

Providing Education, Guidance, Support and Resources

MAPACA

Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

Spring 2011 Newsletter

JUBILEE EDITION



What does this “dressed” Wall Street bull have to do with the Jubilee?! Find out the answer in the article about “Top 10 Ways to Cash In on the Jubilee.”

Also In This Issue ...

Part II: What Are You Doing With Your Alpaca Fleece? Page 4

A Tale of Two Co-ops. Learn about two alpaca fiber co-ops, how they operate, and the reasons you might want to be a member and submit your precious fiber to them.

A Crash Course in Color Genetics Page 20

Ever wonder how you got a black cria from a white dam and a fawn sire? Go back to science class with this article and learn a bit about genetics.

Mariah's Journey Page 24

Read the heartwarming story of Mariah, a suri alpaca residing at Golden Glen Alpacas, and her journey from sickness back to health.

Dos and Don'ts of Tractor Safety Page 30

As the snow melts and springtime returns, the farm community is apt to find itself astride a tractor. Review some basics to keep you and your staff safe.

...and so much more!!

Spring Ahead

I don't know about you, but I refuse to read, watch, or otherwise participate in sensationalism disguised as journalism. I do admit that I peruse People Magazine at my pharmacy work counter during rare breaks in our busy work schedule, but this is fluff meant to entertain and sell ad space, not news. I can't be sure because I did not bother to watch, but I hear that John Stossel's recent segment and follow-up on alpacas may fit into this media genre.

As a small part of a larger piece on what Stossel sees as unfair tax shelters, and thus another case of wasteful government spending and mismanagement, he sets out to prove that wealthy individuals are using alpacas solely as a way to shelter their income. His “proof” comes from interviewing alpaca owners and citing AOBA's member surveys which emphasize the importance of the tax advantages of alpaca ownership. There is little mention of the multitude of other benefits and challenges of owning an alpaca farm. This leaves viewers with the impression that Uncle Sam will effectively buy these “pets” for you and set you up for a life of tax-free, easy living. We all know that one day in the life of the typical alpaca farm owner would set the record straight.

I will use our experience as an example, but I bet most of you reading this are living a similar “alpaca lifestyle.” First, we are not wealthy, nor is the typical alpaca farmer. We struggle daily to make the right financial decisions that any small farm has to make in order to stay in business. Coming from a long line of dirt and livestock farmers, I remember well the life that my parents and grandparents led on the farm. They were up with the sun and worked all day, every day, occasionally stopping to eat. They went to bed sometimes as early as sundown, but most often well after that when the lights were finally switched off in the barn or machine shop. Farming in the Carolina summer heat and humidity was stifling on a good day, and the winters were both bitterly cold and windy or ridiculously muddy. Tractors broke down on the hottest August day, cows decided to go into labor at three o'clock in the morning, manure piles grew large enough to deserve geologic names, and sometimes all these farmers had was a prayer that it would rain, and soon, so that the crops would make it.

OK, so I have it easy compared to my farming ancestors. I do picture them sometimes chuckling to themselves about my fuzzy herd of “hua-whats?” The biggest difference in their dairy cows and my alpacas is that my alpacas are a whole lot cuter than their dairy cows and I do not have to get up at the crack of dawn to milk them. But tractors break down in the August heat, winters are bitterly cold and sometimes ridiculously muddy, alpaca dams go into labor at 3 o'clock in the morning on occasion, poop piles don't clean themselves, and we hope that we can hold on through tough economic times until we reach the other side.

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I dare anyone to say that alpaca farming is not a legitimate and viable live-stock industry. Millions, probably billions, have flowed through our economy because alpacas were imported to the U.S. Think of barns built, equipment purchased and maintained, top quality hay demanded, feed supplements formulated and produced, farm hands hired, trucks and trailers bought, gasoline and diesel fuel burned, associations formed, judges and superintendents contracted, show venues rented, hotel rooms filled, mills reborn, publications created, 4-H and Scouting programs expanded, advertisements placed, and shearers trained and given a whole new client base. This is not to mention the creation of a new breed in the U.S for our veterinarians to practice on... and not just any breed – a LIVESTOCK breed to provide a much needed boost in the income of vanishing large animal practitioners.

If there were ever a case study in "trickle down" economics, the birth and expansion of the U.S. alpaca industry would be a fine subject. And we are really just getting started. Sure, we have some serious obstacles to getting a commercial U.S. fleece market off the ground. We are starting from the ground up. Although dairy farming is back-breaking and grungy work at best, the cow farmer does not have to sit up at night after his long day at work trying to figure out how to sell his product. The milk truck comes by at least once a day and he gets paid, albeit not even close to what the work is worth. And mind you, there is a government-supported floor on milk prices. Come to think of it, there are lots of subsidies for U.S. agricultural producers. Maybe the media should focus on these artificial supports, which continue to exist more to the advantage of big business as opposed to the small farmer. I am not an economist, but I bet dimes to donuts that the positive economic impact of the alpaca industry far outweighs the tax savings gained by alpaca owners.

Still think alpacas are simply a tax shelter strategy? The next time someone tells you this, get fired up. Let 'em have it (in a nice way, of course). Yes, we can deduct and depreciate expenses related to our alpaca businesses. Good for us. But we get no special treatment in the U.S. tax code...So, John Stossel, if you are reading this, you are formally invited to spend a day at Finca Alta Vista. Eat your Wheaties and be sure to bring your Muck Boots. And yes, they do spit.

North American alpaca farmers have made great strides in improving the breed, not just for the U.S, but also for our fellow alpaca owners and breeders from Canada to South America and from England to Japan. Our efforts to improve the understanding of alpacas and fleece production have impacted commercial herds around the world. We will develop our fleece market. The alpaca industry is not lacking in intelligence and ingenuity. We just need more time, advice and leadership. We'll make it work because we love what we do. Alpaca farming is challenging but it can be fun and rewarding...and since when did being in business and enjoying ourselves become mutually exclusive?

Speaking of fun, it's Jubilee time! There is excitement in the air once again as we seem to be pulling out of the doldrums of the economic downturn. The show sold out three whole weeks before the scheduled close of registration! Even if you cannot attend as an exhibitor, I hope you will attend the Jubilee and experience the new and exciting features that we are trying out...features designed to help all alpaca owners promote their farms and MAKE MONEY. If you haven't done so yet, you have to check out all the information about the show on the website. Go to www.mapaca.org and click on "Jubilee Show" at the top. There are so many things to do at the Jubilee, but we're really just getting started. We are in the process of making MAPACA a force for the advancement of the U.S. alpaca industry...YOUR alpaca industry.

Spring is here. Let's spring forward with a renewed commitment to our industry and prove the cynics wrong!

By day, Alan Clark is President of the Board of Directors of MAPACA, and co-owner of Finca Alta Vista in Pleasant Mount, Pennsylvania. By night he is a Pharmacist. Fueled primarily by energy drinks, he seldom sleeps, nor does he eat his vegetables much to the chagrin of the MAPACA Board and staff.



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A Warm Welcome to the following New Members of MAPACA!

84 Alpacas at Linwood Farm

Craig Eslep

Alpaca Yarn Arts

Kendra Biddick

Alpacas at Whispering Oaks

Mark & Janice Palumbo

Alpacas in Harmony

Patty Ludwig

Sorbie Farm Alpacas

John & Sara Hannah

Angels Royale Alpacas

Hilda Housteau

Asgard Acres Alpaca

Farm, LLC

Carole & Joe Rost

Autumn Kiss Alpacas

Robin Shatzkin

Bear's Den Alpacas

Glenn Cobb & Mary

Pugliese-Cobb

Brooklyn Alpacas

Phil Aron

Cabin View Alpacas

David & Christine

Houseworth

Capital Alpacas

Patricia & Robert Bronson

Dancing Horse Farm

Kim Gleason

Edel Haus Farm

John Edelhauser

Estelstation

Mary Ellen Estel

Fair Acres Alpaca Farm

Bo & Becky Bolinsky

Falls Edge Farm & Fiber Mill

Pat & Elaine DiGirolamo

FeltLOOM

Lanette Freitag &

Don Bowles

Ferda Farm, LLC

Marilyn & Richard Ferda

Forest Mill Farm

Les Davis Jr. & Trish

Tyler-Davis

Harley Hill Farm, LLC

Bill & Lori Oraschin

Humming Meadows Alpacas

Denise Spina &

Mitch Sparrow

KaJota Meadows, LLC

Kim Dietz

Kuhn's River Country Alpacas

Louise Kuhn

Little Treasures Alpacas

Terry & Kathy Kiser

Long Lasting Alpaca Acres

Michelle Long

Maranatha Alpaca Farm

Perry & Lisa Darley

Outstanding Dreams Farm

Phil & Vickie Liske

Patchwork Meadow Alpacas

Susan Caston

Rainbow Alpacas

Ann Brown

Shear Delight Alpacas, LLC

Deborah Varga

Shooting Star Farm

Alpacas of PA

Ann Baldwin

Terrace Mountain Alpacas, LLC

Robert & Daryl Baker

Trotter Hill Alpacas

Pam Narrigan

Walnut Grove Farms Alpacas

Diana Klein

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 7, 2011 : Course Broads, Inc. Certified Sorted System of Fiber Course

April 7, 2011: Camelidynamics Seminar with Marty McGee Bennett

April 9, 2011: Membership Meeting at Jubilee

The Board has no events planned past our membership meeting, but many classes are being offered by member farms including:

April 16 and 17, 2011: Alpaca Shearing Seminar

May 14, 2011: Tax Advantages of Alpaca Breeding and Farming

May 21, 2011: Alpaca Basics: an Introduction to "Embracing Your Alpaca Investment"

July 23, 2011: Hands on Wet-Felting with Alpaca Fiber

September 17, 2011: Alpaca Basics: an Introduction to "Embracing Your Alpaca Investment"

For additional information regarding all of the above calendar entries, please visit our website at Mapaca.org, click the "About MaPaca" tab, and then the "Calendar of Events" tab.

Part II: What Are You Doing with Your Alpaca Fleece?

A Tale of Two Co-ops

By Diane Beauchner and Anne Spreng

All your alpacas are shorn. Your adorable crias look slightly forlorn.

You know from experience that their fleece will grow out again so for now you breathe a sigh of relief that shearing day is a memory. You can relax.

Except...“The Question” looms... What do you do with the fleece?

The answer can be as individual as your alpacas. Do you process the fiber yourself? Do you put it in the barn and ignore it, hoping it will disappear before you must build another barn? Do you take a leap of faith by sending it away to a co-operative and believing that indeed you will see it again, spun into cloud-soft yarn or manufactured into some of the warm, cozy products that make alpaca fleece so desirable in the first place? Do you send this hard-won fleece to a mini-mill? Have you considered the likely costs and probable profits of the various options? Do you even know about all the options? What is an alpaca fiber producer to do?

You may consider joining a fiber cooperative.

According to its website, The Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America, Inc. (AFCNA) is an agricultural cooperative formed and wholly owned by North American alpaca fiber producers. Its members are part of an established community of alpaca breeders who produce quality alpaca products in the USA on an industrial scale. Shareholders provide the capital needed for the business to operate, and provide the fiber to make the products. They take responsibility as member/owners to help to improve and to promote alpaca products.

AFCNA membership comprises alpaca fiber producers who have purchased one share of voting common stock in the co-op. Incorporated in 1998, AFCNA has its headquarters in Decatur, Tennessee. A permanent staff provides cooperative administration, product manufacturing management, product sales and fulfillment (packing & shipping) and customer services. A seven to 15 member-elected volunteer Board of Directors guides AFCNA's business and finances.

“Our current member count is 1644,” reports AFCNA president Larry Vellozzi. “The only

state where AFCNA does not have membership representation is Alaska. Pennsylvania and New Jersey represent 78 and 58 members respectively.”

Vellozzi is optimistic about AFCNA's future.

“We have increased the Decatur office with a more efficient staff,” he says. “We have three full-time sorters/graders handling more than 25,000 pounds of fiber that was collected in 2010. This represents an increase in both quantity and quality of fiber submitted before 2010.”

“In three of the last four years,” Vellozzi continues. “AFCNA earned a profit and made patronage distributions. In fact, 2010 was a banner

year for the co-op. Our membership rolls increased by 120, we brought the sorting opera-



tion in-house and improved the production chain. We anticipate similar if not better results for 2011, with full-year impact of the improvements we implemented in 2010 and anticipated production of new American-made products.”

Research indicates the good news that cooperatives are paying out dividends to members and working for the good of the alpaca industry. In December 2010, AFCNA began issuing patron dividends to 492 participants in the fiber collections of 2008 and 2009, resulting in an average payout of \$117.15. The highest check sent out was for \$2,261.97.

Former AFCNA President and Director Daryl Goodrich of Angel Wood Alpaca Farm, LLC, remains an enthusiastic member and supporter of the fiber co-op. “In 2010, we sent to AFCNA 125 pounds of fiber,” he reports. “This year (2010)

we received \$175.00 from AFCNA as our patronage distribution. AFCNA will distribute more profit money in future years as the amount of fiber submitted grows. More fiber equals more AFCNA net income to be distributed. Overhead costs are covered so additional fiber submissions will grow net income fast.”

Goodrich is concerned about additional fiber co-ops coming into play. “Intra-industry competition resulting from splintering of the industry into many independent entrepreneur processors will sabotage the success of the industry,” says Goodrich. “Competition among the parts of an industry holds the industry back.”

The competition Goodrich refers to is North American Alpaca Fiber Producers (NAAFP). New to the agricultural cooperative scene, NAAFP is located in Idaho. Established in September 2008, NAAFP boasts a membership of 282 and a payout of \$27,841.28 for 608 items sold on behalf of members. In 2010, they reported a 25% increase in membership and a 38% increase for fiber submitted by members.

“As the economy worsened, more owners began to focus on fiber as an income producer out of necessity, so there has been a silver lining to the recessions,” says Pamela Harwood, newly elected President of NAAFP's Board of Directors. “Alpacas are fiber animals after all. Things will eventually improve, and better systems will be in place to get more and more fiber into more profitable production and out into the world.”

NAAFP's website states “NAAFP was created to establish the highest level of quality alpaca products from fiber produced and processed in North America by alpaca fiber producers who have their fleece sorted by a certified fiber sorter using the Certified Sorted™ system.”

The use of that Certified Sorted™ system represents the main difference between NAAFP and AFCNA. Goodrich contends that AFCNA is better suited for alpaca fiber processing as an agricultural cooperative because the farmer is the big winner. In contrast, he says, “NAAFP is a co-operative, but it is tied to using the services of an entrepreneur based sorting provider.”

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“NAAFP uses the Certified Sorted™ system to guarantee that the same strict standard is used on all fiber coming in,” says Harwood. “Sorting and grading all fiber before it enters the co-op,” she states, “is efficient, cost-effective, and assures members every ounce received is processed and none is thrown away.”

“Sorting certification, apprenticeship, continuing education, and recertification are overseen by Idaho-based Coarse Broads, Inc. The sorters are self-employed but must follow the system as outlined by Coarse Boards, Inc. CBI has developed and refined a sorting system that assures efficiency and consistency among sorters and apprentices across the country.”

As for the system used by AFCNA, Goodrich says, “AFCNA sorts and grades all submitted fiber. Quality is assured because sorting is all done at one place with the same people and there are performance quality checks. And, efficiency is achieved because sorting is done in large volume.”

Who knew that you could be employed sorting alpaca fiber?! NAAFP members hire their own sorters or apprentice sorters to sort the fleece either on shearing day or on any day thereafter. The sorter goes to the farm or the breeder ships the fiber to the sorter.

“Based on the information from the Individual Sort Report, members gain a better understanding of what their herds are producing and what to



look for as they make future breeding decisions,” says Harwood.

AFCNA also provides sort reports to its members.

“When the bag of fleece is graded in Decatur, a form is filled out by the grader,” explains Velozzi. “At the end of the day, those forms are scanned and emailed to that particular mem-

ber. The response from the membership has been very favorable.”

Jody Hezoucky is a certified sorter who owns Lana Bella Alpaca Farm in Carrollton, Ohio. She was an AFCNA member from its beginnings, serving for a time on its Board of Directors. Over the years, she became dismayed with AFCNA because of such factors as low return on her fiber investment, discovery of store products priced higher than what she could buy from other vendors, finding herself “stuck” with products she could not sell, and the fact that some fiber was being classified as unusable then tossed into the trash.

