



Llama Glama Gazette – Winter 2021

Objectives of the New Zealand Llama Association:

1. To educate owners and interested members of the public in the needs, care and welfare of llamas.
2. To promote llamas and their uses as working and companion animals, and pets.
3. To facilitate and encourage fun activities with llamas.
4. To liaise with government and other authorities on behalf of members on matters pertaining to llama ownership, care and use.
5. To provide a communication forum for the sharing of news, ideas and knowledge relevant to llama ownership, care and use.
6. To negotiate, set up and operate agencies, or other arrangements with other Camelid organisations where applicable to achieve the objectives of the association.
7. To encourage compliance with a code of conduct for llama ownership
8. To provide a registry for the collection of information of all New Zealand llamas and for the registration of llamas.



News from the NZLA

Committee

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.

AGM Report

As I write this, we are all in lockdown again, with Auckland looking like it will stay in Level 4 for a few more weeks at least. Like many people, my family got the vaccine from our regular GP and found it an efficient, painless process.

I hope everyone is doing OK in trying times. Signs of spring are everywhere in our garden and that alone is encouraging.

We had a very enjoyable Zoom AGM on the 8th May, with approximately 33% of members attending. Online meetings have their downsides, of course, but they do allow people to participate very easily without the expense and inconvenience of travel.

Unfortunately, Marty McGee Bennett, founder of Camelid Dynamics and author of the Camelid Companion, was not able to join us as scheduled. We may be able to get Marty for another online event in the future.

The online AGM was a good opportunity to have a chat and hear what members wanted from NZLA, and some excellent ideas came from it.

Local Workshops Planned

Local workshops seemed to be on the top of the AGM wish list discussion. The committee is looking at having two workshops in the North Island this spring – one near Hamilton and the other near Wanganui. COVID has made everything more uncertain, but we still hope these will

be possible. The committee wants to be sure that members would support these kinds of events so please email info@llamas.org.nz to let us know if you are interested and what topics you would like to see covered.

Speaking of events, any event that is attended by one member and co-hosted by NZLA is covered under our Public Liability Insurance. So please let the committee know if you are taking your llamas to an event, or hosting people at your farm so it can be noted.

Possible Virtual Shows

Since the AGM, a few people have said they would be interested in another virtual show. Again, this is the sort of event that needs involvement from enough people to make it worthwhile. Please get in touch if you want to help organise a virtual show, or if you would like to participate.

A High Country Adventure

Some NZLA members are thinking about making a multi-day trek across the Southern Alps to the West Coast in late summer (early 2022). The hope is to use the trip to raise awareness of llamas generally and to raise funds for animal welfare causes, including llama rescues. No details have been confirmed and COVID is making all planning more complicated. Watch out for more news in the Llama Glama or on email in the coming months.

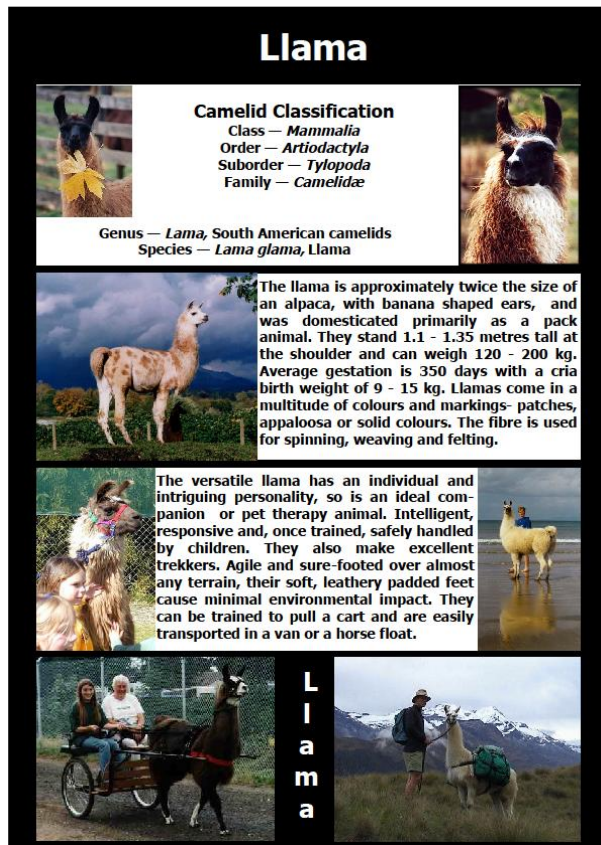
NZLA Promotional Materials

It was raised at the AGM that members might need a reminder of what promotional material the NZLA has available. Those details are below and you can contact Judy on 027 271 7192 or email president@llamas.org.nz for more information or to reserve materials

