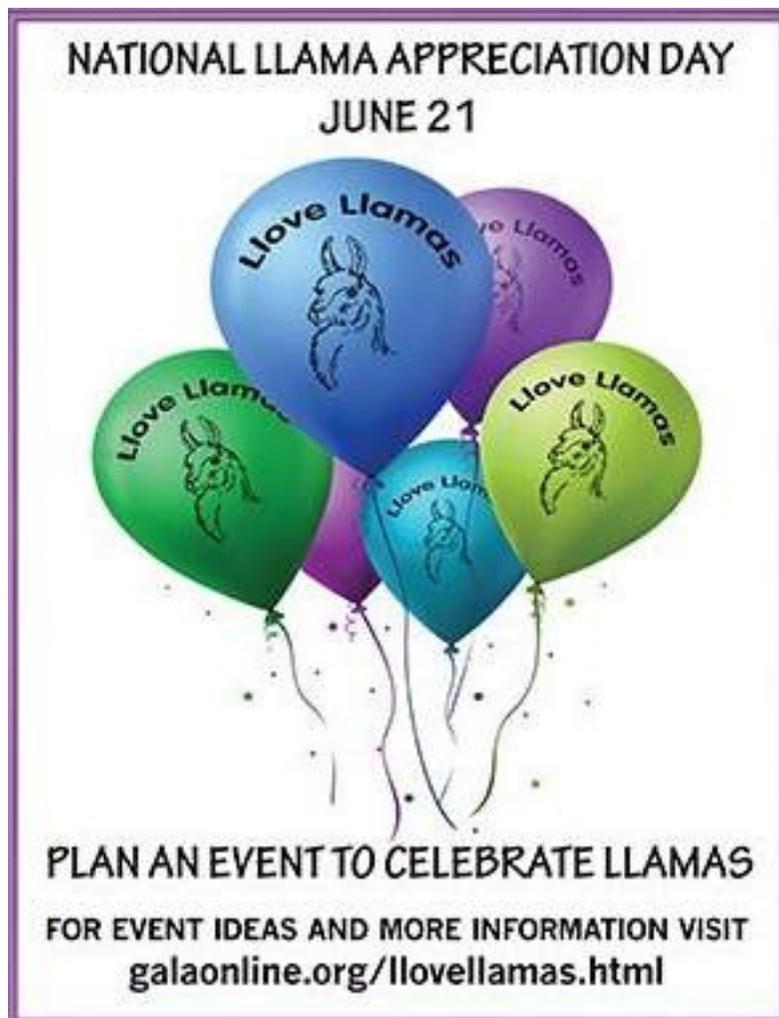
www.howtocatchallama.com

www.llamarescue.info

www.lamarescue.com

Help us spread the word about this site by informing your local veterinarians and animal control agencies of its existence. Llama owners who would like to have input into the content of the site may contact Linda Hayes at llamas@skybea.com. Additions, corrections and new information will be updated periodically.

Reprinted from the Mid West Llama Association Newsletter, Summer 2019. □





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Why Does My Llama or Alpaca Lay Down Instead of Walking on the Lead?

By Marty McGee Bennett

When done appropriately I think that teaching young llamas and alpacas to lead is one of the easiest and most fun aspects of camelid training and handling. Unlike giving injections, oral worming or trimming toenails, taking your animal out for a walk can be enjoyable for your animal as well as for you. The techniques described below can be used to re-train older animals or ones that have not been handled.

If I am having trouble with a skill that other people think is easy, I remind myself, "Anything is easy if you know how to do it!"

Teaching a llama or an alpaca to walk nicely on a lead IS easy provided that you have an understanding of how to avoid the pitfalls AND that you have a proper set up. This article focuses on one very common problem and it is that the llama or alpaca lies down when you are training him to lead. The most important thing to understand and believe is that if your camelid lies down in the middle of a lead training lesson, YOU have made a mistake. You are the teacher, it is your responsibility to convey what you want in a way that works. If the animal doesn't understand, it is not his fault. When I am training I make mistakes. Mistakes are the way that I learn what TO DO.

It is no good to just try random ideas and hope one works, i.e. the "throw all the spaghetti at the wall and hope some of it stick" approach. I evaluate each step of the process as I go and make an educated choice about what will work in any given situation. Animals are not all cookie cutter versions of each other. There is no way to work with an animal and not make a miscalculation now and again. Making a mistake is not the problem. Repeating the same mistake over and over IS the problem. Repeating the same mistake TEACHES the animal to do what you DON'T want him to do.

Understand why your animal student dropped to the ground instead of walking and you are three quarters of the way to "that was easy!" Camelid that lie down on the lead have a reason for choosing that behavior. Labeling the animal as stubborn, stupid or obstinate only reduces your chances of fixing the problem

There are a number of possible reasons for the behavior listed below. More than one reason may apply.

- ◆ The animal is overwhelmed and frightened.
- ◆ The halter doesn't fit.
- ◆ The animal does not know what you want.
- ◆ You are being heavy handed.
- ◆ Your set up is not good enough and does not provide limits.
- ◆ You are standing too close to the animal.

