

## **Camelid Community 2006 Report and Minutes “Using Diversity to Unify the Camelid Industry”**

Aug. 4-6, 2006

Radisson Hotel, Kansas City Airport

By Sheila Fugina and Barb Baker, moderators

### **Organizations with Official Representation at Camelid Community 2006**

Alpaca and Llama Show Association (ALSA)

Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA)

Alpaca Registry, Inc. (ARI)

Alpaca Research Foundation (ARF)

Camelid Alliance

Camelid Working Group (CWG)

Collectible Llamas, Inc. (CLI)

Golden Plains Llama Association

Illinois Llama Association

International Camelid Institute (ICI)

Lama Association of the Mid-Atlantic States (LAMAS)

Lama Medical Research Group (LMRG)

Llama Association of Southern California (LASC)

Midwest Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (MOPACA)

Missouri Llama Association (MLA)

Morris Animal Foundation (MAF)

Ohio River Valley Llama Association (ORVLA)

Rocky Mountain Llama Association (RMLA)

Southeast Llama Rescue (SELR)

Southern States Llama Association (SSLA)

Suri Llama Association (SLA)

Wisconsin Organization of Lama Enthusiasts (ORGLE)

### **Other Acronyms Used in This Report**

*Government Agencies/Programs:*

APHIS—Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA department)

NAIS—National Animal Identification System

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

VS—Veterinary Services (within APHIS)

*Other Organizations:*

ILR—International Llama Registry

LANA—Llama Association of North America

*Diseases:*

BSE—Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

BVDV—Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus

## **Background and History**

Camelid Community is the only national forum that offers the opportunity for dialog among representatives of national, regional and local camelid organizations as well as interested individual owners, providing a unique opportunity for an assessment of the “state of the union” of the camelid world. In the 1990s, the International Llama Association (now defunct) sponsored an annual Llama Assembly, the last of which was held in Colorado Springs in 1997. Representatives of a number of llama and alpaca organizations got together to host Llama & Alpaca Symposium in Kansas City in 1998, a highly successful and representative event. No group or combination of groups sponsored a similar national gathering in 1999. Feeling a need to see such a gathering held on an annual basis, several members of LANA tried getting it going again by hosting Lama Community in 2000 in Kansas City. Though numbers were few at first, attendance grew each year, and hosting and facilitating rotated among various groups and individuals. At the 2004 event the group voted to change the name to Camelid Community

to better reflect the background and interests of attendees. Unlike most conferences, Camelid Community's agenda is set by participants, and those unable to attend also are encouraged to submit proposed agenda items. Representation and attendance at Camelid Community 2006 was the best since 1998's event.

## **Organization Reports**

### **ARI**

Darby Vannier, ARI administrator

ARI registered 17,000 alpacas last year and expects to register approximately 22,000 this year. Turnaround time for registrations is three to five weeks, including DNA testing. Darby said he and the ARI Board are working to increase and improve communication with members. He also said they have a great relationship with AOBA, and the two boards are working together very well.

### **AOBA**

Gordon Anderson, AOBA administrator

AOBA has grown and opened a new office in Nashville January 1. Gordon said AOBA is emphasizing judges' training and certification. Affiliates run their own shows but must meet AOBA guidelines. The Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association had 1,800 animals in a show this past year. Alpacas must be microchipped and registered with ARI to be in a show. They will be working with ARI to develop show registration software. AOBA alternates its Nationals between Louisville and Salt Lake City to accommodate owners in various parts of the country. They also alternate their annual Fiber to Fashion event, which this year will be in Reno in November. There is no point system now for shows. Gordon said AOBA has gotten more serious about performance classes recently. AOBA also sponsors alpaca educational sessions at its shows.

### **ALSA**

Wally Baker, ALSA Board member

ALSA has 7,000 members, including youth, and recently realigned its regions. They have tried to "perk up" the regional shows, Wally said, but much is also up to those in charge of each regional. Some regional shows are much more fun and full of activities than others. Regional show committees could benefit from sharing ideas with each other. ALSA now allows members to show at any of the regionals, which makes it easier for those located closer to the site of a neighboring region's show than that in their own region. ALSA gives \$5,100 in premiums to each show and picks up the facility. It's hard to accommodate everyone for the Grand National, Wally said, and weather is always a concern someplace in the country. Nationals will be the last weekend in October in 2007 and 2008.

