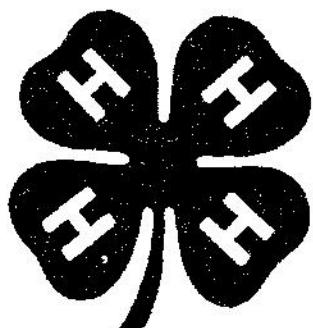


# **SHEBOYGAN COUNTY**



**4-H  
LLAMA  
PROJECT  
HANDBOOK**



# HISTORY

Llamas are South American members of the Camelid family. They originated in the high Andes of South America, and are related to the camels of Asia and the Middle East. There are four species of South American camelids. Llamas and alpacas are domesticated camelids, guanacos and vicunas are wild. Over the centuries, llamas have been developed mainly as work animals and alpacas as fiber producers. However, depending on its fineness, llama fiber can also be used to make ropes, blankets, decorative wall hangings, or clothing.

In the early 1900's, llamas were found mainly in zoos and private collections in the United States. Importation of llamas was stopped in the 1930's by strict laws enforced by the United

States Department of Agriculture. However, in recent years, some investors have been able to import llamas from Chile, Bolivia and Peru for breeding and research. Most of the llamas that you will see or be working with will have been bred in North America. It is estimated there are about 70,000 to 100,000 llamas in the United States. In the past, llamas were considered wild exotics, but there is no such thing as a wild llama and today they are considered domesticated stock. The past 25 years have seen the development of a new industry and status for llamas in the United States. Llamas have drawn much attention as pets, pack animals, sheep guards, entertainers, race companions, fiber producers, and cart-pullers. Llamas are very intelligent and their calm disposition makes them a favorite with many people.

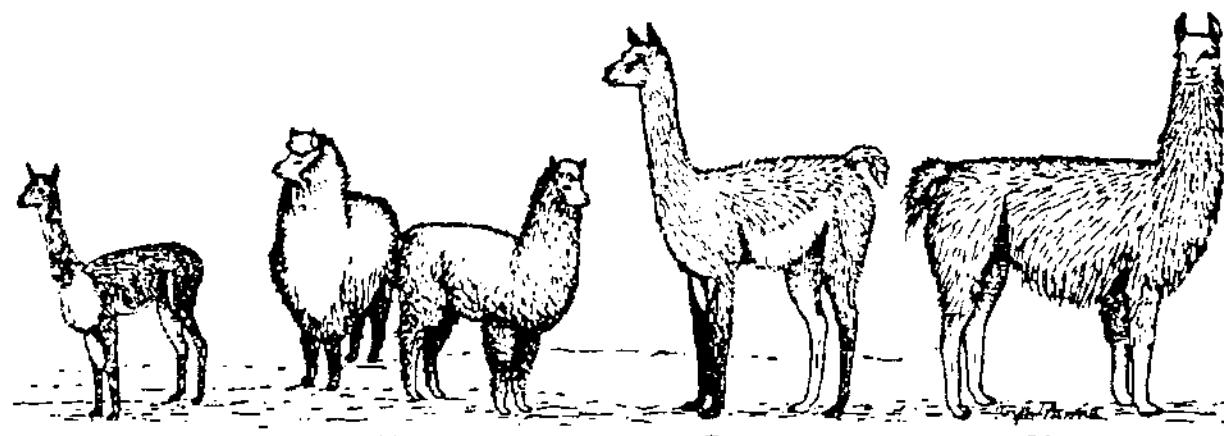


Figure 1 The South American Camelids

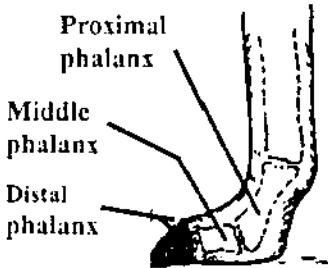
## LLAMA CHARACTERISTICS

### APPEARANCE

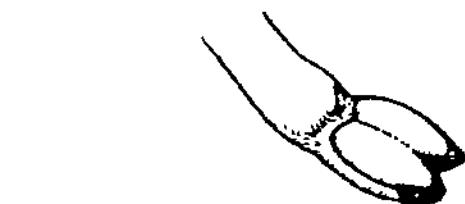
Llamas are unique animals in appearance, habits, and disposition. They stand three to four feet tall at the shoulder and weigh from 250 - 400 pounds as adults. They have a long neck, erect

curved ears, large doe-like eyes, and an unique cloven foot. The cloven foot (see figures 2a and 2b) consists of two toes per foot.

Each toe has a hard nail and each foot has a large, soft leather-like pad on the bottom, giving them great sure-footedness.



*Figure 2a Normal Feet*



*Figure 2b Normal Foot*

The llama's upper lip is cleft (split) and prehensile, meaning able to grasp. Like all other ruminants, they have front teeth only on the lower jaw.

The llama has two types of grease-free fiber in its coat: a long, coarse guard hair fiber which aids in air circulation, and a shorter, lightweight, finer fiber which helps keep the animal warm in cold weather. Llama fiber comes in a wide variety of colors: white, brown, black, rust, gray, and all shades thereof. The fiber length ranges from 3 to 12 inches or more.

Llamas may live as long as 25 years. Some females are able to have babies until they are 17 or 18 years old.

## BEHAVIOR AND TEMPERAMENT

Like human beings and other animals, each llama has a different temperament. Some are shy and cautious, some like to be cuddled, while others hate to be touched. There are a few llamas that are grouchy and don't seem to get along well with other llamas. Most llamas, however, are curious about the world and interested in anything that is not familiar to them. They usually prefer to spend their time with other llamas, but are very willing to work with people when it means that they can enjoy doing new and different things, being with other llamas and seeing new sights.

By nature, llamas are social animals which means that they need to be with other llamas. As youngsters, they learn what it means to be a llama by watching their mothers and other herd members. A large part of what they learn is how to communicate with other llamas through the sounds they make, and through their movements and behaviors. A llama may hum to its baby, or because it feels lonely. It may make a clucking sound if it is irritated, may give a warning call if it sees a coyote or strange dog or may scream if it is really angry or in a fight. A young llama who comes up to an older llama may hold its neck low, put its tail up over its back, and even walk with its legs bent a little bit, all part of a submissive gesture, as if to say "I'm really only a very small llama - I'm very polite and I hope you'll be nice to me". Sometimes an older llama will do the same thing if it is a little afraid, or wants to flirt with a llama of the opposite sex.

Llamas may hold their ears back when they are bored, or to listen to something behind them, but if they lift their noses, and hold their ears close to their necks, this often means that they are about to spit (see figure 3). It is as if they are saying to the other llamas, "I don't like what you are doing, and if you don't watch out, I'll get you!"

Generally, spitting is used to communicate between llamas, to prove their importance in the herd, or when they are hurt or upset. If a llama spits at a human, this may show that it doesn't like



Figure 3 Pre-spitting gesture

what is being done to it. For example, a llama may spit when being given a shot or vaccination. Although spitting is disgusting, it does not hurt and can easily be washed off. A herd-raised llama that has been treated with respect should do very little spitting at humans.

All of these ways of communicating are important because patterns of dominance, or a kind of "pecking order" are a very important part of normal llama social behavior. In any group of llamas, male or female, one of the llamas is the most important or powerful. This dominant animal, at the top of the pecking order, can walk over to another animal eating grain or hay, and say, through gestures, "I am more important than you are, so this is my grain or hay: go away!" The less dominant animal will usually just go. If the two animals are more or less equal, they may have a spitting match, as if to say, "I'm just as good as you are, go find your own food!" Sometimes the spitting is so bad that afterwards, both llamas will just stand there with their mouths open. Usually one animal will leave, and the other animal will eat the food, un-

less it has been flavored by spit. In this way the "pecking order", or dominance hierarchy, is created and maintained.

Female llamas do have a pecking order, but they seldom fight. Usually their arguments are settled by spitting matches. Male llamas, on the other hand, do fight. Starting as youngsters, they spend a lot of time play fighting, and later they may fight seriously. Some of this fighting is over territory. The dominant male will have his choice of the best food, the best place to sit, or the best view of the females from his pasture or living area, which is his territory. Usually this territorial behavior appears when the male is sexually mature, at about 2 1/2 years old, and usually it is directed at other male llamas who share or live near his territory. This is the reason that it is important to cut male llamas' fighting teeth, so that no one will get injured. Llamas are all different. Some males seem to like to fight, others stay out of the way as much as possible. Geldings generally are more interested in food than territory, so if you have a male that fights a lot, and you don't plan to use him as a stud, you may want to have him gelded. The most effective time to do this is when the llama is between 2 and 2 1/2 years old.

## ABERRANT BEHAVIOR SYNDROME (ABS)

Most patterns of llama behavior do not have much to do with people, but there is one condition where people do get involved. This is called Aberrant Behavior Syndrome or ABS. It is very frightening and may be very dangerous for people. It may mean that a male llama must be put down because it cannot be handled safely. Aberrant Behavior Syndrome may be caused when a young male llama begins to spend most of its time with humans. This may happen because the llama has been bottle raised, or because it was purchased as

an only llama. Llamas need and want llama companionship, and it is very hard for them to be alone. Someone who purchases a little male to be a pet or working llama and who sees that he is sad, may spend a lot of time cuddling him, so that the llama comes to depend on human companionship. This is all very well while the male is still young, but as he grows and becomes sexually mature, his basic nature changes. Since he cannot play or fight with other llamas, he will try to play or fight with humans. When he is sexually mature, he may try to defend his territory against humans, since he is confused about the difference between humans and llamas. He may attack humans, especially small, young, or female humans, biting them or attempting to breed them, may spit at them over the fence line, or try to prove in other ways that he is dominant or higher in the pecking order.

Once this behavior pattern has been established, it cannot be changed, and the only safe choice may be to have the male put down.

Female llamas who are raised in the same way do not become dangerous, but they may act spoiled, and treat you just like they would some other less dominant llama. They may spit at you if you have food they want. This may be irritating, but it is usually not harmful.

For these reasons, it is very important not to buy a bottle-raised llama. Some indications that a llama may have developed this behavior problem are frequent "bumping" into people, threatening to spit, spitting without any particular reason or charging the fence. If a llama you are interested in buying does any of these things,

## **♦DO NOT BUY IT.♦**

## **TYPES OF LLAMAS**

There are no real "breeds" of llamas as there are of dogs and horses, but there are three general types of llamas recognized in the United States. These are "heavy-wooled," "medium-wooled," and "light-wooled" llamas. These types are defined by the Alpaca and Llama Show Association (ALSA) as: "heavy wool: abundant body and neck wool with minimal to abundant head, ear, or leg wool; medium wool: moderate body wool, smooth to minimal head, ear or leg wool; and light wool: minimal body wool, short neck wool with smooth head, ears, and legs." (ALSA Handbook Part 9 Section 1A. See resources, ALSA, page 28). As mentioned previously, the llama's coat generally consists of two kinds of fiber. Guard hairs are long and shiny, while the fiber in the undercoat is soft and fine, more like sheep wool or a dog's undercoat.

"Heavy wooled" llamas may have fewer guard hairs, or the guard hairs present may be fine and hard to tell from the undercoat. The fine undercoat is what is used for spinning and weaving. The fiber quality of "medium wool" llamas is usually good. Before you pick the animal that you want for your project, you should decide what you want to do with your llama. If you want to work with llama fiber, then a "heavy wool" llama may give you a larger volume of fiber. If you prefer to have a pack or performance llama, then a "medium wool" or "light wool" animal may be better as the fiber will be less apt to get caught in the buckles and cinches of the pack. It will also be easier to groom and the llama will be less likely to overheat. All three types of llamas come in a wide variety of colors from solid to appaloosa and everything in between.

# CONFORMATION AND CORRECTNESS

Since you will get to know and care for the llama you choose, it really does not matter which type you pick. However, it is important to choose an animal with good bone structure and correctness, so that it can move comfortably and stay healthy. Conformation is the way an animal is put together, good or bad. Correctness means the animal has good conformation. (See figures 4, 5a and 5b). Anything that is

structured right will work better and longer. For example, if you plan on using your llama for packing, then you might consider a large-framed animal with long legs. Long legs can help the llama travel easily over logs and other obstacles on the trail. A large frame can help the llama carry more weight in the packs. Since you will be investing your money and time in this animal, it is important that you get a structurally sound animal.

