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### Additional Selected Comments and Questions on the ILR's DNA proposal:

The *portion* of the questions or comments provided here, just as they were sent in, that the ILR is *answering or responding to* being highlighted in red.

The ILR responses are highlighted in blue.

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***Comment #1:** "In an already depressed economic climate when folks are selling llamas dirt cheap and some giving away the llamas your new requirements will muddy the waters even more in getting non-showers and folks who simply are using the llamas for pasture ornaments to even think of registering them. With the help of the ILR staff and registry office, when I am out shearing and clipping llamas thorough out Texas, I have talked many folks into going back and keeping up the registry and some have been after they are 6-months to 1 year old .....*

*"I just believe we are not finding a solution we are creating more condensed problems and really the problem does not lie with the average breeder or llama farmer it is the ones who are trying to pull shenanigans and say someone is bred to some high powered stud just for profit.....so once again as usual in America we are penalizing the average person and honest person and not taking on the ones who lie on ILR and pedigrees and fix the problem from below .....*

*"Just my thoughts and I understand it will probably be like water off a ducks back, we are our own worst enemies in this industry and only looking in the mirror will correct it ...."*

**ILR Response:** This DNA proposal was not primarily designed to catch breeders who "pull shenanigans." Rather, it was intended as a solution to a variety of situations that come up on a regular basis in which an average llama owner is trying to register a llama that they have acquired either through purchase or through a rescue situation. Many times we can trace the llama in question back to a specific herd but are unable to identify which particular llama it is from the photos. In those cases, if it was previously registered and DNA was on file, we would have a means of identifying that llama and transferring the ownership to the current owner. If it had not been registered but we had DNA samples on the breeding llamas from that herd, we would at least have the potential of locating the correct sire and dam. In still other cases, in which the lineage of an animal is known but the breeder is unavailable to sign for the breeding, DNA on file could be used to prove parentage and allow the llama in question to be registered even though the breeder was unavailable.

In addition, even though this proposal was not designed to catch dishonest breeders, we would like to clear up the misconception that the only inaccurate breeding records come from dishonest breeders. Since the ILR began parent verification over 20 years ago, we have only had a handful of situations in which we have suspected intentional falsification of the parentage by the breeder. In contrast, we have had many, many instances in which honest breeders either simply made mistakes, did not remember correctly, were unaware that some very young males are capable of breeding, were unaware that one of their other males jumped the fence and bred the female in question and/or one of numerous other possible scenarios in which the actual service sire was not the one the owner thought it was. The only thing that will guarantee 100% accuracy of breeding records is a requirement that all registrations must be parent verified but that proposal is NOT on the table.

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*Comment #2: “Who will retain the authority to request samples kept on file be tested for DNA proof validity lineage; can the stored DNA samples be requested for testing by third parties?”*

*“Can the sample be released to research agencies/organizations or other entities without expressed permission of the owner who submitted those samples? If so, under what specific circumstances?”*

**ILR Response:** Once DNA samples are submitted, they become the property of the ILR regardless of whether they are submitted for testing or for storage. Authority to request that samples be tested lies both with the owner and/or with the ILR board. Third parties can request testing but would be required to produce adequate evidence to the ILR board before the testing would be approved. Testing authorized by the ILR board is paid for by the ILR if the results confirm the information provided by the breeder. If the testing proves that the breeding records were not accurate, the cost of the testing will be charged to the breeder.

Because the samples become the property of the ILR once they are submitted, the samples could be released to other agencies or organization without the expressed permission of the breeder or owner who submitted them. Because there have been no specific requests along these lines, the exact circumstances under which this could happen have not been enumerated. When, or if, a situation or request comes up, the ILR board will carefully consider all the ramifications of the proposal and make a decision consistent with the overall welfare of the llama community and the ILR. Any decision would need to be allowed by the existing policies governing the privacy rights of ILR llama owners and the accepted uses for animal information as outlined in our current policies and procedures.

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*Comment #3: “Why do the hair samples have to come from the base of the llama’s tail? Isn’t this a very sensitive area? 35-45 Hairs won’t be fun to pluck from that area???”*

*“I also think DNA samples for a llama that isn’t valued above \$5,000 is overkill. I*

*have been a member & all of our animals have been registered, but it is just getting too expensive to belong to all of the llama organizations and pay all the costly fees for shows...I'd rather put my money toward their care if I have to make a choice. I have stopped going to shows due to the costs and have only participated in a few fiber shows, as my llamas do have very nice fiber. Looks like I will have to stop participating all together the way things are going. It's too bad that a few bad apples have ruined it for the honest llama owners. (Many of us only own 25 or less Llamas and they aren't valued at \$20,000 - \$150,000.)"*

**ILR Response:** Hair samples are not required to come from the base of the llama's tail. That location is one that has been most often recommended by llama owners experienced in obtaining hair follicle samples.