- 2 x banners one held in the North Island and one in the South Island
- Set of four camelid posters. Alpaca, Camel, Guanaco, Llama. Can be printed and laminated in A4 or A3 at

cost price or the files sent to you for printing

- Postcard sized NZLA information cards
- Leaflet with basic llama facts, care and uses information



Llama information poster

Your Llama Stories Wanted

And finally, we have a few excellent articles from members in this edition of Llama Glama. My thanks to the authors and a reminder that we are always looking for articles that would interest other members. They don't have to be long or prize-winning journalism – if it involves llamas and you thought it was interesting, then other members probably will too.

Please email info@llamas.org.nz with any ideas for future articles.

Honouring an NZLA Life Member – by Judy Webby

The glue that has held NZLA together over the years has been Julie Insley, she has acted as President, Secretary, Newsletter editor and Register manager. In 2013, after 10 years of ceaseless work, she stepped aside as President but has fortunately remained on the committee so we have the benefit of her historic knowledge.

In 2015, Julie's contribution was recognised with a Life Membership. Apart from a letter of thanks there was no formal recognition of her life membership, but recently Graham Murray offered his services as a plaque maker. A plaque was delivered to Julie shortly before lockdown hit.

Reflecting on Julie's long association with NZLA made me think that it might be helpful to go over some of the background of the Association for our newer members.

Until 2003, llama owners were members of a NZ Llama and Alpaca Association, and then an Australasian Llama Association. As llamas and their owners increased in NZ, there was a need for a specific Llama association here, so in October 2003 the New Zealand Llama Association Inc was formed.

The initial committee was Julie, Penny King, Lisa Percy and Emma Schwithal, with sub-committees for Public Access/Packing, Events/Shows/Activities, Promotion, Registry and Health. Membership was the healthy number of 50. The first event was a llama trek, and the focus of the NZLA was to be on owners and potential owners with an emphasis on fun.

Membership grew to a grand total of 82 in 2007 and many cria were born. Llamas

were at that stage being marketed as a “lifestyle investment” Shows were a popular way for breeders to show the quality of their stock, and many llamas were imported from Australia and the USA.

Then the Global Financial Crisis hit and in October 2008 NZ was declared to be in a recession. The subsequent tightening of financial belts meant that the market for luxury items, including llamas, decreased rapidly. Membership in NZLA also declined steadily, to the extent that in recent years we have had trouble finding enough people to stand for the committee.

But the upside is that llamas are now being recognised for their magical qualities and practical uses, such as packing and carting. The few people who are still breeding are mainly concentrating on their conformation, working abilities and status in NZ as a Rare Breed, which needs to be maintained.



In recognition of life-member Julie Insley's outstanding contribution to the NZLA.

Why I Own Llamas – by Janette Buckingham

I own llamas because I use their fibre. I am a spinner, weaver and knitter, and have had my home-based business for 31 years. I like the variety of natural colours and the softness of the fibre. Spinning, knitting

and weaving with well-prepared fibre is an absolute pleasure, and is very therapeutic.

I have just over 40 llamas, but shear about 12 of these each February. Apart from some animals' fleeces taking 18 months, at least, to grow to a full fleece again, I don't need 40 fleeces at one time, so I shear in rotation. Forty sounds like a lot of animals, but it takes around four Guanaco fleeces to make a good craft quantity. Also, some of the llamas are nearly 20 years old, so are living out their retirement. They've produced their share of good progeny, so don't owe me anything. I try to keep my stock numbers to a realistic level, but am mindful of the fact that younger animals generally produce the finer fibre. Thus, I breed from a very few selected females every other year. And, of course, I need replacement breeding animals for those who die from old age, or other causes, as does any farmer.

