



# Camelids Chronicle

NEWS-SHEET OF BRITISH CAMELIDS LTD., OWNERS AND BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

**A.G.M.** - a brief report - the minutes will be circulated as soon as possible.

Palm Sunday is probably not the best day for a meeting but even so 50 people were able to attend of which 28 members had a vote.

Ann Knowles-Brown had brought samples of her spinning and weaving together with an interesting demonstration of a separated llama fleece - the resulting 40% down was lovely.

We had a jolly gathering before and after the meeting, which was conducted briskly.

Subjects debated ranged over :-

What the membership expects of the Association.

How to obtain and distribute information.

Communication of committee activities.

How to accrue funds to the Association.

Membership fees.

Review of the Aims and Rules of the Association.

Projects, planning and costing.

Committee size - sub committees and co-opted committees.

Who should and should not be eligible to stand.

The relationship between the Association and the Fibre Co-operative.

Insurance.

Future meetings, shows and fun get togethers.

Finally the vote for the committee:-

Peter Isaac was newly elected.

Peter Knowles-Brown

Jenny Cobb

Linda Johnson

Pam Walker were all re-elected.

**Pat Bentley**

I wish them well and retire with good grace and some relief - looking forward to being an active member and returning my attentions to matters too long on the back-boiler of my life.

**Pat Bentley**  
March 21st. 1989

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

We can look forward to a day with Paul & Judy Rose, Manor Farm, Temple Guiting, Gloucestershire on Sunday April 9th. Pam Walker is giving a training demonstration.

**'A Day With Llama Friends'** at Ordell Safran's house in Winkfield, Berkshire on July 16th.

**A Llama-Khana Day** at the home of Peter Isaacs, The Brooks, Bildeston, Suffolk on June 10th. 1989.

Peter hopes that as many people as possible will take at least one of their llamas - local accommodation and paddocking is available by prior arrangement with Peter, come on you llama fans and make a start on your showing and gymkana careers at these two events.

Molly Badham has very kindly invited the Association to hold a meeting some time at Twycross Zoo, Atherstone, Warwickshire. It will be a very interesting and delightful venue and we thank her for the invitation.

I haven't addressed the thorny subject of dates for the visit to Syke House in September, but it will be after the school holidays and therefore the peak tourist season hereabouts; so that if people want to come one day and go the next there will be somewhere for them to sleep. At the moment I envisage a two day programme.

## MEMBERSHIP

We welcome one new member:-

Miss Mauna Wells,  
Maplehurst Farm,  
Horsham,  
Sussex.

If any member wishes to renew their membership but has not done so yet may I include this gentle reminder.

## EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH AMATEUR GUANACO OWNER

When the children had grown up and all but one of our darling horses had gone to their 'Happy Hunting Ground', I wondered what would fill the panoramic view across the Ha-ha in front of the house? Certainly not cows with their accompanying mud and devastation of fences and grass. Sheep? They do look nice lying contentedly under the shade of the chestnut tree and they are good for the grass but they are awfully dull after my gorgeous Arab horses with their scimitar ears and prancing, heraldic, arrogance. Deer? Too expensive on the fencing, I know, why not alpacas? Semi-domesticated, with their valuable curly black fleeces and looking marvellously original, like the result of an amour between a West Highland Terrier and a giraffe.

A year later, having discovered what alpacas cost and that there was quarantine to Ulster, I visited the local zoo and to my joy and astonishment, discovered it had a surplus of incredibly beautiful creatures called guanacos, which they would be glad to let me have as a second breeding herd near-by. I was enchanted. Their huge soft eyes, forested by darker eyelashes, velvet faces, and legs and necks to drive any couture model mad with envy. Arrangements were made for delivery as soon as my fences were heightened.

### **The guanacos arrive**

I heightened my fencing and time passed and no guanacos arrived. Then one afternoon as we were dressing to go to a cousin's wedding, I saw a car and horse-trailer turn up the drive. Hastily tearing off my wedding finery, I rushed down to find my friend from the zoo with the three guanacos. The male was looking very bouncy and as soon as we had backed the trailer into the field and let down the back, he bounded off in a great state of excitement, followed by a young female, three months old. The mother remained comfortably folded up at the back of the trailer and was plainly very drowsy and unable to stand. My friend explained that in order to catch them, (as they are completely wild and not domesticatable, unlike llamas and alpacas), they had to give them a tranquiliser dart and then, as soon as they were boxed, they got an untranciliser dart so that they would be viable upon arrival. Unfortunately the mother must have missed out with the second dart. We carried her out and sat her in the sunshine and she looked blearily around at the lake and the trees with her lovely big eyes. Then suddenly, the male, having finished 'casing the joint' whirled up all rampant with flaring nostrils and tried to mate her.

