

CONNECTION

Autumn 2021



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

November 6, 2021 v2



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!

Calpaca Connection Editor

L'illette Vasquez
170 Hoofbeat Trail
Kerrville, TX 78028
720-839-0787 cell
editor@lillette.net

2021 Board of Directors

President

Dianna Jordan

Alpacas of Somerset Farm
Somerset, CA
530-620-6033
530-744-7474



President@CalpacaBoard.org

Vice-President

Steve Craig

Peavine Mountain Alpacas
Reno, NV
775.882.2766



VP@CalpacaBoard.org

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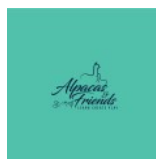


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MLK Alpacas & Friends
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Sunland, CA
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805-432-9344



Director@CalpacaBoard.org

VIRTUAL Quarterly Membership Meeting | 11.13.2021

Check Facebook and Email for online access details.

Hosted by Dianna & Jack Jordan
Alpacas of Somerset | Somerset, CA

[Cover photo thanks to DERWYDD ALPACAS. See more on page 10!](#)

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Affiliations

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Association (AOA)**
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402-437-8484
402-437-8488 Fax
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Contact *Connection* Editor
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To join or renew your Calpaca membership:

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Group Emails
info@calpacaboard.org
Calpaca Facebook
Facebook.com/groups/Calpaca

Message from the President

Hello Alpaca Enthusiasts,

There are so many reasons to celebrate the Gold Country Gathering held in Grass Valley the weekend of October 16 & 17. It was the first and only time in 2021 that Calpaca members and show enthusiasts were able to come together in person. Smiles, congratulations, camaraderie, handshakes, back patting, *oohs* and *aahs* over the alpacas on display and in the show ring, high energy and unbounded enthusiasm filled the venue.

Congratulations to event manager Tracy DiPippo on an extremely successful event. Her team of volunteers and paid support professionals worked together to create and produce one of the most successful Gold Country Gatherings in Calpaca history. Some may not be aware that this was the last Gold Country Gathering with Tracy serving as event manager. If we want this show to continue, we need someone to step forward to take on this responsibility in 2022.

You don't want to miss the November Calpaca Annual Business Meeting and Quarterly Education event. This will be an online-only event. The newly elected 2022 Calpaca Board of Directors will be introduced during the business meeting. Also, the November education meeting will give members an opportunity to provide input about the goals and objectives you would like to see in 2022. Your participation and input during the November meeting will be most appreciated.

Educational Topic: Calpaca... Past, Present and Future

We will step back in time and explore Calpaca's rich, historical and memorable past. We will take a look at Calpaca today... what the organization offers all alpaca enthusiasts from those just discovering the joys of alpaca ownership to the most seasoned and experienced owners looking to support and promote the alpaca industry. We will take a peek into the future... how Calpaca and other alpaca affiliates are meeting the changes and challenges of the alpaca industry.

We are looking forward to an interactive and informative meeting. Please plan to attend.

Take care and stay well,

Dianna Jordan, 2021 Calpaca President



The wonderful event photographs scattered throughout this issue and in the event photo pages were contributed by Derwydd Alpacas. Many more are available on Facebook's Calpaca and Gold Country Gathering pages!

Calpaca News

Calpaca Annual Business Meeting and Quarterly Education Meeting Saturday, November 13

Hosts Dianna and Jack Jordan, Alpacas of Somerset Farm

Educational Topic: Calpaca...Past, Present and Future

We will step back in time and explore Calpaca's rich, historical and memorable past. We will take a look at Calpaca today...what the organization offers all alpaca enthusiasts from those just discovering the joys of alpaca ownership to the most seasoned and experienced owners looking to support and promote the alpaca industry. We will take a peek into the future...how Calpaca and other alpaca affiliates are meeting the changes and challenges of the alpaca industry.

Meeting Schedule

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2276550366>

Meeting ID: 227 655 0366

10:30 am: login, greetings and chat time

11:00 am: Business meeting, introduction of 2022 BOD members followed by educational presentation

Please RSVP by texting Dianna at 530-744-7474 or emailing

DLJORDAN@live.com. Although the meeting is virtual, we would still like to have an idea of who plans to attend.

Calpaca 2022 Board of Director Election

Candidates:

Lindsay Betz, [Summer Hill Farm](#)

Patti Hazard, [Hazard Alpacas.com](#)

Jackie Jones, [Back 40 Farms](#)

Dianna Jordan, [Alpacas of Somerset Farm](#)

Brandi Mello, [Picotoot's Pack of Paca Farm](#)

Pam Ogden, [Ogden Alpaca World](#)

Election Process Timeline:

10/02/21: Voting opens online

11/05/21: Voting closes

11/06/21: Election committee tallies the votes

11/13/21: New BOD members announced at the
the Calpaca Annual Meeting

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

- 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

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.



