



Welcome to your Spring newsletter!

I think Spring is finally in the air and isn't it wonderful to see the sunshine this week ☺

In this quarter's newsletter up we have our regular CCA round up from Sandra and an introduction to our two new committee members, Heather and Abha. In addition to this quarter's seasonal husbandry tips, Sarah has written a feature on Pasture Management which is 'must read'. We've also included an update on bovine TB testing which Defra has provided and was featured in the BAS weekly newsletter earlier this month. Most excitingly, Sandra provides all the details on the Halter Show at Griggs – entry forms are attached to the newsletter email, on facebook and also on our website – we have everything crossed for good weather and a great get together!

Over on our website, we have updated all the ***stud males being offered by CCA members*** this season – don't forget to check it out if you are looking for outside matings. You can always look back on previous issues of the newsletter on the website too and get all sorts of other info there - ***including shearers*** if you are not already booked in: 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

Finally, some dates to remember –

Halter Show at Griggs Saturday 30th April 2022

Mini Vet Day at Popham Alpacas 3rd April 2022

CCA Fleece Show at CarnTremayne Farm 9th July 2022

Thanks

Wendy

CCA Secretary

Message from our Chair

Sandra Muriel



I had been looking forward to Spring and hopefully the end of the Covid restrictions which we have been under for the last two years. I thought we might be walking toward that light at the end of the tunnel but the terrible situation in Ukraine has certainly cast a dark shadow. We must be thankful for the lives we have and where possible, offer assistance and donations where we can. I have donated 25 scarfs, 25 pairs of gloves, 6 (hastily knitted) baby hats and 6 snoods - all 100% alpaca - from Alpacas of Cornwall, which have left to the refugee centres. I am currently knitting more, as no doubt there will be many more needed.

The Mini Vet's Day (3rd April) focussing on birthing was full very quickly. Birthing is always a popular subject and I am sure the newer members attending will enjoy the event and find it extremely informative and those who have already covered birthing in previous Vets Days will learn more - I hope all who attend enjoy the practical 'experience'; I was thankful I had seen as one of my females did need some intervention the following year and I was able to assist her with some knowledge about which bits should come first.

Myself and Nigel Retallack are busy arranging the halter show, after a 2 year break due to Covid we are keen to ensure a good event takes places. More information is later in the newsletter and necessary entry forms and class schedules are attached. The CCA Fleece Show will be held on 9th July, entries will open in the first week of May on the BAS Grassroots website. I plan to give all members a heads up when the entries open to ensure you all get the chance to enter. Last year, nearly 40 entries were from members which was fantastic. We will be awarding our own CCA Colour Champions and Best In Show based on the points awarded.

We have attached an article which was published in a recent BAS magazine, in respect of the rollout of PCR Tests by DEFRA for detection of Btb from 30th March.. This will NOT affect any protocols for voluntary or statutory testing as agreed by BAS and DEFRA, this will only change the way DEFRA determines if a reactor has the disease or not. Instead of culturing the samples they will use the PCR method, which is much quicker, the current culturing takes about 22 weeks, whereas the PCR is around 3 weeks. This will mean that herds which have had a reactor, if the disease is not detected, will not require to be under restriction so long and it seems, there would not be the need for a follow up skin test on the herd before restrictions are lifted. I can only see this as a positive move, as there will be less skin testing/ priming which, for those who followed the Geronimo case, is believed to be the cause of many false positives.

We wish the CCA herds who are entered in the BAS National Halter Show every success, any rosette at that level is well contested. It does not have to be a big herd to bring back a National Champion sash, in 2017, I took a team of 4 boys who stood rather conspicuously in their large pen, we returned with 2 junior white male rosettes in large classes and National Champion Black Male sash, all bred here. Anyone who has entered or considering to enter the Fibre Zone craft show, I wish them luck with their entries.

The one time of the year which affects us all is shearing, please ensure you have yours booked or are at least on one of their lists. They should be starting end of April - to mid May depending on the weather.

Keep safe everyone

Sandra

INTRODUCING OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It's great to have two new members on the CCA committee this year – for those of you who haven't had a chance to meet them yet, here's a little intro...

Heather Lester, Polgrain Alpacas

Hello, my name is Heather Lester and along with my husband David we run Polgrain Alpacas. We are located in St. Wenn, and currently have 23 alpacas. We started with 7 girls three years ago, and is want to happen our numbers have grown significantly since then. My main interest lies in using the fleece from my animals, with a particular interest in weaving. I joined the Cornwall Camelid Association Committee, after being asked if I was interested by Wendy Scott. I am no expert on alpacas, but am keen to learn. I have attended husbandry courses with Kate Brookes at Mullacott Alpacas, the parasitology course at Lyme Alpacas to do my own feecal testing and the 4 day Camelidyamics course with Marty McGee Bennett herself, hosted by Kate at Mullacott Alpacas.