The Zoo man and I shoved him off.

"You see, they mate sitting down" he explained, "and because she is sitting, he thinks she is ready. We must keep him off, or he will damage her in this condition." We repelled another attack and then looking at his watch he said, "I'm afraid I'll have to go. Do you think you can manage?"

"Just give me five minutes to ring up the bridegroom of the wedding I was going to, to explain why I can't come. He is a very dear cousin."

I sped into the house, where I explained with some difficulty the 'peculiar circumstances' preventing

my attending his wedding in about ten minutes.

"I'm not sure that I either understand or believe a word that you are telling me," he replied, "but you have 'made' my speech!"

I returned to the recumbent guanaco and together the Zoo man and I carried her into the open shed which fortunately the male was reluctant to enter. My Zoo friend departed and I sat down to a three hour vigil with this lovely, graceful creature. All the time I talked to her and combed her coat, (as the fleece is one of the most valuable in the world and it seemed unlikely that I would find it easy to acquire, if the male's behaviour was anything to go by), pulling out gently the great matted lumps which in their wild state would scrape off on sharp rocks and thorns. She seemed utterly unafraid and the male never became too threatening due primarily to his being diverted by his strange surroundings. This vigil stood me in good stead in the future, because she developed a rapport and confidence in me which has never failed and ever since I have been able to get her to follow me and to come when I call. Without this rapport I could not have coped with them, for like all wild creatures, they have a terror of being encircled, or of people coming up behind them. A bit like Ulstermen, you can lead them, but you can't drive them!

### **Guanacos on the loose**

As no-one could remember what they were called, least of all my husband, I decided to christen the adults 'Gwen' and 'Echo' Guanaco! The baby of course had to be 'Angelique'. Guanacos do not jump, except in a crisis, they tend more to lean over fences with their long necks and then push. However, baby guanacos, full of the joys of spring, quite literally spring about ten feet into the air and during one of these joyous moments, 'Angelique' sprang out of the field and did not know how to spring back to her mother. All Hell was let loose. Guanacos usually communicate with gentle mewing noises like kittens, but under stress they have a wide range of terrifying snarls, growls, barks and screams. All these were going on "fortissimo" as Gwen and Echo tore up and down inside the fence trying to break through and the baby did the same outside, up and down the drive. I was pounding across the field on the other side of the drive trying to circumvent Angelique and shut the main gates onto the road before she got out, when a very smart car turned in and stopped; a very smart policeman got out and gazed about him. I rushed towards him, (fearing that he would do something to frighten the already distracted animals), and as soon as I got within ear shot shouted,

"Stop!...Stop!...My guanacos are loose!"

He looked at me with astonishment and some concern, but to his eternal credit, he stood stock still, no doubt wondering if it was my under-wear or the animals and deciding that lunatics are better humoured. Puffing and scarlet in the face I managed to shoo Angelique back to a place where she could, and did, jump back over the Ha-Ha. Echo, who I have since discovered is a sex maniac, promptly chased her round the field until they were both too tired to give any more trouble and I leant against the fence and explained the situation to the policeman who replied gravely that he was,

"sure I was a very busy woman" and went away to write a report, no doubt, on some rather unusual occurrences taking place on his 'beat'.

