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# Pacific's Satisfaction

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and we felt very satisfied with our efforts. In talking to a neighbor, we found out that Bruce Hanson is an engineer in Denver who has a log cabin back in the woods a few miles from the llama's present location. I got his email address and pager number and again tried to reach him.

Saturday evening Bruce called me from Washington D.C! At this point the llama, Jorge, had been missing for nine days. Bruce had spent the previous weekend searching all over the area and had come to the conclusion that the animal had probably been killed by the bear. Jorge was one of John's first llamas and he was heartbroken at the loss. His scheduled family vacation on the East Coast had a sad beginning. And now. . .on the last day, hope rang eternal on Round Hill in Park County!!

As I went to bed that night, I just crossed my fingers that we had done enough to keep Jorge in his location and that all the effort would provide a happy ending!

Sunday morning at nine, after flying into Denver at midnight, Bruce arrived on our doorstep. We had already been up the hill with water and more carrots, and yes indeed, Jorge was waiting!

Bruce slowly maneuvered his 4-WD truck up the jeep track and what a sight to see that E.T. silhouetted creature start running toward the truck when he heard the familiar whistle! Kind of a, tears to the eyes moment at the happy reunion. One of the first things that Bruce noticed where the healing claw cuts that the bear had made where Jorge's front leg met his body. He was wounded, and skinnier than usual, but in pretty good shape. It was fun for Pat and I to actually scratch his long, strong neck, feed him some sweet grain out of our hand, and lead him around a bit. He had been trained to jump into the back of a pick-up, and that is just what he did.

We were rewarded the following weekend with an elk steak dinner at Bruce's cabin. We meet new friends in such interesting ways!

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# Crias in Peru Need Your help!

by Dr. Charlene Arendas



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*A curious llama cria at La Raya.  
La Raya births several hundred  
llama and alpaca crias each year.*

## **DEAR LLAMA LLOVERS,**

A team of camelid veterinarians concerned with the well being of llamas and alpacas would like to ask for your support in controlling a devastating disease of llama and alpaca crias in Peru. These veterinarians visited Peru in January 2008 and spent the majority of their time at the La Raya camelid research facility. Headed by Dr. Walter Bravo, the team consists of Drs. Larry Agle (Ohio), Daniel Mora (California), Maria Jimenez (Ohio), Toni Longville (Ohio), as well as Charlene Arendas (Ohio).

## **LA RAYA**

The La Raya research facility has been in operation since the early 1950's at its current location in Peru. Consisting of nearly 70,000 acres, it has been one of the premiere sites for camelid research in the world. La Raya is home to over 4,000 camelids including llamas,

alpacas, and vicunas. However, it has faced some setbacks over the years. In the 1980's, La Raya was a prime target of Peru's Shining Path terrorist group. Many years of research and buildings were burned, hundreds of animals were killed, and lives of the people living and working there were threatened. Since then, the government and universities affiliated with La Raya have given little monetary support to help rebuild. La Raya struggles to have even the simplest of medical supplies delivered to them, due to confiscation at customs. Fortunately, La Raya has begun a turnaround over the past several years, and now has a new director – Dr. Virgilio Alarcon - who is looking to improve the herds and facility. Our group visited La Raya this January to find out how US camelid veterinarians could help.

One emerging problem is a disease of crias called enterotoxemia, which can cause diarrhea and rapid death. While this disease is fairly well-controlled in the USA by use of vaccines (CD&T), in Peru it is a different story.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The primary goal of this project is help in the control of a devastating disease of llama and alpaca crias. This disease - called enterotoxemia - is produced by a bacteria known as *Clostridium perfringens* type A. This disease kills thousands of crias every year in South America. It may kill up to 70% of crias born during the birthing season, and affects all crias, llama or alpaca. The disease acts so quickly, that any treatment is almost impossible. For this reason, vaccination of the pregnant dams is ideal to prevent the disease in crias. Several trials with local vaccines

*Continued on page 34...*

Posey Thisisit

The Halls

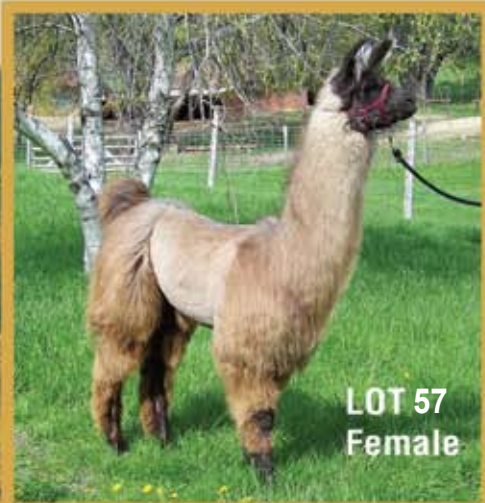
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...Continued from page 32

and even vaccines produced overseas has not produced reliable results. During some years, the vaccine controls the disease and in others it does not. Producing a vaccine is a long-term goal of this project. However, a way to control the disease now is to administer an oral vaccine to newborn crias. This vaccine could be made from plasma of animals that have survived an outbreak. Blood needs to be harvested from hundreds of animals, prepared to obtain the plasma portion, then kept frozen until its usage. Administration of plasma would be by mouth to newborns during the first 6 hours of life to ensure a good absorption across their digestive system. To achieve this, plasma has to be prepared and frozen ahead of time before the birthing season.



*La Raya alpaca herd. La Raya is home to several thousand camelids, including llamas, alpacas, and vicunas.*

For this project, we plan to harvest plasma from llamas and alpacas this November after shearing. The plasma will be frozen until January, when the birthing season begins. A team of two veterinarians (Dr. P. Walter Bravo formerly of U.C. Davis, and Dr. Susan Tornquist of Oregon State University) will begin this project in November. However, equipment is needed to store plasma. In Peru, a laboratory quality freezer and a large refrigerator will be purchased to keep the plasma safe until it is needed. Unfortunately, it is extremely cost prohibitive to have these items shipped from the USA to Peru, and they may not even make it through customs. The La Raya team understands that can be a costly project, but is essential to the survival of the crias, and thus the research herds. A donation of any

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