

MAPACA



Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

July 2004

Newsletter

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MaPaca

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Members at

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Nancy

Johanson,

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Newsletter

Editor:

Alice

Brown.

President's Message:

July has come and gone and the weather has brought new surprises every week. Hot weather, cool weather, - high humidity, low humidity, - minimal rain, floods! Mother Nature truly used much of her bag of tricks this month. Hopefully all of our members and their alpaca treasures are safe and sound and grazing in lush, green pastures. We have happily delivered 28 alpacas in the last 3 months to customers who recently completed their farms. In the course of the process we came across a number of issues involving zoning.

Zoning ordinances in many communities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey have been written, or rewritten to include llamas and alpacas as equivalent to horses. As such they are re-

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2005 MaPaca Jubilee Art Competition

Deadline October 1, 2004

MAPACA announces an ART COMPETITION for the 2005 MAPACA Jubilee. The winning entry will be used to design the advertisements, postcards, show program cover, T-shirts and other items used to publicize the 2005 MAPACA Jubilee. The winning artist will win \$500.00, and will be recognized as the winning artist in MAPACA publications!

Get out your pencils, paints, fiber, camera - even the computer mouse, and put your mark on the 2005 MAPACA Jubilee! We know that as alpaca owners, y'all are the creative types. We invite you to show your creativity by entering the 2005 MAPACA Jubilee Art Competition. Submit your idea for alpaca art, and we will showcase the winning entry on promotional material for the 2005 MAPACA Jubilee.

The rules and entry form can be found on the MAPACA website (www.mapaca.org). Questions may be directed to Chris Armstrong of Calico Moon Alpacas at 410-343-0426 or info@calicomoonalpacas.com

President's Message:

(Continued from page 1.)

stricted to as few as one per acre in a number of areas. I hope to find that AOBA has some awareness of this problem on a national level and that a plan of action is in the works or at least on a "to do" list. I will advise you of my findings.

MaPaca Jubilee 2005 is tentatively "penciled in" by the Farm Complex for April 21 to 24. Nothing is "absolute" until the contract is signed. We are delighted to announce that Andy Schneider has volunteered to be the 2005 coordinator and hope we will have no shortage of volunteers to assist Andy in this arduous task. Good luck Andy!

Regional Alpaca Facility. I received one call regarding a suggestion for working with a local vet in New Jersey who has been on an "accelerated alpaca learning curve" and is converting a dairy facility to kennels and an animal hospital. We will continue exploring options and encourage input from the membership. This is not something that will happen overnight however a game plan needs to be ongoing.

On a related note, **New Bolton Center** will be "slowly" reopening starting August 2nd with the opening of the "outpatient clinic". They do not yet know when they will be open for emergencies. Their number is 610 444-5800.

Enjoy your summer!

Paul Connor

From the Desk of the Jubilee Coordinator:

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2004 MAPACA Jubilee, helping to make it one of the largest and most successful alpaca shows ever held. A total of 450 farms, 1,482 alpacas, and 32 vendors participated this year. The hard work and dedication of a wonderful volunteer staff and the cooperation of a great group of exhibitors made it all happen. Thanks again.

I am honored to be the Jubilee Coordinator for 2005, but the real work is done by the committee chairs and volunteers. They are the ones who really "get it done". We will always need volunteers, both before and during the show. If you can give even a little of your time, please do so. Fill out the volunteer form and send it in or e-mail the volunteer chairperson (when we know who it will be) and let us know what you're available to do.

There will be some changes for 2005. I recently attended a meeting of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Board, chaired by the state's Secretary of Agriculture. Jubilee costs will be going up. The state can no longer subsidize the Farm Show Complex budget. They've been running with a \$2,000,000 shortfall but must now operate on a break even basis. The rental rate for floor space will be going up and the cost of electric drops will double in the near future. Even at the new rates, the Farm Show Complex is still one of the most reasonably priced facilities of its type and size in the country. We will try to absorb some of the rental increase. The actual cost for electric will be passed through. You'll pay whatever we're charged for each outlet.

