

Working in Peru as a Latin American Veterinarian

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My life with South American camelids started in 2003 after received my veterinary degree at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). The contact with chulengos (guanaco crias) was my first challenge and it was not easy because they were very young and I was a naïve vet in SAC knowledge. They taught many things but first of all they taught me to be patient, to recognize the things that camelids really liked and what they disliked most.

Then I started to work with wild vicuñas and Andean communities from the north of Argentina, dealing with the poorest farmers and marginal production and helping the vicuñas to recover from near extinction. Then the llamas appeared in my life, working with breeding farms in all over Argentina.

Peru and Nuñoa in particular fulfilled my professional career. Nuñoa people helped me to understand why I am attached to SAC production in the Andean Mountains and why I am working with camelids. Alpaca and llama production is a marginal activity in almost all of South American, with few innovative technologies, big facilities or excellent males. Andean communities have something that I could not find anywhere else: ancient knowledge, tradition and passion for breeding camelids. That is why I continue working in Nuñoa against everything: climate conditions, tough environment, high altitude, lack of oxygen and big headaches. Twice a year I prepare my gloves, llama's socks, coveralls, boots, soroche pills and my sleeping bag knowing that people, families and communities in Nuñoa are waiting for us to improve their SAC production and have a better life.

Dr. Marcoppido working with Nunoa farmers and Dr. Purdy in Peru