“The AFCNA was not designed to pay members for fiber based on fiber,” says Hezoucky. “It was designed to pay members profit sharing based on fiber submitted, if and when the co-op made a profit from selling alpaca yarns and finished goods.”

“The profit on 10 pounds of grade 5 fiber (duvets) is different from the profit on 10 pounds of grade 3 fiber (coned knitting yarn),” states Harwood.

“The two most profitable SKUs for AFCNA were the socks and the yarn,” continues Hezoucky. “When I learned that AFCNA sold the yarn division and the sock machine was when I was done. Now they are even buying imported alpaca products and selling them. In my opinion, that is not what a US co-op

Beauchner's Tiger Lily

First Place in the MAPACA Jubilee 2010 Fleece Show!

Against very stiff competition, Beauchner's Tiger Lily took First Place in the MAPACA Jubilee 2010 Fleece Show! Judge Cheryl Gehly gave this beige fleece 19 out of 20 for fineness and handle, 16 out of 20 for micron, length and color and 9.5 out of 10 for character. The judge had these comments on the score sheet: “WOW! Fineness! Great character!”

Tiger Lily has numerous performance ribbons. She is confirmed pregnant; service sire is Accoyo America Triton, an alpaca name well-known on the West Coast.

Beauchner's Tiger Lily is FOR SALE.
 ARI #31020923 DOB: 6/14/2008
 DAM: Blankstone's Desiree SIRE: Starbuck de Alta Vista
 Contact Diane at dbeau@ptd.net or 610-366-2055 for purchase details.
 The Beauchner Family is SHEPHERD HILLS ALPACAS
 “You don't have to own a farm to own alpacas.”
www.shepherdhillsalpacas.com

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should be doing to promote North American alpaca."

Like AFCNA, NAAFP members can sell their USA-made products themselves or they can have the co-ops sell their products wholesale. This is the basic principal of co-op sales at work. Profits vary based on the amount of members' fiber in a given production run and according to the items produced.

"The NAAFP co-op offers us the ability to submit all grades of our fiber, take advantage of reduced processing cost, have flexible selling options, and most importantly make a profit from our fiber that justifies being alpaca breeders," says Hezoucky. "As members we own our fiber throughout the production process and can get back 100% of the product that our fiber produces. We can opt to have the co-op sell our portion at wholesale. We can also do a combination of retail or wholesale by product."

Both NAAFP and AFCNA enable members to buy additional product at wholesale. For example, NAAFP currently produces eight grades of roving, five different natural or hand-dyed yarns, hats, gloves, ankle socks, boot socks, and duvets.

"Members of AFCNA may buy at wholesale prices any products AFCNA sells," says Goodrich. "To help farmer members stock their farm stores, AFCNA not only makes available to members all products it makes from member fiber. It also buys imported Peruvian products to round out the product line until it can create more diversity in product from member fiber. So members can make money from submitting their fiber and also from selling products at retail that it buys from AFCNA at wholesale. These products include five different 100% alpaca yarns, four alpaca/merino blend yarns, sweaters, socks, hats, gloves, bags, throws, toy alpacas and teddy bears."

JoAnne Givler of YKnot Alpacas in Germansville, Pennsylvania likes being able to purchase products made in the USA; however, she has this to say about the Peruvian imports: "I don't care for the fact that they (AFCNA) sell products made other than in the USA. It's an American co-op and we should stick to the products being made in the USA."

Maggie Wright of Kraussdale Alpacas in East Greenville, Pennsylvania originally joined AFCNA to have access to products for her farm store. "Now I like the ability as an affiliate to provide a shopping link on my website," says Wright. She would like to see the co-op pursue alternative

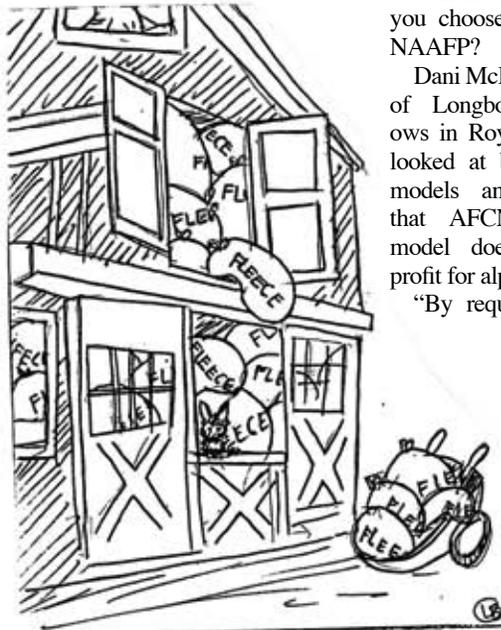
products, like felt or rugs, for lower grade fiber. "The co-op seems to want the best fiber the farm turns out," she says, "and I need that for having my yarn and roving produced for my store."

So. Now you have decided that agricultural cooperatives are the way to go with your fiber. You want to pool resources with other alpaca breeders, to be part of something larger than yourself and your farm, and to maximize profit from your fiber. Moreover, you do not have the time, desire, space, sales savvy or marketing skills to market your yarn.

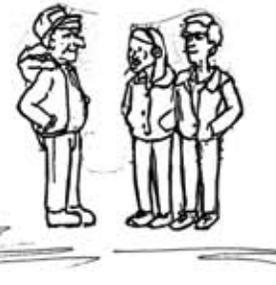
Which cooperative do you choose: AFCNA or NAAFP?

Dani McKenzie, owner of Longbottom Meadows in Roy, Washington looked at both business models and concluded that AFCNA's current model does not drive profit for alpaca owners.

"By requiring owners



"SO, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR FLEECE?"



to pay for each stage of the process, NAAFP has been able to run in the black from day one," says McKenzie. "NAAFP doesn't get loans to cover the cost of processing a product run and have to take the cost of the loan out of the profits given to the business owners. I'm a very firm believer that if you make things too easy for people -- they don't have to sort fiber before they ship to the co-op and they don't have to pay anything up front to have the product created -- you're not actually encouraging 'business behavior' nor encouraging people to participate in the process."

Despite her enthusiasm for NAAFP's methodology, McKenzie reports disappointment in the lag time involved in the product run process. "I turned in my fiber last August," she says, "but it was only pulled into a run recently and the product won't be available for several months."

Back to the question of which fiber cooperative to choose. Perhaps you want to follow the purest agricultural model and not share any profits with an entrepreneur. Perhaps you decide by weighing the convenience of one co-op versus the other. Do you want to use a certified sorter? Do you want to send your fleece off to be done with it?

Ask around. Find fellow breeders who have used one or the other co-op and ask them about their experiences. Analyze each co-op's product. Do you prefer the quality of one product to the other? Review co-op websites. Does one sell products that interest you, the farmer/retailer? Question members of the boards of directors. If possible, calculate the return you can expect on your fleece under each model.

Finally, be confident that the co-op you choose meets the following key criteria:

- a) clear, understandable information about the co-op's financial operations is readily available to you as a member
- b) you as a member can understand the co-op's processes
- c) you as a member are confident in the sorter who sorts your fleece for a reasonable price
- d) you as a member receive frequent and meaningful communication, timely pay-outs and high-quality products.

The best news to fiber producers is that co-ops like AFCNA and NAAFP want and need your alpaca fiber.

"We can always use more fiber," says Harwood. "We can produce more colors if you have, say, enough black fiber for a black yarn as well as for blended gray and rose gray yarns. There are bulk discounts offered by mills, too: the more fiber in one run, the

lower the cost per pound. Our current inventory is very low. In fact, many of the products are sold out until the 2010 fiber runs are finished, which will be in the next several months."

The "What Are You Doing With Your Alpaca Fleece?" series will continue in next month's newsletter with a look at mini-mills.

Anne Spreng is a freelance writer and alpaca fiber artist who resides in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Diane Beauchner owns Shepherd Hills Alpacas in Wescosville, Pennsylvania, is Editor of the MAPACA newsletter and sells her yarn to Anne to create beautiful alpaca products.

Contact Diane at dbeau@ptd.net or visit www.shepherdhillsalpacas.com.



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Casanova's Peruvian
Crown Prince

The new standard in grey fineness!

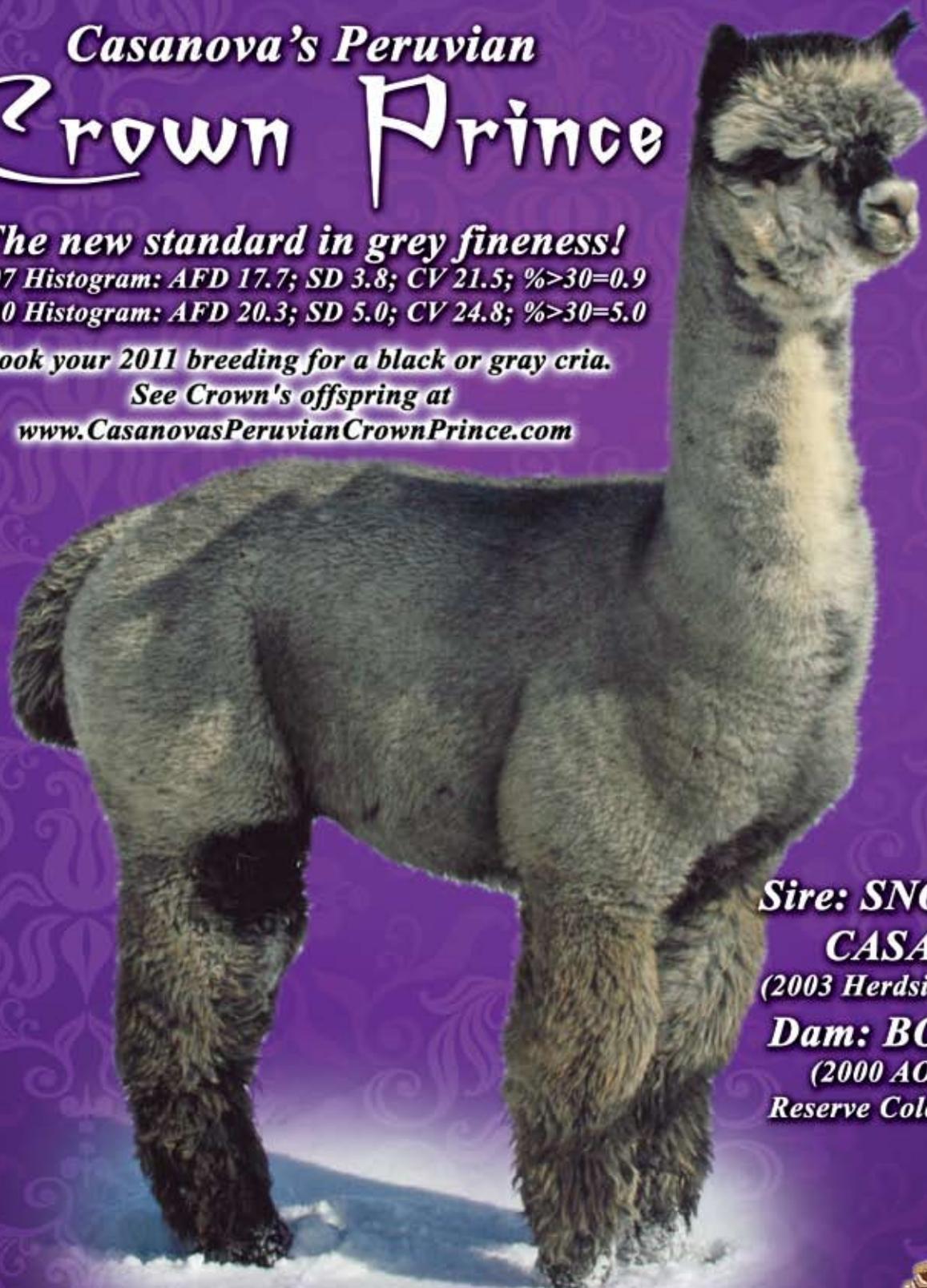
2007 Histogram: AFD 17.7; SD 3.8; CV 21.5; %>30=0.9

2010 Histogram: AFD 20.3; SD 5.0; CV 24.8; %>30=5.0

Book your 2011 breeding for a black or gray cria.

See Crown's offspring at

www.CasanovasPeruvianCrownPrince.com



Sire: SNOWMASS

CASANOVA

(2003 Herdsire of the Year)

Dam: BOADICEA

(2000 AOBA Black

Reserve Color Champion)

WESTPARK
alpaca

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Top 10 Ways to Cash in on the Jubilee

By Alan Clark

What a show this is going to be! The Jubilee stalls were SOLD OUT weeks before the deadline. The excitement is building and will culminate in less than two weeks from now in Harrisburg. There are so many aspects to the Jubilee but here are the top 10 ways to make the show work for you.

1. WIN CASH! That's right, this year we are handing out CASH AWARDS to the top fleece show winners: \$50 for each fleece reserve champion and spin-off highest score in a color group; \$100 for each fleece champion and spin-off judges choice winner; and an extra \$150 to each judge's choice fleece winner! Our fleece judges will be on hand to talk about their weekend of judging your fine fleeces at Wine, Cheese and Champs, our social gathering on Saturday afternoon.

2. SELL YOUR ALPACAS! Take advantage of the "I'm for Sale" program. Ever wish you could spend more time marketing and selling your show alpacas DURING the show? Now you can. Put your Jubilee sales effort on auto pilot by listing your show and sale alpacas on the MAPACA auction website. Potential buyers can find you using our show floor map, and you can conduct your own alpaca auction while you are in the show ring. Best of all? It's FREE! Go to www.BidMapaca.org to get started.

3. SELL YOUR PRODUCTS in our exclusive Member Product Store! We have been busy promoting the Jubilee to the fiber enthusiast and agriculture communities. It's our goal to fill the expo hall with alpaca and alpaca fleece buyers. Take advantage of this great opportunity to showcase and sell your raw fleece, yarn, roving and ready-to-wear alpaca garments. Hopefully you made the deadline for entering your products in this, our first Member Products Store. Even if you did not do so this year, make plans to enter your alpaca fleece and fiber products in next year's Jubilee. It's never too early to start planning! If we are going to make a serious effort at establishing a market for our alpaca fiber, this is a great way to start!

4. TAKE A CLASS. Make the time to

take a seminar by leading alpaca experts. Sign up for the pre-show learning track with Marty McGee Bennett of Camelidynamics or Coarse Broads, Inc. who will instruct on Fiber Sorting for Maximum Profit. FREE show seminars include talks by Mike Safley (Thursday only), Dr. Norm Evans, Brett Kaysen, Monica Kline, Brion Smoker, Wes Parry, Nick Hahn, Andy Merriwether, Wini Labrecque and Leslie Jorritsma.

5. CHAT IT UP! Catch up with old friends and make new ones at the Thursday night Meet & Greet, mingle with breeders while ringside, over coffee at the Crimp and Curl Cafe and at dinner on Saturday night at the 15th Anniversary Celebration. Don't miss this exciting feature of the 2011 Jubilee, complete with great food, drink, music and camaraderie.

6. SERVICE WITH A SMILE. A show as large and exciting as the Jubilee would not be possible without a legion of volunteers! Volunteers ensure the smooth execution of the show and help keep costs down for exhibitors and vendors alike. It's not too late to sign up. In fact, we urge you to stop by the Information Booth in the Crimp and Curl Café anytime during the show to check if we need assistance. Help is ALWAYS welcome and you may find that it's a win/win situation: you'll learn something new and may make new friends and potential customers along the way. "Many hands make light work!"

7. TRY YOUR LUCK! Buy a raffle ticket in the Youth Program Benefit Raffle. When you purchase tickets in the Youth Benefit Raffle, you are helping us fund the all-new MAPACA Youth Grant Program. If you are one of the lucky winners, you will be the proud new owner of a Kubota RTV500 or Schacht 'Baby Wolf' loom! Many more prizes have been awarded and a few more will be awarded in the next two weeks. Visit the MAPACA Store (www.mapaca.org/pages/OnlineStore/) to purchase your tickets TODAY! You can also place a bid in the silent auction or buy tickets for many of our donated raffle prizes.

