

Alpacas on Campus (Q & A with Dr. David Anderson)

By Kim Baake

It's back to school for a lot of kids and young adults, and now alpacas are off to college as well! Alpacas now have a special place in Manhattan, KS, at the Kansas State University. This past winter, a small herd of 12 alpacas were delivered to K-State. I've recently had the opportunity to have a Q&A interview with Dr. Anderson and he was most gracious in providing some time via email for this interview. I hope you find this information helpful to you in knowing that there is help out there in continued education for alpaca owners, and for our vets and their staff.

(continued on page 3 & 4)



Photo courtesy Patrice Scott - K-State © 2007
Featuring MOPACA member Joyce Johnson and her Suri that had the 1st alpaca hip replacement!

Officers & Board of Directors

Cindy Jasper, Director
River Bluff Alpacas
Sonda Caffrey, Director
Honey Creek Farm
Sandy Binder, Director
Mid Missouri Alpacas

Glenn Alpert, President
Alpacas R'Diamonds
Loretta Green, Vice President
Royal Plush Alpaca Ranch
Lisa Ferraro, Secretary
Big River Alpacas
Mary Licklider Treasurer
Curly Eye Alpacas

Welcome New Members!

NEW FARM MEMBERS

Annie Earhart
Alpaca Wings - MO

Ralph & Connie Mueller
RC Mueller Alpacas - IA

Sue & Eric Reimann
Jeff & Trish Wheller
Alpaca Springs Farm - MO

Mike & Carol Richey
Sunrise Meadows Ranch - KS

Deborah Vasser
Mariposa Farm - MO

5th Annual 2008 MOPACA Invitational Update! From Rhonda Butler

MIAS has a new venue for 2008. "Look" for us in Springfield, MO at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds! Show dates will be March 29-30. We are looking forward to a level IV halter show, spin-off competition, fiber art and hand spun skein competition. Our featured seminar this year will be Marty McGee Bennett. She will conduct two half day training sessions, and several short seminars as well as provide individual hands on training throughout the weekend. Primary hotels are the Hawthorn Park and Oasis. Hawthorn Park will host our banquet. Join us in Springfield, MO for a fun filled weekend.

For more show information, log on to: www.mopaca.org

Website Committee News! A NEW and EXCITING MOPACA WEBSITE!!!

MOPACA has updated its website and has now been launched! At www.mopaca.org, you will find many new features as well as ease in navigation. The look has a nice professional appearance and is a representation of all of the Midwest area. The MOPACA Invitational Show information is easier to locate and the Show page has ease of finding those needed registration forms. There is also the new Herdsire Gallery, which features member's herdsires for hire. This page allows you to find a quality herdsire listed in the color that you are looking for. This is a benefit for MOPACA members and allows 2 entries per farm member. This page will be updated periodically, and the next submission will be in December. Check it out. We're sure you'll enjoy the site and remember...the MOPACA website is YOUR Website and we are working towards making it bigger and better for you each year. Thanks! The Website Committee; Kim Baake, Ann Mayes, Bev Rasmussen, and Mary Licklider.

Letter from the President



Hello fellow MOPACA members,

I hope you all made it through the extreme weather we have been having this year. Please remember those who have been disrupted and have incurred losses from these extremes in climate.

A big thanks to the Education Committee and others involved in organizing the great fiber seminar in July. We had over fifty people attend and learned a whole new view of the preparation of fiber for market. We were given more options to use all grades of fiber and the value of sorting and grading. We also discovered how much more we need to learn to make a better finished product. Dale Pessin is now the Education Committee Chairperson and is working on some interesting topics for our February and summer seminars.

MOPACA's current projects are the new web page and our MIAS show March 29 and 30, 2008, in Springfield, MO. Rhonda Butler is the Event Coordinator. To get involved by volunteering is the best way to meet new people, get your name out, and learn about alpacas. Check with Rhonda to see how you might be able to help.

