



Llama Living

Hear What All The Humming Is About...

June 2021

Michigan Lama Association

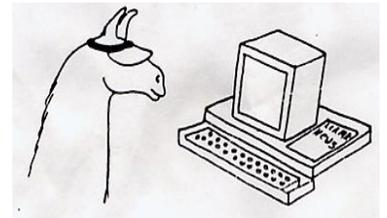
Volume 26, Issue 2



CONTENT

- 10 Marty's Corner
- 12 Upcoming Events
- 22 2021 MLA Membership Application

Llama Living



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- 4 The beginning of the llama show season in Michigan 2021!
- 6 Lamafest - The Place To Be For Over 30 Years.
- 7 2021 MLA Spring Fund Raiser
- 8 The Veterinarian
- 13 Letting Go.....Of Fiber, That Is
- 14 The Importance of Mentors!
- 17 Spring Shearing Tips
- 18 Thank You to Mid-Michigan Show Sponsors and Volunteers
- 19 Keeping Your Camelids Cool
- 20 Protonix: A Lifesaving Drug

Cover photo courtesy of Tami Lash, Lash's Unique Animals.

Michigan Llama Association

Web Site - www.michiganllama.org

Facebook Page - Michigan Llama Association

The Beginning of the Llama Show Season in Michigan 2021!

Photos courtesy of Tami Lash, Spring Millenium Show



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*Fun, extra classes for your
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visit www.michiganllama.org
for show information and forms

Watch for updates on our Facebook page



**I GOT
MY COVID-19
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**Do your part to bring back llama shows and events into full swing!
The more we vaccinate, the safer everyone feels to participate.**



2021 MLA Spring Fund Raiser

Thanks to all of you who participated in the MLA 2021 Spring Fund Raiser. Because of your contributions and drawing entries Llama Living was able to put \$163.00 towards publication expenses for 2021!

A special thanks to Annette Aldrich who once again did a great job in setting up and running the fund raiser. We couldn't do it without her!

Contributors of lama related objects for the drawing this year.

**Aldrich Family, Nokken's Pond
Corky and Dave Dubois, Emerald Glen Farm
Ginger Burns, Ginger's Fantasy Farm
Mark Zurr, Hamilton Co. Llamas
Deb and Brian Greaves, Cabana Acres
Bev and Gary Surratt, Great Escape Llamas
Suzanne and Ken Frambes, Bittersweet Farm**



The Veterinarian

In the treatment of human beings, there are 25 medical specialists. Together they oversee human life from pre-natal procedures to post-mortem examinations.

And yet there is one practitioner who must be: anesthetist, cardiologist, clinical pathologist, dentist, dermatologist, dietician, endocrinologist, geriatricist, gynecologist, lecturer, neurologist, neurosurgeon, obstetrician, ophthalmologist, orthodontist, orthopedist, pathologist, pediatrician, podiatrist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, psychologist, radiologist, surgeon, and urologist....all in one.

This singular person is responsible for the health of your pet throughout its entire life.

To you this person is your local veterinarian, to your pet this person is 25 doctors rolled into one...a pet's best friend.

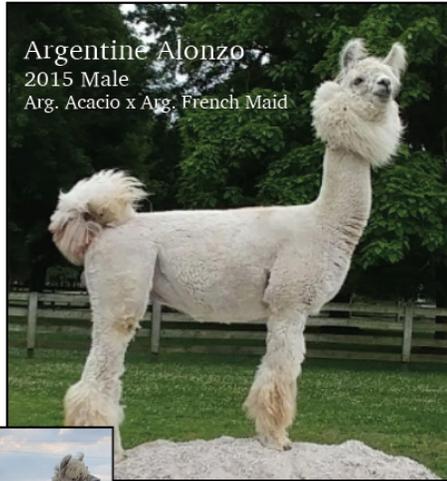
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LOFTY PINE

ARGENTINE LLAMA RANCH



Argentine Alonzo
2015 Male
Arg. Acacio x Arg. French Maid



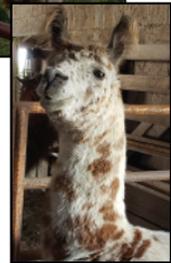
Argentine De Troit
2007 Male
Arg. Midas x Arg. De Atras



Deb and Don Yeagle
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www.ArgentineLlama.com




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Cyndi Ernst
(517) 861-9328
CynthiaRErnst@gmail.com
Howell, Michigan 48855

How You Do Anything is How You Do Everything

By Marty McGee Bennett

“How you do anything is how you do everything. Your ‘character’ or ‘nature’ just refers to how you handle all the day-to-day things in life, no matter how small.”

