



Midwest Alpaca Owners & Breeders Association

Newsletter

Fall 2011



If you did not attend Fiber U in Lebanon, Missouri, mark your calendar for 2012. Fiber artists, shepherds, and the public gathered to share their wares, experiences and talents. The format offered the opportunity for any and all to get first hand experience in working with fiber. The two day event is held in July with this year's gathering the second of what looks to become an annual affair. It is a wonderful time of idea sharing and fiber fellowship.



Vendor space was available and reserved far in advance of the event. It was seller room only! And, most of the venue was focused on alpaca fiber.



From knitting to tying fishing lures, attendees enjoyed the fellowship and fun of learning (and bumbling yarn) with their peers. They also had the chance to see and use fiber tools to help make all aspects of fiber arts handier and simpler.

Thanks to Liz Mitchko and all who were instrumental in offering this MOPACA sponsored event.



Streaming MOPACA meetings & seminars to a location close to you!

We are considering "streaming" the MOPACA meetings and seminars to a central location in each state to save on travel expenses and to increase your ability to participate in MOPACA programs. However, we need someone in each state to play host to other members & identify an acceptable meeting room with a good internet connection. This could be a public library, your extension center, the Vet School.

If you are interested, please contact me as soon as possible to help us set this up for our Annual Business Meeting and Winter Genetics Seminar with Dr. Andy Merriwether.

Dale Pessin, dale@pessin.net, or 314-614-7375.

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AT A GLANCE...cont.

MEMBER INFORMATION

Please visit the MOPACA.org

Website for updates on:

- Meeting minutes
- Midwest Alpaca Farm website
- Member benefits
- Show information
- Past newsletters
- Herd Sire Gallery

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

Brian Willsey, *President*

Jim Carr, *Vice President*

Becky Baker, *Secretary*

Dave Binder, *Treasurer*

Don Haus, *Director*

Mary Lickliger, *Director*

Gwen Wolff, *Director*

MIAS 2012

We are gearing up for our 9th annual alpaca show. Sponsorships are now available at all levels. MOPACA members get special discounts for early sign up. To receive best stall layout plus lots of great benefits, sign up as a sponsor!

Spin-off registration is open, and we need your fiber for this competition. Please consider entering – we only need 2 oz. of your fiber!

There is still time to join our show committee – we need someone to be the Volunteer Coordinator. This job does entail a few days on site and some advance preparation, but it is a great way to meet your fellow alpaca owners/breeders and to have lots of fun. We offer 2 stalls, 2 hotel nights and a few other special benefits for the person who volunteers for this position.

Early bird discounts are available if you register and pay early. Go to www.mopaca.org for details and registration information. Watch your emails for show information and announcements. Looking forward to seeing you in Kansas City next March!

Dale Pessin, Event Coordinator; Barn/Facility Manager - Rob Baake; Treasurer/Registrar - Diane Howard; Fleece Gallery Coordinator - DeAnn Baldwin; Sponsor/Vendor Coordinator - Deborah Vassar; Silent Auction Coordinator - Sharon Heimes; Publicity Coordinator - Kim Baake; Show Book Coordinator - Tasha Knoblock; Photo Contest Coordinator - Debbie Hoerl; Meet & Greet – Stacey Hopson; Volunteer Coordinator –this could be you!

Calendar of Events

Oct. 29-30, 2011	Mid America Alpaca Show Topeka, KS
February 4-5, 2012	MOPACA Winter Education Seminar and Annual Business Meeting Columbia, MO
March 24-25, 2012	MOPACA Invitational Alpaca Show Kansas City, MO
July 14-14, 2012	Fiber U Lebanon, MO

**Check the Website for more information
on seminars and events.**

Winter 2012 MOPACA Seminar

The MOPACA Winter Education Seminar and Annual Business meeting will be held in Columbia, MO, on February 4-5, 2012.

Dr. Andy Merriwether will be speaking on alpaca genetics. Andy is a Professor of Anthropology and Biology at Binghamton University in New York. He is also the owner of Nyala Farm Alpacas. Andy has been involved with research to identify genes involved in domestication, including fleece color, fleece character, and inherited diseases of alpacas and llamas. He is also involved in the first complete genome of an alpaca which should be a blueprint and a road map for future studies. Don't let this topic scare you. Andy speaks to all levels of experience to help you understand alpaca genetics.

We will have our annual MOPACA meeting with the election of officers and BOD and lots of time for networking and mixing with our fellow MOPACA members. Watch your emails and the web site for registration information.

The Education Committee:

Catherine Stickann, Dale Pessin, Deborah Vassar, Barb Wilsey

HOT NEWS from Mid America Alpaca Foundation!!!!