Calpaca 2022 Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
02.05	Connection Winter Issue Submissions Due	
02.12	Quarterly Membership Meeting	TBD
03.24-27	California Classic Alpaca Show	Merced, CA
05.07	Connection Spring Issue Submissions Due	
05.14	Quarterly Membership Meeting	TBD
08.08	Connection Summer Issue Submissions Due	
08.13	Quarterly Membership Meeting	TBD
11.05	Connection Autumn Issue Submissions Due	
11.12	Annual Business Meeting & Quarterly Membership Meeting	TBD

Ask the Vet

By Rachel Oman, DVM, Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Greetings! My name is Rachel Oman. I joined the Livestock Medicine faculty at Colorado State University in December of 2020. I am originally from New Mexico and attended veterinary school at CSU. After graduation, I followed my passion for livestock medicine and teaching by completing an internship and residency in large animal internal medicine residency at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

From there, I joined the Food Animal Medicine and Surgery faculty at the University of Missouri. There I taught senior veterinary students in the veterinary teaching hospital and as an ambulatory clinician. Working in the Midwest was very exciting and gave me a chance to treat many of the conditions that I only read about in vet school like meningeal worm and anaplasmosis. I enjoy working with llamas and alpacas, and find the challenges of treating metabolic diseases and neonatal septicemia particularly rewarding. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time outdoors gardening with my backyard hens and running with my dogs. I am pleased to be back in Colorado and look forward to working with you.

Question: Do camelids get dementia?

The short answer to this question is that we do not know. There are no reports of dementia or cognitive decline specifically in llamas or alpacas. We may find some clues to this quandary by looking at research done in humans and canines. Generally speaking, there are certain characteristic changes that occur in mammalian brains as we age. Assuming that camelids exhibit some of the same changes, it is reasonable to think that they could suffer from dementia. However, we don't yet have any scientific evidence to support this assumption.

Canine cognitive disorder is a relatively recently described dementia-like condition in dogs. In dogs, there are validated checklists of behavioral changes that can help veterinarians make this diagnosis. No such list exists for camelids, and we must be cautious about making a diagnosis based on work done in other species.

If you observe unusual behaviors or changes in attitude and energy level in your llama or alpaca, you should seek veterinary advice to help rule out a seri-

ous medical problem. Your veterinarian may want to perform bloodwork or advanced imaging (x-rays, ultrasound, CT, etc.) to help rule out other causes of the abnormal behavior such as metabolic or electrolyte abnormalities, infections like tooth root abscesses or ear infections, or cancer. In dogs, dementia is often a diagnosis by exclusion, meaning we diagnose dementia by ruling out every other cause of the clinical signs. If after a complete workup you don't identify an underlying cause for the behavior changes, it may be possible that age-related cognitive dysfunction is involved. At this time, we just don't have enough information to know for sure.

Question: My alpaca has white discharge in its eye. What could be causing this?

Eye problems are quite common in llamas and alpacas. With large, prominent eyes, camelids are prone to injuring their eyes. They can also suffer from infections, foreign bodies like grass seeds, congenital malformations like imperforate nasolacrimal ducts (blocked tear ducts), allergies, eyelid lacerations, and even neoplasia (cancer) just to name a few ocular maladies. With so many possibilities, it is difficult to impossible for a veterinarian to determine the correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment without examining the animal.

Excessive ocular discharge, whether it is clear, white or colored, is reason for concern and should prompt a visit with your veterinarian. Other common signs that your llama or alpaca may have a problem with its eye and needs to be seen by a veterinarian include squinting in the light, avoiding bright sunlight or wind, a cloudy appearance to the eye, discolored areas of pigment or blood on the eye, and raised lumps or bumps on or around the eye, especially if they tend to crack and bleed. Sometimes, you may notice just one of these signs, but they can also occur together. Generally speaking, the sooner you get your animal evaluated and on the appropriate treatment, the better the outcome will be.

When you take your animal to a veterinarian because of a problem with the eye, your vet will do a physical exam to check on the overall systemic health of your animal as well as doing a more in-depth exam of the eye. Often, this will involve putting a special stain in

Ask the Colorado State University Vet Team, cont.

the eye that helps identify ulcers on the surface of the globe. It can also help determine if there is a blockage of the tear duct as the stain should also be visible inside the nostril on the same side of the face. Your veterinarian may also use a special magnifying light to look at the structures within the globe itself and take a swab to check for infectious organisms. If there are any raised, mass-like lesions, they may recommend a biopsy to rule out cancer.

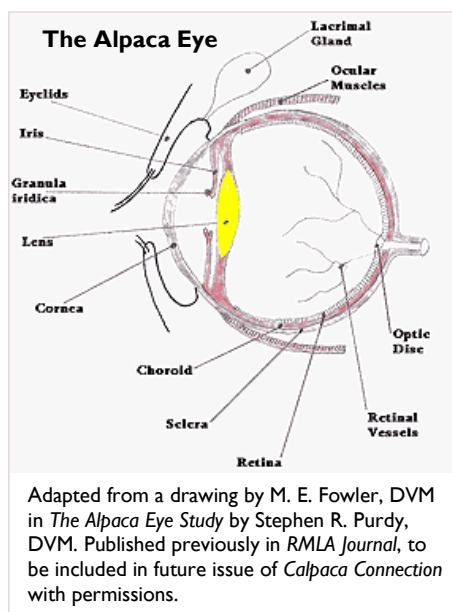
Each case is different, and the process will vary accordingly. The important thing is to get the animal evaluated by a veterinarian before starting any treatment. If you have eye ointment or drops left over from another animal or even from a previous eye problem in the same animal, using them without consulting your veterinarian first may cause more harm than good.