Derek Sivers

The time to get ready for the show ring is WAY before you ever pack the trailer, load your lama and head down the road. How you teach your lama to accept a halter and walk on a lead seems relevant to the show ring, but in truth, everything you do from herding to feeding to trimming toenails affects the way your animal will perform at the show. The show ring is a different world in which we have little, if any, control. The order of classes to the way a judge approaches your animal is out of your hands. To help him cope with the stress of the show ring it is important to teach your animal that you can be relied upon and that both of you together can recover from a misstep. Keeping your cool when things aren't going so well is important in terms of sportsmanship, but is also immensely comforting to your lama. Practicing a flexible resilient attitude that will serve you in the show ring is best practiced at home very day. Reacting calmly is just the way you do things...always.

Showing your lama is important for lots of reasons: marketing lamas in general, creating a reputation for your own farm or ranch as well as helping to refine your breeding objectives. It is also a place where things must happen efficiently and quickly. Judges are under a lot of pressure both to be fair and to get the job done in the time allotted. It is difficult, if not impossible, to completely meet the needs of the animals and the judges. If you decide to show your lamas, compromises with regard to handling will almost certainly be required. You will have to follow the rules of the show as well as the rules set forth in the ring by the judges or risk being dismissed. That said...there are lots of things you can do to prepare your animal for the rigors of the show ring. You owe it to your animal to practice the behaviors required in the ring ahead of time. It is your responsibility to the show staff, judges and fellow exhibitors to be prepared. I also like to remind myself when I am in the middle of shearing, herd management, or teaching a weanling to lead that “into each life a little rain must fall”. None of us animals, two-legged included, get to lead lives completely free of stress. I believe it is reasonable to show lamas and showing can be done reasonably.

Before addressing specific behaviors that will be required of your lama AND of you, please consider the following points.

- ◆ Even if a lama is drop-dead gorgeous, not all lamas can handle the show ring. The choice between a decorated show winner or a healthy animal is not much of a choice
- ◆ Many (maybe most) of the problems that handlers have with lamas in the show ring are the result of mishandling and can be corrected by taking responsibility and changing the approach to the problem. Consider that you can't teach a lama to do something until you can GET them to do it. Many problematic showing behaviors are learned as a result of handlers asking too much too soon. If your lama is not successful at the behavior you want, be content with less and build on that. Doing over and over what is NOT working only teaches your lama to do better, what you DON'T want him to do. Unfortunately, they get good at these behaviors very quickly.
- ◆ Not all lamas are temperamentally the same. It will take some lamas longer to “get it” than others. It will never be useful when it comes to getting ready for the show ring to wait until the last minute. If you don't have time to prepare, it would be better to stay home.
- ◆ Creating a safe environment at home from the time an animal arrives on your farm or is born on your farm will pay you back in the show ring. Herd your llamas into a small catch pen every time you need to lay hands on them and you will reap the benefits in the show ring.
- ◆ When in the show ring it is your job to show the animal and facilitate the inspection. The ring steward is there to assist the judge and is most often going to stand at the opposite shoulder without touching the animal to help steady the animal. Ring stewards are not there to show your animal for you.

- ◆ Halter fit is crucial to good show performance. A well fitting halter fits well up on the thick part of the nose bone **and will stay there no matter what**. Taking halters off whenever possible (that means anytime your llama is not on a lead) allows your llama to relax more fully and hence have more tolerance for the show ring. Please look carefully at the halter fit photo. This is perhaps the easiest thing to address that has the biggest impact on performance in the show ring.

There are certain predictable events that **will** happen in the show ring. You can prepare yourself and your animal for these events in advance. There are also certain behaviors you will need to elicit from your llama to show him off for the judge. You can work with your llama in advance and YOU can learn the techniques required to get these behaviors from your llama when on a lead.



PREDICTABLE PERHAPS PROBLEMATIC EVENTS

Noise and Movement: From the time you get off the trailer until you load your animal to go home he will be subjected to noise, movement and unusual sites. Help prepare your llamas by introducing some new things into the barn environment several months or weeks prior to the show. A boom box in the barn, balloons tied to the fence or inside the barn or interesting things left on the floor of the barn will help create llamas that are resilient. They won't be little divas that can't handle a little something out of the ordinary. Introducing new things incrementally is called systematic desensitization. When done properly, systematic desensitization never provokes a fear response. Introduce new items gradually. For example soft music before loud rock music, a small piece of carpet on the ground in the barn before a big plastic tarp. Have fun being creative with what and how you present new experiences. Scaring your animals with too much too soon by presenting the full stimulus all at once with no way to avoid it can create deeply ingrained fear. In behavioral circles this is called response blocking or flooding and its consequences can be very difficult and time consuming to resolve. Taking your llama to a show with no previous preparation is, in a way, flooding and can result in an animal that never shows well.