8. CONSULT WITH A JUDGE! How many times have you left the show ring wondering why your alpaca did not make the cut? Now you can get a professional assessment of any Jubilee non-placing alpaca. Our Jubilee halter judges will be on hand at the conclusion of the show on Sunday to give a brief evaluation of any alpaca that didn't place. Take advantage of this rare and affordable (FREE!) chance to get a one-on-one chat with an AOBA-certified judge. You'll be able to use the constructive advice to improve the value of your own breeding program.

9. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FIBER. Join us as we promote fiber with the Fleece to Shawl Competition, fashion show and ongoing fiber demos. This is where the crocheted charging bull fits into the picture! Meet Polish-born installation artist, Agata Olek! Olek turns the traditional crochet craft into something very bright, bold and edgy. You are sure to be inspired to do more with your own fiber to generate income after wandering the aisles of "Mundo Fibra!"

10. SEE THE STUDS! Take part in the Herdsire-of-the-Year competition and online herdsire services auction. Take a look at the herdsires and bid on a breeding using your computer and the Farm Show Complex Wi-Fi or on one of our computer bidding stations in the Crimp and Curl Café. Champions beget champions, and the online herdsire service auction is a great way to get herd-improving genetics at a great price!

Believe it or not, there is so much more! The show has something for everyone and we're glad that you will be a part of it. We'll see you in Harrisburg! Safe travels.

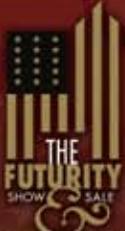
*Alan Clark,
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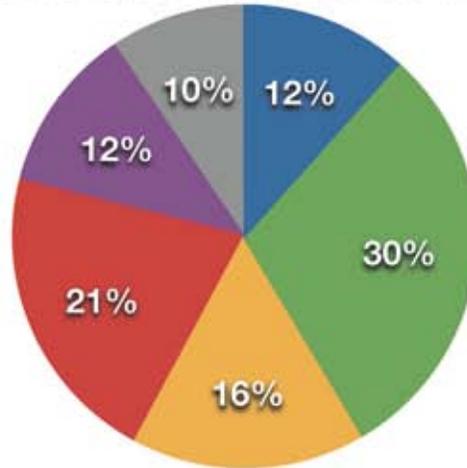


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What Did You Do With Your Fiber in 2010?



- Sent it in to a co-op
- Sent it in to a mill to be processed
- Sold it directly to buyers
- Used it for my own purposes (spun it into yarn, rovings, felt etc.)
- Nothing. It is still sitting in the barn.
- Other

MAPACA FIBER SURVEY

On January 21, 2011 MAPACA sent out a short survey to the membership using Survey Monkey. 73 members, or 28%, responded to the survey. Of those who responded, 79% own huacayas and 21% own suris. Above are the results to one of the questions.

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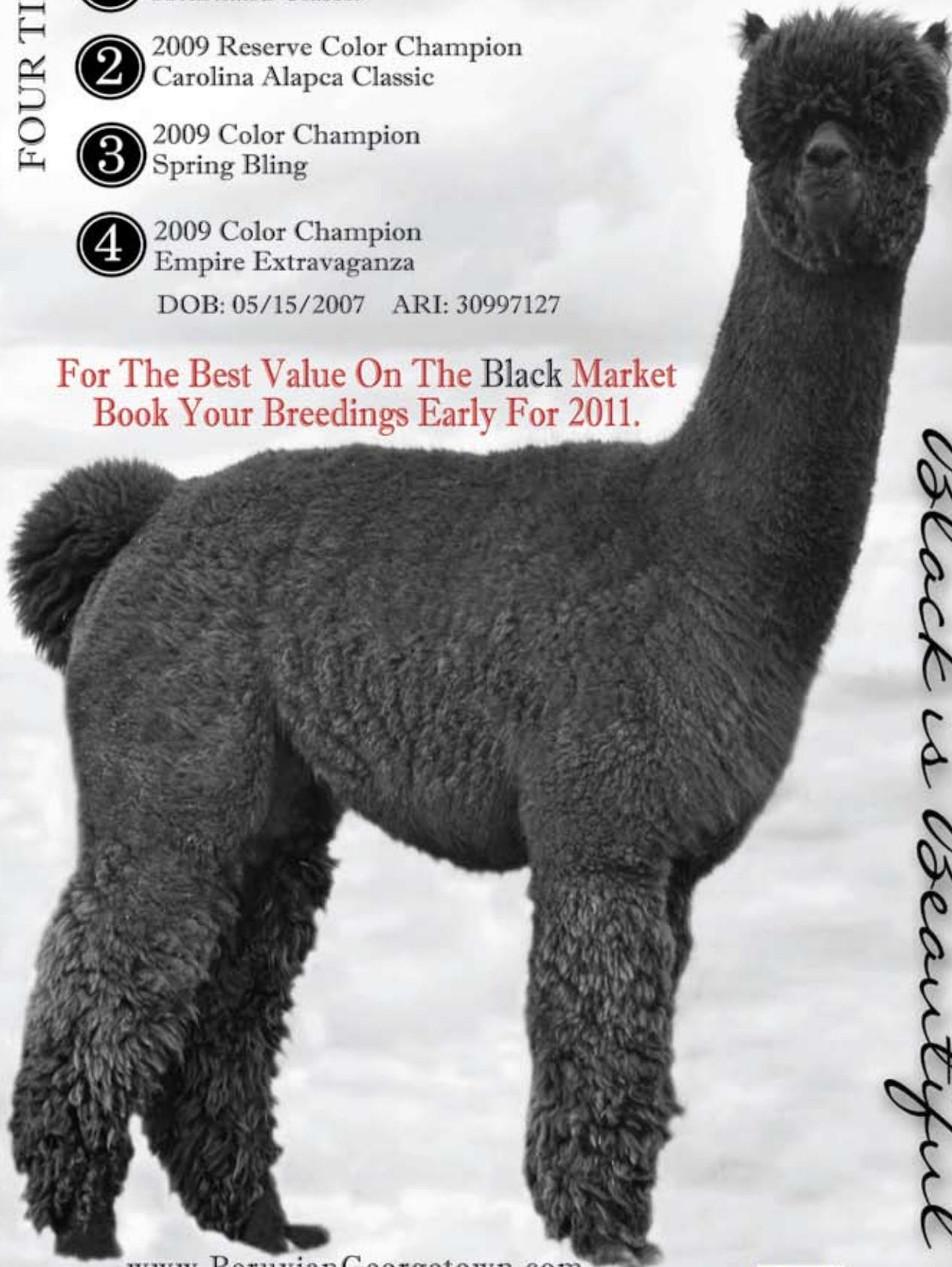
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MAPACA Sponsors Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) 20th Annual Farming for the Future Conference

By Trish Tyler Davis

MAPACA partnered with PASA (www.pasafarming.org) this year for the first time by becoming a Gold sponsor for their 20th annual "Farming for the Future" Conference held at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College, PA. Our sponsorship included a booth during the three-day event to promote our organization and the alpaca industry at large; and what a partnership it was!

Vice-President Terri Kinka and I slipped and slid our way to State College on Wednesday, February 2nd, to get set up for the following day, when all of the attendees would begin to arrive. Our booth was located directly across from the conference reservation counter, so we had a prime spot that gave us very good exposure. We were manning the booth at 7am sharp on Thursday morning, and it's a good thing we were, because people began arriving bright and early to ask questions, look at the pictures, and feel the fiber. Our days were long, averaging 10+ hours, but very exciting as we spoke to hundreds of people about the care of alpacas and their fleece, as well as the benefits of belonging to our organization.

While PASA's mission is "promoting profitable farms that produce healthy food for all people while respecting the natural envi-

ronment", MAPACA was a very good addition to the many vendors and educators that attended. Those vendors and educators included Longwood Gardens, McGeary Organics, Inc., Dave Johnson of Provident Farms and Wes Jackson of The Land Institute. Many of the attendees were extremely interested in fiber animals as opposed to animals raised for meat, and had good solid questions on the development and viability of fiber herds. As this event has already sparked emails and requests for farm visits to some of our member farms, I believe it was a rousing success, and we look forward to strengthening our partnership with PASA as a means to increase awareness to our exciting industry.

Trish Tyler-Davis is the Executive Director of MAPACA and owner of Forest Mill Farm. Contact Trish at trishtylerdavis@verizon.net.



2011 MAPACA Jubilee Battle of the Mid-Atlantic Herdsire All-Stars

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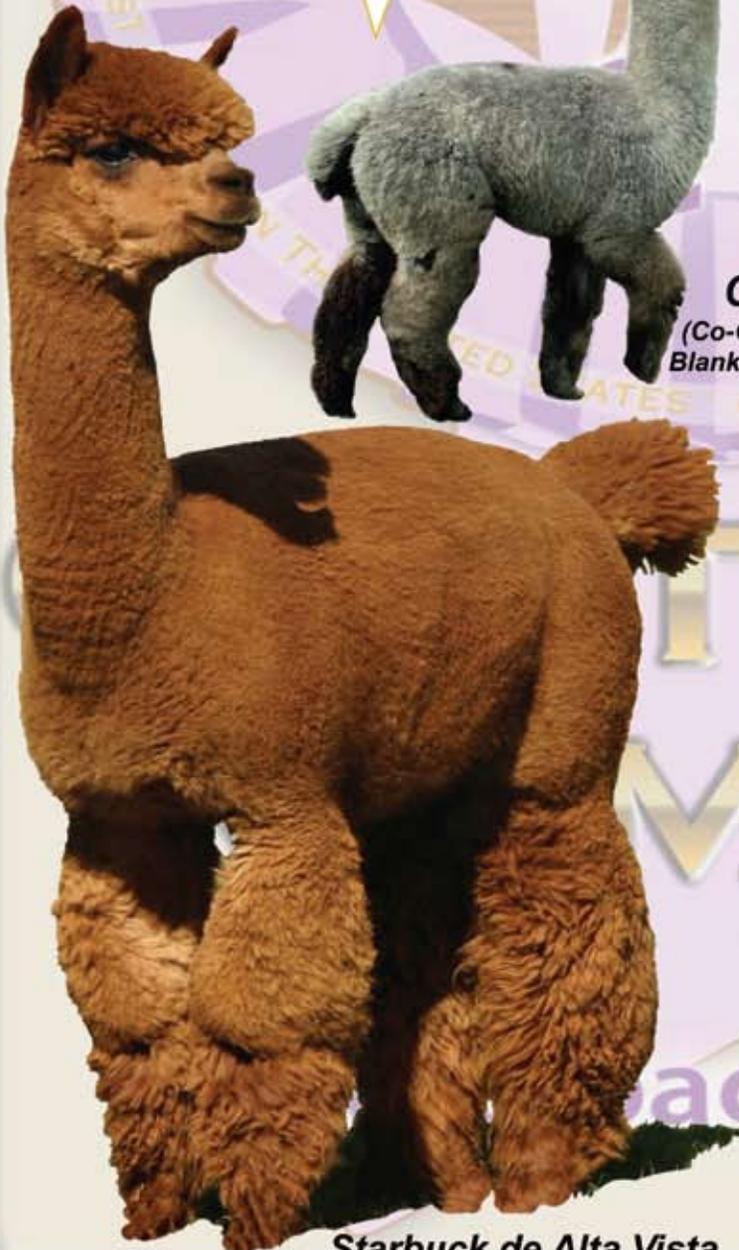
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Digital Media for Marketing Alpacas

By: Joe Preston, Openherd.com



In 1810, the mayor of New York City, DeWitt Clinton, proposed what many considered to be a delusional idea - digging a canal by hand 363 miles long through the wilderness that would create the first transportation route between the eastern seaboard through the Appalachian Mountains to the western interior. However, the project lacked a critical element—special hydraulic cement to prevent water seeping out of the canal and lock system. So a young canal employee named Canvass White traveled at his own expense to England to learn what he could about the technology. On returning, he experimented with native materials and hit on a compound that worked. The Erie Canal opened early in 1825 after just 8 years of construction and cut transportation costs by about 95%, securing New York's economic prosperity.^{1,2}

This story of a vision, a plan, the right technology, hard work, and eventual success, serves as a framework for understanding how to select and use digital media to market alpacas. "Most of us claim to make logical decisions," says Zig Ziglar in *Selling 101*, "but the reality is we generally make emotional decisions." This is even more the case with digital technology because we don't really understand how things work, so we tend to just do what everyone else does and hope it will do the trick, or at least relieve our fears of being left behind. When you understand the role digital media plays in your overall marketing plan, your choices will become more focused and applied with better results.

A Vision

Getting into alpacas is a bit like marriage - relatively easy and compelling to get into but hard to make it successful. Behind every alpaca farm there are dreams about what will hopefully be achieved and strategic marketing is critical in that success. And since digital media is now so central in marketing, it is no wonder that it can be so confounding. DeWitt Clinton's canal idea may have been ambitious but he had a plan and made it happen.

A Plan

It is important to understand that digital media (anything that is created, stored, transmitted, and consumed in digital format) does not make sales happen on its own. Rather it facilitates and multiplies your efforts in the overall sales process commonly known as the Sales Funnel. The concept is simple: start broad and wide getting lots of exposure, then channel prospects to your farm—online or in person—where they can be engaged in a sales presentation and your farm's brand, and finally converted to a sale. This process has to have breadth, depth, and, most importantly, be a complete, uninterrupted system from beginning to end. As in the case with Canvass White's hydraulic cement, you will find potential customers seeping away to other farms if you don't have the right technology in the right places to direct them successfully to *your* farm—and keep them coming back!

Right Technology

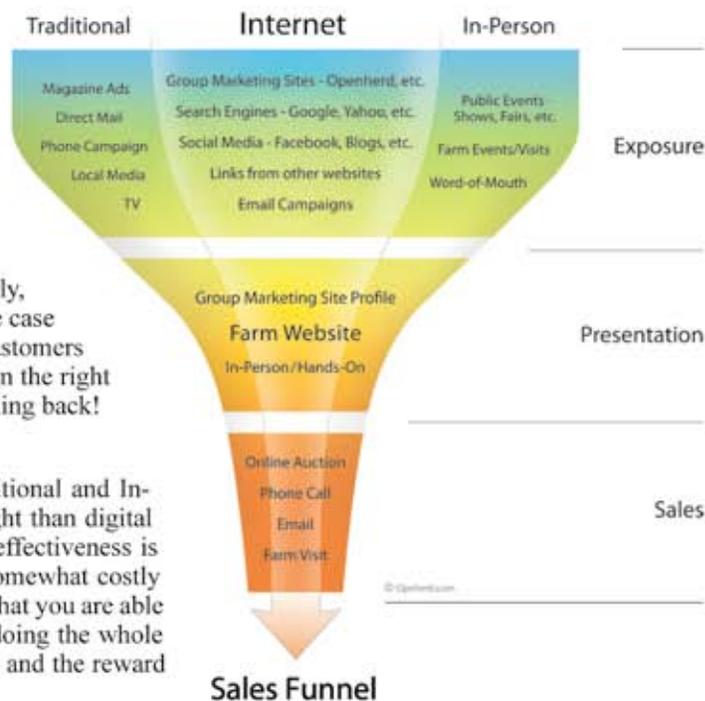
Since we're dealing with digital media, I'll just touch on the Traditional and In-Person categories: Traditional media tends to carry a bit more weight than digital media but it is generally more costly, timelines are longer, and its effectiveness is not as measurable. In-person contact can be time-consuming and somewhat costly but if, for example, you are participating in a show, the advantage is that you are able to do a sales presentation with your alpacas present, which is like doing the whole sales funnel in one step! Word-of-mouth is gold! It's powerful, free, and the reward of doing what you do excellently and consistently over time.

Let's start at the top of the Sales Funnel: The most basic "feeders" into the top of your funnel are **links from other websites** to your pages. Links can be placed by request, such as on fellow breeders' websites, but are usually added automatically when you are active on forums, special interest or social media sites, if a website does a write-up on your farm or you have an interesting article, unique resource, or products/services that others are compelled to link to from their websites.

Social media goes a step beyond a one-way link from another website because your comments, photos, and links are posted onto your "friends" pages and then their friends' pages. While this kind of activity might appear to be idle chit-chat, it is a very powerful form of social marketing. The old adage, "people do business with people they like" is key here.

Blogs are part of the realm of social media but are mostly the work of a single author posting news, updates, commentary, photos, etc. While this may seem, again, to be a time-consuming indulgence, they can get you listed in search engine results because you are writing about subjects that people are searching. Once someone hits your blog page, it's an easy click over to your sales list!

