

# CONNECTION

Summer 2021



## Articles in This Issue

- ♦ CAMELIDynamics & the Science of ABA; Part II
- ♦ Introducing Olde Lyfe Alpacas
- ♦ My Cria Isn't Nursing... Any Suggestions?
- ♦ Tika and the "Danish Diet"
- ♦ A Volunteer Newbie's Perspectives

[Click title to jump to article]



**California Alpaca Breeders & Owners Association**  
Connecting members to Calpaca, the industry and each other



In California's tradition as a pioneer of progress, Calpaca was the first, and the oldest, regional, alpaca association in the Northern Hemisphere. Past and current members of Calpaca have been leaders in the American alpaca industry since 1989.

Calpaca represents alpaca owners, breeders, and enthusiasts in California and beyond. We promote the well-being of alpacas and education of the public about alpacas, alpaca fiber, and alpaca products. We support each other through shared information and experiences. We host meetings, speakers and shows for the benefit of members and the public.

Calpaca Membership meetings are held quarterly on the second Saturday of the second month.

We invite you to join us!

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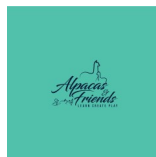
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[Director@CalpacaBoard.org](mailto:Director@CalpacaBoard.org)



## **VIRTUAL Quarterly Membership Meeting 08.14.2021**

Check Facebook and Email for online access details.

**Hosted by Maureen & Larry Macedo**

**Macedo's Mini Acre | Turlock, CA**

Cover photo by Kaylee Velez (see page 9 for more!)

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### Affiliations

#### Alpaca Owners Association (AOA)

8300 Cody Dr Suite A  
Lincoln NE 68512  
402-437-8484  
402-437-8488 Fax  
[AlpacaInfo.com](http://AlpacaInfo.com)

#### Alpaca Research Foundation (ARF)

[AlpacaResearchFoundation.org](http://AlpacaResearchFoundation.org)

#### International Lama Registry (ILR)

[LamaRegistry.com](http://LamaRegistry.com)

### Advertise in the Connection

#### Calpaca Members:

Business Card: **Free**  
¼ Page Color Ad: \$15  
½ Page Color Ad: \$30  
Full Page Color Ad: \$55

Contact *Connection* Editor  
[editor@calpaca.board](mailto:editor@calpaca.board)

### To join or renew your Calpaca membership:

[calpaca.org/page/2572/join-calpaca](http://calpaca.org/page/2572/join-calpaca)

### Stay Connected!

#### Calpaca Website

[calpaca.org](http://calpaca.org)

#### Group Emails

[info@calpacaboard.org](mailto:info@calpacaboard.org)

#### Calpaca Facebook

[Facebook.com/groups/Calpaca](https://Facebook.com/groups/Calpaca)

# Message from the President

Hello Alpaca Enthusiasts,

What happened to spring? The season seemed be on fast forward and sped right by this year. As I write this message, we have just experienced record-setting heat waves in many areas. It seems we are indeed facing a long, hot summer. I urge you to keep a close eye on your alpacas and **stay on top of the many ways to keep them safe and comfortable**. Be sure to do the same for yourself, too. I am so looking forward to fall!

Speaking of fall... Finally, we are going to gather for an alpaca show!! The **Gold Country Gathering** is scheduled for October 15-18, 2021, and registration is open. We are looking forward to an amazing turn-out for this long-awaited event, so reserve your stalls early. *Note:* You do not need to complete all of your entry information to reserve your stalls.

If you would like to help support the show through a sponsorship, there are new sponsorship opportunities at Gold Country. One of the sponsorships supports the ever-popular hospitality table. Also new are the Friends of Calpaca sponsorships. These sponsor classifications provide opportunities to select levels of sponsorship that will help underwrite the cost of putting on the show.

If you aren't registering for the show, it's easy to become a **Friends of Calpaca Sponsor**, and there are other sponsorship options available if you are interested.

1. Go to the Alpaca Show Registration System page registration page at [AlpacaReg.net](http://AlpacaReg.net).
2. In the **Select a show to continue** list box, scroll down and select **Gold Country Gathering**; then click **Enter Show**. The Gold Country Gathering registration page displays.
3. If you already have an account, log in with your user name and password; or create a new account.
4. Scroll down to the **Stalls, Sponsors, Volunteering** section and click the **Add/Edit Stalls, Sponsors, Volunteering** link. The registration page displays with the **Stalling** section at the top of the page.
5. Scroll down to the **Sponsorship** section, where you will find the list of sponsorship categories.
6. When you have made your selections, click **Submit**.

We will truly appreciate your support.

Also coming up is the election for the 2022 Calpaca Board of Directors. It was such a successful process last year that the voting will be held online again this year. Be looking for candidate bio information and voting details coming out soon. Thank you in advance to those Calpaca members who are willing to step up to serve our organization. And remember to cast your vote!

I hope you enjoy reading the *Connection*. The articles are timely, and the Classifieds offer you the opportunity to let others learn about your ranch, alpacas, and products. The *Connection* also serves as a historical record of Calpaca through the years. When you get a chance, read through some of the past issues. I think you will find it very interesting and informative.

Our August 14 membership meeting at the Macedo's was planned to be both virtual and in-person. Recent COVID reports are causing concern among the general population, and masking ordinances are being put in place. As a result, our Calpaca membership meeting will be virtual only. For details, see the homepage of the Calpaca website or page XXX of this newsletter.

Take care and stay well,

*Dianna*

Dianna Jordan

2021 Calpaca President



## Keeping in Touch

Calpaca has three primary ways for members to send or receive information: by email, through the Calpaca Facebook page, and on the Calpaca website.

**Email to:** [info@CalpacaBoard.org](mailto:info@CalpacaBoard.org)

- To Email Calpaca Members: A member of the board of directors will forward your message to Calpaca members in a timely manner.
- To Email Board Members: Your board members encourage members to contact us with any comments, questions or concerns. We are here to serve you.

*Note:* This process helps prevent the scamming that occurred with the former member email distribution list.

**Calpaca Website:** [Calpaca.org](http://Calpaca.org)

This is Calpaca's primary online presence, the "Internet face" of our organization. It's the place where existing, new, or potential alpaca owners can go to learn about Calpaca. Who we are. What we offer. How we assist new and current alpaca owners. How we support the alpaca community through education. What events we offer. What support we offer.

**Calpaca Facebook Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Calpaca>

Calpaca maintains an active Facebook page, **Calpaca-California Alpaca Association**, which serves as an extension of our website. The Calpaca Facebook page exists to promote and answer questions about raising alpacas, using alpaca fiber, husbandry issues; to share interesting news and ranch events; and to promote classes having to do with those issues. We are an open group and encourage people who are interested in alpacas to join the discussions; e.g., BOD announcements, alpacas in the news, emergency information, birth announcements, new purchases/acquisitions, Calpaca events, Calpaca farm member events, industry events, etc. This is a group for learning, sharing, and being supportive.