If you can't get your animal to the vet right away or are trying to decide if the problem warrants a trip to the vet, there are some simple things you can try at home. For your safety and that of your camelid, good restraint and an able helper is usually necessary. Infected and injured eyes are usually very painful, and your animal may not tolerate much of an at-home

exam. That said, if possible, wipe away any discharge around the eye with a soft cloth dipped in water. Gently pull back the eyelids (easier said than done!) and look for any objects like seeds, dirt or hairs that could be irritating the eye. If you see something, you can try to gently rinse it away with a saline solution for eyes, which you can get at your local drug store.

Even if you are able to rinse away a foreign body, there is still a good chance that your animals could have an ulcer on its cornea or a secondary infection that will require further treatment from your veterinarian.

The take-away lesson here is that eyes are complicated. Ophthalmology is a veterinary specialty all by itself! There are many different problems (foreign body, bacterial infection, fungal infection, allergy, cancer, etc.) that can cause similar signs like white discharge. Getting your animal evaluated by a veterinarian as soon as you notice a problem with its eye is the safest way to get your llama or alpaca feeling better quickly.



First published in the *RMLA Journal*, Fall 2021
Reprinted with permission from the author

Volunteers Needed for BEW Study at UC Davis

[Originally posted by Charlene Schmid on Facebook, Oct. 26, 2021 and reprinted here with her permission]

Alpaca owners and Calpaca members: A year or two back, a number of Calpaca members supported the research conducted through UC Davis on hearing and Blue Eye White (BEW) alpacas. As an update, they are still looking for seven deaf BEWs to have their hearing tested and blood drawn at UCD.

What's next, you ask?

Our friends at UCD Veterinary Genetics Lab are on the verge of a collaborative project with a team in Chicago beginning a study on the pigment cells in the skin of alpacas. For this study, they will take a skin biopsy, much like that in the follicle biopsy, and culture the alpaca skin. This will require shaving a small area to take the biopsy. In this study, they want to include BEWs, but they do *not* have to be deaf.

This study may not require you to come to UC Davis, but I am waiting on more details on their ability to collect the biopsy off-site. Ideally, all collections could be made and Fed Ex'd to Chicago in a batch.

As always, funding is scarce, and any donations to the project are tax-deductible. I can connect you with UCD VGL folks for details.

If you are able and willing to support this study, please send me a message through Facebook | Charlene Payne Schmid, or email Charlene@integrityalpacas.com.

Gold Country Gathering

From Walking Fleece Judge, Ken Hibbits

shared by Tracy DiPippo

"Thank you for the invitation to be one of your Gold Country Gathering Walking Fleece judges for 2021. It was an honor and a privilege to be a judge for your show."

This was an extremely well-organized show. The experienced show staff and volunteers made the show run smoothly, and working with your professional team was exceptional. This improved the overall experience for both the exhibitors and public alike.

Please also extend my sincere appreciation to your entire organization and sponsors. It was a pleasure to be a part of this outstanding alpaca show."

A huge shout out and thank you to all who made the Gold Country Gathering such a huge success. Tracy DiPippo, event manager, did an outstanding job as did all the volunteers and coordinators for various aspects of the Gathering. Was great all around. Thank you.

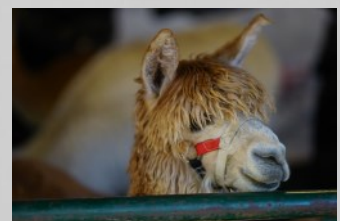
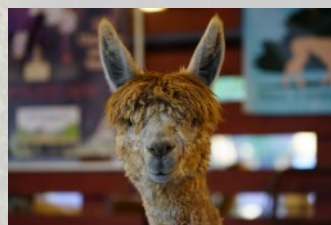
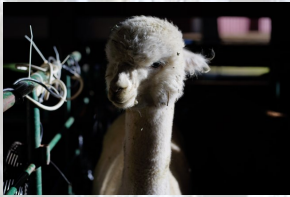
Cynthia Kuhlmann

"I had the immense pleasure of participating in my FIRST EVER alpaca show as a VENDOR!! I have been working non - stop in my spare time making these beautiful alpaca beanies! These creations are truly one of a kind and of yarn produced from my herd. So to me, extra special. I was able to sell beautifully warm socks, skeins and skeins of yarn, and then my beanies!! I even received an order from an entire family!! Little girls, and the mom!! AND one very special beanie for the as yet unborn newborn! I was sad to not have taken any animals, because I am quite competitive, but I truly love selling, and I was glad I made the decision to at least be a vendor. Here is a pic of a beanie donated to the silent auction and WON by Sandra Wallace !!"



Cruiser in Autumn

Gold Country Gathering



Gold Country Gathering



Gold Country Gathering



Defiantly Perfect

by Leanne Antaya, Plateau Breeze Ranch

It was one of those moments at Plateau Breeze Ranch when you question what you are looking at. There, pinned under the chicken wire, was a gorgeous, fine-fleeced, spotted newborn! Her mother was nowhere to be found as I carefully pulled the wire to free her. *Please don't catch her newborn skin on the wire*, I silently pleaded.

I wrapped her in a towel and carried her to a clean location, but no mother followed. OMG! This *is going to be a long day*, I thought as I panicked a bit with the knowledge that this baby needed colostrum to survive. Slowly, her mother emerged, her long, spikey hair covering her eyes. "She's a stoner," my husband often commented on her lackadaisical attitude. "Rod Stewart," my husband joked, noting her "hot legs" and "Do you think I'm

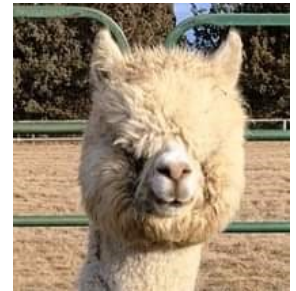


sexy" stroll as she made her way to the baby, smelled her, and then lay down. Not exactly what I was hoping for as I heated a bottle of colostrum and fed this starving little wonder.