Special Interest Websites, such as Ravelry.com, can be great places to network with knitters and advertise your fiber. However, you'll need your own online store to list and sell products. Etsy.com is a very popular website that provides storefronts for selling hand-made



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crafts but requires a dedicated investment of time and effort, and, a good product line to make it worthwhile.

Search Engines: In an AOBA's 2009 Member Survey, those researching alpacas for the first time said that they used internet search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc.) and individual farm websites by very similar high percentages—82% and 80% respectively.³ However, because search engines usually display only one link for any given website, if you're relying on a group marketing site, which can represent thousands of farms, to get *your* farm directly into search engine results, this is unlikely to happen. Visitors have to make their way to your farm indirectly via search or directory pages and can easily browse away to another farm. On the other hand, if you have your own farm website that is properly optimized for search engines, you are far more likely to be directly listed in search engine results. This puts your farm just one click away (see diagram to right), engages visitors in *your* identity and sales presentation and makes it less likely they will browse away to another farm.

Group Marketing Sites, such as Openherd.com, are highly specialized search engines for browsing the largest selection of alpacas, farms, and other resources, and generate the busiest marketplaces (relative to number of members) for advertising to other breeders. Along with features such as online stores to sell alpaca products, group marketing sites offer sales list presentation and management systems superior to what individual farms can afford and the ability to automatically display them on your personal farm website. This is a good example of how technology is used effectively to multiply your efforts by editing in one place with two sites being updated simultaneously. Because of the importance of having a personal farm website, as noted above, we recently took this idea a big step further by providing members with a complete farm website that is connected to their member account, giving them the benefits of being on both a group marketing site and having their own farm website, with updates made in one place. While we're talking about group marketing sites, it is interesting to note that online auctions encompass all three stages of the Sales Funnel—exposure, presentation, and sales all in one.

Email campaigns ("email blasts") are both a form of exposure and sales presentation because they take a good amount of the sales presentation to the recipients' inboxes rather than relying on them to come to you. Email campaigns can be tracked to see who opened them, what they clicked on, etc., are highly effective, measurable, and affordable but depend on having a well developed list of email contacts, which can be gathered from farm events, promotions, website signup forms, etc.

Other digital media such as PDF brochures, digital photos of your animals/fleece/products, videos, etc. are important in marketing but are used in conjunction with other digital media, such as email or being uploaded to a website where they can be viewed/downloaded by a visitor.

Hard Work

In *Selling 101*, Zig Ziglar says that there are three key steps to selling: 1. Appeal to the emotions ("wow! look at that!"); 2. Back up the emotions with logical reassurance (solid information and reasons for buying); 3. Prompt for a decision ("Call-to-action"). Creating appealing, complete sales information and keeping it up-to-date, along with all of the other digital marketing activities we've covered, takes constant, hard work over time. As mentioned earlier, digital media can facilitate and multiply your efforts but it can't replace them.

Summary

DeWitt Clinton understood a very simple truth: the commerce was out there, it just wasn't flowing to New York. So he figured out a plan, employed the right technology, worked hard in a consistent direction, and succeeded in diverting prosperity to his city rather than letting it go elsewhere. Success takes time and perseverance but you can do it!

References:

1. Bill Bryson, *At Home - A Short History of Private Life*, Doubleday, 2010.
2. Erie Canal, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erie_Canal.
3. AOBA member survey, *Alpacas Magazine*, Autumn 2009 issue, pp. 239.



Glossary

Social Media: Websites or applications that are firstly social in nature, rather than commercial, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc.

Blog: A blend of Web and Log. A public journal where regular entries share news, commentary, photos, etc.

Domain: A distinct place on the web that contains a series of web pages or resources, such as www.mapaca.org.

URL: Stands for Uniform Resource Locator. A standardized address format for pages and resources on the internet. <http://www.openherd.com/join/> is a URL to our Join page.

Email Campaign: Sending mass emails to a managed contact list typically using an Email Service Provider (ESP), such as iContact, Constant Contact, etc.

PDF: Stands for Portable Document Format. File type that can be saved out of most publishing programs that doesn't require recipient to have original software to view & print.

About Joe Preston



Joe Preston is partner of Openherd.com and uses his background in architecture to design alpaca marketing tools that are highly functional and easy to use. He lives in northern California with his wife and 3 children and loves to travel to alpaca events and meet people.

More Information...

To download a PDF copy of this article and for more information on these topics and recommendations on solutions to help with your farm's marketing, go to:

www.openherd.com/marketing

If you have any questions or comments about this article or would like to discuss your farm's marketing, feel free to send an email to joe@openherd.com.

What are the Alpaca Bloggers Saying?

Reprinted with permission from Ian Lutz of Cas-Cas-Nac Farm from Cas-Cad-Nac Farm Chronicles

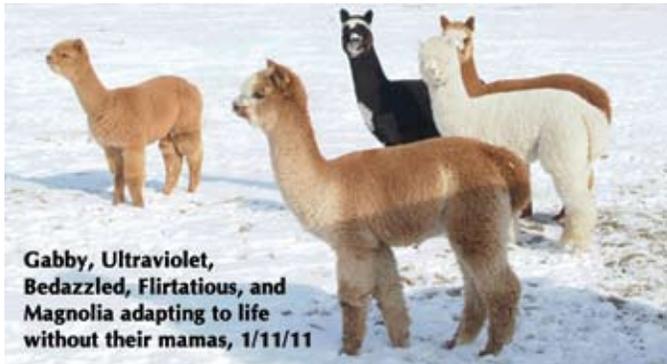
Walking In a Weaner Wonderland

Posted: 11 Jan 2011 12:39 PM PST

www.ccnfchronicles.com/?p=1196

weaner • wean-er (wee-ner) • -noun

1. A recently weaned animal.
2. A recently weaned alpaca at Cas-Cad-Nac Farm that behaves as if its world has come to an end while also constantly and simultaneously enquiring whether you, their shepherd, have any milk.



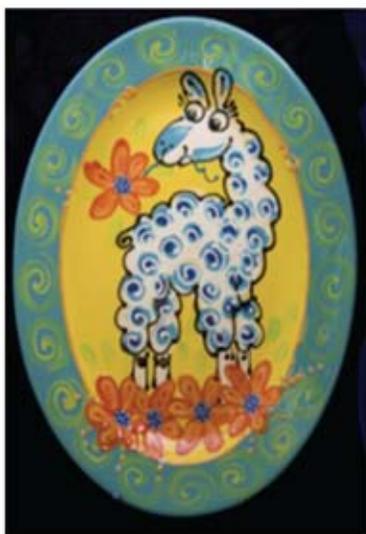
So the first crias from the 2010 birth class have left their dams behind and arrived down at the Main Barn for weaning. The next wave will be joining them shortly (we generally have new groups being weaned every couple of weeks for the next several months), though for now there are just a couple of boys in one feed group and the five little girls pictured at left in another. After giving them all a few days to adapt to their new surroundings while locked inside and/or under the shed covered corrals of the barn, they were just today allowed access to their respective outdoor paddocks for the first time and now have the option to come and go from the barn like any other alpaca in the herd, 24/7. In the case of the females we have one of our older 5P girls, Pinaya, acting as a den mother. Granted when she was first notified that this going to be her duty for the next six months or so Pinaya was less than thrilled: she spent several days with her ears pinned to the back of her head making sure that her small legion of weaners understood that she was not to be messed with and not to even think about trying to suckle.

Though even Pinaya is adapting now and her minions are quickly becoming attached to her, if nothing else the same way a team can bond with a tough (but winning) coach.

Though there are of course many ways to go about it, we have traditionally weaned arbitrarily when our little ones hit 6 months of age. We do make occasional exceptions choosing to leave a baby with mom longer in cases where we have a smaller cria who could use some extra help. We will likewise wean a bit earlier than six months as well if the adorable little parasite is of good size and the dam is starting to have her body condition compromised by the whole experience of motherhood. We have also learned the hard way over the years not to wean if we are about to have a really nasty cold snap or other horrible winter weather (sleet/rain). Nasty weather can add another level of stress to an already stressful situation for the new weanlings and really sets the table for diarrhea in general and GI parasites in particular who already love to exploit this age group as a rule anyway.

In all cases though the idea behind weaning at or after 6 months of age is that the dam has already done most of the work for us. Most of the crias we wean at that age have spent the better part of a month being kicked away by their dams already and are only getting in an occasional comfort suckle as it is. The reality in any case is that the weaners will behave as though the sky is falling in whether you take them away from their moms for the first time at six months of age or even a year. The dams not so much. By the time the crias hit 6 months most of them are ready to move on without their kids. There was one year that because of inclement weather we held off the first wave of weaning until the crias were all basically seven months of age. I kid you not that within ten minutes of removing the crias from that feed group their newly liberated dams were literally pronking around the pasture: we're free! The good news for the little ones though is that most of them develop quickly into confident young alpacas after just a couple of weeks away from their moms. Safe to say that if we could send our 18-year-old human kids off into the grownup universe with that relative percentage of quick maturing, life would be a lot easier for all involved!

Ian and Jennifer are the owners of Cas-Cad-Nac Farm in Weathersfield, Vermont, where they have been breeding award winning alpacas since 1997. The Cas-Cad-Nac Farm Chronicles blog (www.CCNFChronicles.com) is updated on a weekly basis and covers topics dealing with both the farm and farm-family life from A to Z.



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A Crash Course in Color Genetics

By Kathryn Brink

Ever wonder how you got a black cria from a white dam and a fawn sire? Genetics may hold the answer. An alpaca's genetic information is stored in its 37 pairs of chromosomes (74 total), which code for a wide variety of different traits, including coat color and other fleece characteristics. (Humans, by comparison, have 23 pairs.) Each pair of chromosomes contains one from the mother and one from the father, so both parents each contribute one complete set of genetic information to their cria. Genes, which are specific coding regions of a chromosome, are found at different loci (locations on a chromosome), and come in different forms, known as alleles. Though there may be many different alleles for a particular gene, animals inherit only one allele from each parent. An animal's specific alleles make up its genotype.

Some forms of a gene are dominant over others, and, when present, these dominant alleles are expressed in the animal's phenotype, or physical appearance. Alleles that are masked by dominant alleles are called recessive. If an animal has two dominant alleles, it will express the dominant phenotype and will only be able

to pass on a dominant allele to its offspring. If an animal has one dominant allele and one recessive allele, it will look just like an alpaca with two dominant alleles but it will have the potential to pass on either the dominant or recessive allele to its offspring. Only when an animal has two recessive alleles will it display the recessive phenotype. Animals expressing the recessive phenotype can only pass on a recessive allele to their offspring.

At a molecular level, an alpaca's colors come about through the presence or absence of red and black kinds of melanin, a type of protein. Many different genes control the way that melanin is arranged in an alpaca's phenotype, explaining the complexity of color inheritance. Though genes direct how an animal should look, it is actually the proteins that cause an animal to look the way it does.

The Agouti locus is one of the most important, or at least best understood, genes in determining coloration, since in most animals this locus alone determines the alpaca's base coat color. There are many different alleles for this gene, which code for general coat color and black markings (such as black legs or faces).

Alleles at the Agouti locus, in order from most dominant to most recessive, include: tan with minor black trim, red (a shade of brown) with black trim, bay, black with a light belly, mahogany, and black (Sponenberg). Thus, generally speaking, lighter colors are dominant over darker ones at this locus. For example, if an alpaca were to have both a tan and a bay allele, it would look tan but also have the potential to pass on bay to its offspring.

Applying this information, suppose a black female were bred to a red with black trim (light brown with some black markings) male. (We are assuming that only the Agouti locus is involved.) The female is expressing the most recessive trait, black, so she must have two recessive alleles. Her genotype, then, is two black alleles, and she can only pass on a black allele to her offspring. The red male has one black parent, which means that he must have one copy of the black allele. The male, however, is not expressing that black allele but instead a red one, so he must also have a red allele. Now we know the male's genotype: a red with black trim allele and a black allele. The male has an equal probability of passing on a red allele or a

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black allele to his offspring, so there is a fifty percent chance he will pass on a red allele and a fifty percent chance he will pass on a black allele to his cria. Since the black allele is recessive to the red allele, the resulting cria has a fifty percent chance of being red with black trim (red with black trim allele and black allele) and a fifty percent chance of being black (two black alleles). This case works out nicely because we are making the assumption that the only source of color for the alpacas is the Agouti locus and there are various black (recessive) ancestors involved. In fact, a good way to determine what recessive allele an animal has at the Agouti locus is to breed it to a black animal. If the resulting cria has a different color than the non-black parent, this color must be the parent's recessive allele. If the resulting cria is the same color as the non-black parent, either the cria inherited that parent's dominant allele or that parent

Agouti Locus Alleles and Corresponding Fleece Colors

Allele	Range of Fleece Colors
Tan	Beige, light fawn, medium fawn
Tan with minor trim	Beige, light fawn, medium fawn, dark fawn
Red with black trim	Medium fawn, dark fawn, red, light brown
Bay	Red, light brown, medium brown, dark brown
Black with light belly	Black
Mahogany	Mahogany, off-black
Black	Black

Adapted from *The Complete Alpaca Book (2nd Edition)* (p. 543), by E. Hoffman, et. al., Chapter 25: "Genetics of Fiber Type and Coat Color" by D. P. Sponenberg. Copyright 2006 by Eric Hoffman and Bonny Doon Press.

has two copies of the same allele. All of these cases, however, assume that the only locus involved is the Agouti locus, whereas in actuality there are various other possibilities.

For example, the Extension locus, though less commonly observed in alpacas, can have a significant influence on an alpaca's fleece color. If you consider the Agouti locus to be a computer plugged into a power strip, the Extension locus is very much like the power strip. Whether the strip is on or off determines whether the computer can be turned on or off. Similarly, the alleles present at the Extension locus determine whether the alleles at the Agouti locus are expressed. It seems that there are three potential alleles at the Extension locus (Sponenberg): dominant black, wild type (neutral), and recessive red or tan. The wild type (neutral) allele is the most common allele at this locus, and, being neutral, it allows the animal's phenotype to



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reflect the alleles present at the Agouti locus. An animal with one copy of the dominant black allele (present at the Extension locus) will have a black phenotype, regardless of its genotype at the Agouti locus. Much like the recessive black alleles at the Agouti locus, it takes two copies of the recessive Extension allele to produce a red or tan animal via this locus.

The patterns seen on many alpacas also have a genetic basis. There may be many different genes that control spotting, particularly considering the great number of spotting phenotypes. However, shading, which lightens general coat color and particularly affects the belly, is considered different from spotting, with shading dominant to not shaded. A vicuña pattern is a good example of this shading. Grey is another variation on base coat color. The allele coding for grey appears to be dominant to non-grey, and two copies of the grey allele could be a lethal combination resulting in a miscarriage (Paul).

White, caused by the absence of melanin, is a genetically puzzling color, as it can be inherited in many different ways. Genotypic causes of white could include: extremely white-spotted alpacas, near-albino phenotypes, blue-eyed whites, and dominant white genotypes (Paul). Though many forms of white fleece appear to be recessive to darker colors (such as white caused by spotting or dilution factors), there

are at least two possibilities that can explain the dominant inheritance of white color in alpacas. On one hand, white may be the dominant allele at an existing locus (Merriwether and Merriwether). Alternatively, a separate locus, similar to the Extension locus, could exist where a dominant white allele would code for white over any other color combinations and a neutral allele would allow the other color genes to determine the coat color of the animal (Wood and Como).

Research into alpaca color genetics is a work in progress and sometimes a subject of spirited debate. Although scientific understanding is improving, there are still some cases of color inheritance that cannot be thoroughly explained with our current knowledge. So even the best alpaca geneticist might still scratch his head trying to figure out how that cria turned out black.

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About the Author:

Kathryn Brink is a senior at Southern Lehigh High School who studied alpaca genetics as part of her graduation project and plans to continue studying genetics in college. She resides at Flint Stone Farm (www.flintstonefarm.com) in Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, with her parents, Rob and Allison, and sister, Rachael. In addition to her family's farm, Kathryn is an active member of the PACA Patrol, a special interest Girl Scout troop that works with alpacas and was recently featured on "The Late Show with David Letterman". Kathryn can be reached by email at krbrink@ptd.net or by phone at (610) 838-6831.



