



'Paca Parade

March 2009

Alpaca Breeders of the Rockies

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Hello-ABR!

It's been a busy first three months: the new quarterly meeting format, two great educational seminars under our belt and your Board of Directors is working on the ABR strategy that will soon be out for your review. While the outlook for ABR is very good, the economy is in a recession and the BOD is taking measures to protect the organization. The BOD has closely reviewed the budget for 2009 and we've made some decisions on cutting back in certain areas and will continue this trend through the year in the face of the economy and lower revenue projections.

Some of the changes include:

- Canceling the Dr. Van Saun seminar
- Adding Fecal Testing Clinic – helping our members learn to do things at their farm to lessen their costs (Thank you Education Committee).
- Changes in Quarterly Meetings – NO BREAKFAST – just coffee and tea (But feel free to bring your own snacks to get you to lunch!)
- Canceling Fiber Art Workshops Tightening our belts with the Show budgets
- Cancel Volunteer Appreciation Party (we're working on other ways to recognize our great volunteers)

This is just a partial list of things we're doing to safeguard the organization's financial health. Some of these changes may become permanent, some are temporary. But we can expect these changes to stay through the year.

But it's not all bad. There's committees working on developing a standards for our ABR Product Booths, we have several projects in the works dedicated to fiber (based on our Round Table meetings), and we have one of the biggest alpaca shows in the country ready to roll in just a few short weeks – Great Western Alpaca Show.

While this is a tough year for all of us, we are a livestock industry. Regardless of some of the hiccups occurring at the National level, ABR is a solid organization. We will work together, use this time to build a base for the future and come out the other side stronger for what we've accomplished.

I won't be able to be there for our next Quarterly Meeting but I know I leave you in good hands with our Vice President, Becky Zierer. But I'll see you at GWAS!

Till next time... *Kim*



Kim Sawyer President of Alpaca Breeders of the Rockies

Membership

- **2009 membership directories will be available at the next ABR meeting, April 26, 2009**
- **Farm Members 247**
- **Associate Members 9**
- **Business Members 12**



Contributed by
Diana Smith
of Clearview Alpacas & Paco-
Vicuña

Yocom-McColl Tour and Seminar

We have been in the alpaca business for 11 years and have never been to Yocom-McColl's Testing Laboratories, Inc. The tour was absolutely wonderful, we learned about all the different types of wool and fibers, and how they were handled at the lab for testing. Why they test for the many different things and the final outcome to us, the breeders, was great. If you have never been to their lab you really need to stop by for a visit and tour. It helps you to better understand how your fiber samples are handled from the time they arrive until the histogram report is done and sent to you

the breeder.

The next day was the seminar presentation by Angus McColl, and having been at the lab the day before made it easier for us to understand about the process and the different machines they use. The presentation was very straight forward, and questions were answered to everyone's satisfaction. You could tell that Angus really enjoyed working with the different values of the wool and fibers. Since we are actually in the fiber business, and the fiber being produced by our animals is becoming more and more important - everyone needs to know why and how

their fiber is tested.

We learned why it is so important to get your fiber sample cut as close to the base as possible. We will never cut our samples with a pair of scissors again, now that we know how the sample is handled in the lab. We feel absolutely confident about our histogram reports now because there are no questions about how they do the testing, and how our fiber is handled. Everyone should make it a point to tour the laboratory and expand their knowledge of what fiber testing is all about.

“The alpaca awareness level was definitely elevated in Denver during January this year.”

Contributed by Jody Sharp
of Arazzmatazz Alpacas

Thousands of people met alpacas up close and personal at the Stock show this year. As the public streamed by our 72 pens containing over 290 alpacas, many people got to put their hands on our marvelous alpacas for the first time. It was so fun to see that look of awe on their faces! We answered their questions and handed out information. During the public “Meet the Llama and Alpaca” session, we took a large group of alpacas into the ring and the public came in with us to touch them and ask more questions.

The Alpaca Performance and Halter Shows at the Stock Show were well attended by the public. The announcers educated the public about alpacas during the Halter Show. We were well represented by our alpaca youth in the Performance Show and it was the talk of the town. The alpaca awareness

level was definitely elevated in Denver during January this year.