I went into the house, looked at the clock, and made a mental note that I needed to feed her again in two hours. The clock ticked forward as I watched the barn camera. There I saw what I would describe as a professional wrestler's moves. The baby nudged her mother's chin with a strong push, nose to nose, and then jumped over her kushed mom's back, and then returned to the chin. Nudge, nudge, nudge... "Hey, I'm hungry!!!" She took a swipe at mom's ear, reminding me of Mike Tyson, and then con-

tinued to torment this lazy mother until mom finally stood up.

Baby headed between her back legs and ended up under her mom's front legs. She circled back and went for the prize, but missed it and ended up on the other side of her mom's body. "C'mon, baby! C'mon, baby! You can do it!" I screamed at the camera. Mom stood frozen while baby finally found what she was looking for. She nursed for a solid five minutes while I watched with a heart full of happiness.



So, I'd like to introduce you to our newest member of Plateau Breeze Ranch, "PBR Defiantly Perfect"!!! She's a flawless combination of Snow Diamond Pandemonium and S More Spots. Spots with premium, fine fleece is *exactly* what we planned for!



Event Marker Training Your Camelid

by Marty McGee Bennett, CAMELIDynamics.com

This article is a basic introduction to Event Marker/Clicker Training along with some of the specific considerations for using the method with camelids. The process of pairing a specific marker with a behavior and then offering some sort of reinforcer is essentially the same whether you are training a dog, a giraffe, a parrot, or a camelid. In this article, I present the basics of the process and some specific information about how to create a good physical set-up that will help when working with camelids. There are many fine books on the subject of event marker training and workshops for dogs in almost every town. Learning with dogs is a great way to learn the process.



If you are really keen, you can go to a chicken camp! This is a two- to six-day training with chickens where you learn the mechanics of clicker training and the science behind it. I have attended a chicken camp, and found it to be a lot of fun and very helpful. It gives you a lot of respect for the learning ability of chickens! I also teach a clicker training day or half-day as part of my CAMELIDynamics clinics. Check my website course calendar to see if event marker training is on the agenda for the specific workshop you are interested in.

What It Is

Clicker training is actually more properly called Event Marker training. The clicker is only one of many choices for marking a behavior. The key concept is that you are marking a behavior that you will reinforce (usually with food) within a few seconds of delivering the mark. A reinforcer is something that is meaningful for the animal and that the animal will work for. There are many options depending on the animal, and it is up to you the trainer to figure out what is sufficiently important that the animal will stay in the training game and work. Food is the most logical choice, but there are other things that camelids find reinforcing: an escape route if they are concerned; Touch bodywork if they have learned to appreciate that; or in the case of males, access to a female. (More information about food options later in this article.)

Think of the mark like the shutter of a camera. The mark is delivered as precisely as possible at the moment the desired behavior occurs, and the reinforcer is then offered as soon as is practically possible—usually within one to three seconds. Marks can be a sound, such as a clicker, whistle, or a sound you create with your voice. Marks can also be a visual signal. Whatever your mark is, the more consistent it is, the better it works. The most important thing is that the animal understands that the mark is going to result in the offer of a desired outcome, again usually food. From this point forward, for simplicity's sake, I am going to use a clicker as the marker, food as the reinforcer, and “she” or “her,” whether llama or alpaca, to refer to the animal.

Charging the Clicker

You can teach your llama or alpaca to make the connection between the clicker and the food by doing what is called *charging the clicker*, or helping the animal student become “clicker-wise.”

This process is quite simple: click and then treat



(C/T) enough times in a row, usually five to eight repetitions, that the alpaca or llama begins to *expect* that the food follows the sound of the clicker. Observe your animal closely, looking for indications after the click that your animal is expecting the food. Indications might be a pricking of the ears forward, turning the head, or moving in the direction of the handler.

The location of the food as it is delivered is important, and it should be somewhere that is in neutral territory—as in not in your personal space. Animals should learn to be polite as they eat the food, and should wait for it to be offered in a space that is between the handler and the animal.

Teaching a Behavior: The Basics

Once your animal is clicker-wise, or at least there are indications that the clicker has some relevance, you can begin to pair the delivery of the

click with a specific behavior. Once the alpaca or llama begins to figure out that the click, the behavior, and the reinforcer are all related, she will begin to deliberately offer the behavior you have marked to get the reinforcer. When it becomes very obvious and consistent that the animal is offering a specific behavior to get the reinforcer, it is then time to put the behavior on cue.

Putting a behavior on cue means teaching the animal a very specific indicator that is paired with a particular behavior. The verbal cue “Sit” means something very specific—it means to a dog that he must arrange his body so that his butt is on the ground and the front legs are still straight. Dog trainers might want even more specificity from the dog—for example, sitting perfectly straight without rolling over to one side on a hip. (More later about changing a behavior.)



Cues can be visual or auditory. A cue differs from the clicker in that the clicker is a general indicator that the behavior the animal was performing at the time of the click will be reinforced. Depending on the training agenda, the click is used for many

different behaviors. A cue is a request for a specific behavior, and unless that specific behavior is performed, there is no reinforcer offered.



