

LLAMA
4-H
Youth Project Manual

1998

PROJECT PURPOSE And GUIDELINES

This project is designed to provide the 4-H member the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of llamas, while developing their leadership, sportsmanship and showmanship skills. The guidelines will cover the events, which are most widely used in Washington State. These guidelines will prepare the 4-H member to participate in any county or WA State 4-H event.

PURPOSES

- Learn some history about llamas
- Pasture requirements of llamas
- Develop an understanding of animal care and management
- Develop knowledge, initiative, sportsmanship and responsibility
- To maintain good record keeping habits
- Learn about different uses for llamas
- Gain a knowledge of training skills
- Learn about tack and its care
- Gain greater speaking ability to express your ideas to other 4-Hers, judges and the public
- Experience the joy of having, caring for, exhibiting your llama at home, shows and fairs

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. Have visited with different 4-H members who have llamas, so you can learn if this is a project you feel that you can do, knowing the llama is a social animal and needs the company of other llamas, sheep or other animals.
2. You may have decided to buy a llama, but some 4-Hers don't have the place for an animal so they lease their llamas. This is alright when the 4-Her is responsible for the care of the llama, and has made arrangements with the owner of the llama to that understanding.
3. You will need some tack for your llama. A llama halter that fits, lead rope and grooming tools.
4. The activities you want to do with a llama will also determine how old the llama has to be. If you are going to be packing, you will want an older llama. Check with your leader or other 4-Her who knows about the physical limitations and requirements of llamas. Never buy a llama that has not been weaned. It is strongly advised not to buy a bottle fed llama.

5. You will need to know about fiber weights to llamas. The heavy fibered animals will have to be sheared in the summer if you are going to pack. If you are buying a llama for fiber, a light woolled animal is not a good choice. Again check with your leader before buying a llama.
6. Keep records of all expenses, health records, training sessions, meetings and events that you do.

A well trained and cared for llama will not only be a source of pride for the 4-H member but a trusted friend who will share many 4-H years and events with the member. Participation in events should be based not only on the age and skill of the 4-H member but also on the safety of the event to the member and animal.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

1. Join a 4-H club
2. Read and study other materials about llamas and their care
3. Plan your project activities as you learn
 - Keep training sessions short for each activity, this will not stress you or your llama
 - What events and shows you enter, work at your skill level
 - Be a good leader and good sport
 - Work on your record book each week
4. Participate in as many shows and events as you can, the more you work with your llama the greater your skill levels will become. The more your llama trusts you the more he or she will do.
5. Never feel shy about asking questions of leaders, breeders and other 4-Hers, remember there are no dumb questions! The more you learn the better you are prepared for talks, speeches, writing and great leadership.

4-H RECORD BOOK

Keep good records of all your expenses and activities. It is easier to work in your record book each week, than to try and finish one at the end of the 4-H year. A good record book shows others what you have been learning and that your goals are achievable. Some counties and or fairs require a record book as part of the enter process. Your project pin is based on completing a record book. When you apply for grants or scholarships, your permanent record book might also be a requirement. Those who do record books turn them in each year to be judged against others, the ribbon is nice but when you get recognized for you initiative, the smile seems to be bigger.

LLAMA HISTORY

Where did they come from?

The original camelids came from the central part of North America, about where Nebraska is today. There have been no camelids in North America for more than 12,000 years. Some of the early camelids migrated south into South America. From those early ancestors of the past, we have today the 4 cousins of camelids known as *Vicuna*, *Guanaco*, *Alpaca* and *Llama* (Fig. 1). Vicunas and Guanaco are both wild and have been on and off the endangered species list. The Vicuna is the smallest of the camelids, while the Guanaco is about the same size as a Llama. In South America the Llama and Alpacas have been domesticated for over 4,000 years.

Other early camelids migrated to Asia and the Middle East as far south as the Sahara Desert. Today we know them as camels. The Asian camel has 2 humps and is called a *Bactrian* camel. The Middle Eastern camel has 1 hump and is called a *Dromedary* camel. The Dromedary camel is also known as the "Ship of the Desert". They have been used for thousands of years to carry freight across the Sahara Desert.

In South America today the Llama is used for packing, fiber for clothing, meat and its dung is used for fuel. The Alpaca is raised mainly for fiber production and it is also a fuel source, with its dung. Llamas live in Bolivia, Peru and Chile. They live at heights of 14,000 ft to the lower elevations. They are browsers and much of what they eat is considered scrub plants. The peoples of South America do not brand their llamas as we might, but they use tassels of different colors to identify their herds.

What is their appearance

Llamas come in many different sizes, but they look similar. The weight of llamas runs from 250 to 425 lbs. They stand from 36" to 48" at the shoulder and from 5' to 6 ½' at the top of the head. They have many different color patterns to their coats. Their fiber weights range from light wool, medium wool to a heavy wool. The heavy wool llamas look like something out of the movies, for their fiber hangs to the ground, (Fig. 1a). They have 2 different kinds of fiber on them. The outer longer layer of fiber is coarse and called guard hair. It collects much of the debris that llamas seem to pick up while acting like a cooling system. The under fiber is shorter and softer, which keeps them warm while also providing the finer fiber needed for spinning clothing. Llamas and Alpacas as do all the of the camelids have a prehensile upper lip. This lip acts like an extra small hand in that it grasps plants, grass, leaves and other things. They have one row of bottom teeth like other ruminants. Llamas develop fighting teeth as they mature, 4 teeth on the top and 2 teeth on the bottom. Females will also grow fighting teeth though shorter than the ones found in males. All camelids have a cloven foot or split foot, with a soft pad under each toe with a toenail. This padded foot makes them more sure-footed, on rough terrain.

Fig. 1

Fig. 1a

ANIMAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Housing Needs

Llamas like all living things want to be warm in winter and cool in summer. They need a clean area to lay down, clean water and good hay. Simple care can make your animal healthy and happy. You should have a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of pasture for each llama, when you do not supplement with feeding. Your llama needs at least a 3 sided loafing shed tall enough for it not to hit its head when entering or leaving, and large enough so that it can turn around or lay down.