Preparing a fleece for spinning is time-consuming. Ideally, you should have the 'blanket' part of the fleece separated from the necks and oddments. Being the 'best' fibre, the blanket is what you work with for making garments, particularly those which will be worn next to the skin, but I have also incorporated the necks into some projects. Beware of short stiff fibres and guard hairs – the coarse outer fibres. Both types cause the 'prickle' factor in a finished garment.



llama fleece sorted, washed and spread out to dry

I sort through the fleece thoroughly, removing short fibres, handfuls of any seeds and other debris. I also remove the guard hairs. These aren't too time-consuming to remove in a small quantity of fibre, but for a larger quantity, I use my dehairing machine. Before using the machine, I wash the fibre as I would for wool, and spin out the excess moisture in the washing machine. Otherwise, I wash it anyway and then spread the fibre out to dry on newspaper in a sunny, enclosed space – my studio is ideal. Once the fibre is dried (and dehaired), I then put it through my table-mounted drum carder to tease out the fibres and prepare the fibre for spinning. As with any project, preparation time is time well spent.



Drum carding opens the fibres and lines up each individual fibre in the same direction, making spinning much easier.

Prior to choosing a fleece for a project, I need to have a clear idea of what I am going to knit, or weave. I need to have a colour scheme in mind, and most importantly, I need to calculate the amount of spun yarn needed for the project.

I keep my supplies of raw fibre in the woolshed, in vermin-proof plastic bins. Every bag of fleece has a sheet of paper stating the shearing date, the fleece weight, a suggestion of what the fleece might be most suitable for, and the llama's name (I do not rely on my memory for these details!).

The bins are also used to keep the colours separate e.g., white, Guanaco, brown and black. Fleeces which are surplus to my needs are classed into blanket fibre, necks, coarse fibre (all in separate colours, of course) and oddments, and sent to a fibre pool in Christchurch. This system works well, as I'm not overwhelmed with endless bags of fibre. Some of my 'saved' fibre is left to accumulate (in the bins) until I have enough of each colour it to have commercially spun into knitting yarn, to sell in my gallery. When having fibre processed, you have to allow for a loss in the volume, with washing, carding and spinning. It also needs to be remembered that any seeds or debris left in the fibre will go through the system into the finished carded roving. Washing and processing does not automatically remove it. Washing removes the dust, but that's about all. One way of removing such debris from llama fibre is combing, or gilling. Some mills may do this, but could require a substantial amount of fibre to make this a viable process.

Other fibre is sorted and carded, as time permits, and sold in the gallery also.

I realise that many llama owners don't use their animals' fibre, but I can well understand why they have llamas. Llamas

have the X factor, which is defined as “an indescribable quality.”

What is it about these animals which draws people to them? To me, it’s not only the fibre, but the big eyes (and long eyelashes), long ears, the long necksa herd of long necks looks almost comical, as with ostriches and other long-necked creatures. And the gentle, but inquisitive nature. However, I will leave it for other members to tell us about the other attributes.

I say “not only the fibre”, but we all know what a (machine) shorn llama looks like. Sure, we have the satisfaction of having harvested the fleece/ relieved the animal of its coat in hot weather, but are these critters of ours really as appealing without their woolly coats?? Not really, are they?

I think we llama owners are bemused by the way llama merchandise has taken off over the last few years. Indeed, the NZLA logo/advertisement states “Llamas are more than just cute merchandise.” And we who own llamas agree.

But I ask myself why llama merchandise has become so popular?? I think it’s the big eyes, the long ears, the long necks....and the fibre. Any animal which looks soft and cuddly has instant appeal. It’s just a few manic craftspeople like myself who feel the need to take this fibre to greater heights.

[Editor’s Note: Janette’s business, Thickthorne Llamas, sells llama and other fine fibres, Gotland wool, knitting yarns, handcrafted garments and accessories. You can find them on Facebook, or stop by her gallery if you are in the Catlins. Just contact Janette prior to visiting, to make sure that she is home!]

A Llama Trek in the Puhi Puhi Valley – by Lynn Barrett

On 3rd April, Lynn and Pete hosted a llama social walk, with options to stay

over and make it a two-day event. Keith, Diane and Wembo did just one day.

We started off with morning tea out in the paddock on a beautiful sunny day. Then we packed the pannier bags with our lunch, tea, coffee and cake. Went and caught four girls from the adjoining paddock and put a set of panniers on two of them – Holly and Arabella. Arabella had only had the pack saddle on once before, so we decided to try her, and if she wasn't happy, we would put them on one of the others. Well, she got a little tense doing up the cinches, but then cruised along as if she had done it 100 times.



We set off down the winding driveway to the bush at the bottom of the property and out onto the river. There we donned on plastic bags over our boots to cross the river (they kept most of the water out). Over the boulders to the bush on the other side. Here we weaved our way through the totora trees and gigantic rocks, ferns and vines for about 1km, coming out up onto the road.

