

CLI Shows: A New Twist

By Dale Peterson

Llama history was made this past April in Conroe, Texas, with the birth of the CLI Conroe Classic. This was a llama show of significance because it was the first llama show sanctioned by CLI. The show was small but nonetheless significant, because it offered an alternative venue for llama owners to showcase their llamas and consequently their breeding programs. The second CLI show was held two months later in Louisville, Kentucky. It also was small but packed with education before and during the show. Oral reasons at both shows were given in intricate detail and in terms exhibitors and spectators could understand. The Conroe Classic was judged by Kathy Peterson (fiber) and Dale Peterson (conformation). The Louisville Classic was judged by Ulin Andrews (conformation) Anthony Stachowski (fiber/conformation) and Mary Reed (fiber). Together these five judges have over 140 years experience as judges.

The evening before the show in Louisville, all exhibitors gathered around the "Chuck Wagon" for steak dinner at Jack and Tracy Pearson's motor coach. Before, during and after dinner, which included the judges, a round table discussion took place. Many questions were asked about CLI's vision, how it operates and its plans for the future. There was lengthy discussion about the state of the llama industry and positive steps that can be taken to return showing to a fun, fair and friendly experience. Dale and Kathy Peterson, along with Anthony Stachowski freely discussed CLI's future. Those attending the dinner got a very vivid look at exactly what CLI is all about and they liked it. Some openly admitted they were very apprehensive about attending the show because of all that they had heard about CLI. They went on to say that, now that they have heard what CLI is all about from the people that actually know, they are very impressed and pleased that



another show, registry and marketing alternative exists for them.

Before the show began the next morning, Ulin Andrews and Anthony Stachowski gave a seminar. Ulin did an outstanding job providing practical, understandable terminology and facts about conformation. Anthony explained in detail how various conformational faults contribute to health problems in llamas and also the roles proper nutrition and health care play in the overall conformation and soundness. The audience and exhibitors had the opportunity to ask questions during this seminar.

The format of CLI shows is different, the show divisions are different and the judging also is very different from typical shows.



Judge Anthony Stachowski

CLI Show Format

- Exhibitors, judges and spectators at CLI shows are encouraged to spend time together before, during and after the show. All are encouraged to have open, honest dialogue. This helps judges, exhibitors and spectators stay on the same page and allows for practical, real time problem identification and brainstorming to develop solutions.

- There is no mystery about what llamas are competing in the show ring. In fact, as each llama enters the ring the announcer gives the name of the llama and its sire and dam, along with the farm name, the exhibitor's name and the name of the handler. These facts are repeated several times during each class. CLI has confidence in the integrity of its judges and also believes that the audience and exhibitors would like to know some information about the llamas in the show ring. This accomplishes several things. First, all involved feel they are a part of the show, because they are kept informed. Second - and this becomes very important as the sizes of shows grow - it can help with marketing. If another exhibitor or spectator is interested in a particular llama, information about the llama's sire, dam, owner, etc. can be helpful in their decision making process. Third, and most important, all exhibitors and their llamas - whether their llama places or not - have their names announced and feel appreciated for being part of the event.

CLI Show Divisions

- CLI shows divisions are separated by fiber type instead of by fiber length. So, long (or heavy) wool competes with light and medium wool.

- Divisions include Traditional, Silky and Suri fiber, separated further by ages into male and female groups. CLI believes that conformation is conformation regardless of what coat the llama is wearing.

- CLI gives exhibitors guidelines for determining which fiber division is cor-

rect for each llama and also examines the entries to ensure they are in the correct divisions.

Traditional Fiber Type

- Double coated (undercoat & guard hair) -Guard hair may be minimal
- Crimp to the fiber - Fiber has “crinkle” - not straight
- Soft handle
- Loft to the fiber (does not lay flat)
- Fiber length may be short, medium or long

Silky Fiber Type

- Slick to the touch
- Straight
- High luster
- Low loft (not fluffy)
- Minimal to no lock structure

Suri Fiber Type

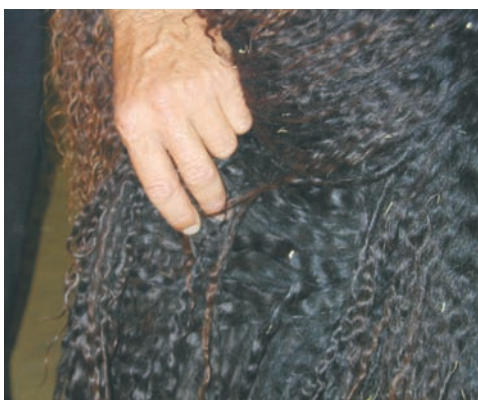
- Straight fiber (no crimp)
- Cool to the touch
- High luster
- Silky handle
- Locks formed to skin
- Types of locks: Straight, Fan, Flat, Curl/pearl, or Pencil