### New arrival

For several months life in the front field passed uneventfully. My 'strange animals' aroused much interest and a good deal of disbelief, especially after a lively party. I thought Gwen was in 'Kid'? 'Foal'? probably 'Calf'. Chambers Encyclopedia 1850 was not very sure of the gestation period nor did I know when she had mated. Most probably before she came here. Then one day as I came out to do some weeding in the front garden, I noticed tremendous excitement in a corner of the field and ran over, arriving at exactly the same moment as a baby guanaco. No problem at all to the mother, but to my horror, Echo immediately charged at the mother knocking her aside and picked the baby up in his mouth, grunting and screaming; so I rushed at him grunting and screaming too and waving my bucket. Gwen rushed at both of us grunting and screaming and the situation was becoming rather fraught, as Angelique, terrified by the noises careered around about us. Echo dropped the baby and I fought him off with the help of my husband, who heard the fearful noises and came running; but it was soon clear that Echo was not going to give up his attack and somewhere at the back of my mind, I remembered that a lot of wild animals mate immediately after a birth and that frequently the newborn babies get mashed up in the process, if not lifted by hyenas. At least we didn't have hyenas but we only had a bucket and shouts against teeth and hooves and a neck like whipcord, which guanacos use much as a swan does. I decided that we would have to get Gwen and the baby into another field, so while my husband emulated a brilliant imitation of an enraged lion at Echo, I picked up the baby and was promptly attacked by Gwen. This was where my hours of patient, soothing talk with her in the past bore fruit; gradually she allowed me to move the still wet and gangling baby foot by foot, pausing and letting her see that it was all right between each move. Finally we got to the gate and then quickly out while the enraged 'Lion' nipped through and shut the gate in Echo's screaming face. Luckily he didn't try to jump, but just went on rushing up and down the fence and then I realised that a white car was standing in the drive while two nice clean policemen, (and they say lightning never strikes twice!), were flapping their hands at him and keeping him back. Able to rise to any occasion, they must have been there for ten minutes before we noticed them and had been a great help in diverting Echo while we got Gwen and the baby out. She was delighted to be away from him and settled very happily with the baby in the sun. The very senior policeman introduced himself, shaking my filthy, bloody hand as if we were at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party saying,

"I have been driving past your wall for years and I always wondered what went on behind it. Today I thought I would risk you thinking me impertinent and have a look."

After ten days I thought Gwen looked as if she wanted to rejoin Echo, who had tramped a trench along the side of the fence but had never tried jumping out, so with

the help of my 'Lion', I led her and the baby back to his field, where he promptly mated her, but after a cursory smell, took no further notice of the baby whom we called 'Oliver'.

Very sadly Angelique died from eating rhododendron, which I didn't know was poisonous and I very nearly lost Gwen too. Only the fact that she seemed to have such faith in my nursing and perhaps that she was older and I noticed her condition sooner, saved her. Angelique never got tame enough to touch until she was really sick beyond curing, though she would come when called and follow.

### Guanaco steaks!

Now we face the problem of having two males to one female and I foresee that we shall have to upgrade our angry 'Lion' act quite a bit. We are also praying that Gwen's next baby will be a girl, if the worst comes to the worst, the Encyclopedia Britannica says that the flesh of guanacos is much prized, as being better than Aberdeen Angus and that the fine wool is the reason for them having almost reached extinction in their native mountains of Peru. There being no Camelid Association in those days we ate Oliver, (very like Aberdeen Angus), and I kept his fleece!

Lady Kinahan

### SYKE HOUSE ALPACAS

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**The following report appeared in the January 'Farm Development Review'. Of all the articles currently being circulated about camelids this is possibly the most balanced view that has been written.**

### **LLAMAS, ALPACAS AND GUANACOS**

The farming of camelids, the generic name for llamas, alpacas and guanacos, has grown over the past 12 months. We consider some of the issues involved in assessing their viability.

From six or seven known breeders and a handful of animals a year ago, camelid farming has undergone a remarkable growth with as many as 100 breeders now well established and around 500 llamas, 100 alpacas and 300 guanacos flourishing on farms throughout the UK.

Although camelids, especially llamas, have been in Britain for the past decade or more, they have until now been largely kept as pets. However, the potential for their high-quality fleeces is now well recognised and prices for animals at auction are rising.

An average breeding pair of llamas or guanacos will cost around £6,000, with alpacas fetching double that. But quality stock can fetch up to £8,000 a pair and a single female llama can cost around £3,500 to £4,000. The alpaca is seen as having the greatest potential; a top quality three-year-old female, in show condition, fetched £9,450 at Europe's first camelid sale at the National Agriculture Centre in October, about three times the average one could expect to pay.

While the growing popularity of llamas is already evidenced by their appearance at two Royal Shows, most of the 15 buyers at Stoneleigh, it is worth noting, had no previous experience of keeping llamas and bought the animals not for fibre production but for pets. There were just 37 lots of which 27 were actually sold, mostly staying in the home market. Only three males went overseas to an American buyer.

Llamas, alpacas and guanacos mix well with other farm animals when put out to graze, are economical to feed and are quite happy with short grasses supplemented with ordinary goat or sheep mixes. Significantly, food conversion rates are 25% better than sheep. They are hardy and, despite their South American origins, appear to take well to the British climate. All that seems necessary are a few sheds where they can shelter from the worst of the weather. In terms of viability, the fact that 25 females could give the same return as 500 to 600 ewes can not be ignored.