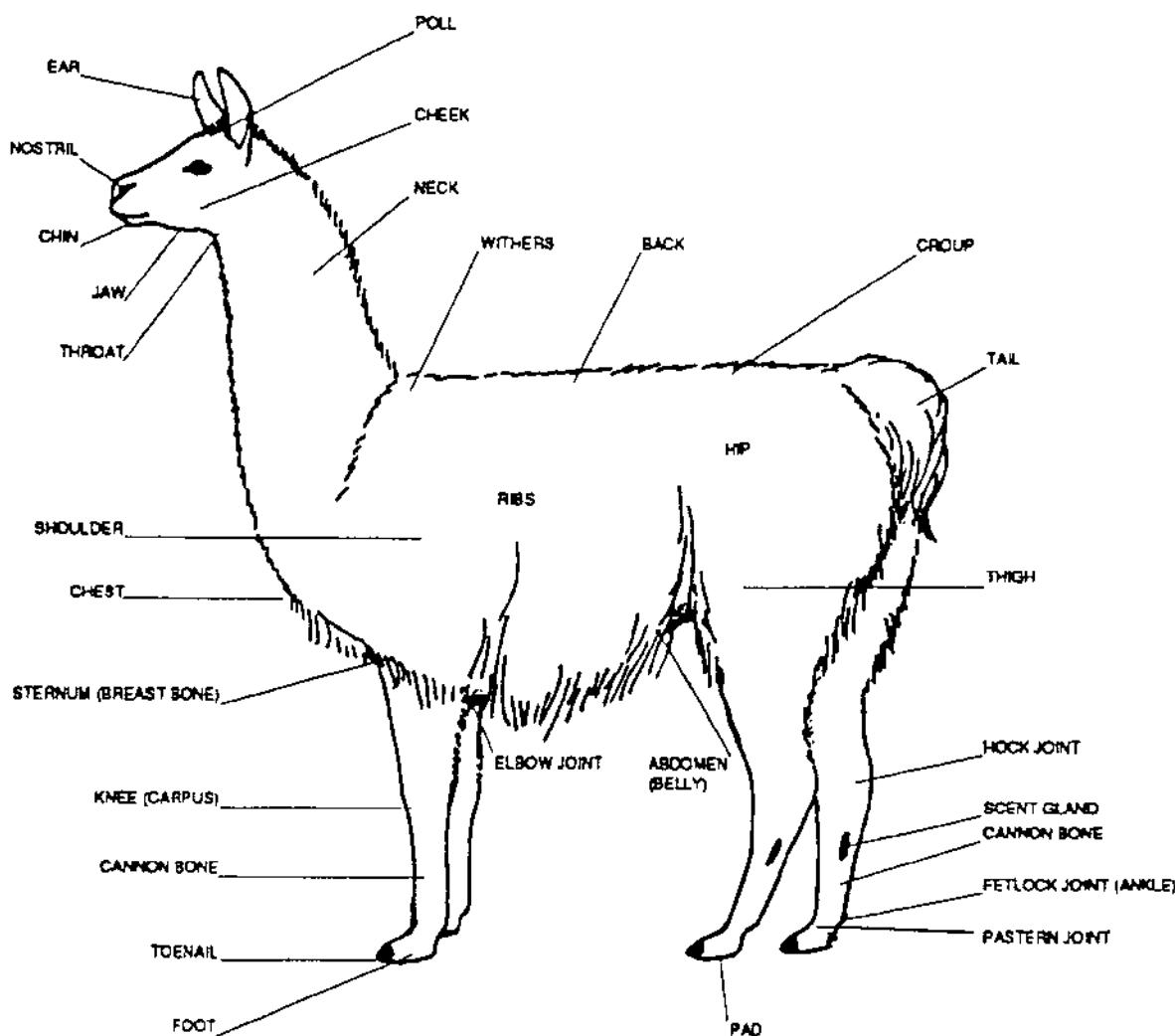
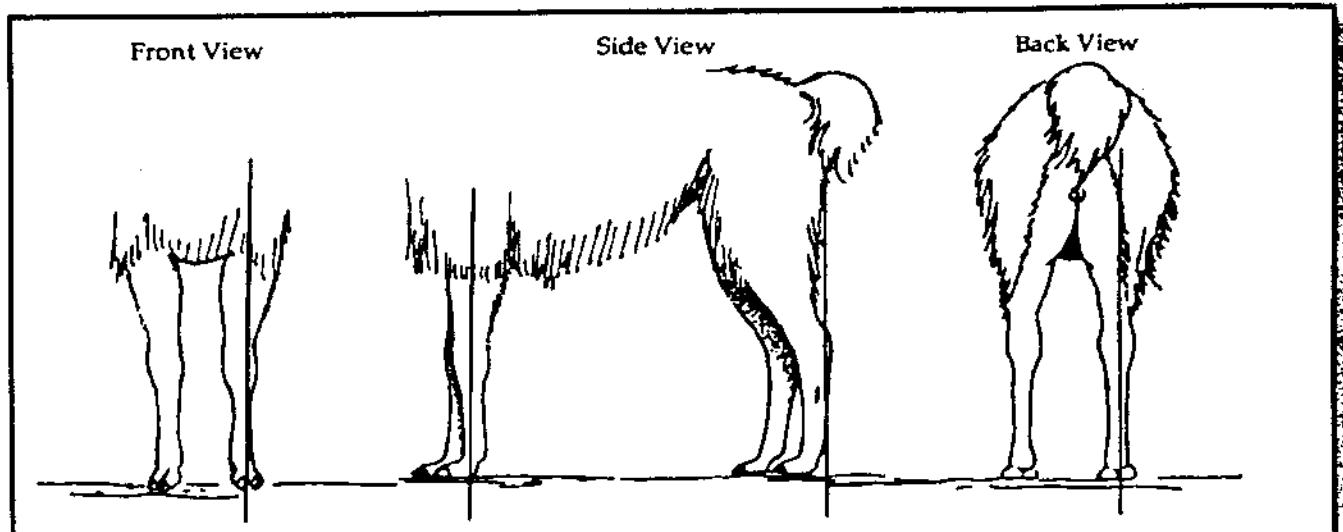
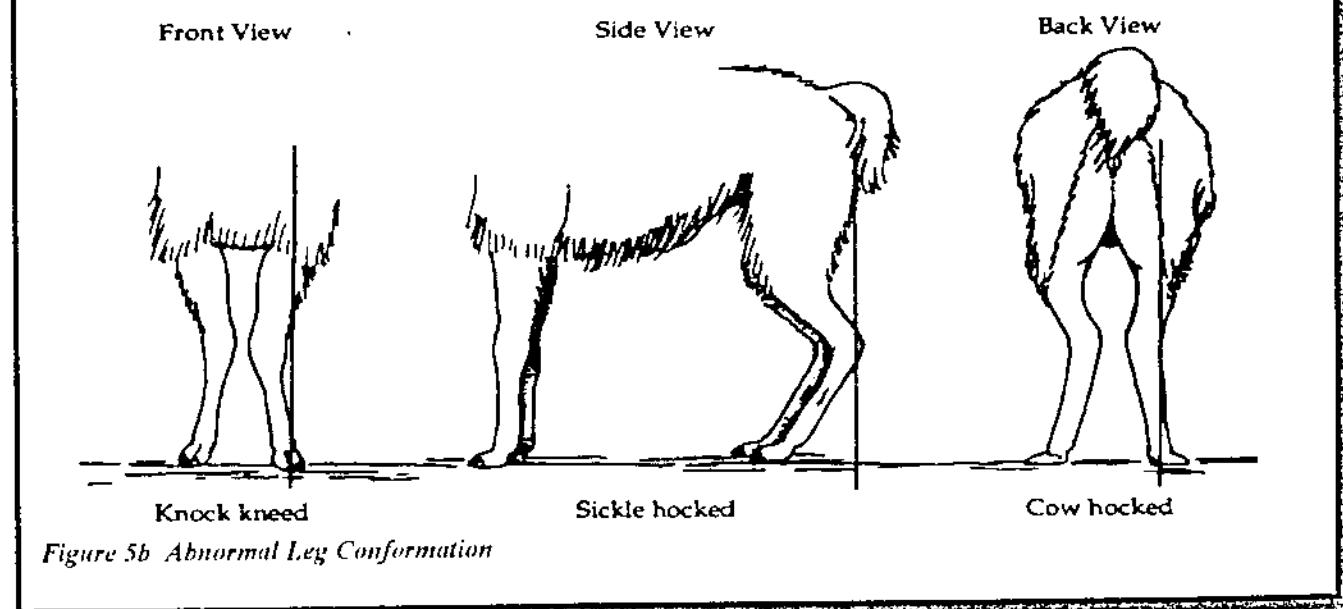


Figure 4 Parts of a Llama



*Figure 5a Normal Leg Conformation*



*Figure 5b Abnormal Leg Conformation*

## PURCHASING YOUR LLAMA

Choosing your llama is part of the fun of your llama project. It really doesn't matter which animal you choose, as long as it has good bone structure, conformation and temperament. If you live on a farm that raises llamas, then you have it made. If you wish to purchase an animal for your youth project, then visiting area llama ranches and talking with different breeders will help you focus in on what you want for an animal.

If you are unable to purchase a llama for your project, don't despair. Some animals can be "borrowed" or rented for the season or year. If finances are tight, be creative and trade your work services for the use of the animal for your special project.

If you have purchased a llama, your initial cost is a considerable investment, but maintenance, health, feed and equipment costs are minimal.

There are various llama owner organizations which can be used to locate llamas for purchase or use. A list of national organizations can be found on page 28.

A helpful book to learn more about llamas is published by the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association (RMLA). Its title is CARING FOR LLAMAS AND ALPACAS, a Health and Management Guide (see Resources, page 27).

## SHELTER AND FENCING

Shelter for llamas doesn't need to be fancy. A three-sided lean-to can suffice to keep them dry and out of the wind. Wood is preferable to metal because it is a better insulator against heat and cold. However, do not be surprised if your animal nibbles on the building. Llamas appreciate windows for light, ventilation and viewing their territory. They are more comfortable in a barn, with a good bed of straw, when temperatures are in the teens or lower.

Llamas are clean, essentially odor-free (except for occasional bad breath), and tend to use a few select waste areas, which makes clean-up easier. Keeping manure cleaned up helps control flies, keeps your llama healthier and makes the area more pleasant to work in.

The fencing used to keep your llama penned in should be sturdy. Barbed wire is not the best choice as the barbs will catch in the llama's fiber or cause possible injuries. Wire mesh, wood or smooth electric fence can be used. Often three to four wires will be needed to keep the animal within the fenced area as a llama can "sneak" through the fence line if less than three wires are used. Your animal will need to get acquainted

with the electric fence if this is the type you'll be using. Because a llama has a large quantity of fiber, it is important to use a strong fence charger, such as one for sheep fences. This can be purchased from your local farm and ranch supply store.

You can train your llama to respect an electric fence by placing it in a corral with a hot wire across a portion of it. Make sure that the wire is not near any food, water or waste areas. Tie a handkerchief or rag on the hot wire so that you can tell where it is in the corral. Your llama will quickly learn that the wire is "hot" and to respect it. Sometimes, however, your llama may get out of its pen because its fiber is so thick that it may not have felt the electrical charge. Be sure that the fence charger is working properly and that there are a sufficient number of wires in your fence line.

Any fence you choose should be at least four feet high. Many llamas can jump that height but will not unless they are being chased by a predator or if they want to visit a friend in the next pasture. A six-foot high woven wire fence will be necessary to protect your llamas if dogs are a problem in your neighborhood.

## DIET

Even though llamas are related to camels, and like camels, may not drink water very often, they still need water. Each llama needs about two to four gallons of water a day, especially during hot, dry weather.

Keep a stiff-bristled brush close to the water container and use it to prevent algae and dirt from building up. Just like you, llamas appreciate having fresh, clean drinking water.

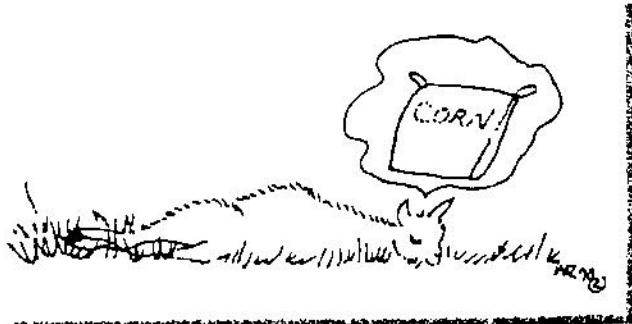
Cattle, sheep and goats are true ruminants with four-compartment stomachs. Llamas are modified ruminants because they have three-compartment stomachs. Still, their digestive systems are very efficient, and they can get by on relatively small amounts of low protein feed.