By being part of the committee, I am hoping that it will help continue my education working alongside other members much more experienced than I am, as well as helping out wherever I can in the smooth running of CCA events. Despite the difficulties of the past couple of years I have found the CCA to be extremely welcoming and friendly and a great place to meet new people. I have contacted other members when I have been unsure of issues with my animals and they have always been helpful and generous of their time. I am hoping that I too can help others with my time, if maybe not my expertise quite yet, though I am always happy to talk to anyone about my own experiences.

Abha Wells, PoWow Alpacas

My name is Abha, I own the PowWow herd near Totnes in Devon. My alpaca adventure started in 2019 when we brought home three pregnant females. Since then, the herd expanded to nine, five females and four boys. Who would have thought that I would give injections, draw blood, cut nails, and pick poo with a poohover three years ago? As alpaca owners, we seem to be doing it all and therefore need all the support and knowledge from other owners that we can get.



The decision to join to the committee for me was a way of supporting the association, it is a great way to learn and to make connections with other breeders, walkers, knitters, weavers etc. I like the way local breeders share and support each other and very much like to be part of that. Whilst writing in newsletters is not one of my strengths, it is a chance to say hi to all of you. "Hi"

I am eager to help where I can and look forward to the next show season as it will be my first ever halter shows. See you there 😊

CCA EVENTS

HALTER SHOW 30th April 2022, MA Griggs Superstore Sandra Muriel

Judge: Jo Bridge from Hilly Ridge Alpacas
Entries are now open until April 12th

The classes will be as BAS rules, the class schedule is attached to this newsletter and available on our Facebook page. Please check carefully the age group for your entries - your alpaca should be entered for the age group it will be on the day of the Show, not when you complete the entry form.

During the judging, the judge will select a colour group of huacayas and one of suris, who will be asked to remain in the ring after their colour champions have been awarded. The Judge would also like any 2nd placed alpacas, who are in the champions lineup to also remain. We will, with the permission of owners, allow members to enter the ring for an expansion of the Judges' reasoning as to why she selected her class 1st and 2nd places, Champion and Reserve - Jo will explain the traits and how she balanced them to make her judgement and selection and members will be able to see more closely the fleeces and conformation of the alpacas.

This will be an invaluable learning tool, not only for owners who show or breed, but anyone who may be thinking of purchasing new or more alpacas.

TRADE STANDS

TRADESTANDS and BANNERS will be FREE to CCA members.

In previous years we have charged £15 for tradestands and £10 for promotional banners around the ring, however this year, Nigel Retallack and I have decided that these will be FREE to all CCA members. We are hopeful that by not charging for trade stands or tables some members who do not show their alpacas, might be encouraged to bring their products and crafts to the show.

Any member who wishes to have a tradestand or table at the CCA Halter Show on 30th April at Griggs Superstore, could you please complete the **Trade Stand Entry form** which is attached to this newsletter and send to Nigel please, as we have to plan the layout of the show area in advance. If you plan to show alpacas and wish to have your tradestand next to you pen, can you advise him please.

PROGENY CLASSES

A first for the CCA Halter Show. Progeny classes are judging the Sire or the Dam's ability to pass on their traits to their progeny. The prize is awarded to Sire or Dam, not the progeny. We normally follow BAS rules, but in the case of sire's progeny, we will (this year) allow 2 progeny to be entered, rather than the usual requirement for 3.

The named Sire or Dam does NOT have to be present at the show - only the progeny!

ENTRIES FOR THE PROGENY CLASSES WILL BE TAKEN ON SHOW DAY OR IN ADVANCE on your entry form.

If you are planning to enter on show day, please take a spare entry form, complete on the day and give to Sandra Muriel by 12.00 noon

Judge Jo Bridge, will hold a short workshop at the end of judging the progeny classes, to elaborate on her reasoning for her placements.

Sire's progeny (Huacaya class no 200 Suri class no 300) :

- Class is for 2 progeny by one sire,
- which may be male or female but not a wether.
- None of the progeny can be under 6 months of age,
- Do NOT have to be owned or bred by the sire's owner,
- but must be registered to the named Sire.