Llamas are very clean animals when it comes to waste. They will find a spot in their pasture, which they use to relieve themselves. This makes for easier cleanup of the pasture, this also helps with fly control. If your llamas are confined in a barn, they will find a spot in it to use as a waste point, this must be cleaned daily. Not just because it smells bad, it is unhealthy for your animals. Fencing is just as important as feed when it comes to animals. For llamas a good field fence is best, barbed wire is the worst choice to make. Your llama can easily get its fiber caught on the barbs, which he will fight pulling out fiber. Make sure your pasture is free from debris; nails, glass, metal or whatever can cause an injury.

Picture of simple housing and fencing

Feeding, watering area and diet

Where and how you feed your llama is very important. You don't want to ground feed and you don't want your llama having to pull his feed down. Feeding on the ground will increase the chances of your animal picking up something, which will make him sick. A large tub where you can place his feed is a better choice. Having a feeder placed high on a wall makes your llama pull hay down increasing the chance that something will get into his nose and airway. The best height for a feeder is about 2' off the ground, feed stays clean and it's a natural position for eating. You like your llama like clean water, place the water tank a few feet away from his feeding area, it helps keep food from falling into the water. Check the water each day to see that it is clean, in the winter you might have to haul warm water, for llamas like you don't like ice cold water. What you feed your llama is very important to his health. A good quality grass hay is best, alfalfa can be a little too high in protein. Sometimes a feed supplement will have to be given. It is best to check with your leader or a llama rancher to see what is best in your area. Llamas will eat from 1% to 2% of their body weight each day. A bale of grass hay will last the average llama about 1 week. Your llamas water needs will be determined by the weather. They drink more in summer than winter, but it is important that in winter they drink enough water each day so that they don't get colic. Llamas will drink from 2 to 5 gallons of water a day.

Do you need to provide salt or mineral blocks to your llama? Do you need to feed a supplement or other dietary additive? Because the ground is so different in each area of the country, some things may be lacking in pasture grasses while there may be too much of something in other areas. The best thing to do is ask your county agricultural extension agent or veterinarian, they have more knowledge of the feed conditions in your area and can help you provide the proper diet to your llama. Your hay is important to your llama, feed the best quality that you can, sometimes hay gathers mold, never feed your animals moldy hay. If you have questions about hay sources ask your leader or a llama rancher, they can help you learn about buying hay. Remember that llamas are much like you, when you change their food source or type it can upset their digestive systems.

Health and Care

Your llama will live between 15 and 29 years maybe older given proper care. You will want to be sure our llama is current on all of the necessary vaccinations. Each area of the country may have some different vaccinations your llama will need but the most important of all is Clostridium C and D, and Tetanus. These vaccinations guard against certain bacterial diseases, which can make a llama very sick or even kill it. Llamas by their nature are stoic, which is to say they don't show signs of being sick. Some llamas have been so good at it, their owners didn't know anything was wrong until the animal died. You are your llamas eyes and ears to his health. Each day check your animal to see if it is acting a little different than normal. As the seasons change so will the way your llama behaves, keep that in mind as you care for your animal.

EXTERNAL BUGS

Llamas have long thick fiber into which little critters move into and live. Some of their little friends, *External Parasites* can be fleas, lice and or ticks. There are some different powders you can get from the veterinarian or feed store to rid your llama of these uninvited guests. The lice will be the hardest to see on llamas with white or light coats, but on dark fibers the lice eggs can be seen attached to the individual hair, as little white grains. Sometimes llamas get skin problems as allergies, dry scaly skin or they might get mange. It is best to have your veterinarian look at your llama and set the course of treatment. As you work with the llama project in time you will learn how to care for different skin problems.

INTERNAL BUGS

Another place your llama will gain unwanted friends is on the inside. *Internal Parasites*, such as the one-celled coccidia or worms can be gotten rid of by one of the dewormers on the market. This again is a place where your veterinarian plays an important part in the care given to your llama. The signs that your llama may have internal parasites can be found in the droppings, or the way your llama behaves. Animals with worms can be listless more sickly than normal or they may just be losing weight. You should have a regular worming program, it may be every six months or more often. If you have more than 1 llama, you should deworm all of them at the same time. Keep their feed off the ground and be sure to clean up all the droppings this helps prevent reinfestation. If you live in an area where white tail deer live, an injectable dewormer against the meningeal worm is recommended. The greater the number of llamas you have or the smaller the space where they live, deworming should be done more often.

FEET

The foot of a llama is cloven or split, there are 2 padded toes each ending with a toe nail. The soft pad makes the llama an ideal pack animal, as he is very sure-footed. In areas where the terrain is very fragile the impact on the ground by the llama is minimal. For your llama to benefit both himself and you the feet need to be cared for regularly. Llama toenails are always growing, and unless the llama is special or walks on a hard surface, his toenails have to be trimmed (Fig. 3). There are a number of different toenail cutters on the market, each person has their preference. As you will learn, each animal, is touchy about having their feet worked with. When you work to desensitize, your llama, pay special attention to his legs and feet. The more he allows you to touch his legs and feet the easier it will be at toenail trimming time. If you have never done this, it is best to have help from your leader, other 4-Hers who have or the llama rancher to acquired your llama from. The pictures below will show you how and where to cut. Being very careful not to cut the quick, it bleeds easily and is painful when injured.

Fig. 3 Normal foot and toenail

Toenails needing to be trimmed

LLAMA TEETH

Llamas like other ruminants have only bottom teeth. Their first set of teeth, are baby teeth, which fall out on by themselves. When your llama is about 2 years old his permanent teeth will start to appear. At about this same time his or her fighting teeth will start growing. They have 4 fighting teeth on top and 2 on the bottom. The fighting teeth will have to be cut off, for they can do a lot of damage to other llamas if left in and they are fighting. This is a time when you might want to call the veterinarian in, for this can be a difficult job for those having not done it before. The fighting teeth can continue to grow after being cut, but they should not get as long. Dental care in all animals is essential, bad teeth can cause your llama to lose weight and his temperament to change. Llama fighting teeth location and how they are removed (Fig. 4). Removal of fighting teeth is usually done with a wire surgical saw. This procedure requires at least 2 people.