However, a good diet is important for healthy, active llamas. They are browsers by nature and like to nibble on all sorts of vegetation. Llama feed consists mainly of grass hay, grass hay/alfalfa mixture, or pasture grass. Llamas will also eat straw much like humans eat lettuce. Straw and hay are forms of roughage that help to keep their digestive systems working properly. If there are trees in the llama pen area or in the pasture, check with other llama owners and your veterinarian to see if the trees contain harmful substances. Llamas will eat tree bark, needles and leaves, so it is necessary to check and find out if the plants growing in your llama areas are harmful. If they are harmful, they must be fenced to prevent the llama from eating them.

A corn or corn/oat mixture or other grain may be fed during the winter months, and especially to pregnant or nursing females. A mineral supplement may also be needed; however, this depends upon the quality of the feed that you give to your llamas and the area in which you live. Check with your veterinarian to see if a mineral supplement will be needed. Minerals

formulated especially for llamas are available from llama suppliers (see RMLA Service Directory, Resources, page 27). Salt is a necessary mineral which should be made available to llamas at all times. Buy granulated trace mineral salt, formulated for sheep, in bags at a feed store.

A single llama will usually consume 1 to 2 percent of its total body weight of feed per day. For example, a 300-pound llama will eat three to six pounds of hay. This is not very much feed, so do not think that your llama is starving. The amount of hay and grain you feed to your llama will also depend upon its size and present weight. Some animals may need more than others. During the summer months, or when pasture is available, they usually will not require any more food than they can eat in the pasture. Any diet change must be made gradually to avoid digestive upsets. During cold weather or heavy work, they will require more food. Check with your veterinarian or other llama breeders in your area if you should have any questions concerning feed requirements.



## GENERAL HEALTH AND MAINTENANCE

Llamas are generally hardy, healthy animals that are easy to care for, but like any animal they do need preventive medicine and good management to stay healthy. It is important to know that llamas are very stoic, meaning that they don't show signs if they are not feeling well. They may be very sick before they begin to *act* sick.

Because of this, it is very helpful to watch your llama to learn how it acts when it is comfortable, happy, and not bothered by anything. That way you will be able to recognize odd or unusual behavior that may mean something is wrong. Don't hesitate to ask other llama people or read books to find out what it means if your llama does something new or different.

Llamas are intelligent, well-coordinated and don't often injure themselves. Still, injuries can happen in accidents or fights between two males. In order to prevent injuries, it is important to keep the llamas' living area free from sharp or dangerous things, and to cut male llamas' fighting teeth (see page 11 for TEETH).

## VACCINATIONS

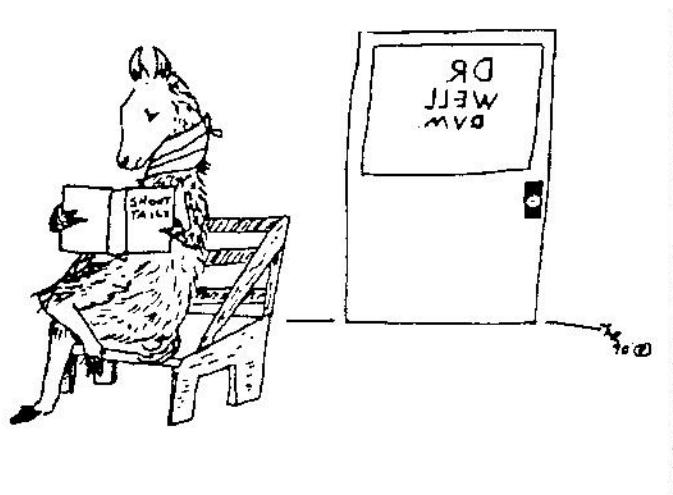
To keep your llama healthy it is important to have it vaccinated yearly. The most important vaccines are those against Clostridium C and D, and Tetanus. These are bacterial diseases which can make a llama very sick, or even kill it. In some parts of the country, other types of vaccinations may be needed. Different vaccines can be combined so that a single injection can protect the llama against as many as eight diseases. *Talk to your veterinarian to find out what vaccinations in what amounts are needed in your area and make sure your llama is protected.*

## EXTERNAL PARASITES

Sometimes llamas have skin problems with lice or mange. If the llama seems to scratch a lot, or is losing its fiber in patches (including some skin), have the veterinarian look for the cause. These skin problems can be treated in different ways. Llamas do shed at times, so a skin parasite needs to be differentiated from shedding. If the llama is shedding, then handfuls of fiber will fall off or can be brushed off the neck and thighs. It is hard to see lice, but their eggs, or nits, are easy to see on dark-colored llamas, as they look like tiny white grains which are attached to individual hair fibers. Sometimes the llama will also have dry, scaly skin under the coat. These problems can be successfully treated with different medications or insecticides. Again, being able to recognize that something is wrong is the first step in treatment.

## INTERNAL PARASITES

Llamas do get internal parasites such as worms or coccidia, a one-celled parasite. If a llama has parasites it may lose weight, be uncomfortable with digestive problems, or just be less healthy and get sick more easily. The veterinarian can do a microscopic examination of the feces to tell if there are parasites. If parasites are found, a llama can be de-wormed with one of the common pastes such as Panacur®, or with whatever kind of de-



wormer your veterinarian suggests. When many llamas live in a small space, or in a wet, muddy area, it may be necessary to de-worm more frequently, or use different types of de-wormers. Talk to your veterinarian to determine what is best for your area. Injectable de-wormers may be helpful against parasites such as the meningeal worm, which is found where there are white-tailed deer, and against lice. To prevent problems with internal parasites, make sure that all llama feed is kept off the ground and away from manure piles. Keep the area as clean as possible at all times. When one llama in a group has internal parasites, the whole group should be treated. De-worming should be done regularly, perhaps as often as once a month. Talk to your veterinarian to determine what is best for your area and the llamas you have.

## FEET

Llamas don't have hard hooves, which makes them different from horses and cattle. However they do have toenails at the tips of their padded feet, and these toenails can get too long. (See figure 6). This problem is usually at its worst in springtime when llamas have been living on soft, muddy ground or snow, and not doing much work. Some llamas may have long twisted toenails that need to be cut frequently, while others seldom grow long nails even if the ground is very soft. Look at your llama's feet and nails regularly, and if the nails are too long, trim them. (See figures 7a through 7d).



Figure 6 Long Toenails

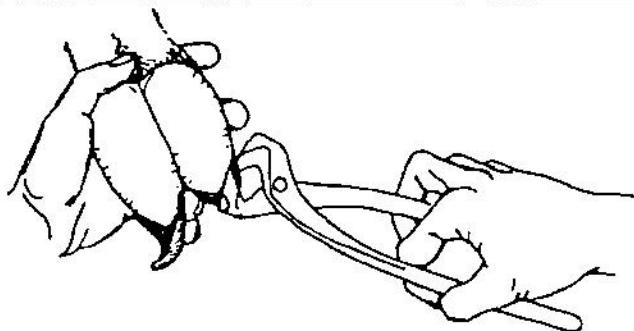


Figure 7b Trimming Toenails, continued

#1 Be cautious here; if the nail is folded over, pressing on the pad, you may need to trim around the folded area. Then, trim the nail later, when it is wet and more flexible.

#2 This area is the "quick." Do not cut too close as it will hurt and bleed if damaged.

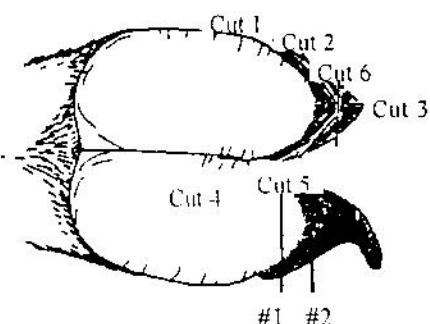


Figure 7c Trimming Toenails, continued

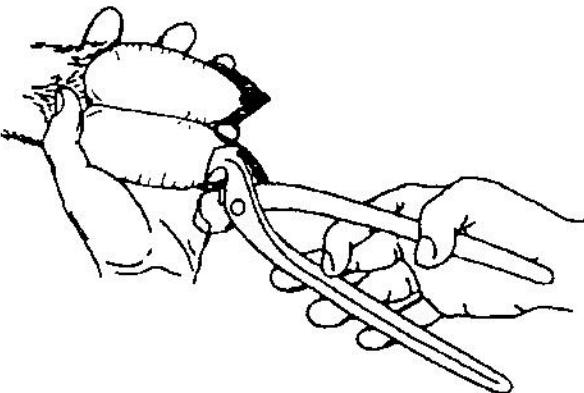


Figure 7a Trimming Toenails

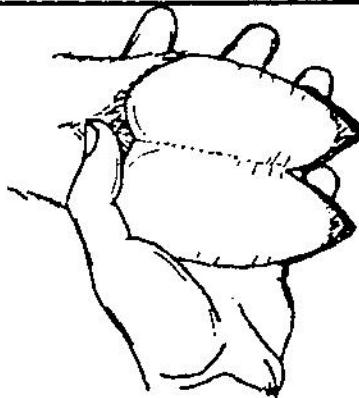
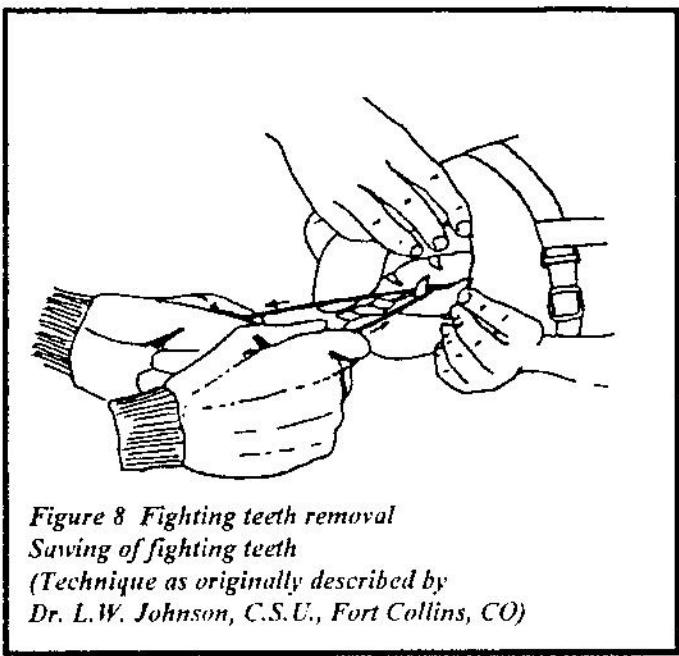


Figure 7d Finished Toenail

## TEETH

Male llamas usually grow fighting teeth when they are about 2 1/2 years old. These teeth are very sharp and can do a lot of damage when males fight and bite each other's ears, necks, legs or testicles. Because of this, it is important to cut the tips off soon after they have appeared. (See figure 8). This is not hard to do, but if you have never seen how it is done you might have your veterinarian do it the first time and show you how. Besides, it is much easier with two people. Sometimes the six fighting teeth will come in at different times. The teeth will also continue to grow even after the sharp points are removed. For these reasons it's important to check fighting teeth a few months after they are cut the first time, and remove new sharp ends, or shorten large blunt stubs.

Females grow very short fighting teeth and seldom use them. Geldings may have very long or very short fighting teeth, depending on when they were neutered.

