

Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A

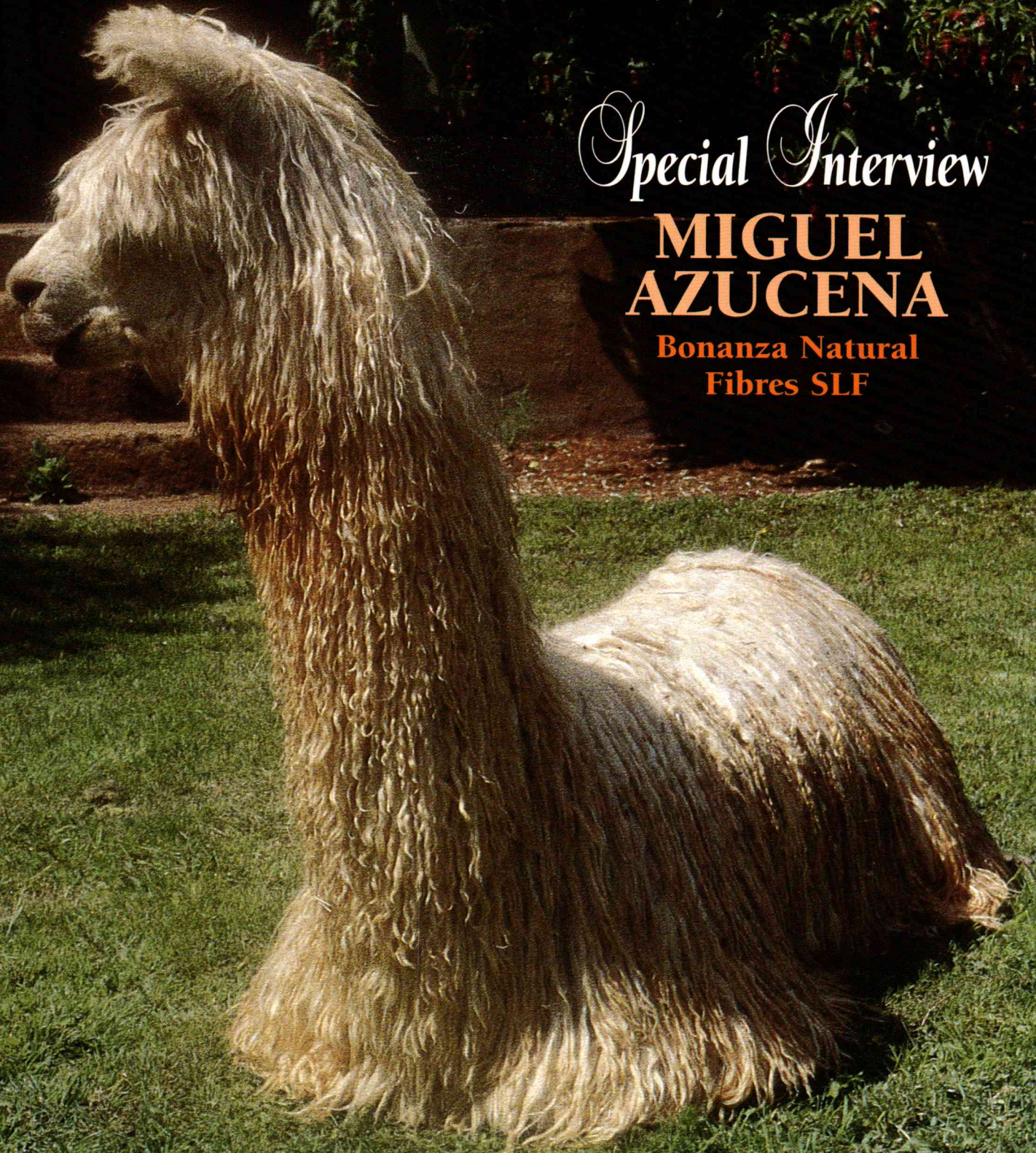
ISSUE No. 19 1997

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Special Interview

**MIGUEL
AZUCENA**

**Bonanza Natural
Fibres SLF**



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FOR A LIMITED NUMBER
OF MATINGS
TO OUR OUTSTANDING
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STUD MALE

AND

OUR DENSE & FINE WHITE
PERUVIAN STUD MALES
READY JANUARY 1997

NOW STANDING AT STUD
OUR CHAMPION FAWN
AND BLACK MALES

MOBILE MATING

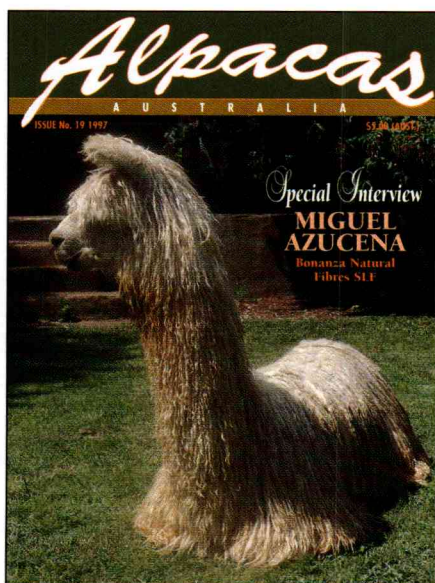
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Those mongrel alpacas...

On the morning of March 21, Don Burke rang 2UE's John Laws to promote what he called, 'a big story... about all those fad animals...' to be aired that evening on *Burke's Backyard*. The TV segment was not complimentary to the alpaca industry and reflected similar treatment handed out by Burke a few years ago.

However, what I found particularly offensive was his description, during the Laws interview, of the Australian alpacas as 'sort of mongrelised animals that have no potential to throw any particular type of fleece at all'.

This is basically a load of rubbish. The remark reflects Burke's ignorance of work being done in Australia to increase our understanding of alpaca genetics in order to assist breeders to develop improved alpaca breeding techniques.

For example, our July International Industry Seminar lectures and workshops will combine practicalities with progress reports on current research. Among the most eagerly awaited reports are those of Bill Wall and Ron Cole on coat colour inheritance; and on suri/huacaya crossings from Ponzoni *et al*; and from Hubbard *et al* on the RIRDC ongoing alpaca research project.

Among other things, Burke accused industries of talking their livestock prices 'up to blazes'. Alpaca prices remain buoyant for quality animals. Yes, the industry promotes alpacas, but this stability has been achieved for a combination of reasons. One major factor, in my view, is that most breeders are in the industry for the 'long haul'. They don't jump in, make a profit and leave.

As a litmus test for this theory, I checked the breeders who advertised in the first edition of *Alpacas Australia* (autumn 1992). They were: Suricaya, Benleigh, Inca, Shanbrooke, Cedar House, Alpaca-link Breeding Services; Carwidya, Capalba Park, Amberdale, Wyona, Coliban Valley, Alpacos Park, Pinjarra, Alawah, Truleen Downs, Glenwood, Haldane. All but a couple remain regular advertisers.

During the Royal Sydney Show Canadian alpaca judge, Maggie Krieger commented on the dramatic improvement in animal exhibits since last she judged here in 1995.

While we can take comfort from Maggie's analysis, no-one but a fool would deny that it will be some time before the over-all numbers and quality of Australian alpacas will give us a viable fibre industry. It's a slow process, a learning experience and damned hard work.

Luckily, there has been a huge amount of help given to the industry – from members of new and older fibre industries and from veterinarians. When Australian vets began caring for alpacas, they had little or no experience of camelids and virtually no veterinary information on which they could rely. The formation, some two years ago, of the Australian Camelid Veterinary Network was a welcome and extremely useful innovation. It has provided vets with a structure for the sharing of information about camelids, built up a data bank of case histories and has assisted vets and breeders alike to understand and maintain the health of their animals.

Optimism has played a large part in the development of the industry. It has produced investment of capital, time and expertise. It rides upon the knowledge that alpaca fibre has a strong world market and the belief that Australia can produce fibre of sufficient quality and quantity to tap into that market.

Don Burke, on the other hand holds a negative and pessimistic view of the alpaca industry. Fair media, we believe, allows balance. In this case, Burke has denigrated the industry and presented a biased view of its circumstances. It's both unethical and irresponsible.

Don Burke could have tested the industry's credibility against its record: a steady increase in animal numbers; conformational improvement; improved fibre yield and quality; and sale price stability. We regret he chose not to do so.

Jill Short, Secretary

Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A

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A Man with a Mission

David Johnson is busy settling in to his job as general manager of the Australian Alpaca Association. I managed to catch up with him one late afternoon in his office at the Association's headquarters in Forest Hill.

Our interview revolved largely around David's brief to play a key role in evolving a business plan that will set firm directions for the industry.

'Where are we going and how are we going to get there?' he said. 'What are the expectations and aspirations of members? It's my task to find these things out and to make sure that the Association creates a business plan that truly reflects the wishes of its members.'

According to David, the plan will cover the next twenty years with defined short, medium and long term goals.

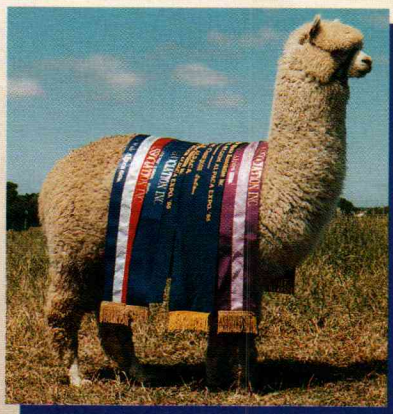
'The first task is to produce a vision statement that provides insight into future reality. What is our vision for the industry as it further develops?

'When we know what our vision is, we go to stage two: the mission. That is, how we make our vision come true.

'A massive amount of work will be involved in collecting all kinds of information on which we can base our strategies.

'The first of these information-seeking exercises will be to find out a lot more about the members of our own Association. This is in the planning stages as we speak – and we'll be employing professionals to take a random sample of members and come up with a profile that will enable us to understand the make-up of our Association.

*based on an interview by
Carol Hosking with new
AAA general manager,
David Johnson*



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AA/6/97

'We need to understand the Association's role now and what it might be in the future. A breed society? A peak industry body? Will the AAA remain the primary industry group or can we foresee changes in the structure of the industry that will need to be made?

'Some hard-nosed analysis of the fibre market that is potentially ours is crucial to the setting up of a feasible business plan. The broader industry needs to be investigated and the relationships within it defined: breeder, processor, management, designers, consumers – within Australia and globally. How do things work overseas? How will they work in Australia?

'Innovation is going to play a key role in the development of the Australian alpaca industry and our success will depend on two factors: our ability to breed top quality animals and our ability to run an efficient commercial operation.

'Within the sphere of successful commercial operation is our ability to value add in Australia. That is a long-standing Association aim, but the practicalities of doing it are things that we need to be planning now.'

David believes that member input is of supreme importance to the success of the Association's business plan.

'If we don't get input from the members, no plan can reflect the true industry view.'

He is looking to have a draft plan developed in consultation with members via the National Committee and regions by September this year. It will be distributed to all AAA regions for discussion and refinement.