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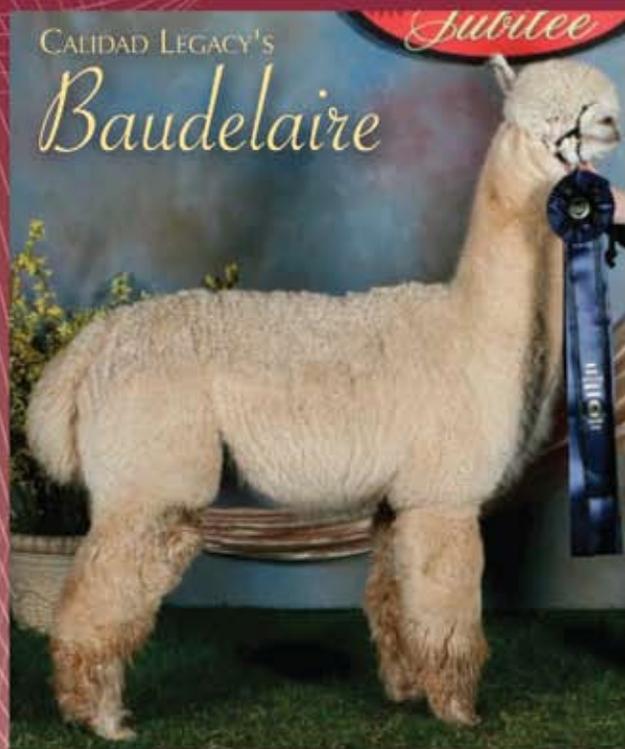
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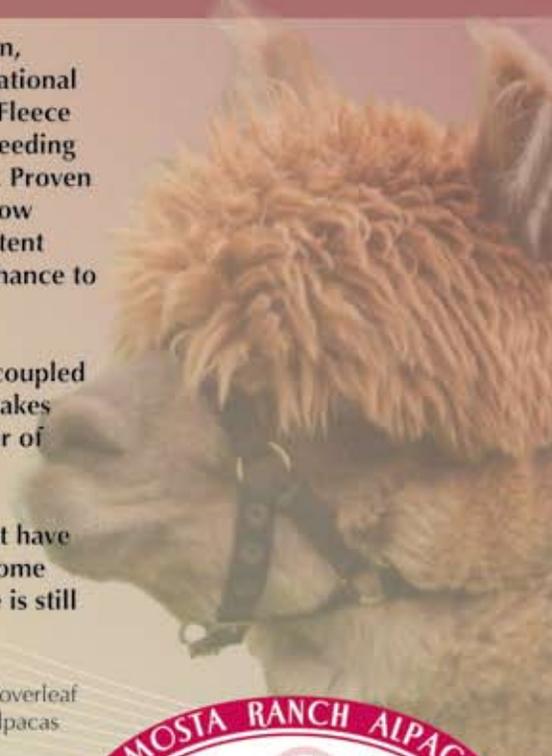


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Mariah's Journey

By Terri Kinka

I realize as I think about how to write this piece that it has been almost a year and a half since the beginning of Mariah's illness.

I begin by thanking all the people who helped us through this time. Without their support, neither Mariah nor I would have been able to make it as far as we have come. There are vets, friends and family members who always gave support and advice as they did research on their own and let me know what they found. I am truly blessed to have such a family of caring people. Understand that this article is a diary of what Mariah and I went through and of what I did to keep her alive. I am not trying to tell others how to diagnose or treat their animals. I am simply recounting the story of doing what I had to do at the time.

Meet Mariah, a very "soft" animal. She is the one who is pushed out of her own food bowl but backs away rather than spit back. She waits her turn at the hay bin and takes her medicine without too much fussing. Mariah is a quiet soul. She loves the babies, often babysitting the crias out in the field while the mommas do their own thing. Mariah herself, mother of only one cria, is four and a half years old. Her son is the mirror image of his mother with the same disposition. We hope that despite all that has happened, there will be another baby in Mariah's future.

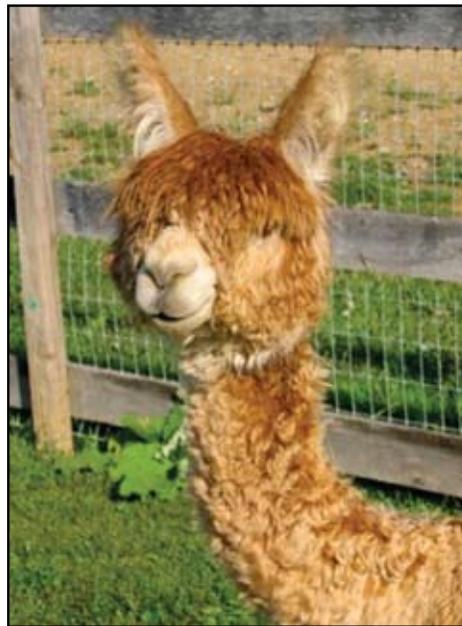
The vets at The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center diagnosed Mariah with presumptive mycoplasma haemolamae, or EPE, in November 2009. EPE is a bacterium that attaches itself to an alpaca's red blood cells. The immune system recognizes this as a problem and destroys the red blood cells. The alpaca then becomes anemic.

Cria at her side, Mariah spent four days at New Bolton in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania receiving oxytetracycline, an antibiotic, and IV fluids. Momma and baby came home with medicines for me to give by injection. As I was about to administer the third injection, I noticed that Mariah's fiber was coming out in clumps. I pulled on some and got a handful. The Vets at New Bolton recommended that I stop the injections; what she had received by then should have sufficed. At that point, her disposition and her poop were getting back to normal. She weighed between 125 and 130 pounds. I believe this is when Mariah's immune system was compromised. The stress of nursing a cria while seriously ill was more than her body could take. She weathered the winter well, however, and it

seemed as if nothing had ever happened.

Then April arrived.

As I was checking the poop pile one day in mid-April, Mariah came over and deposited several balls of very soft poop. Not liking what I saw, I took a sample and ran a fecal culture. The slide revealed what I thought were brown stomach worms, so I consulted the *Alpaca Field Manual* to find the recommended treatment. I began a treatment of Valbazin® as recommended by the Field Manual. Mariah's poop went back to beans and she seemed to feel better; her ears perked up and her eyes brightened. Three days after her Valbazin® treatment ended, Mariah developed explosive diarrhea. Her entire back end was covered with liquefied poop. The poor thing would sneeze and poop would squirt out. I quarantined her with another non-pregnant female until I could figure out what was



going on. The diarrhea subsided after several days, and although her poop was still soft, it was no longer liquid. While I noticed that Mariah had lost weight, I was not overly concerned. I knew that the diarrhea had been debilitating.

Now that Mariah's poop was starting to normalize from soft "cow patties" to "balls of beans" I assumed her body was taking care of itself. Still I became more concerned about her weight loss. Mariah did not gain no matter how much she ate; in fact, she was losing weight. I decided to try some homeopathic treatments rather than hit her with more meds, given that at this point her only problem seemed to be failure

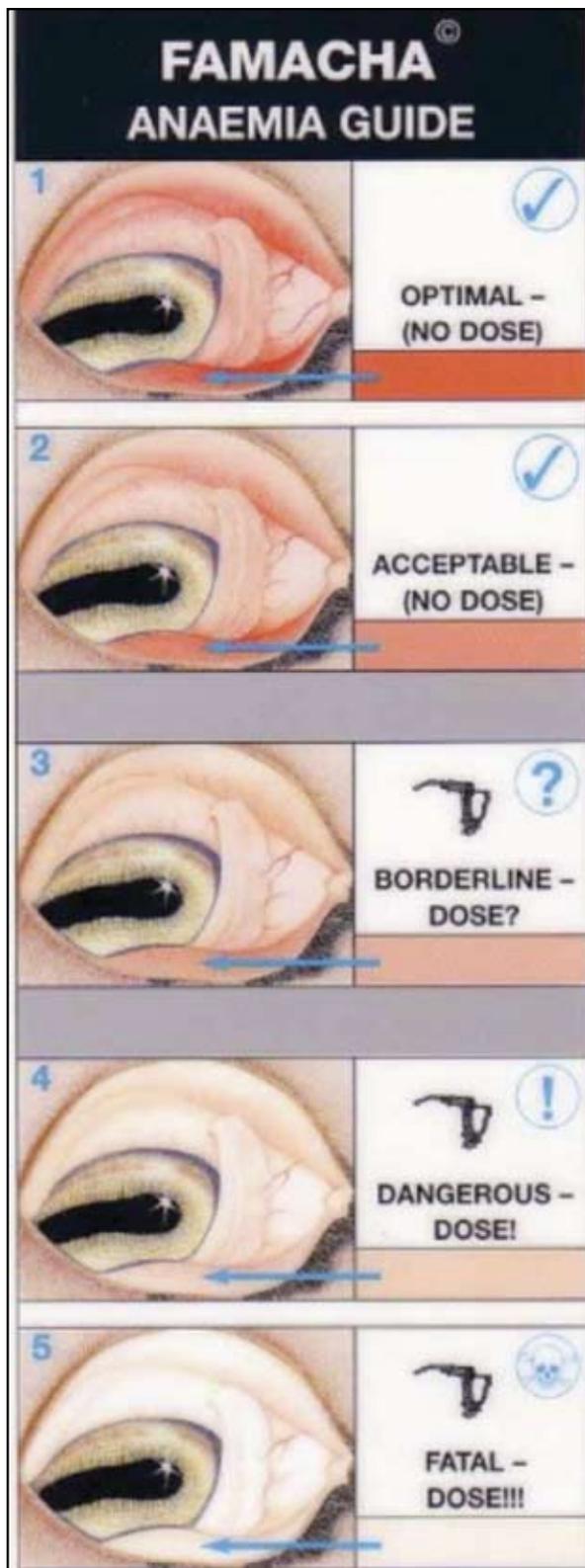
to gain weight. I tried a variety of remedies in consultation with someone trained in homeopathic regimens. I gave Mariah extra feed and alfalfa. Nothing worked. After several weeks, the diarrhea came back with a vengeance.

In mid-June, approximately two months from Mariah's first bout of diarrhea, I ran another fecal culture. This time I noticed a couple different types of eggs. I asked a friend who runs his own fecal cultures to look at my slide. I explained that I thought there were brown stomach worms and some other type on the slide. We agreed: they looked like coccidia. This was not an unjustified conclusion, as a weakened immune system could pick up just about any parasite that presents itself. I started Mariah's first round of CORID® – 5 days on, 5 off, 5 on. At the end of the 15 days, another culture showed the eggs were still there. The vet advised me that if the CORID® did not get the coccidia I should use Albon® Injectable for 5 days only. He gave me the correct dose. This helped. Mariah became more alert, her poop became more formed and her voracious appetite continued.

The vet visited occasionally to check on Mariah and to suggest meds to try. At the beginning of July, he recommended doing a blood panel because she continued to get diarrhea and to lose weight. This was the first time he mentioned anemia – the backs of Mariah's eyelids were almost white – but he did not recommend a treatment. I had never before dealt with an anemic animal. We pulled yet another fecal sample, but this time had a lab analyze it. I ran a sample on my own to see whether I was seeing the same thing. The diagnosis was strongyle. I concluded that I had not done a long enough dose of Valbazin® to destroy all the original stomach worms. The results of the blood panel showed that several of the numbers were lower than the lowest end of the normal range given in the *Alpaca Field Manual*. Mariah's RBC was 5.27. My vet told me that he did not know what else to do. He recommended that I follow the advice of another vet I had consulted. My vet did not offer anything other than that – least of all an explanation of the blood panel numbers and the meaning of Mariah's anemia-test results.

In early August, I met a friend of a friend whose alpacas had experienced problems similar to Mariah's. One problem was dirt eating. Not chewing the grass down and getting a dirty face, but seeking out specific spots around rocky areas and literally eating the dirt. One rainy night I went out to find Mariah with a mouth-

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ful of mud – she was seeking out the iron her anemic body needed to make the red cells she lacked. My friend recommended Safe-Guard® because it sounded like Mariah had *Haemonchus Contortus*. I assumed incorrectly that my friend meant Safe-Guard® paste. I did not know there was a stronger liquid form. I correctly assumed that *Haemonchus* is strongyle, but since I had never heard the terminology I assumed that it is just “plain old” strongyle, like the labs told me several times. So I followed the suggested regimen and, again, Mariah improved, but was not quite cured. I gave her Geritol® Tonic and Red Cell® to boost her iron levels to help with the anemia. Each had a good effect on her system but it was short lived. After a few days, her eyelids whitened and she started to eat dirt again.

At about this time I received my *Alpacas Magazine* with a very interesting article about Barber Pole Worm, a.k.a. *Haemonchus Contortus*. I could not believe my eyes! As soon as I read the article I realized it was about the symptoms Mariah had for four months that no vet or lab could explain to me. “*Haemonchus Contortus*,” the term my new friend used, gave me the clue. I learned about the FAMACHA chart, a 5-color chart used to determine anemia in sheep, for the first time. This turned out to be one of my best sources to check Mariah’s anemia level.

I immediately got another fecal sample from Mariah and sent it overnight to Oregon State University, one of only two labs in the country that can run a test specifically for Barber Pole Worm. They received it first thing on a Monday morning. I called to make sure they received it in good condition since I shipped it over a summer weekend. I told a very nice young woman in the lab the importance of the test and about how long Mariah had been sick. They ran the test that day and called me back to tell me that it showed Barber Pole Worm. I started to cry not only for my poor girl who had been so sick for so long, but because we finally had an answer. Mariah had Barber Pole Worm, a blood-sucking internal parasite that can cause potentially fatal anemia.

I immediately consulted with the vet who helped me through the last few months. He recommended a drug called Cydectin®. It took a few days, but I was able to order it through one of the farm catalogs. The day after I received

the Cydectin®, Mariah received her first dose. Fourteen days later, I sent another fecal sample to the lab at OSU. Some eggs remained and Mariah’s two pasture-mates had picked up Barber Pole Worm. I wasn’t surprised. I gave Mariah a second dose of Cydectin® and, not wanting to take the chance of transmitting the parasite back to her, I medicated her pasture-mates as well. Fourteen days later, I sent yet another package to OSU. By then Mariah was clear of Barber Pole Worm! Again, I cried.

Mariah still struggled with weight loss and anemia. Now that the parasite was gone and Mariah moved to an uncontaminated pasture, I focused on those problems. I sent a few more fecal samples from Mariah and our other animals to OSU to see where everyone stood. Mariah had picked up coccidia, which we treated for, and everyone else was healthy. When questioned about treating Mariah’s coccidia, I stated that it was simply a matter of keeping her as healthy as possible. I didn’t really care that she had already had rounds of meds. I cared that this parasite could take over her weakened system and cause as much harm as the Barber Pole Worm had caused. Again, Mariah rallied. The parasite was gone.

I found a new vet, someone I felt comfortable with as soon as I met her. This vet came to the farm the first time to meet Mariah and to help me with whatever I needed to do to get her back on track. I showed the vet the results from the July blood panel and told her about Mariah’s health struggles. I mentioned Mariah’s inability to gain weight no matter how much she ate, and that she still ate dirt. I told her that Mariah’s eyelids turned pink only right after her doses of Red Cell® or Geritol® Tonic, but shortly faded to a milky color. The vet told me she has seen only one other animal alive with an RBC at 5, asking how I had kept Mariah alive. I told her our story.

First thing, my new vet examined Mariah. She found her body scoring at 2-3 and still anemic – hence the dirt eating. She wanted to do another blood panel to see where Mariah stood. She expressed what I already knew: Barber Pole Worm chewed up Mariah’s gut so much that it would take a long time to heal and to absorb nutrients appropriately. I had to be patient. We decided to do the blood tests and agreed that the vet would return when the results came in.

This blood test, taken about 2 months after the first, showed a higher RBC. The

vet still was not overly happy. She came back and gave Mariah two injections – one of iron, the other, an immune booster. Afterward, Mariah was quiet and didn't eat much. I worried we had given her something she couldn't handle, but the next day she was perky and happy and eating anything she could! I was so happy to see my little girl starting to perk back up! We scheduled yet another vet visit for 30 days later to see how she was progressing. When the vet returned, I told her Mariah was feeling better, but that the weight was just not returning. She had hit a low of 110 pounds; she seemed to be "skin and bones". When we tried to draw blood, the old Mariah woke up and knocked the vet on her backside! With a smile, I reminded her that Mariah was feeling better. The vet noticed that the blood she finally drew was a much brighter red than the first sample she had taken. This test showed that Mariah's RBC was at 18! The vet and I discussed several plans and opted to give Mariah one more iron infusion and immune booster. Again, Mariah moped for the rest of the day but the next day, she was bright and eating! That day I realized she had stopped eating dirt. She hadn't had a dirty face in days.