People Walking Up Quickly: The judge and ring steward are going to walk up to your llama quickly. The judge is going to touch your animal. You can help your llama prepare for this inevitable event by occasionally walking quickly when you put hay out or when you muck out. I am not suggesting walking up quickly to a resting animal with the intent to startle, but simply moving more quickly around them. You can increase your speed gradually as in systematic desensitization as described above. This process will prepare your animals for the inevitable if they are to be shown.

If you have been using the "Chase-Corner, Grab and Hold" approach to catching, here is where you pay the price for this very common catching practice. Like it or not, this technique teaches your llama to run or move away from humans until there is no place else to run and to attempt to escape by throwing his full weight into your arms. In the show ring there is no corner and when the judge and ring steward approach your animal, he will react instinctively by trying to run and you will have to hold him still. This starts the process that often ends in full-on restraint. Using restraint in the show ring is problematic for a number of reasons: it looks bad. Most people of normal strength cannot pull it off with a determined llama and it may create a llama that becomes un-show-able. Always use a small catching area at home (9 x 9 feet square) and approach your llama from behind the eye using the mid line catching technique and you will be setting yourself up for the show ring. Once your llama is trained to lead, practice for the show ring by having people walk up to you while you balance your llama. Balancing is not restraint...it is the process of helping your llama remain equally weighted over his feet and involves a short correcting signal that preempts the attempt to move followed by a release.

Accepting touch on tail, mouth, head, fleece: Your llama will have to be inspected. It doesn't take long and most judges are pretty good about how they perform the inspection. You do not need to duplicate the inspection process as much as you must prepare your llama to be touched. The best way to do this is with the TTouch. The TTouch is pleasant and helps to focus the animal in a much more effective way than patting or stroking. Begin the process in a catch pen. One person can balance the animal while a second person touches around the base of the ears, the neck, top line and tail head. Use the pads of your fingers to push the skin and underlying tissue around in a circle. Move to a slightly new location and make another circular touch. Slide your hand firmly down the neck,

Continued on page 15

UPCOMING EVENTS



JUNE

June 11-13, 2021
All American Youth Jamboree
Hamilton County Fairgrounds
Noblesville, IN
www.youthjamboree.net

June 21, 2021
National Llama Appreciation Day
Let's join GALA and the ILR in celebrating llamas. For more information go to galaonline.org/ilove-llamas.

June 25-27, 2021
2021 ILR Gathering of Friends and Champions Sale and Futurity
Iowa Equestrian Center
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
National halter, performance and fleece classes, educational opportunities, Summer Spectacular Sale, ILR-SD Futurity, vendors, youth auction/activities and more. For more information www.ilrsdthegathering.com

JULY

July 17, 2021
Millennium Magic Summer Classic
Onsted, MI
ALSA and ILR Dual Sanctioned/Dual Shows
For more information and updates contact Tami Lash (517)605-7809 or Facebook message Tami on Facebook.

July 22-24, 2021
Ohio State Fair
Columbus, OH
Llama Show Dates: July 22-24, 2021
Only llamas from Ohio are allowed this year.

AUGUST

August 6-8, 2021
Indiana State Fair
For more information visit www.indianastatefair.com/p/state-fair/exhibitor-entry-info

August 15, 2021
Deadline for Llama Living articles and ads

August 18-22, 2021
Michigan Fiber Festival
Allegan County Fairgrounds
Allegan, MI
August 18-22 - Workshops
August 20-22 - Vendors
August 21-22 - Special Events

SEPTEMBER

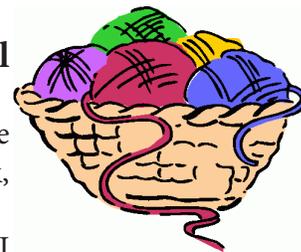
September 3-5, 2021
Lamafest
MSU Pavilion
East Lansing
Contact Corky Dubois for more information: 616-902-2382 or egflamas@yahoo.com

Continued on page 16



Letting Go...Of Fiber, That Is

By Linda Taggart, Too Cool For Wool



I have a confession, dearest readers. I have committed what feels like an unforgivable sin. “I threw fiber away” I know, I know. It hurts even to type it. Why you might ask, would I do something so awful? Honestly.

Stay with me a moment. Last year was a tough year and as my husband and I celebrated new Year’s Eve with a roaring fire and hopes for a better year, he was sweating and making jokes about how I’m a tropical fish and like its way too hot in the house. Fast forward 24 hours and he’s in the hospital for pneumonia. (Not the big C, thank heavens!) They put him in the COVID ward pending the tests and I found out he’d have to quarantine after coming home because of it. Not just from outsiders, but from me!