There are two other related issues high on David's agenda.

One is a national marketing plan to promote alpacas and their fibre.

The other is the provision of practical assistance for small breeders to sell their animals. A pilot program in the

practicalities of sales and marketing is being developed for small breeders. From this will come a full scale national program.

Although the Association's head office, and David, are based in Victoria, this is merely 'an accident of geography', according to David.

'The Association is a national body,' he commented. 'While the various climatic regions of Australia pose special challenges for the industry, I don't take account of State boundaries. What is important is that we develop a set of national strategies for the industry to ensure that it succeeds in its aim of becoming an important part of Australia's primary industry sector.

'I am confident that, by working together, we will establish a profitable alpaca fibre industry, planned for and established within a time-frame established by the members of the Australian Alpaca Association.'

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SURI FIBRE PROCESSING

*Based on an interview
by Sandra Keane of
Pinjarra Alpacas with
Miguel Azucena, Bolivian
natural fibre specialist*

Miguel Azucena supervises a staff of 45 sorters and 1,000 hand spinners at Bonanza Natural Fibres SRL in Bolivia. Bonanza is dedicated to the production and export of fibre, yarn and knitted garments using fibre of the highest quality and in the largest range of natural colours produced anywhere in the world.

Miguel began his career with the Bolivian Government's Bolivian Committee of Wool and Fibre Foment (COMBOFLA) after a traineeship (including a stint on the government's alpaca research farm) with European, Bolivian and Peruvian specialists. The National Institution of Wool and Fibre Foment (INFOL) created in 1979 succeeded COMBOFLA. Miguel worked with INFOL from its inception until he joined Bonanza S.R.L. in 1988.

Bonanza's sister company, Eximbol SRL, owns Acero Marka which has a breeding farm of around 1,000 top quality alpacas raised by specialised personnel. The Acero Marka herd produces 17 natural colours.

Bolivia has the largest number of llamas in the world (2,100,000) and the largest percentage of coloured suri and huacaya alpacas. The total alpaca herd is the second largest (600,000), after Peru.

Designers such as Beatriz Canedo Patiño have established joint-venture companies in Bolivia, such as BCP Alpaca Designs SRL, to produce high fashion designs and fine alpaca fabrics of different textures and colours. This unique collection of classic and elegant garments is regarded as the finest in South America. Beatriz Canedo Patiño successfully operated the Royal Alpaca Inc. in New York City, designing and manufacturing high fashion alpaca products for the USA and Canada before moving to Bolivia in order to create and offer products from her country of origin.

Q. I understand that the growing world-wide demand for the rare suri fleece has marshalled forces in Peru to secure the future of this once threatened breed.

Accordingly, several well-known, large alpaca breeders in Peru have recently begun to establish their own herds and the Peruvian government have introduced a strict export quota to protect suri numbers further. What is the history of the suri in Bolivia and how established is the breed in your country?

A. Camelids such as suri and huacaya alpacas and llamas have lived in the Bolivian Altiplano for several hundred years. During the Spanish Conquest, a significant number were killed and lost.

Since Bolivian independence from Spain, the number of alpacas and llamas has increased. Bolivia

now has the largest llama herd in the world (600,000) and the second largest alpaca herd.

Unlike Peru where the number of coloured alpacas and llamas diminished due to the emphasis on breeding white, Bolivia has retained its coloured camelids.

The suri herds are well established and their numbers are increasing due to the world-wide demand for suri fibre and subsequent interest from countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia in importing these animals.

Q. Which country is the largest producer of suri fibre in the world?

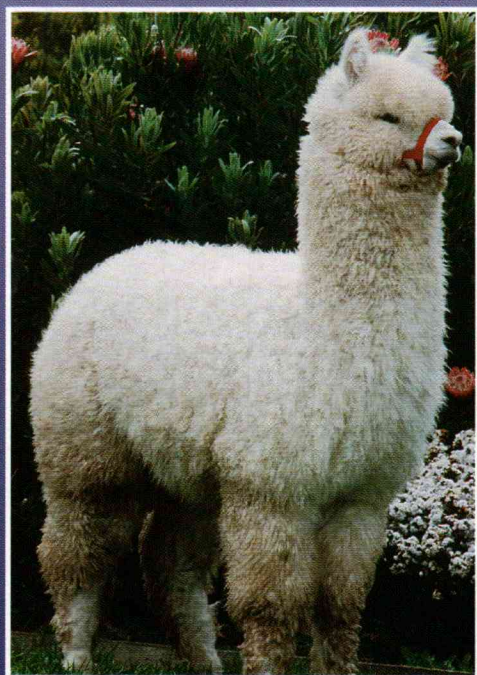
A. The largest producers of suri fibre are Bolivia and Peru. Until 1990, all alpaca and llama fibre produced in Bolivia was sold to Peruvian buyers to process in Peruvian mills. Therefore, past statistics are not very

The rare black suri.



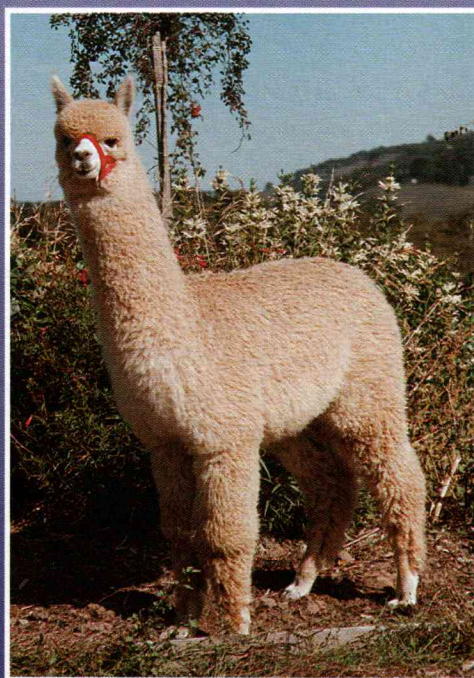
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SHANBROOKE ELITE

Inter. Ch. Male, National Classic 1996.
Jnr. Ch. Male, Melbourne Royal 1996.
Jnr. Ch. Male, State Show NSW 1996.



SHANBROOKE SOCIETY LASS

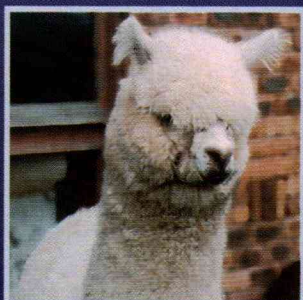
Jnr. Ch. Female, Sydney Royal 1997.
Jnr. Ch. Female, Geelong Alpaca Fest 1997.

Canadian judge, Maggie Kreiger:
"This female has a fleece to die for."



SHANBROOKE ENCHANTER

Jnr. Ch. Male, Sydney Royal 1997.
1st in Class, National Classic Show 1996.
Inter. Res. Ch., Geelong Alpaca Fest 1997.



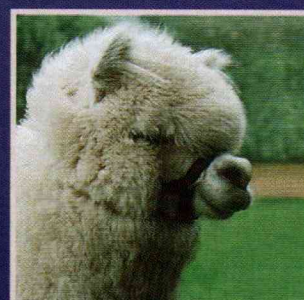
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accurate regarding Peruvian and Bolivian fibre production.

Q. How many tonnes are produced?

A. We process an average of about 10 tonnes a year of suri fibre at our mill. However, not all suri fibre produced in Bolivia comes to our combing mill. The buying price is a main factor in deciding whether the fibre stays in Bolivia or is sold in an informal way to Peru.

Bolivia and Peru share a very large border where many products, including alpaca and llama fibre, flow back and forth depending on the market price.

Q. What is the current premium paid for suri fibre over huacaya alpaca and is this increasing due to growing demand?

A. The price of suri fibre is currently two to three times that of huacaya. It is expected that suri fibre will increase even more due to its limited supply compared to huacaya.

Q. Which countries are the major users of suri fibre?

A. The major users of suri fibre are the textile industries in Italy and Japan. Other countries also use suri fibre in small quantities.

Q. What is so appealing about suri fibre to the textile and clothing industry compared to huacaya alpaca or other speciality fibres such as cashmere or mohair?

A. There is a big difference between a fabric produced with suri and one produced with huacaya. The suri fabric has a similar look to camel-hair fabric but is softer and has more shine (lustre) which is appealing to customers. It is also more durable and has better thermal properties. We can assure customers that suri is superior to cashmere or mohair but the latter are better known worldwide and are, therefore, more in demand and more expensive. Also, the amount of cashmere and mohair

produced is far greater than suri and thus, supply is more reliable.

Q. Do you sell it as raw fibre or do you process it into tops?

A. We have a combing mill that has a capacity to process 600 tonnes of alpaca fibre into tops each year. However, we also sell greasy alpaca and scoured alpaca, depending on demand and clients' requirements.

Q. Is there a demand for blends such as suri/huacaya or suri/wool? If so, why?

A. There is no demand for blends of suri and huacaya tops. However, some suri fabric is blended with a small percentage of huacaya or wool to still retain the look of suri but allow for increased production of suri fabrics.

Q. Is suri fibre more suited to woollen yarns/fabrics or worsted fabrics and what sort of garments are produced from it?

A. The suri fibre is more suited for worsted fabrics such as those used in coats and suits.

Q. What are the preferred minimum and maximum staple lengths for the different manufacturing processes?

A. The textile industry prefers an average of 750mm staple lengths with a fairly low co-efficient of variation.

Q. How is suri fibre graded and how many classes of fineness and categories of colour are there?

A. Suri fibre is graded into three categories depending on fineness. We do not take into account 'Garra' that is, coarser than Medium-Coarse (AG) so we have just three categories of suri whereas there are four for huacaya. We do this because there is just a very small or no percentage of 'Garra' in the suris. The three classes are: Baby (BL) up to 21 micron; Fine (FS) 22-26 micron and Medium-Coarse (AG) up to 35 micron

The fleece from a good baby suri will have 95% Baby Fine and 5%



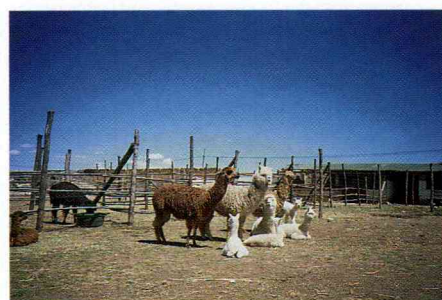
Sorting alpaca fibre at Bonanza Natural Fibres SRL in Bolivia.



Tops making.



Packaging the tops.



Bolivian coloured suris.

Fine. A juvenile up to 2 years of age will have 100% Fine and 0% Coarse.

From a good adult, we generally get 98% Fine and 2% Coarse. So, 98% is good fibre out of a suri.

On average, the babies have less variation than adults.

As far as colour is concerned, there are more than 20 natural colours in suri alpacas.

Q. Does suri contain as much medullated fibre as huacaya?

A. No, suri contains much less medullated fibre than huacaya. We believe this is what makes such a difference in the handle between the two.