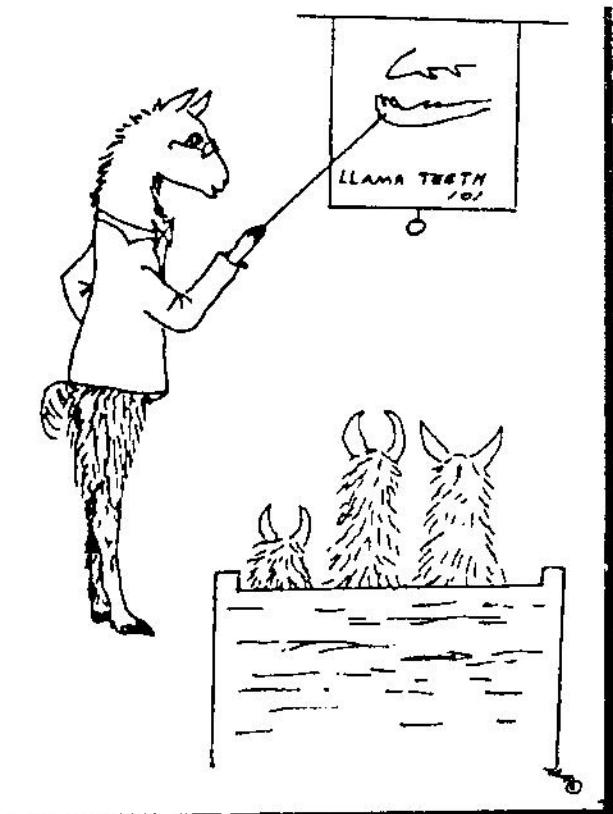


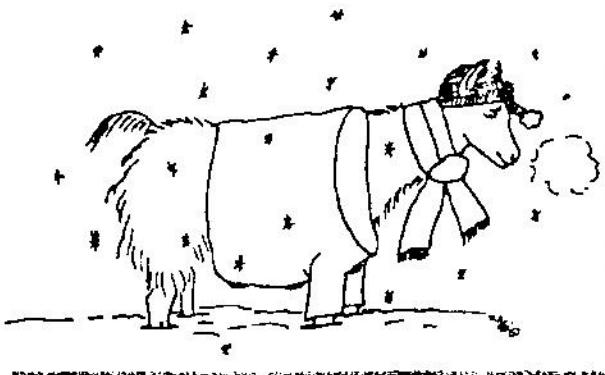
*Figure 8 Fighting teeth removal  
Sawing of fighting teeth  
(Technique as originally described by  
Dr. L.W. Johnson, C.S.U., Fort Collins, CO)*

## HEAT STRESS AND COLD WEATHER

Llamas are very adaptable animals and can live in all sorts of environments, but they do have some problems when the weather is either very hot or

In Alaska, llamas may need to have insulated barns in the winter. Even in warmer climates they do appreciate shelter from wind, rain or snow. Very young, older or sick llamas may need more shelter. A baby llama which is born on a cold day may get frostbitten ears, so it is important to make sure that youngsters are warm and dry. If the weather is very cold, llamas need more food because this will help them to keep warm. They can be given a grain mixture of equal parts rolled corn, oats, and barley. However, it is VERY IMPORTANT not to give a llama a lot of grain, especially if the animal is not used to eating it. Sudden changes in diet can cause very serious problems in ruminants. If you decide to give grain, start with a small amount (about one cup per day), and increase it gradually until the llama is eating 2 1/2 cups (or about one pound), per day.

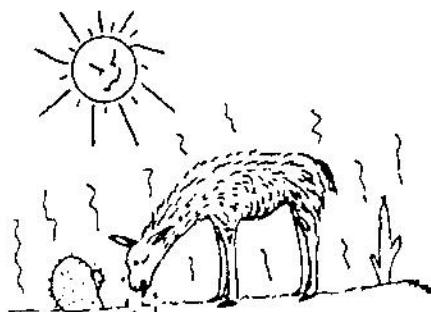




Heat can cause serious problems for llamas, especially when it is also humid. While they may be able to get used to high temperatures, it takes time, and a sudden change may make them sick. If you live in a hot part of the country and buy a llama from someplace cooler, try to get it in the fall, so that the animal has time to get used to the climate before it gets really hot. No matter where you live, it is important to have plenty of fresh drinking water available at all times during warm weather ( $80^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit or more). It is also necessary to have enough shady places that all the llamas in a group have a place to cool off. On hot days, people sometimes leave a sprinkler running in the llamas' area. The llamas learn to stand around or over the sprinkler to cool their legs, stomachs and faces. Other people provide a kids' wading pool full of water; some llamas will lie down or stand in it.



If you do not have any of these things, or if your llama has been working on a hot day, remember to look for signs of heat stress. These include extreme laziness, open-mouth panting, and loss of coordination. If you notice ANY of these signs, you have an emergency! When the body temperature gets too high, above  $104^{\circ} - 105^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit ( $40^{\circ}$  Celsius), the llama will collapse and may die. Use a hose to spray cool water on the llama, especially the stomach and legs. As soon as



possible, move the llama into a cooler, shady area, or create shade with a tarp or large umbrella. A fan can also be used to speed cooling. You will need to take the llama's temperature frequently to see that it is dropping down to normal ( $99^{\circ} - 101.8^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit). Call your veterinarian unless you see immediate improvement. Once your llama has suffered heat stress, it will be more likely to do so again when temperatures are high. To help protect your llama against heat problems, make sure that its vaccinations and worming medications are up-to-date, and that it is not too fat. Try to avoid stressful, scary or difficult activities when the temperature is hot.

Long-fibered llamas (six inches or more of undercoat on the sides) should be shorn. Medium-fibered llamas also appreciate being shorn, especially if they are used for packing or other work. Llamas are not usually shorn down to the skin like sheep; it is better to use hand shears and leave at least  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  inches of fiber to prevent sunburn.

Shearing is usually done in late spring or early summer so that the undercoat will be at least three inches long again before winter.

dewormed as needed, that its teeth and nails are not too long, and that it lives in a safe, comfortable environment are important parts of being a responsible llama owner.

## REPRODUCTION

### NORMAL PROCESSES OF REPRODUCTION

When a male llama is interested in a female, he will usually "orgle". Orgling is an odd sound that is difficult to describe or imitate, but it is something like a loud, rhythmic, bubbly purr. A female llama who is "open", that is, not pregnant, will usually be turned on by the orgling. She may sit down in kush position to be bred, or may wait until the male mounts her to sit down. Breeding takes place with the female in kush position, the male sitting behind her with his chest on her back, and one front leg on either side of her body. The male orgles all the time he is breeding, usually about 20 minutes, but a breeding can last 45 minutes or more, or be over in 5 minutes.

Llamas are different from cattle, sheep and horses which have "heat" cycles which determine when a female is interested in breeding, and when a male will be interested in her. Usually a female llama may be bred whenever she is not pregnant, because the breeding itself helps to stimulate her to be fertile. Because of this, llamas are called "breeding-induced ovulators". Sometimes a female must be bred several times before she gets pregnant, but once she is pregnant, her behavior towards the male will change. Instead of being interested in males, allowing them to sniff at her, hanging around and perhaps kushing if they orgle at her, a pregnant female will stay away from them. If a male orgles at her or chases her, she will run away, or if she can't run, she will spit, scream and do everything she can to avoid the male. Older, more experienced males will usually

lose interest in females who are pregnant, but younger males may have a hard time believing it when a female says "NO!"

Llama breeders keep careful track of the dates when llamas breed. Once a female says "no" to a male who has been breeding her, the owner will check the records:

- May 17: Inca bred Molly 25 minutes.
- May 19: Inca bred Molly 7 minutes.
- May 21: Molly spat at Inca and ran, no breeding.

In this case, the llama owner would consider May 19 to be the last breeding date. Usually it takes 345 days (or so) from breeding until the birth of a llama baby. 345 is 20 days less than a year, so Molly's baby would be due on May 19 minus 20 days, or April 29 of next year. It is important to remember that this is an average birth date. Some llama mothers carry their babies for nearly a year before they give birth, and others may have them quite early. It is not unusual for a baby to be as much as two weeks early or late.

Careful owners check to make sure their female llamas stay pregnant, because females may lose the pregnancy easily between 21 and 60 days after the breeding date. The easiest, cheapest way to check whether a female is pregnant is to do a breed check. With both the male and female haltered and on lead ropes, they are led close together and the male allowed to orgle and try to mount the female. If she sits down in a few minutes, then she is probably open, and can be bred again. If she runs and spits (even if the male is still interested) then she is still pregnant. Other

ways to test pregnancy include blood tests for progesterone (a hormone that is associated with pregnancy), ultrasound, and palpation. All of these should be done by a veterinarian, because if done wrong or carelessly they could injure the llama.

If all goes well, and the female llama stays pregnant, she will begin to show signs during the last several months. She will look fatter, and often her teats will get a little larger, and then quite large just before birth. Every llama is a little different, but it is always helpful to watch the pregnant llama's behavior and appearance carefully. As the birth of the baby gets closer, both may change suddenly. For example, a female who usually likes to graze with her friends may suddenly want to be off by herself in a distant corner of the pasture, and her teats may be bigger.

When a llama is in labor, or beginning the work of delivering her baby, you can usually notice different stages. During the first stage, the mother may be very restless. She may stand up, go to the manure pile, walk a little, lie down and roll, eat a little bit, then do it all over. It is as if the llama is thinking "I don't feel good - maybe I'll feel better if I do this, no it didn't help, I'll try something else". At this time the birth canal is stretching to make room for the baby to get out.

During the second stage, the baby (also called a cria) begins to come through the birth canal. This is hard work for the female, whose muscles have to push the baby out. Sometimes the female will stand during this part of the labor, sometimes lay down, or she may be up and down. She may also grunt with the effort. If this stage goes on for over an hour, it is probably a good idea to ask for help. Usually, though, things will go swiftly, and the baby will begin to show up. It normally comes out as if it were diving: the two front feet and nose first.

When the nose appears, you can gently wipe off any membranes or fluids that cover it, so that the baby can breathe more easily. The baby normally falls to the ground, but you may be able to catch it gently on a towel. Rubbing its body, chest and neck helps to dry it, and will also stimulate breathing. The umbilical cord stub should be dipped in iodine to help prevent infection.

Some babies, or crias, seem to be quite tired from being born, and like to rest for awhile. Others are strong and active, and begin to try to get up right away. Usually it takes at least 10 or 15 minutes before the baby can get up, but the kicking, thrashing around and struggling help it to get stronger, and to get used to being in this strange new world. Make sure that the baby is in a safe place, neither too hot nor too cold, because babies have a hard time regulating their body temperature when they are very young. Within an hour or two, babies will usually figure out where to nurse, and how to nurse. This is an important time for the mother and baby, and usually they don't need help. In fact, it's probably better to watch from a distance, and not try to help, because the mother and baby need to get to know each other.

The third stage of labor is the delivery of the placenta. During pregnancy, this organ helped to protect and nourish the baby, but now that the baby is out in the world, the placenta is no longer necessary. The mother may show some of the signs of labor as the placenta is delivered, but usually there is no problem. Someone who knows what a normal placenta looks like should inspect it to be sure it is all there. After that, the placenta can be gotten rid of. It can be buried so that it will not attract animals, or some people put the placenta in a trash bag, and into their trash can. If no placenta appears after six hours or so, this may indicate a problem, and you should contact a veterinarian.

Crias, or llama babies, usually weigh between 18 and 35 pounds or so. They will often lose a little

weight the day after they are born, but after that they gain between 1/2 and 1 pound a day. By the time they are about two weeks old, they will begin to try to eat a little hay, or graze. They like to be with other llama babies, and will run and play between nursing and resting. Babies are usually weaned when they are about six months old.

## FEMALE DEVELOPMENT

Llama owners begin to think about breeding young females when they are about 1 1/2 years (18 months) old. At this time, a llama is about 2/3rds to 3/4ths of the size it will be as a grownup. Young females will often be very interested in males at this time. It is sometimes possible for females to be bred when they are younger and smaller, but this is not a good idea. A very young llama who is still growing quickly, and who gets pregnant, may not be able to eat enough to provide nourishment for both herself and a baby. As a result, the mother's growth may be stunted so that she never gets to be very big, and the baby may be small too. This can happen by accident if a stud male lives in the same pasture with females and young llamas, so it's important to be careful.

## MALE DEVELOPMENT

Little boy llamas may be interested in breeding at a very early age. They may sit on their mothers and practice little soprano orgles when they are just a few months old. Usually, however, they cannot breed effectively until they are about 2 or even 2 1/2 years old, but, like females, some may become sexually mature before that. This is one reason to wean and separate young males from the females when they are about six months old.

## CHOICES AND DECISIONS

If you are thinking about breeding llamas, there are many things to consider. It is not necessary to breed animals to have fine show animals, or pack llamas, or pets. Breeding any animal is a commitment to taking good care of the mother, and providing whatever is needed for her health and the health and safety of the baby. It may demand more space and more time for training. What will you do with the baby? Will you keep it, or sell it, and who will you sell it to? Think of these things before you decide to breed. Having llama babies around is fun, but it is also hard work and a large responsibility.

