



MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION DEDICATES \$66,820 TOWARD GENETIC STUDIES FOR CAMELID HEALTH

Englewood, Colo. – Morris Animal Foundation (MAF) continues its commitment to camelid health and announced today that it has approved \$66,820 in 2006 for two genetics studies to benefit llamas/alpacas.

Wild camelid populations are often inbred, resulting in reduced genetic variation and an increase in inherited diseases and congenital abnormalities. A new study funded by Morris Animal Foundation will support an already considerable effort by Chilean scientists and their colleagues to collect samples, and it is the first step toward finding the genetic basis of traits of adaptive and evolutionary importance.

The second study will expand the alpaca genome map. As alpacas become more popular, undesirable genetic traits such as deafness and susceptibility to disease have also become more prevalent. Currently, there is little known about alpaca health issues. A previous MAF-funded study has nearly completed a genome map of the alpaca genome that includes about 600 DNA markers. To increase the accuracy of the map, investigators in this study hope to discover an additional 100 to 200 markers. The new study also plans to develop a highly sensitive identity/parentage test for distinguishing between two animals. The addition of these markers and the development of an identity test will help develop genetic tests for disease that can be used to improve alpaca health.

In total, Morris Animal Foundation has approved \$4 million to fund 44 new and 53 continuing veterinary studies for dogs, cats, horses, llamas/alpacas and wildlife in 2006. For a complete list of Foundation-funded studies, including investigator, location, study description and sponsors, go to www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org or call (800) 243-2345.