

Promotion, Promotion, Promotion by Sue Wilde

In the early days of the llama industry promotion of llamas and the llama industry was effortless – the llamas promoted themselves! People arrived at your farm to purchase, the supply was short and the demand, high. I can recall answering ads in the Llamas Magazine and often the response was- they're sold! Auction sales were packed to the rafters with eager bidders and those who went away empty "trailed" were truly disappointed. With the increased population of llamas in North America this balance of supply and demand has shifted and we have our work cut out for us to promote our farms and the animals we have for sale.

After years of animals being imported from South America and the U. S. into Canada, the screening fees charged swelled the coffers of the Canadian Llama & Alpaca Association. This money was earmarked for the promotion of llamas and alpacas and is now being utilized for this purpose. The llama and alpacas divisions of the CLAA have launched separate promotions but with similar thrusts. The llama marketing group has produced an original half hour documentary encompassing all aspects of llama ownership. Marketing specialist, Lionel Wilson, was hired to arrange the airing of the video and pre-airing interviews with breeders in the areas where the show would be aired. Al Hicks, in conjunction with Rysko Pearson Productions, was hired to publish a new website exclusive to llamas. The llama marketing committee wrote and supervised the construction of the site and within a week of the documentary airing the site received over 850 hits! The CLAA office received 69 requests for information and extra help was hired to handle the mailing of the information packages. The public knows that llamas are still alive and well in Canada!

The next steps in the promotional campaign are placing ads in strategic magazines, a new llama brochure, and continued promotion of the website and documentary. No one can call you if they don't have your number and wishing just doesn't make it so. As owners of llamas who wish to breed, buy and sell we need to promote, promote, promote. Support shows, sales, local ag and trade shows, enter parades, visit schools and nursing homes. Host a farm open house, a club open house. Process your fiber and promote it and it's products. Utilize advertising opportunities in local papers, the CLAA Bulletin, the CQ magazine, build a website. Join the CLAA, join a local club. Not everyone in you club may not be of a like mind to you, or on the same path as you but diversity in one of the beauties of the llama! There are lots of roads to Rome and when the legions march together they get there a lot easier than every man for himself.

Repetition is the key to promotion- don't get discouraged, keep trying new avenues. Dr. Murry Fowler always said the first three rules of herd management are: 1. observe 2. observe 3. observe. Know your herd. I say the first three rules to success in the llama business are: 1. promote 2. promote 3. promote. Know the value of your herd and let others in on the secret. Location, location, location – yours!

Visit www.lamacanada.com today! On the members page you can access all our llama breeders through the map and read some of their stories. GO Llama!

New Logo and head shot as on the website.