So, with the house eerily quiet because he was still in the hospital, I opened the door to the guest room, my ersatz fiber storage room. Fleeces I haven’t prepped for the mill or my own spinning lay piled on the bed, contractor bags of seconds shoved into the closet, and one fleece lay spread out on the floor where I’d left it to dry last May. I know it’s appalling and frankly I don’t know how I’ll look you all in the eyes next GALA conference, but hey, I’m owning up to my sins today.

I could have shuffled these fleeces around, tossed them into the basement and forgotten about them, shoved them all against the wall and just made enough room for me to sleep for ten days - he’d take over our master bedroom. Instead, I took a deep breath and started opening the fleeces. This one was too short to go to the mill and I’d snagged it because it would be fine with some careful hand spinning. Which I would get to when exactly? It went into the pile for the compost heap.

These bags of seconds I was holding on to so I could make dryer balls? With a cringe, I admitted making them was about item number 49,357 on my to-do list. Compost. A sheep fleece I’d bought from the UK because the breed was sooo cute (Black Nose Valois. Goggle it, you won’t be disappointed) that I hadn’t even pulled out of the box because the moment I thought it I realized it felt more like sisal rope than fiber?. Yet, into the compost. Bags of britch wool from my rams I was sure I’d turn into rug yarn, One day it will be lovely dirt for the garden.

Now, I don’t toss all the fiber, not by a long shot. The long, silky black fleece from my alpaca, Jareth, stayed as did most of the other alpaca and sheep fleeces that can go to the mill once I get them skirted. But, the important thing is I let go of what I know I couldn’t manage.

To do that I had to be brutally honest with myself about what I could and could not get done. I had to be honest about my priorities and abilities. And yeah, it sucked. I still feel guilt every time I take kitchen scraps to the compost pile. But the weigh of undoable projects has been lightened.

This year has already started out very full. A lot’s going on in the news and in my family life (including a niece-to-be who decided to make her debut six weeks early, landing my sister-in-law in the hospital).

I get the feeling that a lot of non-essential stuff, things I’d been clinging to even though the chaos of last year are going to be let go this year. And to figure out what’s essential and what’s not, I’m going to have to keep up the brutal honesty.

The nice thing is, much like my now pristine guest room, letting go of the things that aren’t essential makes room for the things that actually are. In sorting through all those fleeces and other fiber stuff, I found yarn I’d been missing and I inventoried what I need to do to get the remaining fleeces to the mill.

What about you, dearest readers? Where can you be brutally honest about the things you’re holding on to despite them being impossible tasks or unattainable goals?

Linda Taggart - Instagram @LindaofWindyOaks and facebook.com/LindaofWindyOaks.

Reprinted from *The GALA Newsletter*, February 2021, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1. □

The Importance of Mentors!

By John Fant, Howling Moon Farm



I am not a professional writer by any means, but I like to write. I am going to start a line of articles about what I have seen and learned in the up coming issues about llamas. For many of you it has been years since you have been in my shoes. I am going to tell the good and bad, the victories and failures. So please just stay with our journey.

Here is my intro article, so enjoy! You may not think this is important, but to a newcomer into the llama industry, it is! My wife and I started a few years back talking about buying a llama to guard our hair sheep. We watched them go through the stockyard off and on. We never really were trying to learn anything about them. We just listened to what the owners that were selling the llamas would say. (We all know this - the quick-sale pitch!) At that time, that is all we knew about llamas. Oh yeah, that they spit! We actually watched the livestock handlers at a local auction get spit on!

Then last June (2014), I found out about a wonderful couple that were needing to get out of the llama industry or llama love - there is a difference) due to health reasons. I was shocked that they interviewed me and asked a lot of serious questions of me. I remembered doing the same thing when we were selling our wolf pups. Then I was asked the famous fifty-cent question, "What were we going to do with them?" Originally, we were just going to use them as pets and guards. So, then Katy asked me which llama was I wanting to have. Being I just met the couple and had no clue what the llamas' personalities were, I made the decision to let her tell me which ones would work well for us. I did not know at the time I was starting down a long road with all of this.

I made arrangements that night for the following Saturday to pick them up. I called my wife on the way home to let her know what I did. Shocked and happy at the same time, she forgave me for doing this without her permission first! That night, after I got home, I started reading online about llamas. I wrote down my questions to ask the Murphy's (Inca Llama, Bonneville, AR). Two days later I came across an article that talked a little about mentors. So, being new I called the Murphy's about this and asked what it meant to be a mentor in the llama world. They told me a short answer, but would explain more when my wife and I picked up the llamas. The Murphy's are a great help to us and we still call for advice.

To shorten this article about all the knowledge that they had passed onto us I would write questions down in my notebook to ask and then write the answers beside the questions. This was the best way for me to keep the questions fresh in my mind. I am up to four notebooks at this time.

