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Animal Crackers

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Llamas

In recent years, llama raising has become a multimillion dollar industry. Western Hemisphere camelids include the alpaca, guanaco, vicuna and llama, and in the Eastern Hemisphere there are the dromedary and bactrian camels. Llamas are raised for use as pack animals and as companion animals. Their wool may be of value but they need several years to grow back a new coat. In the American West, they are being used as watch animals for sheep. They are aggressive toward coyotes and many shepherds say they are more effective than dogs, guns, electric fences, and chemical repellents.

Llamas may sell for \$5,000 to over \$50,000 or even more. The stud fee for a male can be as much as \$1,500. Most llama farms are in the West but it is said that there are about 100 farms in Pennsylvania. Four to six llamas can live comfortably on the same acreage as a single horse. They eat chow in the winter months and hay and grass in the warm weather. Their thick wool helps the llamas in cold weather but can make them uncomfortable in the summer. Births almost always take place in the fall and spring, avoiding very hot and cold weather. The gestation period is about a year and delivery almost always comes about noon.

Llama trekking is popular in the West. They are not built for riding (they weigh 300 to 400 pounds) but as an alternative to back packing, they transport supplies for camping trips to high country. Llamas have keen eyesight and hearing and often alert their human companions to wildlife along the trail. They are remarkably quiet and gentle animals, domesticated thousands of years ago in South America for use as a pack animal.

Before you decide on any exotic animal as a pet, investigate! Be sure you know what is required and what you can expect. Many people want something different but cannot cope after a few months.

In the language of the Incas, llama is pronounced "yama," the pronunciation sometimes used instead of "lama." However you say it, do some studying before you try to make a fortune with llamas.

Campylobacteriosis

Campylobacter species are one of the causes of gastroenteritis in man and animals, including dogs and cats. It is worldwide in distribution and the incidence appears to be increasing. However, this could be because special culture techniques are required, and the special media now are available commercially.

Clinical signs of campylobacteriosis are non-specific and typical of any acute gastroenteritis (severe diarrhea sometimes with vomiting). The most severely affected are young, debilitated or immunocompromised animals. The treatment includes fluids and antibiotics. In some cases, there may be chronic, recurrent infections.

There is some controversy over the importance of *Campylobacter* infections because the organism may be isolated from normal and diarrheic animals. It may be considered an opportunistic pathogen and can be a problem in crowded, unsanitary quarters. There is possibility of transmission from pets to humans and severely affected animals should be handled carefully.

Artificial Insemination

The use of frozen or fresh extended semen is becoming quite common. The semen may be shipped overnight for artificial insemination rather than shipping any of the dogs involved. The conception rate is about 75% which compares favorably to natural breedings.

Regardless of the breeding method used, proper ovulation timing is crucial. Special kits for progesterone testing are commercially available for use by veterinarians, along with vaginal smears, to determine correct time for insemination.

Recently the American Kennel Club has approved the use of imported semen from any country whose stud book is recognized by the AKC. There are special requirements, including prior approval. The extraction, storage, shipping and insemination must be done under veterinary supervision. For some time, American frozen semen has been shipped abroad with successful results. There are a number of semen freezing centers in this country as well as some in Australia, New Zealand and France.

Popular Dog Breeds

In 1991, the American Kennel Club registered 1,379,544 dogs. The Labrador retrievers were in first place, becoming the sixth breed to head the list in the last 65 years. The German shepherd was most popular 1926-1928, the Boston terrier from 1929-1935, the cocker spaniel from 1936-1952 and from 1983-1990, the beagle from 1953-1959 and the poodle from 1960-1982.

Following the Labradors in the "Top Ten" were cocker spaniels, poodles, Rottweilers, German shepherd dogs, golden retrievers, beagles, dachshunds, chow chows and Shetland sheepdogs.

There were 134 breeds on the 1991 list. Three breeds were added — Australian shepherds, Chinese crested and miniature bull terriers. There are 146 breeds and varieties competing at championship shows. For show purposes, the American Kennel Club designates varieties in nine breeds. Cocker spaniels are black, ASCOB (all solid colors other than black) and parti-color; bull terriers are colored or white; English toy spaniels are King Charles and Ruby (solid-colored) and Blenheim and Prince Charles (broken-colored). Three breeds are divided by coat - dachshunds are long-haired, smooth and wirehaired, while collies are rough or smooth and Chihuahuas are smooth coat or long coat. Size divides the other three breeds - beagles are not exceeding 13 in. and 13 in. but not exceeding 15 in., poodles are toy, miniature and standard and Manchester terriers are standard and toy. The standards for the breeds give a complete description of the varieties.

Many more breeds of dogs are recognized in different countries and by other registries in the United States. The American Kennel Club is the principal agency for registration of pure-bred dogs in this country. It is an independent, non-profit organization and its efforts include public education on responsible dog ownership. In 1991, there were 1,143 Dog Shows held under American Kennel Club rules.

Book Reviews

The Complete Cat Book by Richard H. Gebhardt (Howell Book House, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022, \$24.95).

Cats have surpassed dogs as the most popular pets in America. This book gives expert advice on every aspect of buying, owning and caring for a cat.

A chart gives evaluations of activity level and grooming needs — high, medium or low. Of the 44 breeds listed, 16 may produce kittens which are not showable (the Scottish Fold may have straight-eared kittens). Nine breeds have genetic concerns (susceptibility to kidney problems in Abyssinians and spinal problems in the Manx).

The cat fancy in the United States was officially born in 1895 when a cat show was held in Madison Square Garden in New York. It is probable that cats were fully domesticated in Egypt about 1600 B.C. In 1990, the six North American registries sponsored 824 shows. The largest breed is the Ragdoll and the smallest is the Singapura. There are color photographs of the breeds, with notes on their origin, development as well as CFA Standards.

About the origin of the Devon Rex, we read "In 1960 a kitten with wavy hair was discovered in a litter of straight-coated feral kittens in Devonshire, England. The father of this litter was believed to have been a tomcat with a similar wavy coat who lived in an abandoned tin mine near Buckfastleigh in Devonshire. The mother of the litter was a tortie-and white normal-coated stray that raised her kittens in a field...."

The Siamese is well over two centuries old, and perhaps a good deal older. The Persian is the most prized - and plentiful - of all pedigreed cats. They are recognized in nearly fifty colors and patterns. It was introduced to Europe by an Italian traveler more than 350 years ago.

Three important questions are answered. Your cat should be altered unless purchased for breeding. A cat is best kept indoors. Do not declaw if this can be avoided.

There are chapters on Care and Housekeeping, Reproduction, Showing and Judging. An excellent glossary, information on cat registries, a bibliography, as well as a list of feline health and welfare organizations is included.

This book is an authoritative reference and may well be called "America's Official Cat Book."

American Kennel Club Dog Caring and Training (Howell Book House, \$9.95 paperback).

This is a basic reference book that tells you what to consider before getting a dog, how to train and care for a puppy, travelling with or boarding your dog, how to recognize common signs of illness and when to call your veterinarian.

"Look beyond the enchanting puppy before you buy, and try to envision what a year's worth of growth will deliver: a perfect fit or potential problem?"

Seven pages of excellent drawings give a lesson in anatomy and structural faults. There is a glossary and bibliography. Information on different competitions - dog shows, obedience trials, field trials, hunting trials, tracking tests and herding programs - explains these activities.

This is a good book to read before you bring your first dog home and one that answers many questions for the novice and more experienced owner.