I started putting some alfalfa pellets in Mariah's food and in her hay bin – nothing drastic – just little bits at a time. I fed her three or four times a day and she gobbled everything in her bowl. Very slowly, with a little backsliding, she started to gain some weight. The more she gained, the better she looked. I could actually see that she was feeling better. I felt pure joy when, one night in October when some of the animals started to prunk around, I saw Mariah running with them! She hadn't done that in months.

During Mariah's medical journey, I have met many remarkable people, all willing to help her in any way they could. Many have asked me why I did what I did when I did it, and all I

can say is that I did the best I could with what I knew and what was available to me at the time. I reached out to alpaca breeders all over the country. All were willing to share what they had seen and done on their farms with specific parasites; however, only one admitted to having Barber Pole Worm in her herd and was willing to talk to me about what she had done about it. I even tried asking on Facebook®, but no one responded. Unfortunately, people are afraid to admit that they have dealt with this parasite. In reality, it is everywhere. We do not know where Mariah picked it up. When she got EPE in 2009, she had not left the farm in almost a year. Our other animals had not been off the farm or at shows in almost five months. Add another five months to that, taking us to April, that no one had been off the farm, and ask where the Barber Pole Worm came from. I just don't know.

I am writing this article because I want others to know that Haemonchus Contortus, a.k.a. Barber Pole Worm, is just another parasite. It is out there, though, and it can kill your animals if you don't pay attention. I have spoken at several farms about my experience. I know my story has helped the farmers take a closer look at their problems.

What have I learned through this experience? First, trust your vet. If you are second-guessing his recommendations or if you feel he is not advancing his knowledge of alpacas to help you and others, then find another vet. Be proactive and advocate for your farm. It's never a bad thing to get a second opinion, but going to other vets for ideas, suggestions or reference should indicate that something isn't right in your relationship with your current vet. Second, take every suggestion you get from others with a grain of salt. Even though something may have worked for them, it may not work for you. Third, don't assume. NEVER assume. If you are unsure what another person is talking about,

even if it's your vet, ask for specifics. Do not ever be afraid to ask "why" or "what about", or to say you're confused and you need clarification. They may treat you like a child, but you will have the information you need. Last, something that I do constantly: practice good pasture management. Clean your poop piles as often as possible. I scoop mine at least twice a day and three times in the summer. My husband burns the piles with our flamethrower at least once every couple of weeks. If I find a problem, one of us burn them every couple of days. The weather here in Lititz, Pennsylvania may seldom get cold enough to freeze the parasites, but we sure can heat up the ground enough to fry them. If you can't clean up the pastures twice a day, then clean them as often as possible. The more proactive you are the better.

Now we are in the middle of winter. Mariah is holding her own around 125 pounds. To see her now after seeing her then, it's hard to realize she's the same animal. I do have a fear. You see, Barber Pole Worm is one of those nasty little things that can go to sleep in the host's body for the winter and wake up with a vengeance in the spring. As I count the weeks until warmer weather and longer days, I am afraid that this may come back to haunt us. So I keep my Mariah well fed and watch the poop pile to make sure that at the smallest change, OSU will get another package.



Terri Kinka is Vice President of MAPACA. She and her husband, Andy, own Golden Glen Alpacas in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Contact Terri at terri@goldenglenalpacas.com.



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ALL ALPACAS

The following article appeared in the January 16, 2011 edition of *The Patriot-News* in Harrisburg, Pa. Reprinted with permission from David Newhouse, Editor, *The Patriot-News*

Article written by: Liam Migdail-Smith

Photographs by Christine Baker, *The Patriot-News*

Editor's note Carole Fair of Hampden Twp. recently started investing in **alpaca**s. She started with Apollo 18. We'll continue to follow her story as she trains him for the Mid-Atlantic **Alpaca** Association Jubilee at the Farm Show Complex in April.

If you're going to be a champion, you need to get used to the crowds.

Carole and Don Fair of Hampden Twp. taught that to their 5-month-old **alpaca**, Apollo 18, Monday when they brought him to the Pennsylvania Farm Show to get used to the sights, sounds and smells of public life.

It was his first time off the farm. At the suggestion of an old friend, the Fairs decided to make

an investment. They bought a female **alpaca** named Brynia. By breeding her, the Fairs have a continuing supply of baby **alpaca**s -- crias -- to sell or breed. And, of course, there's the **alpaca** fleece, which Carole Fair uses to make **alpaca**-related products to sell.

Apollo is Brynia's first cria since the Fairs bought her, and he has a younger sibling on the way. With a mother who's recognized for her fleece and a father who's an eight-time livestock show champion, there's high hopes for Apollo.

The Fairs keep their **alpaca**s at Alpacaholic Acres in Adams County and travel to see them every couple weeks.

At the Farm Show, Apollo watched the people that came to look at him from a distance. He



kept close to playmate, Sterling, a slightly older and larger young **alpaca**, occasionally resting his head on his friend's back.

"I'm surprised that's he's not more excited with all the noise," Carole Fair said.

Fair said she's noticed bits of Apollo's father, Molson, coming through in the way he carries himself. Molson walks with the confidence of an eight-time champion.

"He knows he's good," said Dale Zulli, one of the owners of Alpacaholic Acres.

Apollo holds his head high, Fair said, and naturally stands in the position that will win him points with show judges -- both front legs together and even.

He's for sale now for \$10,000, but the Fairs said they're hoping

offers don't come in until they take him through the show circuit. It would be hard to say goodbye, they said.

But there's still much for him to learn. Zulli is helping him get used to wearing a halter and responding to commands. Carole Fair also is learning so she can walk Apollo through the two upcoming shows she has planned -- the Mid-Atlantic **Alpaca** Association Jubilee, at the Farm Show Complex in April, and the Pennsylvania **Alpaca** Owners and Breeders Association Breeders' Showcase, at the York Expo Center in May.

"I'm being trained and he's being trained to work together," she said.





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Front Page Statistics:

MFI Peruvian Front Page

DOB: 10/12/05

COLOR: Bay Black

ARI# 30339880

SIRE: MFI Peruvian Jericho

DAM: My Peruvian Falzah

- **Champion Halter, 2006 Northern Illinois Extravaganza**
- **Reserve Champion Halter, 2007 Southern Select**
- **1st Halter, 2006 Northern Illinois Extravaganza**
- **2nd Fleece, 2008 AOBA Nationals**
- **2nd Halter, 2007 Southern Select**



MFI Peruvian Front Page, Color Champion bay black male; eager for more cria on the ground.

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Peruvian Jericho My Peruvian Falzah

Full Peruvian MFI Front Page is the championship bay black with a distinguished line of full Peruvian genetics from these Magical Farms superstars: Peruvian Jericho; Peruvian Dakotia; Peruvian Bueno; Peruvian Don Julio; CPeruvian Silvio; and females My Peruvian Falzah; NWA, LTD Jean; 5Peruvian Dona Flavia; and PPeruvian Lizbeth.



MFI Peruvian Front Page



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The Dos and Don'ts of Tractor Safety

By Wes Parry

(All tractor operators should be trained on these best practices.)

As the snow melts and springtime returns to Pennsylvania, the farm community is apt to find itself astride a tractor. Whether it is planting, mowing, moving those last round bales, or smoothing the winter ruts out of the driveway, tractors are an integral part to most farming operations. Tractors also pose a unique risk to the farming community. Did you know tractor accidents are a leading cause of serious injury in agriculture? Not only can employees be injured, but the general public as well.

Also, there is the risk of loss not only to the tractor, but to buildings and other property. However, following common sense safety procedures can significantly reduce the risk of injury and property damage. What follows are checklists designed to address some of the most common operator and mechanical issues involved in tractor losses.

Before the tractor is started...

- Operators should dress properly and avoid flared pants, shirt tails and other loose clothing that can get caught on moving parts.
- A tractor maintenance inspection should be performed before each use (see the list of maintenance warning signs at the end of this bulletin).
- Make sure the power take off shaft (PTO) is properly shielded.
- Tractors should always be equipped with a roll-over protection structure (ROPS).
- Never alter or modify a ROPS.
- Securely fasten the seat belt.
- Keep hitches low and always on the drawbar and designated hitch points.
- Keep all tractor attachment guards and shields in place.
- Make sure SMV (Slow Moving Vehicle) emblems are properly affixed and clear of debris.
- Do not refuel inside buildings.
- Do not refuel if the tractor is still hot.
- No one is allowed to operate a tractor without proper training.
- Minors should be restricted in what tractor operations they perform – the more complex tasks should always be left to the adults to complete.
- Anyone taking medication that can affect reaction time must be prohibited from operating a tractor.

Tractor operation...

- Only start a tractor from the operator's seat – never start a tractor from the ground.

- Never allow children or adults to ride as passengers on a tractor.
- Keep bystanders a safe distance away.
- Do not operate tractors within closed buildings, with the exception of riding arenas requiring surface maintenance.
- Whenever possible avoid holes, depressions, ditches and embankments.
- When uneven ground cannot be avoided, reduce speed to lessen the chance of a side overturn.
- Keep the tractor in gear when going down hill – this allows the tractor engine to act like a brake.
- Keep off public roads whenever possible.
- Never get off a moving tractor or leave it with the engine running.
- When a tractor is stopped, always engage the brakes.

Maintenance Warning Signs...

- Low tire pressure
- Loose wheel lug nuts
- Oil or hydraulic fluid on the ground underneath the tractor
- Low fluid levels
- Frayed or worn belts
- Corroded battery terminals
- Loose bolts
- Loose or damaged seat
- Loose or damaged ROPS
- Broken or inoperable lights
- Faded or damaged SMV emblems
- Organic debris (leaves, grass) in the engine compartment

For those of us who have older tractors without ROPS protection Farm Family is a co-sponsor of the Tractor Retrofit Program for Pennsylvania Farmers. For more information on this program you can go to www.ROPSr4u.com.

If you have any questions about this article or how to best protect your property please contact Wes Parry, United Farm Family Insurance Company, Glenmont, N.Y., and American National Property And Casualty Company, Springfield, Mo., by phone at (724) 678-0239 or e-mail at wesparry@live.com.





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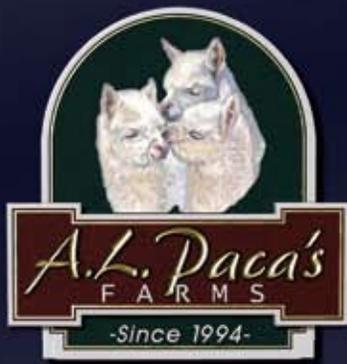


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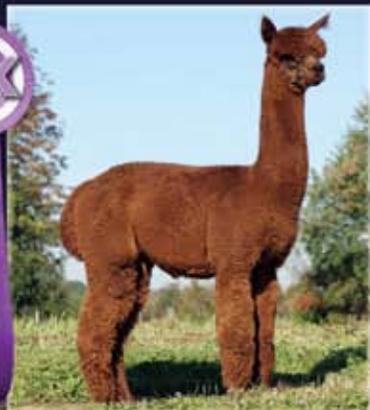
IF Santiago
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A.L. Paca's Khanquistador
co-owned w/ Meadowgate Farm Alpacas



A.L. Paca's Copper Top
co-owned w/ Take Me Home Alpacas



A.L. Paca's JD Hawk
co-owned w/ Never Ending Alpaca Farm



A.L. Paca's Jackhammer
Modern Rose Grey
co-owned w/ Hart-So-Big Alpaca Farm & Alpacas of York



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A.L. Paca's Revolution
Revolution daughter sells for \$46,000 at
2010 AOBA National Auction (high seller).



A.L. Paca's Zamboni
Co-ownership Interest Available!

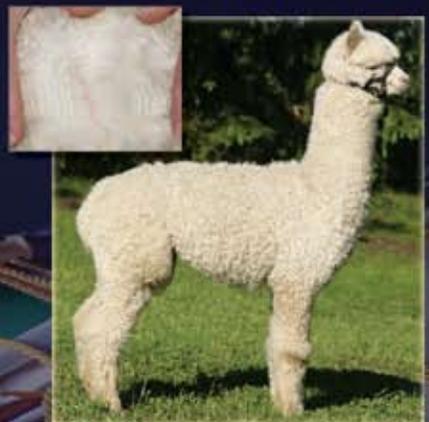


A.L. Paca's Rev it Up
Co-ownership Interest Available!

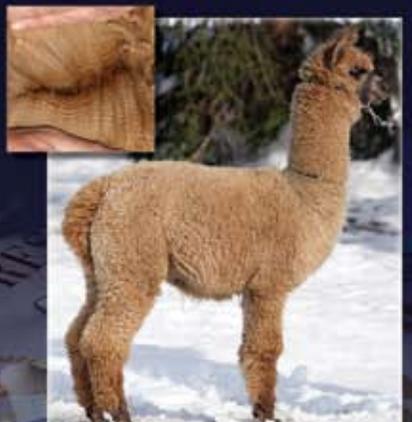


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co-owned w/ Alpacas of the Alleghenies

What Have You Learned?

We asked a few alpaca breeders a simple question:
“What have you learned during the years that you have been working with alpacas?”

Here are some responses:

I haven't met an alpaca yet who wanted a hug!
Chris Armstrong
Calico Moon Alpacas
White Hall, Maryland

What have I learned?

1. You should raise alpacas because you like them. Many people will tout other reasons, but they are misleading you in an effort to sell you something.
2. Some alpacas don't respect the dung pile.
3. Alpaca fleece can be itchy no matter what the fleece zealots say.
4. Alpaca poop is a lot less smelly than that of other livestock.
5. It is really cool when alpacas prunk.
6. Alpacas are smarter than other livestock.
7. An agitated alpaca is much less scary than an agitated bull.

8. Alpaca spit has similar longevity on the skin as skunk scent.
9. Orgling makes me giggle.
10. Alpaca spit stings the eyes.
11. Alpaca spit does not taste good.
12. Alpacas are not cuddly pets, they prefer some space.
13. Not all crias are born between 10:00AM and 2:00PM.
... to name a few ;-)

Rob Brink
Flintstone Farm Alpacas
Coopersburg, Pennsylvania

Breeding a ribboned female to a champion does not always result in a champion cria.

Kit Hower
Blankstone Farm Alpacas
Coopersburg, Pennsylvania

I've learned that female alpacas have a very liberal definition of “dung pile”, and one per pasture is really not enough. Also, once initiated, it is irrevocable.

Fay Steving
Highland Alpaca
Grove City, Pennsylvania

It's not about getting done quickly. It's about taking time with the alpacas, doing the right things, and in the end the alpaca will trust you enough that things get done and you both enjoy it more.

Kristie and Brion Smoker
Sweet Valley Suris
Annville, Pennsylvania

After 13 years, their presence in my life is a daily gift that still makes magic.

Jenny Lindsay
Highland Alpaca
Grove City, Pennsylvania

The greatest income for your alpaca fiber is not usually achieved by selling it raw. It, like many other agricultural commodities, is worth more in the manufactured state. Hire a mini-mill to make your fiber into yarn. If your yarn is then made into hats or gloves, for example, even greater income can be realized when you sell these products directly to consumers. You'll get much more per pound from consumers than selling raw fleece directly to mills. Better yet, join a farmers cooperative like the Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America (www.afcna.com). We are a member. They sort and process your fiber then sell the finished products on your behalf. All profits are then distributed to participating members. Processing tens of thousands of fiber pounds from many farms at once achieves greater economies of scale and uses less of your time than the mini-mill route. A cooperative also achieves finished product pricing power since farm members are not competing against one another. They all go as “one seller” directly to the many product consumers.

Frieda & Daryl Goodrich
Angel Wood Alpaca Farm, LLC
Hackettstown, New Jersey

PATIENCE!

Barb Hartsough
Hart-So-Big Alpaca Farm
Wellsville, Pennsylvania

My top of the head answer refers to the recent Stossel program. I have learned that there are a lot of easier ways to save on taxes than daily poop scooping! The other benefits -- the joy of spending time hanging out with alpacas -- is what makes it more than worthwhile.