*Advertising:* Only Calpaca Farm Members may advertise animals or products for sale. If the frequency of this advertising becomes excessive, the post will be removed by the moderators. The moderators will also remove any advertising posts by non-Calpaca Farm Members.

### AOA Frequently Used Links

- [Alpaca Academy](#)
- [Alpaca Owners Guide](#)
- [Affiliate Directory](#)
- [Marketing Opportunities](#)
- [Members Helping Members](#)
- [Mission and History](#)
- [Renew/Join AOA](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Upcoming Shows](#)

### Updated Lab Schedule

Due to COVID-19 our lab DDC reduced the testing of our blood cards to every other week. DDC will once again be testing our cards weekly. Cards are mailed every Tuesday with the results being returned on Wednesday of the following week.



The June wedding of Stephanie Fong and Jason Wong at Park Winters with Menagerie Hill Ranch's boys, Blizzard and Velvet Legend  
-contributed by Deb Galway-

# Calpaca News

## Calpaca Quarterly Membership Meeting

**Saturday, August 14, 2021 | 10:30 a.m. | Virtual Meeting**

**Covid restrictions have again necessitated that our meeting be virtual only.**

**Information will be sent separately for online access to the membership meeting and educational presentation.**



**Hosts:** Maureen and Larry Macedo, Macedo's Mini Acre

**Education Topic:** Agritourism

### Meeting Schedule

**10:30 a.m.:** Login, greetings and chat time

**11:00 a.m.:** Business meeting followed by educational presentation

**Please RSVP if you intend to attend online.**

**Text:** Larry at 209.648.2338 or Maureen at 209.648.2384

**Email:** MacedosMiniAcre@gmail.com

### 2022 Calpaca BOD Election Committee

- Karen Kelly
- Cindy Harris
- Jaclyn Jones

"The Committee shall actively recruit and nominate candidates for election as Directors for the ensuing terms."

### Upcoming 2021 CALPACA Events

**Oct. 15-17**   **Gold Country Gathering**  
Nevada County Fairgrounds  
Grass Valley, CA

**Nov. 13**   **Calpaca Quarterly Membership Meeting**  
**Hosts:** Dianna & Jack Jordan  
Alpacas of Somerset Farm  
**Time:** TBD  
**Topic:** TBD

### NEW California Alpaca Rescue! [AlpacaLlama Rescue](#) in Modoc County

"We are a small, brand new non-profit rescue looking to grow. We are AlpacaLlama Rescue (non-profit) in Modoc county. We have loved camelids for years and have talked about a ranch for 10+ years. When we realized the need for rescue, we decided that was a better route for us. We aren't trying to raise show animals or be a fiber farm. I have been on the board of an animal rescue for seven years, so I had that experience as well."

**Shelly Frame Crosby | 360.500.8123 | [AlpacaLlamaRescue@yahoo.com](mailto:AlpacaLlamaRescue@yahoo.com) | Alturas CA/Modoc County**

# My Cria Isn't Nursing... Any Suggestions?

By Dianna Jordan, Alpacas of Somerset Farm

The call came in while I was visiting with our daughter. I am so glad I decided to answer it. By the end of the call, I added valuable information to my “what do you do if” toolbox. The fact our daughter was there is a very significant part of this story.

The call was from a friend and fellow alpaca owner looking for help. They had a newborn that hadn't begun to nurse, or even showed any interest in nursing. We went through a series of questions and answers about the behavior of the cria and the dam. We discussed several possibilities and techniques. Based on the behavior being described, I suggested they might be dealing with a condition identified by Dr. Madigan as Dummy Cria Syndrome, so named after the behavior, and commonly known in the horse world as Dummy Foal Syndrome.

The similarity between the cria's behavior and those of a dummy cria included apparent detachment from the environment and activities going on around it, failure to recognize its mother and no interest in nursing.

The theory behind the Dummy Foal and Dummy Cria Syndrome is that somewhere between the time the cria or foal enters the birth canal and the moment it emerges from the womb, a biochemical “on switch” must be flicked that enables them to recognize their dam, nurse and become mobile. It is suspected that the physical pressure of the birthing process may be that important signal.

I asked if it had been a fast birth. The owner didn't know because they weren't there. All the

while our daughter was listening to my part of the conversation. Finally, I asked a question I should have asked earlier, “Does the cria have a suckle response?” The answer was, “No!!” I could hear the frustration and concern in my friend's voice. My reply was, “I don't know what to recommend when there is no suckle response.” After listening to my side of the conversation and hearing my comment, our daughter spoke up and offered her help.

Our daughter Jennifer is a registered nurse and certified IBCLC (International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant). She has over 20 years of experience supporting breastfeeding families, and 25 years of teaching in the health-care field. She has been nicknamed the “Baby Whisperer” because of her ability to turn around the most challenging situations when a baby does not latch on or nurse effectively.

She suggested the nerves associated with nursing needed to be stimulated. As noted above, these nerves are generally stimulated by the pressure and contractions during the time spent in the birth canal. This cria's nerves needed to be woken up so that natural instincts would take over.

She instructed the owner to find the concave place between the ears at the base of the cria's skull (Illustration #1), and with the tips of her index and middle fingers, start gently massaging in a circular motion. This motion stimulates the cranial nerves (CN) that come together at the base of the skull. Pay particular attention to the descriptions (Illustration #2) about Cn5, Cn7, Cn9 and 10, and Cn12, and think about those nerves and their effect on the ability to nurse.

## My Cria Isn't Nursing... (cont.)

After a few minutes of massaging the space at the base of the skull, she instructed her to move her fingers to the sides of the cria's face, and massage along the top and bottom of the jaw line. After massaging the jaw line, she was to insert a finger into the cria's mouth and massage the roof of the mouth.

After getting off the phone with me and feeling they had nothing to lose and a lot to gain, the owners of this



Illustration #1

cria used the "Madigan Squeeze" and our daughter's suggestions.

I am happy to report that after a plasma transfer, the massage treatments and the Madigan Squeeze, the cria started engaging with the world around her, recognized her dam, and started nursing. The proud owners have a healthy and thriving cria, and all of us have a new tool for our "What do we do if?" toolboxes.

