

# Lama Glama Gazette

Welcome to the magazine of the New Zealand Llama Association. Along with our Facebook Groups and website we aim to keep you well informed regarding llamas. We are enthusiastic about promoting these wonderful animals and hope you will want to share news from any of the resources we provide.

In this issue we have a report on the exciting trek held at Lynn Barrett's farm. What a challenge but ultimately so satisfying. Following this is a very interesting piece written by Judy for the New Zealand Rare Breeds magazine on the topic of weeds eaten by llamas.

We would like to remind all members to please feel free to get in touch for a chat or to ask questions. We are truly happy to support you as you learn about llamas.

## Llamas Impersonating Camels or Visiting the Elderly



Judy has been contacted by a journalist who is eager to write about llamas being used in rest homes or as support to folk in similar places. Siobhan is based in Wellington so perhaps in the area. She would also like to write a festively themed article about llamas being used as camels in parades or nativity scenes. Please let her know if you have any suitable images

The llamas certainly are wonderful for people who will benefit from a bit of nurturing. We have visitors to our farm from mental health and other groups and it's always very successful. The highlight is watching llama matriarch, Diamond Harbour, eat a carrot. It's like watching a magician – the carrot is in your hand then in a flash it has disappeared.

## Delicious Sheep



Judy attended the Exotic Sheep Day at Brian Hale's farm in Wimbleton. It was a most interesting day with a variety of sheep and demonstrations in shearing, fibre processing, cooking and sheep characteristics. As Judy was alone running our stand, she couldn't see everything but was very impressed. Hopefully more members can attend next year.

### Brian Hales's Exotic Sheep Shearing Day 27<sup>th</sup> October by Judy Webby

Annually in October, Brian Hales hosts an exotic sheep shearing day at his farm in Wimbledon on the lower west coast of the North island. Brian is enthusiastic about keeping the original breeds of sheep. Each breed is run into the shearing shed and its characteristics are discussed as it is shorn. Each year he features a specific breed, this year it was the Gotland and as it was shorn the Scandanavian Choir from Norswood sang traditional Scandanavian songs including one especially written for the occasion!

It is a truly impressive event and is free to all. Provided was a Meatmaster sheep cooked on a spit. 4 hangi's cooking individual feral NZ sheep breeds, 5 BBQs cooking sample pieces of the various exotic breeds, and 6 cafés cooking exotics using their traditional homeland recipes.

Many craftspeople had stalls and walking models displayed their work.

Rare Breeds members were invited to attend and I took Estefan and Fernando over, plus stock of Keith's Guanaco/Merino and Guanaco/Silk blends for sale and display. We were allocated an outside pen between a café and the entrance to the woolshed, so I don't think anyone missed seeing us. The boys were very popular and obligingly ate carrots all day, although Estefan had to have a rest as you can see in the the photo above.

I never get tired of seeing the joy llamas bring to both young and old.



### **Public Relations Plea**

We are always looking for bright ideas to promote our organisation. We have display stands at various events and shows and people love to see our beautiful llamas. If you'd like to run a stand, we can offer support including display materials and advice. We are strengthening ties with similar organisations such as the NZ Rare Breeds Association. There may be groups that we're unaware of and we'd love to be introduced. The gazette can be given to interested individuals or groups such as schools, local libraries and business associations.

### **Royal Connections!**

Kevin Cole of Kaikoura took his llamas, Legend and Max to meet Prince Charles and Camilla. Prince Charles just loved them and spoke to Kevin for 5 minutes before being moved on by his minders. The media focused on the encounter and the television footage was enchanting. Skilful positioning by Kevin made a superb photo opportunity. Well done Kevin! Photos will be available for the Autumn Gazette.

### **A Magical Moment by Davina Keen**

We had a young lad visit our farm recently. He'd been the victim of horrific bullying and was starting afresh at our granddaughter's school. Lorna May invited him to visit and we took him on a tour. He enjoyed meeting all the sheep, cattle, chooks, alpacas, dog, cat, budgie and pony but when we reached the llamas he just stared in amazement at these very tall beings. "Is this a llama?" asked the boy. I told him that the trio before him certainly were llamas. "I thought they were like unicorns and dragons, you know, just magical animals." Gorgeous! We are happy to report that he's loving school and making good friends.

### **Puhi Puhi Llama trek and social by Lynn Barrett**

We mostly had a good week of weather leading up to and on the day of the trek, which meant the river was low and we didn't have to Zip people over on the zip wire:-)

We had 4 people lined up to join us but at the last minute Keith and Diane had to pull out. Ruth made the trip from Wellington into a mini break, spending a night in Kaikoura and a night with us. Paula who lives a few kms down the road joined us for her first experience with llamas.

We had a meet and greet at 10 am with coffee and cake, then caught the llamas – 12 yr Lynda and her 8 month old cria Giselle, 12 yr old Apricot, 3 yr old Holly. Pete took Apricot as she is his favorite and they both walk pretty fast ! Ruth took Holly, Paula had Lynda and I took Giselle.

We set off through the Deer paddocks and along a 4wd track through the bush, then a sharp left to start our 300m climb up to the top on a zig zag 2ft wide track. Pete and Apricot were marching on ahead, Lynda and Holly weren't so keen at the beginning and we swapped llamas a few times. Giselle wasn't happy about having to stop and wait for her mum to catch up. At about a quarter of the way up we stopped to get out breath back and heart rates back down, swapped llamas again as the girls were starting to get into their stride.





*Quarter of the way up*



*Half way up*

At the half way point we sat on some rocks for a drink, Ruth laid down under a cool fern bush and the llamas had a munch while Paula told us stories of when she was young and used to hunt in these hills.

