

Dr. Steve Purdy's January 2009 Update

January 2009 Update by Dr. Steve Purdy

Children: We stayed at the orphanage (better termed the children's home as no orphans are actually involved). There were 5 brothers there - aged 3, 6, 10, 14, and 17. There are 5 other children in that family with the older ones not at home. The parents work on a local farm and can't afford to take care of them. They are typical of the children who need our help and we took lots of photos of them and recorded video of the 6 and 10 year olds for our fundraising efforts.

We did see 2 kids in town who were there last year . Oscar is well and has a job in the Sunday market. They are no longer in residence, in fact no one is in residence because the home was officially closed in October 2008. The condition of the buildings and kitchen had deteriorated. So the 12 kids who were there are back with their families or who knows where. Kids have been picked to reside there because their parents were unable or unwilling to care for them. This is like the children's home where I grew up. While there they get food, shelter, can bathe, and go to school. Without that they have no chance of breaking the cycle of poverty and overpopulation that plagues their families. We can help some of these kids which is way better than not helping anyone!

The local person who has selected children in the past based upon family need is named Hernan and he is honest, intelligent, and good hearted. We suggest that he will remain on in that capacity when we build the new children's home. We felt very comfortable with him. We would need to find a couple to be in residence to take care of the kids and the buildings. Hernan could help with that.

We brought shoes and other clothing and coloring books, toothpaste, paper, pencils etc. from multiple people here in the US. We also purchased clothing and shoes for kids in the Sunday town market. They are thrilled with anything they get. We also fed them and they were hungry!!! Little kids ate 4 bowls of cereal and everything else put in front of them. They had recently come off the farm and there they only get one meal a day.

We visited the lots purchased already for the new children's home and it is a beautiful location along the river in town with a terrific view of the mountains to the east. The location is excellent for the home and for tourism and for a home base for field researchers. We are waiting for cost estimates on the construction and also Brooke Thomas has come up with what I think is more energy efficient plan taking advantage of sunlight for heating. I think we should ask the town to provide water and sewer service and also to provide furnishings including a refrigerator and washing machine. We need a good working hot water heater for showers and a bath tub.

Farm: We visited Father Paul's farm which provides livelihood for 3 families including 13 children. It is very remote about 1.25 hours from town (45 minutes on the road and 30 more off road). I was impressed with the animals we saw (800 alpacas, and sheep and some cows). Hernan is also the manager of that farm and he has done a good job it seems continually upgrading the herd. He takes animals to shows and buys good breeding stock if needed.

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They are missing some simple things which would greatly improve productivity. They are losing 30 to 40% of the crias annually because they do not use the Enterotox Clostridium A vaccine in pregnant moms and crias. We can help them with that and get a vaccination program started in the area. I am contacting Dr. Raul Rosario in Lima who makes that very successful vaccine. I see us helping them administer the first vaccinations this October and then leaving a second dose for dams and one for crias for the farm workers to administer.

We thought of ear tagging all of the animals and keeping individual animal records to evaluate male and female performance more strictly. The entire herd should be routinely body scored and evaluated for disease such as dermatitis, or intestinal parasites in poor doers. They have no idea what if any intestinal parasites are there and we could easily run those tests this summer and maybe in the fall also.

Portable ultrasound equipment could be used to identify problem animals early and try rebreeding or move them to a fiber herd or cull them. That could be done in June-July after the January to March breeding season. A second visit in October could recheck pregnancy status to further decide the fate of non pregnant animals.

I foresee periodic visits to work with the herd to improve efficiency. I believe Hernan is a good manager based upon what we know now and that he should be kept in that position. The mayor is very interested in all of our projects and pledged to help us and I think we need to take him up on that. We also thought one of the cows should be milked to provide milk daily for the children at least. Chickens could provide eggs. Those things would add a good source of protein to the diet.

A water powered generator could be installed to provide minimal electrical power for approximately \$1000 based upon the one we saw at Lucho Bareda's farm. This farm is beautiful with excellent potential and it would be perfect for teaching and as a model for other farmers in the area. It also is self sufficient mostly but right now the price of fleece is terrible.

Medical/dental: We got a tour of the new hospital building by the doctor and the mayor. The facility is very nice but it has no staff or equipment at the present time. It services 7 other clinics in the province and a woman needing a C section must travel 2 hours in a 2 WD van to Puno for the surgery, after she manages to get into Nunoa. They need a double cab 4WD truck. They are very interested in having periodic visits from US doctors and dentists. The local doctor is to get us a list of needed equipment next.

Tourism: This might have to wait until we have accommodations in the new children's home.