



MAPACA
Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

Newsletter

August 2006
Volume 6, issue 8

**MAPACA TYPE
CONFERENCE**

August 12, 2006

8:30AM-5PM

**SIGN UP DEADLINE EX-
TENDED UNTIL
AUGUST 7TH**

With the alpaca industry at a crossroads in regard to decisions about breed standards, it is **imperative** that all breeders learn as much as they can about the subject. Whatever decisions are made, whether to have a breed standard or not, who makes that determination, and how decisions can be changed, will affect our alpaca industry!

Speakers are Eric Hoffman; Dr. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD; Wini Labrecque, Dr. Stacey Byers, DVM, Ingrid Wood and Mary Reed. The Type Conference will be held at the Philadelphia International Airport Marriott.

For more information and directions go to the MAPACA website at www.mapaca.org. Cost is \$35/person includes lunch.

Come and be educated!

Come and be heard!

Come and ask questions!

Questions—Call Carol Pfister at: 908-303-3670.

**Camelid Veterinarian Continuing
Education Grant Program**

The Board of Directors of MAPACA is delighted to announce the establishment of an annual program to support continuing education for camelid veterinarians serving alpaca owners in the MAPACA region. Grants will be available up to \$500 per session to attend camelid educational programs. Grants are limited to one per year for each veterinarian. In the case of veterinary practices, only one grant per practice per program. Feel free to contact Alice Brown, Recording Secretary, with any questions you may have.

Funds will be available retroactively for programs already attended in 2006. The Camelid Veterinarian Continuing Education Grant Application is available on the MAPACA website. Please submit the completed application to Alice Brown. The applications will then be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. MAPACA requests that all recipients prepare a brief summary of the program, within 2 weeks of attending, to be shared with the MAPACA membership on the MAPACA website. These summaries will be archived and kept on the website for future reference as well.

★ **FIND A TYPE CONFERENCE SIGN UP FORM** ★
★ **INSERTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER. SEND IT** ★
★ **TO ME TODAY! TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR** ★
★ **YOU TO ATTEND THE MOST INFORMATIVE** ★
★ **TYPE CONFERENCE YET! DEADLINE EX-** ★
★ **TENDED UNTIL AUGUST 7TH!** ★
★

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Editor's Ramblings:

Really, what I hate most about all this hot weather is my constantly wet feet. Between changing and filling water buckets 3-4 times a day, hosing the alpacas 1-3 times a day, and moving the sprinkler trying to keep the pastures alive 20-30 times a day, my feet don't have a chance to dry out, ever! I tried keeping 3 or 4 pairs of slip on shoes in the garage so that each time I go outside I can put on another pair of dry shoes. However, generally the dry shoes were actually more like semi-wet or even very soggy. What to do?

A solution occurred to me in the drug store, of all places, as I walked down the aisle where the beach towels, sand toys and flip-flops were all on sale. Right next to the sand toys was a rack of WATER SHOES!. Yes!! Just what I need. I picked out a perky looking black pair with yellow stripes. These may just work I thought.

At home I slipped on my new water shoes. No socks needed. Hmm...they felt quite comfortable. But will they work. Outside, after hosing the alpacas and moving the sprinkler a few times, my feet were totally wet. I took off the water shoes as I headed in to do a few things in the house. Later comes the big test, have the shoes dried for the next water adventure. Sure did! I have now replaced the slip on sneakers for water shoes. Try it. They work great!

On a more serious note, I hope you are all signed up for the Type Conference. The Board of Directors has gathered a great array of speakers. This is an opportunity that you really don't want to miss. I hope I will see many of you there.

By now you will have received your MAPACA Election packet. Please fill out your ballot and mail it in the SASE right away. Don't let it sit on your counter collecting dust. The ballots must be post-marked no later than September 1, 2006.

If you haven't had a chance to speak to your vet about the MAPACA Veterinary Continuing Education Grant Program, now is the time to do so. The form to fill out, along with more information, is on the MAPACA website at: www.mapaca.org.