There will be more changes for next year, but we still have to work out many of the details. To minimize confusion, deadlines for all registrations, pen space, class entries, seminars, dinners, etc, will be the same day. There will be one earlybird deadline and one final deadline for everything, and final will mean final. Last minute changes cause problems downstream that we just aren't staffed to handle. We are exploring ways to improve sponsor recognition. Considering industry growth, we will probably have to further limit the number of pens per farm to allow more farms to participate. We anticipate following AOBA's limit of 6 pens per farm, including displays.

Constructive ideas and suggestions are welcome. Our only interest is to give the members a great, competitive show at a good price, with as much participation as possible. Watch this column to keep up with Jubilee happenings and remember, if you can help, please volunteer to do so. Even a little time is greatly appreciated. Have a great summer. **Andy Schneider**

Editor's Ramblings:

By Alice Brown

“Boys will be Boys!” So, my mother once said when my little brother got into a tussle with his best friend. Then later in my life, as my son was going through the teen years, I remember how every time he had a friend over, they had to “rough house.” No matter how many times I told them not to, they just had to play wrestle or engage in some other activity to pit the strength of one against the other.

It is not so different with our alpacas. I find that “Boy will be Boys!” applies with the male alpacas too. In our “boy” pasture we have boys from one year old on up to seven years old. I noticed that the different age groups seem to hang together. I’ve also noticed that the geldings like to stay out of the way, for the most part. Although, they will sometimes get into a spitting match with each other.

The one year olds, there are 3 of them, like to neck wrestle together, but their matches generally tend to be low key. The two year olds are the rowdiest! The new surges of testosterone must keep them in a constant state of “lets see who is strongest.” Their matches can become quite heated and they can also be quit frequent. This is the time to check for fighting teeth, as they may start emerging between 2 and 3 years old. Have them removed early. I can vouch for the fact that even a 1/8 inch fighting tooth can rip open an ear!

Now the biggest stud boy, he is the king and everyone else knows it. Thus, he rarely gets into a tussle with anyone, unless some upstart 3 year old decides to challenge him. Again, time to make sure fighting teeth are trimmed. Remember, “Boys will be Boys!”

Hope you are having a good summer and that you are enjoying you spring cria and I hope that all your breedings have been easy and successful!

My best to you All,

Alice Brown

Butterflies in the Poop Pile?

By Alice Brown



This spring I again noticed that butterflies seemed to love the poop piles. It seemed like an unusual place for a butterfly to visit. After all, aren't butterflies supposed to like flowers, and other SWEET smelling things, like nectar. As a matter of fact I see MORE butterflies on my manure piles than on my the Butterfly Bush that is blooming profusely, just 50 yards away from the pasture. OK, so why are they always visiting my poop piles. They are not very sweet smelling.

At a butterfly web site that I found (www.moonsweb.com/butterflies.shtml), it says there are over 750 species of butterflies in the U.S. It also says that butterfly gardens need more than just attracting flowers, you also need host plants, for the butterflies to lay eggs on and also a mud puddle for them to sip up nutrients. Ah, now we are getting some where.

The web site then goes on to tell you how to make this mud puddle. It says to pick a spot where the butterfly can land to soak up some sun, as they need six hours of sun a day. Then it says that you can put some salt in the puddle as well as some MANURE! Ureka! We have hit on it. The butterflies like to visit the poop piles to soak up the sun and to also soak up nutrients, especially salts that they require. So, next time you see butterflies frequenting your poop pile, think of it as part of your butterfly garden!

Feature Article:

When Birth Appears Imminent

By Alice Brown

As of this writing we have had nine babies born on our little farm of Forever Precious Alpacas. Of the nine births, I have been there in whole or in part for eight of them. I know this is not a cut and dry subject, but knowing when your female is about to deliver her cria is important. According to Dr. Brad Smith's book, *Llama and Alpaca Neonate Care*, "While the true incidence of dystocias (difficult births) is unknown, work from the Rocky Mountain Lama Association (RMLA) suggests that as many as 1 in 20 births may be a dystocia." Therefore, although most births are normal births, who wants to take the chance of not being there for the 1 out of 20th time that a problem arises. Getting to know the signs of impending birth is something every new breeder grapples with.