Capturing and Shaping

There are two basic ways to get behavior: you can capture it, or you can shape it. *Capturing behavior* is when you wait until the exact behavior that you want occurs, and then click and reinforce that behavior. This is most useful when you can predict that the desired behavior will happen. Otherwise, waiting around for a particular behavior can take a long time!

I am hard-pressed to come up with an example of capturing a behavior in camelids; but one example might be when you enter the barn, and an animal naturally gets up to come over and see what you are doing. You can choose a specific animal, and when you walk through the barn door, mark the getting-up behavior when the specific animal gets up. It would be a good idea to choose in advance which part of the getting-up sequence you want to capture, and then click when that happens. The

mark could be delivered when the animal is fully standing or at any time along the way.

Once the connection between the specific behavior and the click occurs, you can put the behavior on cue. In this case, the cue might be “Stand up.” The behavior is said to be *on cue* when the animal stands when you say, “Stand up.”

Shaping behavior is when you change a behavior with a series of small approximations, going from a simple behavior to a more complex one. A good example of shaping is teaching an animal to put a body part on an object. This is called *targeting*. Examples of targeting are putting a nose on a flat surface like a frisbee, for example, or putting a foot on a platform. If you want to capture this behavior, it might take a long time for an alpaca to spontaneously put his foot on a small platform. Shaping offers a way from here to there—from simple to more complex, or from general to more specific.

Before you can train any behavior, it is really important to have a very specific vision of what the finished behavior (the one you will put on cue) looks like. Animals offer a wide variety of nuance and variation in their behavior. This natural varia-



tion is in part what makes the process of shaping work; but it can also mean that without a specific plan, you may get caught on a side road that will take you away from the behavior you want. These side roads can lead to getting stuck. It is easier to have a clear path and plan—and even then your animal student will throw you some curves. The good news is that event marker training can never be coercive because the choice to participate is always the animal's.

Targeting... an Example of Shaping a Behavior

Since it is the easiest thing to teach, let's look first at targeting with the nose. You will begin with an animal who is clicker-wise. My vision for the finished behavior is to have the animal place his nose on the target (in this case a plastic frisbee) for just a moment, with the nose in the center of the frisbee. You can begin the process by bringing the frisbee from behind your back to a place out to the side of your body, and then clicking when the animal simply looks in the direction of the frisbee. Click and treat, and put the frisbee behind your back again to restart the process.

Once you are absolutely sure the animal will do the behavior when you provide the opportunity, it is time to change the criteria for reinforcement. Decide what the next level of approximation will be. It is always good to have a game plan in mind ahead of time. Training on the fly, particularly when you are inexperienced, can create strange behaviors you don't intend to teach.

In the case of targeting, I suggest waiting for the animal to move her nose closer to the frisbee.

Now, when you present the frisbee, and the animal does what she was doing before—simply looking in the direction of the frisbee—you don't click or treat, but continue to hold the frisbee out to the side. The animal will be momentarily confused and will try to figure out what to do to get the treat. This is where the magic happens! Animals will inevitably and naturally offer variations of the behavior, and you will click and treat the variation that moves you towards the ultimate finished behavior.



This is why it is important to have some kind of a general plan in mind—so you can be ready to click what you want next. The art inherent in the science of event marker training is this process of moving the process forward—shaping. Hold out for too big a leap, and your student will become discouraged and quit the game—not what you want, but not the end of the world. The beauty of the process is that mistakes are forgiven, and it is an easy thing to simply back up to what was working and reinforce that behavior a couple of times; then make the leap to the next approximation easier.

Event Marker Training Your Camelid, *cont.*

In the case of targeting, the animals will often get the idea very quickly and skip many steps, putting their noses on the targets right away. By all means, click and treat that! However, there will probably be some flashes of brilliance like this, followed by some confusion. Because an animal leapt forward, it doesn't mean you hold out for this big leap from then on. You may need to go back to some of the in-between steps. There are really no mistakes: only opportunities to get more information.

One very important thing when you are clicker training: **If you click, you must always reinforce!** This is the contract that you make with your animal student. There are going to be times when you jump the gun and miss the click, but you still pay up.

Putting a Behavior on Cue

Once you have taught a finished behavior, it is time to put that behavior on cue. This is a pretty simple process. The hardest part is figuring out good cues—ones that are logical, easy to remember, and distinctive. Remember, a cue can be verbal or visual. If you choose a verbal cue, it should be a word that is easily recognized and is going to be distinct from other verbal cues. For example, in targeting, I use the body part rather than the word “target,” since I may be teaching an animal to target with other parts of the body. So in the case of targeting with the nose, I use the cue “Nose.”

When putting the behavior on cue, as the animal heads toward the target with her nose, I now say “Nose” just before her nose touches the target;

and as the nose actually touches the target, I click and then treat. Now it is a matter of creating more and more time and distance between the delivery of the cue and the target. With each repetition, you begin to say the cue earlier in the process; i.e., when the animal is further way from the target. You still click and then treat each time the nose touches the target and reinforce that. At some stage, you could say to an animal that is wandering around, perhaps distracted, “Nose,”



and she will look for the target, walk some distance to it, and touch it with her nose. Now you can be sure that the animal knows the specific behavior that goes with that cue.