Sufficiently watered and heart rates back to normal we pushed on to the top where we get the stunning views of the snow-capped mountains and Kaikoura town way in the distance.

We have a converted Nissan Serena at the top with a bed, stove, pot belly, table and chairs. The llamas were tethered and given a drink. We boiled the billy for a cup of tea and sat down to sandwiches, fruit and muesli bars, admiring the view, trying to name the mountains and pointing out places of interest. Some feral sheep wandered up the hill ahead of us and we watched some wild goats negotiate the steep bluff below us.



*Apricot, Lynn, Holly, Giselle, Ruth, Lynda, Paula, May dog*



*Chitty Bang Bang (she flew up there by helicopter)*



*Pizza oven at the cabin*

Fed and watered we continued... a little bit more UP to get to the boundary fence - 2 rusty strands of wire that serve no purpose at all except to draw a line between ours and Scots land. Pete cut the wires, we went through, then he re-joined them. A little bit further along the spur and we come onto Scot's 4WD track that leads back down to the river below. Now a much easier gradual walk down, I was ignoring the blisters I could feel forming on my little toes. Scot met us near the bottom and pointed out which route to take to get over the river. The water was lovely and cold running over my boots and soothing the pain of the blisters. We filled our water bottles and guzzled some much needed refreshment. The llamas cooled off and Lynda briefly cushioned down in the water. We then followed the gravel road for a km or so back to our river crossing, released the llamas back into the paddock and headed back up to the cabin for some nice cold drinks. Pete fired up the pizza oven and I made some pizzas and we all sat chatting around the picnic table until our exhaustion got the better of us.

I was very pleased with the llamas, they have been to the top of ours before but never all the way to Scots and down the other side, they showed no signs of being tired, but I'm sure they were !! A big shout out to Ruth for embracing the challenge and supporting the event. Ruth re-named the event "Ruths Heart Attack Trek" and said she loved it and wants more of us to put on events like this. So if any of you have a great spot that you'd like to share, get in touch with the committee.

Keith was disappointed to have missed the trek and he came the following weekend with two of his young girls age 11 and 9 months old. Unfortunately my blistered toes were still very sore, one was a bit infected, so I couldn't do the walk. I stayed and made lunch while Pete took Keith and his girls up to the top for a cuppa and back down again. My girl Holly joined Keith's girls for the trip back to Cheviot where she is going to meet Amigo for her first mating.



## What weeds do llamas eat and what height fences do they need. By Judy Webby

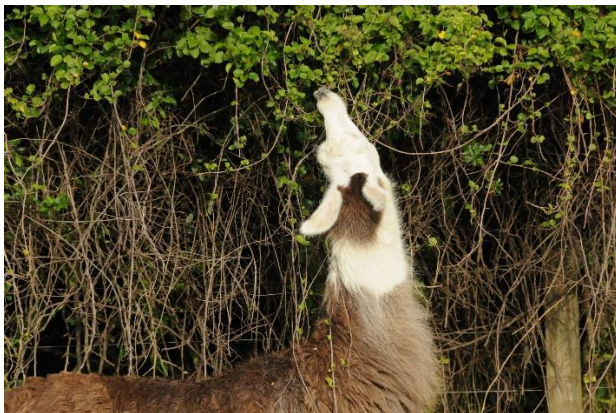
*I was asked to write this article for the Rare Breeds Magazine. Editor Davina thought members of NZLA might find it interesting*

Llamas are a member of the camelid family, along with camels, alpaca, vicuna and guanaco. They are tylopods with a 3-compartment stomach whereas ruminants such as cattle and sheep have 4-compartments. They are very efficient converters of forage, excreting neat little beans that can be used as fertiliser in the garden without further processing such as composting. Entire males will poo in the same spot which makes collection very easy!

As the more domesticated animal often kept in large herds, alpaca graze like sheep, llamas forage like goats and need roughage in their diet to maintain their digestive health. They are particularly fond of blackberry and gorse (and roses if they get into the garden) I have found that they do not seem to be aware which plants are poisonous and will eagerly snatch a mouthful of rhododendron, tutu or anything else that comes within reach! These plants and many others can kill, so be very careful when you are out and about with your llamas. An internet search for plant poisonous to goats will give you an idea of what to look out for, as a search for llama will usually bring up a list of North American plants. This is a useful NZ link <https://www.lifestyleblock.co.nz/lifestyle-file/livestock-a-pets/goats/item/94-plants-that-poison-goats>

On a brighter note they will eat dock seed-heads and thistle flowers, plus any seedling trees that are not protected from them. Desirable trees need a tall surround at their long necks will reach at least 1.8 metres, and some will even stand on their hind legs to reach a particularly tasty leaf or fruit! I use a double fence enclosing medicinal plants such as wormwood, flax and willow so they can eat what they need without having access to the trunk.

Most llamas will stay behind standard sheep height fences but be aware that the superb insulation of their fibre also stops them feeling an electric fence. Barb wire is not recommended for llama as it can inflict terrible wounds. If you are intending to have entire males within sight of females, you will need fences 1-6 to 1.8 high for security.



*Freya trimming the honeysuckle*



*Amigo eating dock seeds*

## Upcoming Events 2020

**Amuri Show**                      March 7<sup>th</sup> At Rotherham  
Contact Convenor Jacky Middleton. [ronandjackymiddleton@gmail.com](mailto:ronandjackymiddleton@gmail.com)

**NZLA AGM**                      May 9<sup>th</sup> At Hikurangi out of Whangarei  
Hosted by Bruce and Davina Keen, go to their website for more information and directions [www.batesandkeenfamilyfarm.co.nz](http://www.batesandkeenfamilyfarm.co.nz)

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