The problem is, there is no "sure fire" sign that says, "I'm going to have my baby today!" However, there are subtle changes that take place in the dam the last month of pregnancy that can help us breeders to know that birth is getting close and may happen today.

The areas to take notice of include: the udder, movement of the cria in utero, calculated date of parturition, cervical plug, behavior, and vulva changes. I also like to keep tabs on respiration rate. The signs associated with labor and birth, if considered all together, can help a breeder to determine if their female is in labor.

According to Eric Hoffman's book, *The Complete Alpaca Book*, on page 366 it says: "The weight of the mammary glands increases from 71.1 to 97.1 grams during the first 240 days of pregnancy, and to 143 grams, 192 grams, 453 grams, and 672 grams at 270 days, 300 days, 330 days, and at birth respectively." This being the case, the udder enlarges noticeably in the last few weeks of pregnancy. I have found that when a female has milk in her teats, she probably is in labor, or will be in the next 24 hours. So, watching the udder enlarge can help in determining if a female is in labor.

I also like to observe each dam in the mornings while they are eating. A total, to slight loss of appetite, can indicate that a female is in labor. However, there are some girls that will eat and then still go into labor later that day. But usually if they are in labor, they just do not eat with their normal "gusto," if they even eat at all.

Keeping your eye to the poop piles is good as well. When in early labor, many females will appear just a bit uncomfortable, although being prey animals, they try real hard to hide this from you, the caring breeder. Some will succeed in fooling you, and you will be heard saying later, after a cria arrives, "I thought she looked like she might be in labor!" Females will display their discomfort in various ways. Going to the poop pile and not doing much if anything is first on their list. Others may include some rolling and positioning of the cria, and others may lay cushed with their back legs off to one side (this one is a real subtle hint).

Then there is the infamous cervical plug. It's supposed to look something like "Elmer's Glue," and be about the size of your little finger. OK, so we all look in the poop piles when we clean to see if we see such a thing. You are the rare person indeed if you find one! However, I did see one once. It was about 3AM one morning and I thought I heard humming coming from the barn. With trusty flashlight in hand I headed out to the barn. Nothing seemed unusual, but while I stood by the barn door, some of the girls went to the poop pile. By chance I decided to shine the light on the back end of the one I suspected, according to her due date, was going to give birth shortly. As the light hit her backend, her tail lifted and out slide a whitish piece of something! "Must be the cervical plug," I remember thinking. I was right, as baby was there when Fred checked the barn again at 5:30AM. So, I would have to say that finding a cervical plug is an indication of impending birth. However, according to Dr. Smith, loss of the cervical plug can come as much as a few days to 2-3 weeks prior to birth.

As for movement of the cria in utero, according to Dr. Smith, this provides no information about pending birth. However, what it does tell you is that the cria is still alive and doing well in there. So, at feeding time in the morning, I like to watch tummies on pregnant mom's for fetal movement. The best place to watch is just past the ribs on the right side. Usually if you stare at that spot for a few minutes you will be rewarded with some sort of fetal movement. As you watch, observe the dam's breathing pattern, then notice movements that are not associated with breathing or cud chewing, that is probably fetal movement. Sometimes you will see an actual body part stick out.

Lengthening of the vulva always precedes birth. If you are watching your female you can tell that the vulva is lengthening and softening up for birth. As she gets closer, you may even notice the vulva at times opening up just a little. Everything is relaxing. Birth is near. At

the same time you will notice the entire perineal area (the muscles around the anus and vulva) softening up. Sometimes this area, just under the tail, will push outward. That is the baby pushing out. To me it even looks like the babies nose is right there. This relaxation begins a few weeks before birthing and becomes more pronounced as birth comes closer.

I have also noticed that when a female is really in labor, her respiration seems to increase as the birth process kicks in. It should be noted though, that increased respiration can be the result of heat, or of the cria laying so that it presses on the diaphragm.