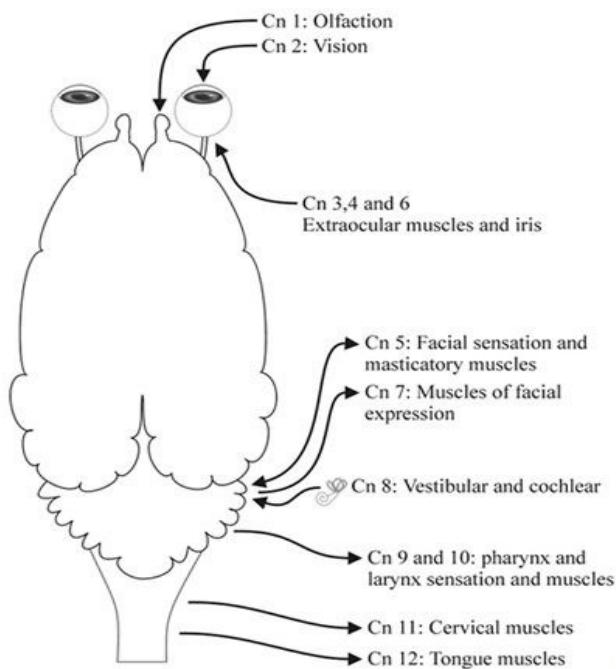
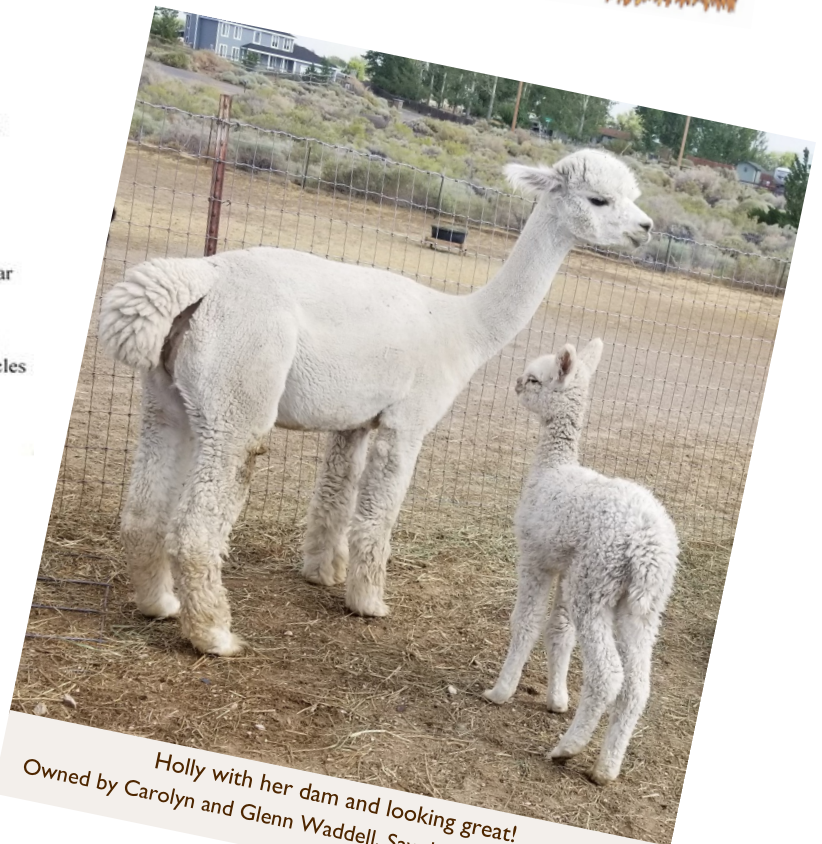


Illustration #2



Holly with her dam and looking great!  
Owned by Carolyn and Glenn Waddell, Sawdust Alpacas, Fallon NV





## Alpaca-Related Articles: Morris Animal Foundation & UCDavis

(\*Added this newsletter issue | Click title to jump to article on the web)

### Morris Animal Foundation:

- 50 Shades of Alpaca Gray (01.28.2020)
- Establishing Effective Antifungal Medication Dosing in Alpacas (04.01.2019)
- Horses, Llamas & Alpacas White Paper (2020)
- Improving the Alpaca Genome Sequence Assessment (02.01.2014)
- MAF Awards \$940,000 for New Studies Benefiting Horse/Alpaca Health (09.26.2019)
- **\*MAF Awards Grant to Test Equine Osteoarthritis Questionnaire**
- Providing Effective Pain Relief for Alpacas and Other Camelids (12.01.2014)
- Researchers Offer New Hope for Deadly Brain Worms (07.15.2015)
- Unraveling the Genetics Behind Health Problems in Grey Alpacas (04.01.2018)
- You Are My Sunshine: Llamas, Alpacas and Vitamin D (03.06.2018)

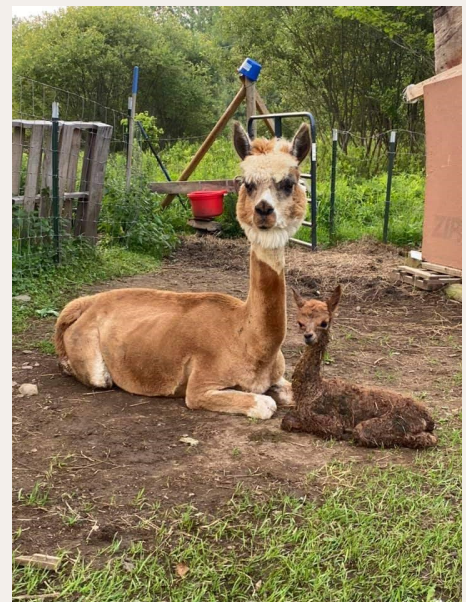
### UCDavis Large Animal Clinic / Camelid Medicine Service

- Burned Alpacas Hospitalized for Four Months Finally Go Home (12.08.2020)
- **\*Dedicated Owner Sees Alpaca [Verona -ed.] Through Long Hospitalization**
- **\*Livestock-Poisoning Plants of California**
- **\*Llama Enthusiast [Joy Pedroni -ed.] Supports Unique Clinical Opportunities**
- **\*New Knees for Verona, the Alpaca**
- UC Davis Cares for 1,000 Animals from Wildfires | School of Veterinary Medicine (08/28.2020)



### On the Cover...

Our wonderful cover photo this issue is used with permission from owner Kaylee Velez. She and her husband Patrick were fortunate to be home at the same time on July 19 and witnessed an alpaca birth for the first time. In reply to the many congratulatory posts from the Facebook group 'Alpaca Farm Life' members, she wrote: "The little guy is a ham already. He promptly stuck his head up my husband's shorts and began rooting and suckling."



## Tika and the “Danish Diet”

By Sandra Wallace, Alpacas of Marin

Tika was born on a frigid, windy evening. I found her at 8:30 p.m. drenched and lifeless next to the placenta. She had been out for a good 30 minutes. Ultima was standing nearby, staring at me helplessly.



Right after being found

So... “Scoop and Run” to the barn, turn on the hair-dryer and BLOW!!!! After four hours with the hairdryer, her core temperature was 96 degrees, and she was dry enough to weigh. Her birth weight was 8 pounds 2 ounces. I fed her some thawed goat colostrum because she was flaccid and could not stand to nurse. Yet she was full-term by dates and exam—her ears stood up, and her teeth had erupted. The next day, Danny Mora, DVM, was able to get more colostrum from Tika’s dam, Ultima. Tika had *no* muscle



Four hours with hair dryer, 8 lbs., limbs flaccid & splayed



After one hour with the blow-dryer

tone in her limbs. We hobbled her hind legs, but she was far too weak to stand to reach her mother’s teats, so she was bottle-fed. When she was finally able to stand 10 days later, Ultima had lost whatever milk she had. (She is a very good mother, but highly opinionated: she would *not* let me milk her.)