CLI Judging Process

• In the Traditional classes, all judges view the same llamas at the same time and then consult with one another to determine the class placing. This gives the exhibitor the advantage of multiple judges viewing his llama in the ring. CLI awards first, second and third place ribbons and fourth through tenth winners get top ten ribbons. - Traditional classes are judged on conformation only.

• Silky and Suri classes are judged separately on conformation and fiber. The Silky competition begins in much the same way as the Traditional with the exception that there is a judge for conformation and a judge for fiber. As with the Traditional classes, first, second, and third place ribbons are awarded and fourth through tenth winners get top ten ribbons. In addition, a first place ribbon for fiber and a first place ribbon for conformation are also awarded in each class. So, it is possible for a winner to be awarded as few as one

first place ribbon or as many as three first place ribbons in a single class (if that llama wins fiber, conformation and overall first place). However, only the



overall first place winner advances to the Championship round.

• After the class placings have been made, the judges give extensive oral reasons and fully critique each llama from the tips of its ears to the pads on its feet to the tip of its tail. When the judges have finished giving their oral reasons, the exhibitor and the audience know every strong point and every weakness of each llama in the class.

• In each Championship class, a Reserve Champion and Champion are chosen. So, there will be a total of six Reserve Champions and six Champions (male and female: Traditional, Silky and Suri) at each show.

At the Louisville event, Traditional classes were judged in the morning, followed by a fun lunch where exhibitors, judges and spectators relaxed and chatted. Mary Reed, Fiber Judge, joined the group during lunch and was available to answer questions. After lunch, the Silky classes were judged, followed by Suri. Fiber and conformation were judged separately in each of these classes. Extensive oral reasons were given by the

judges. Several exhibitors stated they were ecstatic over the amount of analysis and education they were given about conformation and fiber in general and in particular as it related to each of their show entries.

When CLI has enough shows in a season, it will hold a Grand Finally Llama Festival where only the reserve and champions from the year's shows will be allowed to compete for the Grand Champion Crystal Trophy in their division. There will only be six Grand Champions in any given year, one for Traditional, one for Silky and one for Suri, male and female. So, being selected “Grand Champion” for the year is a highly significant achievement for the llama and the breeder/exhibitor.

With emphasis on quality rather than quantity, CLI realizes their llama shows might not be as large as other shows. The cost to enter a CLI show will cause exhibitors to choose their very best to compete with other exhibitors' very best, giving prestige and notoriety to any llama that's good enough to win a CLI crystal trophy.



Judge Ulin Andrews

CLI offers a winning combination for everyone who participates:

- Competition with the very best llamas
- Fair and impartial judging by the very best
- Education and fun for all



"I was impressed with the atmosphere of open communications at the event. It was good to share opinions and ideas with other exhibitors, judges and spectators. The judges were outstanding and thoroughly evaluated every aspect of each llama. I appreciated the detailed critique of my llamas. I'm ready for the next CLI show!" Tracy Pearson

"I had a most enjoyable time, learning so much thanks to the help of some wonderful people...Tracy Pearson. Anthony...was really great...and I thought, with the judging, it was GREAT to hear how they chose what they did.....soooooo informative." Charlie Eckart

"I want to thank you for all you've done to make the first CLI event a great one. It was nice, while not showing, to sit in the stands and hear comments from other spectators going on and on about how educational, informative & entertaining the show actually was." Sandra Reynolds



"Thanks for a great fun-filled weekend at the CLI Louisville Classic! We enjoyed the good food and fellowship. We really appreciated the excellent education we received in the ring from the judges on evaluation of conformation and fiber. Looking forward to the next event." RC & Paula J Smith

"This truly was the beginning of a new fun and enjoyable venue for the llama community that is much past due. The show structure and format that you presently are following is without doubt the best ever for everyone - old and new! This format is what we have all been waiting for a long time! How refreshing to have three judges - on the same page - who were truly interested in each llama appearing before them for an honest and fair, unbiased critique, whether it be good or bad, but certainly not indifferent and uncaring." Ken Dunn