It all started when ABR was invited by officials at National Western to present a demonstration of an alpaca show during the Stock Show. A group of ABR members got together and formulated a plan for a small show. We were given a limited number of stalls and had to have a way to limit the numbers of alpacas in the show, while still giving a good representation of both Suri and Alpacas of every color. It was decided to have yearlings only in this show. The rest is history. ABR members volunteered as always. Judges were selected and alpaca breeders began to register for the show.

Oh yeah – there were a few other bonuses for attending. Winners were awarded cash premiums. We

actually got money for winning! Since we were sharing space with the llama breeders, we got to meet lots of beautiful llamas and their owners. Friendships were formed and we all gained a new appreciation for each others animals. The National Western Stock Show was very pleased to have us join them. We've been invited back for next year. What a great experience!



Fiber Resource Directory Update



The 2008/2009 Fiber Resource Directory has been printed and will be distributed to ABR Farm Members at GWAS and at the April member meeting. Please be sure to grab your new pages. The final print copy, due out in 2010, is in the works. You should have received an email asking about your desire to be included and the opportunity to advertise.

For additional information, to make sure your farm or business is included, or to place an ad, contact Linnea Laurila at linnea@alpenglowlpacas.com.

The Fiber Committee is working on putting the Resource Directory online ~ stay tuned!

Education Now Offering Sponsorships of clinics

“The March neonatal clinic was a huge success and filled to capacity with a waiting list! The next neonatal clinic will be held at CSU on October 3rd.

Sponsorships are available for the June fecal clinic and the October neonatal clinic! Are you looking for a unique opportunity to advertise your farm? This could be that opportunity and we are limiting the sponsorship to 3 per clinic. The cost for sponsorship is \$300.00 and this is what you will get:

- Your Banner/Sign displayed in a prominent location
- Verbal recognition given at event
- Your name, contact information, logo and a brief description of your product or services included in email blasts for registration and follow up emails to participants (min of 3 email blasts sent to all ABR

members and to Rocky Mountain Llama & Alpaca Association (RMLA))

Your flier, brochure, business card and promotional material given to all participants

Contact Patty Jensen, dreamcatcheralpacas@yahoo.com for details and to sign up!

Estes Park Wool Market AOBA Fleece Show

June 10-12, 2009

Features demonstrations, contests, children's tent, exhibits and the sale of fiber animals and products from their wool. Now in its 19th year the market draws 10,000 spectators.

It's time to start planning and preparing. Fleece shorn May 25, 2008 or later are eligible. Our judge is Sara Jane MacLennan. The Show will be held in the Estes Park High School. Fleece check-in is Tuesday, June 9th, noon to 4:00 pm and fleece pick-up is Friday, June 12th from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. For more information and/or the Wool Market registration forms, please visit Estes Park's website at

www.estesparkcvb.com/events.cfm or call or e-mail Jane Meyer at 303-652-1419, jam3mr@aol.com. I will have registration forms available at the next ABR meeting on April 26, 2009. Please plan to enter fleece and help make this one of the most successful shows in the Western United States.

Contributed by Jane Myer of Three Meadows Ranch

ARI Update

ARI started off 2009 with a good first quarter and with fiscal responsibility on the part of our staff is well on track for a balanced 2009 budget. Two areas of interest that we are working on: (1) an EPD data-collection project that will enable breeders to enter and track their own herd data (2) investigating the possibility of uploading identification photos into the AIMS system. One of the challenges with such photos is keeping them from being "marketing" photos, and a policy change has been enacted that will exclude ranch identification, ribbons, show banners, etc. In

other words, when and if the photos are allowed, the photo will be simply of the alpaca...but won't it be great to look at actual photos of the parents, progeny and eventually whole family trees...!

As some of you know, my term is ending for the ARI Board in June. In view of other things transpiring in our industry, I would like to state publicly that the ARI Board has been a most delightful group of breeders with whom to be associated. The Board has stayed focused on the mission of providing the industry

with the best possible DNA-Parentage verified database while efficiently supporting our customers: all breeders who own an ARI-registered alpaca. I chose not to seek re-election for very personal reasons definitely not associated with my ARI fellow board members, all of whom I am proud to call friends. With an excellent Executive Director in Darby Vannier and those still seated on the BOD, plus a good field of candidates for the election, in my opinion your registry organization is in very good hands.