The Affiliate Congress, representatives from each affiliate, met face to face with the AOBA BOD in Nashville, in July. Both Gwen Wolff and I attended this meeting. Teams were formed to work on the top issues facing the industry. We received updates on the planning of National Alpaca Day, the Fiber to Fashion Conference in January, improving the National Show in Salt Lake City and the kick off to the Year of Natural Fiber in 2009. The Marketing Committee is currently planning for a float in the 2009 Rose Bowl Parade. Visit www.mopaca.org for Gwen's full report on the Affiliate Congress meeting.

Don't forget the December 1st MOPACA meeting in Columbia. Sonda Caffrey will be the head of the Nominating Committee for MOPACA 2008 officers. Each year, one board member and all officers are elected. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Sonda.

Thanks to all of the volunteers that keep MOPACA an organization I am proud to be a part of.

Glen Alpert – Alpacas R'Diamonds

MOPACA President 2007

Area Events 2007

For Details of each event, visit www.mopaca.org or contact each event coordinator.

Aug. 3-5 – Camelid Community 2007 – Kansas City, MO. Contact Sheila Fugina at bsfugina@presenter.com

Sept. 8 – All Hands in the Making of an Afghan – Paola, KS. Call Kathleen Wedel at 913-783-4589

Sept. 15 – Open House at Alpaca Wings Ranch. – Centerview, MO. Visit www.alpacawings.com

Sept. 15 – Nagy (Weaver) MU Vet School, and Don Day Univ. of MO Extension Office – Education Programs – Rocheport, MO. Call Sycamore Creek Farm at 573-815-9500

Sept. 29-30 – National Alpaca Day. Many MOPACA members are registered and planning a farm event this weekend. Visit www.nationalalpacafarmday.com

Oct. 6 - Alpaca & Fiber Fair of West Central Missouri, and Alpaca Care & Fiber Arts Workshops Warrensburg, MO www.alpacaandfiberfair.com

Oct. 20 – Herd Management for Success Visit www.kansasalpacacompany.com

Oct. 26-28 – 4th Annual Mid America Alpaca Show Topeka, KS. www.midamerica-alpacashow.com

Dec. 1st – Quarterly MOPACA Meeting – Columbia, MO. www.mopaca.org Calendar of events for further details.

MOPACA Member's Tips and Hints: By Member, Sandy Binder

With all the warm weather that we have been having I have been putting out extra water buckets in addition to our automatic waterers. As you know the buckets do get tipped over and often need to be fastened to "something". I had some tires stacked up in our alpaca barn from an obstacle course that I was using earlier. I thought why not use the tires to contain the water buckets. It really works great and no dumped buckets!

For the **Affiliate Congress Update to MOPACA Members Report** please visit the MOPACA news page on the website at www.mopaca.org

Does MOPACA need to advertise?

By Pete Caffrey, Marketing Committee

The simple fact is, it's not mandatory that MOPACA market itself. Now these are not the words you would expect from a guy on the marketing committee. So let's look at reasons why it's a good idea that we do advertise.

At the time of this writing MOPACA was one hundred and five members strong. Take an average of ten alpacas per farm; times the average selling price per alpaca, you are looking at assets worth millions. In fact, I believe ten animals per member is an extremely low guess. We as a group are a major supplier of alpacas to the industry and offer a large selection of buying options of quality animals.

Having said we are a great place to buy alpacas and to find herdsires doesn't help until the buyers become aware that we exist. The buying public has more choices today than ever before as to where they can buy alpacas and find good herdsires. Other affiliates are starting to advertise with more frequency and we need to be in the game. Magazines like American Livestock and Alpacas Magazine are now available at Tractor Supply Store as well as several national chain bookstores.....a great source for new buyers to discover MOPACA.

All of our advertising messages enforce the strength of our members, the quality of our product

and our commitment to buyer support. The advertising message asks the buyer to visit our website. Once there, all MOPACA members have an equal chance. Advertising MOPACA means that perhaps a potential buyer will look at us first before making a buying decision.

This year MOPACA will provide over sixty thousand reader images through its print advertising. Think about sending one letter and a forty-one cent stamp to each of these same people...the cost would be huge. We will reach the same audience for less than thirty dollars per member farm per year, which comes out of your dues.