It is hard to put a price on camelid fibre, because sales are at present on a very small scale to hand spinners, whose interest is generally that of the non-commercial hobbyist. Female llamas and guanacos are sheared in alternate years, while alpacas and some male llamas are sheared annually. Yields depend on the quality of the animal, but a rough guide is as follows:

guanacos 1 to 2kg, llamas 2 to 3kg, alpacas 3 to 4kg. Prices achieved recently form the basis of what the British Camelid Society is recommending to members, and are: llama fleeces at around £1 per ounce, guanacos £1.50 and alpacas £2.

In fact, the rich dark brown alpaca fleece is currently worth around £100 a kilo, and some hand-spinners have paid up to £150. Indeed, some exceptional alpaca fleeces have been known to fetch as much as £1,000; but these are unusual results, based on the actions of individual buyers in a narrowly-based market.

Alpaca fibre is especially highly rated. Its quality is similar to that of angora, and it can be processed by hand or machine. After stretching and combing it becomes very smooth but makes up into a tough, hard-wearing cloth, a top quality material with no equal in the luxury fibre market.

While llama fibre is generally considered less luxurious than alpaca, it is still rated a top quality product and its toughness and versatility makes it a viable proposition for the general textile market - for example, the carpet-making industry - as well as for those serving the top fashion houses. Llama-fleece socks, of the type worn by the hill people in Peru, have the durability of 30 pairs of shop-bought socks in this country.

What are the prospects for anyone considering going into camelids either for breeding or for fibre production?

One of the first things to be considered is the scarcity of stock. There are thousands of llamas and alpacas in South America but they have to stay there because of a ban on imports into Britain for fear of bringing in foot-and-mouth or blue-tongue. This has resulted in the high value of those animals already here, which is reflected in the consistently high prices that can be asked for fleeces.

One way of increasing the availability and quality of UK breeding stock is the use of genetic engineering techniques for embryo transfer, and this is currently being pursued. It would enable, for example, difficulties in breeding alpacas to be overcome if females could be flushed and their eggs transferred into the easier-to-rear llamas. This kind of advance would also ensure that the temptation to go for quantity at the expense of quality, always a danger when stock is in short supply, would be overcome.

Agricultural scientists are studying llama breeding at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen where a mixture of camelids, including the much rarer vicuna, are being inter-bred. As well as providing new information on breeding techniques it could also result in the production of new luxury "super fibres" which could create new markets for suppliers, and be very attractive to buyers at the top end of the textile industry.

The llama has an excellent digestive system enabling it

to feed on the kind of marginal land which neither sheep nor cattle would accept. As the animal's natural habitat is the mountain regions of South America, it can thrive on rough ground anywhere in the country, and is entirely suited to hill farms.

However, it will be some years before a national breeding herd has been established, and only then will the fibre production potential of camelids under British conditions be established. Moreover, there can be no established marketing channels until there are worthwhile quantities of fibre to sell.

It was these facts which prompted Prof. John Nix, of Wye College, to make the following dry comments about llamas in the introduction of his 1988 'Farm Management Pocketbook': "Those interested in obtaining wool from llamas may be better advised - and find it cheaper - to take a plane to the Andes where there is the added value of a trip to Cuzco and Machu Picchu, which I can thoroughly recommend. Or for those who simply love to gamble and have money to indulge the habit, there is always the Stock Exchange - which game can be played from the comfort of an armchair. Or there's the horses..."

The British Camelids Society recognises the long-term, speculative nature of an investment in llamas etc. Its chairman, Peter Knowles-Brown, a Lanarkshire sheep farmer, says that people who are thinking about camelids should treat them as a second or third interest, buy a breeding pair, and let it build slowly.

He said: "It is a long-term project and no one should think this is the answer. It is interesting, it is rewarding and there is potential for the future. But we are talking about 10 years before the availability of animals makes it really worthwhile. Prices for fleece are still very much of a lottery because there isn't the market yet other than for hand-spinners. But the alpaca promises the most. It has everything. It is the ultimate animal."

The British Camelids society was set up by pioneers like its Secretary, Mrs. Pat Bentley, of Newby, near Penrith, and looks after owners' and breeders' interests. It publishes a newsletter called the Camelids Chronicle to keep enthusiasts abreast of the latest developments, and provides advice on the care, feeding and behavioural aspects.

#### COMMENT

Because camelid breeding programmes are unlikely to have an effect for many years, and because the import of stock is so restricted, the fledgling industry has constraints which are more severe than those felt by the farmers of Angora goats, venison or snails.