Dam's progeny (Huacay class no 201 Suri class no 301) :

The class is for 2 progeny by 1 dam, same rules apply to the dam's progeny as above, with the addition:

- The Dam's progeny must be sired by 2 different sire's and
- must be at least 11 months different in age.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Mini Vet Day on Birthing – 3rd April – SOLD OUT

2022 Fleece Show – 9th July – More details to be shared soon

WELFARE

SPRING HUSBANDRY TIPS

1. Boost Vaccinations for Pregnant Mums

Don't forget to provide pregnant mums with a shot of your usual clostridial vaccination between 8 and 2 weeks before they are due to unpack (check amounts and dates with your vet) – this ensures they pass immunity to their cria whilst still in the womb)

2. Mites

As always be on the lookout for mites particularly in the armpits and under the tail. There are several treatments available – if unsure you should speak to your vet

3. Feet

Keep checking regularly – particularly in the wet weather – watch out for infection on the bottom of the pad and between the toes – if they are infected you will often notice the smell and a discharge. If this occurs talk to your vet as antibiotics may be required

4. Plasma Supplies

If possible and you are expecting births, take blood from geldings for plasma, alternatively identify a reliable and geographically close source.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT FOR THE COMING MONTHS

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

With spring just around the corner, we are due the next flurry of grass (hurrah!). Whilst I do not profess to be an agronomist, here are some points to consider whilst grazing your alpacas in the coming months:

1. Stocking density

This will vary between systems and influenced by many factors – some of which you can control and others you can't! For example, climate, soil quality and pasture re-growth, dietary requirements of the group, type of supplementary feed, rotation frequency and parasite burden. As a guide, the British Alpaca Society (BAS) suggest:

- Rough grazing land: 4 to 5 alpacas per acre
- Permanent pasture which is over five years old: 5 to 6 per acre
- Temporary pasture which is less than five years old: 6 to 8 per acre

2. Sward type and height

Research has confirmed that alpacas will selectively browse opposed to graze; more like goats than sheep. As such, they prefer a mix of grasses and forage herbs that complement their high fibre, low sugar diet. Ensure your pasture and boundaries are checked for poisonous plants such as Ragwort, Laurel, Laburnum and Yew.

As alpacas are unable to extrude their tongues, they rely on the contact between the incisor teeth and the top dental pad and their unique split upper lip, which is very sensitive and mobile, to eat and promote this behaviour. In order to maximise intakes grazing should be maintained between 3cm and 10cm. Too low will impact on re-growth and risk exposure to soil-based organism and too high will be anatomically challenging and may impact body condition.



3. Inputs and Outputs

Forage and soil analyses are a really useful tool for diet formulation and pasture management. Body condition scoring is essential to determining whether the inputs are meeting the requirements. Deficiencies in minerals such as selenium, cobalt and iodine (assuming on an ADE regimen) can be detrimental to growth and reproduction and are particularly important with the impending breeding season and quick grass growth where their levels can be diluted.

4. Water

Alpacas have the ability to absorb water from the diet through their specially adapted spiral colon BUT drinking water is still the most essential feed component. Females preparing to lactate and warmer weather conditions will increase the amount of water consumed anywhere from 2L/head/day to 12L/head/day! Troughs should be cleaned regularly and located with easy access to promote intakes.

5. Suns out - Guns Out!

Rising temperatures mean parasite eggs will be starting to hatch on the pasture and burdens will be increasing. Alpacas are particularly sensitive to *Nematodirus battus*, which are usually the first to appear on mass, and *Haemonchus contortus* (barbers pole worm), which can cause profound anaemia.

Please avoid routine worming without knowing which group/individual is affected and with what worm, which is best achieved by worm egg counting on faecal samples (alpaca specific). This information dictates which wormer to use and avoid the risk of introducing/exacerbating resistance. The best way to reduce pasture burdens is to poo pick! The Oct 2021 Newsletter was based on this if you need a refresher.



6. Pasture Diseases

a) Listeria

This neurological condition is fairly prevalent in alpacas and arises from bacteria, isolated in soil, entering through the mouth and causing micro-abscesses in the nerves of the face and eventually to the brain. Early treatment can be successful but typically of alpacas, they don't display symptoms until quite late stages of disease. Mole hills are the biggest contributor of contaminating pasture and cut forage – if you have any evidence of mole disturbance on your ground ensure you tackle it sooner rather than later to minimise the risk. This year seems especially 'moley'!



b) Neospora

Whilst not widely reported in alpacas, work out of Europe has isolated this parasite and with the breeding season upon us I thought it was worth a mention....

Essentially, this protozoal parasite is spread by dogs and foxes that eat infected placenta and subsequently shed it in their faeces, which contaminates the pasture. As it is the same parasite that affects sheep and cattle, it is possible a wild vector could introduce this into your herd from other stock. The best way to prevent this disease is by having good biosecurity and fencing to keep wildlife out, dispose of placenta appropriately and remove any dog faeces.



