



MAPACA
Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

Newsletter

Jan. 2006

Volume 6, issue 1

ANNOUNCEMENT

The MAPACA Board of Directors is happy to announce that MAPACA will be sponsoring a Guest Speaker at each and every MAPACA meeting from now on. If you have ideas for a Guest Speaker or if you would like to be a speaker yourself (we have many talented and knowledgeable people in our ranks), please contact Bob Ciszewski at: **(304) 496-1073**. Also, the Board of Directors has decided that the quarterly meetings for MAPACA will rotate between the different areas of the region. If you would like to sponsor a meeting, please contact Bob Ciszewski at the above phone number for details.

PLEASE SAVE THIS DATE: JANUARY 15, 2006!
Lunch - 12 Noon, Speaker - 1 PM, Meeting - 2 PM

GUEST SPEAKER
Dr. Karen Baum, DVM
Little Doc's Veterinary Care, Inc., Huddleston, VA

Dr. Baum currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Alpaca Research Foundation and the International Lama Registry. At the January 15th MAPACA meeting Dr. Baum will speak on the subject of Emerging Diseases in Camelids.

The meeting will be sponsored by Kathy and Jim Schwartz of Blue Earth River Farm Alpacas (Mount Crawford, VA). Please **RSVP** to Kathy Schwartz at: **540-908-7420**. The meeting will be held at:

Hess Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, 4165 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Directions: Coming from the North, take 81S to US 33 E, Exit 247A toward Elkton. Go 2.6 miles and take a right turn onto Massanetta Springs Road. (There will be a Quarles gas station at the intersection). Take an immediate left onto Quarles Drive. Proceed up the hill and Hess Orthopaedics will be at the top of the hill. Huge brick building with white pillars in the front.

Coming from the South, take 81N to US 33 E, Exit 247A toward Elkton. Go 2.6 miles and take a right turn onto Massanetta Springs Road. (There will be a Quarles gas station at the intersection). Take an immediate left onto Quarles Drive. Proceed up the hill and Hess Orthopaedics will be at the top of the hill. Huge brick building with white pillars in the front.

HOTELS: http://www.hrcvb.org/harrisonburg_va_hotel.php Massanutten Ski Resort (right down the street) <http://www.massresort.com/>

The Board of Directors hopes that the membership will be as enthusiastic about this new arrangement as they are in implementing it and they are hoping that many of you will be able to attend. Again, if you can attend the January 15th meeting, please **RSVP** to Kathy Schwartz at: **540-908-7420**

Sincerely,

The MAPACA Board of Directors

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Jubilee Update!

By Anne Hallinan

Greetings!

For those of you who don't already know, the MAPACA Board of Directors decided to hire me to help manage the 2006 MAPACA Jubilee. For years, MAPACA members, the MAPACA Board of Directors, and very dedicated volunteers have worked together to put on this successful, nationally prominent annual show. But as any of you who have ever worked on a show know, it takes a lot of time and volunteer hours to do so. My roll is to manage the wonderful show you have already developed, take over many of the day to day tasks, act as point person for subcontractors and free up a lot of time so that fewer volunteer hours will be required and more of you can enjoy the show, each other and your alpacas.

Don't worry if you were hoping to lend a helping hand at the show. We'll still need your help! It takes lots of people to run a show of this size. Please, send me an email with your contact information and let me know what part of the show you're interested in helping with. We'll need people to assist with check in, the halter show, fleece show and traffic. I'll do my best to make this a great volunteer experience for you and we'd love to have you on the team!

The big question is, when will registrations open? The answer: Registration forms will be online February 12th and registration will open on **February 13, 2006**.

Plans are already in the works for a bigger and better Fleece Show, complete with a skein and handmade competition, great educational seminars, auction and some fun social activities. Don't forget, in order to accommodate as many farms as possible, stalls will be limited to 5 pens per breeder, so plan accordingly.

