



### *Welcome to your Winter newsletter!*

A very Merry Christmas to all and wishing you a happy and successful year ahead with your alpacas 😊

In this quarter's newsletter up we have our regular CCA round up from Sandra and BAS news from Kate and a look back over our CCA events in th Autumn – the Vet Day and our Zoom call on alpaca nutrition with GWF. The eagle eyed amongst you may notice that I have re-run last year's seasonal husbandry tips given by Sarah who has also contributed a feature on eye problems. Kate has shared her best practice on weaning and finally I have shared our journey making Cornish Alpaca smocks from our fleece.

I hope you enjoy the read and don't forget that you can look back on previous issues on the website and get all sorts of other info there too: [www.cornwallcamelidassociation.com](http://www.cornwallcamelidassociation.com)

If you are not already a member of our facebook group, please look it up (cornwallcamelidassociation) and ask to join and we will have you sorted straight away – it's a really easy way to connect to other members and ask questions or join in the chat 😊

As ever, all contributions and ideas are welcome for the next newsletter 😊  
[cornwallcamelidassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:cornwallcamelidassociation@hotmail.com)

Thanks

Wendy

CCA Secretary

## Message from our Chair

Sandra Muriel



Where has 2021 gone...it has flown by. I am writing this on the eve of the shortest day of the year - I like this day as my positive vibes tell me that we are now half way through the winter, the evenings will start to draw out and we can look forward to the spring. Of course Christmas distracts us from the weather and short days, giving and receiving cards reminds us of friends near and far and is a time to reconnect with relatives - I sincerely hope that Covid does not plunge us back into a full lockdown again this winter, it is demoralising and challenging for us all.

I was delighted to see lots of members at the GWF Zoom presentation, which was very detailed and quite scientific but a good learning curve as to the complex dietary needs of our alpacas. GWF offer the premier supplementary feed Camelibra along with Fibregest which provides the basic support needs for them. It sometimes can seem an expensive product but if it ensures good health for the alpacas it is a prudent investment. During the discussion I raised about a creep feed as I use a branded foal creep feed for my weanlings but it is a largish nut - Welsey listened and did his research, then produced a limited amount of 20kg bags of a new product Crialibra which I was delighted to order. It is a 2mm nut which is preferable, hopefully GWF will take this creep feed to a full rollout in their product range.

Wendy and I were approached by BAS CEO Duncan Pullar who along with Neil Payne is endeavouring to reach out to the regional groups. We joined a zoom meeting of the Chairs and Secretaries of the regional groups, led by Duncan and Neil, which evolved into a very lengthy meeting after which Wendy and I both ate our burnt dinners. Pre completed questionnaires revealed we the CCA are not the smallest regional group but we certainly do seem to be one of the most enthusiastic. I cannot single out a group which is more pro active than us, indeed many say they organise events but have very few takers. Duncan was keen to point out this is about what BAS can do for the regional groups and not the opposite. The next meeting will be to discuss welfare across the regions and how it could be supported. If there is any rollout of funding or resources we will ensure the CCA receives it's share. Personally, I am really proud that we were invited, recognised alongside some of the much larger and established groups and able to contribute.

I have been following the news releases re the National Halter Show 2022 and the National Fleece Show but no mention of the Fibre Zone which normally forms part of the show at Telford. It appears that person who has organised it for the past few years has declined to do it again, so they are seeking a new organiser and there are no details of the classes/entries available at the moment. If this changes, I will ensure we get a news release out to members swiftly via email and Facebook in case anyone is considering entering. There are other craft shows planned on the BAS calendar so if you would like to enter then please do continue to keep putting your skills into action.

Here on farm, I delayed weaning till after Christmas as last year I had some feeding problems with the younger cria. This is a crucial time of their development and I like to get as best practice as possible for my weanlings. This year I have Gatsby, Guinevere, Giselle, Griffin and Georgia who are blending together as a gang, most are eating separately from mums and ready for the big change. We are not attending the National Show 2022 so there is no pressure to wean and get the youngsters halter trained early.