Hope to see you on August 12th!

Best, Alice Brown

PRESS RELEASE—June 19, 2006**New USDA Animal ID Brochure Allays
NAIS Fears**

Recently, numerous articles have appeared in the popular press and on web sites urging opposition to the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). While there are legitimate concerns regarding implementation of the NAIS, such as data confidentiality and cost to producers, many of the arguments being presented to foster opposition have no basis in fact or have nothing to do with the NAIS. The USDA has now posted a new informational brochure on the NAIS web site entitled “The National Animal Identification System: A Guide for Small-Scale or Non-Commercial Producers”. See: http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/downloads/print/Guide_Smal_NonCommercial_6_2_06.pdf

This brochure is a “must read” for camelid owners because they fall into the category of small-scale or non-commercial producers. By separating fact from fiction, the brochure will help distinguish real concerns from imaginary ones so efforts can be focused on the legitimate issues still in need of resolution.

Please continue to submit your comments or questions to any of the following Camelid Working Group (CWG) members.

Teri Nilson Baird at
teri@brokenwindmill.com

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72040.3361@compuserve.com

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www.camelidid.org

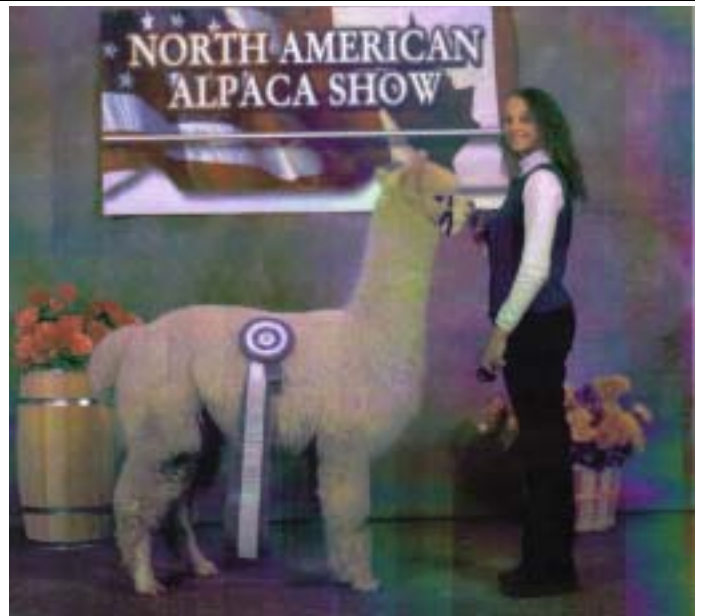


Photo sent in by Vicki Askew
Pictured Alycia Askew with her friend Sabre

My Alpaca, My Friend

*By Alycia Askew, Sunset Ridge Alpacas,
Valley Falls, NY*

A happy doe eyed
Kind sweet fuzzy friend
That loves me no matter what,
That listens no matter what I
say
That never actually has a bad
day
That I take care of
And who takes care of me,
My good friend.
My best friend,
My Partner,
My alpaca,
My Sabre

Has Your Pasture Got The “Right Stuff”

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

At the beginning of 2005 the owners of Alpaca Vista Suris, located in Washington State, decided to expand their farm to include another location in beautiful Spotsylvania County, Virginia. As the only son of an only son it fell to me to pick up the banner and start this new location. It didn't hurt that I already lived in Virginia and had just bought a 5-acre former horse farm. After many consultations with the “home office” it became apparent that while setting up an alpaca farm had certain common steps, it also needed local advice and expertise to ensure that local differences (soil, forage, pests, weather, etc.) were taken into account. A critical first step in the establishment of our farm was the pasture preparation.