At one month of age, Tika had constant light-green diarrhea. I think we were a bit too aggressive with the bottle feeds, and she aspirated some of the milk, causing pneumonia. I gave her antibiotics with probiotics, and then

I took her to the Large Animal Hospital in Cotati for X-rays and labs. The X-ray showed diffuse/dense pneumonia

and a huge diaphragmatic hernia. Her left lung was almost completely compressed by her abdominal contents. The veterinarians warned me that she would not survive.

The diarrhea got worse, and twice I found her almost lifeless in a pool of a strange, translucent, blue-green diarrhea; and she was responsive only to fluids via rectal tube. Fecal exams were negative. I



Tika at eight days old, her legs hobbled so she could stand. This is how I weigh my babies, playing “baby in the mirror”



## Tika and the “Danish Diet” (cont.)



This Xray was taken at one month of age. Her chest is on the right side of the image. The lungs should be dark with no white—the white lacy pattern is all infection. She has an enormous gas bubble in her C1 (stomach), which tracks into her chest through a diaphragmatic hernia (a hole in the diaphragm that allows abdominal organs to enter the chest).

gave her Toltrazuril for possible coccidiosis, but to no avail. She had diarrhea with Wombaroo, goat milk, goat yogurt—even goat yogurt with Lactaid. Finally, I decided that Mother Nature has a weird sense of humor, and perhaps Tika was severely lactose-intolerant. I cast my eyes desperately around the kitchen for a suitable substitute and found an old can of split pea soup. So it began. I fed her pureed split pea soup with butter melted in. It turns out that there is no lactose in butter—the lactose stays with the whey—and she needed the calories that butter offers. Also, as a growing baby, she needed animal fat and cholesterol to make cell membranes and other cellular structures.

Happily, the diarrhea stopped! She was all but inhaling alfalfa and non-alcoholic beer for hydration with extra calories. I called it the “Danish Di-

et”—split pea soup, butter, and beer! It was easy to mash alpaca pellets in beer for a porridge, taking care to soften the pellets with beer in a microwave for a few seconds, along with some butter. This became a staple for her. I was able to feed her with the disposable soft plastic Pasteur pipettes that I buy for running fecal exams. They cost a few pennies each, and I cut off the tip to



Tika at nine weeks with her mom, Ultima

feed the thick porridge.

Through all this, Ultima was a steadfast, loving mother. She had almost no milk, but she helped her baby “nurse” and nurtured her lovingly. It was heartwarming to see them cuddled together—Ultima with her tiny baby snuggled up close! Ultima would put up with me taking the baby away for hours so that she could feed without Mom eating her food, and then she welcomed her baby back. By 3½ months, Tika hit a milestone weight of 20 pounds 6 ounces.

One warm evening in late September, Ultima refused to come into the barn with the other



## Tika and the “Danish Diet” (cont.)



A quiet moment with Tika and Ultima

mommies. The mommies and crias have a nice, safe, outdoor pen attached to the barn; I call it the “Neonatal Nursery.” On the warm nights, the other girls do love to sleep out on the slopes of the large barnyard pens. Tika was too small to join her mother: she only weighed 21 pounds, and I was concerned about predators, or even a large bird or owl, taking her. Tika fretted, “Where is Mommy?” I kept her preoccupied with food (eating is her favorite pastime). Tika is very vocal—she is always griping and grumbling. Her vocalizations are very distinctive, so I recorded them on my phone, and then walked around the slope where all the females were cushed. Ultima immediately recognized her baby’s calls, and I was eventually able to lure her back into the barn for a happy reunion! (I have an audio “library” of orgles on my phone, which can really help with breeding. I call it “mood music.”)

Tika made slow, steady progress and weighed 25 pounds by the time she was five months old. My goal was for her to one day reach 40 pounds. She

has an enviable pedigree—a line breed on both Matrix and Snowmass Quechua, with Accoyo Poseidon in the mix. Her fleece is gorgeous—a long staple with bright, crimped bundles of fine fleece.

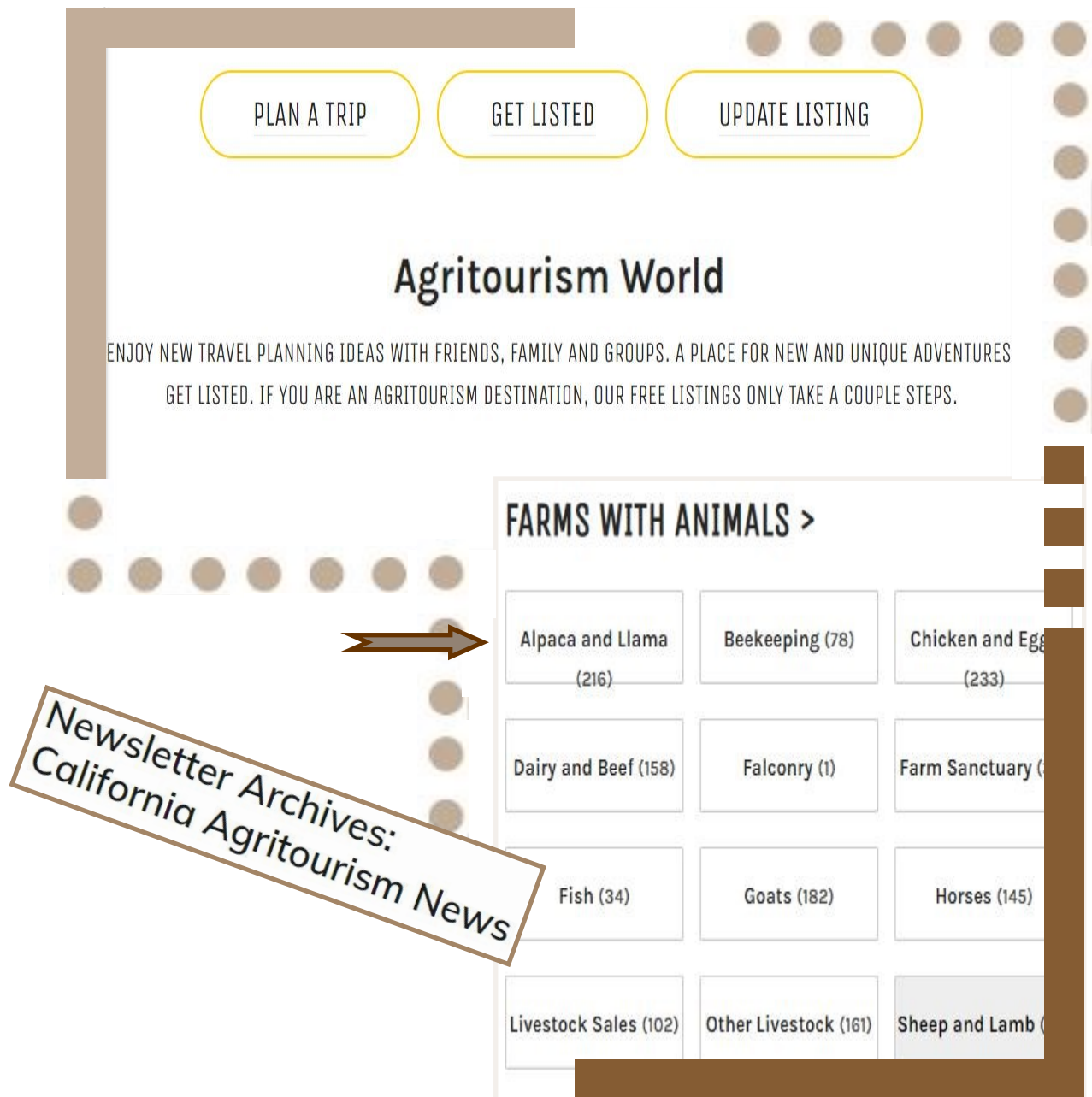
At one year of age, Tika has exceeded my goal—she weighs nearly 50 pounds and is well-established as an eccentric member of the herd! She rarely leaves the barnyard to graze with the other girls, but she is happy to stay behind with her head buried in the extra pellets and alfalfa I give her. Her dam had a new cria a few weeks ago, so the mother-daughter bond has been stretched. Tika has met her new little sister (who will soon out-weigh her!), but she has found her own place in the “girl pen.”

