

# Queso Cabeza Farm

*Rick Boesen and Laura Volkmann  
Olivet, Michigan, USA*

Originally from Wisconsin, Laura Volkmann and Rick Boesen decided after their marriage in 2001 to fulfill a dream Rick had since college: to have his own farm. To accomplish this, they sold two houses and bought a 20-acre parcel near Olivet in south central Michigan, naming it Queso Cabeza Farm in honor of their Wisconsin roots. They knew they wanted to raise something unique. Llamas, with their ease of care and distinctive personalities, were exactly what they were seeking.

After spending considerable time and energy clearing years' worth of debris from the barn and outbuildings, a project still in the works, they were ready to bring home their first llamas. Maurita and Moonstone, who are still part of the family, were the first of the original four to arrive. They gave Rick and Laura their initiation into the 'llama life.'

As they relate the tale, they were leading the animals around the pasture acquainting them with their new home and feeling quite happy with their decision to raise llamas, when suddenly the wind caught a barn door and slammed it shut. Maurita and Moonstone were off, dragging Laura and Rick with them! Laura released Maurita and later had to recapture her from the lower pasture. Moonstone, with Rick in tow, only ceased running when she slammed chest-first into a 2-inch tubular steel cattle gate. Thankfully, Moonstone was unhurt, but the gate is still badly bent.

In addition to operating the farm, Rick works as a software consultant. Laura is currently a full-time law student at the University of Michigan, coming home to the farm on weekends.

In October of 2003, realizing there was only so much the two of them could do, they hired high-school student Sean Day part-time. He is as dedicated to the well-being of the llamas as Rick and Laura, and dreams of having his own llama farm someday.

When Rick and Laura have to leave the farm, Sean is eager to take over the responsibilities.

Sean's specialty, however, is training the animals. Laura says, 'Sean can get the llamas to do things Rick and I can only imagine, and they do it very naturally.' They currently take in 5 or 6 shows per year in Michigan, and hope to expand their participation to include shows in Indiana and Ohio. In May 2004, Sainte Maure de Queso Cabeza ("Sassy") won Reserve Grand Champion, Heavy Wool Female at the Ludington Llama Classic.

Herdsmen include Harley, a full Chilean available for outside breeding. Bonfire, a two-year-old three-quarter Peruvian Suri, will be available in the fall for limited outside breeding. Salchicho, a four-year-old Kong son will not be available for outside breeding.

Rick and Laura encourage visits to the farm, and say there is always something to do whether it is picking berries, feeding llamas, or pressing apples for cider in the fall.

**CQ**

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