



January 2014 Food For Thought

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Greetings,

As we begin a new year together, I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to our efforts of expanding

Llamas

All you need to do is gaze into the big, soulful eyes of a llama, and you risk joining the growing ranks of llama lovers. These intelligent herd animals are gentle and curious in nature. People have described their personality as kind, stoic, peaceful, aloof, regal and low key. Averaging 6' tall at the top of their head, llamas are members of the camelid family and generally weigh between 250 and 450 pounds. Their life span ranges from 15 to 25 years and are considered mature at 3 years. Communication is accomplished through hums and clicks along with subtle head, ear and tail movements, and are combined to express anger, dominance, submission or affection. A piercing alarm call signals danger to the rest of the herd.



Originating in the Andes Mountains of South America, natives put them to work as pack animals centuries ago. They still serve in that capacity, carrying loads up to 75 pounds over rough terrain for 20 miles in one day. With their two-toed feet, they are extremely agile and sure-footed. The soft pads on the bottom of their feet offer a bonus of low impact on the terrain. You can even find llamas serving as the occasional golf caddy!



Through the years, we have discovered other uses

agricultural literacy among the students of New Hampshire. If you have not yet had a chance to donate, you are always welcome to give through Paypal at the link above or to send a check to the address below. Donations to NHAITC help us develop school programs, purchase resources for educators and create outreach materials. With a part-time coordinator and no overhead thanks to the NH Farm Bureau, your donations are used entirely on the program. The future of NHAITC depends on support from donors, farmers, teachers, community members and all who care about the importance of agriculture and the education of our youth.

Being new to the position of State Coordinator, I welcome your suggestions for new programs, newsletter themes,

llamas. Dried dung can be used for fertilizer or burned for fuel. Llamas are often used as guard animals for herds of sheep or goats. They bond closely with their charges becoming very protective. Llama fiber or wool is highly sought after for its hypoallergenic and insulating properties. Being partially hollow, the air pockets in the fiber add to its warmth. The low lanolin content (7% compared to 35% in sheep's wool) essentially makes it hypoallergenic. Many crafters prefer the fiber for these qualities using it to spin wool, felt outerwear and create other projects. Llamas also make great therapy animals (see separate article) and can be trained to pull a cart.

For whichever reason you choose to own llamas, they are generally very easy to keep. Housing needs include a three-sided shelter offering protection from sun and intense weather. A 4-foot high electric fence will serve to keep predators such as dogs and coyotes out. A fan for cooling purposes is helpful since llamas can be susceptible to heat problems. A sand pile where they can roll and fluff their wool is also a nice addition. Llamas typically forage for their food with one acre accommodating up to four llamas. They enjoy many types of forage from grass to brush with pine needles being a real treat. When necessary, many llama owners supplement with a flake or two of hay a day and specially manufactured grain. Monthly care may include administering Ivermectin during months without a hard freeze to prevent meningeal worm and trimming toenails. Most llamas are sheared once a year in the spring to harvest their fiber and to help them with cooling over the hot summer months. Transportation needs are simple and versatile since llamas prefer to kush or lay down while traveling and should remain untied for safety purposes. They are comfortable in anything from stock trailers to minivans. All in all, llamas are low maintenance and a great addition to any pasture.



Llamas as Therapy Animals

activities and other ideas to help NH Agriculture in the Classroom cultivate an understanding and appreciation of our food and fiber systems for our state's students. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts. I sincerely look forward to working with all of you.

Best wishes,

Debbi

NH Agriculture in the Classroom

Calendar

Farm & Forest
Exposition.
February 7th & 8th
Radisson Hotel
Manchester, NH



[link to website](#)

Ag Literacy Day
March 25th, 2014

Join us in sharing this book with your local school by reading in the classroom. Please

Look for unusual visitors at your local school, hospital or senior housing.

As a past llama owner, our most enjoyable memories are the visits to local nursing homes. The residents seemed delighted by these uncommon visitors as the llamas stood patiently while residents easily pet their long necks and received their llama "kisses". They are kind and cautious with everyone, but seem instinctively gentle and attentive to those with special needs. Llamas do not react negatively to cumbersome movements or unusual noises which is why those with limited activities respond to llamas so positively. Manuevering around medical equipment, into an elevator or through doorways doesn't pose a problem for the llamas. A positive and rewarding experience for everyone!



Frequently Asked Questions

When it comes to llamas, there are two questions asked far more often than any others:

1. Do llamas really spit? They do, but almost always directed at other llamas, generally over food issues. If they ever do spit at a human, it is most likely because they have been abused at some point and don't entirely trust humans.
2. What is the difference between llamas and alpacas? Llamas are roughly twice as large as alpacas with much larger ears. The llama has a coarse outer coat over a soft inner coat. Alpacas have a single, very fine coat and are generally bred for their fiber. Llamas are more versatile and are considered "beasts of burdern" for their pack animal capabilities.

Llama Resources

Greater Appalachian Llama and Alpaca Association
<http://www.galaonline.org/>

contact us if you are interested.



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Llama Lifestyle Marketing Association
and Llama Information

<http://www.llama.org/>

Llamapaedia

<http://www.llamapaedia.com/>

Newsletter Topics

Our goal is to provide ideas, resources and links for educators of various grades facilitating the integration of agriculture into your existing curriculum. You can help us be a better resource by letting us know what topics are of interest to you. Send any subject ideas, needs or suggestions to the address listed to the left. We look forward to hearing from you.