The next one was a real surprise to me. I was at the Tulsa llama show, trying to learn some more about halter shows. There was a young lady leaning on the ring fence with a llama on a lead watching the show. I asked if she had a few minutes to explain some of the things the judges were looking for, etc. This young woman, who is also a published author of her own book (Inti, the Very Helpful Llama) answered my questions with a big smile. Honey Reese (now Fenn) has an astonishing amount of knowledge of current trends in the llama show world for such a young age. Also, she has a very good breeding program as well that she has great pride in and should have. We have spent many hours texting, etc. about llamas. So we have a separate notebook with her name on it of every thing she has taught us.

The last, but not least, are the ones I am personally trying to be like...they opened our eyes to the performance and PR llama world. The family is the Halls of Simplicity Llamas. I realize it comes naturally to them, but they are the best ambassadors for llamas we have met. It was by accident we met. Phyllis and I were sitting and watching an obstacle course performance at NAILE 92014). Greg overheard us trying to figure it out. He gave us a crash course about performance classes and all that goes into it. That was worth the trip alone to us to have someone explain and give us that knowledge and understanding for that type of show. We spent the rest of the day learning and watching Greg and Jessica, his daughter. Greg even gave us the opportunity to harness his llama to the cart, plus let Phyllis drive him around to get the experience of driving. The most important lesson Greg made sure that we understood is about the PR end of the llama world. That lesson we have retained and practiced often. There have been several others that has given us advice over the last year and we are thankful.

The main idea of this article is just to remind us that there are a lot of new possible owners that really need the help and knowledge that we have so don't be shy about being a mentor. So the next time someone asks if "do llamas really spit?", just look at it as an opportunity to educate that person to the world of the Wonderful Llama.

Reprinted from the Midwest Llama Association Newsletter, October 2018. Originally printed in the February 2016 issue of the Southern State Llama Association Llama Journal. □

How You Do Anything is How You Do Everything Continued

down the top line to the tail, use a hand full of tail wool to lift the tail away from the body and move the tail in a circle around the tail head.

Use your whole hand to make a circular touch on the areas of the body where the fleece will be checked. (For more information on TTouch visit TTouch.com). It is important to teach your lama that he can accept inspection without restraint. Practice touching in the catch pen first then in a lane way or slightly larger pen and finally out in a small paddock. Introduce touching incrementally allowing your animal to set what he considers to be a safe place. Practicing with animals in tandem is also a helpful way to transition from touching in a catch pen to touching in a larger area. Strand two animals right next to each other while they are each touched. One very common error is to practice show ring inspection over and over thinking that the lama will get better at accepting it. If what you are doing is annoying like parting the lips and you do it over and over you will create resistance to the behavior. Consider that a far better approach is to touch the mouth in a pleasant way using light circular touches now and again leaving out the specific bite showing maneuver. Save that for the show ring. When you are in the show ring make sure to get your animal ready BEFORE the judge is standing in front of your animal waiting and the pressure is on. The best way to be ready at exactly the right moment is to watch the previous exhibitor during the inspection and begin to prepare to show the bite as the judge is examining the tail. In this way you will be prepared for the judge, but will not be standing too closely with your arms around your animal for too long possible causing him to act out. You will also have your animal in control when the judge walks up quickly preventing an escape reaction.

Behaviors you must be able to affect and/or correct - Head held too low - Walking too slow - Walking too fast - Preventing movement - Asking for specific limited movement as in one foot or one step.

The answer to being able to affect all of these behaviors lies in your ability to make small corrections to an animal's stance or balance that are subtle and well timed. Allow the animal to have a chance to integrate the correction and then correct again if necessary. All of the behaviors listed above are best attended to with small intermittent corrections instead of a more forceful steady pressure. Common mistakes include: Using steady pressure in an attempt to force the animal to perform the desired behavior resulting in an animal that resists in the opposite direction. Pulling an animal forward resulting in an animal that pulls back on the line. The net result is that the animal actually slows down. Holding an animal back steadily results in the animal pushing forward into the pressure and ironically causes the animal to speed up. Holding the head up often results in an animal that slows down, walks awkwardly, or pushes the head down into the pressure.

Completely losing contact with the animal - having no contact makes it impossible to offer guidance or corrections and results in a loss of control. This is NOT the same as leading with more line. Losing contact means too much slack in the line. You can lead WITH contact from a distance. It is about the connection with the animal, not the distance from the animal.

Over correcting - using overly large or abrupt corrections distract or startle the lama and often makes it difficult to judge the gait or stance.