Q. What about uniformity of micron between suri and huacaya? How much variation is there?

A. According to our experience, the uniformity of micron on the suri is better than the huacaya — approximately 35% more uniform.

Q. How does the frequency of shearing between huacaya and suri compare and what are the reasons for shearing one more regularly?

A. We shear both suri and huacaya every year.

Q. What is the average annual fleece weight of a suri compared to that of a huacaya?

A. There is no rule on this. It depends very much on the animal. However, on average, we have not found any significance between the fleece weight of a suri compared to a huacaya.

Q. Is suri generally finer?

A. They are about the same, on average, but suri seems to be finer (even when it has a higher micron) because it has less medullated fibre and feels finer to touch.

Q. What other essential differences are there between suri and huacaya fibre?

A. The most important differences are: less medullated fibre; lustre and structural shape of the fibre. The suri looks like camel hair whereas huacaya looks more like wool. I would like to see suri fibre called suri 'hair' instead!

Q. Suri fibre has little crimp. How important is a well-defined crimp in grading huacaya and what role does it play in the manufacturing process?

Is crimp a useful tool to gauge fibre quality such as fineness, density, uniformity of micron or elasticity?

A. We do not like to have crimp on the suri fibre. The more it looks like hair, the better.

We found that huacaya fibre with crimp is related to density and fineness but that is not a rule. If two huacaya alpacas have the same micron count and same density, then the one with more crimp is preferable. However, density and fineness are more important than crimp.

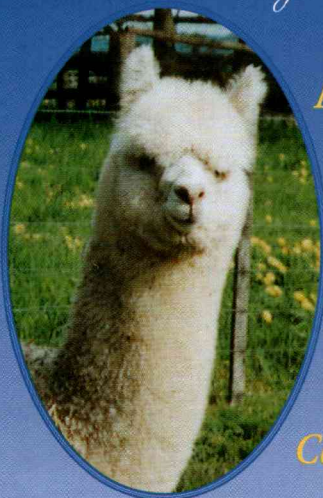
Q. How important is lustre in grading suri and huacaya?

A. When we buy suri, we do not pay attention to lustre, but when we work on our breeding program at our farm [*Acero Marka*], we care very much about lustre. We believe that lustre will become more and more important in suri in the future.



Amberdale Alpacas

Introducing



**Amberdale
Amazing Grace**

*stunning
daughter of*

**Amberdale
My Girl**

National Show
Champion

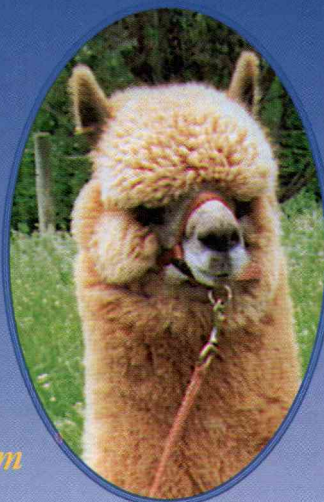
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Superior Males at Stud are

★ Murragama Banjo solid black ★ Two imported Peruvians solid white ★

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Stud enquiries phone Jenny or Gray Morgan (03) 5962 5352



Q. What is the difference between the Peruvian and Bolivian grading and buying processes?

A. The main difference is that, in Bolivia, we pay a premium for fineness whereas Peru does not.

The Peruvians usually blend alpaca with other fibre such as wool in order to lower the micron count and with coarser fibre to increase micron. We do not blend with wool so we need to make a perfect sorting to get the micron count we want.

Another difference is that Peruvian companies process many more tonnes of alpaca than Bolivians. Because they buy big quantities of fibre, they do not have the time or the organisation to pre-sort the fibre before buying. They just buy any fibre lot available at the stated market price. As I said, since they have the possibility to lower or increase micron count during processing, they accept almost any quality of fibre.

Usually, the fibre that we reject during our pre-sorting is sold to Peruvian producers to blend with other fibre lots.

Q. I notice that some white suris have a bright and lustrous fleece whereas others have a dull, greyish appearance. Is the latter due to higher grease content? How important is grease content in the manufacturing process?

A. We do not know exactly what makes an alpaca have a lustrous fleece compared to a dull, greyish one. We are sure this has to do with genetics.

The less grease content the fibre has, the better yield and better production for the mill processing the fibre.

During scouring, most of the grease is taken out of the fibre.

The international textile industry will only allow about 1.5% of grease in the fibre when it is sold scoured. A larger grease content may make it impossible to process the fibre.



Bohrt Royal Line Byron, suri stud sire, standing at Pinjarra Alpacas.

Q. Is there an additional premium paid for coloured suri? If so, which are the most popular colours?

A. We pay a premium for dark coloured suri fibre. The most popular colours are white, fawn, light fawn and brown. There is no price for black suri fibre as there are no quantities of this colour available. We usually negotiate a price at the time but we pay the highest price for black suri fibre. As far as huacaya is concerned, black is still commanding the highest price.

(Billy Bohrt, principal of Acera Marka added: 'In my next shipment to the US, I have a few black female suris and also white suris that have been bred by a black suri male. It is very difficult to produce black suris so a stud fee from a good black suri male is priceless.'))

Q. I understand that Bolivia breeds the largest numbers of coloured suris in the world. Is this correct?

A. There are no reliable statistics regarding coloured suris in Bolivia or in Peru. But, based on our experience, we believe Bolivia is breeding a larger percentage of coloured suris.

Q. What percentage of the suri herd in Bolivia and Peru is coloured?

A. I can only speculate that there are

about 17% coloured suris in Bolivia compared to only 2% in Peru.

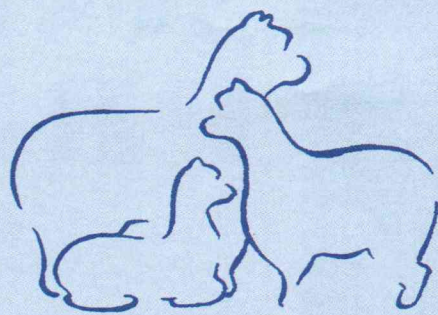
Q. Analysis of data on coat colour inheritance in Australian alpaca herds suggests that colour is dominant over white and that black is dominant over brown. Can you tell us anything about inheritance of coat colour in the suri?

A. Some findings have shown that colour is dominant over white but have also shown that brown and even light fawn is dominant over black. But, these are only preliminary results and should only be used as such.

Q. There are a number of different suri fleece types. Some suris have tight, pencil-like staples (locks) which twist all the way to the skin. Others have broad locks which fan out or are completely straight without any twist or curl. What type of lock do the processors and breeders prefer? Which is finer?

A. On our farm, we prefer the suri with as many locks per square inch as possible.

(Billy Bohrt elaborated: 'We found a relationship between the number of locks and shape of the locks. The more locks the suri has, the less the diameter the locks will be



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AUSTRALIA'S PREMIUM SURI STUD MALES

From TWO leading suri breeders
with ONE common aim.

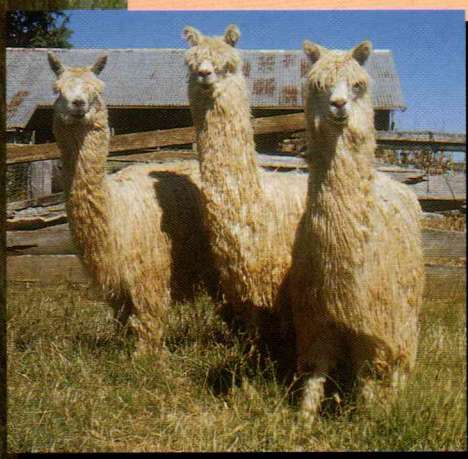
“Our aim is to provide breeders with the best. Recent purchases of Peruvian and Bolivian stock continue our program of improvement through controlled expansion of the genetic base of Australian suris.”

Proven performers* now standing:

- Suricaya Paramount (white)
- Suricaya Golden Chief (fawn)

And introducing:

- Desert Reign (white)
- Desert Dynasty (fawn)



A glimpse of tomorrow

*Male progeny of Suricaya Paramount and Suricaya Golden Chief — herdsires of the future.

Surilana

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Phone: 053 487 744 Fax: 053 487 754
Jill Short, Alpaca Syndicated Traders Pty Ltd
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Desert Reign

and also the closer to the skin the locks will start. It was very important for me to prove and determine mathematically which suri is a better type of suri just by finding out the number of locks in a 10cm². area. I came up with this idea because advertisements may not be true and there was a lot of room to make mistakes. Usually, the beginners, the new people in the industry, had to pay for those mistakes. As we can prove the micron by a test, we can also get an accurate result by counting the number of locks per 10cm². area. Usually a good suri alpaca will have about 180 to 200 locks in a 10cm² area. Regarding judging suris, I personally prefer a 'wave' in the staple but my decision will also depend on which one has more locks per square cm.

'The processors will also accept a fleece from a suri that has as low as 50 locks per 10cm². as it is very difficult to buy big quantities of suri fibre because of the small number in the world. So the processors usually blend the suri fibre with huacaya - like about 70% suri and 30% huacaya. At the moment, suri fibre is about three times more expensive than huacaya and is in very big demand so we expect it to increase even more.'

Q. Do small, soft ears denote finer, denser fleece?

A. We have not yet found a direct relationship between soft ears and characteristics of fleece.

Q. How important is 'woolliness' on the face or, alternatively, absence of fibre on the face in evaluating fleece quality?

A. Every breeder determines the type of animal they want to breed. We prefer 'woolliness' on the face but this is only important in evaluating the look of the animal, not the fleece quality.

Q. What other methods do processors and breeders use to differentiate

between an average suri and an outstanding suri? Can you rank these attributes in order of importance i.e. conformation, density, fineness, lustre, etc.? Obviously, attributes such as density and weight will be more important for the breeder than the processor.

A. Processors only consider micron count, grease content (as I said earlier, the international textile industry will only allow about 1.5% of grease in the fibre when sold scoured) and length of fibre.

We, as breeders, rank the suri attributes by: conformation; locks per square cm; fineness; lustre; and density.

However, colour may be important in accepting or rejecting a suri. We may accept a solid black suri even if he has not got very good conformation nor many locks nor a low micron fibre.

Q. What are the essential differences between Bolivian and Peruvian suris?

A. Bolivian suris may have more potential as we believe they may be more intact than the Peruvians, that is, less huacaya blood. We believe that coloured Peruvian suris, in particular, may have a large percentage of huacaya blood. I also prefer the Bolivian suris because they have better lock formation (i.e. more locks per 10 cm²).

Q. Unlike the harsh climate of the South American Altiplano, Australia's climate is kinder to the suri and the small but growing number are thriving in our temperate regions. Because its fleece does not capture and retain the warmth like a huacaya, the suri also copes better with the hot Australian summers.