And I still keep a can of Andersen’s split pea soup in the kitchen... because you never know!!





# Agritourism Resources



## California Agritourism News

Agricultural tourism (agritourism) is a commercial enterprise at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment and education of visitors, and that generates supplemental income for the owner or operator.

The **California Agritourism News e-newsletter** is written by the statewide agritourism coordinator for the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UC SAREP). This e-mail newsletter is a chance for growers, agritourism operators, county staff, tourism professionals and everyone else involved in California agritourism to keep up with the latest information. Input and suggestions from readers are always welcome!

## Part II: REINFORCEMENT

by Marty McGee Bennett, [CAMELIDynamics.com](http://CAMELIDynamics.com)

In my previous column on [Applied Behavior Analysis](#), I wrote that my early experience with a scientific approach to animal behavior was unappealing in that I thought it limited a rich emotional connection with animals in favor of numbers, statistics and a dry clinical approach. In fact, adopting an appropriately detached approach to behavior with a more scientific mindset can deepen your understanding of what makes animals do what they do, and results in a more genuine connection. Understanding the science is freeing—there is no need to invent an agenda or backstory that explains behavior; you can simply observe it and shape it.

Last time, I introduced some important terminology and principles from the course “Living and Learning with Animals” taught by [Dr. Susan Friedman PhD\\*](#), Utah State University. These included the scientific definition of learning, how to operationalize behavior, how labels get in the way of really understanding behavior, and the scientific A-B-Cs of behavior (antecedent-behavior-consequence). In this article, I will discuss the science that supports our human efforts to influence and shape behavior. Learning is defined as “a behavior change due to experience.” When it comes to the way our animals behave around us or *for* us, understanding how your animals “experience” you and your behavior couldn’t be more important.

One hundred years of research on behavior has resulted in a set of general laws called “Fundamental Principles of Behavior.” Key to the understanding of these principles is a unifying rule called “the law of effect” which states, “In any giv-

en situation, the likelihood of a behavior occurring is related to the consequences that behavior has produced in the past.” Simply put: behavior is a function of its consequences. More than that, behavior is a tool to *produce* consequences.

You can choose not to take a scientific approach to animal handling and training; but the fact is that, just like gravity, these laws are in effect and govern how your animals respond to you. Science has permeated the way we think about animals: our speech is peppered with scientific jargon that most of us don’t use correctly and more importantly don’t really understand. We generally use the word *consequence* with a negative connotation; e.g., “Don’t fasten your seatbelt, and you will suffer the consequences!”

From a scientific standpoint, the definition of consequence is defined as “an event that influences the future strength of the behavior it immediately follows.” An alpaca or llama learns from the consequences of his/her behavior; if the behavior is useful, it is worth repeating. This feedback comes from all aspects of the environment: other animals, inanimate objects and, of course, the HIC’s (humans in charge).

We egocentric humans inappropriately reserve “real” learning for ourselves. We assume that animals are creatures of instinct, and that most of their behavior is innate and hardwired. This basic assumption is off the mark: it turns out instinct plays a part (with animal *and* human behavior), but behavior is very fluid and subject to modification based on the effects of consequence. In fact, the vast majority of behavior is learned, and the

more scientists study behavior, the more dynamic it proves to be. For example: birds are born knowing how to build a nest, but they improve their technique over time such that the second or third or fifth nest they build is much different and better than the first one.

Anyone who has watched a seasoned mother alpaca tend to her baby knows how invaluable her previous experience is. For the most part, first-time mothers figure out how to both deliver and care for a new baby: human intervention may—or more often may *not*—improve upon the process or outcome. Herd management practices which separate animals by age for human convenience will eliminate a young female's opportunity to observe a birth and to interact with experienced mothers and new babies. This practice may not be the best way to manage alpacas. Routinely assisting with a birth and “helping” a baby to stand and nurse may teach your alpacas to rely on your assistance—what happens if you aren't there?

Learning from experience involves a good deal of **when/if-then** reasoning. **When** there is a speed trap on your way home and **if** you speed, **then** you get a ticket. Your alpacas watch you closely for all kinds of clues about what your behavior means for them. **When** you come out the house wearing your muck boots and you head in the direction of the feed room, **if** the alpacas come running, **then** they get fed. Walk out the same door with a dress on, or even the wrong shoes, and you get no reaction. **When** a trailer pulls into the driveway, and **if** the stud male waits by the breeding pen, **then** he may get lucky—trailers become *very* interesting! The meter reader gets no greeting at all! Most of us notice these “when/if—then” contingencies and enjoy telling other breeders about them over

dinner; but understanding the effect of consequence is a much more potent tool. Provided the consequences are reasonably consistent, animals learn in a very short time; and the *when/if—then* relationship can be used to shape behavior very deliberately.

As we discussed earlier, consequences are not all bad—they aren't always good either. Simply, consequences either increase or decrease the likelihood that a behavior will be repeated. *Reinforcement* is the process by which a consequence increases the strength of the behavior it follows. The word “reinforcement” is often used interchangeably with the term “reward.” In some contexts, the two things coincide. Using the word “reward” however, introduces an element of judgment, which muddies the water. If your dog barks, and you yell at him to stop, and he barks louder, then you have reinforced the barking by yelling even though you surely didn't mean to reward it. Using the scientific definition will help you see more clearly how your behavior affects an animal.