LLAMA EYES

Llamas have large soft eyes, that seem to look at you with questions. The eyes of a llama are a little smaller in size than those found in cows and horses. Because the llama head is smaller than those of horses and cows the eyes seem to be extra large. The llama has a 3rd eyelid, which they use to wipe debris off their eyes. Because of the seemingly large size of the eye, llamas seem to have more eye injuries than other animals. These injuries can be caused from fighting, twigs or any of a number of other things. Keep your eye, on their eyes for injuries or some type of inflammation. All eye problems should be looked at by your veterinarian.

LLAMA ATTITUDES

Llamas are like people; they have different attitudes and/or temperaments. You have friends that all different, from being shy, to very outgoing, with everything in the middle. Llamas are the same way, some are quiet, shy or outgoing. Others are very jumpy, don't like being touched or anything in the middle. If you are buying a younger animal and wonder how he will be when mature, look to the mother, father and any mature siblings living with him/her to see how they might turn out when mature.

LLAMA COMMUNICATIONS AND TEMPERMENT

Llamas seem to be always talking to themselves other llamas and animals, and of course us. Their communication is done with physical movements' and voice sounds. The first thing many people think is that llamas and camels spend all of their time spitting at each other or people. Llamas spit at llamas as a way of telling each other to "get lost". If they are real unhappy about getting a vaccination they will find you the target of some spit. Females spit at each other as their main tool of telling each other who is boss. They spit at each other over food, places to lay down, the top of the hill and any of a number of issues. When you use a paste worm medication on llamas, you will get to see and maybe wear spit. It comes off with soap and water, the smell is the most unpleasant part of it. Spitting is one way of communications with llamas but it is what they are known for. Llamas talk with each other by humming, clucking and screaming. When you take a llama out of his secure area, leaving his friends, he will become nervous and will begin to hum. As you work with your llama you will notice a difference in the pitch of the hum, each pitch relates to his feelings as to what is happening. The clucking sound a llama makes seems to be a way of saying "don't forget I am higher on the pecking order than you", this is just a warning. Screaming may occur during fights, or when an different animal intruder that represents a danger is present. Llamas in a group as with any other animals develop a "pecking order". The pecking order is the social structure of animals; there is somebody at the bottom and somebody at the top. Once a pecking order has been established the llamas will stay in their place. As your llama grows and matures he may begin to try and change his position within the order. If a male is *gelded* at a young age his interest will be food and places to lay down. You can observe the behaviors of llamas when they are in a group. Young animals will approach older llamas with their tails over their back and their head and neck down. This is to say to older llamas, "I am not a threat to you don't hurt me". Llamas as they grow, do a lot of neck wrestling, slamming into and jumping onto each other to establish the pecking order. You do not want to become a llama to a llama, because he will try to become dominate over you, and this is very dangerous to you.

That is one reason you do not want to have just one llama and no other animals, they need animals to be social with.

When male llamas have been bottle fed and have not been around other llamas a condition known as “Berserk Male Syndrome” can occur. This animal becomes very dangerous and in most cases needs to be put down. A similar condition can occur with female llamas, where they treat you as a lower social class llama. The llama pre spitting position (Fig. 5)

Figure 5

LLAMA CORRECTNESS/CONFORMATION

When you buy or lease a llama you want to be sure that he/she is put together correctly. Are all the pieces the right size and in the right place? Does the llama have good bones structure, all the things that help keep your llama healthy and able to do what the two of you want to do? A llama with small weak legs is not going to work well as a pack animal or give you years of trail obstacle courses. When you have found a llama that you like and are not sure about his structure, ask your veterinarian to check him/her over. In fact you should have the animal vet checked before buying anyway, it makes good sense to be safe than to be sorry. When you have found an animal that you like and it is structurally correct, the chances are the llama will have good conformation. Conformation means that the parts are all proportionate dimensions, especially to an animal. Another way of say this is to say, the legs aren't to long or short for the body. The neck and head are the right length and size to the rest of the animal. All the pieces fit and look like they belong together. See (Fig. 6) llama picture. Things to look for in conformation.

Views of Normal Leg Configuration

Views of Abnormal Configuration

POINTS to REMEMBER

- What is my llama going to be used for? Knowing this will help you get the right llama.
- If I want to do packing with my llama! You need to find an older mature llama for packing now
- I am doing public relations with my llama. A llama 6 months old that you can develop for PR
- I want to do trail obstacle. The llama should do obstacles that are fit for his age and physical well being.
- The fiber weight of my llama fits my requirements, light-wool for packing, heavy-wool for spinning.

ITS TIME TO BUY A LLAMA

Looking at llamas is an adventure, especially if there are a lot of llama ranches where you live. You see big ones, small ones, light-wool, heavy-wool, young, mature, fearful, friendly and a million different color combinations. You have talked with your leader, your parents and other 4-H members who have llamas. You know how much money you have and what you need to do to buy or lease. Many llama ranchers will let you buy on time, everything is set, but which one do you buy? You will buy the one you like, he/she might not have the best conformation, you might even forget all the points to remember, yet you will have made the decision. It is your project and if you buy one that doesn't fit the area of your project, have no fear, you and your llama will figure out what it is you two do best. Some llama ranchers will want to check out the place where their llama will be going. Many do this to be sure you have the space and are set up for a llama. However you should not take offense to this. The rancher wants to protect both the llama and you. It is recommended that when you take your new llama home, you keep him in a smaller pasture area, where you can sit with him a few hours every day for a week. If you do this, he has a chance to get use, to his new surroundings along with becoming familiar with you and your smell, which builds the bond between you.

