



# ILR Lamaribbean 2007: “Looking to the Future” Cruise Conference

*First ILR Cruise/Conference rated a resounding success by participants.*

**A**n outstanding motivational speaker, stimulating conversation with more than seventy fellow llama enthusiasts about creating a brighter future for the llama industry, abundant good food, seventy degree temperatures and plenty of opportunities for relaxation and exploring, all combined to create a very enjoyable and productive ILR Lamaribbean Cruise 2007.

When polled at the end of the cruise as to whether or not the ILR should plan for a similar cruise/conference in the future, several participants wanted to schedule one again for 2008 while virtually all the remaining participants thought 2009 would be an ideal time to participate in another conference on a cruise ship. The ILR Board will be discussing the possible scheduling of another cruise/conference in the near future and will get the word out as soon as possible regarding their decision.

Despite a few hours delay in departure on Monday night, Lamaribbean participants gathered bright and early on Tuesday morning to participate in a process, led by Kevin Ochsner of Agri Business Group (ABG), that produced an evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the llama industry. Kevin also presented the results from the ILR survey sent to all members in the Fall of 2006 with Camelid Quarterly, Llama Banner and LlamaLink at the top of the list for the periodicals

read for information on llamas. A more detailed description of the results of that process, along with the complete survey results will be provided at a later date. The main point coming out of the discussions at the conference however, was the need for all interest groups in the llama world to collaborate on getting the word out about llamas. One of the successful projects, prior to the cruise that exemplified this spirit of collaboration,

was the llama booth presentation at the Future Farmers of America (FFA) conference in Indianapolis, in October 2006. Fourteen llama organizations combined resources to spread the word about llamas to approximately 52,000 high school agriculture students from across the nation. We hope to see other similar projects in the future.

Dinner each evening of the cruise was spent around tables with eight to twelve fellow llama enthusiasts sharing our experiences in the llama industry. At dinner we were treated to a wonderful selection including prime rib, lobster, roast duck, lamb, mahi mahi, and pasta with an equally tempting range of desserts. The international waiters added to the delightful experience. The Lamaribbean cruisers can now attest to the truth of the statement, “You don’t leave a cruise hungry, but you might be a few pounds heavier!”



*Cruise Ship “Splendor of the Seas”,  
docked at Costa Maya, Mexico*

After Kevin Ochsner's full day interactive presentation on Tuesday, we spent a few days at the ports of Cozumel and Costa Maya enjoying the activities offered in this tropical climate. Late in the afternoon, after we had returned to sea, we reconvened for an informative llama breeding philosophies panel discussion led by Mark Smith, Kristy Brown and Darrell Anderson. The last day of the cruise began at 9:00 am with more conference sessions including a very informative and enjoyable

slide presentation by Sally Rucker documenting the history of llamas in the USA. Drs. Karen Baum and Kristy Brown shared some valuable llama medical expertise with us before we broke for lunch.

After lunch we learned many of the tricks of using our websites for marketing from Sue Wilde. Throughout the presentations many references were made as to the importance of the genealogies of our animals. ILR Registrar, Jan Wassink gave a presentation on navigating the ILR website, showing everyone how they can research genealogies very easily on their own. Jan also went on to outline some of the coming attractions at the ILR; a Llamas for Sale with a link to genealogies right in the ad, as well as the Show Module which will give owners and show managers the ability to register, manage and report show results online, without duplication of data entry. These are both in the trial stages but you will be hearing more about them in the near future. Darrell Anderson moderated our final discussions regarding where we go from here. Kevin Ochsner wrapped it up with his final thoughts: Collaboration and cooperation are not only important but are also critical for the llama industry as it looks to the future.

The highlight of the final day was the ILR cocktail party where fifteen items were given away to those lucky enough to have their names drawn. Seven items were donated prior to the beginning of the cruise including a beautiful hand woven rug by Ingrid's Hand-woven Rugs Inc., a plush llama fiber blanket donated by Larry McCool, Pacific NW Llama Fiber Cooperative, and a beautiful llama bust, sculpted by Henry Rivera. Another eight items were generously donated on the spur of the moment by those present and ranged from breedings to an iron sculpture. All items and a more detailed recap of the conference will be posted on the ILR website (<http://www.lamaregistry.com>).

It was a very positive and productive conference. The ILR Board is appreciative of the superb presentations and the beneficial input from the attendees. The information gathered will be presented on the ILR website and used by the Board to determine specifics as to the direction of the ILR in a number of areas. All in all, the ILR Board is pleased with the results from their first conference and they are quite certain it won't be the last one.



**Photos:**

1. Main speaker Kevin Ochsner and his wife Julie at dinner
2. Conference participants visiting at the ILR cocktail party
3. Drawing for the door prize winners
4. Door prize items with a backdrop of the ILR display
5. Registrar, Jan Wassink presenting on Navigating the ILR Website and ILR Coming Attractions
6. Llama Breeding Philosophies panel members Darrell Anderson, Kristy Brown, and Mark Smith