Lucy Farrar, ARI Secretary

“Two areas of interest that ARI is working on; EPD data collection and identification photos”

Contributed by Lucy Farr of
Front Range Alpacas, LLC
ARI Secretary

Alpaca Fiber Symposium

March 15, 2007 North Carolina State University College of Textiles had a forum called, "Fiber to Fabric." About 50 or 60 participants' breeders and owners gathered to listen to several address and went on a tour of the College of Textiles' fiber milling equipment, weaving looms and textile design room. We then went on a tour of the College of Textiles' fiber milling equipment, weaving looms and textile design room. We then had a brainstorming session wherein several material things came out of that forum.

One idea was to start thinking outside the box in terms of use for our fiber. Another practical result was integrating alpaca on the College's data base for manufacturers and suppliers of raw material. But, for me, the main thing that came out of that gathering was the idea of a possibility, a hope, a future. There was a real possibility that use of our product by major industry was a real possibility.

I had been told that there were not enough alpacas to supply and support a major industrial initiative. Well it seems that the

increase of alpacas was and is becoming exponential. The signs were developing for a rather large and not so gradual increase in available animals. We need to expand the way that alpacas can be made commercially viable. We need an outlet for selling our alpacas. We need to make it financially attractive for the existence of alpaca fleece herds. To do that, we need to have a large market for our fiber; an industry. That is what this symposium is about.

To market our product fiber, we need to be able to describe it

in technical terms that the textile and fiber sectors of industry are using. That means testing our fiber for all the properties that it possesses, technical needs of the processors. To help us on our way to solving this problem, the Steering Committee of The Alpaca Fiber Symposium, has arranged numerous speakers to address these issues followed by brainstorming sessions.

Further information can be found at www.alpacafibersymposium.com or contact Jillian Ramsay Stern of Ramsay's Alpacas at: 724-833-4572
ramsaysala-pacas@zoominternet.net.

Jillian Ramsay's full article was featured in this month's "Show & Tell"



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Marketing Your Alpacas at an Alpaca Event

The marketing plan for any alpaca breeder should consist of an integrated communication strategy that includes advertising, public relations, direct mail, marketing events and alpaca trade shows. This integrated marketing plan, as it has come to be known, operates on mainly the two-dimensional plane using consistent messages and imagery. The alpaca trade show exhibit is the three dimensional vehicle for the marketing plan as attendees can view all three dimensions of either your alpacas or your products.

Why exhibit at an alpaca event?

The alpaca event will most often provide the following:

- a. the best opportunity to view your alpacas/products. (Everyone wants to touch them.)
- b. an opportunity to meet you and your opportunity to invite them to your farm/ranch.
- c. the opportunity to meet your objectives whether they are:
 - generating prospect leads
 - an opportunity to invite attendees to your farm/ranch or even make a sale
 - introduce your newest alpaca/product.
 - promote awareness of your farm/ranch/products.
- d. the most cost effective use of your marketing dollars.

Four steps to a successful alpaca show.

To be successful at an alpaca trade show, you must:

1. set objectives,
2. define measurable goals,
3. plan,

4. and implement your strategy.

Your exhibit

As attendees walk through the aisles, you must apply what I call the “2-second hooker” as you only have two seconds to attract and stop them. It’s OK to be aggressive. Have your “elevator” question ready, i.e., “Are you interested in a ____alpaca with ____ micron fiber?” You fill in the blanks or better yet, create your question for what you believe is the best “hook”.

Key elements to consider when planning your exhibit are structure, graphics, location and literature.

Your exhibit structure is the theater for:

1. communicating your marketing messages
2. displaying alpaca graphics and limited ribbons
3. exhibiting your alpacas/products
4. face to face marketing with current customers and prospects

Everything has been done to get the attendees to the event.

The face to face opportunity is here. It's time to tell your story and sell your alpacas/products.