The Mid America Alpaca Foundation will offer the University of Illinois an alpaca related externship scholarship. The externship is valued at \$1,000.00 per year for a term of five years, to be funded at a rate of \$1,000.00 per year. With this valuable addition to alpaca owners educational and medical interests, Mid America now hosts scholarships for vets in five states. Existing scholarship programs are in place at Kansas State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas A & M, and the University of Missouri.

KState forms Camelid Medicine Club

Classmate have organized the KSU Camelid Medicine Club at KState CVM. Both local and regional breeders need to take notice that this club has been formed and offers mutual benefit to the university as well as alpaca ranchers. The president and vice president of the organization have provided check-in support for the North American Alpaca Show in Massachusetts. Those in the club offer hope to be a volunteer presence at the Mid America Show this fall.

"We hope to really excite alpaca owners all over the country with the fact that there are many vet students who want to be camelid veterinarians!" said Sara Ku, the medicine club president. "Dr. David Anderson is our faculty advisor, and we're looking for any local farms in KS to allow us to come to their farms and practice some basic skills (injections, nail trims, dental procedures, etc.)"

Sara can be contacted by email, sku@vet.k-state.edu.



FIBER TIME

We need to provide raw fiber, roving, or yarn for the 2012 show's fiber arts section. At this year's show, the demonstrations available by fiber artists were a great hit. The floor traffic that stopped and stayed at this display was great, and many were able to have a hands-on experience with alpaca fiber. Artists included knitters, crochet artists, and spinners.

Each donation will be acknowledged by a letter noting the number of pounds donated with a value of \$2.25 per pound for tax purposes. If you have fiber, it can be delivered to Sara at the October Mid-America show in Topeka. It can also be shipped to

Sara Morris
Hidden Lane Alpacas
10270 SW Hidden Lane
Augusta, KS 67010

ACT NOW



Pumpkin Time Pattern

Pumpkin Body

Wedge (Make 7[8])

Using MC and straight needles, CO 7 sts.

Beg with a RS row, work 5 rows in stockinette st.

Increase Row [WS]: P1, m1, p to last st, m1, p1.

Repeat these 6 rows twice more. 13 sts.

Work 5[17] rows in stockinette st.

Decrease Row [WS]: P1, p2tog, p to last 3 sts, p2tog, p1.

Work 5 rows in stockinette st.

Repeat these 6 rows twice more. 7 sts rem.

BO all sts.

Stem

Using CC and double-point needle, CO 7 sts.

Work 3[4] inches of I-cord.

Distribute sts evenly between 3 double-point needles and place marker, ready to begin working in the round

Next Round: [Kfb] in each st. 14 sts.

K 1 round.

Next Round: [Kfb] in each st. 28 sts.

K 2 rounds.

Next Round: [Kfb] in each st. 56 sts.

K 2 rounds.

BO all sts loosely.

Vine

Using CC and straight needles, CO 28 sts.

[K into front, then back, then front again] of each st. 84 sts.

BO all sts, twist piece into corkscrew.

FINISHING

Sew wedges together along long, shaped edges to form round pumpkin body. Weave in ends on body, stem and vine.

Run yarn through lower edges of each wedge and pull tight to close bottom of pumpkin. Secure yarn and weave in end. Weave in ends on body, stem and vine.

Felt pumpkin body, stem and vine in washing machine using low water/economy setting on hot water wash with a couple pairs of jeans or other heavy garment to provide agitation. Add a small amount of detergent or dishsoap to the pieces. Check every 10 - 15 minutes. Once stitch definition is no longer visible, remove pieces from machine and rinse with cold water.

Stuff pumpkin with plastic bags. Wrap yarn very tightly around pumpkin at seam lines, and knot to secure. Repeat for each seam line. This will cause grooves to form along body of pumpkin during felting. Allow to dry completely.

Remove the plastic bags and scrap yarn tied around seams. Stuff pumpkin.

MELISSA CLEAVINGER JOINS THE GROWING LIST OF FUTURE VETS BENEFITTING FROM SCHOLARSHIPS

Melissa Cleavinger is heading into her third year of veterinary training at Oklahoma State University with a scholarship in hand from the Mid America Alpaca Foundation. She was born and raised in Garland, TX. After graduating from high school she attended Texas A&M University, earning a BS in Biomedical Science and a BS in Animal Science. She also travelled to Germany in a history of veterinary medicine study abroad program before joining the class of 2013 at Oklahoma State University. Melissa admits she still "bleeds maroon" for A&M! After college, she plans to complete a food animal internship before moving back to rural south Texas to work in a mixed-animal practice.



She fell in love with alpacas during her first year at OSU during an alpaca castration wet lab. She served as Wet Lab Coordinator for AASRP during her second year and will serve as Vice President her third year. She also holds officer positions in VBMA and SVECCS, and is a member of many other clubs such as AABP and AAEP. She is also an Operation Main Street speaker for the National Pork Board.