Once you have taught a behavior and put it on cue, the clicker is no longer necessary for that particular behavior. If you need to brush up, you can always bring the clicker back for a review session.

As for offering a reinforcer consistently when you cue a behavior, there are diverging opinions. Some trainers feel that unless you consistently offer some kind of meaningful reinforcer when cueing a behavior, you will see a deterioration of

the behavior. Others think that offering a reinforcer each time will create an animal that needs a reinforcer for everything. I think the truth is somewhere between and varies from animal to animal. But the solution when a behavior breaks down for some reason is to practice more with valued reinforcers.

What about teaching an animal to target with the foot? You might think you could start by teaching the animal to look at the target, but I think this is a mistake. I think you have to get the animal's attention very quickly on the body part, and leave the target for later on. I would click and reinforce taking a step, teaching that behavior before adding the target. If you want to teach an animal to put his foot on a platform, you can start with something on the ground—for example, a square piece of carpet. Next, put something under that to raise it off the ground just a little bit.

Learning how to chunk things down, building a behavior on the one before, is how you shape behavior. The process can be slow at first; but once an animal learns the process, it teaches creativity and initiative, and the animal learns each new behavior more quickly.



Clicker Training Set-up, or the Antecedent Arrangement

When it comes to the set-up, or the antecedent arrangement, clicker-training camelids is different from teaching dogs. In order for an animal to learn and try out new behaviors, it must feel safe. Most camelids feel safer in a group. Isolate one animal from the group, and the animal can become so distracted that it can't concentrate and learn. Event marker training requires focus from both the learner and the teacher.



This is one of those times, too, when there are differences between llamas and alpacas, and from one animal of the same species to another. It is perfectly fine to try different things, and see what works for you and the animal you are teaching.

Here are some options:

- Work inside a catch pen with other animals in adjoining areas that are small enough that the animal in the pen doesn't feel alone. However, working in the typical 9x9' catch pen, which I recommend for haltering and other types of training, can be too small. Room to move around is important.
- Work with you staying outside the pen and the animal inside a pen alone, or with one or

two other animals in the same or an adjoining pen. This keeps your learner close, but with her feeling safe because you are not inside the pen with her.



- Work in a small paddock with one or two animals, with other animals in an adjoining paddock.
- Work in a large field with a group of animals, choosing to work with the animal that is most interested. In this case, my experience is that the most assertive animal will usually go first, but will often tire, and the next one in line steps up. This set-up is much less of a problem than you would think. In fact, working with even a big group of animals can be the easiest way to work.
- If you have an animal who is particularly food-aggressive, you may be pleasantly surprised at how she responds to clicker training with food. In most cases, when foodies learn how to work for food, they put their energy into figuring out what you want so that they can get the food instead of trying to take it from you.

Food Considerations

You must be in charge of the food. The worst thing is for the animal to get the food from you by poking its nose in your pocket or pushing into your body. My clicker kit includes a pouch that I selected after trying many different options for controlling the food. The pouch allows you to use a small dish to offer the food. I think it is better with camelids to offer food in a dish and to keep the reservoir of food in the pouch. Many animals either don't like to take food from a hand or are afraid to. The small dish seems a better way to offer food than with your naked hand. It has the added benefit of separating the clicker training process from hand-feeding, which can turn into inappropriate food-oriented searching.



Using this system, you can be in complete control of the food, and it is not visible to the animal. Additionally, you can leave the gear in the house, and your animals are not always following you around wondering if you are going to offer food.

It is a good idea to practice with your dish and pouch. You want to become skilled at scooping out a small amount of grain from the pouch and

offering it to the animal in a way that avoids dropping the grain on the ground. Grain on the ground is free, and the animal becomes confused about working for food versus getting it for doing nothing.

In the kit, I also include a clicker that makes a loud but not jarring sound that works well outdoors or in a barn.

Train in the winter when animals are more dependent on the food we give them. When the ani-

mals live in lush pasture, they are less motivated to work for food. This gives you something to do in the winter that you can do bundled up and wearing gloves, and that your animals will love.

It is always a good idea to weigh your animals regularly; but it becomes more important if you use concentrated food for training, and especially if you do a lot of training. Remember that if you give your animals concentrated food on a regular basis, you must subtract from their regular ration the amount of food you offer for training.

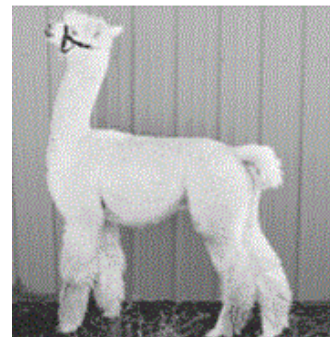
A camelid that is calm ...

- is quiet.
- blinks regularly. (A very slow, deliberate blink indicates an animal that was tense and is beginning to relax.)
- stands in balance on all four feet.
- breathes at a normal rate: approximately 10-30 respirations per minute, heart rate 60-90 beats per minute, temperature 99.5-102°F.
- eats or ruminates.
- is still.
- holds its tail lightly against its body.
- swallows on a regular basis.
- carries its neck slightly forward of its shoulders.
- moves its ears regularly and holds them loosely.
- watches the handler with interest.
- will walk—not run—inside the confines of



A camelid that is fearful ...