Looking forward to the New Year, the uncertainty of the Covid situation, the committee agreed with me that again we will have an AGM via Zoom, which will be 17th January, the invitations will be going out soon. At the moment, BAS CEO Duncan Pullar will be attending as an observer and I hope may input about the role of BAS with the regional groups. We have set the dates for the Halter Show and Fleece Show and Judges have been appointed - further details will be revealed at the AGM. I hope I can see many of you at the AGM and in the interim, wish you and your families as very happy, healthy Christmas and New Year.

Sandra

## NEWS UPDATES

### BAS NEWS

#### Kate Brookes, BAS Board member & Mullacott Alpacas



It's Christmas and I have been on the BAS Board for over a year! We have not yet met in person, all meetings being by zoom, but I think that has really helped the board. I live in Ilfracombe, North Devon (almost as remote as Cornwall!), other board members are in Scotland, Northern Ireland, East Anglia, The Isle of Wight, and pretty well everywhere in England. We don't have a Welsh Board member (yet!). The thought of us getting together for regular meetings would be challenging, a huge time commitment, expensive, not very 'green', and perhaps prevent some people from standing for election. That said I am missing the easier interaction you get in face to face meetings.

My current board responsibilities increased with this year's AGM. With Ron Mackintosh standing down I am now the lead on the board for everything related to bTB. There are some exciting new developments - did you know that if you have a holding number you are now able to get two free visits from a vet to give you biosecurity advice? We are still trying to get vaccine trials underway for camelids, but at the moment there are only trials being undertaken with cattle. The Geronimo situation has had an impact on trust in testing, DEFRA and in many other ways. I have also found that Brexit has had an impact with voluntary testing for my herd - the blood samples got stuck in customs and so had to be re-taken. I feel I have taken on a challenging role with this!

My other board responsibility is the affiliate trainers. About 4 years ago a process was set up to train experienced breeders to run basic alpaca courses, with agreed content, that would ensure that new and prospective owners were educated enough to be able to buy and care for alpacas. The scheme had slipped a bit into disuse, but I am pleased to say that with a bit of pushing there are now courses running from Scotland to Cornwall and in Northern Ireland. I personally think that separating education from purchase is helpful. Who can learn when looking at a group of gorgeous alpacas trying to choose who will come to spend the rest of their lives with you!!!! I am now working with affiliates to update the material where necessary and then I hope to arrange another process to enable people to become affiliate trainers in the future. (More on that in future newsletters!)

As ever, if you have anything you would like to discuss about the board, its work or the BAS in general, you are welcome to contact me.

I hope you all have a happy, healthy Christmas, with plenty of quality camelid time!

Kate

[katebrookes2@gmail.com](mailto:katebrookes2@gmail.com)

## CCA EVENTS

### CCA Vet Day 2021 - Review

Hannah Belton, vet student at the University of Bristol

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for organising this day and for allowing me to attend and meet you all. It was so lovely to hear all your amazing stories! As I discussed with many of you over the course of the day, it is great as a vet student to learn more about some of the less common species and to learn from all your experiences as camelid owners!

It was a busy day learning about a range of different topics. We started with camelid skin disease then moved on to appropriate use of medicines, the impact of vitamins and minerals on cria development and fertility and, of course, you couldn't have a vet day without discussing our final topic of the day, poo!

It was also interesting to review the results of the survey you had done and to have lots of discussion about your different treatment protocols.

I thought I would bring together some key messages I took from the day and hopefully some key things to keep in mind for the future— please refer back to your notes from the day for more detail!

**Identifying which type of mite you have is important for targeting treatment and managing itchy alpacas –**

remember to look in the key areas where *Chorioptes*, *Psoroptes* and *Sarcoptes* mites are found to determine whether you need topical or systemic treatment. Managing the environment is also very important for mite control as they can survive for long periods off the animal.

**Vitamin D supplementation around unpacking – we all now know how important this is long term for development and the impact on onset of puberty in maiden females through regulation of phosphorus levels in the body.** Remember that crias do not receive any Vitamin D through the placenta but do absorb it through colostrum so dosing the dam pre-unpacking helps to boost the content in the colostrum. If the dam unpacks later than anticipated, the cria can be supplemented too. Giving injectable Vitamin D to crias at birth can increase the risk of sepsis so give oral forms, although save this for after colostrum has been given as it can stimulate early gut closure and prevent uptake from colostrum. Injectable forms can be given from one week old.

