

Notes on Beans, Part II

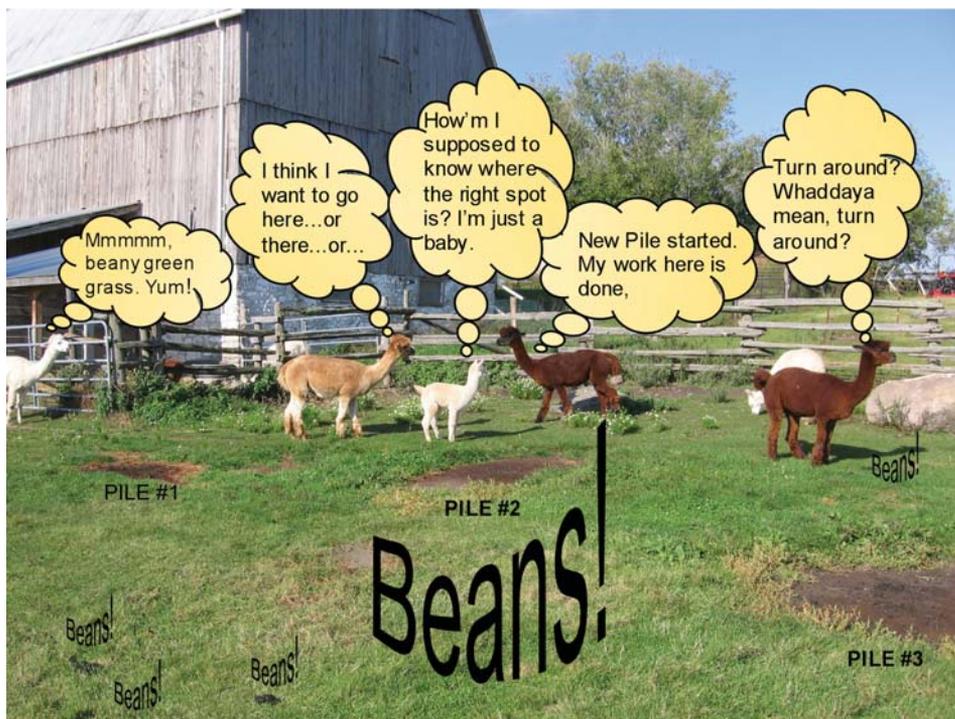
By Marj Brady

If you own alpacas a collection of manure is inevitable. Everyone says alpacas are easy to pick up after because they poop in one spot and it's true, sort of. Their poop is right there, and there, and oh, over there, just waiting for you. You clean up after your alpacas, haul your harvest off to the sacred poop storage area and wait and wait and wait until finally someone decides it's time to sell it or spread it on the hay fields or dig it into the gardens.

In the category of what is possibly too much information, we have two manure piles. Pile number one is the large one where most everything goes: waste hay, beans, weeds before they go to seed, placentas and the occasional dead rodent. Pile number two is primarily beans collected from the pastures and is located on an old concrete silo pad, this is the good stuff, the stuff we sell.

According to everything I've read, alpaca poop doesn't have the optimal balances of nutrients- nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus. But it must have something good in it, it grows fabulous tomatoes.

My parents live in the big city of Toronto. My Dad loves tomatoes and early in our alpaca life we persuaded him that alpaca poop helps grow the best tomatoes. Not that he used our manure to grow his own tomatoes; no, that



would have been too easy. We had to give him the tomatoes that we grew here and, once he was addicted, we started sending beans back to the city for him to use in his own garden. You know how they say that the worst non-smoker is a reformed smoker? Well my Dad is a very gregarious, reformed anti-manurist and pesters all the neighbours on his street telling them that they have to try this, it's great stuff, blah, blah, blah.

After a couple of years of persuasive nagging he finally convinced an older European lady, with a huge vegetable garden, to try a bag of beans, maybe it was just half a bag. A few months later he was accosted by a very excited neighbour. With hair flying, apron flapping and bosoms bouncing, she ran down the sidewalk with an armload of veggies to tell him about her amazing tomatoes and peppers and to ask for five

more bags of beans. The following year she asked for twelve bags and this year she took sixteen.

Obviously we're thrilled to have a repeat customer but, on the down side, she has sworn my father to secrecy. Now we can't sell to his other neighbours as this lady has a competition of sorts with the gentleman right beside her. He ordered a truckload of sheep manure, in an effort to one up her, but wound up with burnt plants and a garden full of weeds. She cackled and trotted down the street to fix my father with the evil eye and remind him of possible drastic mutilation and the many curses that would be rained upon his pointy little head should he deign to divulge her secret.

It's not poop...it's gold. You can sell it, spread it on your hayfields or in your own gardens. Either way it's definitely a valuable commodity. If you choose to sell it and offer delivery be prepared, your vehicle may develop an earthy aroma that even the mightiest little pine tree deodorizer can't beat!

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About the Author

Marj. Brady has been breeding entertaining buacaya alpacas since 2003 and lives with her family on a small farm north of Stirling, Ontario, Canada.

A promotional graphic for Amazing Graze Alpacas. It features a photograph of a brown alpaca standing in a snowy field. The text "MERRY CHRISTMAS!" is written in large, pink, stylized letters across the top. Below the photo, the text reads: "Marjory Brady & Steven Martin", "Stirling, Ontario, Canada", "amazinggraze@sympatico.ca", "613-395-6406", and "www.AmazingGrazeAlpacas.ca".