Any pasture should be designed to match the intended animal's nutritional requirements. The farm that we acquired was designed for horses. We were four months away from placing alpacas on them. So we had to redesign the pastures to produce the optimum growing conditions for pasture grass preferred by alpacas. Also, we wanted to create an environment that would produce a healthier grass and therefore, healthier alpacas. The normal alpaca's diet will consist of about 80% forage (2.25 to 2.5 lbs per day) and 20% supplement (.75 lb per day). Alpaca females needs differ during late pregnancy & lactation and will require about 70 % forage (2.5 to 2.75 lbs per day) and 30% Supplement (1 to 1.5 lb per day). Since an alpacas diet is largely forage it is important to have the healthiest grasses for their consumption. This does not necessarily mean the richest grass. Alpacas do best on grasses that are between 10 to 14% Protein (11-12% ideal).

The best sources of information that we found were the local *Cooperative Extension Service, farm co-ops, feed stores, neighboring farms, and landscape nurseries*. We visited the Cooperative Extension Service first since it is a repository for a lot of agricultural expertise, documents and informative websites. However, we learned to come better prepared the next time we visited. We learned that we should allow about two hours to explore what we needed to know to have a healthy pasture for alpacas, as well as getting the local gossip on farm related conditions and current issues. It would also have been better if we showed up with:

- ◆ Pictures of property showing the topology (the lay of the land),
- ◆ Close-up pictures of pasture weeds and grasses (or

samples), and

- ◆ Close-up pictures of pasture trees and bushes (or samples).

Our extension agent talked about the importance of what I call TCM, or Test, Correct, and Maintain.

Testing the Soil

Soil testing is the first analysis that we did to determine what, if anything, needed to be added to the soil to provide the best growing conditions for the alpaca forage. A soil test should then be conducted every 2 to 3 years in order to provide a baseline for tracking changes in pH and soil fertility. It is great if you bring your farm pictures that show it's topology and growing conditions with you to the extension agent so that he can help determine if you need to run multiple soil tests. For our 5 acres, a single composite sample was sufficient. The Extension Agent gave us a form and a box to place the soil into. We then dug (using our trusty shovel) 12-15 pasture core samples from random locations throughout the pastures. Each core sample was about 3-4 inches wide, uniform depth (3-4 inches) and equal amounts for each core sample. We let the core samples dry and then mixed the soil together so that we would have a composite sample. If your topology and growing conditions vary widely you may want to test separate samples. We then filled the box supplied by the Extension Agent and sent it off to the lab for analysis. The results were returned to us in about 7 days (and it was free). The soil report will provide you with the mineral breakdown and recommended soil treatment. The pH level for our area should be between 6.2 and 6.8. In our case, it was acidic at 5.5 and the report recommended to add 1.75 tons per acre of lime to sweeten the soil. It was also recommended that we fertilize with a 50-30-0 mixture.

Alpacas also require a mineral called Selenium in their diet. Current Virginia soil tests in our area do not measure Selenium (Sodium Selenite, Se) in the soil. However, a *forage analysis* can be provided through the Extension Office to determine amount of Selenium in the forage (\$35 was the price that we were quoted). In most cases though, Selenium will have to be provided as part of an alpaca mineral supplement since selenium levels in many regions are poor.

Another reason that a forage test should probably be conducted is to understand the nutritional value of the forage. By understanding the nutritional value of the forage an alpaca owner can better gage what supplements to provide and whether to allow the alpacas unlimited access to the grazing pastures. It is important to note that just like humans, the alpaca's nutritional diet is critical to their long term health and productivity. *Selenium enhances the immune function and reproductive perform-*

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ance in alpacas.

Correcting the soil

Based on the soil report, we now understood that we needed to add lime and fertilizer to the soil to bring it up to a point where our forage would grow and prosper. The lime will increase the pH level in the soil, and fertilizer would bring the necessary nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium into the soil to improve growing conditions. We applied the lime and fertilizer to the soil as soon as was practical in order to start to bring the soil up to the optimum Ph level. In fact, lime and fertilizer (phosphate/phosphorus and potash/potassium) may take a year or longer to bring the soil into alignment with your needs: so the sooner the better!