In fact, my experience at farming both huacaya and suri is that the suri appears to be a hardier animal all round with less reproductive problems. Many other suri breeders in the U.S. and Australia agree. Whilst

our breeder numbers outside South America are too small and our experience too limited to know if the suri is, indeed, a more robust animal, it would be reasonable to suppose that centuries of natural selection in the inhospitable Andes — which saw the suri brought to the brink of extinction — would pay dividends to suri farmers in the more temperate zones of Australia.

Do you think there is a future for the suri in Australia. If so, why?

A. We agree with your perception that suri are hardier animals all round, more robust and also more resistant to warm as well as cool temperatures than huacaya.

My own opinion is that the near extinction of the suri mostly happened because the suri fibre is much more difficult to hand spin. As you know, in the past and also today, peasants' clothes are hand spun and hand knitted from huacaya, llama or vicuna, not from suri. I also believe that suris will be even more resistant to cooler temperatures than huacayas as long as they have good feed. We will see how good suris do in the cold regions of Canada in the future!

Author's background

Sandra Keane, principal of Pinjarra Alpacas, has been breeding alpacas for the last seven years at her picturesque property in North-East Victoria. Pinjarra's large acreage includes 100 acres of wildlife habitat which is home to a diversity of native animals including over 100 identified species of birds.

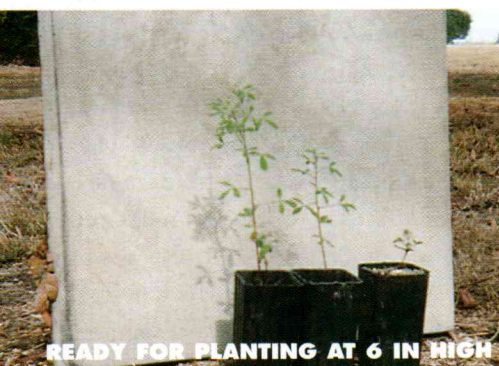
In 1995, Sandra coordinated the first shipment of Peruvian alpacas, including Peruvian suris, into Australia. In 1994, she became sole Australian agent for Bolivian suris after being impressed by their lustre and handle during a visit to the U.S. in 1994. In 1996, she imported the first Bolivian suris into Australia.

Sandra now manages some 30 head of Bolivian and Peruvian suris together with the larger herd of some 80 huacayas which have given her the opportunity to make some first-hand observations between the two fleece types. An article based on these observations appeared in the Autumn 1996 edition of *Town & Country Farmer*.

Suris are relatively new arrivals with only 300 currently in Australia.



TAGASASTE SEEDLINGS



READY FOR PLANTING AT 6 IN HIGH



AT 10 MONTHS



TOP WIRE ADDED AT 12 MONTHS

HEDGE-HOGGING ALPACAS 'EAT IT NEAT!'

The surrounds of the maternity paddock at Benleigh Alpaca Stud are a great conversation piece, and most visitors depart with the intention of implementing the same idea at their own farm.

What else would you expect to notice in a maternity paddock apart from 'mums and bubs'?

The Tagasaste Hedge!

Allan Jinks commenced the layout plan two years ago, when he planted Tagasaste, more commonly known as Tree Lucerne around the perimeter of the paddock. Two barriers of chicken wire, 60 cm apart protected the plants, the intention being to allow the alpacas to eat the tops as they grew, thus making them more bushy. Ultimately more chicken wire was placed over the top, and the bushes grew to fill the wired cavity.

The result is an alpaca-manicured 'box' hedge.

The hedge is a diet supplement, a perfect protector from wind and sun, as well as a great double-fenced divider. It also offers a safety zone for anyone with fear of neighbouring roaming dogs. What a bonus!

The Tagasaste is an evergreen leguminous tree-shrub which produces masses of white flowers in early spring. Originating in the Canary islands, it has been planted in Australian gardens

as an ornamental and on farms as a wind break and has been utilised as food value by pastoralists for many years.

In other areas of the farm the Tagasaste has long been used to form edible windbreaks for stock, but for the alpacas it is a different story.

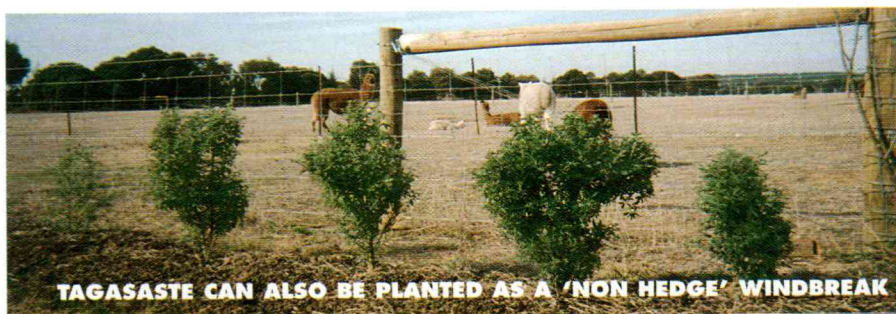
They neatly prune leaves as they protrude through the wire, although in spring with lush grass growth, the Tagasaste has been seen to grow considerably longer fronds while the animals choose to feed more on grasses, but during the recent excessively dry summer throughout Victoria, it has been a blessing, giving green pick at all times.

Tagasaste grows easily in many soil types and climates, can be germinated from seed or started as seedlings (see photo, left). Growth is rapid, aided by 'paca poo' and a little water if possible.

Cria are often seen nibbling beside their mothers on the leaves or just resting in its shelter. The whole concept works easily and we believe breeders should consider adding it to their management scheme in the coming season.

In summary, for the alpacas, we consider it excellent — aesthetically attractive, nutritional as well as functional, and the animals themselves clearly approve as they 'eat it neat'.

Carolyn Jinks



TAGASASTE CAN ALSO BE PLANTED AS A 'NON HEDGE' WINDBREAK

ALPACAS

CENTRE STAGE, IF YOU PLEASE

.....
by David Rogers

It all began with a conversation between my wife, Sally Rogers of Elms Hall Alpacas and an animal handler at Discovery Theatre in Sydney's Taronga Zoo.

Our son, five-year-old William was patting one of the trained goats in the display and told the handler that he led his alpacas in just the same way as the handler was leading the goat. The handler was interested to find out more about alpacas and Sally was happy to oblige. There were subsequent conversations with the zoo's Animal Presentation Manager, Kevin Evans. The outcome was that Elms Hall offered to donate an alpaca to the Theatre.

The Fresh NSW Milk Discovery Theatre is a very popular attraction at Taronga Zoo. Its aim is to educate children about domesticated animals.

However, as with all zoos, there are strict rules about the introduction of new animals. All must spend three weeks in quarantined isolation.

Because we were planning to donate a young male, we were worried that quarantine might prove detrimental to his health. Sally decided that the problem might be solved by having another alpaca keep him company, so she approached another Hunter Valley alpaca breeder, Jill Nicholas of Belgrave Park Alpacas. The result was that two young males, Bizet and Tango Boy were off to the zoo.

During their period of quarantine, the animals were tested for diseases and internal and external parasites, in accordance with the Zoo's rigorous standards. They came through with flying colours and progressed to training for their new life. They were halter trained and acclimatised to the constant attention and handling they would receive from young visitors.

Discovering that the zoo had little veterinary literature on camelids, Jill Nicholas approached the AAA for help. A package of material was assembled including seminar papers, and the invaluable Murray Fowler book, *Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids*, along with anything else Jill and Sally could lay their hands on. This was handed over to Taronga's senior veterinarian, Dr Larry Vogelnest.

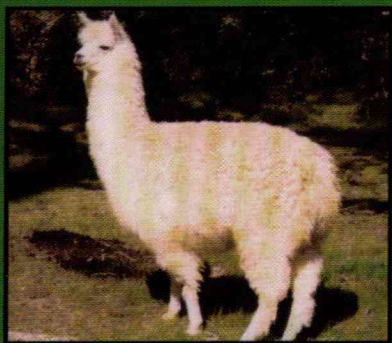
At last, the day came when the Bizet and Tango Boy made their debut at the Theatre. They joined a merry band of animals that includes sheep, goats, donkeys, chickens, a pig, and a cow. The alpacas are proving to be a big hit with handlers and audience alike. If you're visiting Taronga Park Zoo, make sure you head over to the Discovery Theatre. There, in the thick of things, you will find Bizet and Tango Boy, performing under their stage names of 'Wal' and 'José'.



From left: Sally Rogers, Jill Nickolas, Taronga Zoo's senior veterinarian, Larry Vogelnest and José (Tango Boy).

ALPACAS

Getting Started



Peter Kelly

PETER KELLY is a newcomer to the alpaca industry. He and his family run Bellawood Alpaca Stud at Goulburn in the Southern Highlands of NSW. The family purchased their first female alpaca in June 1996 and now have 27 alpacas on their 40 acre property.

According to Peter,

while alpaca industry people were very helpful when he was seeking information about the industry, 'there was no one source of information that gave people interested in alpacas the opportunity to find out about these animals in their own privacy'.

Peter decided to write a book based on his family's experiences. *Australian Alpacas: Getting Started* is the result. The book is easy to read, well illustrated and smartly presented. At \$19.95 plus \$2.00 postage, it represents excellent value. You can buy it direct from Bellawood Alpaca Stud or through Angus and Robertson Book Stores.

By now, members should have received a letter from Peter, promoting *Australian Alpacas: Getting Started* and inviting contributions for a more ambitious project. He wants to compile a book, based on breeders' experiences, that will be 'a collaborative effort to improve the alpaca industry and remove some of the mystery that exists'.

Peter's appeal for contributions in his circular letter bears reprinting: 'Any negative incidents or experiences you've endured will not be isolated events. Most often mistakes and disasters (near and actual!) provide the clearest signposts for better practice. Don't be reluctant to share positives and negatives. The goodwill of Australian alpaca breeders will ensure that any negative incident you document will be read in the light of what that experience can teach all of us.'

Some may feel that Peter's view may fly in the face of the highly competitive philosophy that seems to pervade much of Australian current thinking. On the other hand, shrewd business practice may dictate that co-operative effort by alpaca breeders to share information will help not only to attract, but also to retain the newcomers so necessary to assure long term industry success.

Pens out, breeders! Peter wants to release this new book in October. For more information, telephone 048 290 276. Send your candid, 'warts and all' contributions to Bellawood Alpaca Stud, Middle Arm Road, Goulburn NSW 2580.

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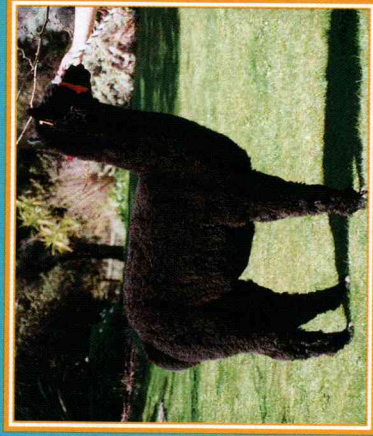
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TAKE CARE OF YOUR CRYPTOGAMIC LAYER!