Some llamas should not be bred at all. If the animal does not have good conformation, it should not be bred. Also, an animal that has a very poor temperament may pass on this characteristic to its offspring. Males that are not suitable for breeding may be gelded after age two. Young llamas need time to mature before giving birth, so don't try to rush the process because you are eager to have a cria around.

If you have thought it over, and do want to breed llamas, look carefully at the llamas you want to breed. What are your breeding goals? If you have a female, and she has sound conformation but her coat is medium, and you want a more woolly cria, you may want to locate a stud that has a thick and woolly coat. But you may also want to see whether his babies have inherited his coat; some characteristics are not passed on as easily as others. Try to make sure that both parents have good characteristics to pass on to their babies.

# LLAMA TRAINING

## INTRODUCTION

Llama training is an art. A successful llama trainer knows how to interpret the animal's body language and to act accordingly. Even llamas that are normally gentle and even-tempered may test your patience during training. Repetition and consistency are equally important. Each new maneuver may need to be repeated in exactly the same manner several times before the llama will realize what you want it to do. But keep initial training sessions short - no more than 20 minutes at a time. Llamas respond well to verbal cues, and the trainer should master the art of using a voice tone to soothe, praise or reprimand. Llamas will often relax upon hearing a calm, reassuring tone, and they will likewise become frightened if they sense nervous-

ness or fear in their trainer's voice. Never hit or strike a llama in any manner; a sharp "NO" will often suffice as a reprimand. From a llama's point of view, the best possible reward for a successful training session is to be returned to its companions.

Llamas react suddenly to quick movements, whereas they will often stand their ground when faced with a slow, steady approach. They should first be touched on the lower neck as opposed to the head or back. Very few llamas will allow contact with their face prior to extensive training. When holding or working with a llama, it may be necessary to stroke the animal in a slow, circular motion to relax it. A firm hold is needed when working with any llama, as a relaxed grip may encourage the animal to jump or bolt. On the other hand, the trainer should not try to restrain the animal when it has panicked or is extremely jumpy, for llamas are much stronger than humans, and this may lead to injury for one or both participants.

The last important point that the trainer should remember is to try to anticipate the llama's actions. Most people who are experienced with llamas find it easy to recognize and to interpret the animal's movements, so that neither they or the llama are injured in the training process. For example, when a llama tilts its head upwards and flattens its ears against its neck, it has become upset and is about to spit (see figure 3). Kicking may accompany this gesture, and the trainer may find it wise to back off for a few moments in order to let the animal calm down. Experience with llamas will allow the trainer to decide for him or herself what the proper method should be in each case for each particular llama. Some llamas may exhibit problems such as hostile, aggressive behavior and excessive spitting/kicking at humans. These animals will need to be handled by experienced trainers.



## FACILITIES

The training area should be set up so as not to provide any distractions to the llama or trainer. The llama needs to be able to concentrate its attention on the trainer, and should be trained away from other animals or large groups of people. However, some llamas become so stressed by separation from their companions that they can not concentrate. Including a young llama's mother, or an older llama's best friend, in the training area can help make it feel more secure. Llamas also learn by watching other llamas. If your young llama sees another stand calmly to be haltered or brushed, this can help it learn to do so more quickly.

A 10-foot square corral should be used in the initial training sessions. This is large enough to hold the llama and trainer, yet have plenty of room for both to move freely. The sides of the corral should be sturdy and at least 4 1/2 to 5 feet high. The facilities should be comfortable and safe for both the llama and trainer, and out of weather extremes. The trainer is responsible for putting together a training environment that will make learning easy and enjoyable for both llama and trainer.

## BARN SAFETY

How many times have you heard your mom say, "Pick up these toys!" There is a reason: safety. Just as in your home, the barn, corral, pasture and llama training areas need to be kept clean of nails, twine, wire, etc. In the course of playing and establishing their pecking order, llamas can get hurt by these items. Because llamas cannot pick up for themselves, you will need to pick up for them.

Pathways especially need to be kept free of litter and trash. Containers used for feed and water need to be kept in convenient places where they

will not be in the way. Training equipment should be hung up. Hay and straw should be swept up from the pathways in a barn. If you need to carry water from the hydrant to the pen, do so with a manageable sized bucket.

Never use matches or lighters inside a barn or stalling area. Hay and straw can catch on fire very quickly! If a fire does occur in a barn, animals will panic and probably not go in the right direction in order to escape.

Rakes, shovels and brooms need to be picked up when not in use and stored in the corner of an unoccupied stall or area. These tools can injure both humans and animals if left lying on the floor.



## EQUIPMENT

You will need the following items when training your llama:

Sturdy halter  
Cotton or polypropylene lead rope  
Gloves (optional, but strongly recommended)  
Wand (or other similar apparatus such as a fishing pole or small diameter PVC pipe. You will need a three to four-foot length.)

## PROCEDURE

### Getting Acquainted

During the first week that you have your llama, let it become acquainted with its new environment and your presence before you attempt any training. As you feed, water and clean up manure, the llama will get used to your voice, scent and actions.

### Catching

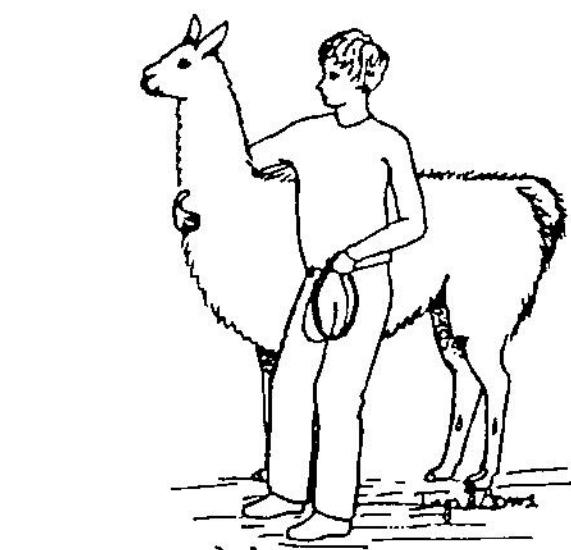
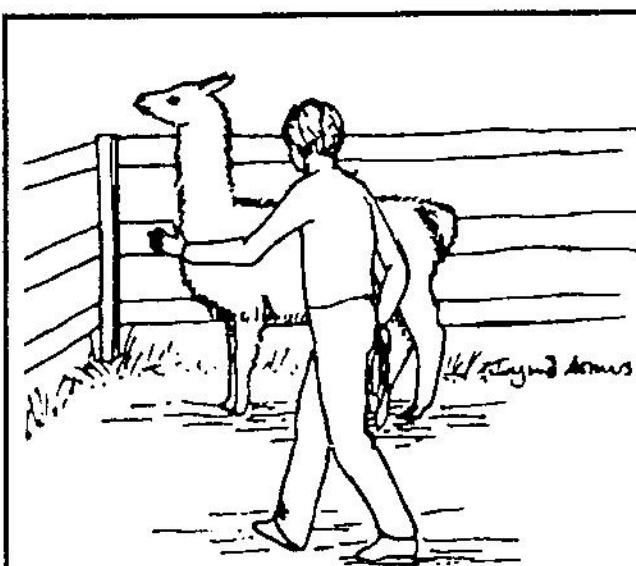
Initially, some trainers use a small amount of grain or other treat to tempt the llama into coming near them. However, experienced trainers caution not to do this very often because it can slow down the training process and make your animal fat.

At the beginning, your llama will probably need to be cornered to be caught. Approach your llama from the side, just behind the front leg, with your arms extended (see figure 9a). Use a voice command, such as "stand", and praise your llama when it does stand still. Be consistent about this approach throughout the training

procedure. When the animal is cornered, secure it by circling your arm around its neck (see figure 9b). If the animal does not accept this and tries to fight, let go and try again. Repeat this procedure until it stands calmly with your arm around its neck. Once you can do this, halter training can begin.

### Halter Training

If your new llama is between six months and one year old, it may still need to be halter trained. Llamas younger than six months old cannot pay attention long enough to be trained easily. Older llamas should already be trained. First, you will need to estimate the size halter that you will use. The nosepiece should fit just in front of the llama's eyes when it is in place (see figure 10). The nosepiece should also have enough room so that the llama can open and close its mouth easily. The nosepiece is probably the most critical part of the entire halter. It shouldn't be too small or too large. Most yearling llamas will need a medium size halter to begin their training. As the llama gets older, you may need to buy a larger halter. These can be purchased through a llama equipment dealer.

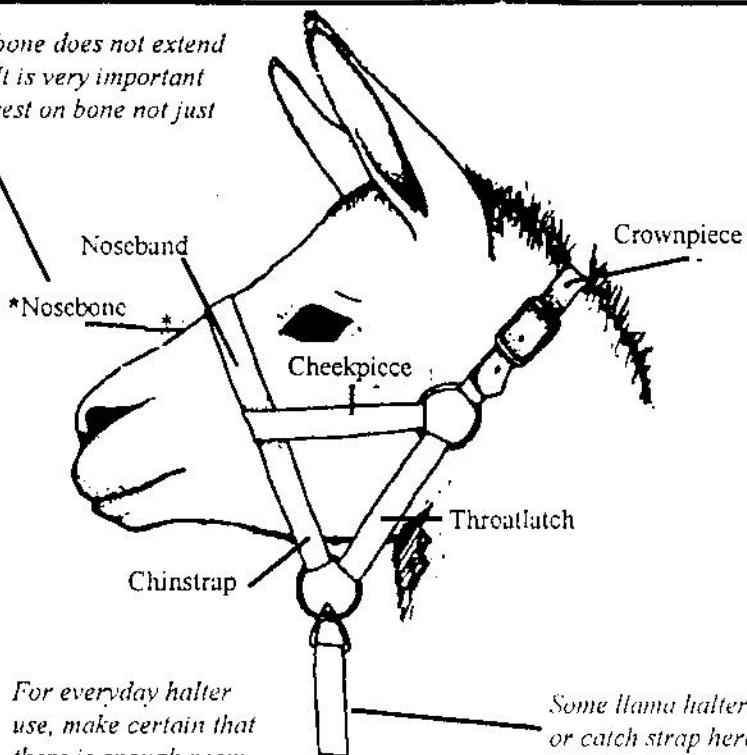


a. Cornering the llama

b. Catching the llama

Figure 9 Catching the llama

*\*Note: The llama's nose bone does not extend much beyond this point. It is very important that the halter noseband rest on bone not just the fleshy part of the nose*



*For everyday halter use, make certain that there is enough room to slide 2 or 3 fingers (more if your hand is small) between the chinstrap-throatlatch and the llama's jaw.*

*This will allow the llama to open its mouth, chew, etc. without being pinched by the halter. If a halter must be on for several days, during transport, or on a pack trip, it can be even looser. Make certain, however, that the noseband still fits up close to the eyes.*

*Some llama halters have a "dangle", or catch strap here, others do not.*



*For brief periods (up to an hour or two) at a show, you may want a halter to fit more snugly. However, if you leave the halter on too tightly, it will cause sores on the nose and jaw as the llama tries to open its mouth to eat.*

Figure 10 Halter Placement

After you have adjusted the halter so that you think it will fit, the next step is to put the halter on the llama. The difficult part in this step is to get the llama used to the feel of the halter on its head and the rope around its neck. Pay particular attention to safety during this phase of training, so that the halter does not become tangled in your hand or any part of the llama's body.

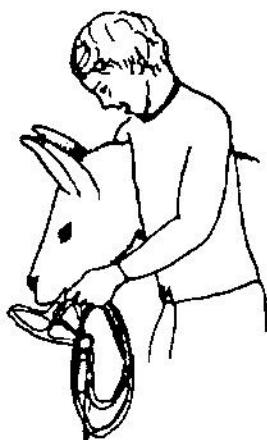
Corner your llama using your voice command. At this point some trainers like to loop the lead rope around the llama's neck in order to restrain

it. Keep the rope in your left hand - do not tie it around the llama's neck or attempt to tie the llama to anything. With the halter unbuckled and also held in your left hand, circle your right arm around the back of the llama's neck and stand close to the llama. Continue to hold the halter in your left hand, but grasp the right side of the crownpiece in your right hand. With your hands in this position, hold the halter several inches below the llama's head in the exact same position that you would put it on the head (see figure 11 a). Then slowly attempt to slide it over the nose (11b). If the llama

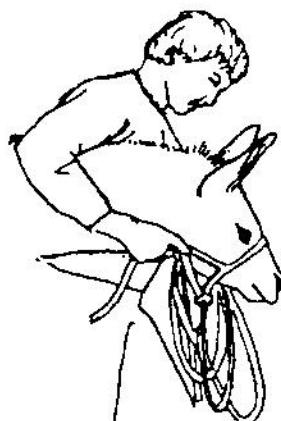
offers little resistance, put the halter on, slide your right hand to the buckle to fasten it, and allow the llama to wear it for a few minutes. Remove the halter as slowly and gently as you can. Then repeat the procedure. Again, as in all other phases of training, use slow, steady, fluid movements.