Taking everything into consideration, if you see one of these signs, your female is probably not in labor. If you see several, or all of these signs, you better get your towels and Nolvasan ready! To use an illustration, it's like when you are looking for the signs of Spring. If you see a few forsythias blooming, it doesn't mean Spring is here. It probably just means that we've had some unusually warm days in February and some of the flowers were tricked into blooming early. However, if you see that the days are getting warmer, the calendar is saying it's nearly April, and the crocuses, daffodils, forsythias, and snow drops are all blooming and the tulips are sending up their leaves, the total of the composite sign indicates that Spring is here at last.

When I see milk in the teats with a puffy udder, an elongated vulva and a puffy perineal area, and the female is going to the poop pile and/or rolling or cushed with hind legs to the side, and her nostrils are flaring some (while that of other alpacas are not), that's a pretty good indication that I will be drying off a new baby within an hour or two.

Remember though, that alpacas are prey animals and they try to hide the fact that they are in labor. Some are more determined to do this than others and some are better at hiding an impending birth. There are some females that you will probably never succeed in seeing give birth. With those types of girls, you might want to make good use of your binoculars to monitor their progress. But keep the birthing kit handy. Have a happy birthing season!

References:

1. *Llama and Alpaca Neonatal Care* by Bradford B. Smith, DVM, PhD, Karen I. Timm, DVM, PhD, and Patrick O. Long, DVM.
2. *The Complete Alpaca Book*, by Eric Hoffman.

Alpaca Awareness – On the Rise

*By Jovi Larson, FiberGenix Suris,
Ringoos, New Jersey*

When I bought my first alpacas, almost seven years ago, hardly anyone knew what an alpaca was. I remember that I had to explain alpacas to EVERYONE, without exception! Individual breeders and AOBA had the very important mission of increasing the awareness of the American public with regard to alpacas and alpaca fiber.

Much has changed since 1998. I firmly believe that the alpaca education of our fellow Americans is well underway. Let me explain with the following true experience:

July, 2003. I had to pick up a one-month old cria at New Bolton Center, the large animal facility of the University of PA vet school. Since the cria was a bottle-baby, her mother was not with her, and due to her small size, I could fit her into the back of my Saab hatchback when I put the rear seat down. I was returning home along Route 1, a four-lane road with the occasional stoplight. I had to be very slow and careful with stops and starts since the little cria was being obstinate and would not kush down. I was staying in the right-hand lane due to my slightly slower rate of travel (not my usual routine).

Having just started up after the light turned green, I was passed on the left by a police car. Next thing I knew, the police car had slowed down considerably – slow enough to be next to my left rear side. Of course, I was sweating bullets wondering what I had done. The car then pulled up even with my window, and I looked over to see two policemen in the front seat – looking directly at me. I was thinking “What had I done?”

The policeman in the passenger seat pointed to the rear of the car and mouthed “What's that?” (Both of us had our car windows closed due to air conditioning.) I mouthed back “ALPACA”. His response was “OK” and the ‘thumbs up’ signal before pulling away.

I think that I grinned all the way home.

Classified Ads:

Any member may post an ad for alpaca and/or alpaca farm related equipment and items. The ad should include a one sentence description and contact information such as phone number and email. We will run your ad for one month, if you do not sell the item and wish to run it again, let me know. This will be a free service to current MaPaca members ONLY. Please send your ads to Alice Brown, 458 Main Road, Vineland, NJ, 08360 or fpalpacas@aol.com or call 856-697-8127.

1. ***A Breeder's Guide to Genetics—Relax, It's Not Rocket Science*** by Ingrid Wood (Stormwind Alpacas) and Denise Como, available from Quality Llama Products (1-800-638-4689) - soft cover: \$20.75, hard cover \$30.25.
2. The "**Hay Saver**" double sided, covered feeder helps you keep your alpacas clean while reducing feeding costs. **www.AllAlpacas.com or 724-940-4045.**
3. Custom designed, hand woven and knitted fashions from your alpaca's fleece, roving or yarn. Shop online at **www.cherryridgealpacas.com.**
4. 2 oz. Custom hand-spun sample skeins from YOUR alpaca! \$10 each plus \$2 shipping. **scmoore@1st.net or 740-934-9318 for details.**
5. Yarn, batts, rovings, and felt from your alpacas. Snuggler's Meadow Alpacas & Fiber Mill. **www.snugsalpacas.com or 440-636-5384.**
6. For Sale: **Products designed for alpacas:** Chutes, Shearing Tables, Skirting Trays, Panels, Feeders, and More. **www.AllAlpacas.com or 724-940-4045.**