April—June Schedule of Events

- April 26, 2009—ABR Member Meeting 9:00 am—3:00 pm

9:00 am Breakfast Round Table discussions (bring your own breakfast, coffee & tea provided)

9:30—3:00 General Meeting followed by Fiber Round Table Discussions. Lunch will be provided. **Please remember to RSVP so we have enough for everyone.**

- May 1-3 Great Western Alpaca Show
For more info go to www.alpacabreeders.org/gwas/2009/index.html
- June 20 Fecal Testing Clinic
at CSU 8:30 am—4pm For more info go to www.alpacabreeders.org
- June 21-21 Paca Buddies Open House
At Arapahoe County Fair Grounds
10am—4:30 pm For more information go to www.pacabuddies.com

Fecal Testing Clinic

Registration is now open for the Fecal Testing Clinic ~ June 20th at CSU.

The morning program will include common parasite life cycle and pathogenesis review, how to do a fecal float and parasite identification. After lunch, we'll head to the lab and learn to do our own testing, followed by interpretation and parasite management discussions.

Lunch will be provided but due to budget tightening, please make sure you have breakfast prior to the clinic.

Attendees are encouraged to bring 3 samples from their farms.

Attendees are encouraged to bring 3 samples from their farms.

Registration forms are available on the ABR website.

Alpaca Breeders of the Rockies 2009

Great Western Alpaca Show 4th Annual Photography & Alpaca Art Competition -- "Image: an Alpaca"

GWAS is proud to announce our fourth Alpaca Photography & Art Competition. We encourage everyone to enter "Image: An Alpaca". We are very excited to have Scott and Debbie Miller, of Greener Pastures Alpacas and managers of Crescent Moon Ranch as our co-judges this year. Scott and Debbie bring a wealth of experience and have a unique perspective on balance and beauty as exemplified by their outstanding herd of alpacas. We will present 1st - 3rd place ribbons, Best in Show & People's Choice awards. Please read the rules and the categories carefully before filling out your entry form.

If you have any questions please contact Andrew MacArthur, Photography Coordinator, at Andrew@springtoofarm.com.

ABR Member Farms— If you have an event coming up in July through December 2009 contact javerch@u2ranch.net to post your event on the ABR website and in the next newsletter. Deadline is two weeks prior to the newsletter release date. For July newsletter listing is June 16, 2009

Please continue to check the ABR Website for additional events that may be added after newsletter cutoff date

“Keep an open mind and investigate other possible toxic agents to which a sickened animal may have been exposed, as well as the possibility that another type of illness may be involved.”

Steps to Prevent Plant Poisoning

Every year, poisonous plants cause death, temporary and chronic pain and illness, abortions, decreased productivity, and birth defects involving hundreds of thousands of grazing and browsing livestock. The annual economic loss amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars. Although less is known about llama and alpaca susceptibility to plant toxins than other livestock, there are documented cases of poisoning of llamas by at least Oleander; Mountain, Black or Sierra laurel (*Leucothoe davisiae*); Rhododendron; Water hemlock (*Cicuta* spp.); Ponderosa, Western or Yellow pine (*Pinus ponderosa*); Yew (*Taxus* spp.) and Death camas (*Zigadenus* spp.). Camels reportedly have been poisoned by African plant species identical or related to western U.S. plants: Thornapple (*Datura stramonium*), Milk or Pencil bush (*Euphorbia tirucalli*), Lantana, Castorbean or Castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*) and Sorghum.* Time will tell more about how llamas react to other plants that have harmed horses, sheep, cattle, goats or pigs, but using caution in allowing them access is the best policy in the meantime.

For complicated reasons of plant and animal evolution, well-nourished herbivores will generally avoid eating most toxic plants. The toxins in some plants make them unpalatable to animals—they either smell or taste bad. Animals learn from other animals, particularly their mothers, to avoid some of the other poisonous plants. Still other poisonous plants produce a disagreeable physiological sensation soon enough after ingestion that animals learn not to eat them at all or they stop before consuming toxic quantities. But these mechanisms of safe eating are not foolproof. As noted, above, poisoning does occur and when it does, it can be devastating to both animal and owner.