You cannot understand reinforcement without really and truly understanding that the *animal* makes the decision that something is reinforcing, **not** the human. Whether or not the behavior increases or decreases in strength is the yardstick that determines if our strategy for altering behavior is reinforcing to the animal. As in the example I just used—yelling at the dog to stop barking—if your dog continues to bark or escalates the barking when you yell, the yelling is in fact reinforcing to the behavior even though that is not your intention. In the case of camelids, most of us want our alpacas to feel comfortable being near us. We want our llamas or alpacas to approach, linger and visit standing closely to us. I have observed, to the chagrin of many of my

students, that hugging, or even reaching out to an alpaca or llama, makes a “no-man’s land” of the area around us. We humans might enjoy physical contact; but if you understand the body language of camelids and observe the effect of hugging an alpaca or llama, you will see quite clearly that this very human behavior is uncomfortable for camelids. Reaching out to or hugging an alpaca or llama when they come close will reinforce the animal to halt his approach and get no closer than arms-length to you, and probably further. The same logic applies to the way that many people catch a llama or an alpaca. Use the common corner-grab-hold approach, or grab any llama or alpaca that gets close enough, and “when/if-then” becomes **when** I see a human, **if** I get up and run away, **then** I cannot be caught. Hardly the message we want to send to our animals! Use a catch pen for catching, and keep your hands to yourself when moving amongst your animals, and they will come closer and stay longer.

Because behavior is always happening in a continual stream, learning to be a close observer of an animal’s behavior and honing your ability to deliver reinforcement with impeccable timing is crucial. The trick is to reinforce the behavior you want, not the one just before or the one just after. If you are late or early in your delivery of reinforcement, then you may be encouraging a completely different behavior than the one you intend.

Using the same example of teaching alpacas and llamas that it is safe to hang around and stand closely to humans, try the following exercise. When you enter the pasture or barn and your animals are cushed, try to reinforce the

tendency of the alpaca or llama to remain cushed instead of provoking movement.

You can also experiment with various ways of moving around your animals to see what reinforces stillness instead of moving. As preparation for this exercise, spend some time observing your animals as they get up from a cushed position. Observe what they do first before they arise. If it is to reach forward with their head and neck, then you will be looking for any forward movement of the head as the early indicator that the animal is preparing to get up. This behavior would be an indicator that you are coming too close or otherwise behaving in a way that would cause movement.

Watch closely, and you may be able to observe even earlier indications of intent to get up. For example, if the llama or alpaca is chewing a cud, he or she may stop and swallow it in preparation to get up. Close observation will tell you what action certain behaviors will signal.

The other half of the equation is *your* behavior, and this will also require some experimenting. In my experience, the best non-threatening barn behavior is one in which you:

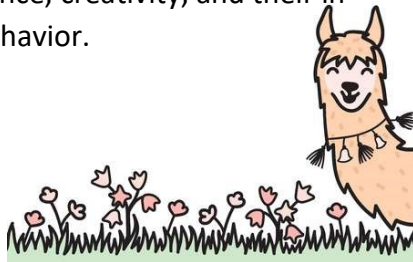
- Do not look directly into the animals eyes.
- Carry your body with a relaxed posture, shoulders down, arms loosely by your sides.
- Breathe regularly and deeply.
- Move in a “consciously casual” fashion that is not too slow and not too fast
- Aim your chest slightly away from the animal(s) so that if you raise your arms (do not actually do so), they would not be aimed at the animal.



## Camelidynamics, Alpacas and the Science of ABA: REINFORCEMENT, *cont.*

It is fun to experiment with how your body position and demeanor affect a camelid's willingness to remain cushed when you are near. Once you look at your animals through this new lens, you will realize how rich and intricate the relationship can be. Your camelids will surprise you with their intelligence, creativity, and their insights into *your* behavior.

Happy handling!



For more information about Dr. Susan Friedman's *Applied Behavioral Analysis*, visit [BehaviorWorks.org](http://BehaviorWorks.org)



Camelidynamics is a system for training handling and understanding camelids. It incorporates the science of behavior with elements of TTEAM and TTOUCH. We offer classes, equipment, informational books and DVDs. Camelidynamics also certifies individuals interested in teaching the Camelidynamics system.

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## Introducing: *Olde Lyfe Alpacas*

Photos by Stacey Payne

I bought my first alpacas in March 2017. I didn't exactly know why... other than I was intrigued by their incredible fleece and their calm, peaceful, curious personalities. I bought a pregnant female, a yearling female and a juvenile female, thinking that was a good learning curve.



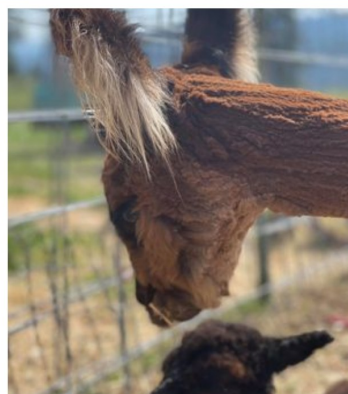
I jumped right in to learn everything I could about caring for these animals. My mentor ranch, where I boarded them, was involved in showing, so within a couple weeks of buying the alpacas, I signed up to go to watch the National Show. While there, I attended all the educational classes I could, and met and talked with as many ranches as possible! There were almost 1000 of the most beautiful alpacas I've ever seen (at that point!), and I just fell more in love with my decision.

Over the next year, I attended everything I could: shows, symposiums, educational events. I met wonderful people in the alpaca world; and somehow along that first year's journey, I picked up another 10 alpacas!!!

By January 2019, I had 30. I had decided to be a breeder and raise show-quality alpacas! I've had much success as a new breeder, learning at every event, listening to my mentor, and refining my breeding program.

I participate in farmer's markets, have a little online retail store, sell lots of animal—some mine, some brokered—and try to go to as many shows as I can afford. I would have *never* thought back in 2017 that my whole world would be driven to ranching by these incredible animals.