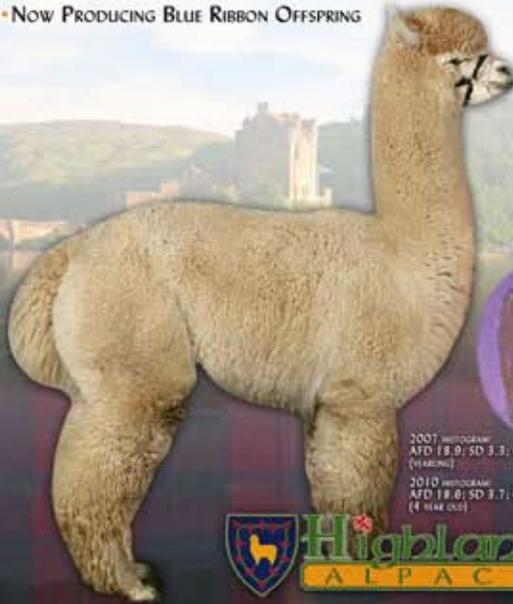
Helen Hornbake
Alpacas of Gettysburg
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania



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(HARVEST)

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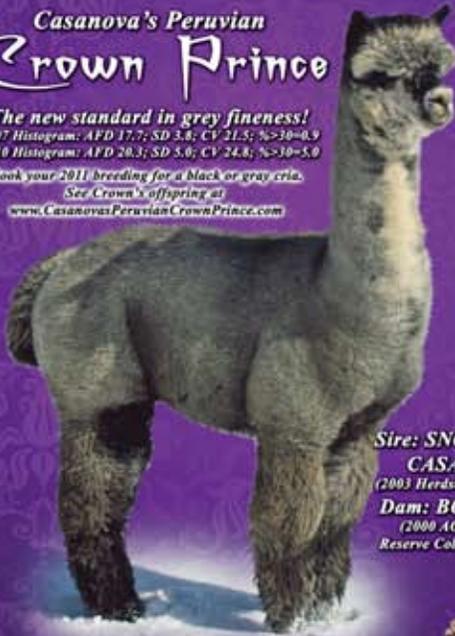
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Fay Steving/Jenny Lindsay Grove City, PA
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STANDING STUD AT:



The Five Ps of an Alpaca Purchase

By Michael Gelorme

CNBC interview. Wall Street Journal story. John Stossel's Take on Fox Business News. Martha Stewart Show. *Late Show with David Letterman*. With what appears to be the most national exposure ever for alpacas, the public interest in our industry is seemingly higher now than ever before. The growth of our national alpaca herd has finally hit mainstream America!

What do we do with this strong interest in alpacas? How can we actively increase participation in this developing industry, make the right decisions for improving our herd, and engage in the growing popularity of these wonderful animals?

BUY ALPACAS AND RIDE THE WAVE!

If only it were that easy! As we prepare for the upcoming Spring show season there will be plenty of opportunity to improve your alpaca seed stock and peruse the available alpacas ready and willing to move to your location (or agist at a location of your choice). Shows, which are a great place to see what is up and coming in the industry, have begun. Successful auctions in Las Vegas (Priority) and Phoenix (Snowmass) have brought to light the uptick in movement of the alpaca industry. The plethora of "on-line availability" of our four-legged friends is high and the email campaigns and events promoting farm visits and educational gatherings are abundant.

What are the factors that you should be aware of in making your alpaca purchase, besides just liking a particular alpaca?

I have outlined **five** basic (not exclusive) decision-making criteria to consider when making your next (or first) alpaca purchase. These specific and objective criteria are only suggestions to help quantify and qualify your expenditure of capital toward a sound business investment.

I came up with these criteria in response to numerous calls and emails asking for my input on a client's "deal" they just completed or were considering. Most transactions are genuine and forthright but some make you grab your head and ask "Why?" Remember, "the deal" is always good for the seller, for whatever reason. It is up to you (the buyer) to review your decision-making criteria and decide if it fits **your plan** and is **good for you!**

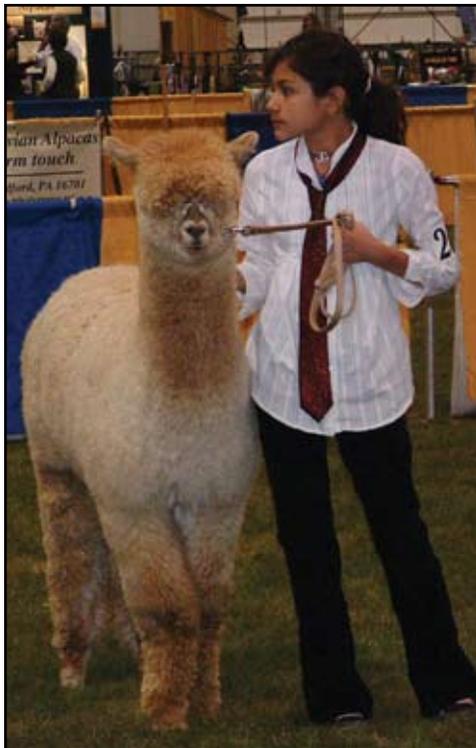
When evaluating alpacas I have learned from many of the best breeders across the

country (coupled with numerous personal mistakes) to look at the following criteria to determine how the prospective alpaca fits my plan.

1. **PEDIGREE** is a term that is often referenced and yet seldom reviewed or understood in considering an alpaca purchase. It is tough to evaluate pedigree, especially if you are a new breeder. By definition the term means: the line of ancestors of an individual animal, especially a purebred animal. Genotype (the genetic makeup of an alpaca as opposed to its physical characteristics) tells the ancestral story of your targeted alpaca. This lineage leads you to believe that there is a higher propensity of repeating whatever characteristic you are intending to repeat based on the genetic makeup of the animal. Good genetic makeup provides a sound building block for future generations. Allow the seller to elaborate on the pedigree of your targeted animal. Use this information, and acquired knowledge, toward your goal of genetically enhancing your herd. Ask and read about pedigree and what genetics you are intending to market and promote. There

is nothing more basic than this! Who and where the alpaca comes from is usually the first question from an informed buyer. The Alpaca Registry identifies all alpacas by a number. From this number, and associated certification, all alpacas can be traced back to their original imports. Ask the seller to provide this number, copy of certification, and the sourced registry information of ancestors that have fallen off of the certification, in order to review the entire background of ancestors of your targeted animal. By doing this you will engage the seller in a conversation and build on your own knowledge base. In dealing with genetics hope is not a strategy; the past is a very good indicator of the future!

2. **PROMOTION** I am referring to **promotion** as show participation and result for the alpaca. In and of themselves, shows tell you little when developing your marketing plan. Rather, they help to build your story for the alpaca as a prospective buyer and eventually, a future seller. A show placement refers to the arbitrary judgment of an alpaca amongst its peers at that particular time, at that particular show or marketing event. This is a good



Nia Gelorme showing Mercucio in Halter Class at MAPACA Jubilee 2010, one of the largest alpaca shows in the United States.

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way to gain particular “hands-on” knowledge of what a trained industry judge has to say about your targeted animal. It is a “point in time” evaluation of that animal, based on phenotype (how it looks and feels), as it is compared to other alpacas of the same age, sex and color. Promotion evaluation (show) is a tremendous asset to the buyer and seller when telling the story of the animal. This can be part of the attraction for a particular alpaca by creating a distinction above other alpacas in the same sex, color, and/or age category. There is a list of criteria outlining the size of the event or show that your targeted animal participated in on the Alpaca Owners and Breeder’s Association (AOBA) website (if it is an AOBA certified event). A Level V show is bigger than a Level II show and more than likely had more animals competing in the same class as your targeted animal. Use the AOBA database resource to determine how many alpacas were in the class in which your animal competed.

Shows are a tremendous source of marketing and momentum for a winning animal. Use this information to help determine if your targeted alpaca fits your plan. There are many free on-line tools available to check show placement in addition to our own AOBA database. There are plenty of blue ribbon-winning alpacas that have never procreated. This is only a piece of the puzzle; however, it is a very visible piece.

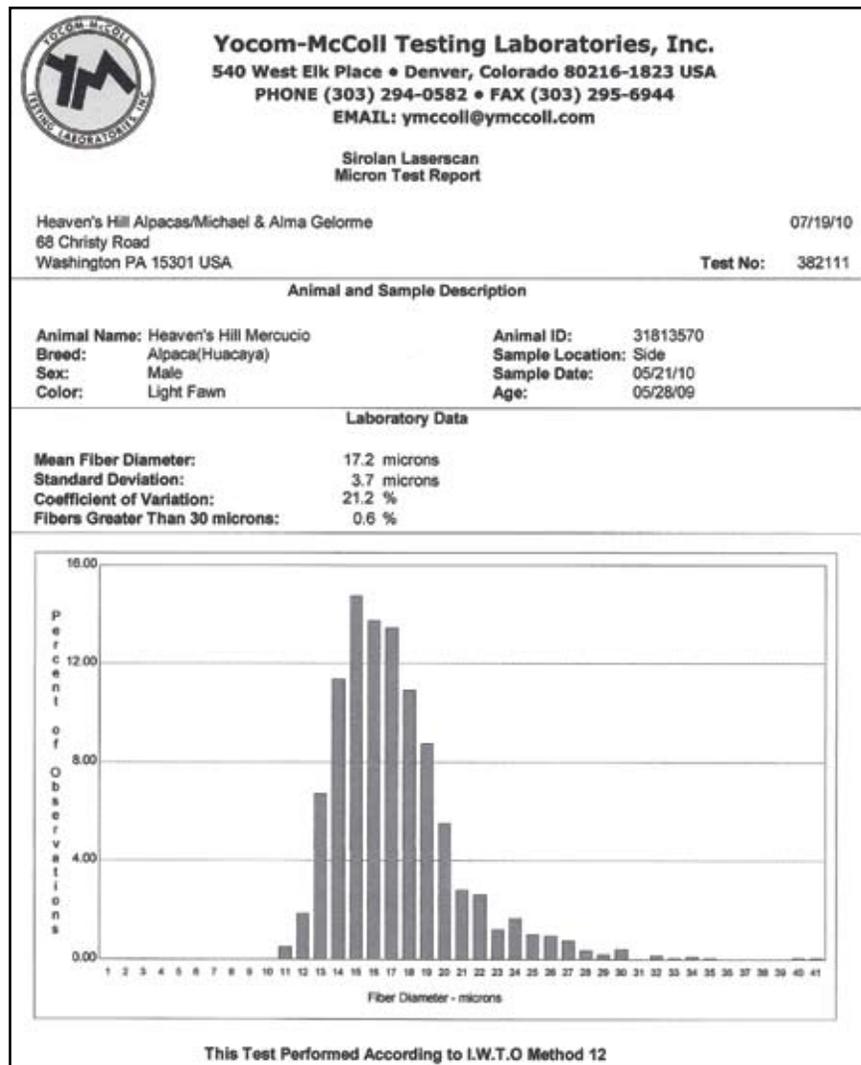
3. **PRODUCT** refers to the fleece, which is the product of the industry and reason why we are breeding alpacas in the first place. Quality and quantity of fleece are perhaps the most objective criteria to be used in assessment. There is actual data, from specific tests, measuring the physical characteristics of the fibers in the prime fleece that should be reviewed when considering a particular alpaca for purchase. These tests do not contain fiber length measurements and they do not refer to the “style” of the fleece, necessarily, but refer to the actual measurable attributes of the fiber or skin itself.

The most common test is a Histogram. Among other things, this test measures the micron density (average) of the fibers that

make up the prime coat. The deviation between the secondary and primary fibers (referred to as that Standard Deviation and Coefficient Variation) is another standard of measure that can affect the handle and processing of the fleece. There is a measure for fibers that are excessive in width (over 30u) that affect the comfort factor of the fleece itself. There are laboratories that measure these physical attributes of the fleece and more importantly how they have increased or changed over the different shearing periods (from year to year). As we move toward increasing the herd in North America, doesn’t it make sense that we should focus on the objective criteria that promotes better fleece and more of it?

The other test is a follicular skin biopsy test. This more invasive test also promotes additional data utilized in determining propensity for success to improve the fleece in our national herd. There are many articles written about each test. One central source of that information is The Alpaca Registry. There are also many sources outlining style of fleece and what uses it best fits. The point is that *all* fleece is a viable product! Ask the seller to describe the attributes of their animal’s fleece characteristics and why they are important.

4. **PRODUCTION** is the most overlooked attribute of any livestock. Particularly in this our industry’s infancy stage, ease of procreation is essential. The first three points here are meaningless if this piece in your decision-making criteria is overlooked. I am referring to conception, delivery, and the ability to promote a thriving offspring. Most contracts cover “live birth” guarantees for a measured length of time. I have not seen a contract that covers low milk production in a breeding female, too many teats born to an offspring or difficult delivery and veterinary care required for a gestating/ lactating female or cria. History is usually the best predictor of the future. Ask the seller for known history on the genetic line and production results. Ask to review the medical and sustenance regimen associated with your targeted alpaca. Review contractual guarantees



Histogram of one of Heaven Hill’s alpacas, Mercucio.

and procedures for resolution if a challenge should develop in the reproduction capability of your potential investment. Reputable breeders have a vested interest in a positive experience for the buyer and animal alike.

5. **PROGENY**, as with every livestock industry, is our biggest asset in visual and practical decision making. What has happened in the past is the best predictor of the future! The production out of either a male or female takes the guesswork out of expectation and makes those breeding decisions tangible. Though probability of success in breeding is increased with visual evidence of the outcome, guaranteed outcomes from repeated unions are never certain. Once the “Golden Years of Youth” are past, the best indication of the “going concern” of your investment is their offspring. In males and females whose fleece and phenotype (physical characteristics) are not at their peak, this “criteria” (offspring) in your decision-making is perhaps the most powerful and specific. Besides increasing your probability for improvement in future offspring, based on the outcomes of the past, the value of the data evaluated, from a particular union, can help you forge your own decisions. Contained within the Registry is the opportunity to capture that data and outcome as it pertains to production (birth weight, time of delivery, sex, weaning weight, etc). Success in the market place (show circuit) of the offspring is possibly the most telling. Pay attention to Produce of Dam and Get of Sire classes when available at shows. These are perhaps the most significant factors in determining the likelihood of success from a particular union.

There are plenty of deals in any industry. Your primary con-

cern is what is important to you. There is a distinct value, both intrinsic and realized, in aligning yourself with leaders in the industry as mentors and guides to better decision-making. There is also a definite advantage in consorting with like-minded people who are interested in moving the industry forward and building on the attributes of our product. Finances, shared resources, marketing expenses, operating expenses, and breeding stock are all topics (along with many others) that should be considered in making your alpaca purchase.

Using these five basic Ps in decision-making: Pedigree, Product, Promotion, Production and Progeny, it is possible for a small breeder to thrive in the industry with just a few pertinent questions in hand and the ability to evaluate objective criteria as a guide to better decision making.

I wish I would have known this when I started!

Michael, Alma and their young daughters own and operate Heaven's Hill Alpacas located just outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A full time breeder focused on huacayas of color, their herd of 50+ alpacas is over 6 years in the making with genetics from all over the country. With a tag line of "Breeding for Comfort in Color" and the home to 4 Peruvian Legacy's ONLY Full Peruvian Black Male Offspring in the world - "Sixtus", they welcome frequent inquiry and provide feedback, support and service for responsible herd development.



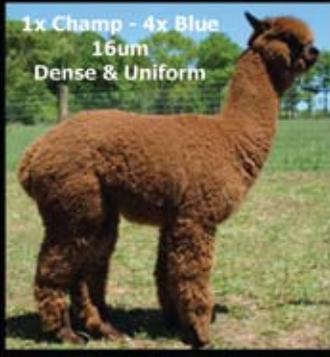


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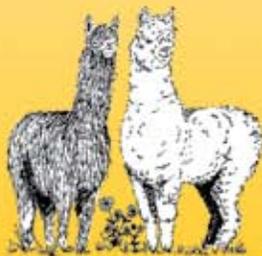
MABA Alpaca Celebration!

November 12 & 13, 2011

MABA's 3rd installment of our highly acclaimed **Level III Halter Show** will once again be held at the *Carroll County Agricultural Center* in Westminster, Maryland! Stay tuned to our web site for complete details including Halter and Spin-Off registration, rules, deadlines, and everything else you'll need to know!