Because of the llama's nature, several ap-

proaches to halter training, as well as to all other phases of llama training, can be used. As a trainer, you may decide that you prefer one method over another, or even to make up your own. This is fine, but again, patience, consistency, a steady approach and praise must be employed at every step. A little practice in training llamas will give you the experience that you need to begin to make your own training decisions.



a. Holding the halter ready.



b. Halter is slowly pulled on, or llama may put its head directly in.

Figure 11 Haltering the llama, the Standard Method

## LEADING AND TYING

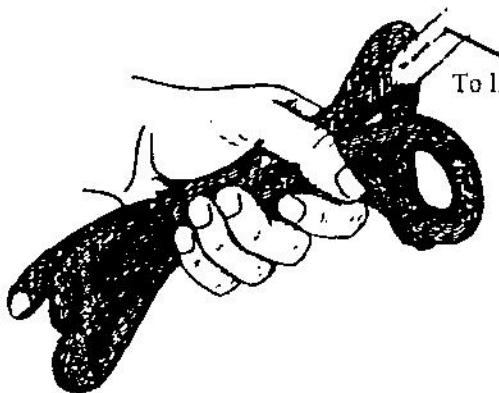
After you have spent several sessions getting your llama used to the feel of the halter, you can begin to teach it the basics of leading. Whether your llama will be used for packing, performance or show, the fundamentals of leading remain the same. The behavior of a llama at the end of your lead rope is of utmost importance, for this is when the llama is supposed to know that you are in control.

Halter your llama, then attach a strong lead rope to the halter. If you have a fairly large fenced area in which to work that is next to your training pen, open the gate between the two areas.

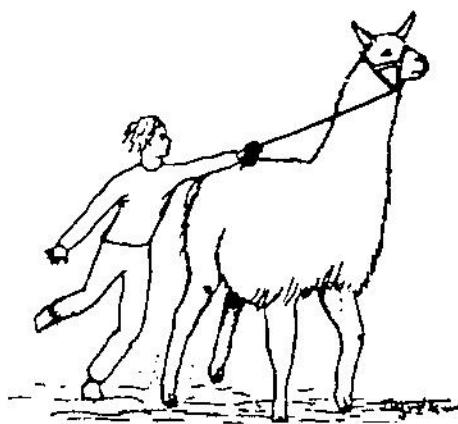
At this stage, gloves will be helpful. Hold the

lead rope in one hand approximately two or three feet from the llama's halter. The excess part of the lead rope can be held in your free hand as illustrated in figure 12.

Do not tie the lead rope around any part of your body or loop it around your hand or wrist. Tug gently on the rope and give the command "come" or "walk", until the llama steps forward. If the animal refuses to move forward, pull harder until it does. Try not to allow it to move backward. When the llama takes a step, reward it with praise and by slackening the rope for a moment. Then, tug on the rope again until the llama takes another step. This helps the llama to learn that the command "come" or "walk" means that you expect it to follow you. Encourage the llama to move forward with your voice; and praise it when it does move. Here is where you will need



*Correct: Rope is held in loose coil in one hand, while the other is free to hold or move the llama. Rope can be dropped in an emergency. Hold the lead rope in one hand approximately two or three feet from the llama's halter.*



*Incorrect: Rope is wrapped tightly around one hand, where it cannot be easily dropped. Llama has gotten in front of person, and when this happens, the llama can be difficult to control.*

**Figure 12 Handling the Lead Rope**

patience, because llamas are notorious for planting their feet and refusing to budge. If this is the case, and you absolutely cannot move the llama, then try moving the llama's head and neck from side to side. It will eventually get off balance and have to move. As a last resort measure you can have an assistant walk up behind the llama with a wand or other pole in hand, taking care not to startle it, and gently touch the llama on its hind quarters. Be careful as the llama may react by kicking.

It should not take long for your llama to get the hang of the leading procedure. Every so often, especially when the llama has done well, stop for a few moments to praise it and let it relax. Your llama may, at some point, become frightened by the procedure or startled by a new object in its path and react by jumping around or trying to run away. When this happens, go WITH the llama; walk or run along side while talking in a calm voice. You can usually bring a llama under control faster this way than by trying to hold

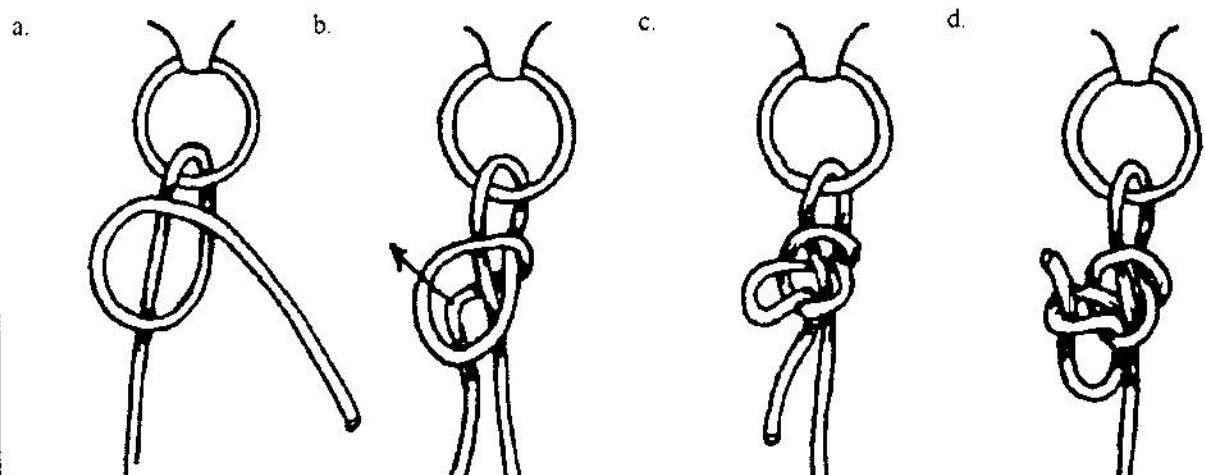
in place by force. If you cannot keep up, or have been caught off guard, LET GO of the rope. Don't take the chance of being knocked down or dragged. Then, try to corner the llama without further excitement, catch it and resume training after it has calmed down. It is important to show the llama that it cannot get away with such an act for long. Stopping the session because of a breakaway would only reward the animal for its behavior. To end each training session, have the llama repeat something that it can already do reasonably well and praise it. This way, your sessions will always end on a positive note.

The first few lessons in leading should be kept to no longer than fifteen to twenty minutes, and be done in an enclosed, yet spacious, area. After the initial stages, concentrate on making the llama walk a few feet behind you, with some slack in the rope. Nobody wants to pull a llama up a trail or into a show ring! Also practice making the llama stand a few minutes at a time using the voice command "stand" or other similar word.

When you feel that your llama is progressing well and is under control, you may move out into a larger area for your walks and increase the length of each session. Introduce your llama - gradually - to new obstacles, objects, sights and sounds. Practice taking your llama onto bridges, cement walkways, through streams and over ditches. Teach it to walk carefully over or through these obstacles, rather than to jump them. Allow other people to touch your animal's neck and back, at the same time praising the llama when it stands quietly and tolerates such actions. This should be a fun and interest-

ing time for both you and your llama. Now you can practice tying your llama for short periods of time. Use a sturdy rope, tying it to a solid object with a knot which will hold, yet allow you to easily release the llama in case of an emergency (see figure 13). Leave a few feet of slack in the rope, but not enough that the llama can lie down, step over or get tangled in the rope. Stay nearby. At first, llamas do not like to be tied and will fight or struggle. Reassure the llama and praise it when it stands calmly. Soon it will learn to stand quietly when tied. When you can rely on your llama to stand quietly while tied, you can use a bowline knot (figure 14).

*Quick Release Knot - Often used when a llama will be tied for a brief time, the quick release knot, as its name implies, can be quickly untied. It will remain stable, but the knot will get tighter if the llama pulls on it, and it is not as reliable for long term as the bowline.*



a. Pass rope through ring or around a post. Make a loop in the free end of the rope, and place it over the standing part.

b. Pass the free end behind both the standing part of the rope and the loop. Push a "bight" or loop through the first loop.

c. Pull on loop to tighten the knot.

d. To keep the animal from pulling on the free end of the rope and untying the knot, pass the end through the loop.

e. To untie knot, pull end back out of loop, and keep pulling. Knot will swiftly unravel.

Figure 13 Quick Release Knot

**Bowline knot** — This strong and reliable knot has been used for generations by sailors and climbers in situations where lives may depend on the knot staying tied and not slipping until it is untied, no matter how much strain is put on it. It is often used to tie a stake line to a tree or stake pin, so that a llama can graze safely for hours or overnight. It can always be easily untied.

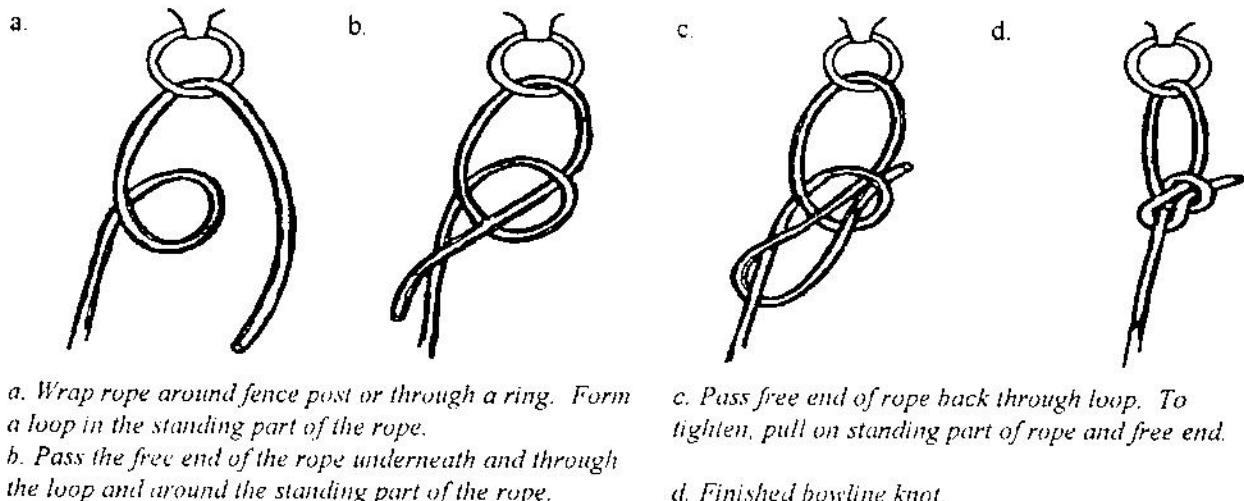


Figure 14 Bowline Knot

## BRUSHING

Once your llama is able to lead well and stand tied for long periods at a time, you may begin to brush and desensitize it.

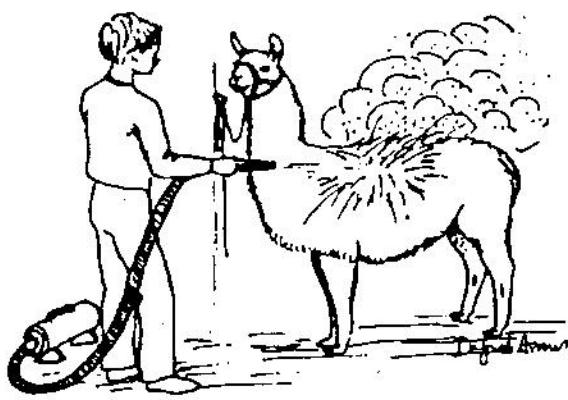
Brushing your llama is a wonderful way to start desensitizing. Not only is this the time to be sure there are no burrs, hay stems, pine cones, etc. in the fiber, but grooming also further de-

velops your working relationship with your llama. The llama will learn through these brushing sessions that, although this is new and maybe frightening, you're not going to hurt him or her and you can be trusted (see figures 15a - d on page 24). Some animals are easier to groom than others. Start with the neck and sides, which are easier to groom, and move gradually to the more sensitive back, legs, stomach and hips.