The secret to good communication when leading a lama is to maintain a LIGHT contact through the line, notice early on when an animal needs a correction, make it AND then RELEASE. Think of your lead rope as a telephone. Pulling steadily = a one sided conversation resulting in a lama hang-up. No contact = the call is

Continued on page 16

How You Do Anything is How You Do Everything Continued

dropped. There is one sure fire way to get better leading....videotape yourself! Look for moments when the animal does exactly what you want OR exactly what you don't want and analyze your behavior just before and during the interaction. When your lama misbehaves you will probably notice that you are doing one of the three common errors described above. A good self-check for the quality of your connection as you lead is the angle of the hook on the lead rope, Leading in contact means that the hook is angled slightly towards you, pulling steadily means that the hook and lead rope are consistently parallel to the ground. Losing contact means that the hook is dangling freely. Periodically glancing at the hook attached to the halter will insure that you are paying attention to the way you are leading.

When asked to stand in line or in profile, pay attention to your animal's stance. Your animal should be standing up proudly with all four feet in balance under the body. You may have to ask your lama to move one foot slightly. Practice moving one foot at a time with intermittent signals. Working inside a maze made of PVC poles is a great place to practice this behavior. Work your lama over obstacles even if you never expect to show in an obstacle class. You will have fun and your lama will learn a lot about his balance and self carriage.

The show ring is not a perfect environment, but when you enter a show and agree to participate you have entered into a kind of contract. Your end of the contract is to be as prepared as you possibly be. This will serve your interests, the interests of the show staff and judge as well as the most important player....your lama.

For more information on Marty's teachings, workshops, etc. visit her web site at www.camelidynamics.com. □



Upcoming Events Continued

DECEMBER

OCTOBER

October 21-24, 2021
GALA Conference
Richmond, VA
<https://galaonline.org>

December 9, 2021
3rd National Llama Day
See the Greather Appalachian Llama Association
(GALA) web site for ideas to help celebrate this day.

NOVEMBER

Deadline for Llama Living articles and ads

MLA Board/Membership Meeting
Date and place yet to be announced.



Spring Shearing Tips

By Dr. Char Arendas, DVM

Spring is finally here, as is the start of the show season! Here are some tips and helpful hints on some of the health care needs your llamas may have this time of year.

SHEARING AND SEDATIVES

While most of us are well-versed in shearing even the most difficult of camelids, sometimes the chute, blindfold and belly band aren't enough to get the job done right! Over the years, we've found better living through chemistry (for us AND the llamas). After dealing with a spitting, kicking, bucking animal, you find that a little sedation goes a long way to lessen their stress, makes the job go faster and smoother, and you both end up with less injuries. If you have a few animals that are particularly obnoxious, you may want to inquire if your veterinarian can supply you with some mild sedation or tranquilizer to use prior to shearing day. Some vets may not be comfortable leaving you with certain types of drugs, as many of the sedatives we use are controlled narcotics. However, some of them aren't or your vet would certainly be able to come out and administer the sedative for you. I like a mild cocktail of Butorphanol ("Torb") mixed with a little Acepromazine ("Ace") or a tiny bit of Xylazine ("Rompum").

After the shearing you may want a stronger cocktail or glass of wine. There are also some herbal products such as Rescue Remedy, Calms Forte, and equine cattle calming products available. It is not known how well these actually work in camelids or if they work at all. Of course, the REAL solution to this issue is to work with the behavior of the llama to get it to tolerate whatever you are going to do - shear, toenails, teeth. This takes time, patience and probably some sort of grain or treat. Realistically, there comes a time when you "just have to get it done, now" and worry about the behavior training later.

SHEARING NICKS

Another aspect of shearing that comes up this time of year are nicks and cuts from the clippers. Small cuts less than an inch long are "probably" of little concern, though I would cleanse the area with some betadine/iodine, then apply a small bead of super glue to pull the skin back together. Anything larger than that, or if the cut goes deeper than just the layer of skin, should be checked by your veterinarian. If there will be a significant delay (more than 24 hours) in the time between the cut and your vet's availability, then I would at least get an injection of penicillin and banamine (flunixin) into the animal, if you have these available to you.

CLIPPER BURN

Sometimes, our blades run too hot, especially if we are on llama #5 and are working at a fast pace. The shorter the clipper job, the more likely clipper burn is to occur. I think the best way to prevent this is to physically touch the surface of the blades that contacts the llama's skin. If it is too hot for you to hold on your hand for 10 seconds, then do not put those clippers on an animal. Check the blades during a session as well, especially if it is going to take a long time, like a full body shear. You may need to take a little break and work on toenails, vaccines, teeth, or something else while they cool.