And please, don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or ideas you may have. (*Just remember that I'm on the West Coast, which is Pacific Time!*)

Be sure to mark your new 2006 calendars. 2006 MAPACA Jubilee, April 28-30 – Check In and Set Up on April 27. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Anne Hallinan, CMP
mapaca@mhevent.com
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541.896.3089 fax

Editor's Ramblings:

Instead of rambling in this issue, I wanted to share an article with you that I found on the Alpaca Research Foundation web site. It is a research update and describes the BVDV study that MAPACA is funding. Hope you find it informative. Best, Alice Brown

Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association (MaPaca) Teams up with the Alpaca Research Foundation (ARF) to Support Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVDV) Research

Recent concerns about cases of BVDV in alpacas have been fueled by reports of several confirmed cases of persistently infected (PI) alpacas all across the United States and in Canada. (See the BVDV census on the ARF website). ARF has worked quickly to solicit research proposals designed to determine the prevalence of this virus in North American alpaca herds. The following two complementary proposals have now been approved for funding with a November 1, 2005 start date. We are very happy to report that the Board of Directors of MaPaca has agreed to fully fund the second of the two studies. ARF will fund the first.

1. An Epidemiologic Assessment of Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus Infection in US Alpacas, to be conducted by En-Min (Eric) Zhou, MD, PhD and Julie Ann Jarvinen, PhD, DVM at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. 11/1/05-6/30/07, \$17,600. The major goal of this study is to test the blood from 200 randomly selected alpaca herds across the US for virus neutralizing antibodies against two types of BVDV to determine how commonly and frequently alpacas are infected with BVDV. In this study, only alpacas older than 6 months will be tested. The investiga-

tors will also look for a relationship between potential risk factors such as exposure to cattle or participation in shows and the presence of antibodies.

2. Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus in North American Alpaca Herds: Determination of and Implementation of Control Strategies, to be conducted by Clayton L. Kelling, DVM, PhD, David R. Smith, DVM, PhD, David J. Steffe, DVM, PhD and Bruce W. Brodersen, DVM, PhD of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 11/1/05-10/31/06, \$20,500. The major goal of this study is to determine the proportion of North American alpaca herds that are infected with BVDV by testing for the live virus as well as antibodies to the virus in crias under the age of 6 months. Participation of 200 herds will be needed to complete the study. If the virus is found to be active in a herd, further testing will be conducted to determine whether persistently infected carriers of the virus are present in the herd. In addition, the investigators will develop and help implement a plan for eliminating carrier animals and establishing BVDV-free herd status. Cost effective monitoring strategies will be developed whereby owners can certify their herds as BVDV-free.

Clayton Kelling and his research team at Nebraska have been at the forefront of developing testing and monitoring procedures for the control of BVDV in cattle and dairy herds. We are fortunate that they are willing to apply their expertise to this important problem in alpacas.

Completion of these studies will require cooperation from hundreds of alpaca owners across North America. All testing will be confidential. Only the herd owner will be notified of the results. If you are contacted and asked to supply blood samples from some of your alpacas, please plan to participate. By joining a study you will receive valuable, free information about the BVDV status of your herd and advice on how to achieve and maintain your herd's BVDV-free status. So take the first step. Join a study and get tested now! You will be helping all alpaca owners, including yourself, by agreeing to participate. To find out more about BVDV go to the ARF website at www.alpacaresearchfoundation.org.

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Letter to the Editor:

The following is the personal experience of a MAPACA member who detected Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus (BVDV) in their herd. We sincerely thank him for his openness so that other breeders may learn of this disease recently detected in alpacas.

Hi all.

As many of you know, the night before the Empire Show we learned that a cria born on our farm was potentially a BVDV PI (“persistently infected”) cria. We pulled our animals from the show as a precautionary move. I thought I would give an update as to the current situation at our farm.

I’ll try to be brief refreshing you on this disease, but refer you to the Summer 2005 Alpacas Magazine article for more complete information and the Winter 2006 issue. There is also an informative, well-written article in the December MAPACA Newsletter. (Editor’s note: The June, 2005 issue of the Camelid Quarterly also has an excellent article on BVD in alpacas.)

A lot is known about this disease in cattle but little is known about it in alpacas. The main risk of this disease occurs when a pregnant female is exposed to the disease in early pregnancy (18-120 days post-conception in cattle). During this period, the fetus she is carrying does not yet have an immune system to develop a response to the disease. The cria doesn’t recognize the disease as foreign and will develop a “persistently infected” condition where it will always be contagious, shedding the virus in the billions. The cria may be a “poor doer” or it may live and thrive. In cattle, PI calves can live to adulthood and reproduce (every calf it gives birth to will be PI).

