

Nunoa Project Veterinary Team Work December 3-16, 2015

Team members for this trip were: Dr. Steve Purdy, President, Nunoa Project Peru, Dr. Gerardo Diaz- Peruvian veterinarian from CONOPA, Lima, Peru, Dr. Kristen Peterson, Ely, Minnesota; attended Nunoa Project Intensive Camelid Practice Course as veterinary student, Catrina Price- final year veterinary student from Bristol University, England, Maren Raab- final year veterinary student from University of Wisconsin; attended Nunoa Project Intensive Camelid Practice Course in 2014, and Thompson Blodgett; photographer and videographer, animal handler from Ely, Minnesota.

We made alpaca herding community visits to: Coarita (Lampa District), Pucarayllu (Pucara District, as are the other 3 communities), Alto Pucarayllu, LaUnion, and Sapamaccota. Our work consisted of the following: selecting top quality females to be bred to Nunoa Project males in January- April 2016; evaluating breeding males and females for farmers, ear tagging preciously vaccinated pregnant females against Enterotoxemia which kills a high percentage of young crias; pregnancy examinations by palpation and ultrasound; vaccinating pregnant females against Enterotoxemia; teaching farmers body condition scoring and discussing causes and remedies for low scores; evaluating and treating skin disease (mange); treating eye infections; discussing fiber sales with community members including timing, pricing, and potential for future collaboration to receive higher prices (currently below \$3 per pound for raw fiber); demonstrating gentle handling techniques; and evaluating the 14 Nunoa Project superior breeding males we own. The expected distribution of NP males early January 2016 for use for 3 months is: Coarita- 2 Huacayas and 2 Suris; Pucarayllu- 2 Huacayas; Alto Pucarayllu- 2 Huacayas; and Sapamaccota- 3 Huacayas.

Evaluation of the current situation of our work in Pucara and Lampa

Dr. Diaz has done an excellent job coordinating the enterotoxemia vaccination program with the 5 communities. It is clear that a local coordinator is necessary for continued progress. Additional CONOPA veterinarians will visit the area during January and February to collect samples from deceased crias to evaluate cause of deaths to help formulate a prevention program. The response of most communities is very good with farmers becoming personally involved in the vaccination and reproduction programs. Dr. Diaz has seminars planned with the communities covering improving breeding practices and animal health.

Many animals are in poor body condition and they are in advanced pregnancy at this time. This is because it has been relatively dry during the ongoing rainy season. We found similar body condition in July due to the unusually cold temperatures and snow. We expect that animals may have poor lactations and crias will not grow well unless the rains catch up soon.

Communities are currently selling their fiber at various times to local buyers. We continue to look for a way to get them a better price for their fiber. A local coordinator is needed to work with the communities to get together a substantial quantity to obtain best pricing. The fiber also needs to be collected at a specific time and transported to the buyer. Members of all 5 communities attended a shearing information and training session provided by Michell Mill at Malkini in Puno. Electric shearing is not currently being used but there is a real fear that shearing animals closely will worsen the already poor body condition of pregnant females leading to adult, cria, and fetal deaths.

Work with Llama Pack Project, Urubamba, Peru

This new project for us near Cusco in the Sacred Valley is similar in goal to our alpaca work in the southern Andes- to improve use of camelids to increase family income and standard of living for the farmers. We stayed at the project's headquarters in Urubamba and visited one llama farmer and his family near Calca. There are 10 individual families which the Llama Pack project is working with to use their llamas to generate income during tourist treks in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The family we visited lives in a very remote location as do all of those involved in the project. It took us 3 hours of uphill climbing after 45 minutes in a truck to reach their property which was stunningly beautiful. They have 20 llamas of various sizes. Many had good fiber. The wife is a very talented weaver as evidenced by the beautiful ponchos worn by the family members during the herd work. We taught handling, haltering and body condition scoring while evaluating females for pregnancy with portable ultrasound.

Llama Pack Project will evaluate 10 herds total this next year and provide training for farmers. We met a professional fundraiser who happened to be visiting the LPP hostel. She worked with us during the llama evaluations and we will be speaking about helping LPP to obtain funding for their future endeavors. Our role is that of veterinary advisor, including animal evaluation and teaching improved animal husbandry in conjunction with our Peruvian collaborator CONOPA.

Trip Summary:

Good progress is being made on both the alpaca and llama fronts. There is great potential for improvement in the standard of living for camelid farmers in both areas. We should keep up our commitment to visit Peru twice yearly with veterinary teams. Each team of students and veterinarians has excellent and dedicated members who work hard, learn a great deal, and are changed positively by the experience. On the ground personnel are needed to make these programs successful and our fundraising efforts need to continue to allow this to happen.

Stephen R. Purdy, DVM
President, Nunoa Project Peru