**Using medicines safely and responsibly, particularly antibiotics.**

Select the correct antibiotic – refer to your medicine handout from the day for more information or contact your vet if you are unsure. Avoid underdosing antibiotics and complete the whole course – we don't want those nasty resistant bugs to stay behind!

**Check your poo – it can tell you a lot!**

Remember that alpacas of different ages, from your newborn crias to your older animals may develop different problems so always contact your vet if you're not sure what could be causing the changes you are seeing, whether it is green, yellow or blood that you observe in the pellets. Once you know what is causing the problem then you can target treatment and prevention with specific products.

Here are some photos of everyone enjoying the day!



## GWF Nutrition Zoom talk November 2021 - Review

### Nigel Retallack, Carpalla Alpacas & CCA Committee

Thank you to all who joined our zoom on 23<sup>rd</sup> November with Welsey Habershon, BSc (Hons) Dip RN, who is the GWF Technical Director.

I thought it was very in depth and informative. It was very interesting to hear about the way the camelibra has been formulated to have enhanced absorption through the gut wall.

I realize it was probably too in depth in places for some people's taste but I'm sure everyone will have learnt a lot and comments on the facebook page after the event were really positive.

Following Sandra's suggestion that a creep feed product specially formulated for alpacas could be interesting, Wesley went ahead and made up a prototype product. At £30 a 20kg bag, there are still some available should any members wish to try it out – Wendy and Sandra have already got some on the farm and so far it's a hit with the cria! GWF are working on bringing the product formally to market next year so you won't see it advertised anywhere yet, but the brief is as follows:

#### **Crialibra**

A complementary winter feed for adolescent cria from 6-12 months, designed to maximise daily live weight gains, reduce dietary stress and enable a smooth transition to adult complementary feeds. Ideal for bridging the gap between Hembra & Cria and Camelibra. Manufactured as a 2mm pellet.

#### **Daily Feeding Recommendation**

General Maintenance Level: 100g/Day

From weaning: continue feeding 50g Hembra & Cria and add 75g Crialibra for 2 weeks from weaning. Then stop Hembra & Cria and increase Crialibra to 100g per day. Continue across the winter into early spring.

Springtime transitioning: after 1 week's good grass growth (typically late March) introduce Camelibra at 50% feed rate (in line with bodyweight) and reduce Crialibra to 50g per day for 2 weeks. Then reduce Crialibra to 25g per day and feed Camelibra at 100% feed rate (in line with bodyweight) for 1 week. Finally remove Crialibra altogether and feed Camelibra along with grass and hay.

Looking forward if there are any other topics you would like to see covered in a zoom session, please let me know and we will see what we can do at committee to make it happen.



## WELFARE

### SEASONAL HUSBANDRY TIPS

CCA Honorary Vet - Sarah Caldwell, BSc (Hons) BVSc MRCVS

#### ❖ VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTATION

Vitamin D supports the regulation of calcium and phosphorus within the body and is essential to the day-to-day health and development of your animals. Current recommendations are:

**Prevention:** 1000 IU vitamin D per kg every 2 months for injectable (sub-cut), monthly for oral. **Treatment:** 2000 IU vitamin D per kg monthly. **TAKE CARE TO CHECK THE VITAMIN D DOSAGE OF YOUR PRODUCT AS THEY DO DIFFER.**

#### A note on ADE AVAILABILITY

Just to make you aware, there is a national shortage of vitamins and minerals – including ADE. There is currently a limited stock of Belavit ADE but it is only dated until the end of December 2021. Unlike the administration of antibiotics, where it is essential to adhere to the use by date and the 28 days from when the bottle was opened, the ADE may be slightly less effective but will not cause any harm. I would therefore advise, that in the absence of an alternative, that you continue to use the ADE you have at your current dosing regimen until a new batch is available on the market – at this point in time we don't know when that will be.

