

READERS' COMMENTS

North American Show By Dale Peterson

In an interview about ALSA in the last issue of Cool Camelids, I made comments about shows I attended in 2005. Two readers took issue with my statements about the North American Show. Their comments are printed below in their entirety.

Letter from Donna Keith
Dear Dale:

I read with interest your interview with Cool Camelids magazine. I was saddened to read your comments concerning the North American Show in Kentucky. I have worked for years with the KY Llama and Alpaca Association (sponsors of this show), and we have done everything possible within the guidelines of ALSA and NAILE to make this show an enjoyable experience for the exhibitors.

The thing that distresses me most concerning your comments was the fact that your information was incorrect. How much better it would have been for all concerned if you had checked your facts before repeating them.

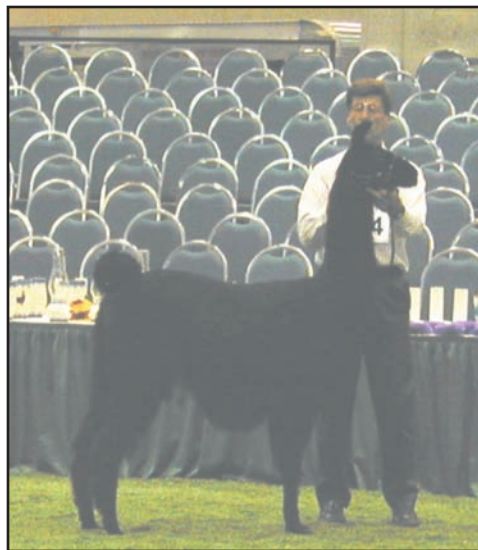
This year (2005) our number of animals was up from approximately 225 to 260. We had about 70 farms represented.

Since its inception, the NA Show has been an ALSA show. In 2003 and 2004 the BOD of KLAA decided to try to have a combined AOBA and ALSA show. We found that the paper work was overwhelming and the expense exces-

sive. After much consideration, the KLAA BOD chose to return to our original ALSA show. We realized this was not agreeable with everyone; however, we needed to do what worked best for us.

I'm sorry, as a spectator, that you found the NA Show boring. We will continue to have a positive attitude and try to make this an exciting week-end in November with hundreds of vendors, a great facility, good premiums, and a fair show with happy exhibitors.

Wishing you and yours the best in 2006, I remain
Sincerely, Donna Keith
Fantasy Star Llama.



Email from Charlotte Beaudin:

Personally I enjoy your "Cool Camelids" publication - interesting debates and articles. As a past President and current Board Member of the Kentucky Llama

and Alpaca Assoc. (KLAA) I would like to respond to Dale Peterson's critique of the 2005 North American Llama & Alpaca show. For your readers who might not be familiar with the North American - the North American Livestock Expo is held the first two weeks of November in Louisville, Ky. For two full weeks it showcases different types of livestock and holds a world championship Rodeo. The event is heavily advertised in print and on television and draws thousands of exhibitors and spectators from across the country. There are also agricultural presentations and a mammoth livestock-related vendor hall (think your average state fair on steroids). It is a wonderful opportunity to showcase your farm and introduce our wonderful animals to a wide variety of livestock people and spectators. The facilities are first rate - a large climate-controlled exposition hall, 2 large sawdust rings (no dirt or dust), ample seating for spectators, nice size stalls right up by the rings and excellent wash facilities.

For over 14 years KLAA has sponsored the North American Llama & Alpaca show which is held the first weekend of the Expo. For 2003 and 2004 we sponsored ALSA/AOBA shows. For the 2005 show the KLAA membership voted to go back to an ALSA-only format. Kathy Peterson remarked in her interview about

the decline in 2005 shows due to natural disasters, gas prices and animal health concerns. When we were putting our show together we had the same concerns. As it turned out our 2005 exhibitor numbers were up from 2004. In 2004 we had 125 llamas and 100 Alpacas. In 2005 we had 200 llamas and 60 Alpacas.

I too, attended the Llama Fest in Michigan - it was a great show and I had a good time. I'm sorry Dale didn't enjoy his experience at the North American. As one of the sponsors of the show I felt "no air of discontent", in fact 2005's show ran very smoothly. If Dale heard "sounds of grumbling" they weren't about our great premiums - handmade llama/alpaca pottery, ribbons and cash, our outstanding facilities, all the interesting things to do when you are not showing, our helpful and enthusiastic volunteers, or the large crowds of spectators that watched our classes. I would hate to have your readers pass up coming to the North American show based on Dale's critique of our show. A show is not held for over 14 years without having something to offer exhibitors. If anyone has questions or wants more information about the North American Llama & Alpaca show please feel free to contact me at dbeaudin14@hotmail.com Charlotte Beaudin

Commentary

When I gave my thoughts in the last issue of Cool Camelids about the Lamafest in Michigan, I noted that the event was well organized, overall attendance was great and there was a wide variety of vendors. I neglected to mention the enormous amount of volunteer time it must have taken to make Lamafest such a success. Also, I did

not give credit to the volunteers who organized the North American Llama Show and worked to ensure it ran smoothly. That was completely unintentional and I apologize for not giving credit and praise to all who volunteered and provided financial support to Lamafest and the North American Llama and Alpaca show. All of us realize that these events surely would be fewer and the quality, as well as the strength of the events, would be diminished severely, if it were not for the hundreds of volunteers that give unselfishly of their time.



Although Ms. Keith and Ms. Beaudin disagree with my assessment of the North American show, it still remains my assessment.

The City of Louisville is very proud of their Exposition Center and it is without question second to none in that part of the country. It is a wonderful facility to stage any livestock event. In fact many high profile camelid events, such as the AOBA Convention, the CLI Festival, and the Celebrity Alpaca Sale, are held there. Each year the North American Llama and Alpaca show is held in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition

which attracts many hundreds of vendors to service different areas of the livestock industry. These vendors are not attracted there exclusively for the llama and alpaca show as is the case with Lamafest in Michigan. In my assessment of the North American Llama and Alpaca show I did not mention any specific numbers of animals. I said the numbers "appeared" to be down from the year before.

When I entered the llama and alpaca area in 2004, I could hardly get around because stalls with animals in them covered practically every square foot of available space. When I entered the same area in 2005, I thought I was in the wrong place, but I wasn't. The llamas and alpacas were stalled on one side of the show ring. Beyond the stalls, show ring and bleachers, there was enough vacant space left over that, with some lines drawn on the floor, any two basketball teams could have played a game and still have had room for their bleachers.

I am not advocating that people not attend the North American Llama and Alpaca Show. On the contrary, I would like to see everyone mark the North American on their calendars as an event not to be missed, along with Lamafest. Both of these shows have run for many years, and they need to continue. But show management for the North American show needs to recognize that what they have done year after year is not working well any more and they need to step it up a notch or two. They need to create some excitement and make the event fun. This cannot be achieved by doing the same old tired thing over and over and over again. Ms. Keith said she was sorry I found the event boring. She should not be sorry I found the event boring; she should be sorry I was not the only one.