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October 24, 2016

Dear AOA Member,

It's that time again. Every year we at the Alpaca Research Foundation (ARF) send a letter to alpaca owners and breeders in North America in hopes of stimulating interest in the work we do and getting much-needed donations to continue support of our research funding. While this may be old information to most of you, there are new alpaca folks out there who require a short introduction to ARF. ARF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose goal is to financially support and encourage scientific research for the benefit of the North American alpaca community. 100% of our donations go to support research. Details regarding everything we do, and have done, can be found on our website www.alpacaresearch.org.

In the past we have funded both short-term and long-term research studies. Years ago we told everyone that not every research project would result in information you could take to the barn the next day, but that we would always try to follow up studies with intermediate goals with studies which would lead to finite useful conclusions. These studies invariably are much more expensive in terms of reaching useful information. Years ago, we funded the first large genetic study in alpacas, a study whose cost was about equal to our total bank account. This was a scary decision to make. The connections we made with that study ultimately resulted in the analysis of the alpaca genome at no cost to us. Without that initial decision, the rest would never have happened. Those days, however, are over. Due to markedly decreasing donations over the last several years we have been able to fund only 15% of research proposals we have received from universities and colleges of veterinary medicine from all over the country. As a result, we are focusing more on short-term studies, the conclusions of which can immediately translate to actions on your farms and are less expensive to support. This is not a bad thing; it's not a good thing; it's just not the total goal of our organization.

Two short-term studies were completed within the past year. One looked at the pharmacokinetics of buprenorphine, a powerful pain-killer, and the results will be useful for veterinarians working in the field with alpacas as well as in veterinary clinics and hospitals. The other study evaluated three anesthesia protocols with the goal of determining whether they could be useful in the field for minor surgical procedures. As it turned out, these protocols were deemed not fit for farm use, but are a very useful addition to anesthesia in clinics and hospitals.

Last year we stated that we were encouraging investigators to evaluate a vaccine against *Haemonchus contortus* (barber pole worm), a nasty parasite which has become a problem in alpacas and has become severely resistant to anti-parasitic drugs. We have just funded a study to look at the safety and efficacy of this vaccine (Barbervax) in alpacas. We have also funded a study to look at prebiotic and/or probiotic options for treating alpacas with chronic low body scores who have no signs or symptoms to suggest any pathological cause. The conclusions drawn from both of these studies can be utilized immediately on your farm.

If you feel that the work we do is important to you or to the North American alpaca community, in general, please make an effort to support us financially. There is no such thing as a donation that is too small. If you go to our website and click "Make a Difference," you will see all the options open to you to help us achieve our goals.

Sincerely,



Alan ("Abe") Rosenbloom, MD
President, Alpaca Research Foundation



Patricia Craven, PhD
Director, Alpaca Research Foundation