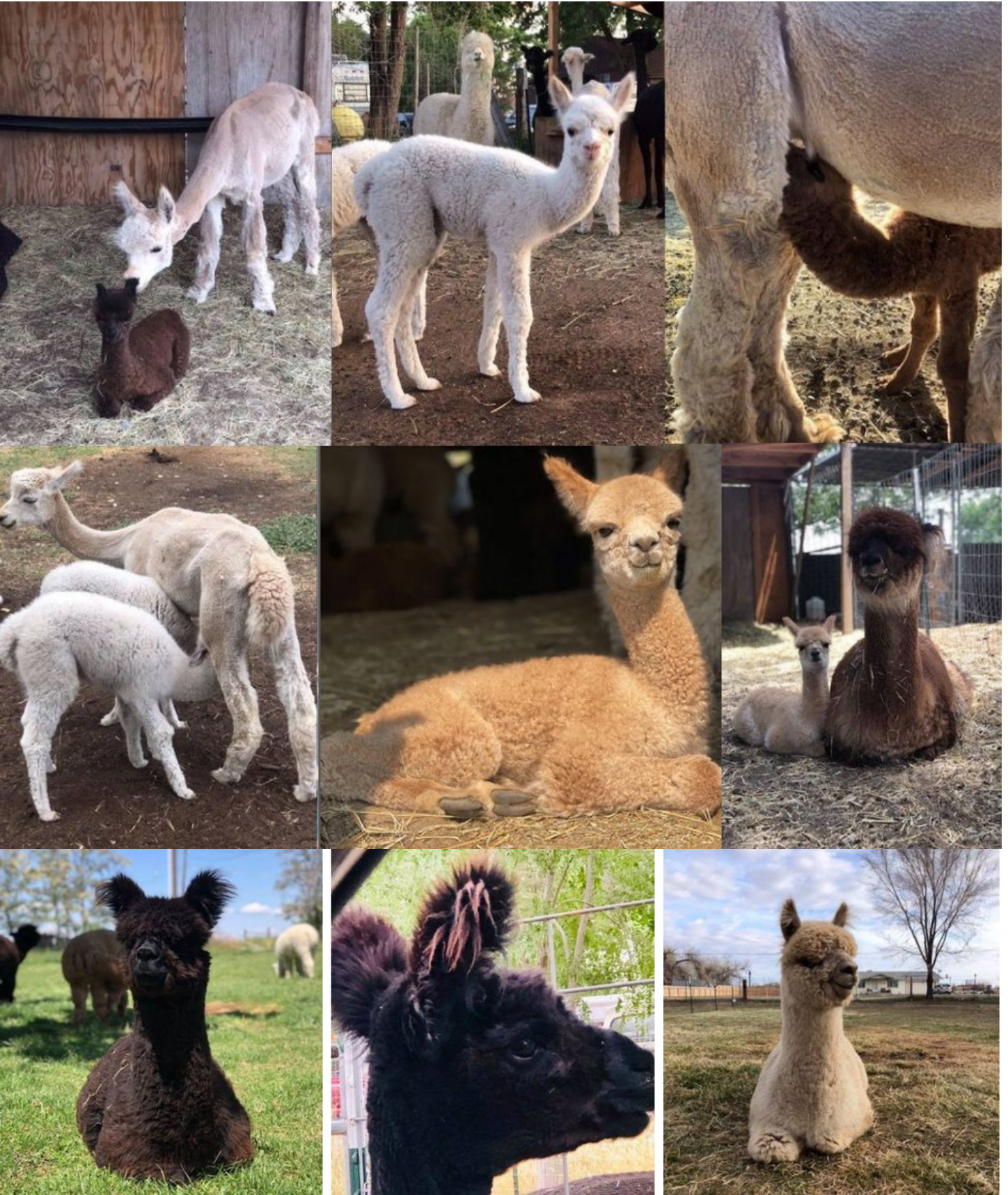
Today, I have reduced my herd to under 20 so that I can really focus on the best care and breeding decisions, producing better and better animals, and excellent fiber. I also have three wonderful llamas, and have recently added angora goats for their locks of mohair.



Sp Adobe Spark



## Olde Lyfe Alpacas (cont.)





## A Newbie Volunteer's Perspectives

by Julia Rae

In the heat of this Texas summer, I find myself in a more holistic kind of environment than I have known previously: Baxter's Southwest Llama Rescue refuge in the Hill Country.

Yep, you got me pegged. I am a bona fide cosmopolitan seeing (exploring, learning) what "roughin' it" is all about. Most of my 30 years were spent in food, event, or beverage service. Farm life? So far... it's a dream. I shovel manure every day(ish). I now understand what "humanure" is... and how it works! With such apocalyptic rhetoric in the air of our multitudinous media sources, this new skill—knowing what I can do with my... stuff!—assuages ever pervasive, low-level anxieties. After last year, we all can recollect our private potty panic!

Did I mention the stars at night? As it turns out, all the la-di-da aspects of my beloved city life pretty much prevent anyone from seeing *any* of our awe-inspiring Texas starscapes. I find my evenings now blessed with a startling panorama as I sit back after a hard day of animal and land care.

And the animals! I feel my heart expand with love as I greet these precious, predator-leery llamas each morning. What a delightful community to enter. All you need for proof of the endearing nature of the llama rescue community are the cartoonish names given to these four-legged ladies and gentlemen.

In the picture, you find me with three new females that were lovingly sent to us in early July. (Pro tip: By leaning your head down for sniffs, llamas find hu-

mans much more approachable. The girls' names are Mary Poppins, Spoonful of Sugar (Mary P's offspring), and Bella.

While I still feel green after two months of farmhand labor, a sturdy confidence grows. This whole time I believed that the world is built for and buttressed primarily by commerce and progress, it turns out an alternative can now exist for me: living day-to-day and protecting these amazing animals that inexplicably have be-

come an intrigue in the exotic meats market.

In late July, Baxter and I attended a nearby live-stock auction prepared to rescue two llamas if they needed us. We were heavily outbid, which actually bode well for the llamas' future. But that surprisingly painful personal

failure as llama protector brought unexpected humility. Industries are big. Habits are formed. None of the norms and businesses necessitate compliance, however. Not if you break free. And I enjoy this lifestyle choice, where consumption falls from the foreground.

Baxter's work ethic feels like an antidote to animal cruelty. Animal rescue work sure does beat asking what temperature everyone at the table wants their steak, and if I can offer them a soup or salad with the entrée, and letting them know how well this bottle of Cabernet would pair with that medium-rare filet mignon. Alas, nothing is perfect. Nothing ever will be. (Most people order their steaks well-done.) But *c'est la vie*... that's life. Something tells me we *can* live more in tune with nature, though. As long as we believe in the sanctity of the lives that surround us.





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## Herdsires, cont.

**MHAR Blizzard by Justice** is a beautiful, bright white stud, with extremely uniform, dense, crimped fleece, full-body coverage, and excellent bite/conformation. At 8 years of age, his fleece still has a lovely, soft, but-tery feel!

At the 2014 Gold Country Gathering, judge Kathy Klay said “He’s the total package!” when awarding him First Place (no CC), noting his soft crimp style and density. Most recently, his 3rd fleece spin-off entry won Judges Choice! And his 4<sup>th</sup> fleece spin-off entry won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the adult (D) class (of 8) at the 2017 AOA nationals, this in spite of being very dirty thanks to our very wet/muddy winter. His first cria are on the ground with more due next winter. We can’t wait to see them all!

To date we haven’t used him as much as we should because we’ve been focusing on the SG/black colors. But he’s produced several lights/fawns; and now a gorgeous brown with amazing early crimp/bundling and density, plus staple length, brightness and handle that we’ll definitely be showing! So we’re focusing more on using Blizzard and hope you will too!

His stud fee is \$750, including 60 days agisting at Menagerie Hill Ranch in Vacaville for your girl. Reserve your breedings now and take advantage of his great genetics at this special price!

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**Menagerie Hill Ranch** is pleased to offer the stud services of **RR Gun’s Kit Carson (KC)**. With **17 Championships and 21 1<sup>st</sup> Place** wins, it’s no wonder that more than **10 of his offspring are Color Champion** winners! KC took his first championship at 8 months of age. Since then, his fleece has maintained its length, fineness and uniformity, and he remains one of the best grey males in the country.