### **SLA**

Tom Riley, SLA treasurer

SLA has about 100 members and had its first conference in Estes Park this past June. Plans for next year's conference already are underway. SLA has its own registry, which is a sub-registry of the International Lama Registry (ILR), and they pay ILR to handle it. Llamas must be microchipped, blood typed and registered with ILR in order to be included in the SLA registry. SLA is developing a breed standard. Tom gave a brief description of the kuering process being used to rate suri llamas. To be in an SLA show, a llama must be certified a suri. SLA produces the *Suri Llama* magazine, copies of which Tom passed out to Camelid Community attendees.

### **CLI**

Dale Peterson, representative

CLI has its own registry, which is not a sub-registry of the ILR. It is for every type of llama in existence, Dale said, and requires DNA, microchipping and proof of parentage for registration. It is expensive to register and to show so people will only register and show their best, said Dale, thus helping to create value. CLI's show division is for halter classes only; there are no performance classes, and animals do not accumulate points. There are classes for traditional, silky and suri llamas. They don't compete against each other. CLI produces *Cool Camelids Magazine*, and Dale handed out excerpts from that publication.

## **Research/Education Reports**

### **MAF**

Allan Dewald, MD, representative

Allan showed a wonderful video clip spotlighting the various animals helped through MAF research projects. The Llama/Alpaca Division is the smallest division at MAF. Four new research projects have been approved for funding through MAF. See the LMRG and ARF sections of this report, as well as LMRG and ARF handouts included with this report. More financial support of MAF camelid research projects is needed from llama and alpaca organizations.

### **LMRG**

Allan Dewald, MD, representative

See complete LMRG handout as an attachment to this report.

Started in the early 1990s, LMRG provides an opportunity for the camelid industry to have input on proposals presented to the Llama/Alpaca Division of MAF for funding. LMRG reviews the proposals for applicability and affordability and provides input during an annual evaluation session to MAF's Scientific Advisory Board, which evaluates the proposals for scientific methodology and merit. LMRG is in need of active participants (with financial support) from organizations in the camelid community.

### **ARF**

Allan Dewald, MD, ARF vice president

See complete ARF handout as an attachment to this report.

Founded in 1997, ARF encourages and supports scientific research that benefits the North American alpaca industry, primarily in the areas of alpaca health and husbandry, genetics and fiber. Allan said 13 projects were funded by ARF in 2005-2006, including significant contributions to three ongoing MAF projects. In addition, 10 new research proposals directly submitted to ARF currently are under consideration for funding in 2006-2007. Many of the projects are applicable to llamas as well as alpacas, and all undergo rigorous peer review prior to approval for funding. In the project investigating BVDV infection in camelids, Allan said 19 percent of the herds tested have been positive with nine percent of the animals testing positive for antibodies. PI (persistently infected) crias are the problem, he said, and veterinarians are recommending they be euthanized.

### **ICI**

Barb Baker, representative

See ICI director announcement as an attachment to this report.

With the move of Dr. David Anderson from Ohio State University to Kansas State University, a new ICI director has been named to replace him in that position. Dr. Jeff Lakritz, DVM, PhD, has been at OSU for the last three years in the Food Animal Section working along with Dr. Anderson. He also is head of Food Animal Medicine and Surgery at OSU and is currently on the Scientific Advisory Committee for MAF. Dr. Lakritz has a good deal of clinical experience with camelids and has completed and published numerous articles on the health and well being of camelids. Unique among livestock industries, ICI serves as a centralized library for collection and dissemination of all facets of camelid information and education and is funded through an endowment. Services are available free online at [www.icinfo.org](http://www.icinfo.org).

## **Animal Care Topics**

### **IRC Council**

Sheila Fugina, IRC Council moderator

See revised IRC Council purpose and plans statement and definitions for words used in rescue as an attachment to this report.