.....
By Bill Burley

*Save the cryptogams and
the cryptozoa!*

Botanists, ecologists and soil experts (pedologists) know all about cryptogams and the cryptogamic layer. Most farmers know about them too, but they don't call them by those big, two-dollar terms!

The cryptogamic layer of the soil is that thin part of the topsoil which is composed of thousands of living organisms. The plants are called cryptogams: the mosses, lichens, ferns, mushrooms and other fungi and tiny little flowers; and animals are called cryptozoa: tiny, hidden animals, many of which are insects.

Strictly speaking, cryptogams to the botanists are plants with hidden reproductive parts (Greek *crypto*, hidden; and *gamos*, for marriage). These plants have very small reproductive structures not easily seen without using microscopes and difficult laboratory procedures. They include the ferns, mosses, lichens, and fungi, although the latter are now considered in their own kingdom of organisms, no longer plants.

Zoologists use the general term cryptozoa (Greek, *zoon*, animal) for tiny, often hidden animals that are found under leaves, bark, in the soil, etc. Even bacteria, no longer considered as either animals or plants, are cryptozoans, as are the soil nematodes (roundworms) that farmers know about.

The higher plants, what we usually call seed plants, include the familiar trees, shrubs, and wildflowers which produce conspicuous seeds and often have large, visible reproductive parts. In old botanical classification, they were called phanerogams (Greek *phaneros*, visible) in contrast to the cryptogams with their hidden reproductive parts.

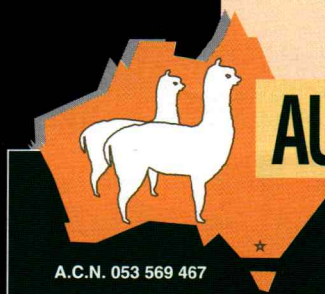
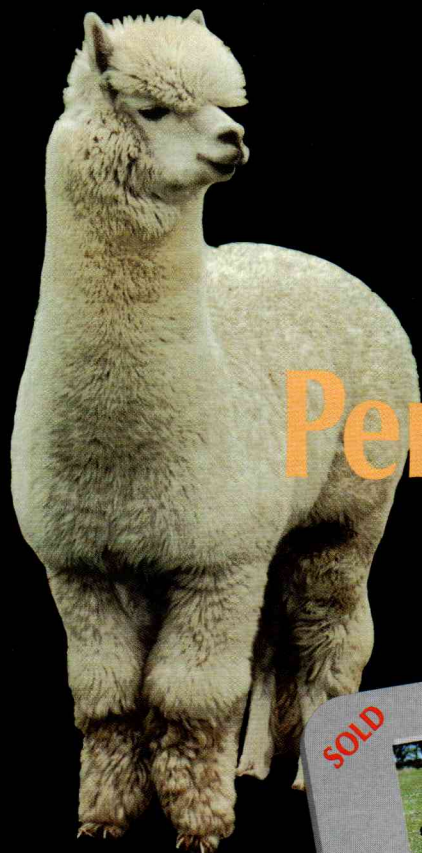
Those of us who have rural properties and farms are particularly interest-

ed in the cryptogamic layer of soil because it is this complex, living layer which gives so much of the productivity to the soil. It's really the topmost layer of what we often call 'topsoil'. This layer contains lots of biological diversity – hundreds of species of organisms – which together form complex webs of ecological interrelationships (predators and prey, food chains, producers and consumers, nitrogen fixation and many other soil processes). When we damage this layer, we tend to decrease long-term soil fertility and severely reduce biodiversity. In the process, we unwittingly make the system more vulnerable to further disturbance or deterioration.

Livestock vary in their effects on the cryptogamic layer and, of course, the stocking rate is a crucial factor. Soft-padded animals such as llamas, alpacas and kangaroos are less damaging to the soil surface than are animals with harder or sharper hooves (sheep, goats, cattle, horses). On the other hand, even paddocks with large numbers of alpacas can be badly damaged if stocking rates are too high or animals are forced to overuse particular areas of the paddock (such as along fences and near water troughs).

With a little extra thought as to how we stock our paddocks and manage our livestock, we can do a better job of protecting the cryptogamic layer. In the process, we preserve more biodiversity and decrease soil losses due to wind and water erosion.

An intact cryptogamic layer also is much less susceptible to weed invasion. Weed seeds cannot penetrate the surface as easily as on soil that has been disturbed or ploughed. Generally, the less stock on an area, the better for the



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We believe his progeny are stunning. They are all solid coloured (mainly medium and dark fawn) and they all resemble Centeno in both conformation and fleece quality.

Centeno is a very compact animal with superb conformation and presence and extremely dense fine crimp fleece.

We purchased him specifically to improve the quality of our own herd and, on results to date, we are more than pleased with our choice of herdsire.

If you wish to improve the quality of your herd, we believe Centeno is the obvious choice. We offer both agistment and mobile mating service. Our mating agreement contains a host of benefits including a 'live cria' guarantee. The service price is negotiable, depending on the number of matings you require. Agistment is free for the first 90 days. Your alpaca sent to our stud for mating will be well cared for under the full time supervision of Michael Brennan.

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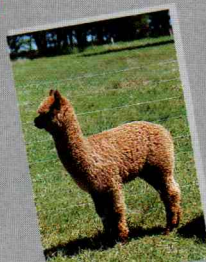
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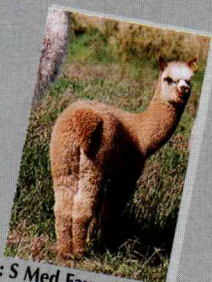
Alan Batchelor

Ph: (03) 5826 5364 Mobile 015 845 839

SOLD



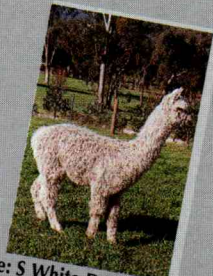
Male: S Dark Fawn DOB 10/5/96
Dam: White/Black



Female: S Med Fawn DOB 9/6/96
Dam: Grey

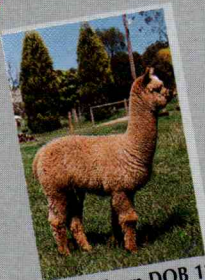


Female: Dark Fawn DOB 9/9/96
Dam: White/Black



Male: S White DOB 30/5/96
Dam: Solid White Suri

SOLD



Male: S Dark Fawn DOB 12/6/96
Dam: White/Dark Brown

Who Beat The Peruvians?



WHO HAS WON NUMEROUS BLUE RIBBONS?

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Greenvale Alpaca Stud

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Andrew and Julie Wilson,
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cryptogams but that must be balanced by our need to run livestock throughout much of rural Australia.

Some farmers and pastoralists are establishing 'exclosures' or areas from which all livestock are permanently excluded. In these areas, the biodiversity of the cryptogamic layer can regenerate and thrive, providing sources of 'inoculation' for other areas, as the tiny animals, plants, seeds and spores distribute themselves outwards.

A note from Sandi Keane

The best way to learn about the cryptogamic layer is to spend a little time getting acquainted with this exciting, hidden world just beneath the soil's surface.

Try to find an undisturbed piece of ground which is reasonably moist. Lying face down, nose almost in the

dirt (the interesting smells are a bonus!) and using a magnifying glass, you will see this tiny, hidden kingdom come to life.

When I tried this recently, my patience was rewarded with remarkable sights: bright & shiny-winged insects scurrying amongst the tiny fungi and grass roots; little red mites clambering over mosses and lichens; and all sorts of strange and beautifully-coloured particles made up of nature's debris – the leaf litter, roots and decomposing insects – or food for the tenants of this Lilliputian kingdom.

What is even more exciting to think about, is what we can't see: the microscopic world which, too, has its own living organisms and tiny, complex ecosystem.

Like Alice in Wonderland, we can quickly learn to enjoy and respect this diminutive world 'through the looking glass' – and help protect the biodiversity!



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The aim of this new event was to 'showcase new and emerging industries' and provide 'the traditional farming community, investors and the general public with a comprehensive and impartial insight into the many options and potential that the new farming industries offer'.

Royal Farm Expo is an initiative of the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of South Australia with major sponsor, *The Stock Journal*. It was held in conjunction with the Society's Autumn Show (a major horticultural and floricultural show) on 7, 8 and 9 March.

The South Australian branch of the Association saw this as a not-to-be-missed opportunity to promote the alpaca industry in South Australia. Late last year, a committee was formed consisting of individual and Regional Committee AAA members, to create an



attractive and innovative display.

The venue for the Expo was the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds at Wayville, on the edge of the city of Adelaide. The Association secured a refurbished ram sale pavilion which was well positioned to attract the attention

of every passer-by. This site offered a rural atmosphere, with minimum noise from other stands. There was room for an Association and individual stands, which meant a variety of exhibits could be mounted.

The committee decided on several major focuses aimed at informing the public about our industry: an 'Introducing Alpaca' brochure, displays of shearing spinning and knitting; a major fleece show and of course; animal displays. The overall theme was 'Alpacas in South Australia'. This was highlighted with posters of the state, embellished with alpaca stickers and gum tree branches.

Each day, two alpacas were shorn, which proved to be a very popular event. As most alpacas in South Australia are shorn in late spring, finding candidates with sufficient fleece proved to be quite difficult. However, our 'quota' was obtained and all the animals behaved impeccably – apart



from one screamer who had not been out of the paddock for eighteen months.

An enthusiastic group of spinners and knitters (members, family and friends) worked throughout the three days of the Expo with great cooperation and enthusiasm to complete a garment by closing time each day. The first fleece shorn each day became their project. The resultant children's vests were most attractive. They will be presented to a local primary school which created a number of hangings depicting alpacas, using alpaca fleece to create the collage. These hangings were part of the eye-catching backdrop for the spinning and knitting display.

A felting demonstration was an additional attraction that raised much interest.

The all-important animal displays exhibited the largest possible colour range. Putting together a wide colour range involved obtaining animals from



a multitude of breeders, large and small. Those less used to shows were given the opportunity to support the Association while gaining experience in staffing stands and sharing their knowledge of alpaca farming.

There were regular parades accompanied by introductory talks and they were very popular with the crowd.

Alpaca walks throughout the grounds also created the usual fascination.

The decision to hold a fleece show at the Expo also proved to be an ideal way of showing off the wonderful colour range alpaca has to offer. With a record 83 fleeces entered, the resulting display was something to behold, especially as the Association was given the

HIGH COUNTRY ALPACA STUD

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Now standing at stud:

Formerly of "Pucara" fame
the well-known

PURRUMBETE CARAMEL CHRIS
solid dark fawn.

And the "new kid on the block"
APOLLO

son of the great World Class Superstar
solid light fawn.



Both boys have very fine, very dense, lustrous, soft-handling, crimped fleece with excellent coverage. Both are multiple ribbon-winners.

Dave and Leonie Pearson - Mt Tamborine, S.E. Queensland
Ph: 07 5545 1705 Mobile: 0419 773 283 Fax: 07 5545 2858



use of sheep fleece display stands which set them off beautifully.