- Jackie Mathiason, *Show Committee Chairperson*
- Jess & Chris Armstrong, *Event Managers*
- Sue Ives, *Superintendent*

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2nd International Conference on Camelid Genetics and Reproductive Biotechnologies (ICCGRB)

Shauna R Brummet, PhD
Chief Scientist, Alpaca Registry, Inc.
www.camelidconference.com

The most important conference that you should attend this year is coming up September 16–18, 2011 in Houston, Texas. Organized by the Alpaca Registry, Inc. and the Alpaca Research Foundation, the ICCGRB promises to be an exciting and informative event.

Many of the sessions (plenary as well as researcher and breeder breakouts) will focus on the genetic studies of camelids and others will focus on reproductive biotechnologies usage in camelids. So many interesting topics that directly impact the breeding of camelids for traits of economic value to their owners!

Geneticists and reproductive scientists from around the world including the Middle East, Australia, South America and the United States who study all camelid species will convene in Houston to exchange information on the latest developments in their fields. The conference is open to camelid owners and breeders, veterinarians, scientists and all those interested in genetic improvement. Registration will be limited to 200 on a first come first served basis – go to www.camelidconference.com and register today!

Are you interested in understanding more about the **genetics of color**? Do you wonder why those two dark brown alpacas of yours produced a white cria? Do you want to know how those two fawn alpacas produced that gorgeous black cria?

Dr. Carlo Renieri, University of Camerino, Italy will present a plenary lecture on the genetic basis of black and brown colors in our alpacas. Dr. Phil Sponenberg, in a breeder breakout session, will give us the benefit of his years of observing alpaca colors and comparing the genetics to that known in horses and dogs. We'll also get to hear Dr. Kylie Munyard share her thoughts on molecular genetic aspects of pigmentation in mammals, one of the research foci in her laboratory at Curtin University in Australia.

All of you Suri breeders – are you interested in the latest scientific research on **the genetics of Suri phenotype**?

Dr. Belinda Appleton of Australia will deliver a plenary lecture on her research on this topic and Dr. Andy Merriwether will speak on the subject in a breeder breakout session.

Want to understand more about **Estimated Progeny Differences (EPD)** and how to use the tool in your own breeding program to deliver crias that exemplify the traits you most value?

Then come hear Dr. Mark Enns of Colorado State University and Dr. Shauna Brummet, ARI's Chief Scientist, fill you in on the industry-wide Alpaca Registry EPD program. We'll discuss how EPD are calculated and what the results mean and how you can use them to drive your breeding program in the direction you want it to go.

Many breeders and veterinarians share concerns regarding **congeni-**

tal defects in camelid species. We will benefit from the many years of research and field work by the inestimable Dr. LaRue Johnson when he provides insights, observations and future directions in a breeder breakout session.

Do you wonder if **BVDV** is still of concern to camelid owners? (In a word, YES!) Dr. John Neill from the USDA Animal Research Service will discuss his work on Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus (BVDV) to help us understand more about its function in persistently infected (PI) crias. This devastating disease is still with us. Learn more about how USDA scientists are helping us to understand and deal with this issue.

Do you just wonder how all of this **genetics and genomics** stuff is done and what it means overall to us as breeders of camelids?

We'll hear from Dr. Warren Johnson and his colleagues Drs. Polina Perelman and Joan Pontius, all three genomics researchers at the National Institutes of Health's Laboratory of Genomic Diversity discuss work being done worldwide to sequence and map the camelid genome and compare it to other mammalian (including human!) genomes. A treasure trove awaits researchers in camelid genetics as the data becomes more available to allow them to tap into work done in other species.

Dr. Terje Raudsepp, a cytogenetics specialist from Texas A&M University, will describe how physical mapping of the camelid genome is being done and how that physical map relates to the genetic sequence data being generated at other universities and research centers.

We're bringing Dr. Juan Carlos Marin from Chile to discuss his work on recreating population history and genetic purity of South American camelids. This should be really interesting to hear how he is studying the four South American camelid species and their interbreeding over the centuries.

Everything described above is just the genetics aspect of this conference! We also have convened a group of researchers, veterinarians, and experts from other livestock species and alpaca breeders to present their work and discuss a variety of topics related to **reproductive biotechnologies**. What do these technologies mean to the worldwide camelid industry and specifically to the alpaca industry? These are questions that are important to producers of camelids in the old and new worlds. ARI's 2004 mid-winter conference focused on this topic. More than seven years later there is much new information to share and discuss.

Some of the camelid world's most distinguished scientists are coming to Houston to share their research and experiences with the ICCGRB. There will be a number of talks by renowned researchers in these technologies to share how they work, what they can accomplish

and in what ways they are best deployed.

Dr. Ahmed Tibary, well-known camelid reproductive specialist from Washington State University, will discuss in plenary session the state of the art techniques involved with **in vitro production of dromedary camel embryos**. Then, we'll learn from Dr. Lulu Skidmore, Technical Director of the Camel Reproduction Centre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, about her work in achieving successful **artificial insemination in dromedary camels**.

Here in the US we tend to think of embryo transfer (ET) as a new technology, but it has been studied and used in the dromedary camels for many years. We are fortunate to have Dr. Abdelhaq Anouassi, Director of Veterinary Research Center AL hejen Infertility and Artificial Breeding Program, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates to present his research center's experiences in **large-scale commercial ET in dromedary camels** over the past twenty years.

Reproductive biotechnologies are utilized in South American camelid species as well. Coming to Houston from the Institute for Research and Technology in Animal Breeding, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina is Dr. Marcelo Miragaya to share his team's experiences in **the in vitro production of embryos in South American camelids**. Also, coming to the conference from Peru is well known veterinarian, researcher and alpaca judge, Dr. Julio Sumar, University of San Marcos, Lima, Peru to provide insights on success factors in a large scale alpaca ET program.

From north of the border we are pleased to have Dr. Gregg Adams, Professor of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences from University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada to deliver a plenary lecture on a very exciting discovery made in his laboratory. Made more exciting by the fact that the work was partially supported by funds from the Alpaca Research Foundation, we'll learn more about the mechanisms of ovulation in camelids and a protein that he discovered called **ovulation inducing factor (OIF)**.

There is much more on reproductive biotechnologies! In breeder breakout sessions we'll have several presentations that are "must hear" for any alpaca breeder.

From Drs. Tibary and Sumar there will be discussions on the **advantages, disadvantages and practical considerations in the use of ET and artificial reproduction** in camelid species. Dr. Jane Vaughn from Australia will share her experiences as a veterinary service provider of AR. Also from Australia we'll hear from alpaca breeder Mr. Robert Gane on his farm's use of ET in their breeding program – the good and the bad. Dr. Peter Nagy, farm manager EIMCP, United Arab Emirates, will discuss the use of serum progesterone determination for synchronization protocols in camelid breeding programs.

We'll also hear from Dr. Mike Bishop, cattle rancher, researcher and co-founder of bovine genetics company Infigen, Inc., who will provide **industry perspective on the development and implementation of artificial reproduction technologies in the cattle industry**.

In other breakout sessions researchers will have the opportunity to discuss such topics as how major **rearrangements of chromosomes** during sperm and egg formation can result in infertility from Dr. Michelle Kutzler of Oregon State University. Dr. Abdelmalek Sghiri will discuss the **effects of nutrition on ovarian functions** and Dr. Marcelo Ratto, University of Saskatchewan, will discuss current research work in **super ovulation of camelid females**. Dr. Peter Nagy, UAE, will provide research insights into the **use of AR in improving milk production** in old world camels.

This ICCGRB follows the highly successful first International Workshop on Camelid Genetics held in February 22-24, 2008 in Scottsdale,

AZ. That meeting brought together a group of researchers and veterinarians focused on the genetic and genomic study of camelids. The results were new scientific collaborations and a greater understanding among researchers of basic research tools needed.

This ICCGRB is an opportunity for all alpaca breeders to come together and learn more about alpaca genetics as well as reproductive technologies that are used in many livestock species. State of the art plenary lectures targeted at all attendees will be delivered in morning sessions. The afternoons will be devoted to concurrent breeder and researcher break-out sessions. Breeder break-out sessions are designed to give all breeders the opportunity to ask any questions about genetics or reproduction in alpacas. We will also have poster sessions where attendees can speak personally with the presenters about their research projects.

On behalf of the organizing committee, the Alpaca Registry, Inc. and the Alpaca Research Foundation we invite every alpaca owner or breeder to attend this meeting. We are certain you will have an outstanding weekend of learning and camaraderie among friends, old and new. Please visit www.camelidconference.com for registration and conference details.

Organizing committee:

- Shauna R Brummet, PhD
- Patricia Craven, PhD
- Warren Johnson, PhD
- Alan (Abe) Rosenbloom, MD
- Ahmed Tibary, DVM, PhD
- Darby Vannier, MBA





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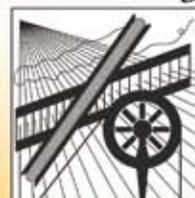
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Promotional Consideration for the Fiber Enthusiast's Prize thanks to The Mannings Handweaving School and Supply Center. Please visit them at www.the-mannings.com.



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These top two prizes will be given away at the Jubilee on Saturday evening at the Fashion Show event. There are even more awesome prizes that have started to and will continue to be drawn each week leading right up to check-in day. They include: 1) Dinner for four with Norm Evans on Friday night of the 2011 Jubilee; 2) Dinner for four with Marty McGee-Bennett on Friday night of the 2011 Jubilee; 3) An Emerald Sponsorship at the 2011 Jubilee (already drawn); 4) A Lifetime MAPACA membership; 5) One free full-page color ad in the 2011 Jubilee newsletter (already drawn); 6) One free animal stall at the 2011 Jubilee; 7) One Year MAPACA membership; and 8) Three free halter show entries drawn separately. Thank you in advance for participating by buying your tickets. Raffle proceeds will go to fund a new MAPACA Youth Grant Program. Good luck!

Go to www.mapaca.org for more information and to buy tickets!



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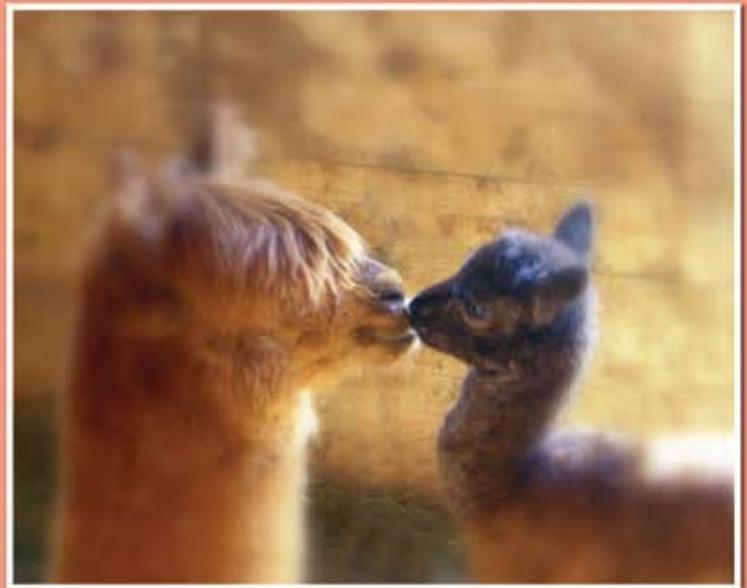


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Golden Glen Alpacas*

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Boy, Oh Boy!

Prince Ali Ababwa

After three beautiful girls, we were ready for our foundation female, Blankstone's Desiree, to show us what a little boy would be like. What a fine future herdsire she and sire, AW Magic, have produced! Prince Ali Ababwa was born on September 29, 2010 and from what we see and the comments he has received, we think he is a special cria. Take a look at his perfect conformation and already dense popcom fleece. We are eager to see how he does in the show ring this year.

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Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Kim Conrad, Treasurer, MAPACA

Cash Accounts status (rounded to nearest dollar) as of 2/25/2011:

Checking: \$12,692.00

Money Market (savings): \$178,779.00

PayPal: \$79,058.00

Cash continues to come in for Jubilee registrations and memberships right now. We are also starting to see some Jubilee expenses going out, the largest of which include deposits on stall panels, sod and show management fees. Other smaller items that add up quickly include expenses for marketing and advertising mostly, and administrative items such as printing and supplies. As we approach the show dates, the show expenses will become more significant. Be assured that we as your elected board are being very watchful of the Jubilee budget and are doing our best to ensure that the show is not a draw on our association but ultimately provides funds to it so that we can continue to use those dollars toward achieving our mission for our members. Outside of the show, other expenses include

those to hold membership meetings. Because we had to cancel the February membership meeting at the last minute due to weather conditions, expenses for that meeting will be lower than planned.

We are in the midst of reviewing the 2010 books, making year-end adjustments and preparing for 2010 tax returns. Therefore, we will have full 2010 statements for the membership at the member meeting during the Jubilee in April. Until then, if any member has questions, please feel free to contact me, and I will do my best to answer.



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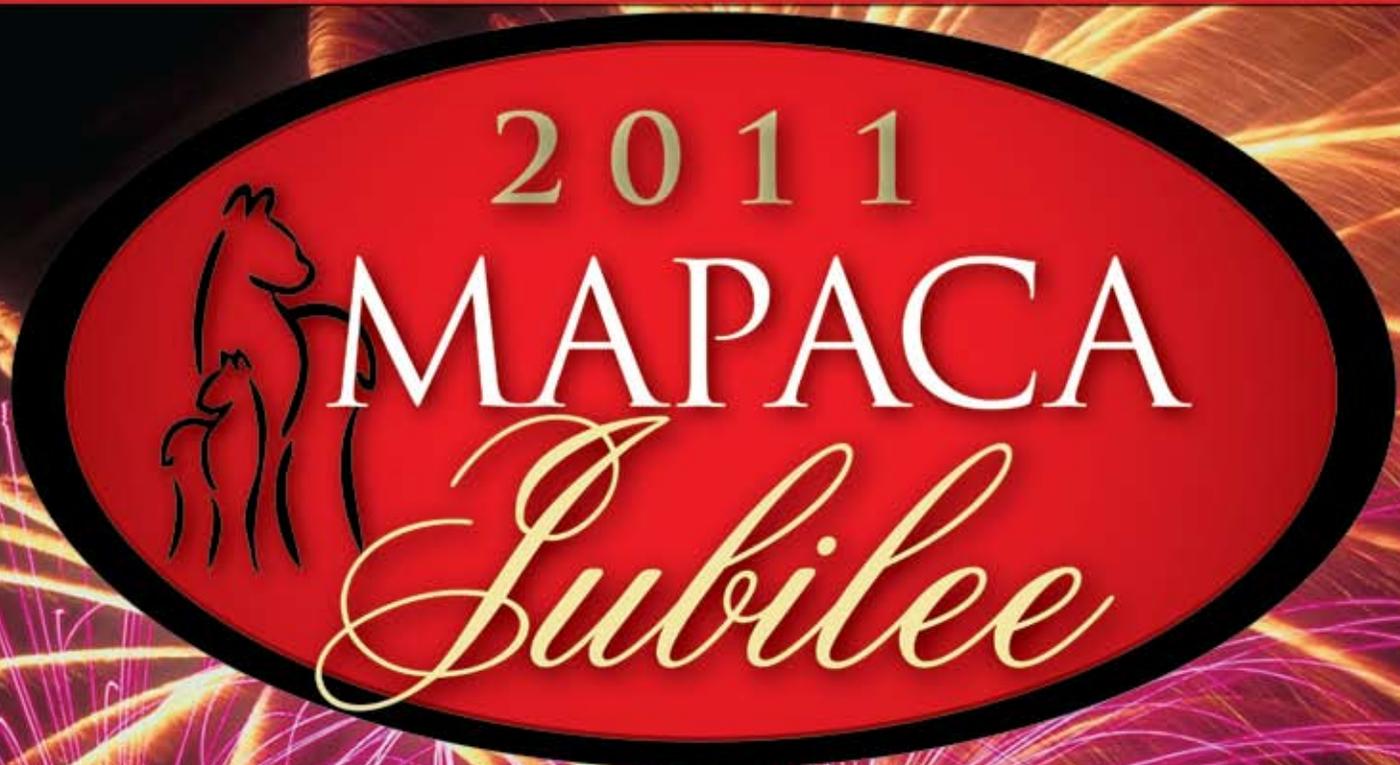
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