Here we crossed over to another big bush



block of land with a huge 7-meter tipi just inside the gate; the llamas weren't phased by it at all.

We followed a grassy 4WD track to a little cabin then on and up, zigzagging until we reached the top where we were greeted with 360° views of mountains, the sea and Kaikoura town way off in the distance.



We tied the llamas up and unpacked them, they tucked into the grass while we tucked into our sandwiches and hot cup of coffee. After sitting chatting and admiring the view we reloaded the llamas and headed back down, along the road to the ford crossing back up to Lynn and Pete's cabin.

There we had a final cup of tea and piece of home-made lemon drizzle cake before everyone headed home.

I hope that more members will join us on future walks.

(The Puhi Puhi Valley is about 20 km north of Kaikoura.)

The Story of Shag and Sheila – by Keith Payne

Just a few months ago, a Trade Me notice appeared about the need of a new home for two llamas, from a farm outside of Riverdale, near Gore in the South Island. There was an 18 (or so) year old entire male (no name but referred to as Banana Ears) and his daughter of 8 years (or so), without a name.

The bush block they had lived on all their lives was sold and the new owner said to shift them or shoot them. They were very wild; the daughter had never been handled and was known to disappear into the bush for years at a time. The male had been purchased at a young age from a breeder near Dunedin, had been put in with a couple of guanaco type girls, which did result after a number of years in the birth of his daughter. They had not been concerned about having an entire male running loose with females because any offspring will be hybrids and “as we all know, they are sterile.”

It took a couple of weeks to organise transport and attract this wild pair to an area where they could be loaded. But this was achieved, they were transported to Gore, the next morning loaded into a cattle truck and driven to Christchurch, where I met them. Quickly they were coaxed into my llama float, arriving home on a dark, wet, cold night. I didn't get my first good look at them until after sun up.

Talk about a couple of wild ones!! Of course, this was almost what I had expected. If you take a llama that had been running wild all its life, surviving on its instincts alone, without human contact, you really would not expect too much. But I was not prepared for the absolute fear that the young lady had of humans. To the point where she would aggressively seek to get out of sight, even if that meant trying to bash through fences and gates. The potential for harming herself with these antics became too real and I quickly decided I would just back away from her and concentrate my attention to the male.

I determined to name them Shag and Sheila.



Shag (aka Banana Ears)

Now Shag was different than his daughter. He had a nervous look about him and would follow her lead at all times, running around after her, but he lacked the look of desperation that accompanies the wild ones. At times he seemed to be intently studying me, like he was trying to figure if I was a threat or not. For 2 weeks I walked up to and around him, brought feed, getting closer but not attempting contact. Third week I could persuade him into the yards and walk around him. Fourth week I eased him into a very small pen and after a

couple days slowly reached out and stroked his neck. He stiffened but I slowly kept it up and, in a few moments, felt the tension ease out, he turned his head, looked at me – no sign of aggression.

After that it became easy as long as I didn't rush things. Within a week he accepted a halter and the next day began his leading lessons – the first day we managed about 3 meters in half an hour. A week later we were covering 3 ks a session.

He doesn't like to be brushed but has reluctantly and somewhat grudgingly permitted me to begin to cut his mighty fibre off. For about 2 minutes each session - it is a slow process. But as I worked my way from front to back his agitation increased. After a while I was able to remove enough dags in his back end to obtain my first glimpse of his genitals. SHOCK! Shag has no testicles, just a couple of wrinkled prunes! After a second inspection the realization struck me, this fellow has not been gelded correctly, he has had the connection of blood vessels etc. to his testicles crushed. The name for this procedure is "burdizzo", I have never heard of it being performed on llamas, and I suspect there would not be a camelid vet in the world who would approve of its use.

And all of a sudden, I was engulfed in a wave of pity for this poor fellow, what pain and discomfort he must have endured, and here he is putting his trust in me.

But the story ends well. Sheila is now in with my girl herd of 22 and getting more settled each day. Shag has relocated to the stud paddock where he has his own area and boys on either side for company. For both of these llamas this is the first time in their lives they are able to be safe and have an ample supply of feed and care plus the company of their own kind.