Champion fleeces were displayed in enclosed domes giving viewers a chance to get close, but not to touch.

The Alpaca Industry address was given by Geoff Hargreaves in one of the RAHS seminar areas. There were

also alpaca farming seminars held in the alpaca pavilion. Nick Veltjens discussed financial and budgetary issues and Andrew Caldwell covered fibre production and evaluation.

Over 40,000 people visited the Expo and we believe a majority came to the alpaca pavilion. Association

members distributed over 8,000 'Introducing Alpacas' brochures, 3,000 Industry Directories and 200 seminar booklets over the three days.

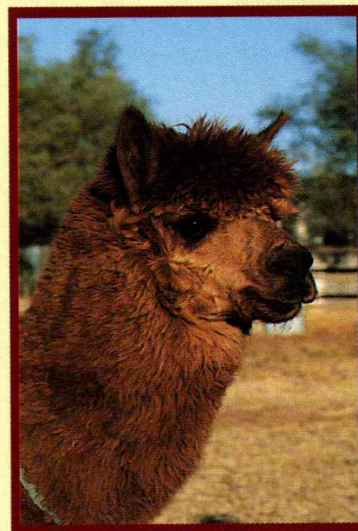
The SA region wishes to record its appreciation of a grant from the Association which was of great assistance in making sure our participation in the Royal Farm Expo was highly successful.



WYONA CHIPPER

Australia's Most Successful Show Winning Male Alpaca.

Senior Male Champion, Sydney RAS, 1995.
First 2 Yrs & Over Male, Sydney RAS, 1995.
Reserve Champion Male, Gulgong, 1995.
First 2 Yrs & Over Male, AAA National Show, 1994.
First 2 Yrs & Over Male, Melbourne RAS, 1994.
Reserve Champion Male, Sydney RAS, 1993.



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The Sydney Royal

Canadian judge, Maggie Krieger judged more than 100 alpacas at the 1997 Sydney Royal Show. It was gratifying to hear her comment that Australian alpacas have shown a dramatic improvement since she last judged in Australia, at the National Alpaca Show, Randwick in 1995.



*Grand Champion Male, Purumbete Minderoo with handler, Janie Hicks of Coolaroo Alpaca Stud and judge, Maggie Kreiger.
(Photograph courtesy The Land newspaper.)*

The Winners

Jnr Champion Male

Shanbrooke Enchanter, D & R Condon

Res Jnr Champion Male

Cedar House Montgomery, Cedar House Alpacas

Intermediate Champion Male

Purumbete Minderoo, Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Res Intermediate Champion Male

Wyona K O, Wyona Alpacas

Senior Champion Male

Purumbete Commandor, Southern Cross 1

Res Senior Champion Male

Jolleen Eureka, Jolleen Alpacas

Jnr Champion Female

Shanbrooke Society Lass, D & R Condon

Res Jnr Champion Female

Coolaroo Silky Oak, Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Intermediate Champion Female

Benleigh Highland Lass, Cedar House Alpacas

Res. Intermediate Champion Female

Cedar House Bliss, Cedar House Alpacas

Senior Champion Female

Purumbete Pennies from Heaven, D & J Bishop

Res Sen Champion Female

Purumbete Celtic Princess, D & J Bishop

Champion Suri

Cedar House Kingston, Cedar House Alpacas

Grand Champion Male

Purumbete Minderoo, Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Grand Champion Female

Benleigh Highland Lass, Cedar House Alpacas

Supreme Champion

Benleigh Highland Lass, Cedar House Alpacas



(Above) Sydney Royal Show Supreme Champion Alpaca, Benleigh Highland Lass, with exhibitor Peter Sultan of Cedar House Alpacas.

(Photograph courtesy The Land newspaper.)

Junior Judging Competitors

From left: Katie Clymo, Katie Morton (Res Champion), Kylie Hollingworth (Champion), Rebecca Farquhason, Cassie Bird.



Champion Saddle of 1st Fleece

Eldorado Stud

Res. Champion Saddle of 1st Fleece

A & K Caldwell

Champion Saddle of Fleece – open

K & J Hollingworth

Res Champ Saddle of Fleece – open

Cedar House Alpacas

Supreme Fleece

Eldorado Stud

SENIOR HANDLERS

1st Wendy Beer; 2nd Peter Sultan; 3rd Ann Hindmarsh

JUNIOR HANDLERS

1st Cassandra Bird; 2nd Edward Billington; 3rd Katie Morton

JUNIOR JUDGING

Champion Kylie Hollingworth

Res Champion Katie Morton

HERDSMAN COMPETITION

1st The Gorge Alpacas; 2nd Hidden Valley Alpacas; 3rd Alpacandes Alpacas.

[The Herdsman Competition is an innovation of Breed Captain Pauline Nugent. It is awarded for all round presentation of pens, animals and studs in the interests of promoting the industry to Show visitors.]

Meet the heavenly twins!

A small miracle on a British alpaca farm heralded the arrival of Hale and Bopp, twin alpacas who are just about as rare as their celestial namesake.

The heavenly twins were born on Good Friday to Peseta, a fawn coated Chilean import who conceived before entering the UK.

The UK's largest alpaca herd owner, Pat Bentley was amazed to discover a tiny black scrap ('little bigger than a foetus') lying in a pool of sunlight. She soon realised he was the weaker, but most determined, of the twins.

'He couldn't stand for the first few days and thrashed about in the straw, struggling furiously to get up,' Pat said.

After several doses of alpaca and cow colostrum, followed by three days (not to mention nights) of one-hourly feeds, Bopp was finally encouraged to stand.

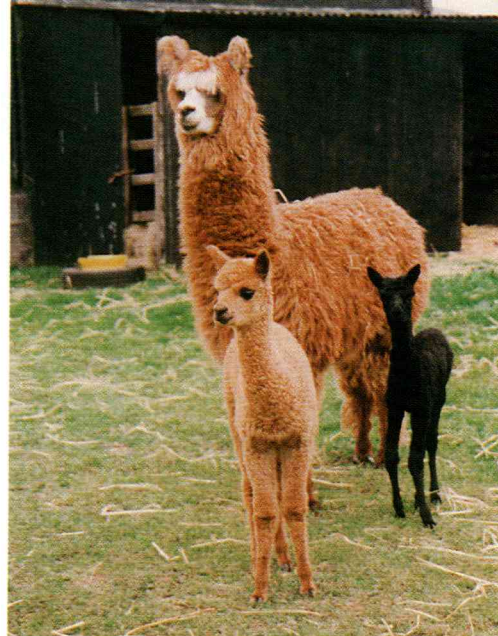
'I have to confess to being quite

exhausted!' Pat confessed, after her marathon stint with the tiny alpaca. 'But it was well worth the effort. He is over the first hurdle and out to grass with his sister, Hale.'

Bopp weighed in at a little over 8lbs at birth. With his teeth un-emerged and ears flattened over his head, he appeared a good three weeks less mature than his twin. The twins were born with separate placentas, so it seems unusual he should have been so malnourished.

With his jet black coat he makes a startling contrast to his pale-fleeced dam and sister. Each twin may well have been conceived by a different male, though only DNA tests could prove the theory.

Meanwhile, the twins, Hale and Bopp are out at pasture, their future secure as part of Pat's sixty-strong herd and their horoscopes are looking 'starrier' by the moment!



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Future imports to be screened

The Association is developing a protocol for the future screening of animals being imported into Australia.

The National Committee recently decided to adopt screening standards for both conformation and fibre, following the industry's 1996 decision to screen for genetic faults.

The screening standards adopted by the Association bring Australia into line with the United States and should ensure that only imported animals of the highest quality are eligible for registration on the Australian Register.

Screeners will be appointed by the Association and undergo training to ensure a high level of competency and consistency.

A person wishing to import alpacas into Australia will be required to pay the costs of having the animals screened, by

Australian screeners, in the country of origin. Animals will be screened for genetic faults, undesirable traits, conformation and fleece characteristics.

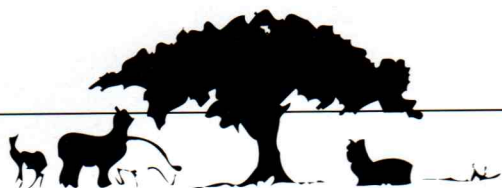
While the presence of a genetic fault will result in immediate disqualification for import, phenotypic characteristics will also be evaluated using a point scoring system. Only animals scoring 80 or more of the 100 available points will be accepted for registration, provided they otherwise qualify.

Characteristics on which animals will be point scored include: shape of head and muzzle, shape and size of ears, body characteristics, leg conformation and fibre. For fibre, points will be deducted for every micron over 26, standard deviation in excess of 5.5, lack of density and percentages of fibre over 30 microns.

By adopting strict screening standards, Australia will ensure that it does not become a dumping ground for inferior stock not acceptable on the North American Registry. Further, it will do much to ensure that future imports enhance the national herd and assist our industry in achieving its goal to breed alpacas that are amongst the best in the world.

Screening standards cannot prevent the importing of an animal into Australia, no matter what unacceptable physical or genetic characteristics it may have. However, by refusing to register animals that do not pass screening requirements, we can provide a significant disincentive to anyone wishing to import inferior animals.

*Jill Short, Secretary
Australian Alpaca Association Inc.*



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ACN 074 718 693

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International South American Camelid Festival

AREQUIPA, PERU

**Tues 4 to Sun 9
November 1997**

Details of this exciting event – including the possibility of a group booking to travel to Peru for the event – are now available.

Contact general manager,
David Johnson at the National
Office on (03) 9877 0778.

NEXT ISSUE

**DUE TO UNFORESEEN
CIRCUMSTANCES, WE
HAVE HELD OVER
OUR ADVERTISED
COOLAROO/ALPACA
CENTRE STORY ON
AUSTRALIAN MADE
FASHION UNTIL NEXT
ISSUE.**

Alpacas Australia

1997 ALPACA CLASSIC SHOW & SALE

**PENRITH RUGBY LEAGUE
CLUB, NSW**

**Saturday and Sunday
15 & 16 November 1997**

Start preparing your animals
now!

Entry forms for the Show
and Sale will be circulated to
members shortly.

For information, contact
Jenny Jones at the National
Office on (03) 9877 0778.

BANKSIA PARK ALPACA STUD



"Industry leaders committed to quality"



ALPACA EXCELLENCE

1996 Perth Royal Show (125 animals)

SUPREME CHAMPION ALPACA

Senior Champion Male
Reserve Senior Champion Male
Senior Champion Female
Champion Wether
Junior Champion Male
Reserve Intermediate Champion Male
Champion Sires Progeny (60 animals)

– Ivory King –

**MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR
(LOGAN'S CUP)**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CLIENTS.

