

# GALA Educational Conference 2025: Camelids Rock!

To: All GALA Members

From: Barb Baker and Deb Gaskill, Co-Chairs

We are excited to share details about this year's GALA Educational Conference, hosted in Cleveland. Below, you'll find information about some of the outstanding speakers and presenters who will be joining us, along with a preview of the scheduled classes for the weekend. Please note that this list is not final; we're still confirming additional sessions and presenters to ensure a top-notch experience, complete with special extras to enrich your conference weekend.

We also wish to address the previous email you received. Due to a mix-up involving a few incorrect details and a bit of inexplicable technical "voodoo," the message was not what we intended. We apologize for any confusion and are pleased now to present a correct and exciting overview of the talent lined up for our event.

## Conference Kickoff

The conference will begin Thursday at 1:00PM with Attendee Registration, followed by the annual face-to-face Board of Directors Meeting. The day will wrap up with our popular Ice Breaker event and Corn Hole practice.

## Featured Speakers and Sessions

Keynote Address: Dr. Andy Niehaus, DVM (The Ohio State University) will deliver "Exotic Insights from a Farm Animal Vet." Dr. Niehaus will also present two additional sessions: "Critical Care in Camelids" and "Standing Strong; Bone and Orthopedic Conditions." His presentations promise to offer invaluable information during his time with us on Friday.

Our second Keynote Speaker, on Saturday, is Kendall Wild, a fourteen-year old young lady with an interest in training and a love of alpacas. She will share how she "Trained Her Blind & Deaf Alpaca for Obstacle Classes".

Dr. Robert Van Saun (Penn State University), a leading expert in camelid nutrition, will speak on Friday and Saturday. His topics include the "Latest Research in Alpaca Nutrition," "The Key to Feeding Forage to Camelids," and "What's New from Peru."

Dr. Lisa Fox, DVM (The Ohio State University alumna and Cleveland-area practitioner) joins us as a new GALA veterinary presenter. With extensive postdoctoral work in alternative treatment modalities, Dr. Fox will demonstrate how chiropractic and acupuncture can address pain and various issues in camelids. She will also present “Iridology: Reading the Window to the Soul” in the classroom.

Dr. Char Arendas (GALA member and Ohio State University graduate) will offer sessions on “First Aid: On the Go and At the Show” and “Environmental Enrichment for Camelids,” sharing the latest developments in these important areas.

## Hands-On and Inclusive Training

For those interested in training their camelids to be respectful, easy to handle, trail-ready, gentle with disabled and autistic children, and generally well-mannered and enjoyable companions in and out of the show ring, a variety of specialized sessions and practical guidance will be available throughout the weekend. Unfortunately, John Mallon, who was to join us this year to share his training philosophy and methods, will not be able to be with us after all. But, he is doing well and working to “get back in the saddle” literally!

But we are lucky to have the expertise of several noted trainers, showmen, and judges who will cover all of this and we have planned an Obstacle/Performance Class for Saturday during the incredibly popular “Meet the Camelids” on Saturday afternoon. Tami Lash, noted camelid breeder, trainer and judge joins us once again to share her insights and expertise on all aspects of camelid training and showing.

We are fortunate to also have Jeff and Niki Kuklenski who are going to present several classes in the tent, as well as in classroom. Due to an injury suffered by John Mallon, Jeff will be in the tent with several hands-on training sessions, including “Why Does My Llama Do This?” and “Working in the Round Pen”. Niki will also share some of her many talents in the camelid arena: conformation, a session on “So You Want to Drive Your Llamas”, and “What Makes a Great Therapy Animal” .

If you're wanting to spend time in the Fiber Arts Room, you won't be disappointed because GALA Board member, Cindy Millard has put together some “tried and true” classes as well as some first-time ones, such as Deb Gaskill's Ice-Dyeing class. If you're adventurous with your yarn dyeing, you'll love this! Laura Harrawood, from Missouri, and a phenomenal fiber artist will be taking you through two sessions of creating a felted bag that you will then embellish with beads and baubles that she will have for you to experiment with on your pouch. Her sister, Joanne Kohnen, will help you create your own one-of-a-kind felted flowers which can also be used on your pouch or on other projects you may already have. Laura has also agreed to share her “Spinning

with Beads” class, which is always a “sellout”! The **only requirement is that you must know how to spin**. Class size is limited

We also are pleased to have two Cleveland-area “fiberistas” joining us; Mary Casey and Paula Janu are both master spinners on the drop spindle method and, of course, the spinning wheel. Our own Charlotte Sankey will get you started and help you finish a “make and take” needle felted item.

Kendall Wild present her “Developing a Method to Measure Fiber Microns.”

I will be showing you how to create everything from coasters, to shawls, wraps, table runners and more, using the Continuous Strand Weaving Method. It is a “make&take” and everything needed will be supplied.

For those of you who are looking for ways to make your farm more of a business and may be contemplating adding events to your current offerings, you will not want to miss Andrea Parent-Tibbetts’ presentation on “Determining When and How to Scale Up Your Agritourism Operation” Andrea has a very successful farm operation and will share what’s worked for her and can/may work for you.

Following Friday’s classes, there will be a delicious dinner buffet and relaxation after our first full and busy day. But, dinner is not the end of the day: come prepared to rock, roll and swoon as we welcome **ELVIS** to our stage to share an hour of the King’s favorite and most famous songs. Feel free to dress for the era—bellbottoms, paisley prints and wild hair are welcome!

During breaks between sessions and at lunch, be sure to peruse both the Silent and Live Auction tables. Get your bids in early and often on the Silent Auction items and be sure to check back to keep your bid the winning one! The Live Auction follows our fabulous plated dinner Saturday night, when the action gets fast and furious as our Auctioneer gets the ball rolling! Keep your eye out for those items that you decided you can’t live without and be ready to get your bids heard. And, don’t forget to have plenty of ones, five, ten and twenty dollar bills with you for the Bag Raffle; the winner gets half and the other goes to GALA’s Camelid Research and Government Relations Funds, as does all the money raised with the auctions.

So, have you made your travel plans, hotel reservations, registered for the conference, ordered your T-shirts, hoodies and ball caps?

Sunday, our last day, you can pick up some bargains in the Yard Sale where folks have brought items that they’re no longer in need of and which you might just have been needing!

With our Brunch at 11:00, we say our “good-byes” .....until next year’s conference!