Definitions for words commonly used in rescue discussions were developed by members of the IRC Council in response to a request by Camelid Community 2005. Those definitions were presented at this year's gathering in the hopes that they will become the camelid industry standard so discussions of camelid welfare are clear and understandable and don't get bogged

down because of a misunderstanding of what is meant by the words used. Sheila also presented a rewritten organizational proposal establishing the council. The new version is a simpler and more practical description of the purpose and plans of the IRC Council. (Though the council had eight members at the time of Camelid Community 2006, two more members have joined since then.) The council continues to compile a nationwide list of rescue groups and individuals so there can be communication and networking in llama and alpaca welfare situations (send additions to Sheila at bsfugina@presenter.com). The council soon will set priorities on the other items it plans to work on in the coming year, including educational efforts and opportunities. Darby Vannier of ARI said it now would be possible to “microchip check” alpacas involved in welfare situations, and Sheila said she is already using ILR’s database to identify llamas in some welfare cases.

### **Camelid Emergency Preparedness**

Karen Conyngham

See complete article as an attachment to this report.

It is essential that camelid owners be prepared with an evacuation plan before it is needed. The natural disasters that have been so prevalent in the news—hurricanes, wildfires, floods—underscore the need to be ready to save our animals as well as ourselves. Karen showed slides of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that emphasized her points very graphically. She reminded everyone that though you may think you are relatively safe from natural disasters in your area, other disasters can happen anywhere—including barn fires, hazardous material spills, train derailments and propane line explosions. Disaster plans also should include how to be prepared to “shelter in place” for a period of time, perhaps without power sources or the ability to leave your farm to obtain food and water. Just getting people to think about it is the necessary first step, she said. She not only recommended that camelid owners be prepared with a plan for their individual farms, but also that llama and alpaca organizations work with their state animal health or public health agencies to see what is needed in their areas. Barb Baker also suggested that camelid owners register with ICI’s Emergency Alert System to receive notifications of emerging diseases, epidemics, outbreaks or issues requiring immediate response.

### **USAHA**

Karen Conyngham, ILR representative to USAHA’s Board of Directors

USAHA is made up of the 50 state veterinarians, practicing and university veterinarians, USDA, APHIS and VS. The USAHA 2006 Annual Meeting will be in October in Minneapolis.

### **Standards of Care Update**

Marsharee Wilcox

Two standards of care pieces were presented at Camelid Community 2005, “Minimum Standards of Care for Llamas and Alpacas” and “Recommended Practices in Caring for Llamas & Alpacas”. Marsharee reported on distribution of the two pieces and urged that camelid organizations with web sites include a link to the site where the documents are available at [www.camelidcare.info](http://www.camelidcare.info). There was discussion about including the booklets in the Advisor Packets for this year’s FFA National Convention.

## **Animal Health Topics**

### **Diseases**

There was general discussion of diseases currently of concern. Continuing the discussion of BVDV infections begun by Allan in his ARF presentation, Darby Vannier of ARI said one of their vendors is trying to make an easier BVDV test. Allan asked that Darby keep him informed of the vendor’s progress. Outbreaks of anthrax, particularly in Texas and Minnesota, were also discussed. Though Texas usually has annual outbreaks of anthrax, the cases in Minnesota were the first ones to occur in the state in many years.

## **Government Relations**

### **Animal ID/NAIS**

Karen Conyngham

## **CWG**

Dr. Julie Ann Jarvinen and Teri Nilson Baird, CWG co-chairs

See CWG draft recommendation #1 and list of CWG discussion items and unfinished tasks as an attachment to this report.

These discussions were co-mingled since the CWG is charged with developing written recommendations to USDA regarding the camelid portion of the NAIS. Though the CWG used industry input to recommend use of microchips as the preferred method of identifying llamas and alpacas, there are still a number of decisions to be made regarding microchips—location of the chip, who is responsible for microchipping, etc. Camelid Community participants definitely were in favor of using a universal scanner for reading microchips. CWG is forming new subcommittees to address unfinished tasks. Julie and Teri said there are a number of issues regarding the tracking of camelid movements that need to be discussed and asked for input from registries and show associations so their needs can be taken into consideration. Two other areas the CWG would like subcommittees to address are the role of camelids in epidemiology of livestock diseases and conditions for industry participation in the NAIS. All camelid organizations with web sites were urged to provide a link to the CWG web site at [www.camelidid.org](http://www.camelidid.org).