The cria (Tag) at our farm was born on 10/1/05, 16 pounds, somewhat slow to start, much better after a plasma transfer, then on 10/12 started to crash so I took him to Tufts Vet Hospital. About 10 days later, the first PCR test came back positive for BVD. A positive PCR test indicates an acute infection. A series of PCR tests, several weeks apart, are necessary to determine a true PI cria versus an acute infection or a false positive test. Three PCR positive tests have confirmed Tag’s PI status.

Since it is necessary to wait some time between exposure and seeing antibodies, we had to wait a couple of weeks before we could test our herd. On 10/31/05, we tested our entire herd of 68 animals, including a gelded llama. A red top for an antibody test (Serum Neutralization test) and a purple top for a PCR test were sent to Cornell for every animal on the farm. When the test results came back two weeks later, several animals were positive for antibodies indicating exposure (impossible

to determine time of exposure – last month or last year?) and several crias came back PCR positive. The PCR positive crias and their dams were isolated from the rest of the herd and another series of tests were run. Since none of our adult males were antibody or PCR positive, we did not include them in the next round of tests since they are completely isolated from the females and crias. The second round of tests were again Serum Neutralization (antibody) and PCR tests on 52 animals, sent to Cornell on 11/18/05. We also sent 52 blood samples to another lab for an ELISA (antigen) test.

A few days ago, we received the PCR results that one of the crias (Penny) was again PCR positive, indicating that she was likely a PI cria as well. The other PCR + crias came back negative, indicating that on 10/31 they had either an acute infection or it was a false positive test. A third PCR test was run on Penny and she was removed from our farm to a horse farm owned by a vet from Tufts where Tag and his dam have been living for the past month. Both of these crias are active, robust and the picture of health; looking at them, you would have no clue that they were PI.

Penny was born on our farm on 9/15/05, which unfortunately increases the time period we had BVD exposure on our farm. Several animals have left our farm for breedings or sales so we have had to notify several farms of potential exposure to their farms (not a fun task).

Both Tag’s and Penny’s dams came to our farm in the Spring as boarders. One dam was 148 days pregnant and the other 164 days pregnant, both past the 120 day time period for when an in utero calf can be infected with BVD. The period of risk for alpacas is not known, although the alpaca literature generally states the first trimester (115 days) or extrapolates from the cattle gestation period. Combined with the fact that no other PI crias were found in the other 20+ births we had this year, it would appear that these dams came to our farm already infected. One came from Maine, the second from Colorado. I don’t point this out as an attempt to point blame at other farms, but rather to highlight the fact that BVD in alpacas is a *country-wide issue* (italics by editor) that I believe the industry needs to get a handle on. I have talked to MANY people in the country about BVD over the past 6 weeks and some believe that this is a Northeast issue because that is where the cases are being seen. I believe that *the Northeast is seeing the cases because we are testing for it.* (italics by editor) The Colorado farm involved has tested its herd and many of its animals have tested positive for BVD so it appears certain that that girl came to our farm with a PI cria in utero.

As mentioned earlier, the true risk of this disease is to

(Continued on page 5.)

(Continued from page 4.)

pregnant females in early gestation because of the potential to create PI crias. Because of the 2+ month exposure of Penny to my herd (of course she was in with all the 2005 crias and their newly pregnant dams!), I have a number of pregnant females who are BVD antibody positive. What to do about them? Since we do not know if all exposed females will give birth to PI crias, the almost uniform advice I have been given from vets and virologists around the country is not to terminate the pregnancies, but to isolate these females and test the crias (PCR test) immediately at birth. My dilemma: terminating a pregnancy is a lot easier decision than putting down a few week old cria (it will take several weeks to get test results and run a second test on any PCR+ crias. And during this period, the dam and cria must be quarantined.). I have decided to terminate a few pregnancies that are "higher risk" – these are the dams of crias who tested PCR+ on the 10/31 test and were in isolation with Penny. For the others, I will probably allow them go to term, isolate and test the cria. (12/10/05 update: Dr Steve Purdy stated at the Northeast Type Conference BVD session that there is a 1 in 3 chance that a female exposed during pregnancy will give birth to a PI cria.)

My non-vet advice:

- Require PCR negative tests on all animals arriving at your farm
- Isolate all new animals and animals coming back from shows or breedings for 2-3 weeks; if you cannot isolate, at least keep them away from pregnant females
- Test your herd to know their current status, to identify any PI animals or "at risk" pregnancies, especially if you have had any "poor doers", early births or stillborns.
- PCR test all crias at birth, preferably before they nurse.
- Ask (demand?) that all auctions and sellers test the animals before you buy

Something that has been noted by three different breeders I have spoken to is that PI huacaya crias sometimes have a suri-like fleece coat. A different than normal coat has also been noted in some PI calves.

