

Nunoa Project 2024- 18 years in the Altiplano and Counting!

Nunoa Project is a US nonprofit which conducts educational and service programs in the US and the Peruvian Andes. Nunoa Project veterinary teams have been working with camelid (alpaca and llama) farmers in Peru since July of 2006.



Dear interested parties-

Our international goals include elevating production in the alpaca herds of the Peruvian altiplano through improvements in reproduction management and fiber production from alpacas. We have placed multiple teams in the Andes for long term study and coordination with farmers, in addition to conducting our twice annual two week work trips. In 2024 we had teams in Peru in January and July-August. Our team members and leaders have come from many countries including the US, Peru, Argentina, New Zealand, the UK, Australia, Canada, and Germany. Our Peruvian veterinary coordinator maintains contact with Peruvian farmers in between work trips. All of us share a common goal of practical education and helping others to attain a better life.



The high altitude work at 13,000 to 15,000 feet is difficult and uncomfortable by US normal standards. It is very challenging on a daily basis, but the rewards are high. Small changes and interactions with the farm families can make a large difference in their lives. Team members have a strong sense of service to others and a clear perspective of how fortunate we are. Team leaders have developed from early starts with the Project as young veterinarians and students. Team members are students and veterinarians. New members start out inexperienced on each trip, but within a few days the teams are working like a well-oiled machine. It is an exercise in international problem solving, teamwork, and flexibility.

Team members commonly deal with altitude sickness and gastrointestinal upsets. The showers are cold or non-existent, the food is very basic, sleeping is interrupted due to the altitude, and it is very cold every night in the high Andes. The roads are

rough, but at least we have trucks to move between farms unlike most of the farmers with whom we work. The farmers are often wary of outsiders at first, but they soon recognize that the team comes to work hard and to share knowledge. The Peruvians are after all multigenerational camelid farmers. We come to learn from them also. The children are happy and very inquisitive. They want to see ultrasound images of pregnancies and watch closely as we work with their animals. They are curious to look into microscopes at whatever we are examining. They are the future scientists and leaders of the altiplano.



The work we do includes evaluation of breeding herds including body condition scoring as a measure of herd nutritional status, parasite surveys, evaluation of breeding males, measuring pregnancy rate with ultrasound imaging to evaluate reproductive efficiency, evaluations of breeding females and offspring, and talking to farmers about the problems they see in their herds to try to identify simple solutions. The farmers' primary cash product is alpaca fiber for which they are paid a low price by the pound regardless of quality. Our goals include achieving more fiber production from each herd, and the birth and survival of more offspring each year. We conduct training seminars and clinics which are well attended, with demonstrations and education on practical, hands on techniques.

The ***most recent trip to Nunoa and Lloque District*** in the Department of Puno in the southern Peruvian Andes was in July and August of this year. We interacted with local government veterinarians to assist farmers in these areas. We evaluated hundreds of alpacas and worked with new farmers. We delivered 200 cria coats manufactured in Peru to farmers. We will do this on each of our future work trips. We maintain contact with the farmers through the local alpaca association heads and our Peruvian veterinary coordinator, Dr. Jhoana Jimenez. Dr. Maren Raab from Wisconsin was a co-leader this past summer. She was a team member as a veterinary student a few years back. Dr. Heather Jenkins Brazzell from Virginia is our other experienced team leader and she will be there again in January 2025 with Jhoana.



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