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*Daisy and the Bumblebee,
Costume Class Winners*

was happening. The youth were studying everything they could get their hands on and testing each other. In our county, we had 15 members enrolled in the llama project and we had 7 trips to award to the State Fair.

When the big day arrived, the judging arena at the State Fair was filled with llamas.

The first day consisted of checking in the llamas and the llama interview, along with the costume class that night. The youth had both a written and oral test on their llama knowledge. The top youth in the interview received a captain's chair while the rest of the Top 10 received a nice polo shirt. That evening the barn was bustling with kids, llamas and costumes. And the bleachers were filled with the public cheering on about 30 youth and llamas all dressed and looking so good. The class winner was daisy and bumble bee. They even had music - "The Flight of the Bumblebee". What a hard class to judge! The public all cheered and many went back to the stalls to talk with the youth and take pictures. Now there were some great public relations!

Thursday brought the performance classes. The 4-Hers were divided by grades in school and two rings were going at one time. There were all the obstacles that you would find at an ALSA show. Again, the bleachers were filled with the public. Everyone just loved it! The top youth received plaques and all received ribbons.

Friday was the showmanship class. All the youth looked so professionals. We sure are a fortunate industry to have so many wonderful youth representing us. The classes were big and the judging hard.

Standing in the barn, I would hear the 4-Her's promote llamas to the public, answering all their questions and explaining how wonderful our llamas really are. Stalls were always clean, water changed and the isles were constantly swept clean. The public was greeted with smiles and excited youth. I was so proud! This is really what llamas are all about. The youth were also judged on their herdsmanship and it was amazing the attention the llamas did get.

Throughout the whole llama show there were lots of promotion spots on television and radio. Our county got up at 3:30 am to do live morning television spots from 5 to 7 am. This show even had the Minnesota senator, Norm Coleman, out for a llama kiss. The llamas were asked to be in the State Fair parade too. Talk about getting llamas out in the public and educating people about their wonderful qualities! This was the place to be. The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest State Fairs in the country. This year the visitors had the added pleasure of seeing our 4-H youth with their llamas!



2008 Virginia Christensen National Llama Welfare Award Presented

News Release, November 6, 2008

Submitted by Gayle M. Woodsum

Sherri Tallmon of Hidden Oaks Llama Ranch in **Estacada Ore.**, has been chosen as the recipient of the 2008 Virginia Christensen National Llama Welfare Award.

The honor, which includes a \$500 cash gift, was created in the name of llama lover, advocate, breeder, judge and organizational leader Virginia Christensen of Nevada. It is designed to recognize and

support individuals dedicated to the long term viability and overall welfare of llamas in the United States.

According to award organizers, Tallmon was selected as this year's recipient in recognition of many years of hands-on, consistent llama rescue efforts. As Tallmon herself states on her website, "Another important part of our farm is taking in llama rescues. As with all animals, there are so many out there that are unwanted or have been abused that are in desperate need of good homes, which is why we take breeding quality llamas very seriously!"

Tallmon's work and name rose to the attention of the Llama Welfare Award selection committee from countless sources over the last year. In response to the committee's request her friend and admirer, Pamela Watson, provided the following report:

Since I met Sherri some years ago she has always devoted a part of her time to what many llama owners would consider the "undesirables." Sherri is always able to see beyond that label to their hidden potential. Whether as a guard, pet or even

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driving llama she has an uncanny way of finding just the right home for the hundreds of rescues she has taken in over the years. At any given time on a visit to her ranch you will find a few of them waiting for their future homes.

On one of my recent visits to her ranch there were two precious deer-like females. When Sherri got them they were underweight and thus very small in size. When we walked down to the pasture to look at all the llamas, the first priority was not to look at some of the beautiful show quality llamas Sherri has from her own breeding program, it was to look at these two shy llamas and for her to point out how they were doing better and were very sweet.

This is the Sherri I have always known. She started out in childhood a horse girl, showing champion Arabians that her family owned on their horse ranch. But when Sherri got her first awareness of llamas she had found her critter soul mates.

A few years ago Sherri did a rescue near the Oregon coast. Little did she know it would be as a result of this particular rescue that she would suddenly be under siege by a force that would quickly take many of her most loved llamas, including Curly Sue one of her first rescues. The nightmare force was later identified as the dreaded Eimac disease that many of us have since come to know.

One of the llamas from that rescued herd (Smoky) who had managed to hang on had become a ray of hope for Sherri. Daily, the calls from or visits with Sherri would be to tell of the latest pounds Smoky gained.

Unlike many llama owners at the time who were secretly hiding their loss of llamas to Eimac, Sherri used it as a teaching



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moment to raise awareness to her fellow llama owners. She learned all she could about Eimac and even put together her own photos and literature to do talks and share all the information she could to help others avoid such a tragic and sudden loss of their own. Smoky would go on to survive and you would have thought he was a million dollar llama by the joy Sherri expressed over his survival.

Sherri has not just taken in llamas. In the little alcoves tucked away near her home where she has noticed an intact llama or two housed with a female, Sherri in her unique way has worked with the owners and offered to take the male llamas to be gelded just to avoid another, "they keep having babies and I don't know why" incident.