On that note.... I'm back to the lambing shed!

Please let Wendy or I know if you would like any of these topics expanded on in the next Newsletter.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the CCA Birthing Refresher.

Sarah x

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BOVINE TB - ROLL OUT OF PCR TEST

a message from Defra (from the BAS Weekly Newsletter 04/03/22)

Bovine TB – roll out of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test

Accurate diagnostic and confirmatory testing is the cornerstone of any disease eradication programme. The current “gold standard” method for bTB testing from tissue samples (for bovine and non-bovine farmed animals) remains traditional microbiological culture. However, although well established, it takes between 6 and 22 weeks to obtain a final result, from that process.

That’s why we’re really pleased to tell you that from 30 March APHA will be using a PCR test in prescribed scenarios (detailed below). The recently validated PCR test can detect the bacterium that causes bTB directly from tissue samples collected at post-mortem inspection. Its major advantage – compared to culture - is that it will typically take within three weeks to get a test result.

FAQs

What is a PCR test?

Each *M. bovis* bacterium contains unique DNA which carries the genetic instructions for its development, function, growth and reproduction. PCR is a molecular-based laboratory technique which identifies tiny amounts of DNA present within *M. bovis* bacteria and amplifies it (by making millions of copies of a specific sequence of the target DNA) to produce a quantity which is then detectable.

How will the new test be used by APHA?

From 30 March the PCR test will be used (as ‘business as usual’) in Great Britain for tissue samples from carcasses of:

- TB slaughterhouse cases in cattle and non-bovines i.e. animals routinely sent for private slaughter with suspicious lesions of TB identified;
- Non-bovine animals such as camelids, goats, pigs, sheep and farmed deer that are removed as TB test reactors, direct contacts or clinical TB suspects. And cases where suspicious TB lesions are identified on diagnostic post-mortem examination in a veterinary laboratory; and
- Domestic pets (cats and dogs) and exotic species of animals (e.g. in zoological collections) submitted to APHA for laboratory investigation.

How does the accuracy of the PCR test compare with microbiological culture?

In the test validation study, the *M. bovis* PCR test produced equivalent results to the traditional microbiological culture method.

How will the PCR test improve the management of TB incidents?

When a bovine slaughterhouse case is identified, the herd of origin’s officially TB free status is suspended pending the final test results from the laboratory. Animals can only move on or off the affected holding under a licence issued by APHA. Currently, tissue samples taken from the carcass are submitted for microbiological culture - that process can take up to 22 weeks to complete and during that time the herd remains under movement restrictions.

Rather than relying on culture results PCR testing will be used. The process will be much quicker – with test results typically available within three weeks. If the test results are negative restrictions on the herd will be lifted thus limiting the negative impact of movement restrictions. In most cases it will also eliminate the need for a check test – currently herd check tests (using the skin test) may be carried out pending the receipt of culture results.

The new PCR test will also allow rapid detection of *M. bovis* in tissue samples from carcasses of non-bovine animals, to confirm or negate infection in TB test positive animals, suspected cases of TB identified at post-mortem examination in the laboratory, or during routine post-mortem meat inspection in the slaughterhouse.

Are there any limitations of the *M. bovis* PCR test?

An important limitation of the test is that it is not possible to apply whole genome sequencing (WGS) directly on the *M. bovis* target DNA sequence that is amplified through PCR testing (i.e. the PCR product). WGS is only possible with DNA obtained from a pure microbial culture. This means that APHA will not be able to rely exclusively on the PCR test for case management and epidemiological analyses of TB breakdowns. Therefore, even when a PCR test yields a positive result, to allow full analyses of the breakdown and identify the probable source of infection, subsequent culture will still need to be carried out to allow WGS to be performed. Not all of the PCR positive samples from a given breakdown will be subject to WGS and it will not interfere with or delay APHA’s decisions to manage the TB breakdown.

For a small proportion of samples, PCR may not provide a valid test result. In these cases, culture will need to be carried out to obtain a final result (and in the case of non-bovine samples, additionally WGS).

Further information about the *M. bovis* PCR test is available on the [TB hub website](#).

AND FINALLY... SH*T sometimes happens ...



Storm Eunice unhelpfully moved this CCA member’s brand new field shelter before it had been anchored to the ground in its final location ☹ Remember, however heavy and immovable they may seem, mother nature is stronger – anchor them down !!

And this was not what we wanted to happen at the end of a full poo pick the other day ☹ Far too heavy for us to move, we had to deploy the tractor to put it back on its feet !