- leans or pulls against the handler, lead rope, catch rope or the side of the chute, or exhibits other behavior that indicates it is out of balance.
- lies down and get back up repeatedly.
- seeks to escape by leaping forward, pulling back, rearing; or may try to crawl under or through an opening.
- stomps its feet and/or kicks.
- holds its tail over its back, clamps it to its body, or arches it up and over its back.
- stares fixedly.
- spits.
- refuses food or bolts food down so fast that the animal doesn't chew.
- throws its head around, sometimes in a distinctive pattern called "orbiting," in which the camelid looks straight up and then whirls its head around in a circle. (This is common in



Is Your Ad Doing Its Job?

By Linda Hayes | Llama Linda Ranch, Prescott Valley AZ

People are funny when it comes to buying llamas. They often lead with their hearts. They see one that catches their eye, and the sale pretty much takes care of itself. But how do you get a buyer to visit your ranch to begin with? To drive buyers to your ranch, you must advertise repeatedly.

People want to buy from well-known breeders and individuals who have a good reputation. They may read show results and notice that one particular farm seems to do most of the winning. They may see ads in the *Journal* that become familiar because they are in every issue. They may hear about a ranch from word of mouth. If you want that recognition factor, you need to advertise repeatedly. One ad in a magazine once a year won't do the job. It is better to use several small ads than one big one.

Start with designing a business card—ones you can pass out at shows, attach to your emails and use as an ad in the *Journal*. You could even pay to have it reproduced in an email blast to other llama owners. Unfortunately, good business cards don't have room for much. They need to tell who you are, where you are located and what you sell. Be specific about what you have for sale. For example, are your llamas Suris, Argentinians, pack, etc.? Include contact info: email, phone number and web address. Your name is important. Find a way to include it.

In a larger ad, you have room for an advertising slogan. I borrowed mine, "Llamas for the Fun of It," from Kay Patterson. She made the very first llama sales in this country with a simple ad in national magazines. It said "Llamas are fun." Just that and her phone number.



A memorable logo also helps. It should not be too cutesy or hard to decipher. Who will ever forget the llama hatching out of an egg in Charlie Hackbarth's pack system logo?

Does your ad tell where you are located? If there is no town listed, people may overlook your ad because they think you are too far away to bother with.

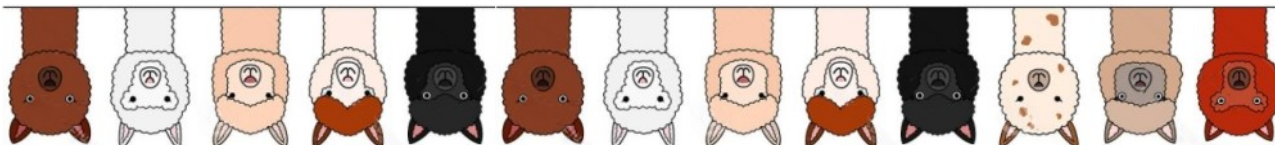
Your name on the ad is a must. This is one of the biggest mistakes people make. They assume that because you recognize the ranch name, you will know who owns it. This assumption is not correct. People like to know the person they are dealing with.



Each ad you put out should look similar to the others. It needs to be recognizable. Years ago, Dr. Art and Lois Kennel used ads that had a cartoon with llamas doing or saying something humorous. The ads were a hit. When people first got their magazines, they would try to find those ads before reading anything else. You want to strive for this kind of advertising.

Is the ad so full of information that it looks cluttered? If it does, people will overlook it and go on to something else. Lots of whitespace is important. People are always in a rush, and won't take time to wade through a lot of verbiage. If you have seen ads from the 1800s, you probably noticed that they read like a short story. Those days are over. Make it short and to the point.

Advertise often and with clarity, and you will see more visitors to your ranch, and those llamas will start to sell themselves.



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 Identifying what you are paying for

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Connection deadlines are firm with few exceptions. Submission deadlines allow for newsletter publication one week prior to each quarterly Calpaca Membership meeting. Both advertising copy and articles must be received by the deadline, or they will not be published until the following issue. Payments for advertising must be received by Calpaca Treasurer Jackie Jones within seven days of submitting the ad via email or, if payment is mailed, included with disk containing the advertising copy.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Submissions Due</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>
Winter 2021	Jan. 16, 2020	Feb. 06, 2021	Feb. 13, 2021
Spring 2021	Apr. 10, 2021	May 01, 2021	May 08, 2021
Summer 2021	July 17, 2021	Aug. 07, 2021	Aug. 14, 2021
Autumn 2021	Oct. 16, 2021	Nov. 06, 2021	Nov. 13, 2021



Calpaca - California Alpaca Association

Jennifer Powers Tom Krasny • Oct 30 at 12:17 PM • 🌐

Editing to add Shari at Cross Creek Alpaca Rescue is managing the placements. Contact <https://www.facebook.com/foralpacas>

As many of you may know, Tom died suddenly and wholly unexpectedly in August. I have now begun the process of selling the ranch and must begin to place our alpacas. There are 20 here from the ages of 6 to 21. It is imperative that they go to good caring forever homes. Strong preference for clients of Dr. Robin Skillman. As much as possible I would like to keep them in their friend groups placing no fewer than 4 at a time. Message for details. Sincerely Jennifer



Calpaca Classified Ads

Agisting

Menagerie Hill Ranch is a full service, family run alpaca ranch offering **agisting, consulting, sales, support and alpaca fiber products**. Our agisting service includes quality feed/water, routine husbandry, vaccinations, birthing and other care. Cria born here receive basic halter training. Owners are welcome to visit any time by appointment, and we will help you learn how to care for your alpacas. Veterinary care, breeding, show training and other services are extra. Standard rate \$3.50 per day. We are located in the English Hills area of Vacaville, close to Hwy 505.

