

Florida Alpaca & Llama Association Inc.

www.falainc.com

LATE SUMMER 2026

Wow! Summer is in full swing, and I am already looking forward to the fall! I hope everyone is staying cool and comfortable during this heat with plenty of fans, pools, electrolytes, and shade for both themselves and their camelids!

Summer Educational Seminar

Over the summer, FALA hosted an educational seminar where our members had the opportunity to learn about a variety of interesting and important topics. Sessions included how to dye fiber, how to choose and properly fit a pack, common diseases and potential parasite threats, and how to select the right livestock guardian dog for your needs.

The day was packed with knowledge, fun, and great fellowship! We strive to make each educational seminar both informative and enjoyable so that all of our members—from beginners to seasoned camelid enthusiasts—can continue learning and expanding their knowledge.

Please let the board know if there are any specific topics or areas of interest you would like us to consider for future educational seminars!

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Fairs and Shows

We have also been busy planning for the upcoming year, including the FALA Winter Classic Show and the Florida State Fair.

If any members would like to volunteer at either of these events or are interested in learning more about showing their animals, please let us know! We are more than happy to help guide you and get you where you need to be.

FALA Winter Classic Show

Location: Haley Stables, Lady Lake, Florida **Dates:** January 16–17, 2027 **Judge:** Isaac Beck

Florida State Fair Llama and Alpaca Show

Location: Tampa, Florida **Dates:** February 11–14, 2027 **Judge:** Lauren Wright

Elections

We will be holding elections for the upcoming year, and several positions will be available. If you are interested in running for a position and helping with the organization and planning of events, please contact John Previte at jprevite@verizon.net.

Getting involved on the board is a wonderful way to help shape the future of FALA and contribute to our growing camelid community!

Youth

Any youth interested in participating in the Florida State Fair should contact Tracy Weaver at lotsallamas@earthlink.net to make sure they have all the important dates, deadlines, and information needed to participate.

Annual Meeting Sunday, November 15, 2026

This year's Annual Meeting will be held at Withlacoochee State Park in Dade City, Florida. Our annual hike and challenge will take place in the morning, followed by lunch and the annual meeting.

This is always a wonderful day filled with fun, fellowship, and time spent with fellow members and friends. I look forward to seeing everyone there!

As we head toward an exciting fall and winter season, I hope to see many of you at our upcoming events. Thank you to all of our members, volunteers, and board make FALA smembers for helping uch a wonderful organization!

Sarah Strautmann, FALA President
Heaven Sent Ranch

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HAVING FUN WITH CAMELIDS...IN THE COMMUNITY

Great job Sarah Strautmann and Candice Miller for organizing this wonderful event. I had fun watching and listening to the spectators who were very excited to see the alpacas and llamas!

The young exhibitors did an excellent job creating and setting up the courses and performing! Kudos also to Maya Miller for judging, and teaching by providing positive and constructive feedback! The Camelids were very impressive too!



2026 FALA EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

Thanks to everyone who participated and attended this year's FALA Educational Seminar. As usual there was a lot of caring and sharing! We were extremely thankful to have back Dr Lisa Edwards again this year from UF. She brought Dr. Marcela Valdes Soto with her and they shared a lot of important information on Camelid health. Please click on the link below for copies of their presentations. <http://www.falainc.com/Links.html> While you missed a lot of the detailed conversations, these presentations still offer great information.

We needed a 3rd opinion, so "Dr. Kyle Llama" offered his opinion on a few topics. He took time out of his busy schedule of showing off all of his Pack options. Fleece was flying and dying all different colors. We discussed guardian dogs and so much more. Always



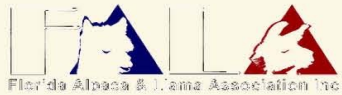
2026 FALA EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR





FLORIDA CAMELID VETERINARIANS

CITY / AREA	VETERINARIAN / COMPANY	PHONE
Brooksville	Dr. Doug Davenport	352-279-2986 / 352-797-9030
Gainesville	University of Florida - Large Animal Hospital	352-392-2229
Gainesville	Dr. Jennifer Frank - Mobile Vet Services	352-339-8948
High Springs	Dr. Natalie J. Lamneck - O'Leno Vet Services	386-931-8711
Inverness	Dr. Angela Spann - Suwannee Valley Veterinary	386-684-4077
Lake county and surrounding counties	Dr. Katelyn Menacho - Oak Hammock Vet Services	407 454-1518
Lake, Sumter, Marion, and surrounding counties	Dr. Halie Isaacson - A Farmer's Vet	407-947-9876
Ocala	Dr. Michael Lokai - Central Equine Hospital	352-237-6211
Ocala	Dr. Yayanti Sondag - Ocala Farm Vet	904-434-4452
Ocala	Dr. Joan M. Tennant - Mobile Vet	352-304-6494
Starke	Dr. Michael Ricker - Bradford Pet Care Hospital	904-964-3906
Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Hernando	Dr. Jessica Paris - Keystone Vet Services	706-344-3110
DENTIST		
Advanced Equine Dentistry - Mobile	Dr. Richard Grist / Dr. Chester W. Taylor	727-484-4473