Camelids offer potential for the successful breeder, but not all farmers are successful in breeding. Profitable fibre production depends in the short term on the producer's ability to establish his own markets.

Anyone looking at camelids with a view to

reliable annual income and regular pay-back periods on investment ought really to look somewhere else. Nevertheless, the uncertainties of the breeding and fibre markets could to some extent be offset by the tourism and leisure potential of the animals. Most areas could support a llama centre and an associated craft shop for hand-spinners and craft enthusiasts, although it is doubtful whether they could support more than one. Such a venture would require time and skill in obtaining media publicity and in promotional work among the schools, clubs and associations which might build a visit to a llama centre into their annual programmes.

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#### SHIPMENT OF LLAMAS

Extracts from a report which appeared in The New Zealand 'Northern Advocate' 12th. Jan. 1989.

Hundreds of Chilean llamas and alpacas are due to arrive in Wellington this month and will be quarantined on a ship anchored near Somes Island.

Between 1200 and 1300 animals are expected to arrive about January 20 and will be quarantined on the ship for 40 days. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries public relations manager Christopher Boland would not say who was bringing the animals into the country. The animals were checked before shipment and monitored by MAF staff during the journey to New Zealand.

No members of the public will be allowed near the ship while the animals are in quarantine and Dr. Boland said he hoped the Wellington public would co-operate.

In a separate project, a ministry consultancy group has recently returned from Chile where they observed llamas and alpacas being farmed.

Scientist Dr. Terry Knight said there was increasing overseas interest in the animals, with American small-block holders paying up to \$25,000 for quality animals, with a show and pet market developing in America.

Alpacas were farmed for their wool, with high quality fibre fetching up to \$15 to \$20 a kilogram, he said.

Until recently the Chilean Government only allowed llamas to be exported to zoos or game reserves. Most of the estimated 100 animals currently in New Zealand were bred in zoos.

## CHRISTMAS WITH LLAMAS (CANADIAN STYLE)

8 p.m. on Christmas Eve

**Me:** "But I don't want to open my presents on Christmas Eve, it's not the same."

**Husband** "Well here's one you must open."

It was a plane ticket to Toronto, to spend Christmas with my sister and brother. I had to be at the airport by 11.30 a.m. the following morning, Christmas Day.

The only sensible thing I could think of, after the initial shock, was that I would have a chance to visit Jennifer Spooner's friend, who breeds llamas in Ontario. I wasn't sure exactly where he lived but felt sure we could travel a hundred or so miles if necessary.

### **Visit to Lars Dahl**

As it happened, he lives about 10 miles from my brother. After several phone calls to and from Mr. Lars Dahl, it was arranged for my brother and his family to come with me on a visit, two days before my return to England. Armed with cameras and wearing heavy winter coats and boots, (they had a lovely white Christmas and it was, naturally enough, a bit chilly), we set forth.

What a lovely afternoon we had! Lars and his wife Agneta made us very welcome, (as of course, all llama breeders do). First of all they put away their enormous Hungarian Commodor dog, who I think, might have liked us all for dinner, although apparently, once he recognises a friend is more likely to lick you to death and is very gentle with all the llamas, including the new born 'crias'.

Lars was happy to talk on all aspects of llama farming. The Canadians have to be very careful about Selenium deficiency and have their soil analysed to see how they should adjust their feeding programme. They are also "very hot" on the injections they give their animals. Cribs are always injected as soon as possible after birth, with clostridial and selenium vaccines.

The first thing anyone could not help noticing about the Dahl animals is how friendly they all are and I am sure this is because they are so well groomed. Even the males were quite happy to have us peer at the crimp in their fibre, which apparently is a very important factor. Agneta Dahl spends all of her time caring for the llamas and spinning and knitting-up the fibre, which she gets purely by grooming - they rarely shear or clip their animals.

### **Rabies concern**

There is cause for concern regarding rabies in Canada, so the Dahls bring in the llamas each night. They have a lovely warm barn in which they also keep their Angora goats and a couple of friendly old cats to keep down the vermin. During the summer the heat is just as extreme as the cold in winter, so Lars has fixed up his own air-conditioning for the llamas. He uses an 18 inch

diameter, strong plastic tunnel with occasional holes in its length, this is strung right through the building. Attached to one end of this is an electric motor which either blows or sucks, depending on whether he wants hot or cold air to flow through. Sounds primitive but apparently it works well and is an important factor in the well-being of the animals.

The females and 'crias' run together in one paddock and the males run together in an adjoining one. Apart from an initial minor scrap to determine who is boss, they have no trouble at all. Indeed the animals looked perfectly healthy and happy to us.