Deb Galway & Kirk Howard, Owners
www.menageriehillranch.com 707.290.7915

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Larry 209-648-2338 | Maureen 209-648-2384

Herdsires

Menagerie Hill Ranch is pleased to offer the stud services of **RR Gun's Kit Carson (KC)**. With **17 Championships** and **21 1st-Place** wins, it's no wonder that more than **10 of his offspring are Color Champion** winners! KC took his first championship at eight 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 out KC and his cria 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!

He normally summers in Utah and will be leaving around May 1. Until then, he's available for hosted breedings at **\$3,000**, with **drive-byes at \$1500**. Reserve your breedings now and take advantage of his great genetics!

Deb Galway & Kirk Howard, Owners
www.menageriehillranch.com 707.290.7915

Calpaca Classified Ads

Herdsires, *cont.*

Macedo's Mini Acre, Turlock, California

Suri: Jar Jar Binks, Sir Baronoff son and Angel Dreams Viggo (true black)

Huacaya: RR Brubeck (roan)

Sundance Kid (light fawn; has sired harlequin greys)

Desert Lotus Mr. Wallace (grey)

macedosminiacre@gmail.com | Larry 209-648-2338 | Maureen 209-648-2384

MHAR Blizzard by Justice is a beautiful, bright-white stud, with extremely uniform, dense, crimped fleece, full-body coverage, and excellent bite/conformation. At six years of age, his fleece still has a lovely, soft, buttery 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 fourth fleece spin-off entry won 1st 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 for Calpaca members, 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!

Deb Galway & Kirk Howard, Owners

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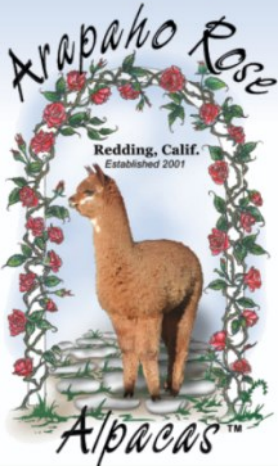
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Maureen Macedo 209-648-2384

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To provide safe refuge for unwanted, neglected or abandoned llamas through intervention, education and necessary support. To seek placement and lifelong care for all llamas entrusted to our care.

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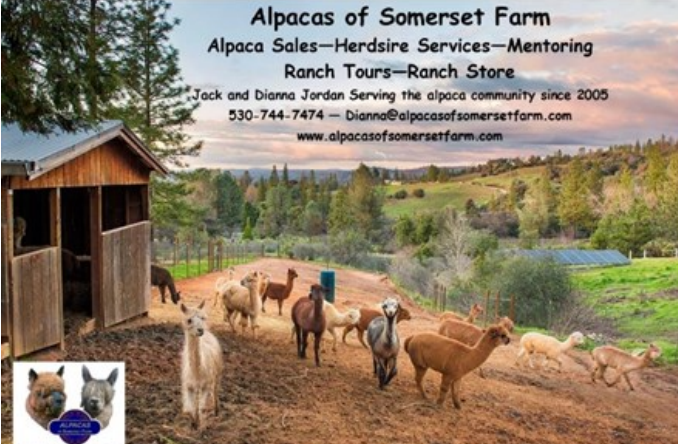
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Join Calpaca Today!

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



NEWS & UPDATES

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 Member Education Sessions

The last of bi-monthly member education sessions takes place on **November 17**, and resumes in January of 2022. This call is a benefit for paid members of AOA. You can attend at the scheduled time or watch the recording at a later date. The call link will be emailed the morning of the calls.

Program:

*New Membership Structure
with Sarah Donahoe*

2022 Mazuri® AOA National Alpaca Show

Presented by Flying Iron Ranch, Tierra Prometida Alpacas, & TXOLAN Alpaca Association

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ENJOY NEW TRAVEL PLANNING IDEAS WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY AND GROUPS. A PLACE FOR NEW AND UNIQUE ADVENTURES
GET LISTED. IF YOU ARE AN AGRITOURISM DESTINATION, OUR FREE LISTINGS ONLY TAKE A COUPLE STEPS.

FARMS WITH ANIMALS >

Alpaca and Llama (216)	Beekeeping (78)	Chicken and Eggs (233)
Dairy and Beef (158)	Falconry (1)	Farm Sanctuary (1)
Fish (34)	Goats (182)	Horses (145)
Livestock Sales (102)	Other Livestock (161)	Sheep and Lamb (1)

Newsletter Archives: California Agritourism News

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!

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](#)
- [Alpaca Fiber](#)
- [Alpaca Registry](#)
- [Alpaca Research](#)
- [Alpaca Shows](#)
- [Alpacas as a Business](#)
- [Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Embryo Transfer](#)
- [EPDs](#)
- [Farm Management](#)
- [Genetics & Breeding](#)
- [Health & Husbandry](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Research Registered Alpacas](#)

Video Topics Available From International Camelid Institute Include:

- How To Give an Injection
- Assessing Your Camelid Before You Call Your Veterinarian
- 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