Let's look at each of these possible miscalculations in more detail along with the solutions.

The Animal is Overwhelmed and Frightened and Lying Down Feels Safer Than Standing Up.

Getting small is a coping strategy for camelids. They don't all use it and some have more of a hair trigger "cush" button than others, but in my experience, in a stressful situation it means the same thing. The animal doesn't know what else to do and it feels safer to get small.

It is similar to a child putting his or her head down on the desk when they don't understand the material and the teacher is not noticing the signs of confusion and/or fear. Teaching animals to lead that are too young, either mentally or physically, is probably the biggest reason for this problem. An 8-10 month old animal will learn to lead twice as fast as a 4-6 month animal. Here is a partial laundry list of what will cause "overwhelm" lessons that are overly long, do not include any breaks, are too frequent, or teaching in a location away from other animals.

The Halter Doesn't Fit and Lying Down Seems Safer Than Moving.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of proper halter fit, particularly in the early stages of teaching an animal to lead. I have written many articles on halter fit; it is not a simple subject. For purposes of this short article, the most important aspect of halter fit is that there is plenty of room in the nose band for comfort and that the crown piece (the part that goes behind the ears) has plenty of "take up", meaning that you can snug up the crown piece and the halter nose band will slide well up on the nose bone resting quite closely to the eye AND that it will stay there no matter what! If the nose band slides forward and off the bone onto soft cartilage, it will compress the cartilage and compromise the airway creating panic. One very likely response to panic is to lie down or more dramatically rear or leap up and crash to the ground.



Improper halter fit.



Proper halter fit.

The Animal Doesn't Know What You Want Because You Haven't Taught Him What A signal On the Halter Means.

Education, NOT brute force is much easier with less blow-back. Most people don't teach an alpaca or llama the meaning of a signal. When I train an alpaca or llama to lead, I give a very specific signal on the lead - a squeeze release signal that shift the animal's weight forward. When the animal takes a step, I drop the connection marking the moment of the step and indicating that taking a step was the desired behavior. I call this "turning on the light bulb" and I teach this inside a catch pen after the animal is comfortable in a halter, but BEFORE I take hi out of the catch pen into a larger area.

mContinued on page 22

Why Does My Llama or Alpaca Lay Down Continued



You Are Being Heavy Handed On The Lead

Unlike every other barnyard animal, llamas and alpacas have tiny heads on the end of a long stalk offering anyone with control of the head an extraordinary amount of power. It is very scary! Putting a lot of pressure on the head only pulls the head forward lowering the neck. Pull harder and the animal widens his stance and grows roots. Pull harder still and the animal will simply pull back balancing backwards on the anchor that you are handily providing. Keep pulling and “down she goes!” Pulling steadily on a lead - essentially making the animal uncomfortable and “rewarding” with a release - is much slower than teaching a signal to come forward. The animal must engage in the process of elimination to figure out how to make you stop pulling - lying down also provides a release in pressure, but hardly the behavior you are after. Once you teach your animal to lie down as a way of relieving the pressure you apply to the head, you are in big trouble. This particular learned behavior is a tough one to retrain.



Wrong way to lead.



Right way to lead.

Your Set Up Does Not Provide Limits And the Shape of the Training Area Doesn't Provide Options For Influencing Behavior.

Leave the confines of a catch pen and walk out into a square area and you have no way to influence where your animal goes EXCEPT to hold steadily on the lead. Hold steady on the lead and many animals respond by bucking and rearing, followed by collapsing on the ground in a heap. Instead, work in a catch pen that adjoins a long narrow aisle way and you can stop an end-run simply by stepping in the animal's way. Additionally, the shape of the pen adds clarity to the process and says visually to the animal, “Follow me and stay behind.”

You Are Standing Too Close To The Animal Triggering A Learned Behavior To Run Away In The Opposite Direction.

If you are among the many people that rely on trapping your llama or alpaca in a corner to catch him, consider how this affects the animal's behavior when learning to lead. In all previous situations your approach signals to the animal to move away in the opposite direction from your approach. When you hook a lead to him and stand near him in a large area, his natural inclination is to run in the opposite direction, NOT to go with you. If you want your camelid to feel comfortable trying a new behavior such as moving toward you, your best bet is to be well away from him. (I also advocate not using a corner for catching, but that is another topic.) Use a long lead in a long narrow lane way, use a light connection, stay well away from the animal and remember to BREATHE!

There are many different approaches to lead training. I feel the most comfortable with techniques that educate rather than dominate. I feel energized and personally satisfied when I can start young animals on a lead and watch the light of understanding come on in their eyes. Loyalty to a technique that isn't working will only

teach your animal behavior that you don't want. Pay attention to what works and modify your approach. The result will be a more efficient training session and one that is more fun and less frustrating for both you and your animal student.

Happy Handling!

For more information about Marty, Camelidynamics, events, workshops, etc., checkout her web site at www.camelidynamics.com. □



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