Sheila with the herd

Sheila will always be a wild one and it is best she stays with me where there is lots of room plus other females with whom she can take comfort. I will wait until November to give Shag a full haircut and after that he will be ready for a quiet forever home somewhere in NZ. Whoever takes Shag will be pleasantly surprised at his handling and companionship. I am impressed with him. A lovely boy

Editor's Note: Sadly, Shag died after this article was written. Keith reported that he had come up for morning rations as normal. He was found a few hours later; Keith suspects a stroke or cardiac arrest. Shag had spent nearly 20 years in rough conditions and we are glad that Keith could give him a chance to live a proper llama's life before the end.

Keith has rescued numerous llamas over the years. By chance, I was reading the Autumn 2015 NZLA newsletter (lots of extra time during lockdown!) and saw a report on how Keith had completed an 840km, 10-hour return drive to rescue two llamas named Roo and Rohan.

Keith reported that "...The deterioration in both is advanced...Both are feisty, but manageable and are really quite nice boys. They were well loved pets of folk who know nothing about llama care."

The NZLA committee is very grateful to Keith for generosity in rescuing many llamas over the years.

Diablo and the Inca Army – by Keith Payne

Editor's note – The story of Diablo and Chambi is fictional but the dates and events of the Spanish colonisation of the Andes are historically correct. It is an interesting insight into the history of the land of the llamas.

He was born in 1530 CE, in a land we today call Bolivia, high in the puna, where only the vicuna live at greater altitude. He had light golden coloured fibre, except for the underside of his neck and belly which was white like cold, cold snow. He was taller than the other males and his willingness to answer a challenge from any of his herd companions had hardened his muscles, sharpened his reflex and honed his instincts. He would quickly challenge any stranger who ventured within his awareness and would accept no master – until one day he met Chambi.

Chambi was born in an area to become known as Ecuador. An Inca army loyal to Atahualpa, half-brother to Huascar, was based in Ecuador at the time of the death of Huayna Capac, the ruler of the Inca. A civil war started between the brothers.

Chambi found himself in the service of one of Atahualpa's armies lead by General Quisquis. In combat, he was without fear and his strength and prowess with the traditional large battle axe earned him its name. And he became known as Chambi. But Chambi also displayed exceptional skills at herding and managing llamas, without which the Inca army could not be such an effective threat to its chosen enemies. And so Chambi was sent to the puna of Bolivia in search of the finest, strongest and most intelligent llamas to serve in the personal guard of General Quisquis.

Chambi had observed a bachelor herd for a number of weeks before setting a trap and

contriving to lead and then drive them into his makeshift but efficient large corral which closed behind them. He spent the next several months learning their habits and characters. The big golden fellow intrigued him, but he stubbornly resisted Chambi; it would be a contest of wills between them. Eventually he had reduced the llamas he wished to keep to two handfuls, and had included the big golden fellow amongst them. After another month he felt they were prepared as a group to be herded, and early one morning with the snow drifting sideways, they set out in the direction of Cusco where he intended to meet up with the army of General Quisquis.

But much had happened in his time away. A strange group of foreign men had arrived on the coast, marched inland capturing Atahualpa and demanding a massive ransom in gold and silver which they took before executing him in a public square. They were reputed to have weapons with special powers, they fought from the backs of powerful beasts protected by plates of an unknown metal and wielded long swords made of a magical metal that would not break. They were unclean, fully bearded, and had a seemingly insatiable appetite for gold and silver.

These strange men were aided by thousands who had previously been defeated by the Inca and relocated to areas throughout the Inca empire. These people took the opportunity to strike back at the Inca in this way.

Chambi and his small herd of llamas stumbled on a group of Spaniards and their allies, not fully aware of the perilous situation. He was captured and about to be put to death when with a mighty roar his llamas came thundering through the camp providing him the opportunity to escape. The Spaniards later told many a story of the vicious llamas led by a big golden

demon, with blazing eyes, flying feet and a battering ram chest, they called him DIABLO, the devil. And so began the legend of Chambi and Diablo.



One of "Diablo's" descendants in NZ (Keith Payne photo)

Eventually meeting up with the forces of Quisquis, Diablo settled into the life of an army llama. When on the move, which was often, he and his team would transport a load of battle weapons. The principal weapon of the Inca army was the sling, the size of the sling to determine the bulk of the projectile to be hurled, the skill of the slinger determining the distance it could travel. Other weapons included lances, clubs, maces, chambi (axe), small and large shields and when the people from the rainforest were included then a huge quantity of bows and arrows. All Inca soldiers wore tightly woven cane helmets which were very lightweight but of considerable strength.