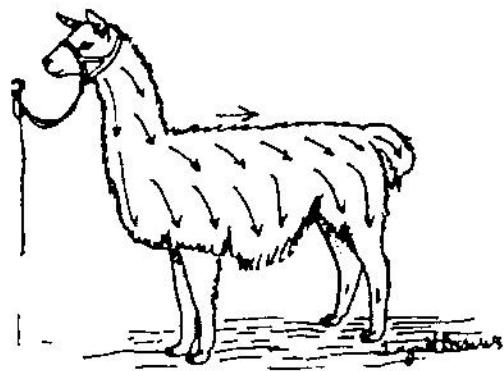
If your llama has long (6 inches or more) or matted fiber, brushing can make it feel very uncomfortable. It is best to shear this kind of llama before brushing it. Llamas that work hard packing will also appreciate being shorn. Talk to other llama owners to find someone who can shear your llama or teach you how.

Using a CIRCUITEER® blower, or leaf-blower, can make grooming easier because it separates the fibers and removes pieces of hay and dirt. Most llamas get used to a blower quickly. Begin by directing the air flow at the shoulder, side and neck. Slowly move on to the other areas of the body.

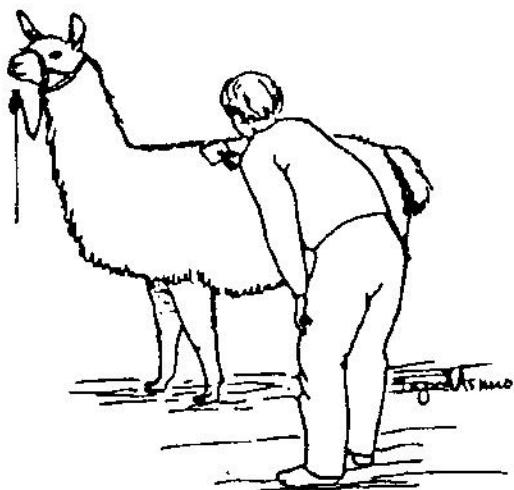




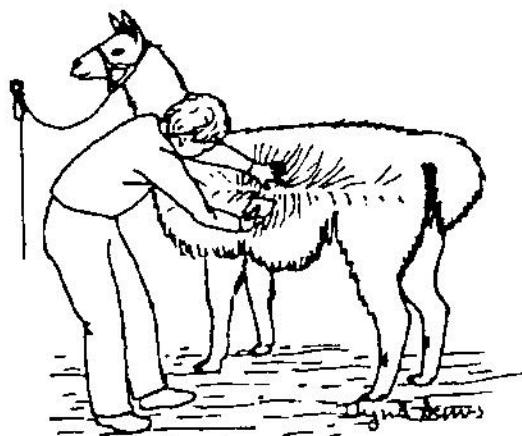
*Figure 15a Blowing the llama to loosen fiber and remove particles of dust and hay*



*Figure 15c Direction of grooming*



*Figure 15b Grooming*



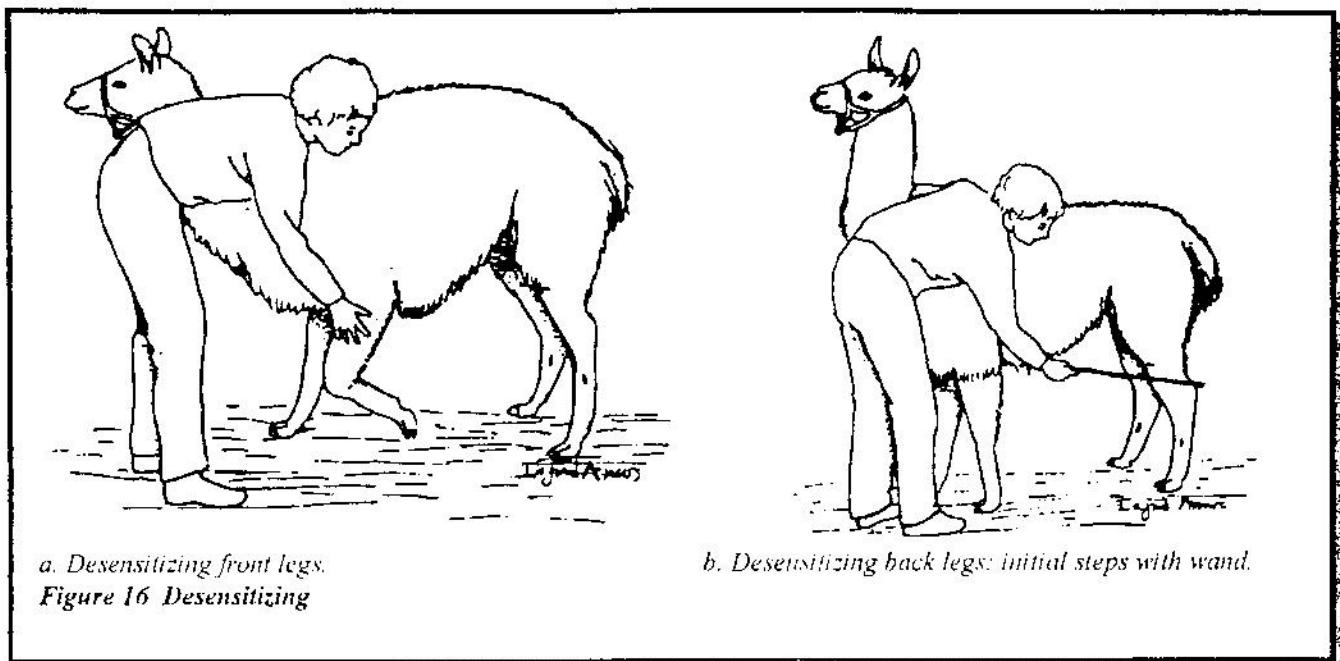
*Figure 15d Deep Grooming: part coat parallel to spine and brush from skin outward. When this part line is clean, move up an inch or two and repeat.  
(Generally used only before a sale or show.)*

## DESENSITIZING

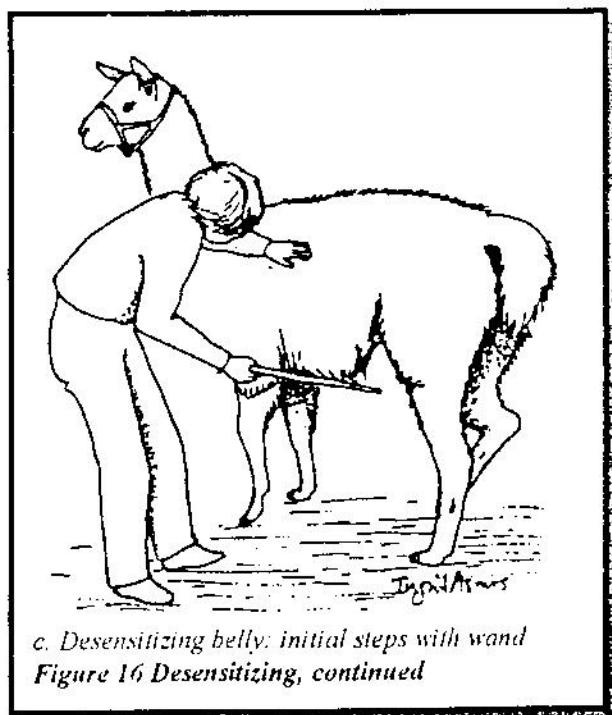
Desensitizing is a training process in which you slowly and steadily begin to touch certain areas on the llama's body which it normally does not like to have touched, such as the legs, stomach and head. Begin by tying your llama a bit shorter than usual. A nearby wall or fence will be useful. Starting on its left side, stand close to the llama, facing the rear. Place your left arm either on the llama's back or around the front of its neck to restrain it. If there is a wall or fence nearby, or a corner, place the animal so that

cannot move away from you in a sideways or forward direction. Put your right hand on the llama's shoulder, and slowly move it down the animal's leg while patting firmly (see figure 16a).

When the animal begins to act up, move your hand back to where you started. Repeat, praising the llama when it is calm. Each time attempt to move your hand a little farther toward the llama's foot. When you can touch the llama's entire foreleg without its moving, then grasp the animal's



foot and attempt to pick it up. At the same time use another voice command such as "foot". If necessary, push the animal gently away from you in order to shift its weight off the foot you would like to pick up. Repeat your verbal cue and lift the llama's foot. When you have successfully completed one forefoot, praise your llama, switch sides and repeat the sequence for the other forefoot.



Now for the hind legs. First, try desensitizing the hind legs in the same manner as the forelegs, starting on the llama's left side and placing your hand initially on the flank. Be careful that you do not get kicked - stay alert and watch the llama's actions for signs of discontent or restlessness. If the llama allows you to continue without kicking, by all means do so. If, however, you are doubtful, use the wand, or substitute, as an extension of your arm, allowing the llama to kick all it wants (see figure 16b). When the llama accepts the wand touching the entire leg, proceed with your hand. Again, practice picking up the llama's foot, then repeat the process with the opposite leg. Remember to praise the llama each time it cooperates.

Next, you may begin to desensitize the llama's stomach (see figure 16c). This should be fairly easy once its legs are completely desensitized. Again, watch out for kicking. This step is especially important for pack animals, show animals, and females and can be accomplished using either the wand or your hand. At the end of this phase, you should have no trouble touching your llama's entire stomach, including the genital area and the female's teats.

The head is generally one of the most sensitive areas on a llama's body. But it should be included in the desensitization process so that later you can apply medications, saw teeth, or just clean the llama's face before a show. With your llama haltered and tied, slowly slide your right arm up the back of its neck. If you prefer, scratch the llama with your right-hand fingertips in a firm rhythmic circular motion to calm it. When you reach the base of the ears with your hand, remain there for a while to get your animal used to the touch. Then slowly move your hand onto the llama's head from between the ears.

At this point most llamas will act uncomfortable, and may shake their heads or tense up. Each llama's reaction to head training will vary, so adjust the type of training to each animal. Keep advancing your hand onto the llama's head from between the ears or along the jaw. Repeat this procedure until the animal becomes comfortable with your touch. Desensitize the ears last, using the method you have found most effective for the rest of the head.

The important things to remember are to move slowly, praise the llama when it cooperates, and to be patient. When the llama allows you to touch its nose, chin, temples and ears without a problem, head training is complete.

The entire desensitization process may take a dozen or more 15 minute sessions. Be patient and reward your llama verbally. You will probably wish to combine these sessions with the brushing lesson. Above all, be consistent and learn to recognize when your llama is tired or at the end of its attention span. Even after your animal is trained, you should repeat these lessons once in a while to make sure that your llama will remember them in an emergency.

## KUSHING (OPTIONAL)

One final lesson that you may want your llama

to learn is kushing, or lying down on command. This is best accomplished while your llama is still small and young, and very well-trained otherwise. This procedure may require two people.

Start by tying your llama low to the ground, or passing the lead through a ring or stake low to the ground. Stand on one side of the llama's back, with your partner on the other, and pull on the lead, forcing your llama's head down. With your other hand, push down on the llama's shoulder blade, while your partner pushes down on its back end. Repeat the verbal cue "kush" or "down" during this process. If necessary, reach down and fold one of the llama's legs up to encourage it to kneel on its front legs. Keep it up, and practice this every time you work with your llama, until it learns to lie down and stand up on command.



This command can be useful in emergency situations that might arise while packing or trailering a llama.

Training your llama can be an easy and fun process if done correctly. Whatever your goals, begin with the gentlest animal you can. Watch other, more experienced trainers and ask questions in order to increase your knowledge and skill. Always remain calm, move slowly and steadily and never hit or punish your animal physically.

Finally, remember that training a llama can be thought of as an art, and that there is always room for improvement. As you progress and gain experience you may wish to move on to training for showmanship, halter or performance classes, or extensive pack trips or races. You are sure to discover that a well-trained llama is a gentle, intelligent and reliable companion.