**Jubilee Halter and Fleece Show
Results may be viewed on the Ma-
Paca web site at:
www.mapaca.org**

Do You Want to Advertise in the MaPaca Newsletter?

No ads will be accepted that include the PRICE of animals for sale. Stud Service prices are acceptable. Thank you.

We will insert one-page ads for members in MaPaca Newsletters. Ads cost **\$40.00** for one 8 ½" by 11" ad, on 24 pound paper or less, if you supply ALL the copies (they can be in color and two sided if you like). If your ad is on heavier paper than 24 pound, the cost will be **\$60.00**. If you would like us to copy your ad, supply us one copy and we will have it copied in black & white, one sided, for **\$70.00** total.

If you know any business that sells products or services relating to alpacas or farming in general that would benefit alpaca farmers, that would like to place an insert AD in the MaPaca Newsletter, you can recommend them if you are an existing Lifetime MaPaca Member. The costs for businesses would be an additional **\$100.00** added on to the regular member fee for an insert AD. Thus it would be either **\$140.00, \$160.00, or \$170.00**. Please send copies, along with payment, to Alice Brown, 458 Main Road, Vineland, NJ 08360 by the 20th of the month you want your ad inserted. Make check payable to **MaPaca** and include check with inserts.

If you have any questions, please email Alice Brown at fpalpacas@aol.com or give me a call at—**856-697-8127**.




Members Events **Calendar**

August 14 and 15, 2004—Marketing Alpacas on Land and On-Line, Sponsored by The Breeders' College at French Hollow Alpacas, Bonville, Vermont. Featuring Julie Wassom. Also, Alpaca Photography—A Lens with a View, by Jennifer Clark, and Effective Website Design by Tom Lichtman. Early Bird Special: Register before July 24, 2004 and save \$25. Tuition: \$175.00 per person, \$225.00 per couple. Contact French Hollow Alpacas by calling 802-297-9353 or register on-line at www.frenchhollowalpacas.com. Receive a free complimentary copy of Julie's new book, *101 Ways to Market and Sell Your Alpacas*.

August 21, 2004 — 11:00AM—4:30PM, Alpaca Breed Standard Presentation and Discussion, at the Robin's Nest Restaurant, in Mount Holly, New Jersey. \$30.00 per person (includes catered lunch). Limited to 50, sign-up deadline August 9, 2004. Make checks payable to Alpaca Heritage Events, Inc. and mail to Ingrid Wood, 1862 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road, Columbus, New Jersey 08022. for sign-up form and directions go to www.AlpacaHeritage.com or contact Yvette Kirilenko at 908-996-5248 or ysk@att.net.

September 4, 2004—Alpacas—All Things Considered—Speaker Steve Hull, PhD. A Paca Fun Farm, Mt. Airy, MD. \$125 per person, \$200 per couple. Includes light breakfast, gourmet lunch, and seminar book. Contact: Neil or Jo Padgett, mpcneilp@aol.com or 1-301-829-1762.



September 4-5, 2004—Alpaca Clinic—Central PA. Two-day clinic for alpaca and llama enthusiasts. Contact : Jen Ford jfford4@comcast.net or 412-242-0624.

October 2, 2004—Fourth Annual Alpaca Heritage Sale and Open Farm Day. 10AM-4PM— presented by Alpaca Heritage Events, Incorp. This year the Alpaca Heritage Sale will be at the Waldorf School of Princeton, NJ. Free seminars, Free refreshments, Free parking, Alpaca apparel, Llamas, Herdsire Showcase, 20 participating breeders, over 40 alpacas. Contact Alice Brown for information, 856-697-8127 or go to www.AlpacaHeritage.com.