The tri-fold brochures featuring **Look To MOPACA** with our strengths highlighted on each panel will be released in early fall. We will use graphics developed by Ronda Butler. These brochures will be no charge to members, they can be used as self contained mailers or hand outs. Details on ordering will be released when this product is ready to ship.

The remainder of 2007 and all of 2008 print advertising has been formulated and reserved. Look for MOPACA advertising in the upcoming issues of Alpacas Magazine and American Livestock Magazine. Both publications are now available at Tractor Supply stores. Our advertising is designed to take the reader to www.MOPACA.org!

(Q&A Interview with Dr. Anderson – continued)

INTERVIEW:

Hello Dr. Anderson, my name is Kim Baake and I'm the editor of the MOPACA Newsletter. I would like to feature a Q & A interview of you, regarding the Mid America Alpaca Foundation and the camelid program at K-State. Our members would benefit a great deal, hearing from you as to the purpose and goals of the foundation and your program. If you would please, may I have a few moments of your time?

Q. Dr. Anderson, K-State University has acquired a small herd of alpacas recently. How did this come to be?

A. *The Mid-America Alpaca Foundation, (MAAF) met with me when I returned to KSU in May of 2006 to seek out collaboration for alpacas education and health. We determined that a teaching herd on-site was a priority "first step". Through the marvelous efforts of Bob Sines, Lynn Wedel, and Pete Caffrey the "Alpacas On Campus" campaign was formed. This achieved successful funding from MAAF in the fall of 2006 and the teaching herd was in place in the Winter of 2007 with the generous donations of 6 females by Steve, Roseann, Tasha &*

Shana Knoblock, and 2 males by Mike and Janet Wilkins.

Q. What is the purpose of this herd at K-State?

A. *The goal of this project is to establish a teaching herd of alpacas at K-State, College of Veterinary Medicine, to promote the health and well-being of alpacas by increasing the knowledge, comfort, and competence of practicing veterinarians. Veterinary students receive extensive didactic education in anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, medicine, surgery, preventive medicine, animal management, and reproduction. However, their hands-on learning experiences with livestock are limited. This is particularly true of non-traditional livestock. Llamas and Alpacas are commonly encountered non-traditional livestock species, but veterinary students have little to no experience working with these animals prior to graduation because animals are not readily available to them. The animals maintained in this teaching herd will provide learning opportunities for the students prior to their year of clinical training. These animals also will be used to provide continuing education programs for practicing veterinarians.*

Q. Are your students receptive to learning about camelids, as well, recognize them to be livestock and not as an "exotic" species?

A. *Yes. The veterinary students are very excited about having the alpacas here. We get many volunteers for activities and every single student that comes through the senior year gets to work with them. We have had some students say that they want to come to K-State vet school specifically because we have a knowledgeable program to teach the care of camelids.*

Q. Will this program provide continuing education for vets, and if so, will this be on a nationwide level, or just in the local/regional area?

A. *Yes. In fact we had our first CE conference for vets on August 10, 2007. As a part of this course, the vets were given an opportunity for hands-on work in which we demonstrated many daily procedures to be done in practice including ultrasound. This course was open to any veterinarian from anywhere. Also, if vets are having trouble talking to their clients, certainly we are here to help. We always have Q&A sessions at all CE conference and at any event/show we attend. There will be several Q&A opportunities at the October Mid-America Alpaca Show for people to interact with KSU vets.*

Q. Where do you plan to focus your teachings in regards to research efforts on camelids?

A. *At this time, we are focused on teaching and education of veterinary students, veterinarians, breeders, owners, and anyone interested in the care and well being of camelids. Research has become very expensive and competitive. What I am most interested in right now is validation of therapies commonly used in practice. At this time, there is not a single treatment or nutritional recommendation that has been validated (e.g. shown to be true) for alpacas. The main reason for this is that validation studies are much more expensive than typical research. A validation program would require a minimum of \$750,000 to get the right scientists to begin work. The research that is currently funded through various industry mechanisms is critical to the advancement of knowledge. Unfortunately, these same studies cannot and will not answer the question of what treatment is most appropriate in a clinical case, what will benefit a sick alpaca the most, etc. At this time, the state-of-the-art knowledge is, "I did this and they got better, so I assume it will work for you." Federal dollars are extremely unlikely to ever be made available for this purpose because few to none of veterinary therapies have been validated for horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, cats,*

etc. Until a philanthropist takes this program on as a personal passion for funding, it is unlikely to occur for alpacas. We are ready when that person is ready!