There are a variety of reasons why livestock eat poisonous plants. There are some to which livestock have been found to be attracted. Some unpalatable plants appear to lose their disagreeable odors or tastes when dried (as in hay); a significant cause of poisonings is consumption of toxic plant parts mixed in hay, silage, grain, or processed feed. Some typically safe plants become toxic when fertilized or treated with certain herbicides. They may simultaneously become more palatable. Weather stresses and other natural conditions may convert the non-toxic to toxic. Probably most importantly, if put into a situation where only poisonous plants are available or where they make up a large percentage of available forage, animals will eat them.

Whether or not animals will be sickened by ingesting particular toxic plants is also a complex matter. Not all species of livestock are equally affected by or susceptible to various plant toxins. For example, it is thought at this time that only equines contract “chewing disease,” a devastating illness involving irreversible brain damage caused by consumption of toxic amounts of *Centaurea solstitialis* or *Centaurea repens* (commonly known as Yellow starthistle and Russian knapweed, respectively). I personally choose to err on the side of caution and avoid feeding hay to our llamas that contains this plant. The relative health of the individual animal (or, if a ruminant, of the microflora in its rumen) can figure into how well it can handle some toxic substances in the plants it consumes. The digestive systems of some animal species can adapt to be able to detoxify higher levels of toxins with exposure. A substantial quantity of some plants must be ingested to trigger illness or death. A couple of leaves of other plants can kill.

Despite all of these variables (and more), experts agree that plant poisoning can be minimized. The best means is a combination of effective use of good information about toxic plants and the provision of adequate amounts of safe alternative food. In the unhappy event that poisoning occurs, being informed may facilitate effective response.

Here are some suggestions that may help owners of livestock of all types protect their animals from poisoning:

- Pasture management is critical. Learn about plants in pastures and the animals that will graze there. Seek help from Extension agents and others, if necessary. Some options:
 - Eliminate or fence securely around toxic plants, especially if animals may find them palatable or if they are highly toxic or abundant. NOTE: If you grub out highly poisonous plants such as the various Water hemlock species (*Cicuta* spp.), take appropriate precautions to protect yourself and others, especially children.
 - If animals will have access to less palatable toxic plants, ensure that they always have adequate safe forage available. Check plant levels and types periodically. Do not overgraze.
 - Watch carefully in early spring or late fall when toxic plants may be more prevalent than others.
 - Know which plants are drought resistant. They may be the only food available under some circumstances.
 - Watch out for toxic plants that are evergreen from fall to spring.
 - Ensure that animals have adequate water, as well as salt and mineral supplementation, if needed.
 - Avoid giving access to plants during their toxic season's).
 - Check on your pastured animals regularly and know the signs of poisoning to allow prompt action in case poisoning occurs.

(Continued on page 9)