We used a drop spreader with aerator spikes (in order to get the fertilizer deeper into the soil) on the back of our lawn tractor and spread it on a windless day. As time and the elements work the lime and fertilizer into the soil, the soil will produce better forage. (If there are alpacas on the property they should not be allowed to graze fertilized pastures until rain has thoroughly dissolved the fertilizer into the soil.) We plan on testing the soil every few years to determine how quickly it is coming into line with what we need. However, while our soil was being balanced, we had to plan for the more immediate issues such as maintaining and growing forage for our arriving alpacas in our existing pastures.

Maintaining Existing Pastures Weed Control

The first step in maintaining a forage rich pasture is to control the propagation of weeds. I noticed that while the grass was over grazed on our property when we got there, the weeds were doing just fine. In addition, they seemed to especially flourish in and around the old horse dung piles. While I did not have enough sense to take weed pictures or samples with me when I initially met with the extension agent, I did ultimately take pictures and email them to him for identification. I used a digital camera with a close up lens so that they could see leaf and stem detail (since many weeds look alike from a distance).

Another way that I learned about the weeds was visiting web sites like www.ortho.com (a great pictorial index of weeds and pests complete with recommended solutions) or the Virginia Tech web site <http://www.ppws.vt.edu/weedindex.htm> (a more comprehensive website, but you have to know the name of the weed first to get more information quickly).

One caution I expressed to the Extension Agent was that I wanted to ensure that anything I placed on or in the pastures had to have no adverse effect on the alpacas. We determined that I had four weeds in the pas-

tures; Broadleaf Plantain, Ground Ivy, Pig Weed, and Spotted Spurge. He recommended that I use livestock friendly weed control for pasture use. We checked with our local Co-op and landscape nursery to ensure that they had enough in stock to meet our needs. They also recommended that in eliminating weeds, timing is everything. The best times to apply weed killer is when weeds are actively growing which is typically Spring & Summer. In addition, they recommended that we apply the weed killer only in the areas affected by the weeds and not use it as a general application. The extension agent also indicated that by keeping the grass about 4 inches long it will naturally inhibit weed growth.

Growing the grass

The horses that had been on the property prior to our arrival had certainly tried the patience of the pasture. The pastures were overused and under seeded. Since the Extension Agent has broad information and knowledge about your area forage they will be able to tell you what grows best in your area. In Virginia, the best growing grasses seem to be Fescue, Orchard, and Bluegrass. We looked at the existing grasses and determined that it was light in Orchard Grass. Alpacas seem to enjoy munching on Orchard Grass so after the weed control had been completed, and about three weeks had past (in order to give the weed control time to work and also not affect the new grass seed) we began to overseed with Orchard grass. The reason that we decided to supplement rather than replant was simple. We felt that there was a reasonable blend of grass in the pastures, but it had suffered from overgrazing and from under nourished soil. We believed that if we paid proper attention to the soil, let the pastures rest and naturally rejuvenate, that we could invigorate it with additional Orchard Grass. In addition, newly seeded pastures typically require about 18 to 24 months to become fully established and we did not have that kind of time.

We purchased 50 lbs of Potomac Orchard Grass seed at the local feed store and spent the next weekend applying it. It takes typically 10 to 15 lbs of seed per acre and was recommended that we seed in early spring and/or late summer. These requirements are only for Virginia so check with your local extension office or neighboring farms for recommendations. We applied the seed on a day after the grass had dried out from the previous evening's dew. We didn't want to apply the seed on wet grass since it is critical to have the seed in direct contact with the soil (and not stick to the grass itself). We dragged the fields before applying the seed to open up and loosen the soil. We then used our drop spreader attached to the back of our tractor to apply the seed. We then dragged again after seeding to shake and settle seed