As with all issues in the alpaca medical world, there is no consensus on this disease, the appropriate tests for camelids or the effectiveness of the tests. We need more research. The Alpaca Research Foundation (<http://www.alpacaresearchfoundation.org/>) has information on their website and is sponsoring some BVD research. Tufts Vet School, who I believe is on the cutting edge of this disease along with Cornell virology lab, is hoping to be able to keep Tag and Penny for further testing and some

possible experimental treatments, but like all things, money is needed. Here we have 2 vibrant, healthy crias from which I believe we can learn more about this disease in alpacas. Please contact me if you would like to donate to Tufts' research. (12/10/05 Update: The Board of Directors of the Empire Alpaca Association has given \$10,000 to Tufts for research on BVD in alpacas).

In some respects, I am very fortunate to have gone through this experience because I now know the BVD status of my animals and the potential risk I have for 2006 PI crias. If Tag had not gotten sick, I would not have tested my herd and would not have identified Penny as PI. I could have had the potential to have my whole crop of 2006 crias be PI.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Steve McCarthy
Spruce Ridge Farm

Editor's Note:
To benefit alpacas nationwide, MAPACA has recently responded to a funding request by the ARF and has donated \$20,500 to ARF as sole sponsor of the Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVDV) Cria Study in North American Alpacas. See announcement of this in the article on page 3. It is hoped that by supporting this effort, veterinarians and breeders alike will better understand the impact of BVDV on the national herd. We commend the Empire Alpaca Association for their contribution to BVD research.

MaPaca Meetings—2006

January 15, 2006

April 27, 2006 (At the Jubilee.)

July 16, 2006

October 15, 2006

***Please mark your calendars for these dates and plan to attend. Watch the Newsletter and the web site for announcement of the meeting times locations. The locations will vary.**

FYI—Meetings are held each quarter, starting in January on the third Sunday of that month.

Advertise in the MAPACA Newsletter!

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

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 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. **Any questions, email Alice Brown: fpalpacas@aol.com or call: 856-697-8127.**

Classified Ads:

Any member may post an ad for alpaca and/or alpaca farm related equipment and items. The ad may include a one sentence description and contact information.. 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. Team J W Alpaca Handling Equipment—**chutes, lightweight panels, gates, and Hay saver feeders of all sizes. Some discounted used equipment available. **Get Your year-end tax deduction!** 8ft. And 10ft. Team JW show panels available, while they last. 8 ft. panels \$68 (new \$78) and 10 ft. panels \$78 (new \$85). Available for pickup at Wild Rose Suri Ranch. See http://www.wildrosealpacas.com/alpaca_equipment/alpaca_equipment.htm or call **410-734-7084.**
Wild Rose Suri Ranch, MD.
- 2. Alpaca & Light Livestock Equipment—**in stock chutes, feeders, panels, and shearing table. Can be shipped or picked up at our farm. www.lightlivestockequipment.com or call **Jay at (518) 524-0545 AuSable Valley Alpacas, Jay, New York.**



Calendar of Events

February 19, 2006—BVD Seminar-10AM-4PM, Alpha Fire House, Alpha, NJ. Sponsored by the New Jersey Alpaca Community (NJAC). Dr. Ed Dubovi from Cornell University and Dr. Katrina Alger of Califon Animal Hospital will discuss transmission, clinical symptoms, testing, and control of BVD in alpacas as well as quarantine issues and new immunization protocols. \$40 for NJAC Members and veterinarians and \$50 for Non-NJAC members. Fee includes lunch. **Please go to www.njalpacas.org or call Frieda Goodrich 908-852-7204 for more information. See insert this issue of the Newsletter for registration form.**

March 4, 2006—An Introduction to Camelid Color Genes— 11:30AM—3:00PM. Seminar at Stormwind Alpacas by Ingrid Wood. Author of *A Breeder's Guide to Genetics: Relax, It's Not Rocket Science*. Columbus, NJ. Easy access from Route 206, Route 295 and the NJ and PA Turnpikes. \$50 per person (includes lunch). Call—**609-261-0696** for details.