- Be careful with herbicides (including those that may be applied by others, e.g., local government entities). Learn about their direct effect on animals, whether animals may be attracted by application of the product and, if palatability is likely to increase, know about the inherent toxicity of those plants.
- Be prepared to identify and respond appropriately to toxic plants when animals will be taken into unfamiliar areas. New poisonous plants may be eaten simply because the animal has no experience with them.
- Avoid driving animals through areas with high concentrations of toxic plants, particularly if they are hungry.
- When tying, picketing, or staking animals, identify, and avoid areas where they are likely to consume toxic plants. If at all possible, find a place that is grassy, rather than leafy. Most, although not all, wild grasses are safe forage. [Be able to identify and avoid *Triglochin maritima* (known in most areas as Seaside arrowgrass) and *Zigadenus* spp. (commonly known as Death camas, but there are several other common names).]
- Do not assume that others know about poisonous plants. Feeding animals “treats” seems to be an almost irresistible urge of humans. Educate both adults and children who may come in contact with animals so that they know not to feed them leaves, fruits, etc. (This exercise will also alert children to the whole issue of poisonous plants. Many plants are at least as dangerous for children to eat as livestock.) Consider providing visitors with “official treats” that animals like and can safely eat.
- If animals are rented or lent to others, orient the temporary caretakers to toxic plants along with other instructions on care and handling. Provide plant identification resources to be taken along with the animals.
- When selling animals, ensure that buyers are aware of toxic plants. Consider providing pertinent materials to the new owners.
- Do not feed yard or garden vegetation (clippings or trimmings) to livestock.
- Try to arrange to walk uncut hay fields before buying and check hay when feeding. Buy grain and processed feeds from reputable sources.
- Consider removing toxic trees and shrubs in corrals, pastures, and yard that could be accessible to livestock. Of course, the urgency of this measure depends on the toxicity of the plants.
- Anticipate accidental circumstances such as leaves blown by wind or the fact that animals sometimes get out.
- The safest course during Christmas and other holidays is to avoid feeding trees or other greenery to livestock. Although *Pinus ponderosa* (Ponderosa pine, among other common names) is the most commonly referenced harmful member of the *Pinus* genus, other species and other conifers also may be toxic, especially if consumed in large quantities over a short period. Many common types of holiday decorative greenery can be deadly.
- Check branches and tree limbs brought down in pastures by storms to ensure that they are not from toxic trees.
- Plant poisoning is generally a complex medical situation and will probably require a veterinarian’s evaluation and care. The following may be helpful for livestock owners to keep in mind:
 - Establish a connection with a veterinarian before an emergency arises. Locate a practitioner familiar with your species of animal(s) and involve him or her in routine care.
 - Ask for information about any plants in the area that may already have caused problems. If other animals have been poisoned by local plants, there is a good chance that local veterinarians at least will be aware of that. They also may have some good advice to give you about prevention or response or both.
 - If you will be taking animals into a situation where veterinarian assistance will be difficult to obtain, ask your veterinarian to discuss some prudent actions to take in the event of poisoning. Always notify a veterinarian when plant poisoning is suspected. Be prepared to provide him or her with as much information as possible about the situation.
 - Discuss appropriate supportive/symptomatic care you may be able to provide to sick animals and be prepared to provide it until assistance arrives.
 - Try to identify any suspect plants.
 - Get a sample.
 - Inspect the area where the animal was grazing. Try to determine the amount and duration of consumption.
 - Observe and make careful note of any physiological or behavioral signs the affected animal may exhibit.

Contributed by Shirley Weathers, co-owner of Walsh & Weathers Research and Policy Studies and Rosebud Llamas Utah, excerpted this article from her book, Field Guide to Plants Poisonous to Livestock—Western U.S.

2009 Great Western Alpaca Fiber Arts Competition

Calling All Fiber Enthusiasts Time to Show-Off

It's time for the ANNUAL GREAT WESTERN ALPACA SHOW, to be held at the National Western Complex in Denver, Colorado on May 1-3, 2009, and we want your beautiful creations made from alpaca to be entered into the Fiber Arts Competition.

Our judge this year will be Claire Walker, who has judged for us in the past and is enthusiastically welcomed back.

1st through 3rd place ribbons will be awarded in all categories. A Judge's Choice Ribbon will be awarded. As always, we will also be holding a People's Choice competition which will be awarded in 3 categories as well – adult, youth and skein, and recipients of that award will receive a gift certificate from Interweave Press for a 1 year subscription to one of the many magazines they publish.

All entries can be brought to check-in on Thursday, April 30th from 1:30 pm to 5:00pm. If the 5 pm deadline won't work because of work issues and checking in your animals, you can mail-in your entry and pick-up your entry on Sunday, May 3rd, 2009 between 12:00 and 2:00 pm. No entries will be accepted after 5:00 pm on Thursday, April 30th.

Ribbon!

Judge's Choice

People's Choice

MAIL-IN ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Due to the strong interests of Fiber Artists from across the country who wish to participate in an ABR sponsored Fiber Arts competition, but are unable to attend, we are pleased to announce that we will be accepting mail-in entries again this year. ENTRY FORMS, ARTWORK, PAYMENT, AND PREPAID RETURN POSTAGE must be postmarked by April 26, 2009. If you mail artwork or skeins, please handwrite: "Mail –in Entry" on all forms. Prepaid return postage & address labels must accompany the mail-in packages. Any work that is mailed in an envelope must contain the correct size, new, postage paid, return mailing envelope with return address labels and postage attached. (Remember to leave enough room in your return envelopes and boxes for those ribbons!) If you wish your returned artwork to be insured by US Postal Service or United Parcel Service, proper labels must accompany the work.