October 9, 2004—Happy Alpaca Farm Day and Seminars—10AM-4PM—Fenwick Manor Farm, New Lisbon, NJ. Dr. Norm Evans, DVM will speak on herd health, nutrition, and management. Andrea MacDonald will share information on alpaca fiber. \$85 per person or \$125 per couple (includes lunch). Contact Katharine Thompson, 609-893-5552 or FMFalpacas@Fenwick.net, Web: www.FMFalpacas.Fenwick.net.

Veterinary News for the East Coast: Viruses in Alpacas

By Alice Brown

Identification of the cause of diarrhea in a cria, as well as in an adult alpaca, can at times be frustrating. Even after running fecal exams and cultures for parasites, the cause may be elusive.

When all else has been ruled out, the cause may be a virus. According to The Western College of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Saskatchewan, there are several viruses known to infect alpacas and there are several other viruses that may infect alpacas, but cases have not yet been confirmed. The list includes: Adenovirus, Blue tongue, Borna Virus, Bovine Viral Diarrhea, Contagious Ecthyma, Foot and Mouth Disease, Herpes virus, Influenza A, Para influenza III, Rabies, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, Rinderpest, Vesicular Stomatitis, West Nile Virus, and Rotavirus, (<http://duke.usask.ca/~misra/virology/stud2003/lama/home.html>).

Most breeders immunize against Rabies (off label), but that is about the only virus that alpacas are routinely vaccinated against. Some have used the equine West Nile Virus vaccine on alpacas as well.

Contagious Ecthyma or orf is caused by a member of the pox virus family and is common in the U.S.* Foot and Mouth disease is a highly contagious viral disease that decimated the livestock industry in the United Kingdom a few years ago. Camelids are not highly susceptible.* Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV) causes blisters in the mouth, nose, and on or around the feet and teats. It can be differentiated from Foot and Mouth only through a laboratory test. Viral diarrheas may be caused by adenovirus, togavirus, rotavirus, and coronavi-

rus. The result of infection with any of these viruses usually results in a profuse watery diarrhea that is white to yellow in color.* Viral diarrheas are most common between 5 and 15 days of age in cria.* Bovine viral diarrhea virus has been isolated in a few lamas. *

West Nile Virus, is a viral encephalitis that has spread across the U.S. since first being diagnosed here in 1999. Clinical symptoms include muscle incoordination or abnormal way of moving, loss of appetite, and disturbances of the central nervous system.* Laboratory tests can diagnosis West Nile Virus by detecting the presence of antibodies.

Any diarrhea in crias, especially watery diarrhea, is cause for concern and a veterinarian should be consulted and a fecal exam conducted. A culture of the fecal sample may also be required.

According to Dr. Norm Evans' Field Manual, often loose pasty cria diarrhea is caused by too much rich milk. This may be the case if the cria has no fever, is gaining weight, and is playful. In this situation Dr. Evans recommends cutting back on the females grain. Dr. Evans' recommends SMZ-TMP (check with your local veterinarian for dosage) for nonspecific diarrheas in cria. A half ounce of yogurt (live culture), may also be given 2-3 times a day.

If worms, coccidia, and rich milk are not the cause of the diarrhea, a virus may be the culprit. In this case, treatment may involve using kaolin (such as kaopectate), electrolytes in water, and keeping watch for secondary infections.* I have also found live cultured yogurt to be helpful. All such treatments should be conducted under the direction of your local veterinarian.

**The Complete Alpaca Book* by Eric Hoffman pages 449-451.

Comments
about the
Newsletter,
any contri-
butions,
send to
Alice
Brown at
fpalpacas
@aol.com .

**O, how bitter a
thing it is to look
into happiness
through another
man's eyes.**

**—Shakespeare,
As You Like It, V. 2**



“Hello World, Hello Kitty!”

Forever Precious Summer Jewel and Kylie “kitty.”
Photo by Alice Brown of Forever Precious Alpacas, Vine-
land, NJ.