

Arthur Kressly raises 'alternative livestock'

Tamarack Farms 'loves' llamas

LYNNPORT — Others may 'laugh', but Arthur Kressly is serious about raising llamas. And yesterday after 4 years of raising the animals, he took the opportunity to join other llama raisers in Oregon for their first llama conference.

What made Art and his wife Carried decide to raise llamas on their Tamarack Farms? He explains they were living on a 28 acre homestead near Kutztown and trying to think of livestock they could raise profitably as a farm venture on their limited acreage.

They particularly wanted to raise some animals that they could be outstanding

with, so they picked llamas. Kressly said there only about 3000 llamas in the United States, mostly in Oregon, and only half of the llamas in the States are privately owned. Art insists that even if someone offered him a bundle for the whole herd of 24, there are at least 4 animal which would not go

He said that what llama husbandry he has acquired, has been "by the seat of my pants" and it's the challenge of raising the animals that he thrives on.

Kressly said the animals average about 350 pounds with an average birth weight of 30 pounds. He said that his



Depending on the angle, llamas have a graceful symmetry.



veterinary bills are minimal and that in fact his vet donates his services for the novelty of treating the unusual animals. The Kresslys practice routine worming procedures twice a year although fecal samples have yet to show any incidence of parasite infestation.

The animals must be inspected for lice. He said the llamas need at least four-foot fences. The family dogs have learned to stay outside the fences because large females have a habit of rolling the dogs with their front feet, he said. Kressly said he has only been kicked once in 4 years.

The llamas are sheared at the age of 2 years and once a year thereafter. The wool is prized by spinners and brings \$25 a pound. Average yield per llama is 4 pounds per shearing.

He said animals are fed a standard horse feed with alfalfa mixed hay once a day. They are a three stomached animal.

Kressly has found it sometimes difficult to acquire the breeding stock he needs. He explained that initially his attempts to purchase excess stock from zoos met resistance. Then he acquired for a nominal yearly fee his USDA license and now he says the biggest hurdle is his phone bill which is generally large. The llamas have an average life span of 15-20 years and an 11 month gestation period. They come in to heat at 30 day intervals. Kressly said they generally drop their young twice in 3 years at Tamarack Farms.



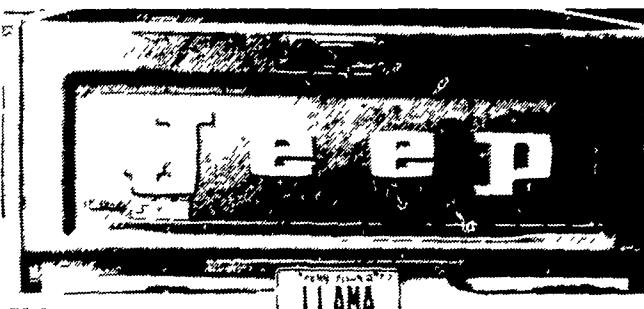
Llamas like Mancho are basically quiet animals which when they make any noise make a humming noise, Art says.



Kressly maintains small llama sheds to qualify for his USDA license. He says the animals rarely use them.



Llamas are herd animals and adapt to most any weather condition according to Art.



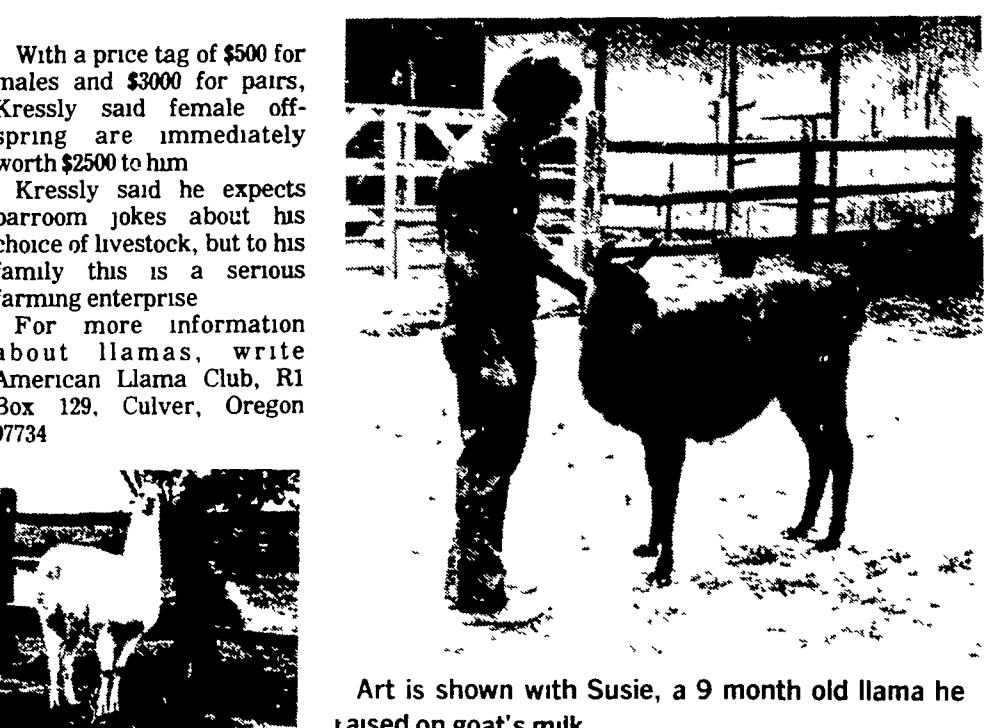
The family loyalty to their project is emphasized by their license plate and bumper stickers which read "take a Llama to lunch".



Situated in Lehigh County, the Kressly farm belies the unusual nature of the livestock raised here.



Art gets indignant when people ask him if llamas spit. He said horses kick and he's only been spit at six times in four years, all by the same llama. Llamas are more likely to spit at each other, especially pregnant ones.



Art is shown with Susie, a 9 month old llama he raised on goat's milk.