## GROOMING--FROM RANCH TO RING

1. TRIM YOUR LLAMAS NAILS ONE TO TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SHOW.
2. A DAY OR TWO BEFORE THE SHOW, WASH ALL BRUSHES, HALTERS AND LEADS WITH LIQUID SOAP. AIR DRY.
3. BLOW YOUR LLAMA WITH A LIVESTOCK BLOWER EXTENSIVELY TO REMOVE AS MUCH DIRT AND DEBRI AS POSSIBLE.
4. GIVE YOUR LLAMA A THOROUGH BRUSHING FROM THE INSIDE OUT.  
A. BE ADVISED DURING THIS BRUSHING YOU WILL BE REMOVING THE DEAD FIBER FROM YOUR LLAMAS COAT AND YOUR LLAMA WILL NOT BE AS WOOLY IF HE HAS NOT BEEN GROOMED IN A LONG TIME.
5. SOAK LLAMA THOROUGHLY WITH A HOSE. IF YOU ARE USING A POWER NOZEL OR POWER GROOM KEEP YOUR PRESSURE COMFORTABLE.
6. DILUTE SOAP IN A BUCKET FIRST THEN WORK IN.
7. WASH FACE AND EARS WITH A NON IRRITATING SOAP AND A WASH CLOTH.
8. RINSE FACE WITH A CLEAN WASH CLOTH.
9. PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO STIFLES AND KNEES WITH STAIN REMOVERS SPECIFICALLY MADE FOR MANURE OR GRASS STAINS ON ANIMALS.
10. RINSE ENTIRE ANIMAL UNTIL SQUEEKY CLEAN.
11. BLOW DRY WITH A HOT AIR LIVESTOCK BLOWER.
12. BRUSH ... BRUSH TYPE DEPENDS ON FIBER CONDITION AND TYPE AND SENSITIVITY OF LLAMA.
13. FINISHING TOUCHES - MINK OIL, COAT DRESSINGS THAT DO NOT LEAVE ANY RESIDUE, FOAM MOUSSE FOR LIMP COATS, MIST FOR CRIMPED FIBER, STATIC GUARD AND FLY SPRAY. ( NOT ALL AT THE SAME TIME- THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE CHOICES AVAILABLE
14. DOUBLE CHECK FACE, EARS, NOSE AND UNDER THE TAIL.

REMEMBER NO MARATHON SESSIONS. BRUSHING SHOULD BE A CONTINOUS PART OF TRAINING AND BE STARTED WEEKS AHEAD OF TIME. BE PREPARED BEFORE THE SHOW AND DO AS LITTLE GROOMING AS POSSIBLE WHILE ACTUALLY THERE.

KNOW AND TEST YOUR PRODUCTS BEFORE YOU ACTUALLY USE THEM FOR A SHOW SITUATION. THAT WAY THERE WON'T BE ANY SURPRISES FOR YOU  
TRAINING \* GROOMING \* HANDLING  
FOR SHOW AND SALE PRESENTATION

## 4-H LLAMA SHOWMANSHIP

**Definition:** There are two basic classes in which llamas are presented in shows: Halter Class and Showmanship Class. Of these two 4-H usually exhibits only in Showmanship Class. Halter and Showmanship are two different types of classes but the rules for showing are the same in both classes.

It is important to know where the emphasis is placed in each class.

**Halter Class** - the llama is the central figure and you are secondary. 95% of the judging is on the llama, its soundness, conformation, balance, travel, disposition. 5% is on the handler, the way he looks, the way he has prepared the llama, and the way he handles the llama.

**Showmanship Class** - Emphasis is placed almost totally on the handler. He has the main role while the llama plays the secondary part. Showmanship is simply the handler's ability to show his/her animal to its best advantage. It has nothing to do with the llamas conformation. It has everything to do with how you have trained and handle your llama. 50% of the judging is on how you show your llama; follow directions, leading, turning stand in relation to the llama, backing, stopping, showing to the llamas best advantage, and your control when in line and working. 25% is on the handlers appearance, and 25% is on the llama's appearance and the equipment used (halter and lead).

## SHOWMANSHIP RULES

- You should dress neat and clean.
- Don't wear other logos or emblems, or a name tag.
- Don't wear flashy jewelry...show your llama, not yourself.
- Be courteous and show good sportsmanship at all times.
- You may use soft voice commands with your llama.
- You are not supposed to touch your llama at any time except to smooth messed up wool, or assist the judge during inspection.
- Don't be distracted by anything or anyone outside the show ring.
- Be confident and stay "up" all the time, even if you don't feel like it.
- Be alert to the judge, keep your eye on him/her and keep smiling!
- Your llama should be clean and well groomed.
- Make sure llamas toenails are trimmed.
- Halters and leads need to be clean, in good repair, and well fitting.
- Respect your llama...you may be dismissed from the show if you jerk your llama, become angry, or otherwise mistreat him in the ring.

### In the ring:

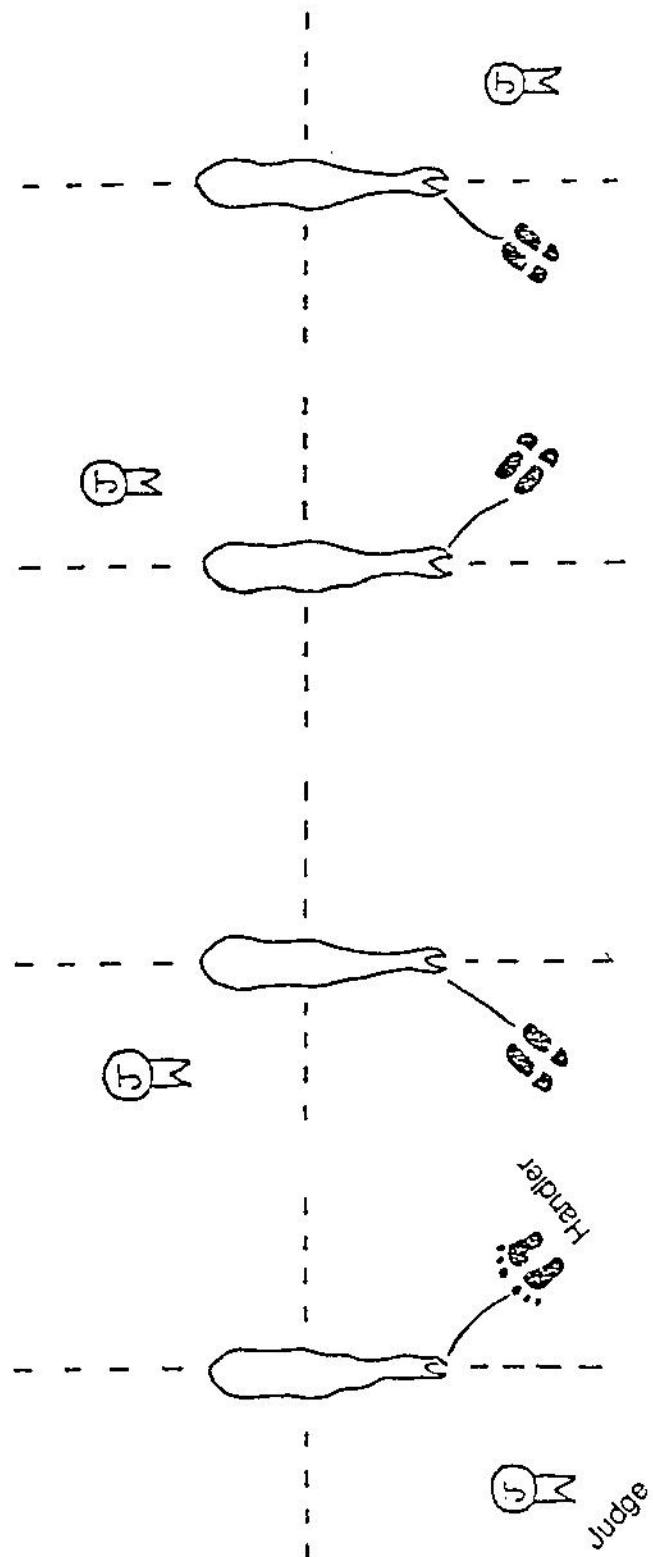
- When you enter the ring, you will walk on parade...keep a llama length apart. You will be asked to reverse direction. Walk with your lead held properly, never drag your llama.
- Never pass the llama ahead of you on the inside, always pass out of the line of the judges view unless the ring steward tells you to do so. Keeping your proper distance.
- Keep your feet at a 45 degree angle towards the llamas front legs.
- Hold the lead rope about 8 inches down from the snap. Never hold onto the snap, you could accidentally let your llama loose in the ring.
- Don't talk to the judge unless he speaks to you first. If you don't understand, ask him to repeat the question or instruction.
- You may speak to the ring steward if absolutely necessary.
- Don't bluff an answer...simply say you don't know the answer.
- Keep showing even if the judge is at the other end...he may be watching you out the corner of his eye.
- Never talk to another showman...it is bad manners and distracting.

- If your animal is nervous, do the best you can...the judge knows llamas can be nervous.
- When holding the lead, keep your arms up and try to keep the lead slack...never let your llama hold your arm up.
- Smile...Smile...Smile...watch the judge and Smile...Smile...Smile!
- The judge will inspect you and your llama.
- You will be asked some questions by the judge...know your llamas name, age, sex, weight. Know llama anatomy and body parts. Be courteous.
- As the judge moves around your llama, you move around your llama appropriately...see the attached diagrams.
- After the judge makes his selections, he will call you out and place you...don't quit showing...he may change his mind after he sees how he has lined up the places.

**WHATEVER THE PLACING YOU RECEIVE;** remember it is only one person's (the judge's) opinion on that particular day. Leave the show ring just as proud as you entered, knowing you did the very best you could on that day. Some of the audience will be watching you all the way out because you were there favorite! Have a good time and remember why you are out there showing ... to learn and to have fun!!

## POSITIONS OF LLAMA, HANDLER, AND JUDGE

Keeping toes pointed toward the animal's eyes, the handler should face the llama diagonally at a 45 degree angle off the llama's shoulder, in front of and to the side of the head, moving slowly and smoothly from side to side as the judge moves around the animal.



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# YOU BE THE JUDGE AT THE 4-H LLAMA SHOW !!

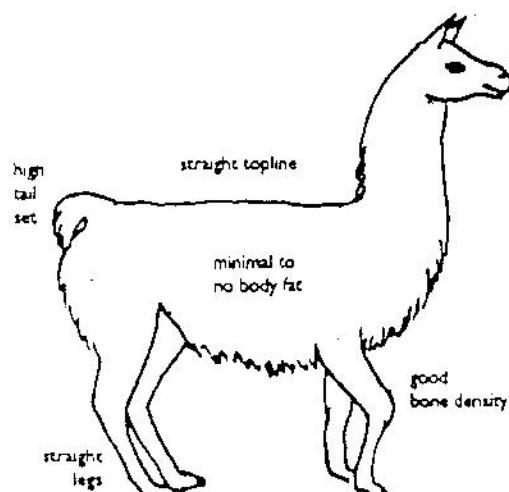
## LLAMAS

### WHAT THE JUDGE LOOKS FOR IN LLAMAS:

- All body parts that are symmetrical and proportionate to one another (neck, length of body, length of legs).
- Straight legs, straight topline and a high tail set.
- Good bone density and minimal to no body fat.
- Clean, soft wool on body. Textures vary from fine to coarse, and from very short to very long in length.
- Correct "way of traveling" (walking and running).
- Trusting spirit and gentle disposition.

### WHAT THE JUDGE LOOKS FOR IN THE SHOW RING:

- **COSTUME CLASS:** the exhibitor's attire is judged on beauty and/or originality, coordination with the llama's equipment, and spectator appeal. The class also examines the llama's ability "to endure" its costume on its head, back, legs, etc.
- **OBSTACLE COURSE:** The animals are kept on a loose lead through obstacles, which represent those that may be found in woods or while hiking or packing. This competition also examines the llama's trust in its handler, while using its own intelligence to evaluate tackling each obstacle.
- **SHOWMANSHIP CLASS:** This class demonstrates the handler's ability to show the animal to its best advantage at halter. Judging is based on the exhibitor's basic skills in fitting, grooming, following directions, and style of presenting the animal to the judge. The llama's conformation is not considered. The handler's attire should be neat, clean and appropriate for the class.



• **PUBLIC RELATIONS ("PR") CLASS:** This class shows the llama's willingness to negotiate any obstacle and handle any unexpected situation as the animal participates in visits between the handler and the general public.

• A good showman is polite and courteous to other exhibitors and pays attention to both the animal and to the judge at all times.