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact:

Barb Dedecker at (720) 733-9294 or email at barb@rapunzelsfarm.com.

Mail-in entries are to be addressed to:

Barbara Dedecker
GWAS Fiber Arts Coordinator
Rapunzel's Farm
13455 Furrow Road
Larkspur, CO 80118

SO NOW YOU ARE ASKING, WHERE ARE THE ENTRY FORMS AND RULES

Please go to:

www.alpacabreeders.org/gwas/2009/index.html

3 Days of GREAT Educational Clinics, Workshops and Presentations for SURI & HUACAYA Alpaca Breeders. EVERYONE IS WELCOME to Register!

Suri Network's Summer Symposium
All Suri Fleece Show & Spin-Off
(Amanda VandenBosch/Tim Lavan, Fleece Show Judges; Donna Rudd, Spin-Off Judge)
August 13-15, 2009 in Estes Park, CO

Four Thursday Clinics

- ★ Hands-On Parasitology Lab with Dr. Pam Walker
- ★ Felting From Beginning to Final Product with Louise Rusk
- ★ Neo Natal (2-part Clinic, Lecture & Lab) with Dr. Tom Cotton
- ★ Fiber Grading & Sorting with Mary Lou Clingan

Friday & Saturday Educational Presentations

- ★ 1/2-Day Classification Workshop for all Attendees
- ★ Pacamarca EPD Program & Grupo Inca Suri Fiber Criteria with Dr. Ruzsa Morante from Peru
- ★ The ARI Registry at Work and How it Affects You with Dorley Vauzier
- ★ Medications for Camelids with Dr. Pam Walker
- ★ An Overview of the Livestock Industry with Brett Kayson
- ★ Business Issues of Operating a Farm with Claudia Ressler
- ★ Presentation with Dr. Robert Colton

Saturday Social Fun and Herdsire Live Auction

www.SuriNetwork.org
1-877-NET SURI (638-7874)

When a Llama is laid back, it's not the only beneficiary

By Matthew Dalton WSJ February 17, 2009

The engines of innovation for a promising new class of pharmaceuticals are covered in soft hair and tend to spit when irritated.

Scientists are exploiting an unusual feature of the immune system of llamas -- a South American relative of the camel -- to develop new treatments for diseases including rheumatoid arthritis, cancer and Alzheimer's. Llamas, camels and their alpaca relatives are one of only two animal families that create extremely small antibodies, the molecules that are the soldiers of the immune system.

Antibody technology has produced a number of blockbuster drugs over the past decade, such as the cancer treatments Avastin and Erbitux and the arthritis drug Enbrel. Antibodies can be programmed to target proteins that are responsible for diseases, just like a vaccine prepares the immune system to fight viruses. They deliver drugs directly to the troublesome proteins responsible for the disease or block the action of the proteins themselves, stopping the progression of the disease.

But conventional antibodies are large, complex molecules that aren't very durable and have trouble finding their way around the body's tiny crevices. Scientists hope the tiny antibodies

found in llamas and camels -- about one-tenth the size of human antibodies -- can burrow into the densely packed cells of a cancerous tumor, slip their way through the blood-brain barrier to block the build-up of plaques that cause Alzheimer's, or settle into the crevices of joints to prevent arthritis.

A major problem is that it sounds too good to be true, said Serge Muyldermans, director of the Cellular and Molecular Immunology lab at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels and one of the founders of [Ablynx](#), the Belgian biotech firm that has the patents on using llama and camel antibodies. "The only disadvantage they have is we can't find a disadvantage. People don't believe us any more."

The unusual properties of llama and camel antibodies were accidentally discovered in 1989 by Raymond Hamers, a professor and scientist at the Vrije Universiteit. One of his students was investigating the ability of camels to fight off infections, and presented Mr. Hamers with test results that showed the presence of smaller antibodies along with the normal larger antibody molecules. Mr. Hamers first thought the student had made a mistake. Four years later, Mr. Hamers and his team published their findings about camel antibodies in the journal *Nature*.