Karen said that the CWG is trying to locate camel owners since they are included in this species working group. She asked that anyone with names and contact information for camel owners forward them to her at [72040.3361@compuserve.com](mailto:72040.3361@compuserve.com). She also reminded the group that the CWG needs to comment on the USDA docket by September 6.

## **Camelid Alliance**

Marsharee Wilcox, representative

The Camelid Alliance is a small, independent group of alpaca and llama owners who also are active members of USAHA. Alliance members monitor and respond to emerging disease and regulatory measures potentially impacting camelids and their owners. Alliance efforts in 2005 focused heavily on the Canadian border closure and the classification of camelids in that disease response situation. When a cattle group was successful in getting a temporary injunction to prevent the border from reopening, USDA appealed the temporary injunction, and the Camelid Alliance filed an amicus brief supporting USDA's position. While approximately \$6,000 in donations from camelid organizations and individuals has been received to help in meeting the \$20,000 in legal fees incurred in researching, writing and filing the briefs, more donations are needed. Those wishing to contribute to the legal fund should make a check payable to "Spyridon Koch Camelid Legal Fund" and send to Marsharee Wilcox, 3214 Eves Way, Hampstead, MD 21074. Efforts continue to formalize the separation of camelids from ruminants in the Code of Federal Regulations. Support of these efforts is an investment in every camelid owner's ability to keep, transport, sell and enjoy their llamas and alpacas.

## **Expanding Interest/Ownership in Camelids**

### **National FFA Convention Report**

Barb Baker, representative

There was a llama display at the 2005 FFA National Convention in Louisville for the first time ever, and it was highly successful. Sponsored by ALSA, ICI, ILR and LANA, the display included a pen with llamas who were the highlight of the convention and endeared themselves to the 53,000 attendees. Barb said the convention is moving to Indianapolis this year and will be held October 25-27. Though there was concern at first because the new facility doesn't allow animals, an exception was made for the llamas and for a horse group because both were so popular last year. The new display, sponsored by ALSA, ICI and ILR, will highlight the many uses of llamas with expanded fiber and packing exhibits. A bookmark highlighting those uses and including web site addresses of the three sponsoring llama organizations will be handed out to FFA members at the display. The bookmarks are tied with llama fiber, and some Camelid Community participants were helping out by tying bookmarks during discussions. The 2006 llama display also will be more inclusive, and llama organizations are encouraged to provide financial help so we can expand interest and ownership in camelids. Groups donating will have web site or other contact information displayed at the booth and included in take-home materials. Contact Barb at [bebaker@earthlink.net](mailto:bebaker@earthlink.net) for more information on how to be involved.

### **Tournament of Roses Parade**

Maryan Baker, LASC president

After trying for a number of years to have a llama unit accepted in the Tournament of Roses Parade, Maryan reported that LASC finally succeeded. Llamas will be included in the parade for the first time New Year's Day 2007 in Pasadena. She said there will be 18 llamas with their handlers, and they will be located toward the beginning of the parade. There will be llamas pulling carts, some carrying packs, and other llamas and handlers dressed in traditional costumes. Because this is such great national exposure, llama organizations and owners across the country might want to think about how to tie in locally with this New Year's Day event.

### **Llama Drill Team on Animal Planet**

Barb Baker

The llama drill team that performed at this year's Ohio State Fair will be featured on an episode of Animal Planet this fall as part of a feature on the Ohio State Fair. Directed by Donna Moore, the llama drill team has been a fair highlight for years. Film crews were busy capturing the drill team and other animal related activities during this year's run of the fair.

### **Lama Fiber and Lama-Related Activities**

A wide-ranging discussion provided suggestions for using llama and alpaca fiber in ways other than the usual yarn, roving and batts by using it to stuff pillows, pet cushions and other handcrafted items. Others use their animals to generate revenue by holding llama birthday parties, offering "take a llama to lunch" hikes, selling llama manure, setting up poker runs for adults and doing publicity for businesses by having llamas at grand openings, etc. Using camelids as a draw for a bed and breakfast and working with tour operators to have your llama or alpaca farm included as part of a scheduled bus tour also were suggested. Others offer niche services like shearing, toe nail trimming and giving shots. We were reminded not to forget educational events—school visits, pet expos, fiber festivals—that may not generate immediate income but that may pay dividends in the future.