TACK YOU WILL NEED

There is not a lot of tack you will need for a llama, but what you get has to be right. A lead rope with a snap clip, llama halter, toenail cutters, brushes and combs. As you go along you might buy a blower, but that is a special choice. The lead rope of choice by many people is a flat web type with a snap clip on one end 10ft long. It is not as heavy as the round rope type. A llama halter is what you have to buy, and sized to fit your llamas' age: weanling, yearling or adult. The halter is cut different for over the nose. An improper fitting halter will slide down and off the bridge of the nose cutting off the llamas airway. Llamas as you, do not like the feeling of having no air. As with any animal you do not want to leave a halter on your animal all the time. It will begin to rub the hair off of the top of the nose bridge. When you have a raw spot there the llama is not going to be willing to be worked with, for he has pain. The llama halter (Fig. 7) comes, either with adjustable bands or is pre-sized. Just remember to get the right size for your llama and don't use the halters made for a different animal. The type of toenail cutters to buy is personal preference for many people, your leader or a rancher can help you out in this area.

LLAMA TRAINING

Llama training as with any training of an animal is greatly rewarding, because of the disposition of the llama, you may feel this even more. Llamas are naturally cautious about their surroundings and what is in it. They approach each new item or unknown activity with reservations. Remember that llamas as with all browsers have a basic instinct: to flee. On the food chain they are the “prey”. Keeping the natural instincts of the llama in mind, if strange things are introduced to them slowly they learn to ignore it and move on to the next activity, without wanting to bolt. All individuals, both adults and youth, 4-Her and non 4-Her, and those with and without disabilities have found llamas give them a great feeling of independence. Llamas like to see and do new things, and they are very intelligent, and because of that they get bored easily.

Halter Broken

When you buy or lease your llama it should be halter broken and able to be lead around. If the llama is not halter broken, it is recommended that the person you are buying the llama from, halter break your llama!!! Because llamas are intelligent and have a way of remembering things, the halter breaking process even though not harmful is stressful. Some llamas will remember and be leery of the person who halter broke them. If you were to halter break your llama and his disposition was to remember that event, it will be harder for you to have him trust you or be willing to work with you.

Training Times

Working with your llama everyday is what you might want to do, yet weather conditions can make that difficult. If you are living in a part of the state where the temperature goes below freezing, then keeping your llama warm is more important than training, unless you have a heated arena. Young llamas when outside in freezing weather will get frost bitten ears. And if the ground has ice on it they, like you, can slip and fall. If you live where it gets very hot, the morning hours are best for training times. Llamas with heavy wool should be shorn so that they can be cooler. Leave a couple of inches of fiber so they don't get sunburned and that they have a little something for winter. If the temperature gets real high you might not want to work with your llama unless it's in the morning. Sprinklers in the llamas pasture helps them stay cool, they will walk over it or stand over it to cool their stomachs, legs and chest. You must watch your llama for heat stress, for if their body temperature goes beyond 104-105 degrees they may collapse and die.

Now that you know to be careful when you work with your llama how much time do you spend training? Llamas, being intelligent get bored easily so plan ahead. If you are working on 3 or 4 points of training limit each piece to about 15 minutes. If you will be working with your llama for an hour and he will remain interested in his new adventure. It takes about 12 sessions for a llama to learn what it is you want him to learn. So working with him each day and covering new things, before long his trust in you will grow and you will have a llama doing things for you. Should your llama have had no training other than for the halter, you will need to work with him in a small area with a 12'x12' stall or pen. You don't want to find yourself running all over a large pasture trying to catch your llama. This activity not only becomes a frustration for you, but your llama is learning a bad habit, running keeps him from being caught and having that thing put on his face. You hopefully want your llama to stand still for you when you call out his name, this can happen when working in a small area. Be sure other animals are out of the training area, for they cause more stress to what is a stressful situation for your llama. (Fig. 8) shows how to set up a training area for your llama, it is only one of many ways.

Figure 8 Training Area

Teaching Llama to Stand

If you have set up a training area with a pen in a small pasture, you will want to work with your llama in the pen. If he has never been in the enclosure before, once you have him in let him get used to it. Your llama needs to be reassured that this place is not going to hurt him or that it isn't a place to be afraid of. If you are in the pen with him speak in a smooth calm voice. Llamas learn that the different pitches in sound can mean different things. Talk with him, saying his name as you walk around slowly, he might just stand there or he might jump all around. Once he has become used to the idea that you aren't going to grab him and do something terrible he should relax. Llamas tell you when they are very nervous, you see it under their eyes. There is a muscle about $\frac{3}{4}$ " under the eyes that will tighten up when the llama is upset, this muscle pulls the lower eye lid down, sometimes exposing the pink underside of the eye lid. Other times you just see a raised line under the eye. Figure 9

Eye as it looks under stress, muscle and eye lid.

When your llama has become as relaxed as possible speak his name and say "stand" and begin to walk up to him. As you get closer to him keep repeating his name and stand. If he runs to another area, start over again, remember only do this for about 15 minutes. You may or may not get up to him during this session, if not there is always the next time. If he gets too excited stop and let him relax. When you are able to have him stand and can walk up to him, tell him how good he is. Then

carefully place your arm around his neck. If he says “no” keep repeating this in small doses until he stands and allows to place your arm around his neck. Remember to say his name with praise. Some times giving a little treat to your llama for doing a good job makes things go a little easier. He will learn that doing what is expected can get him a little morsel. Now that he will stand and let you walk up to him in the stall, let him out into the small pasture and do the same training if necessary. Llamas like to play hard to get, so keep in mind that each time you go to get him, you might have to direct him to the small pasture. Now that it is a little less work to catching your llama, if you need work on haltering, starting up will be somewhat simplified.

SOME ITEMS YOU WILL NEED

A few items you will want to have on hand when working with your llama. If you are starting with a young llama, have a proper fitting halter, lead rope, soft gloves, a smooth wand 4' to 5'. The wand can be a commercial purchased or a piece of ½" pvc pipe. If you have an old horse lunge whip, cut the web covering off a t the handle and slid it off, you should find a perfect fiberglass rod. This wand is used to desensitize the back and lags of a llama. A small fanny pack to put some treats in. The gloves help with rubbing the head and neck of llamas that are not used to being handled. A cotton rope about 10' long with a snap on one end will help in training. Using heavy hemp ropes is not recommended as hemp will catch llama fibers and pull, cotton should not.