Dr. Muyldermans, who was part of the team led by Mr. Hamers, says his lab continues to find potential new treatments for all kinds of ailments. One candidate: an antidote to scorpion venom.

Drugs using larger antibodies usually must be injected, because the antibodies will be destroyed in the stomach or the lungs. But smaller antibodies are more resistant to such extreme environments, which means the drugs can be taken orally or by inhaler. Smaller antibodies can also be grown using bacteria, much cheaper than using the mammal cells needed to grow large antibodies.

"Having a smaller molecule makes the antibody easier to synthesize and, in theory, should reduce the cost of production," said Mike Clark, professor of therapeutic and molecular immunology at Cambridge University. He has also been a consultant for firms that do antibody work.

And it's possible to stitch together different kinds of these antibodies, producing a molecule that can target several different proteins at once. Scientists expect this will be particularly useful for blocking the growth of cancerous tumors, which typically involve the action of several different proteins.

Other companies are searching for ways to use small antibodies. The U.K. company Haptogen, which was bought by [Wyeth](#) in 2007, uses antibodies from sharks, another animal known to produce small antibodies. Domantis, a U.S. company bought by [GlaxoSmithKline PLC](#) in 2006, snips off part of the human antibody using laboratory techniques that produce something similar to a llama antibody.

Despite their promise, no one knows whether drugs using small antibodies will work in humans. The first drugs are still several years away from being approved for medical use. Ablynx is probably closest to putting a product on the market -- a drug to prevent blood clots that tend to form in patients who have had stents implanted to open a blocked artery. If the drug passes all its clinical trials, it could be on the market in 2012 or 2013, said Ablynx Chief Executive Edwin Moses.

(continued on page 11)

When a llama is laid back

(Continued from page 11)

Ablynx -- which calls its llama antibodies "nanobodies" -- also has a partnership with Wyeth to develop a new arthritis drug that will use nanobodies to block TNF alpha, an immune-system protein that causes the inflammation characteristic of rheumatoid arthritis. Wyeth is hoping the Ablynx drug will help replace its blockbuster arthritis treatment, Enbrel, when the drug's patent expires after 2011.

"In the lab, the nanobodies have actually performed spectacularly," said Davinder Gill, vice president of biological technologies at Wyeth Research. The drug is in the first stage of human clinical trials.

Ablynx is developing 24 different antibody-based drugs, all using llamas, Mr. Moses said. Ablynx uses llamas rather than camels because they are cheaper and easier to buy in Europe, where people tend to keep them as pets.

The key to this cutting-edge technology is the health of the llamas. Ablynx tries to keep their stress levels down so their immune systems produce the required antibodies.

"They are probably the best-kept llamas in the world," said Eva-Lotta Allan, Ablynx's chief business officer.



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The time has come for the fashion industry and alpaca industry to become united and work together for a common good. The United Nations has declared 2009 "The Year of The Fiber." Let us come together, to show our pride in our farms, animals, and fashions. We have a tremendous opportunity to show the Fashion World what we can produce, using alpaca fibers. The 2009 Second World Alpaca Conference is being presented by the Alpaca Owner and Breeders Association.

The World Conference this year will take place in Cleveland. The Conference kicks off June 4 and closes June 7. We are pleased and proud to announce the Fashion Show Gala, "The Rhythm of

Alpacas", is to be produced by Colorado's own Timothy D's – A Salon and Alpacas de Leon Ltd.

The 2009 Fashion Show is expected to become a benchmark for future ramp shows featuring alpaca fiber products. More importantly it is anticipated that this show will open the door to growth in the global marketplace. "This is the time for each of you to show off your farm's products, and become a part of a new "Alpaca Awareness." In the past years alpaca ranchers have seen a change in the definition and status of their livestock with the USDA. Those of us in the fashion industry love to be in the forefront to beauty and glamour, this is your opportunity to be-

come part of a fusion we feel will continue to grow and prosper."

We're excited to have our State's alpaca ranchers in the forefront of this proud history. Whether or not you are able to attend the Conference, you are encouraged to donate time and talent. There are many ways to contribute including sponsorships for the Fashion Book. For additional details and forms please contact Timothy D. at 303-549-5421 or by e-mail alpacasdeleon@aol.com



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