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Calendar of Events

August 25-27, 2006—East Meets West Auction—Brookhollow Farm, Boonton Township, NJ
 Catch the excitement....when the alpaca world meets at the 5th annual East Meets West Alpaca Auction, featuring crias sired by the incomparable Snowmass Invincible. Renowned camelid experts, Dr. Ahmed Tibary and Dr. Robert Van Saun will be speaking on reproduction and nutrition. Don't miss the opportunity to bid on donated herdsire services featuring the best of the best: Snowmass Nova, Invincible and more.
For more information www.eastmeetswestauction.com

MaPaca Meetings— 2006

**August 12, 2006—
Type Conference**

**Annual Meeting:
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 and locations. The locations will vary.

Classified Ads:

Any member may post an ad for alpaca and/or alpaca farm related equipment and items. The ad may include a short description and contact information. This will be a free service to current MAPACA members ONLY. Please send your ads to Alice Brown, fpalpacas@aol.com or call 856-697-8127.

1. **Alpaca Cria Sweaters**—Made of 100% alpaca. Warm, durable, lightweight, soft! Small to 25lbs. Large to 35 lbs. Assorted colors. \$50.00 each + tax, S&H. Free shipping with purchase of 3 or more. **Mountain Meadows Alpaca Farm. 540-586-1745.**
2. **Manure Spreader.** Pequea Model 70, ground driven, excellent condition (used 10 hours total), paint faded. 70 bushel capacity. If new \$2,900—asking \$1,500 or reasonable best offer. Pictures available. Contact: **Paul at Big Sky Alpacas—856-223-0570.**
3. **New Alpaca Photos Website—www.alpacaphotosonline.com** 100s, soon to be 1000s of photos of alpacas and products. No charge to submit photos. Contact: **Nancy Lake, info@alpacaphotosonline.com or 301-393-5878.**
4. **Wanted. Long term boarders** (one or two Huacaya females) fair rates, excellent pastures, spacious barn, and plenty of TLC, **call 609-261-0696 or visit www.stormwindalpacas.com**
5. **Cover-It Shelter**, 12 feet X 20 feet. Grey Rip-stop covering. House style. Great for storing hay or small tractors—or as a quarantine shed. FREE, just dismantle and take away. **Call Jovi at 908-806-6255.**
6. **Cover-It Shelter.** 22 feet X 20 feet X 12 feet high. House style. Heavy-Duty grey rip-stop covering over steel rib construction. Zippered door. Less than one year old. Stores over 400 bales of hay. Disassemble and remove for \$400 (originally about \$1000 new). **Call Jovi Larson 908-806-6255.**
7. **Stall Mats**, 4 X 6 feet, 3.4 inch thick. Indestructible. Half-price at \$20 each. **Call Jovi Larson. 908-806-6255.**



Calendar of Events

September 9, 2006—Eastern Extreme Alpaca Auction

Join us for the Premier Alpaca Auction of the Fall! We are proud to offer an elite selection of Huacaya Alpacas and thrilled to hold this year's auction at MOUNTAINEER RACE TRACK & GAMING RESORT! Visit the resort at www.mtrgaming.com. Join us Friday afternoon for a Meet & Greet and Alpaca Viewing. Friday Evening we invite you to a night out at the Race Track. On Saturday morning our guests will have the opportunity to attend seminars with featured speakers AOPA certified judge Ruth Evalstead & Dr. Wayne Jarvis. Visit us at www.easternextremeauction.com to preview auction lots. For more information **contact 1-877-MY ALPACA or info@easternextremeauction.com**

September 23, 2006—9AM-4PM Columbus, NJ, Camelidynamics Workshop with Dorothy Hunt, the first Camelidynamics Practitioner certified by Marty McGee Bennett. Learn a kinder, gentler, and more effective way of handling alpacas and llamas. Limited to 20 participants—\$150 per person—lunch included. Reserve your space by mailing a check to: Stormwind Alpacas, 1862 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road, Columbus, NJ 08022. **For information call 609-261-0696, or stormwindalpacas@comcast.net.**