Putting Halters on Llamas

If you have a young llama and he is halter broke, yet shy of the halter, you might want to spend additional time working with him on haltering. If your llama does not have a halter on, move him into the training stall, have the halter with you. Get him to stand and walk up to him, place a looped lead around his neck, do not tie it! A tied rope around the neck can cause many problems for the llama and you if he runs, the rope could strangle the llama. Having the looped lead in your left hand take the halter and be sure the nose band part is open, slowly move it up to the llamas face, you want to slip the halter around the llamas nose, moving it to just in front of the eyes. Take your right hand reach around the llamas head and get the crownpiece, bring that around the llamas head and buckle it (Fig. 10). You might find your llama doesn't care for the halter so let him wear it a little while. Once he is relaxed, carefully unbuckle the halter and slowly remove it. If he has not fought the halter and unhalter activity, repeat it so that you become comfortable with doing the haltering. If he jerks his head out of the halter repeat this activity again, after a few times he should not fight the halter. Never leave a halter on an animal all the time. Animals can get their halters caught in fences, on poles and limbs.

Leading Your Llama

Llamas love to go on walks anywhere, but sometimes we have to train them to the lead rope. There are a couple of things to remember, first do not tie the lead rope around your hand or any part of your body. The use of gloves will be helpful to protect your hands. If you put knots about every 20" in your lead rope, the knots keep the rope from sliding through your hands. To begin have your llama in your small pasture, so if he gets away from you, you don't have to run all over to catch him. So you are standing in front of your llama, lead rope attached, you turn and start walking and come to a quick stop, he doesn't move. Come back up to him, speaking calmly, turn and say "walk up" as you are walking. He again does not move. If he has his front feet planted (Fig. 11) walk back up to him shorten your lead, as you pull say "walk up" and move his head from side to side. The moving of his head from side to side should make him relax his planted front feet and take a step forward. Once you get him moving, keep saying "walk up" as you walk around. Now in the course of all these things he might decide he isn't going with you and he turns and runs, let go of the rope. If you haven't become frustrated or he isn't too stressed, try again. It will take a few work outs but he will follow. Once your llama is following you around in your training pasture, open the gate and lead him around a larger area. Keep your excess lead rope looped (Fig. 12) in your left hand, you do not need to have a long lead with your llama. As you and the llama move out into a bigger area, find items to step over, such as small logs. If possible walk through water, just let him learn about new sights and sounds. The training sessions on the lead should get a little longer each time, as you work together, you should also begin having slack in your lead. It is recommended that you change sides after a few lead rope training sessions. Many folks work with their llamas only on his left side. When you work both sides your llama gets used to you being on either side and doesn't become nervous when you change sides.

Figure 11 Moving llama when front feet planted

Figure 12 Looped lead

As you work your llama and feel more comfortable with him, move out into other areas. It helps to walk by the cars in your driveway, around the house, across small ditches. If you live in a place where it is safe to walk across the road or down the street, take him to the houses of your neighbors. This will help him get used to strangers along with walking on blacktop. When you go to different areas, stop and tell him to “stand”, this helps for the showing in the ring.

Backing

Teaching your llama to go backwards will be important no matter what you do with him. Once he has learned to lead comfortably and stand, begin to teach him to back. The easiest way for many is to walk up and face him, and gently rattle the snap where it hooks to the ring on the halter. As you do this say the word “back”. He might not go straight back, but as you work with him on this you will learn to guide him back straight. This can help you if you walk into a spot that is too tight for him to turn around. After awhile just saying “back” should get him to move.

Kush

If you have a young llama under a year, teaching them to kush, or to lay down, is much easier than trying to teach an older llama to do this. When llamas kush they are at their most vulnerable, so they really have difficulty doing this on command. One way to teach them to do this, stand in front of your llama, kneel down, then pull down on the lead rope while saying “kush”. You will find the llama will lower his head but not go down on his knees. So each time you are kneeled down pull the lead rope up shorter so that his head has to go lower (Fig. 13). At some point in his training you will see him go down onto his knees, keep pulling the lead rope down and towards you. Keep pulling as you say “kush”, he then should set his back down, **don't jump up**, praise him and let him settle in. After a few minutes stand up, he will most likely jump right up. Repeat this training procedure again. You will find that he will kush eventually on command. Once he kushes for you, start moving around him, this will teach him that you are not a threat to his safety. Once all of this has been done, if in the future you need to have him kushed down to place a pack on his back or to check him for an injury things will be easy.

Desensitizing

If you have a young llama, you will need for him to allow you to touch him all over his body. In order to have a "touch me" llama, you need to desensitize him. This is where the wand comes into play. Bring your llama back to his training stall, haltered and with lead rope. As you talk with your llama in a soft voice have the wand in your right hand. If necessary let him see and smell it. With a slow motion bring the wand up to the back of his neck and move it down and along his back (Fig 14). As you do this he will probably jump around. Be careful not to stick your llama with the wand. Continue doing this until he can stand still. Then start moving the wand down his legs and around the feet. The reaction will most likely always be the same, jump time. The next area, after the legs and feet, is the belly. Never carry on this activity for more than 15 minutes. Stop if the llama gets to stressed. A wonderful source book on llama training is: *Llama Handling and Training* by Linda Tellington-Jones.

Figure 14

Foot Pickup

Being able to pick up your llamas feet is one of the more important things you want to do with your llama. After you have your llama desensitized to the point where you can touch the llamas legs, you can start working on making him pick them up for you. One way is to slowly run your hand down the llamas leg while saying "foot". At first in might move to the side or back away from you, but if you keep it up, he will lift his foot. Slowly take the foot in hand and lightly feel his foot and pads. Remember when you have done one foot you have 3 to go. This simple feat gives you a way of checking his feet for injury, without him jumping all about. When trimming his toenails, the ability to pick up his feet will make that care activity much less stressful to him and to you. Some llamas that will not allow their feet to be touched have to go into a chute for toenail trimming. If you are out packing and your llama comes up lame and if he is foot sensitive, without help you will be having to continue on making things worse or get him down to care for the foot.