#### ❖ KEEP THE BUGS HAPPY!

..meaning the good bugs in the gut. The best way to achieve this over winter when grass is limited and of poorer quality, is to provide ad libitum hay. This should be mould and dust free and provided in a way that ALL animals have access at all times.

#### ❖ KEEP THE WATER FLOWING

With temperatures dropping below freezing, water troughs will be high up on the list to check daily to ensure your animals have access to water. To reduce the risk of your troughs freezing, place a plastic bottle filled with water and a cup of salt into them.

#### ❖ KEEP WARM

This is particularly important to younger and older members of the herd. Jackets are the best way to balance the fluctuations in temperature. Minimise draughts; straw bales are the best for this but rubber is a good alternative and can easily be cleaned. Use sand under straw bedding; this helps to absorb any excess moisture, reduce bacterial load and acts as a good insulator. Straw is in great demand this year and so is also very expensive, sand will help to reduce the amount of straw required.

#### ❖ PROVIDE A FESTIVE TREAT!

Left over Christmas trees are safe to eat and will appeal to their browsing behaviour.

**HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS –  
HERE'S TO 2022!**



## EYE TREATMENTS FOR ALPACAS

CCA Honorary Vet - Sarah Caldwell, BSc (Hons) BVSc MRCVS

Alpacas are relatively prone to eye disorders including trauma (a), infection (b) and tear duct obstruction (c).



A

B

C

All of the above required a different treatment plan which can only be decided by an examination of the eye. This will determine whether there is any damage to the outer layer (cornea) or whether the issue is within the eye itself. Ruling out ulceration means steroid-based treatments may be used to speed up the healing process NB. these should be avoided in pregnant animals.

The reason for writing this article is that the only licensed farm animal eye cream, Opticlox, is currently unavailable. Alternative topical antibiotic products are however available from the small animal sector and include Ciloxan and Fucithalmic. Whilst these products are more expensive, they are my preference even when Opticlox is available as the droplets are easier to administer and achieve a more accurate dose (d). The clear solution, opposed to the cream also avoids the loss of sight – essential to minimising the stress levels of a prey species.



Eye disorders can be painful and may require additional pain relief but speak to your vet before administering to ensure this will cause no harm.

### Things to look out for:

- Eyelid closure
- Excessive blinking
- Excessive tear staining
- Eye looking larger
- Discolouration of the eye
- Redness of the tissue/membrane
- Any pitting on the surface of the eye
- Rubbing eye
- Swelling around the eye
- General change in behaviour
- Signs of blindness such as circling/bumping

**IF IN DOUBT – GET IT CHECKED OUT!**



## WEANING TIPS

**Kate Brookes, Mullacott Alpacas**

I have been invited to share a blog I wrote on weaning around this time last year. I have also added my experiences this year.



In autumn 2020 I tuned in to a webinar by nutritionist Jane Vaughan in Australia and amongst much other useful information, she was suggesting weaning cria at 4 months of age. I have always weaned at 6 months of age, unless there was a specific reason for a cria to be separated from its mum earlier. At the time of the webinar my 21 cria were between 4 and 6 months of age. There was just one under 25kg, two between 25 – 33kg and the others all heavier, the heaviest being nearly 50kg at 5.5 months. The three smallest were all just over 4 months of age.

The cria were all used to entering a creep feeder and eating 'hard feed' consisting of GWF Hembra and Cria concentrate, dried flaked peas, young stock creep pellets and speedibeet. I kept daily weights as I weaned the cria, ready to return them to their mums if I felt concerned at the impact of such early weaning. The mothers were always within sight of the cria, in an adjacent pasture, neither mums or cria seemed stressed at the separation, with only two cria still grazing close to the fence line by day 3 of weaning.

I found that the three smallest cria (not actually the youngest) all did better, in terms of growth rate, without their mums. The ones over 5 months had almost no slowing in growth. There were several at under 5 months who had a noticeable flat line for around a week at the start of the weaning period.

So, would I wean cria at 4 months again? For those cria where growth has slowed significantly, yes. For most cria I think I would wean at 5 months onwards if possible. Weaning the whole group together did seem to minimise the stress on them, so I would wait until I had a group that were ready to wean together. The return to condition of some of the mums feeding greedy youngsters was very quick, and for already pregnant females this is probably good.