Intermediate Champion Female
Reserve Intermediate Champion Female
Reserve Senior Champion Female

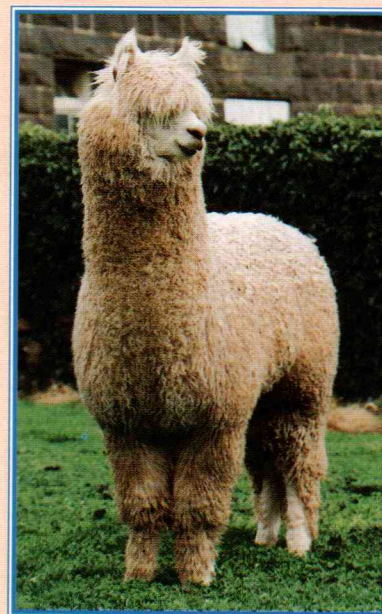
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1995 PERTH ROYAL SHOW SUPREME CHAMPION
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INTRODUCING; BANKSIA PARKS NUMBER 1 PICK
PERUVIAN MALE. SOLID MEDIUM FAWN
20.3 MICRON AT 3 YRS OLD.



PUCARA ALPACA STUD

Alpaca for the discerning breeder

Pucara have quietly gone about acquiring the best alpaca genetics available in the world in a quest to breed quality fibre for quality product. Witness the stunning Machos that arrive in March '97: Peruvians, Don Julio, Drambuie and Legend. We are also part-owners of Peruvian Hemingway – 17.8 mic., 3.9 s.d., 21.9 c.v. at 7 years old. His progeny are breathtaking. They have consistently won in the U.S. show rings. At the Denver National Show '96 where shown, his progeny won the junior male and female classes which had more than 20 animals per class!!!

A number of our select Peruvian females bred to Hemingway are for sale. Also available are a beautiful selection of weanlings, male and female, some of Hemingway descent. With them will be an elite group of full Peruvian suris, the quality of which has no parallel in Australia. Soft, lustrous, fine... locked fleeces that hang like curtains of silk.

We haven't neglected colour either. All the Aussie 'experts' said there was no colour in Peru, but of the 5.4 million kgs cut there 35%(*) is coloured!!! Pucara this year got 50 coloureds in Peru before the Peruvian government shut the door on colour..
..for ever!!!!

1996 NATIONAL CLASSIC AUCTION

Congratulations Peter and Margaret Bennett for the purchase of Purumbete Hot Shot from Pucara and Merungle Alpaca Studs, the highest ever price at auction in Australia... Hot Shot is now at stud at Pucara.

Well done Aymara Alpaca Stud on the \$42,000 sale of a weanling female, the daughter of Pucara's outstanding black herdsire, Pacific Beethoven.

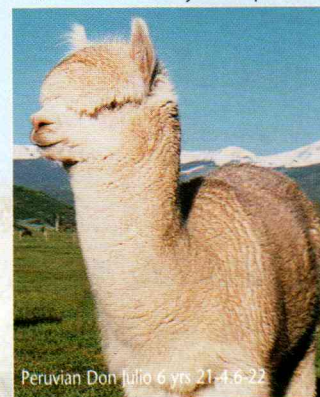
Give us a call, we'd like to hear from you.

(*) R. Weatherall, 1995

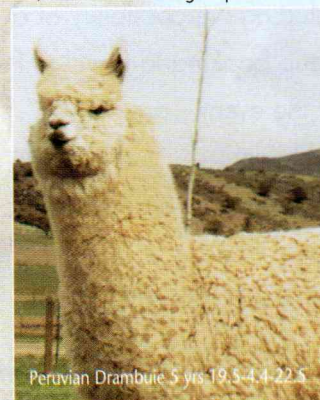
Tel: 0352 633 436
Fax: 0352 633 364
015 525 391

Jude Anderson
Alan Cousill

1/2 Owners Shelbory Park Alpacas

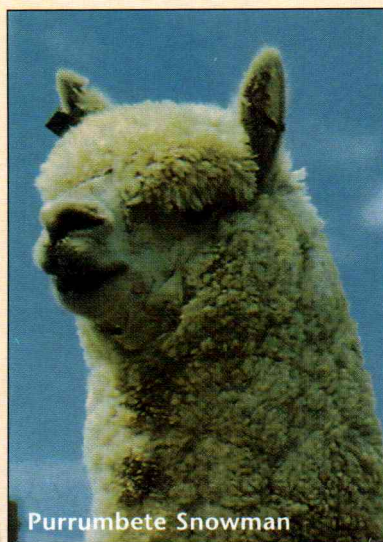


1/2 owners Warralinga Alpacas



PUCARA MACHOS

(Now at stud)



Purrumbete Snowman



Pacific Beethoven

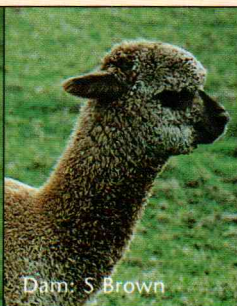


Purrumbete Caramel Chris

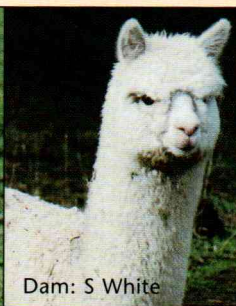
SNOW MAN PROGENY



Dam: S White



Dam: S Brown



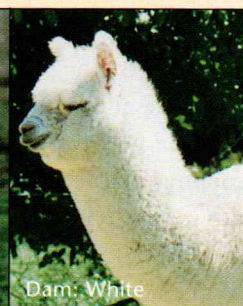
Dam: S White



Dam: S White



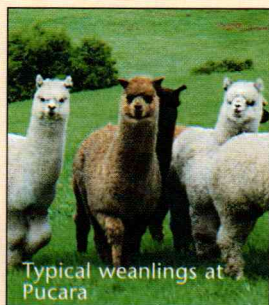
Dam: Dk Grey



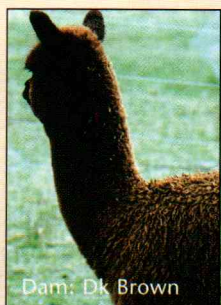
Dam: White

'Snowman progeny have won the supreme championship of two largest shows of alpaca in Victoria 1995 and the Royal Sydney 1996.'

CHRIS PROGENY



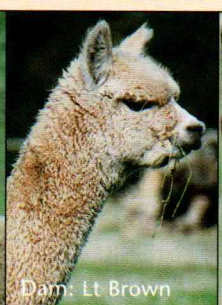
Typical weanlings at Pucara



Dam: Dk Brown



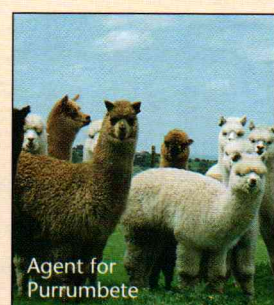
Dam: Brown



Dam: Lt Brown

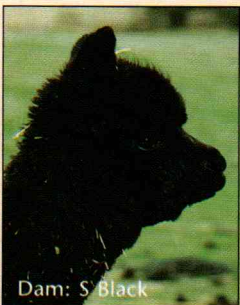


Dam: Dk Brown



Agent for Purrumbete

BEETHOVEN PROGENY



Dam: S Black



Dam: S Black



Dam: Dk Brown



Dam: S Black



Dam: Dk Brown



Dam: S Black

PUCARA WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE BOUGHT ANIMALS FROM US RECENTLY
 🎉 CONGRATULATIONS 🎉

John and Diane Kuhl Mt Gambier
 Jessie Jenkin Geelong
 Trevor and Debbie Walker Mt Gambier
 Paul and Lesley Tepper Mt Eliza
 Laurie and Margaret Binks Albany
 Riki and Rainer Marten Staverton
 Judy Brear and Lyn Sullivan Martinsville
 Helen Fritsch Dural
 Rex and Bev Shearer Bega

Geoff and Jeanette Cumming Peterborough
 Peter and Judith street Mittagong
 Kay and John Cleaver Woodend
 Kim and Marc Tonkin Bombala
 Bert and Margaret Rijk Silvan
 Peter and Erica Bennett Bell Post Hill
 Ken Madl Denver
 Lynn and Lutz Jacobi Little River
 John Simpson and Sue Bourchier Shepparton

Wendy Horchkie Newcastle
 Ted and Meredith Cole Brisbane
 Geoff Martin & Sue Curliss Mt. Edgerton
 Paul and Pauline Witham Elaine
 Sue Wood Albert Park
 Gary and Jan Pettit Clarkefield
 Geoff Cole & Gary Scarlett Torquay

When owners become breeders there's cause for celebration!

Great excitement in the Calder household at 6.30am on the morning of 6 April 1997 — a phone call from Rob and Raelene Strong told us we were the proud grandparents of a female cria.

She's not only the first born 'Ashley Grove' cria, but also the first purebred Peruvian cria, out of quarantine, to be born on Australian soil.

Naturally the Calder clan, Peter, Geraldine and Mac travelled forth to view the new addition to the family, stopping at the shops to purchase a film for the Polaroid. It seemed a very long drive from Springvale South to 'Mariah Hill', Nar Nar Goon North... and what a wonderful sight our new baby was.

Jolimont Avonlea, her very proud mother, was only too happy to let us

pet and cuddle her, and was beaming with maternal pride. And so she should — not everyone has such a perfect first born.

Avonlea seemed 'stress free' and looked quite happy and relaxed after the event.

Avonlea was mated on May 8, 1996. Her confinement lasted eleven months: through quarantine in the Cocos Islands with tropical heat, transport by plane to Tullamarine, then by truck to Jolimont at Romsey, Victoria. After that, she survived an horrific heat wave, a stressful selection day where 81 breeders poked and prodded her and a truck ride to Nar Nar Goon.

One can only deduce that Avonlea and alpacas in general, are resilient creatures.



Ashley Grove Brooke with proud owner, Geraldine Calder

We're sure her sire would be just as proud. He is known, at present as Jolimont (ear tag) 44. We do know that he came from the Don Julio Barreda Alpaca Stud, in Peru, and should know, within a few days, his new name and location.

Avonlea is looking forward to mating with another of the Julio Don Barreda boys in a few weeks.

The Calders are now officially breeders, not just owners. We now have four girls; Avonlea, Abigail, Alice and of course, our new little girl, Brooke.

Geraldine Calder

HOPE DOWNS ALPACAS

Based on quality animals of the best conformation and fibre from a variety of top genetic lines. The stud is managed by experienced live-stock producers on one of the most diversified farms, 45 mins from Perth.

AT STUD: COOLAROO BOLERO

Solid light fawn (by Don Quixiote-slf) multiple show winner and sire of excellent progeny (can be viewed).

STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS

Hope Downs is hosting a series of one day Elite Alpaca Production Workshops conducted by Coolaroo stud with Dr Jim Watts on July 27 and 28.