### **Llama crush**

While talking in their log-cabin home over a cup of herb tea, Lars suggested we, (that is British Camelids), might like to contact one of the Professors at the University of California; he gives a very interesting and informative talk on llamas (I am afraid I have mislaid the note of his name, but I can find out if anyone is interested). One final thing Lars was keen to show us was the specialised llama crush. He was very definite that metal is not the material to use when restraining llamas. He has given me the drawings for the model he has made in wood (not his own creation this time!) It is extremely easy to make and cheap too. If anyone would like a copy of the details please let me know.

We had a super time there at Bradford, Ontario. My brother and his family were invited to keep in touch and to visit again - like I said, llama folk are friendly folk.

**Beryl Cossens**

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### LLAMA AUCTION

As most readers know Mr. John Thornborrow the Auctioneer is going to hold a Llama auction on October 11th. 1989 at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire.

The British Camelids are supporting this auction and it will be for anyone wishing to sell or buy animals - it is NOT a private auction.

May I, from experience of last year's auction, make a few suggestions:-

All animals will have to be halter led to the ring, therefore please do start training your animals early if they are not already leadable.

Taking them amongst people is also a great help, as sudden crowds can be a bit frightening, especially if they have been quietly out to pasture most of their lives.

Last but not least, background music can help to deaden sudden bangs and noises.

Please give me a ring if I can be of any help.

**Pam Walker**

## LETTERS

Dear Camelids Chronicle,

I read with dismay yet another disparaging report on llamas and the people who have them ('Farmers' Weekly', 25th. Nov. 88).

Speaking as a serious owner, breeder and admirer of these lovely creatures, I cannot help feeling sorry for those who must write in such condescending terms. They don't know what they are missing.

I also feel aggrieved that these journalists are actively being encouraged by members of our Association. Would it not be more helpful for us all, to read sensible, legitimate information, rather than a quote from a document dated 1774, which in any case, is incorrect? It would certainly give a better impression of our industry to the general public.

Speaking also as one going through the agonies of an agricultural planning application, I am not amused to hear from our County estates department, that they have heard that llamas are sold as pets, (as though that's all they are sold for), and that this is not classified as Agriculture.

Perhaps we should get together and decide exactly what is good to tell the press and what isn't, (or to tell anyone else, for that matter.) This also applies to prices quoted to non-members. Certain information is not helpful in that area either.

Finally, on the subject of a fibre co-op. Are we ready for such a thing so soon? i.e. can we really produce enough fibre for this to be viable? If we do need such a co-op, why do we not join forces with the existing one for cashmere, angora and mohair? Or are we really only trying to beat the Yanks at their own game?

Bill Cossens

## TRAINING YOUNGSTERS

We find the easiest way of training llamas is to start as soon as they are born. If they are stroked daily, all over, including the legs, for the first few weeks, this gets them used to being handled. Whilst doing this we put on a size 2 'Halti' Headcollar, (Pam Walker has these for sale). After this is accepted as part of the daily routine, we only do it now and again and the Halti is changed to a proper Llama Headcollar. We have two sizes, each of which is fully adjustable at nose and head. The first size fits from a few months old till the animal is a young adult. They are made for us in Dumfries at a very reasonable price.

When the youngsters are about a year old we start to train them to lead, with one person leading the mother and another with the youngster on a lead rope. After a bit of jumping about, they soon get the idea and follow; if this is done for a short time each day it soon becomes second nature.

It is advisable not to make too much fuss of the youngsters after the initial stroking and brushing sessions, or they may become too pushy and grow to have no respect for human beings, this can tend to cause problems when they become adult, especially with the males.

We keep our bachelor herd on a separate farm about 15 miles away and if we need to catch them for dosing etc., we take our horse-trailer into the field, entice them inside with food and then shut ourselves in with them. When we get five or six in the trailer they are so tightly packed, that putting on headcollars or dosing is comparatively easy, and the chances of being kicked are virtually eliminated.

The easiest way to put a headcollar on an adult not used to wearing one is to drive it into a stable or shed and with the aid of a helper, "crush" it against the wall with a wooden gate while trying to fit the headcollar. Some animals are extremely determined but an equally determined handler usually manages it in the end!

The address for Headcollars is:-

Mrs. Vanessa Knight, Floss Park, Cummertrees, Arman, Dumfries DG12 5TZ Tel. 04617 319

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Ann Knowles-Brown

## LLAMA

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