Taking a Brush to Your Llama

If your llama has not been desensitized you are not going to be able to brush him. Llamas like to brush themselves, just watch them in the bushes, but go near them with a brush in your hands, bye-bye. The only way you can clean a llamas' fiber is with a brush. Various brushes have different ways of pulling on the fiber. A different way of saying this is; the blue brush works great on Little Creek, but the same brush makes Beaver Dam go nuts! It might be necessary to try 2 or 3 brushes before you find one that works best on your llama. Some llama owners use blowers on their llamas, they work wonders for getting out dirt and other things, but can mat up the fiber if not used correctly. There are various products on the market that makes brushing easier, ask your leader or other 4-Hers about what they use. One very important thing to remember, don't tease the llamas fiber, it will become very difficult to undo.

Bathing

Someday you might find yourself having to bathe your llama, remember this isn't a llama standing in the rain, you are going to get him wet. If you do not have the facilities for bathing with warm water and a place to put him for drying, it is recommended not to bathe them in winter. It takes hours for them to dry, if done in cold weather you could be getting more than what you want, a sick llama. If in the summer on a nice warm day and you have a blower, bathing is not much of a problem. When a llama is soaked they look thin because their fiber lies flat to their bodies.

Questions to Think About

- Does my llama have a safe and healthy place to live?
- Are his toes trimmed?
- Do I check him over each day to see if he is behaving normally?
- Has he had all of his vaccinations and has he been wormed lately?
- Have I been keeping up with my record book?
- Do I ask questions of my leader or other 4-H llama owners about things I am unsure of?
- Have I been helping younger 4-Hers with their llama project as others have helped me?
- Do I keep my training sessions to about 15 minutes per activity or do I stress my llama?
- Have I read other materials on training and care of llamas?

Project Areas in Greater Detail

The following brief descriptions should help you find what you want to do with your llama in this project. Many 4-Hers do more than one activity because they enjoy having more things to do.

Breeding

You may have a female llama and want to use her in a breeding project as a mother and cria. This would be similar to the mare-foal project found in the equine section of 4-H. This type of project should cover everything from the time your female is mature and healthy enough to breed, the pregnancy, nutritional needs, birth signs, birth, cria development, weaning and selling of your cria. This can be a very rewarding aspect of any project, not only for you to learn about developing a breeding program, but to also learn proper management and care of your animal for the end result of herd enlargement or for marketing your cria to a new and safe home.

Trail Obstacles

Almost all 4-Hers do trail obstacles because they are fun and can show others how and what they have accomplished in training. It is a way for great interaction not just with your llama but with other 4-Hers and their llamas. There are many different kinds of shows you can go to where obstacle courses are used, i.e. open, 4-H, clinics or just a big gathering of llama owners. Each person talking about the great things their llamas do or things they have had difficulty with. Obstacle courses for some are a sporting event, for others a way to practice and train their animals for going on hikes. Many different kinds of obstacles are used, i.e. bridges, ramps, tunnels and steps to name a few. A list and diagrams of obstacles is shown at the back of this manual: Figure 15 Trail Obstacles. All trail obstacles must be appropriate not only for the age of the 4-H member but just as importantly the physical ability and age of the llama. Never do anything that can harm yourself or your llama!

Public Relations Obstacles

The idea of the public relations obstacle course is the same as for trail, but with the obstacles seen as of people interaction that a trail interaction. Many llama owners 4-Hers and others take their llamas to schools, hospitals, nursing homes and also have them in parades. The idea is to train your llama not to be afraid of flashbulbs, balloons, small children, wheelchairs or just a large group of people. Some llamas take to public relations better than they do trail events. Figure 16 PR obstacles.

Figure 15 Trail Obstacle sample

Figure 16 Public Relations Obstacle sample

Packing

Packing in the outdoors is a wonderful experience that should be enjoyed by all people at least once. Some folks never take to it but others live for it. If packing is the place where you want to be then you will need a llama that is physically mature enough to carry a pack, has light wool and long legs. Llamas can carry 25% to 30% of their body weight on their backs. This weight total has to include the pack and frame. Now if your llama weights 350 lbs. you would not want to put more than 105 lbs. total on his back. This weight also reduces the distance you can travel in a day. The more weight on his back the sooner he will become tired. The 25% weight limit gives you a little more distance to travel. All of this of course knowing you are not going straight up a hill. One thing you need to remember also when adding up the weights don't forget to include the llamas feed. You won't find food supplements growing on trees. There are many different pack frames you can buy for llamas, some are made from wood others are made from metal. No matter what frame you buy be sure it is for a llama and it fits. A llama pack frame is made so that nothing rubs against their spinal column. You might not want to get into the heavy pack set ups, if not, daypacks are also available. If no one in your club does any packing have your leader check around to find some other club which might do packing. They can help you in this project area. There are also some great publications dealing with packing in the back of this manual. Figure 17 some pack frames and packs for llamas.

Cart Driving

Cart driving is another special project area that requires a physically, fully mature llama. The cart is seen as the biggest cost, yet all of the harness equipment needed is also very expensive. This project takes on some special training procedures, in that you move from the front of the llama to the back of the llama. You need to learn how to handle reins along with guiding and controlling your llama from behind him. After you have trained your llama to work to reins, you need to move him to the cart shafts. This again will be a worked on, over time, eventually you will have your llama hooked to a cart and training him to pull it. The cart driving area offers parades, shows and special events. There are many shows that have cart-driving competition.

Figure 18 Cart and Harness

There are many books and magazines written about llamas and their uses. As you grow in the llama project you will come to discover how rewarding the llama as a friend can be. This project has no barriers as to who can have a llama. The biggest barrier to llamas is not buying too many, one llama never seems to be enough!

I Bought, I Trained, My Llama Does it All, Where Do I Go From Here?

If you have had a good year with your llama and have worked hard, the FAIR, is your next stop. A place to show other 4-Hers, your leader, parents and fairgoers your accomplishments. For many generations of 4-Hers the Fair and its special memories are what they are willing to share with others. There is something special about showing an animal in front of strangers. The fair has its own smells, sounds, action and food. All the junk food you can eat on 30 acres, what could be better? As long as your llama, as are all the animals at the fair, is safe and not stressed out, nothing could be better.