Melissa enjoys spending time with her three dogs. She comes from a huge family and enjoys being home for game nights and pool parties. Her hobbies include reading, watching movies, home improvement projects, wine-tasting, travelling, outdoor activities, and attending veterinary conferences.

NATIONAL ALPACA FARM DAYS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

The Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association is excited to present National Alpaca Farm Days September 24-25, 2011.

We hope you will have the opportunity to invite the public to visit a farm to learn about alpacas and meet people living this satisfying and rewarding lifestyle. Every farm has their unique style of welcoming and educating visitors. You won't want to miss this experience!

We welcome you to take part in the excitement of this special weekend in September! Visit www.nationalalpacafarmdays.com for more information.

Sincerely,

AOBA

Alpaca United is Paving the Way for a North American Fiber Market

Have you heard about Alpaca United (AU)? Well if not (or if you have and you'd like more information), MOPACA member, Liz Vahlkamp, is a member of the interim Board of Alpaca United and is happy to speak with anyone who is interested. The following information will hopefully be an introduction for everyone, and may inspire some MOPACA members to become investors along the way.

Alpaca United was formed in March, 2011, as a result of the Build-A-Tent initiative started by AOBA Board member Claudia Raessler. While Claudia started the initiative with a general vision of promoting alpaca fiber and a temporary loan from AOBA, it was just one week before the Build-A-Tent meeting in November, 2010, that she was fortuitously introduced to Nick Hahn, former CEO of Cotton, Inc. You know the advertisements – “Cotton, the fabric of our lives”? Well, that's Cotton, Inc. and Nick Hahn. As they talked, Claudia began to see the value that Nick, who is now retired from Cotton Inc, could bring to the North American alpaca fiber industry. Nick recognized the opportunity our great fiber offered. From there, the Build-A-Tent initiative took off – 600 alpaca growers strong, Alpaca United was officially formed, AOBA was repaid, the offices moved to Connecticut. Nick is now at the helm!

You might be wondering what AU is really all about. To sum it up, Alpaca United serves as an umbrella organization over all existing alpaca fiber growers and producers with a mission to promote alpaca fiber to a number of different groups and through a number of different initiatives. It does not compete with the cooperatives, private enterprise, or individual farms, nor does it make a stance on cottage industry versus commercial. While Alpaca United is certainly opening doors to the commercial world, the initiatives that AU is pursuing will most definitely benefit all alpaca growers and producers regardless of size or focus. Alpaca United is exactly that — an organization uniting all of our fiber efforts so that we can promote North American alpaca to the world.

In a few short months, we've accomplished quite a bit:

- 1) We started off with a great deal of press. Women's Wear Daily — THE fashion periodical — ran an article on AU and the opportunity for North American alpaca growers to come together. We got press in Textile World and even in the Peruvian textile periodicals.
- 2) We created a logo and began promoting North American alpaca as a luxury fiber – something we all know, but not something the general public knows about, nor something that global textile manufacturers have considered in the past. While North America has never been known as a producer of any luxury fiber, AU's branding efforts are starting to change that thinking. AU is actually starting to get inquiries from around the world for our fiber because of our branding and promotion, and we will soon be passing those leads on to our investors
- 3) We secured a booth at “ITMA” – the largest textile manufacturing trade show in the world. Liz will be traveling to

Barcelona, Spain at the end of September to work the booth, and will certainly report back to MOPACA members. Our mission there is to promote North American alpaca and to let people from around the world know that we are up and coming!

And what is AU planning for the future?

- 1) A Center of Excellence — through Nick's connections, we got an audience with North Carolina State University and are in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding whereby we will have access to all of NCSU's equipment and specific space for research and development of alpaca fiber. NCSU's textile research center is considered one of the finest in the world, and they are allowing us to utilize their facility on an ongoing basis! More details to follow on that.
- 2) A show room and library — this will likely be located in New York City and will offer a place for textile designers to come and see what we're producing in yarns and fabrics. We expect this will take a couple of years to set up, but it is a goal that we are firmly set on.
- 3) An online resource page to begin matching alpaca growers with a whole host of fiber producing options. Some will be options you know about, but others will be new to everyone. We expect that initiative to be up and running within the next four to six months.
- 4) Further trade shows — we've got a number picked out for 2012 and hope to further promote our growers and producers.

And these are just for starters! So, follow along, become an investor, and help our fiber industry move to a whole new level. While we are still working on our website, you can go to www.alpacaunited.com to become an investor.

And the Board members of AU would like to send a special thanks to MOPACA for becoming an investor in this great initiative.

Thank you everyone, and feel free to contact Liz Vahlkamp (314-440-1627, saltriveralpacas@yahoo.com) for further discussion and information.