### **Adding Value to Camelids**

Discussion focused on the importance of training and handling in adding value to camelids no matter what their purpose. It goes without saying that animals trained to pack or pull carts, and to handle easily while performing those tasks, are worth more money than those without such training. Animals trained to handle themselves well when exposed to a wide variety of people and activities are worth their weight in gold as public relations or therapy animals. No matter what their purpose, though, camelids that have been trained in the basics—haltering, leading, loading in a trailer, standing for shearing, shots and nail trimming—are easy to handle and pleasant to be around, which adds value to those animals.

### **Competition Among Organizations**

This topic was first brought up last year when someone mentioned that all llama and alpaca organizations are competing for a finite dollar. Most camelid owners (and prospective owners) only have so much money, and they increasingly are making choices about which organizations to join and which projects and entities will receive their financial donations. This puts us all in competition with one another at least indirectly.

More and more llama organizations are including alpaca owners as members and providing educational programs and conferences with both llamas and alpacas in mind. Camelid Community participants felt it was important to encourage even more networking and sharing of information among organizations and across species, fostering cooperation rather than competition among organizations.

### **Take-Away Topics for Camelid Community 2007**

Set for Aug. 3-5, 2007, at the Radisson Hotel, Kansas City Airport

LMRG—Find additional qualified and committed people to participate on the LMRG and camelid organizations willing to provide financial support for those people.

MAF—Generate additional financial support from llama and alpaca organizations and owners to support camelid research projects. Publicize the various ways to donate to MAF so groups and individuals can select which options best fit their needs.

IRC Council—Continue to build nationwide list of rescue groups and individuals. Help to educate animal control authorities in the care and handling of camelids, also providing them with camelid owner contacts in their areas. Decide top priorities in overall IRC Council plan, and establish steps to accomplish them.

Emergency Preparedness—Distribute “Camelid Emergency Preparedness” article to llama and alpaca organizations for printing in newsletters and posting on web sites. Encourage individual farms to prepare their own plans, and urge camelid organizations to work with their members and with state animal health and public health agencies to develop plans for their own states or regions.

Standards of Care—Encourage llama and alpaca organizations to provide a link on their web sites to the web site where the two standards of care documents may be accessed: [www.camelidcare.info](http://www.camelidcare.info).

NAIS/Animal ID/CWG—Get CWG representation from llama and alpaca registries and show associations to provide input regarding registry and show systems for animal tracking. Continue to build contact list of camel owners.

All Organizations—Encourage more networking and sharing of information among organizations and across species. Urge cooperation rather than competition among organizations.

## **Camelid Community 2006 Participants**

Gordon Anderson, Nashville, TN  
Teri Nilson Baird, Elizabeth, CO  
Barbara Baker, Plain City, OH  
Maryan Baker, Riverside, CA  
Wally Baker, Riverside, CA  
Joy Bishop-Forshey, DVM, Wauseon, OH  
Linda Carter, Metamora, OH  
Zelma Cleaveland, Chillicothe, MO  
Cara Colyott, Coulterville, IL  
Charlie Colyott, Coulterville, IL  
Karen Conyngham, Austin, TX  
Allan Dewald, MD, Rapid City, SD  
Sheila Fugina, New Richmond, WI  
Julie Ann Jarvinen, DVM, Ames, IA  
Kathy Lamphear, Harrisonville, MO  
Patti Morgan, Buena Vista, CO  
Lloyd Nash, Martinsville, IL  
Karen Oertley-Pihera, DVM, Ball Ground, GA  
Kurt Oertley-Pihera, Ball Ground, GA  
Dale Peterson, Birmingham, AL  
Thomas Riley, Carmel, IN  
Lisa Saunders, East Peoria, IL  
Kathy Smalley, Cumming, GA  
Ken Smalley, Cumming, GA  
Craig Swindler, Indian Trail, NC  
Janet Swindler, Indian Trail, NC  
Darby Vannier, Lincoln, NE  
Marsharee Wilcox, Hampstead, MD  
Joyce Wilson, McPherson, KS  
Ricky Zachow, Drexel, MO