Update for 2021 weaning

This year I decided to wean at 5-6 months, building on my learning from last year. With one exception, all my cria were born in roughly a two month period (they never quite stick to due dates do they!). I weaned the first 10 cria when they were all 5-6 months old. I kept all the cria (weaned and unweaned) together with the unweaned cria mums. The weaned cria mums were just the other side of the fence. Around a month later I weaned the 2nd group of 11, having introduced a

couple of non-mums into the group a couple of weeks before the 2nd group weaned. This meant that there were three adults in with the cria when I removed the 2nd group of mums and put them in the field the other side of the fence. With both sets of weanlings I again found that the mums seem completely happy to leave the fence line to graze at the far side of the field, once they had checked their cria were OK. Some of the cria (about four in the 1st group and two in the 2nd group) hung around near the fence grazing for two or three days, but showed no significant signs that they were stressed by the separation. Very regular weighings showed that weaning had taken place with almost no weight loss, or even growth slowing, for the cria.

This is the way I will do it next year. Five to six months of age, (unless there was one with very slow weight gain that was over 4 months, that might benefit from wearlier weaning). Keep the cria in a familiar field with familiar herd mates and the weaning mums get moved, but still in sight of their cria.

Of course there are as many ways to successfully wean as there are colours of alpaca (and that is definitely more than 22!) but I have found good observation of the first couple of weeks with very regular weighing for the first month will really help you decide what works for you and then you can improve it even further for next year.

Happy weaning!



**USING YOUR FLEECE**

**Dark Sky Cornish Alpaca Smocks**

*made in the South West in collaboration with Two Rivers Mill and British Alpaca Fashion Company*

**Wendy Scott, Dark Sky Alpacas**



Tom and I were asked to submit a piece for the Alpaca Magazine year book about our alpaca smocks so thought we would share a preview.



After two years of hoarding fleece from our growing herd, we really wanted to make something special from it. As we specialise mainly in Suri, our product needed to lend itself to the silky, draping qualities of that fibre and we wanted to make something that was both unique and relevant to Cornwall. And so our journey began!

We met Anila and the British Alpaca Fashion Company via Instagram and after visiting their studio in Dulverton we were all excited to work together. Anila's ambitions and belief in alpaca as a fibre to make bespoke, luxury clothing were contagious so we decided to design our first Dark Sky products in collaboration.

**Concept** Tom and I came up with the concept – what could be more Cornish than the fisherman's smock? We thought we could use alpaca to create some luxury smocks ideal for embracing the outdoor life, just as at home in the countryside as walking to the local pub in Kensington. We knew we wanted to feature suri fibre, keep the colours completely natural and have a super high quality product that people would want to pay for.



**Design** At this point, we needed Anila's input. At the British Alpaca Fashion Company they have invested in a state of the art knitting machine and a small team of experts to work on the design all the way through to making up the product. Having taken our brief, the prototyping phase was both an exercise in design and delivery – experimenting with shapes, styles and knitting techniques until we came up with something that we loved and that could be made!

**Spinning the yarn** Anila introduced us to Phil at Two Rivers Mill. The two of them have collaborated on many projects over the years and she knew Phil would be able to spin suri to the quality needed for the smocks and to the tight specifications necessary for her knitting machine to run smoothly.

As suri is the far rarer type of fleece there hasn't been a huge amount of precedent for using it in clothing in the UK but Two Rivers Mill have successfully spun a range of 100% and blended suri yarns, mostly in fine 2-ply counts.

Because the smocks would demand a high performance yarn Anila and Phil agreed that a 60:40 suri : huacaya blend would give us the drape and finish we were looking for along with better wear resistance.



Phil produced three colourways from the raw fleece we provided: cream, beige and silver grey – we were delighted with the first stage of making our smocks!

**Prototyping & Production** Anila and the team were also excited and got to work on the prototype smocks. We had two face to face design workshops in which we finessed ideas and tried things on with video calls in between due to Covid restrictions. This resulted in two different designs that we decided to take forward into production. Whilst both are unisex, one is more tailored and 'smart', the other more casual and 'comfy'.