The Fair

Going to the fair with a llama or any animal brings with it a special responsibility. Your llama is not at home where he knows he is safe, and where he can go and browse when hungry. When he is thirsty the water tank is just outside the barn. He no longer sees the cats, dogs, chickens or any other critters that are part of his normal daily life around. No, what he will find are new sounds and smells, different llamas and well as other large animals. No place to walk other than his pen or to and from the arena. Small children with balloons tied to their wrist, lots of strangers sticking their hands and arms in at him. Your favorite llama is going to get stressed. You need to care for him!

Care of Animals in Public Settings, Animal Quality Assurance

Of all the things you do with your llama at the fair nothing is more important for you to remember than their care and feeding. The general public comes to your barn to see your animal, and how that animal is cared for in the barn. The public has a way of remembering things that might be unpleasant to the animal, such as overcrowding, no water, bad or no feed or soiled bedding. These things stick in the public's eye. Not only do they think the animal is being poorly cared for at the "FAIR" but think of how they see the animal living at home. You are an ambassador for showing care and compassion to animals. If you have an animal that has gone lame while at the fair, you will not show the llama in any classes. His care is more important than some show class; his physical health cannot be jeopardized. Having posters and displays of your project on the wall tells many stories to the public, but don't forget that talking to the public is an educational experience for them also. Answer all questions as honestly as you can, if you don't know the answer to a question, find another 4-Her who might be able to, then remember there is always your 4-H leader.

Moving Your Llama from the Stall to the Show Ring or Out of the Fair

The first thing you are going to be faced with upon arrival is moving your llama around the fair grounds when there are fair-goers present. When you have your llama out of the stall, you need to have a person not only at his front and sides but his back. Llamas, like all animals, have blind spots about their space. His major blind spot is at his back, (Fig. 19), if in a crowd of people he will be looking forwards and to the sides, he will not have time to look back. A person reaching out or running up to him from the back will produce an unwanted response "the kick", and it will be your fault. Most fairgoers have no idea how to act around large animals, they think large animals will act like overgrown dogs. Be prepared for all kinds of activities and take precautions that will make the outcomes a great time for all.

Animal Activists

A major concern for all animal project members is the presence of the animal activists. Animal rights activists do not believe in raising animals for food, or experiments or for testing. They have a Constitutional First Amendment right to protest on PUBLIC PROPERTY. The show or fair that you are attending should have someone in authority to speak for the 4-H member or any other person showing animals. **DO NOT GET INTO A SHOUTING MATCH WITH THEM.** Let those assigned the task of addressing animal rights activists do their job. As a 4-H member active in an animal project you need to know that this issue can come up at any time.

Herdsmanship

All individuals partaking in the animal projects be they 4-H, FFA or open has to provide care to the animals at a show or fair. This continual on going care is referred to as herdsmanhip. In large 4-H clubs the herdsmanhip duties are divided between the 4-H members each day. Some 4-H members only do an hour of herdsmanhip a day while others may do 3 hours. Some 4-H members might find themselves being the only animal project member in their club. In cases such as these, other clubs will band together so that herdsmanhip can be shared. Herdsmanhip is a way to be sure that the animals have clean water, feed and stalls. They keep the isles clean and are able to answer questions from the general public. Much more important is that somebody is always there to keep an eye on the animals for injury and sickness. Fairs judge the herdsmanhip in each barn. They place winners each day, and then have an overall winner at the end of their fair. Herdsmanhip is not just a way to keep 4-Hers busy, it is an important part of fair participation.

The stall you have at the fair hopefully has a wood wall opposite the aisle way. Stall sizes vary, but the stalls for llamas should be big enough for 2 animals. The wall is used to place your decorations, ribbons and whatever is flat. Decorations at a county fair are club decisions, while the decorations at State Fairs are county themes. What goes into the stall besides your llama? Place against the wall side of the stall in one corner a bucket for water. In the other corner place the hay bag or bucket. This prevents members of the public from accidentally dropping something into the llamas feed or water. The stall is not a place to store an ice chest, tack boxes, clothing, radios or anything else that is not a llama. Figure 20, shows a typical fair stall.

Figure 19 Blind Spot

Figure 20 Typical Fair Stall

What Do I Wear at Fair

When at the fair you need to dress according to the activity you are doing. When you are working around your llama you need to have on boots or shoes; sandals are not the proper foot wear. When doing trail obstacle courses wear what is appropriate for the course. The main place where a certain dress code will be enforced is in the Fitting and Showing event.

Dress for Fitting and Showing

- White shirts or blouses, buttoned at the neck with tie or pin
- Black or dark colored pants, dark brown or blue is acceptable
- Black or dark colored boots or shoes, tennis shoes are not permitted.

Optional Dress Items

- Vest if conservative, dark colors in a madras style
- Gloves, black or dark

Items not allowed

- Hats, Sandals or Shorts

Tack for Fitting and Showing

- Black halter web, nylon, leather unadorned
- Black lead, round rope, flat web or nylon unadorned
- Halter and lead must be clean

Pattern and Other Information from Judge

- Patterns must be posted 1 hour prior to event
- Once at the ring, only 4-H members may be in the waiting area
- Questions may or may not be asked, decision will be made by judges
- Champion and Reserve Champion placings do not have to be given if the judge decides no member has shown Championship Qualities.

The Danish Judging System is used in all 4-H events. The 4-H member and animal are judged to an established standard for their project. They are not judged against each other. Under this system, the highest place setting is established by the standard, therefore blue ribbons at times are not given at random. Ribbon placings are Blue for first, Red for second and White for third.

Handler Class

This class is designed to give the 4-Her the opportunity to show his training successes in certain activities with his llama. The class is conducted in a catch pen or stall. The llama is placed in the stall unhaltered. The 4-H member can provide a list of activities he wishes to demonstrate with his or her llama. This may include lifting all 4 feet of the llama or it might be just 2 feet, the ability to brush the llama from head to tail. Feeling the llamas body including the belly. The 4-Her might want to show how to put on a pack. Haltering is mandatory, as is hooking up a lead rope and showing how to tie a safety knot. Time spent on each entrant should not exceed 3 minutes. Sample list of activities; halter, attach lead rope and tie with safety knot, show teeth, pick-up foot or feet, run hand from top of llamas head to tail, touch llamas belly, brushing of llama. Some optional things might include, kushing, backing, putting a fly mask on or hat. This class is a way to individualize the project for the fair. All items attempted should be 4-Her age appropriate.