His kids still win big in the ring... including 2016 Gold Country Gathering KC son 4-Sights Crawford won RCC behind RR Dizzy Gillespie in Grey Male; KC daughter 4-Sight’s Centerfold won CC, grey female; AND KC son RR Lancelot won Black CC. Centerfold also took CC at the 2016 ABI and the 2017 Futurity. And at the 2017 CA Classic, Lancelot won CC in both Halter and Walking Fleece. Most recently, MHAR Ebonni Carson won CC in Walking Fleece (Black) at the 2019 Gold Country Gathering!

Check KC and his cria out at:

<http://www.menageriehillranch.com/alpacas-for-sale/121347/rr-guns-kit-carson>

With gorgeous silver gray fleece, excellent conformation and a perfect bite, we believe Kit Carson can make a big impact on our breeding program and yours!

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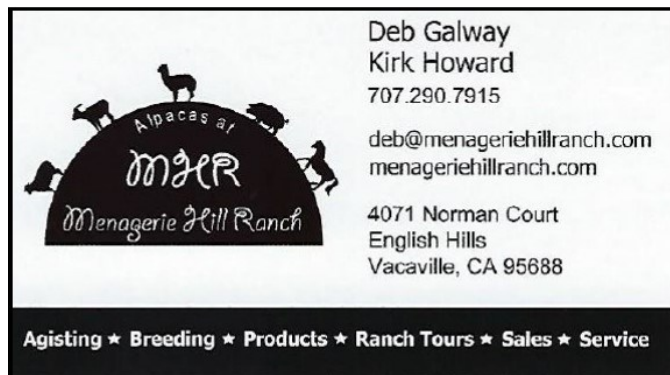
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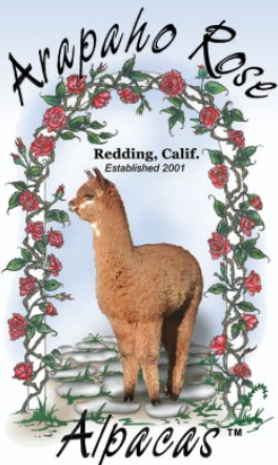
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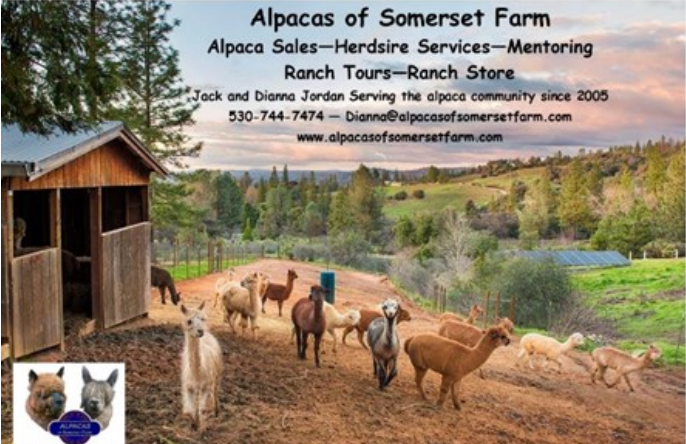
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# Alpaca Education At Your Fingertips

Do you know the AOA website contains a section called the Alpaca Academy? The Alpaca Academy provides education and information for the entire alpaca community. Topics range from the most common questions about alpacas and the industry to in-depth articles on alpaca EPDs, genetics, and breeding. Alpaca Academy also provides information on the latest alpacas research and links to additional resources.

The following pages contain examples of the various topics available for those wanting to know more about alpacas and the industry.

One of the common themes I have found in reading about what alpaca owners breeders would like is the desire for more education. Perhaps many don't know that many of their questions have already been addressed in the Alpaca Academy. Take a few minutes to review the topics on the right . If you would like to learn more about the Alpaca Academy just follow this link:

<http://www.alpacainfo.com/learn> and

## ALPACA ACADEMY



- [About Alpacas](#)
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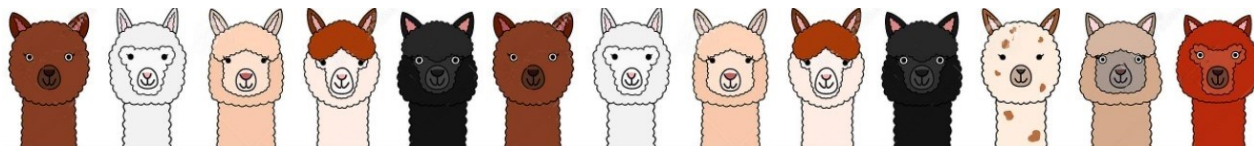
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- Removal of Fighting Teeth
- Proper Halter Fit For Camelids
- Passing A Stomach Tube in Camelids
- Obtaining a Blood Sample and preparing the DNA Blood Card
- Shearing for the Health of Your Animals
- Training Your Camelid to Halter and Lead

## Contribute to the *Calpaca Connection*!

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of editing a newsletter is coming up with articles and ideas that are current, relevant, interesting and beneficial for our members. I like to write... I could fill each issue with my own stuff; but that's not why I'm here. To create a truly valuable resource for Calpaca members, we need Calpaca members to contribute.

- You have ideas all the time, right? This is a great place to explore and express them.
- Have you solved a problem at your place or with your animals? I'm betting lots of us would like to know how you handled the challenge.
- Do you get calls or emails asking your advice on fiber, herd management, breeding, and other aspects of living this lifestyle? Harness your responses, and let's share them!
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Autumn 2021	Oct. 16, 2021	Nov. 06, 2021	Nov. 13, 2021



## Join Calpaca Today!

The **California Alpaca Breeders Association (Calpaca)** represents alpaca owners, breeders, and enthusiasts in California and beyond. We promote the well-being of alpacas and education of the public about alpacas, alpaca fiber, and alpaca products. We support each other through shared information and experiences, and host meetings, speakers and shows for the benefit of members and the public. We invite you to join us!

**Calpaca Membership Meetings** are held quarterly on the second Saturday of the second month of each quarter.

### Calpaca Farm Membership - \$100/year (\$50 first year)

#### Benefits:

- Free marketing on Calpaca website (animals, fiber, store, services etc.)
- Educational quarterly Calpaca membership meetings
- Free advertising opportunity in the Connection newsletter
- Ability to link your Web site to a mobile device
- Ability to link your Web site to Facebook page
- Lobbying our State Legislature through— AG Day sponsorship
- Discounts at alpaca events
- Advertising opportunity to showcase your farm to over 3000 alpaca breeders
- Opportunity to run for a seat on the Calpaca Board of Directors and have a voice in the future
- Opportunity to host a Calpaca meeting and give your ranch and alpacas more exposure
- Two votes on Calpaca issues
- Connection newsletter that provides educational articles
- Ability to send email marketing items to members offering your animals, products and services
- Complimentary listing of your Openherd website on Calpaca's website – check out <http://www.calpaca.org/alpaca-farms/>

### Calpaca Associate Membership - \$30/year

#### Benefits:

- Attend all Calpaca meetings and events
- Quarterly Calpaca *Connection* newsletter

**Join Online**