Not too long ago Sherri got a call from a couple telling her they had rescued a male llama and wanted him sheared. She drove 70 miles to shear this llama. Once getting there she learned he had been abused by the previous owner. She spent hours talking

llamas with the new owners and encouraged them to have him gelded. By the time she left they said they wanted to drive to her place one weekend, help clean barns and learn all they could about llamas.

The other day I visited Sherri and she just had to show me her two new "old boys" that she had already found a home for. Here they were, two buck-teethed guys, throwaways to many—but to Sherri, they have potential. She quickly found a home for these guys. They are headed to a local vet to help keep his pasture down.

There are too many stories like this to mention, but the bottom line is Sherri's devotion to all aspects of llamas whether it be showing, breeding or rescuing. Opening people's eyes from ignorance to awareness is a big part of what makes her happy.

- Additional Insert Follows -

Virginia Christensen National Llama Welfare Award Criteria

To be awarded to an individual who has consistently, and over an extended

period of time, promoted thoughtful care to llamas through public and private efforts in a variety of settings, including but not limited to demonstration of the following efforts:

- participation in the education of llama owners and potential llama owners as to the attentive care and compassionate handling of llamas
- leadership in volunteer and organizational settings that exhibit diversity of membership, philosophy and mission
- promotion of llamas as companion animals with basic physical and psychological needs that surpass their value as a commodity
- unflinching participation in public and private activities that support and implement the prevention and cessation of cruelty, neglect and desertion of llamas

PACO-VICUÑA BREEDERS HELD PLANNING CONFERENCE

Press Release: Oct. 14, 2008

Submitted by Linda Hayes



Owners of the unique type of alpaca known as paco-vicuñas held a four day meeting in October 2008 to set up a breed association and plan marketing strategies. The conference was held at Jefferson Farms in Denver, CO. Besides the planning sessions there were speakers and a farm open house.

The Paco-Vicuña Association Mission Statement is as follows – “Develop and promote the Paco-Vicuña breed by focusing on vicuña; characteristics, vigor, and fiber fineness while maintaining the gentle manner and fiber growth rate of the alpaca.”

The paco-vicuña (P-V) is relatively new to North America although it had been bred in South America off and on over the centuries. They are alpacas which have many vicuña characteristics such as extremely fine fiber and exceptional vigor. Breeders are hoping to promote these

characteristics without losing the gentle nature and fiber growth rate of the alpaca.

Besides the working sessions, several speakers were on hand and Arthur and Jane Levene, owners of Jefferson Farms showed videos of vicuñas and alpacas in South America.

The group was moderated by Don Smith of Hickory Ridge Farms, Braymer, MO. Committees were set up to organize a breed association which will include the P-V registry, marketing, use of Expected Progeny Data (EPD), and a web site.

Speakers at the 4 day event included Phil Switzer of Switzer-Land Alpaca and Paco-vicuña Farm, Estes Park, CO he provided a history on lama importation into the states. Phil was a screener for both llamas and alpacas and has imported most of the P-V's now in the U.S.

Bret Kayson of Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO spoke of how to set up a breed association that avoids many of the pitfalls which newer groups have dealt with. He suggested keeping the registry and breed association in one organization and to include EPD's focusing on the animal's Form to Function

Mark Enns, also of Colorado State explained how EPD's work. Using data from the cattle industry, he showed the group how quickly positive breed characteristics can come forward when EPD's are tracked.

Angus McColl of Yocom-McColl Testing Labs in Denver, CO showed slides of how fiber characteristics such as microns are tested. He gave a brief history of data collection and explained how he could help with the tracking of EPD's.

Sean O'Connell of Thunder Canyon Farm Paco-Vicunas and Alpacas, Tijreas, New Mexico gave a Power Point presentation on how the website would work and the options available. He explained the technical information in layman's terms making it easy for everyone to comprehend.

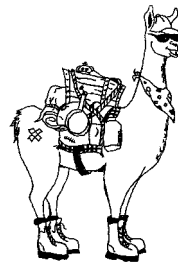
The weekend open house entertained many visitors from the alpaca community as well as people new to the industry. Claire Walker, Westcliffe, CO demonstrated spinning P-V fiber. Several ranches brought animals or set up displays.

It was an eventful conference with everyone agreeing on the direction the breed must take to succeed in the future. Others in attendance for the planning sessions include Barb and Bob Hance, Hance Ranch, Wheat Ridge, CO; Diane and Delmar Smith of Clearview Alpacas & Paco-Vicuñas, Black Hawk, CO; Kathy O'Connell, Thunder Canyon Farm Paco-Vicunas and Alpacas, Tijeras, NM; Tom and Carol Yerden of Wolf Den Alpacas, North Fork, ID; Nicky Elves of Jabulani Farms Paco-Vicuñas, Parker, CO and Linda Hayes of The Chacu (vicuña roundup) at Llama Linda Ranch, Carbondale, CO.

Anyone wanting more information on the P-V can contact the author at hayestees@sopris.net or www.paco-vicunas.com or the registry at www.paco-vicunaregistry.com.

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