Llama, Male or Female at Fair

You can have and show either male or female llamas in 4-H. As in all projects males must be gelded at a certain age. For all species except llamas the age at which they have to be gelded is 12 months. Llamas have been allowed to stay intact until they reach 16 months of age. If you do not want to geld a llama at that age, remember he can not be shown at the State 4-H Fair. Some counties might not have female llamas and therefore the county rule for gelding might be different. Female llamas used in the 4-H program and are changed each year as they mature, and are not part of a breeding project does not make a 4-H project. You never go beyond a young llama in your project. Intact males of other species, such as sheep, can be older than 12 months if they are being used in a breeding program and are not shown at fairs.

Female Llamas

Female or male, llamas are all enjoyable at a young age, as each matures their habits and personalities change. Females, as with males, change when they become sexually mature. The female llama unlike many other animal species comes into a breeding cycle whenever she is not pregnant. When the female llama that is not pregnant goes to a fair, where there are intact males of breeding age, the fair activities are of no concern to them. You do not want to have a breeding program at the fair!!! If your fair was females only and they are all pregnant you are limited to the events which you are going to be involved with. Pregnant ladies have special physical limitations, besides the fact they spit at each other for just existing, and whoever is in the way can find spit upon them. If your fair allows intact males and females, they need to be separated in the barn. There is limited space at most fairs, so this would be impossible to do. Especially at the State 4-H Fair, which pens animals by county. Females carry a baby usually for 345 days, almost a full year. When their baby, called a "cria" is born she will stay with it until weaned, approximately six months. The baby at her side makes obstacle courses somewhat difficult. For more on mothers and babies read; *Caring for Llamas, A Health and Management Guide* by Clare Hoffman, D.V.M. and Ingrid Asmus.

Male Llamas

Males that have been gelded or castrated and intact males at fairs don't normally present a problem. Many shows and fairs last only a few days, which doesn't allow much time for the intact male to become territorial, so you can have a good show. One thing, of interest, to watch for, is as the fair length increases, the animals will become weary of the general public and will lay down facing away from the aisle and the public. In the show ring you might see some llamas trying to establish a pecking order, but it is not that often. Many llama owners do not want to geld their llamas at any age, or they have a minimum age limit that they geld llamas at. Animals remaining intact beyond a certain age can present safety issues for the 4-h member. Young 4-Hers do not have the strength required to handle an intact male who has decided he wants to do other things. *Some or a few, maybe 10%* of intact males will never present a problem, but you will not know if your animal is going to be one of these. Because no body can say for sure about any male animals behavior when left intact they must be gelded, Big Period.

Open Shows

Open shows also have rules governing, at which age intact males maybe shown with different ages of the youth involved in the show.

Obstacle Guidelines

The following list of obstacles for both trail and public relations are the ones from which the State 4-H fair will draw from. The number of obstacles used at the State Fair and in your county fair should be determined by the number of participants in the events. Time restraints should also be used to determine number of obstacles used. All obstacles should be set up to the ages of not only the 4-H member but also the llama.

Persons with Disabilities

Obstacle courses set up for those without disabilities will be changed to reflect the abilities of those persons with disabilities. Some obstacles may be appropriate for all parties while some others will have to be eliminated, or modified. What is expected is that all participants be able to be in events, which reflect their individual environmental activity abilities. Scoring will be reflective of the obstacle numbers, set up for each group.

Trail Obstacles

Obstacle diagrams and requirements can be found in the appendix.

1. Tunnel,
2. Jumps
3. Teeter-Totter
4. Bridge
5. Circle with pick-up item
6. Passing to the side
7. Stepping in the ladder
8. Circle in a box
9. Limbo bar
10. Backing in and out
11. Backing up with angle in obstacle
12. Change of pace
13. Circle with front feet in back feet out
14. Hula Hoop pass over

Public Relations Obstacles

1. Weaving between chairs
2. Photo Shoot
3. Walking past bench and being petted
4. Balloon tunnel
5. Backing around object
6. Weaving between poles with balloons
7. Limbo bar
8. Walking up 2 steps across platform down 2 steps
9. Walking up to a costumed character
10. Show teeth and foot to a person
11. Carry a large doll as if it were a small child
12. Let stranger pet the face
13. Kazoo stand, stand while a kazoo is blown
14. Umbrella pass

As a 4-H member in the llama project, you have started out to learn about and work with llamas. But you have gained a friend for many years after you leave the 4-H program. Your llama as you learn will become an extension of what you have but into this project. There are many places that you can visit and your llama will also be welcome. The adventures you have with your llama are the wonderful memories you will have to share with your family and friends for the remainder of your life.

Me and My Llama, 4-H Project

General Youth Manual

“To Make the Best Better”

Have I Learned Anything Questions:

- What is the average life span of a Llama?
- Is a llama a true ruminant?
- What is a baby llama called?
- Does my llama have a safe place to live?
- What kinds of things can I do with my llama?
- Where did the first camelids come from?
- What other animal has a foot, like a llama?
- Do female llamas have fighting teeth?
- What percentage of a llamas weight can be put on his back?
- Are light-wooled llamas best for packing?
- Do ruminant animals have top teeth?
- Did I have fun with my llama at the fair?
- Does my llama trust me?
- Should you leave a halter on a llama all of the time?
- What is more important to me, winning a ribbon or my llama?
- Can I talk to strangers about llamas?
- Do I ask my llama to do things I won't do?
- How long does a female llama carry a baby?
- Do I check on my llamas health each day?

There are many questions a person can ask themselves about llamas, and there is much to learn. There are many fine books and magazines that deal with llamas, read all you can for your llama looks to you for his health, safety and adventures.