A great product I like to use is called Clippercide. Besides offering some lubrication and cooling effects to the blades, they seem to run smoother AND it is a disinfectant - it kills bacteria, fungus, and viruses. It is also a human product used by barbers! If you do find yourself with a clipper burned animal a few days after shearing, you should apply a soothing topical cream or ointment, such as antibiotic ointments, zinc oxide, aloe vera, or silver sulfadiazine (SSD ointment). If there is a lot of oozing and moist skin, the animal may need antibiotics and you should consult with your veterinarian. Hopefully, the llama already got a CD & T vaccine!

SUNBURN

It seems that some animals, notably the white ones and the ones with less dense fleeces, are more prone to sunburn with a short shearing job. I wouldn't hesitate to apply some aerosol spray sunscreen to these animals. The spray ones seem much more user-friendly than trying to squirt lotion out of a bottle and rubbing it in. I don't know if it will prevent sunburn, but it certainly is worth a try. However, if the animal is going to a show soon, you may want to re-think applying an oily substance and sending them off to the bust bowls in the pasture.

Continued on page 23

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Keeping Your Camelids Cool

By Linda Taggart

I used to love summer. Give me a 90° day with humidity so high going out on the porch is like walking into a soup pot, and I was happy as a clam! But since I got fiber animals, my love for midsummer has decreased dramatically. Now I worry whether the fans are still going and if they're out of water because one of the alpacas knocked over the bucket while trying to go for a swim...again.

Heat is not something for which most of our fiber animal were bred. Summer days in the Andean highlands of Peru reach around 60° on average. Southwest England, the corner of the country with the most sheep, hits about 70°. And New Zealand and the major sheep-producing areas of Australia top out around 80°.

Here in Pennsylvania, we routinely hit 90° or higher for long stretches at a time and it's happening more frequently as climate change barrels down on us. We also tend to have less rain (by as much as half!) than those other places, so grazing may not be as good as other parts of the world. And we're in the middle of the country, vertically speaking, so there's a good amount of even hotter temps the further south you go.

What does this mean for our flocks as the dog days of summer hover on the horizon? It means we have to adjust our setups to ensure we keep our animals cool and healthy in the summer heat. Luckily, there are some simple things we can do to help them keep their cool.

The first, and always most important, item is water. Keep it plentiful and available at all times. I have a particular struggle as I have short sheep. To make sure they can reach the buckets, I have to put them where the alpacas can step in them. (Although I'm working on a solution for this, it's a perennial struggle as I have a couple Michael Phelps wanna-bes.) This means I'm out at least three times a day to dump and refill waterers.

Second, and almost as important, is shade. Make sure there's plenty of space they can get out of the sun. Fiber animals can get sunburned, too, especially right after shearing. All white animals are more susceptible to sunburn, too. Plus, it's cooler in the shade. Maybe only a degree or two, but it can make a difference.

Next on the list is fans. And I do mean plural. My llama, Miss Fancypants, will hog the fan if there's only one there and considering she's at least twice the size of my alpacas she wins that fight every time. We don't have electric out at the barn, so just about the time we're ready to unplug the heated waters from the winter, I repropose those extension cords to run out to the barn. (Be safe and only use cords designed for outdoor use and check them for wear and breaks every year. Also, always be aware of where you've set the cords so you don't run over them with the lawn mover..gives side-eyes to husband who's done this twice in the last year).

And the last thing I'll suggest is watering your alpacas. They'll grow much taller if you water them daily (just kidding). What I mean is they love to be hosed down. Make sure to keep the spray on the legs and under the body and not on top. Studies show that alpacas who are wet on top of their body actually get hotter over time and not cooler. Put the hose on an old-fashioned sprinkler, the kid you use to run through as a kid, or pull out the hose and give your alpacas a treat on the hottest days. If you're like me, a spritz with the hose on yourself isn't too bad either.

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Protonix: A Lifesaving Drug

By Dr. Char Arendas, DVM

Long ago, when llamas were much newer to the veterinary world, there was little knowledge surrounding their medical care. Veterinarians had to extrapolate dosages and treatments based on other species that they treated such as horses, sheep/goats, cattle and deer. One of the common old regimens for suspected stomach (C3) ulcers was to use an expensive oral equine ulcer product called GastroGard.

As time went on and llamas grew in popularity, research showed that GastroGard actually didn't work very well in camelids. Mainly, this was because many oral drugs that worked in horses are not absorbed properly in the camelid's 3-compartment stomach. Currently, the most effective treatment for C3 ulcers has been show to be an injectable medication called Protonix, or its generic version pantoprazole.

Let's explore this medication, how it's used, and why you might want to ask your vet to keep some in your camelid medicine cabinet!

So what exactly is an ulcer? Well, it's an area of the stomach where the protective mucus layer thins out too much, allowing the stomach acid to erode the layers of the stomach wall. In camelids, the third compartment of the stomach (C3) is the acid-secreting portion of the stomach. If the ulceration process continues, it can become a perforating ulcer. This is an ulcer that has completely eaten through the entire stomach wall and can introduce stomach contents into the abdomen, potentially causing a fatal peritonitis.