Submitted by Liz Vahlkamp and AU



MINUTES OF THE 7/9/2011 MOPACA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BOD report

Gwen Wolff distributed copies of the 2011 MOPACA Strategic Plan. Representing the BOD, she fielded questions from those present on the plan, outlining benefits being worked on by the Board and committees. She requested input on the plan. Values of membership were discussed including the best online educational opportunities, Web site presence offered to each farm, and the herd sire gallery.

Mary Lickliger also reported activities of the BOD. She urged all to renew memberships by completing the revised application, which is available online. She urged members to clear mopaca@mopaca.org from spam filters.

A potential new feature was announced that would offer educational seminars to central locations in MOPACA states through Internet streaming webinars. Hosting capabilities would be required to locations providing a gathering space for viewing educational programs.

Mary also announced that the Board would amplify strategies for marketing efforts. Requests for bids were distributed seeking a consultant to develop advertising strategies and media and a second to provide basic design work including a clear graphic identity and corporate colors. Both positions are outlined in a descriptive document that was distributed and will be available to interested consultants.

Rosie Newbery has been named as an interim administrative assistant. She is an atmospheric science major from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Kim Baake will be unavailable for work during an extended leave to assist her family.

Gwen indicated that a national organization of agricultural marketing professionals has been identified to assist in seeking marketing consultants. The Board has also acquired an agricultural journalism contact with the University of Missouri. Data is available from AOBA, too. Brian announced that agriculture-marketing resources offer demographic profiles and trends on those who are moving into agriculture. Gwen added that the profile of alpaca purchasers has changed.

Questions were taken from the floor. Robin Gibson? asked when the advertising for marketing and publicity bids would kick off. Answer: bids will be open right away. Richard Stickann asked if there was a goal measurement system in place for the strategic plan. Answer: the organization will collect data this year, as it is the first strategic plan ever developed for MOPACA.

Treasurer's report

Mary Lickliger indicated that expenses are in line with plans for this year and provided the treasurer's report. A balance of \$14,454.54 is available in cash. The final show report is not in hand, but preliminary numbers indicate that a profit was made. Profitability is needed from the show each year to continue current levels of operation.

Pete Caffrey asked what the MOPACA desk manual (referenced in the strategic plan) was.. Answer: the Board is completing development of an administrative procedures manual. Marta Howe asked if we could fix the problem that caused the resignation of the president on limited notice. Answer: without knowing the reason for the resignation, it is difficult to know what to change. Catherine Stickann interjected the memberships' appreciation of Brian for stepping in to complete the president's term for 2011-12. Brian encouraged all present to read the bylaws on filling the office. Cindy Jasper noted that all should become familiar with the bylaws. Members also voiced concern about getting on the Midwest or MOPACA Web sites. Mary advised that anyone having difficulty should get assistance from mopaca@mopaca.org.

Education committee report

Dale Pessin led this discussion. The education committee is calling for new members. They are planning a winter seminar. Currently Barbara Willsey, Catherine Stickann, and Deborah Vassar serve. A special thanks was offered to Liz Mitchko for the success of Fiber U.

Show committee

Dale Pessin will step into the role of event coordinator for one year. She expressed appreciation for a wonderful manual to assist in the process. A chair is needed for the silent auction, a profitable component of the show. MIAS is planned for March 24-25, 2012.

Publicity report

Beth Brown and Brian are heading up the publicity committee. Advertising continues to be regionalized with the primary focus on Kansas and Missouri. Other states will experience some advertising. The focus is on driving farmers to MOPACA. We are encouraging them to take advantage of the Midwest Alpaca Farms site. AOBA has adopted the same print and Internet strategies. Members' ideas are needed.

Patty Hesselbring asked how many hits are seen on the Midwest Alpaca Farms site. Brian will send out this information on request. Pete indicated that there are approximately 140 visits per month.

Catherine suggested social networking through Facebook. Brian noted that FB is the third largest "country" in the world. The demographics on FB are very similar to MOPACA's. A presence on FB would require a manager for the page. Beth suggested that it could be conceptualized as a blog. She suggested a group site so members could log on for discussion.

Election committee

This year, the treasurer and vice president positions will open as well as one position on the Board. Gwen chairs the nomination committee and needs two volunteers in the short term. In an update to the minutes, Gwen indicated that the nominations should be in place at the end of August. Ballots will be distributed in November.

New business

Pete reported that the University of Illinois is set to open a scholarship. MOPACA has a total of four university-level scholarships. The Foundation works with four states plus Illinois and Texas A&M. The Texas association is fully funding a scholarship.

Brian announced a call for more volunteers and reiterated the need for membership renewal.

Liz announced that Fiber U would be July 14-15, 2012.