

# Lessons from alpacas

## at Sabamba Alpaca Ranch

By Sally Schmidt

Visitors to the farm often ask us what is required to raise healthy alpacas.

My standard answer is it take 4 things:

1. A home that is safe from danger
2. A family (herd) consisting of numerous alpaca members
3. Good food and water
4. As little stress as possible

Usually our guest will then say “That sound good for me, too.”

Isn't that the truth! We've all had to deal with way too much stress and concern about danger in the past year. Now it's time for us to learn to accept that the corona virus will be staying with us. So how are we going to live with it successfully? Acceptance is the key to peacefulness. We have had to accept living with other viruses and this is no different.

One of the reasons the covid virus will continue to be with us is because it is an animal hosted virus. Animal hosted viruses cannot go away because we cannot eliminate all the animals from the earth. Today's science does tell us that animals are a dead-end host for covid which means they cannot transmit the virus back to humans. There are many viruses like this.

Owning and caring for alpacas has taught me that there are many similarities in sicknesses and treatments in both animals and humans.

For example, we use probiotics for an animal that is having stomach problems. Sometimes those problems are caused by the use of antibiotics. Sound familiar? Some of the antibiotics that we use on alpacas are the same as those used for humans. Of course, the dosage is different for everyone. We've all heard about ivermectin being a horse de-wormer. Did you know that ivermectin was used in humans long before it was ever used on animals? And yes, we also use it for alpacas. My veterinarian once had me go to the pharmacy to pick up a prescription for a sick alpaca. The pharmacist was very confused by the dosage but when I explained it was for an alpaca she understood. I say all of these things to help you understand that there is a closer relationship



between health care in animals and humans than you may have thought. Both humans and animals share this great place we call earth so why should any of this be a surprise?

Here is one other very interesting story relating to coronavirus and alpacas. Alpacas are part of the camel family. Llamas are also part of their family. Years ago, medical professionals discovered that llamas have an antibody that is very tiny compared to most mammals. It is called a nano-body. Because of its tiny size it adheres to viruses in a special way. This antibody has been proven to be effective in fighting (SARS) (MERS) (HIV) and the coronavirus. Isn't that interesting? The studies were conducted in Belgium. The following quote was taken from the summer 2020 edition of Alpacas Magazine.

“Researchers hope that camelid antibodies could be injected in someone who is not yet infected, but at a high risk like a health-care worker to provide temporary protection against exposure to the coronavirus.”

As I sit here at my desk typing I can look out over my pastures to see our different colored alpacas grazing on orchard grass. They are out with their family. One pasture filled with moms and their babies along with our momma's to be for 2022 and our two younger females born in 2020. Looking out the other window I can see one pasture of younger males, one pasture of our older, open (not pregnant) females, and two additional pastures of breeding males. Cars going by often stop just so that the travelers can gaze at them also. There is something so relaxing about watching them in their happy place. When it gets dark, they will head back to the barn for safe sleeping. Let's take a lesson from these adorable furry animals. Let's live our lives free of stress - hanging out with our family and friends, eating good food and resting in the evening. Be well — from the alpacas!

## The Sabamba story:

It's easy to see just how delightful and charming alpacas are in appearance, but it's their personalities and humanlike behavior — there are troublemakers! — that makes them so likeable. Sabamba Alpaca Ranch and Bed & Breakfast runs and resembles a happy family, in both the human and animal sense. In fact, it is within that theme that the farm got its unique name. "We took the first letter of our 7 children's names to create (it)," Sally explains. "We wanted them all to be a part of the ranch..." The "full service alpaca ranch for breeders, enthusiasts and anyone interested in alpacas" focuses on breeding for fleece production, which begins with sheering the animals in May. Each alpaca produces 5-10 pounds of fleece each spring (500 pounds of fiber = 1700 pairs of socks!), and varies in length and grade. The fleece, or fiber, is softest when the alpacas are at their youngest and similar to human hair with age becomes shorter and coarser. Alpacas come in 22 natural colors, but Sally often finds an unexpected variation while sheering the active and playful babies of the family. "We'll go through the process and think, OK, there's a white colored one, a grey colored one and if it's a cria (baby alpaca) it's usually hay colored because when they roll on the ground, the hay gets stuck in their baby fleece," she laughs. ■

### Sabamba Alpaca Ranch and Bed & Breakfast

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## Old World Christmas Market at Osthoff Resort

December 3-12 • Daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sabamba Alpaca Ranch will be featured at the annual market at Osthoff Resort. Located at 101 Osthoff Avenue in Elkhart Lake, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily "experience the holiday 'gemütlichkeit' of a traditional European Christmas Market, reminiscent of the centuries-old German Christ kindles market. International and regional artisans displaying their specialty wares, European delicacies, German Christmas music and Father Christmas are all a part of the 18th annual Old World Christmas Market."




For more information, visit [www.christmasmarketatosthoff.com](http://www.christmasmarketatosthoff.com).

The farm store located at Sabamba Alpaca Ranch hours until Christmas are Monday through Saturday 9-5, closed on Sunday. Extended hours Wednesday and Thursday to 7 p.m. The farm store also will be open during the Osthoff Resort show. Shop online at [sabambaalpaca.com/shop/](http://sabambaalpaca.com/shop/)

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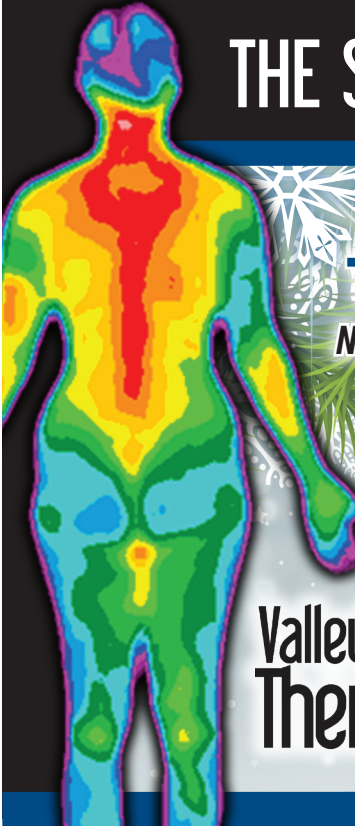
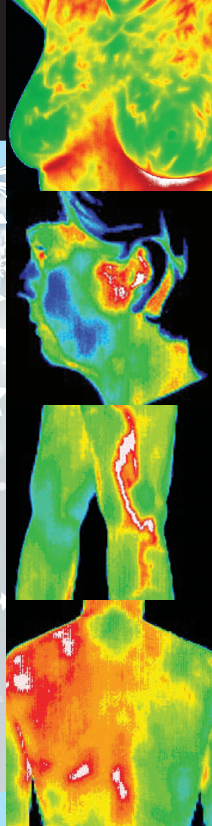
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*Merry Christmas*

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