What are even the symptoms of a C3 ulcer in camelids? Well, it can be vague. Generally speaking, we worry about the potential for ulcers to develop in a "sick" camelid and they can even occur simply due to stress! Early symptoms could include decreased appetite, teeth-grinding, and lethargy. More severe symptoms may include increased heart rate, colicky behavior (abdominal pain, kicking at the belly, rolling) restlessness - constantly switching from kushing to standing, or even fever.

Pantoprazole/Protonix is a prescription drug that is manufactured for people with acid reflux and ulcers. It is a member of a class of drugs known as Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs). PPIs are the most potent class of drugs that help to reduce stomach acid production. PPIs help block the cells that secrete acid in the stomach. Because stomach acid has such a low pH (it's "acidic"), blocking the acid secretion will help increase the stomach pH and thus help heal an ulcer.

Protonix/Pantoprazole comes packages as a box of 19 glass vials that each contain 40mg of pantoprazole powder. To mix up a vial, you need to inject sterile saline or sterile water into the vial until the powder is dissolved completely. Then, you can draw all the liquid in the vial back up into your syringes to administer. In humans, the instructions say to add 10cc of sterile liquid into one vial to reconstitute (dissolve the powder and mix up) the medication. However, that is for humans who are getting the drug as an IV infusion over 15 minutes. Because camelid owners will likely be using the drug SQ, and using multiple vials for one dose, I usually cut the amount of sterile liquid wayyyyyy back.

The usual dosage in camelids is 1mg/pound of body weight, given SQ once a day, for 3-5 days. However, if your vet is administering the drug or if your animal has an IV catheter in place, it can be given IV once a day at half that dose (0.5 mg per pound). More often than not, it's just going to be easier to give it SQ. So let's do some quick math. If you have a 200# llama, you need 200mg of pantoprazole per dose. If each vial is 40mg, you need 5 vials per dose. You do NOT want to have to mix up each vial with 10cc of sterile water or saline and then inject a total of 50cc SQ. When I dose it, I use 5-10cc of the sterile diluent initially, then I go from vial to vial dissolving the powder with that same liquid. Then, I only have to inject the animal with 10cc SQ (max). Because you are using less liquid, it does make the drug much more concentrated. I don't know that any research has been done to look at the absorption when it is give like this at a higher concentration, but n my experience, it seems to work great and I haven't had any issues with injection site reactions.



As a vet, I use pantoprazole in several instances: (1) A sick or down camelid (for almost any reason).)2) A normal acting camelid with a decreased or absent appetite. (3) A highly or easily-stressed camelid that will be undergoing a stressful event (travel, new pasture, new home, etc.)

You will need to obtain Protonix or generic Pantoprazole from your veterinarian, as it is a prescription medication. Your vet would need to order it for you, as a local pharmacy won't routinely carry it. I did have a client that spoke to her Sam's Club pharmacist and they were able to special order it for her (with a vet's prescription, of course). The shelf life is generally 2 years, so keeping some on hand won't break the bank and is probably a good idea. You don't know how valuable it is until you really need it and don't have any on hand. I always like to carry a few vials in my camelid travel first aid kit!

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Spring Shearing Tips Continued

VACCINES

Most people I talk to tend to do herd health practices at the same time of spring shearing. Shearing time is a GREAT time to booster the CD & T vaccine! As a reminder, CD & T vaccine protects your animals against the infection caused by the bacteria *Clostridium perfringens* types C & D toxins, as well as Tetanus. All three of those infectious bacteria are NORMAL inhabitants of your soil/pasture/etc. So, when you accidentally nip a toenail too short, nick the skin with the shears, get a few drops of blood at an ivermectin injection site, and cause a little bit of bleeding in mouth from cutting fighting teeth...you are creating an opportunity for these bacteria to enter the animal's system. This is a great time to boost their immunity. The standard dose of any of the sheep/cattle/goat CD & T vaccines on the market, is 2cc given SQ (subcutaneously, under the skin). It is not by weight or age. A 30# cria and a 500# stud all get the 2cc. If the animal has NEVER had a CD & T vaccine previously, you should booster it in a month, then just annually re-vaccinate.

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MLA Editor's Note: *It is always better for you and your lama to train the animal to accept shearing and hand's on work prior to actually working on the lama. The MLA Library has a lot of information to check out free for MLA members regarding lama training. There are also many lama trainers out there who have information available regarding training your animal. Marty McGee Bennett, is one of those trainers and is a regular contributor to Llama Living regarding training llamas. She also has a web site and her CAMELIDynamics Mobile E-Newsletter.*



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