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U.S. NEWS

World's oldest llama enjoys comforting chronically ill children in North Carolina



2 of 4 | This photo provided by Victory Junction shows kids posing for a photo with Llama Whitetop at Victory Junction, a camp for chronically ill children, in Randleman, N.C., in 2023. (Victory Junction via AP) [Read More](#)

BY **HALLIE GOLDEN**

Updated 2:49 AM EDT, March 5, 2025

A bucktoothed llama that spends his days comforting chronically ill children at a North Carolina camp founded by [NASCAR](#) royalty has been crowned the world's oldest llama in captivity.

At 27 years and more than 250 days, the selfie- and snuggle-loving llama called Whitetop dethroned Dalai Llama, the [Guinness World Records](#) announced last week. Dalai lived on a ranch in Albuquerque and was announced as the oldest in 2023 shortly after his 27th birthday.

Whitetop was donated to the [Victory Junction](#) camp in 2006, just two years after race car driver [Kyle Petty](#) — the son of NASCAR great Richard Petty — and his family founded the camp in honor of Petty's own son, Adam, who was 19 when he was killed in a 2000 crash while practicing for a race.

The year-round free camp sits on 84 acres (34 hectares) in the Petty hometown of Randleman, North Carolina, about 75 miles (121 kilometers) west of Raleigh. It's designed for children with conditions that include cancer, kidney and heart disease, cerebral palsy, Spina Bifida and an array of neurological and physical disabilities.

Whitetop has become known for his relaxed, sweet and empathetic personality. His go-to move is to lie still while campers pet him, which can comfort children and give them important sensory input, said Billie Davis, the camp's barn director.

"He really gets to help campers come out of their shell when they interact with him," she said. "He can be kind of intimidating at first, but once they come over to him and love on him and pet on him, they just realize how sweet he is."

One of his best friends is a miniature highland cow named Gus-Gus, who tends to forget Whitetop is a llama and enjoys jumping on him. Whitetop

also likes to roll in fresh wood chippings, chomp on soaked alfalfa and pose for selfies.

“If you try to take a picture of him from the side, he’s not into it,” Davis said. “He will, like scoot in there and try to get his face from a side profile so that it’s like he’s cheesing.”

Davis attributes Whitetop’s long life to great veterinary care and exercise, as well as it simply loving his job.

The average life span for a llama is 15 years, according to the Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance.

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Whitetop has developed arthritis in his twilight years but otherwise is very healthy, said Davis. And the only times the llama becomes upset is when Gus-Gus, along with two miniature donkeys named Jed and Jethro, leave him alone.

Stephanie Wilkerson, 33, first went to the camp’s family weekend in 2006 after she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. She said she was initially a little nervous around Whitetop but soon realized petting him and giving him hugs made her feel better.

“When I started stroking him more and more and more, I got more relaxed,” said Wilkerson, who lives in Thomasville, North Carolina.

With Whitetop's newfound fame in longevity, the camp has started selling limited edition T-shirts displaying Whitetop with sunglasses and the words, "Still Spit'n." The proceeds go to the camp.

Although Davis said Whitetop would like people to know not all llamas spit on you.

"Typically llamas only spit when they are scared, uncomfortable or territorial over something," she said. "And he just loves his job so much that he doesn't do it."



2026 Calendar of Events

September 27 , 2026 — FALA Meeting 1pm Social 2pm Meeting

Terry Thorspecken, Villa Llama, 33330 County Road 437, Sorrento, FL
 (Special drive instructions: you reach address at mailbox, drive down access road about 1/4 mile, past a nursery, then you'll see my gate. Drive up to the house.)
 Bring your chairs.

November 15, 2026 — FALA Annual Meeting and Llama Trek

Withlacoochee River Park, Dade City, FL
 Walk 9:00am - 11:30am, lunch at noon or upon return of trekkers with animals,
 meeting after lunch.

★ Need to re-home a llama or alpaca? Contact Claudia Hammack, llamachick@yahoo.com

★ Youth interested in showing a llama or alpaca for FFA, 4-H, or for fun? Contact Tracy Weaver, lotsallamas@earthlink.net

Camelidynamics

August 17, 2026

Observing alpacas and llamas without a task

How often do you spend time with your alpacas or llamas when you don't need anything from them? No haltering, no toenail trimming, no injections, no training or handling. You're just there... when was the last time you did nothing?

Sit down, be quiet and watch your llamas or alpacas. Notice who comes closer, who keeps their distance, what changes when you stop trying to make something happen. Notice how they rest, how they relate to one another, how they move, scratch and graze.

Some of the most useful things I've learned about camelids have come from simply spending time with them.

Try it sometime. What do you notice?