The proposal would not have added any additional costs to the registration process. It would, however, have added another "task" to the registration process.

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**Commet #4:** *"I understand your thinking, but this will require an actual mailing instead of just online for registration and add to the pain in the ass factor. I think it will result in less registrations for that reason, but I could be wrong. **Will there be a grace period so several samples can be collected and mailed in? Will it result in a delay of registration until the samples are mailed in or will you pull registrations if they are not in within a certain length of time?** Seems like the tougher times are the more people want to pile on regulations. The nature of the beast I guess. The beauty of the llama business for non livestock people was that it was so simple.*

*"I still believe that most people would provide DNA samples for any customer who requested it. Those who DNA all their animals could use that as an advertising point and could require DNA sampling before they made a purchase without imposing that standard on every Tom, Dick and Harry who breed a couple of llamas for fun or who sell for pet prices. One size does not have to fit every operation. This will lead me to discontinue registering my pet quality, and guard llamas and most little males, mainly because it doesn't matter to those customers and it won't be worth the hassle. **In an electronic society the need to go back to snail mail to register will be seen as a step backwards by many and I'm sorry that you didn't poll the members.**"*

**ILR Response:** We were anticipating that the samples would be sent in with the registration application so we had not finalized a "grace period". Because the proposal made the samples a "requirement" for registration, the registrations would have been delayed until the samples were received. If or when this proposal is reconsidered, we will give further consideration to the concept of a "grace period".

Perhaps the e-Bulletin outlining this proposal could have been clearer but the intent of the notice was to let the llama community know that we would be polling the members with the upcoming ballot and give everyone a chance to think and discuss the concept before we asked them to vote on it. Instead, after considering the feedback from our members, the board has decided to withdraw the proposal until some time in the future.

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***Comment #5:*** “I have reviewed your statements regarding DNA sampling. I do not agree at all with your proposal. As you know the economy is not what we would like to see. ***You claim that this will just take time and will not cost. Everything costs even storage. What will happen is that just like the government sooner or later their will be a additional fee attached or cost of registration will go up, possibly by having to have an extra person take care of the program and then that person will need to hire another person. Adding additional requirements, may be just the little thing that sway some people to say, why bother registering their few offspring - when they are only going to get a couple of hundred dollars. You will say that this will add value to the breeders animals who follow your program, but remember we all need the small back yard people to sell our animals to and a lot or most of them starting out don't care about a piece of paper especially if it costs them more. (The world is not all show people.)***

*“I know a lot of people live in the dream world of the high end animals, but just like the sports world superstars, that is a very small percentage of the animals that are sold. I have followed the major sales, and you have to be blind not to know that a lot of the animals are bought back or friends purchase them. Look at some of the dumping sales that are conducted in the center of the country were animals are going for about the cost of registration. Do you think these people care about DNA or the future costs? We have had many types of registered critters over the years. The most successful way to run a program is to keep it simple.*

***“As a board your job is not to reinvent the wheel, but to keep ILR solvent, cutting costs where you can and keep it simple for the people the registry serves.”***

**ILR Response:** We stand by our statement that this would not have cost the registry anything other than the few seconds it takes the data operator to document the sample in the computer and then put the sample into storage. We can not conceive of any additional costs of the program under this proposal.

While we understand your skepticism about organizations and the government, even a cursory review of the history of the ILR will show that the fees charged llama owners have not even kept up with the rate of inflation. Rather than allowing fees to escalate, we could be more appropriately criticized for not raising fees enough to keep up with the costs of providing the services we provide to llama owners. Again, a review of other registries will show that llama owners receive many more services and enjoy lower fees than the owners of the vast majority of other livestock species.

While we agree that part of the responsibility of the ILR board is to keep the ILR solvent and keep things simple, those are not the only two responsibilities of the board. One of the other major responsibilities of the board is to provide the llama community with accurate genealogic records.

This proposal would have allowed the llama community to take a small step toward more accurate records at very minimal expense to llama owners. However, enough of you have responded that this is not the right time to take even this small step that the board has withdrawn the proposal for now. We hope, however, that many of you will voluntarily send in the requested DNA samples so we can identify and

**“retrieve” some of the “lost” llamas into the registry as well as continue to move toward more accurate records in our database.**

**Thank you for your input and consideration of this proposal. *The ILR BOD***

*Alone we struggle; Together we thrive!*