Q. How is funding provided to support this herd of alpacas and this program?

A. *This teaching herd is funded by the Mid-America Alpaca Foundation. The future of the herd is entirely dependent on external funding, so the role of the MAAF is crucial to its continued success. Donations are accepted and people can contact the MAAF to explore a variety of giving opportunities, or Patrice Scott at KSU for monetary gifts. As well, MAAF has been extremely pleased with the open support they have received from MOPACA. I have had many very rewarding experiences with MOPACA and have deep respect for its members and mission. At this time, approximately 20% of our alpaca case load at the VMTH at KSU comes from Missouri. This shows too direct benefit to membership of having the camelid program at K-State.*

Q. Any final comments about the program, or MOPACA?

A. *Funding, personnel, and resources do not allow every veterinary school to have an extensive alpaca program. Thus, selected programs have developed over the years: Oregon State, Colorado State, Ohio State, Auburn University, Washington State and recently Tufts, Pennsylvania, Purdue, Cornell, etc. When I moved back to KSU in May of 2006, I opened our doors to camelids - welcoming them with open arms much as I did at Ohio State. The success or failure of this program is completely dependent on the mutual relationship we develop. This is an equal partnership between you, your veterinarian, and us. You give us your support and we will reciprocate to the fullest extent possible. I enjoyed a wonderful relationship with so many people at Ohio State - many of which are MOPACA members. Now I am located to your West instead of your East. Horace Greely said, "Go West young man" and here I stand today. If you need us, we are here.*

Thank you Dr. Anderson for your valuable time!

For more information visit:
Kansas State Veterinary's website:
<http://www.vet.ksu.edu/depts/VMTH/index.htm>
Mid America Alpaca Foundation:
www.midamalpacafoundation.com

MOPACA is a supporter of the Mid America Foundation with portion of its proceeds from the show's silent auction donated to the foundation.

News From the Education Committee

By Dale Pessin

Save the date of February 23-24, 2008 and plan to learn all about alpaca genetics, especially color genetics from Dr. Andy Merriwether. Dr. Andy Merriwether and his wife Dr. Ann M. Merriwether, a developmental psychologist, have approximately 30 alpacas at Nyala Farm Alpacas in Vestal, New York. Andy is an associate professor of anthropology at Binghamton University. He has a BA in Medical Anthropology and a BS in Biology, and MS in Genetics, and a Ph.D. in Human Genetics. His research has involved studying the ancient DNA from archeological skeletal remains including alpacas mummified by the Incas prior to the Spanish invasions.

The Drs. Merriwether have combined their expertise in an article published by Alpacas magazine in 2003 titled 'Alpaca Color Genetics', and Andy has continued to do genetic research into both medical and color of alpacas. Many of you may be familiar with Andy from Yahoo's Alpacasite Group. He often participates in genetic discussions and has a down to earth approach so any of us can understand what he is describing.

This is a seminar not to be missed for all of us interested in improving our breeding programs!

Once again, the date is February 23-24, 2008 and we will meet in St. Louis, Missouri. Watch our website for further details!

We also have a very exciting surprise for our summer seminar. The details are not yet confirmed, but at this time we can suggest you **save the week of August 10th through 16th of 2008**. As soon as we have the exact date, we will notify you of the specific dates. This is another **NOT TO BE MISSED** seminar, so watch for further details and make your summer plans accordingly.

Our education committee is working diligently to provide comprehensive seminars that fill your needs. Several of you have made wonderful suggestions for programs. Please contact Gwen Wolff, Rob Long, Macel Koerth, or me with any of your suggestions and comments on content, location, dates, etc. Thanks!

If you have a story about your experiences that you would like to share, please send to the newsletter editor, Kim Baake at newfenwick@earthlink.net
Please know that due to file size, space on the newsletter, or nature of your story, that not every story may get published. All submissions for newsletter and website are subject to edit and approval.