

On Starting Rookies

By Marj Brady

One of the most dangerous phrases I have ever been known to use is, "How hard can it be?" In our household this statement is a proven precursor to disaster or, at the very least, hilarious chaos.

We decided that we would breed alpacas. We bought our starter herd, which included proven dams and a proven herdsire. Those proven animals had crias and rebred and the cycle continued. All was good and as it should be until we decided to start a new boy a couple of years ago. Just to make things interesting we thought we'd start him with a maiden. Yeah, I know, not smart, but I was limited in 'on farm' stud options for her and he was nice and, at almost two years of age, they were both ready, or so I thought.

Our little Princess had spent the winter with her tushie pushed up against the fence, teasing the

boys, batting her eyelashes and generally being a complete tart. The boy in question, we'll call him Randy, was big, well-endowed and placid. We put Randy and Princess in the breeding pen and stood back – nothing. He didn't orgle, barely even sniffed her and they both started eating. I put Princess in with one of our proven boys he orgled and mounted her but she refused to cush after several minutes of walking around with him on her back. I put everyone back with their respective herdmates and shrugged it off.

Three days later I tried again with Randy - still no orgle. Three days later, when Randy still did not ogle, I put a young proven boy in with them, thinking the competition might jump start Randy; wrong again honey, there was still no cush. Although Randy still wasn't orgling and wouldn't try to breed, he wouldn't let the proven boy anywhere near his "date". On another desperate day I opened the gate to the girls group. When Randy ran over to his mom he was spit on, kicked, chested and screamed at by all the peggos in the

group – I finally had to rescue the poor guy from the psychotic ladies.

Days passed - no orgle, no cush. Then, after eighteen days and no less than six attempts, Randy finally started to orgle. Princess still wasn't ready to cush which immediately moved us into Stage 2 Frustration. I tried her with Randy, I tried her with Mr. Supreme Proven Macho, I tried her with Old Geezer Spit Checker Macho – no luck, but we kept trying. She walked around with these big boys on her back and wore them out but she obviously wasn't ready. I spoke with umpteen people, other breeders, vets, people on the street who I'm sure thought I was just a little nuts and, of course, I reread all the books. I even talked to myself...a lot.

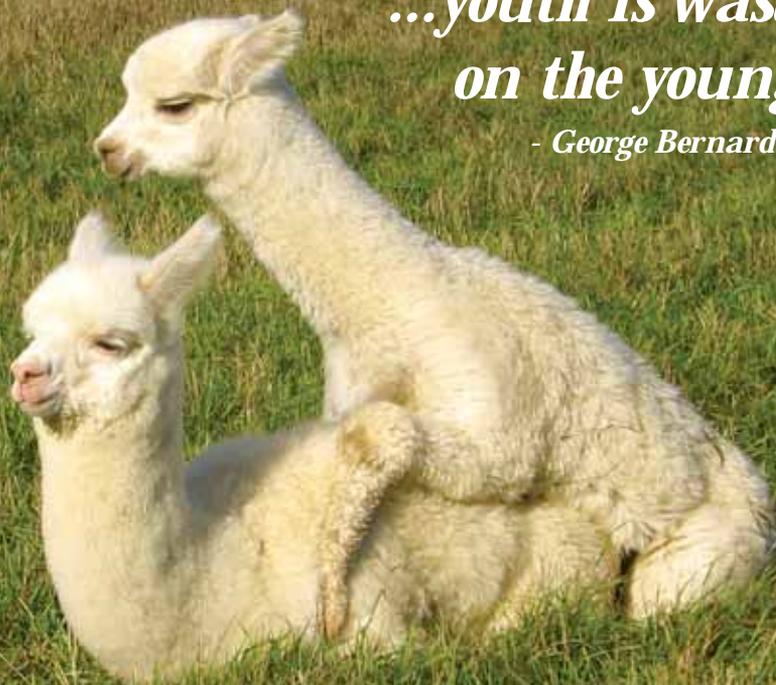
On day thirty-six, after umpty-ump attempts, she finally cushed for Randy! Hurray! Now maybe we would see some action. Nope. On to Frustration Stage 3.

Randy had figured out how to orgle and mount and get her down, but once she was down he had no clue what to do. He limboed down over her back, twisted her head around, climbed on sideways and leapt up, affronted, when I tried to reposition him. We did this spastic dance for a while and ultimately moved the participants



"...youth is wasted on the young."

- George Bernard Shaw





outdoors, thinking they may be more comfortable, less skittish plus, it'd give the neighbours something to talk about.

Randy orgled, Princess cushed, Randy mounted sideways and bred blazes out of her armpit for ten minutes. I let him for by then I was ready to rip my hair out as I tried desperately to remember whether he was oxygen deprived at birth.

Finally, fifty-two days after the initial introductions were made and countless bungled attempts, Randy and Princess actually did the deed. It was a textbook breeding, with all the right parts in all the right places! I was exhausted and thrilled. I had no idea how they felt and really didn't care because I knew that the saga would continue in a few days with

the dreaded spit check!

I know some farms have boys who know exactly what they're supposed to do from the day they're born; Randy wasn't one of them. Those pint-sized perverts are too cute with their shrill little yoy-yoy-yoy orgling, trying to breed their sisters or mounting 200 pound Tina who has either cushed for the dirty little optimist or, more likely, was already cushed, chewing her cud, when Mr. Yippee decided to try out his new toy.

"How hard can it be?" Plenty hard. It took me over seven weeks of trying those two every few days. The good news? Princess definitively broadsided, clucked and dramatically spit off at her first and

subsequent spit checks and a sturdy white male cria was born to this talented duo last summer. We've repeated the breeding; she caught on one again, he bypassed the armpit, and this time the foreplay only lasted about thirty seconds. Whew!

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About the Author

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