September 30-October 1, 2006—Autumn AlpacaFest—Blankstone Farm, Coopersburg, PA.— 10AM-4PM. Open house for holiday shopping/alpacas for sale from many farms/free seminars on alpaca husbandry, taxes, fleece, veterinary care, fashion show, alpaca blessing, demonstrations. **Go to www.blankstonealpacas.com.**



Calendar of Events

September 30-October 1, 2006—I Love NY Alpacas Autumn Celebration— Ballston Spa, NY— ((Just 30 minutes North of Albany) Sponsored by Spa Alpacas. Saturday and Sunday from 10AM-4PM (rain or shine). Fun, educational, relaxing event in the midst of pastures full of friendly, fleecy alpacas. Weekend activities include farm and facility tours, fleece spinning demonstrations, free mini-seminars, hands-on alpaca handling and agility training, shopping at “The Fiber Nook” farm store. Contact: **Kelly & Paul at 518-885-0585 or pjzanella@aol.com**.

October 14, 2006—Alpaca Heritage Sale—10AM-4PM—Mullica Hill, New Jersey 08062, at the Gloucester County 4H Fairgrounds. Twenty Breeders all in one place! Private treaty sales, free fiber seminars, free admission to the public, visit: www.alpacaheritage.com . For more information call **Ingrid Wood: 609-261-0696**.

November 4-5, 2006—The Great American Alpaca Yarn & Fiber Festival—York, PA—Small Alpaca Farms of the Northeast Association—an event for all alpaca owners and breeders to showcase and sell their American grown, processed and produced alpaca fiber, rovings, yarn and products. Participate in the fiber related classes: enter skein, fiber arts and fleece competitions; donate to and enter silent raffle/auctions; see the alpaca to shawl demonstration and then bid on the shawl during the live auction. **For details: www.safona.org/events.html or contact Naomi Fenstermacher, at 610-273-0220.**

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into the soil. *Orchard grass* is a tall bunch perennial grass that grows in clumps, rather than forming a smooth sod. It's leaves are a light dull green folded at the base and may grow to a height of 40 inches. It also grows best in pH 5.5 to 7.0. Orchard is commonly used for hay and pastures; however, it does not persist under close and continuous grazing and requires a higher level of management than some of the other cool-season forages.

One final note: in caring and feeding the pastures it is also important to identify and manage the trees, flowers, and bushes in and around your pastures. Some vegetation is actually poisonous to livestock and alpacas. One web site that may be helpful is <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/content1/poisonplants.php>.

Also, in the fall the deciduous trees will deposit lovely dead leaves all over your pasture. If the leaves are not picked up, they most certainly will smother the grass that you have just lovingly grown. So you will have to take this into consideration as well.

Our western farm swears "our alpacas LOVE our dead maple leaves so they help clean up." In initially surveying the property, we believe that we are at minimum risk, but we will be looking at this more closely in the next year and either cutting back or eliminating any suspect and dangerous vegetation.

The final step in the process was patience. During the first year of growth we will be rotating the alpacas in the pastures more quickly in order to give the new Orchard Grass time to establish itself and prosper. To maintain good Orchard Grass pastures, it is essential to rest pastures 3 to 4 weeks between grazings so that the grass has a chance to recover and continue to develop. However, as the pastures rest, we will still keep busy. There are many projects that we have to attend to in order to be ready for our new arrivals. We have to redesign the fencing, set up watering, feeding and caring stations, establish a relationship with a veterinarian, find hay and many other necessities. We truly believe – what was once a job, has now become an adventure!

Copyright 2005, Alpaca Vista Suris

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. Please, when you send inserts, do not require that I have to sign for them! **Any questions, email Alice Brown: fpalpacas@aol.com or call: 856-697-8127.**

Please send your comments, articles, or submissions to
Alice Brown at:
Fpalpacas@aol.com.