An early prototype



Tanaya, Cindy and Sami at work at the British Alpaca Fashion Company studios

Having settled on the styles, there was still more work to do to get a range of sizes with all the right proportions – recognising that we are producing quite small volumes but obviously need to cater to different body types and dimensions. After the first run, we called in friends and family of different sizes to check out sleeve and hem lengths and figure out if we had the right amount of 'bagginess' in the arms and cuffs etc. I'd describe it as both an art and a science to get to something that works well.

**Presentation** It was back to Tom and I to design and source the labels and packaging to present these lovely garments in a way befitting their quality. We chose leather logos to feature on both designs together with sew in name, size and care labels and finally, swing tags.





We added QR codes to the swing tags and made a bespoke section of our website 'Who made my smock'. Ownly owners of the smocks are able to access this and see the story of their smock – from the alpacas who grew the fleece, all the way through the production process. (To see the rest of the web page, you'll have to buy one!!)

The presentation boxes are the finishing touch – something lovely enough to keep and use, we hope.



So there we have it, the finished product of all our labours. Friends have already snapped up a number of them and we will have them as an optional extra for guests who come to stay in our newly finished holiday cottage, hoping that they may want to take home a beautiful product to remind them of their holiday in Cornwall and the wonderful alpacas they met on our farm.



Smocks at home in the holiday cottage, the alpacas and Wendy wearing smock no. 1 !

We have other ideas brewing and will see how sales go before we decide exactly what we make next. We are certainly excited and hopeful that this is a part of our business we can develop further.

Please do get in touch if you are interested in one of our smocks or have any other ideas you'd like to discuss.

Wendy & Tom Scott, [www.darkskyalpacas.com](http://www.darkskyalpacas.com)  
Anila Preston, <http://www.britishalpacaafashion.co.uk>  
Phil Allen, <https://www.tworiversmill.com>

## ADVERTISEMENTS

The CCA's honorary vet; Sarah Caldwell BSc (Hons) BVSc MRCVS is now providing a **bespoke camelid consultancy service**.



**TheHumanVet** offers:

- A second opinion for clinical cases; working alongside your vet for a consistent approach,
- Health planning for all herd sizes, new and established, for all experience levels.

For more information visit [www.thehumanvet.com](http://www.thehumanvet.com)

Contact Sarah at [info@thehumanvet.com](mailto:info@thehumanvet.com)

***SHOW DATES FOR THE DIARY (as published by BAS 10/12/21)***

**National Show**

Date: 25th, 26th and 27th March 2022

Judges: Mrs Mary-Jo Smith and Mr Tim Hey

Venue: Telford International Centre

Entries open for pre-booking: 1st December 2021

Organiser: Duncan Pullar 07496 578781, [ceo@bas-uk.com](mailto:ceo@bas-uk.com)

**NWAG Halter Show**

Date: Saturday 2nd April 2022

Judge: Mary-Jo Smith

Venue: Borderway Mart, Carlisle.

**HoEAG Spring Alpaca Fiesta 2022**

Show Dates: Friday 8th, Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th April 2022

Judge: Barbara Hetherington

To be held at Bury Farm Equestrian Centre

**Scottish Alpaca Championship**

Dates; 23rd and 24th April 2022

Judge: Barbara Hetherington

Venue: Lanark Auction Market

Entries open: 18th February 2022

Entries Close: 24th March 2022t

Entry fee: £22 inc VAT

Organiser Stuart Ramsay

**South of England Spring Live Alpaca Halter Show.**

Dates: Saturday 23rd April & Sunday 24th April 2022

Judge: Jay Holland

Venue: South of England Showground, Ardingly RH17 6TH

Organisers: Tony & Hilary Monkcom [hilary@pinnaclealpacas.com](mailto:hilary@pinnaclealpacas.com)

**CCA Cornwall Fleece Show 2022**

9th July 2022

Venue and Judge tbc.

**EAG Fleece Show**

August 2022 further details tbc

**EAG Halter Show**

October 2022 further details tbc