Thousands of llamas were pressed into service to transport the army, for there was also a need to carry tents, food, etc. Each thousand llamas were the responsibility of an experienced llama herder who in turn would have 10 assistants responsible for 100 each and in turn young boys who would have 25 each to take care of. All llamas were required to carry a load but a large number would also be destined to

feed the army or for sacrifice as battles loomed.

Chambi, Diablo and his group were part of the general's personal support and would travel in sight of the litters carrying the general and his seniors. Days before battle would be spent fasting, ceremony and sacrifice rituals before the scattering of coca leaves and consumption of chicha (maize beer).

A battle would be preceded by much shouting followed by the loud noise of thousands of conch shells and clay trumpets heralding a virtual blizzard of stones, javelins and arrows. And then the shock troops poured in. Most opposing armies would submit and accept the benevolence of the Inca after observing the discipline of the Inca army and its awesome destructive ability, those that chose to test the military strength of the Inca were subjected to harsh post battle reprisals.

In battle, Diablo was frequently called upon to deliver much needed replacement weapons to the officers who were in the thick of the fighting, Chambi would wrap alpaca neck hides over Diablo to accord him protection as they charged to the battle front, Diablo's repute with the troops growing as he screamed his high-pitched war cry at llamas in the opposing army.

But fighting the Spanish invaders was a different story. In pitched head-to-head battles the Spanish had inflicted major harm on the Inca warriors, themselves suffering only very light damage in return. General Quisquis was obliged to adopt a different military strategy opting for ambush in the narrow canyons of the Andes rather than a head on confrontation. Diablo and his llama companions were constantly on the move, up to 18 hours each day as the forces of Quisquis would make an ambush one day and be immediately on the move to the next one

planned, and so successfully earned the first military gains of the campaign as the Spanish forces crawled through the Andes on the road to Cusco.

But the Spaniards stepped up the supply of soldiers, horses, weapons and support to their new rich colony in the New World. The Incas were gradually forced into the more remote areas of the high Andes as well as rainforests to their east, a series of military losses obliging them to adopt a more classic hit and run style of warfare, eventually they were totally subdued. By the end the Spanish had eliminated over 95% of the Inca and 90% of their llama and alpacas. They were truly the greatest vandals in history as they continued to plunder the economic resources of this once wealthy and most impressive empire.

With the Spaniard conquerors came their domestic animals, principally the sheep which pushed the llamas and alpacas into the higher altitudes of the Andes where the European sheep could not survive. But they also brought their draft animals, the donkey and mule in addition to the pack horse, capable of carrying larger loads than the llama. It was only in the higher reaches of the Andes, away from the formed roads that the llamas continued to be dominant given an ability to travel through rough country and live off the land. As they still do to this day.

The Blessing of the Animals

In many places around the feast of Saint Francis (October 4) there is a Spring or Fall "blessing of animals."

In the Catholic church, St. Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of animals and the environment, who was born in the 12th century and went on to found the Franciscan Order.

Stephen Mulholland took his llama Hob to the blessing for several years.

This year the Blessing of the Animals may be disrupted by COVID but it's still worth keeping an eye open for services at your local church.



The Llama Library List

Members are reminded that the NZLA has a number of useful books that can be loaned out. These include:

- Alpaca a Homeopathic and Natural Approach by Tineke Verkade
- Alpacas - A Basic Veterinary Reference by Peter Aitken BVSc
- The Waldo chronicles - A Training Log by Gwen Ingram
- Medical and Surgery of South American Camelids by Dr Murry Fowler
- The Camelid Companion by Marty McGee-Bennett
- A Guide to Raising Llamas by Gale Birutta
- Evaluating a Llama Pack by Gwen Ingram
- Packing with Llamas by Stanlynn Daugherty
- Llama Driving by Ron Shinnick
- Fundamentals of Felt Making by Patricia Spark

- Caring for Llamas and Alpacas by Clare Hoffman
- DVD - Click & Reward vol 2

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Llama registry reminder

The register will always be a valuable asset that needs maintaining so we have a record of the lineage of llamas in NZ.

Please keep us up to date with births, deaths and ownership transfers. Here is the link to the Registry

page <https://llamas.org.nz/registry/>. If you have any questions about the register email registry@llamas.org.nz

Find us on Facebook

Members are encouraged to use the NZLA Facebook page. Tell us what's happening with the llamas in your life, post interesting articles you've seen elsewhere or ask questions of the NZ llama community.