Calendar of Events

April 9, 2006—Alpaca Heritage Budget Caper (ABC Show)— Sponsored by Alpaca Heritage Events. The ABC Show is a fun and affordable one day alpaca halter show to be held at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship Maryland. Judge: David Friedman. Full Fleece, Performance, Costume Classes and a Fleece Show. Free seminars, parking, and admission. Entry fee is \$60 per alpaca. \$20 for a vendor booth. No stall fees, bring your own panels. **Entry DEADLINE: FEB. 15, 2006.** For more information go to: **www.AlpacaHeritage.com** or contact Ingrid Wood at: **609-261-0690 or stormwindalpacas@comcast.net** . See form in December 2005 Newsletter.

April 28-30-MAPACA Jubilee 2006—The MaPaca Jubilee will again be held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, in Harrisburg, PA.
*Halter, Fleece & Performance Classes
* 4 Rings of Simultaneous Judging
* World-Renowned Judges
* Seminars by Leading Alpaca Experts
* Picture Perfect Alpacas!
* Expanded Fleece Show
* **New! Skeins and Handmades Competititon.** See the MaPaca web site at **www.mapaca.org** and read your MaPaca Newsletter, to keep abreast of current Jubilee information. Arrival and check-in date is April 27th.

My Kingdom For Some Water

*By Renee & Barry Prokop, Alpaca Vista Suris,
Spotsylvania, VA*

“Water, water, and not a drop to drink.” That was my thought as I stood on the barren frozen snowy tundra as the wind howled across the land. Well, ok, maybe the wind wasn’t howling and I was actually standing in my back pasture. But it was pretty darn cold. I had just been trying to chip the ice out of my frozen automatic watering stations after dumping out the blocks of ice from my rubberized buckets (my plastic buckets had cracked and split many days ago).

I knew that the watering stations would eventually freeze in the winter and that we would have to find alternative ways to provide water to the alpacas. I had started out using plastic buckets (because they were cheap). The trick was to get the buckets filled with warm water and out to the barn before I either fell, tripped, or lost most of the water due to faulty handling. The plastic buckets soon cracked and split as the water turned to a block of ice, I then went for a more industrial strength rubberized model that won’t crack and split no matter how solid the ice became. Somehow that didn’t make me feel any better.

In order to devise a better solution, I collaborated with a buddy of mine to develop a solar heating system

that would heat and circulate the water during the day. We then added a battery to the pumping system to work during the night. Once we stood back and looked at our design it just seemed too complicated.

Finally, admitting defeat, I called my sister-in-law Mary and presented the problem to her. My sister-in-law Mary has owned a horse farm for as long as I can remember. She continues to delight in hearing stories about my supposed farming techniques. Behind my back she refers to me as a “gentleman farmer”. However, in spite of my many trials, I am learning to be a good steward of the land and of alpacas.

On this day, I was feeling a bit dejected. “Say, Mary. Do you have any good ideas to keep the water from freezing during cold days?” “Sure, heat the water up!” “Well, I know that you use a heated horse trough but that costs a lot of money to heat all that water all winter. Besides alpacas don’t drink nearly the amount of water that a horse does. Isn’t there anything out there that I can use for about five gallons of water?” “Fish.” *Mary delights in confounding me from time to time.* “Fish? I should put fish in the buckets?” “No! All you have to do is buy a 25 watt submersible aquarium heater used for fish tanks” “Well, why didn’t I think of that!” “Because you’re a gentleman farmer!” *Mary has an answer for everything.*

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

**Renewal Postmark
Deadline
December 31, 2005
To receive your MA-
PACA Jubilee 2006
pen discount.**

**Either fill out and send in
the renewal form from the
December 2005 Newsletter
or go to www.mapaca.org
and printout the member-
ship/renewal form, fill it
out and send it in.**

News Flash:

I wanted to let everyone know that I contacted Dr. Secteau from New Bolton in reference to alpacas being changed from the category of exotic to livestock by the BOD of New Bolton. Dr. Secteau told me that the BOD did meet and discussed the matter and as of about a month ago, New Bolton has changed the classification of alpacas to a livestock category. The charges have been reduced to this classification. I asked Dr. Secteau if she would have New Bolton send me a letter confirming this and she agreed to do this. I will ask Alice to publish the letter in our next Newsletter.

Sincerely,
Fred Brown
Secretary, MAPACA