I wish to attend the Elite Alpaca Production workshop at Hope Downs Alpacas on:

☐

Sunday 27 July

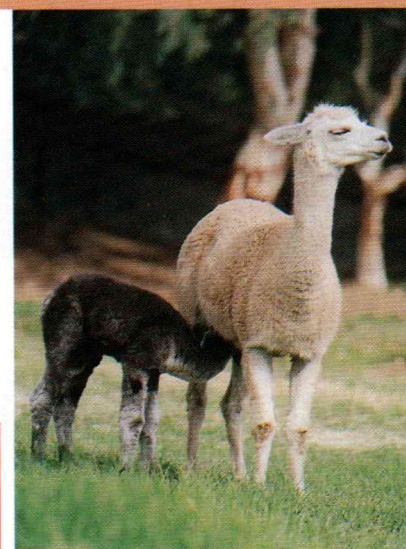
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Monday 28 July

Name.....

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PhoneFax.....



Please cut out or photocopy the booking slip.

Post to Dolly van Zaane at Lang's View Farm

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or fax (08) 9571 4369

For enquiries phone (08) 9571 4349

email: dolly@enternet.com.au

When you invest in Hope Downs Alpacas, you narrow down the odds

A grand young lady – *Benleigh Highland Lass* Supreme Champion RAS, 1997

This young lady started her career in the limelight when she was just 6 months old. She paraded for her first show at the Geelong Alpaca Fest (around 90 exhibits). Nothing short of Supreme Exhibit. What an effort at such an early age. Her next show was at Warrnambool in Victoria. Once again she won Junior Champion female and Supreme Champion.

The really big contest was against Benleigh Wedding Bells at the National Show, where she won National Intermediate Female Champion and National Supreme Champion for 1996.

Before the National Show, Highland Lass was sold by Benleigh to Cedar House, but did not move to NSW to continue her show career until she had been mated to Inti, the sire of the 1996 National Supreme Fleece winner. As a pregnant female she went on to win Supreme Exhibit, Canberra Royal 1997; St Ives Show Sydney 1997; Camden Show 1997; topping it off with Supreme Exhibit, Sydney Royal Show 1997.

Also at RAS, the crows were treated to the unusual spectacle of seeing a supreme champion shorn. Her fleece weighed a healthy 4.3kgs.

After 10 days at the Royal she was taken home and allowed to run in the paddock – and have her first roll in the grass for 10 weeks! (Have you ever seen a happy alpaca?!) Benleigh Highland Lass is expecting cria in November.

It is worth mentioning that there has been no other alpaca anywhere that has consistently won as many Championships or Supremes. She is truly a grand lady.

Wendy Billington, Cedar House.



'Whew! That's a load off my back!' (At least, that's we imagine Benleigh Highland Lass is telling co-owner, Peter Sultan)

(Photo taken by The Land newspaper.)

TRARON ALPACAS

PROUDLY INTRODUCE

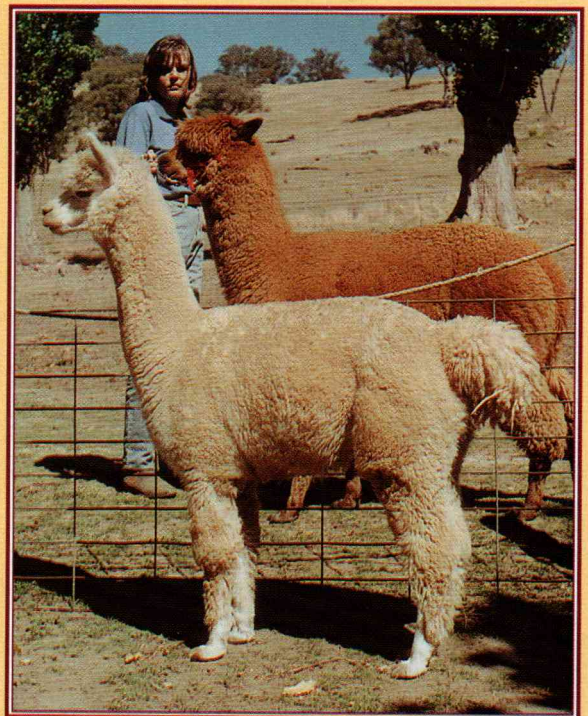
"Peruvian Diodoro"
(White)

Diodoro is one of the outstanding males of the Viceconte Peruvian Shipment and perhaps the finest working male in Australia. Doro has a soft, lustrous, crimped fleece and very good conformation and temperament.

Co-Owners:

Bill & Annette Robbins and Pat & Rosa Viceconte.

*Enquiries: Bill & Annette Robbins
Fax/Phone 060 725 224
R.M.B. 7062, Wodonga Vic 3691*



19.5 micron 20 c.v. at 3 1/2 years

You've tried the rest now try the best.

Gina Rinehart enters the alpaca industry in WA

Lang's View farm, located 35 kms north of Perth in the Bullsbrook hills has recently introduced alpacas to its already wide range of agricultural pursuits with the purchase of ten females and a stud male from NSW's Coolaroo stud.

The farm is owned by Gina Rinehart, daughter of the late Lang Hancock.

Farm manager, Dave Scott who is an experienced stud livestock producer, selected the animals. They arrived at the property in late November last year and have already produced nine cria.

Dave commented, 'I have been around stock all my life and, although my experience was very limited with alpacas, I think once you know your livestock, that makes it all the easier.' He said that he looked particularly for

sound conformation and fibre quality and made sure that he had a range of bloodlines.

Dave's partner, Dolly van Zaane will concentrate on showing and marketing the animals with the help of handler, Samantha Lilly. The alpacas will be collectively known as Hope Downs Alpacas. Dolly is well known in equestrian circles as a photographer, equestrian journalist and a sport horse breeder.

Hope Downs Alpacas is to host two workshops run by Coolaroo and conducted by Dr Jim Watts on Elite Fibre on Sunday 27 and Monday 28 July,

'We are new kids on the block and, by hosting this workshop, we achieve two major aims. First of all, we are introducing Dr Jim Watts for the first time in WA to speak on elite fibre pro-

duction in alpacas. At the same time, we are introducing Hope Downs to all the alpaca breeders and anyone who is looking into alpacas as an investment,' said Dolly.

She said that the stud is in the alpaca industry for the long haul: 'Alpacas have a great future in the Australian fibre industry and we are determined to be part of its success.'

Those interested in attending a workshop can obtain information and bookings by phoning (08) 9571 4349 or faxing (08) 9571 4369.

The indefatigable Janie Hicks is taking her workshop roadshow to Rosemount Alpacas, in Canungra, Qld. Dates are August 17 and 18. For details, ring George Rose on (07) 5544 0106 or fax (07) 5544 0107.

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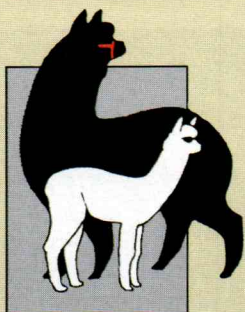
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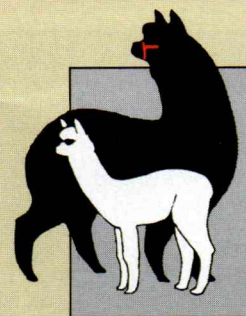
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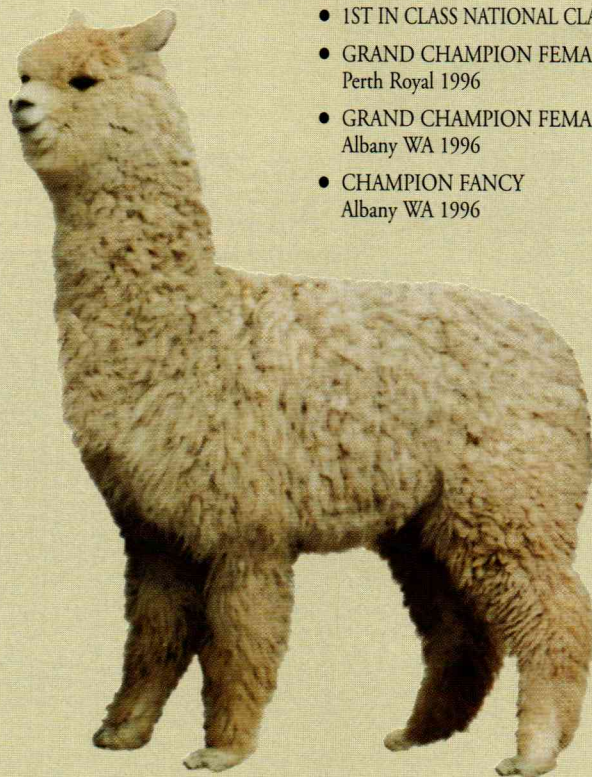
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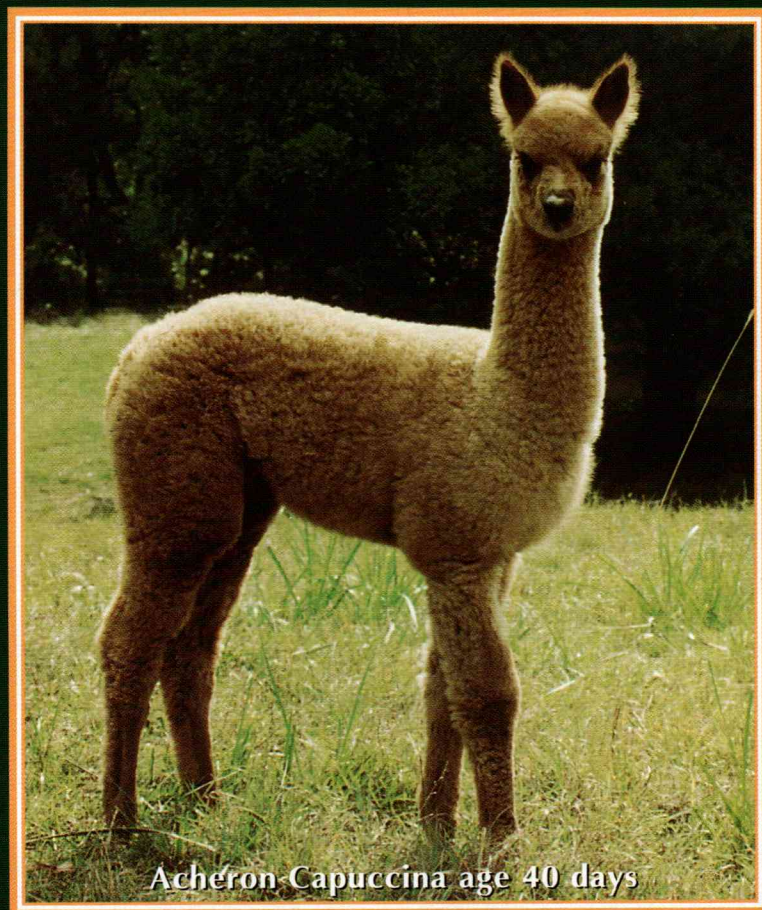
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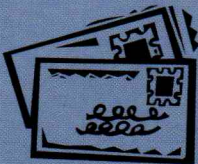
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Unit 9, 663 Victoria Street, Abbotsford Vic 3067.

WHY THE LIVE CRIA GUARANTEE IS GOOD BUSINESS

It may surprise many readers to learn that a live cria guarantee is not standard practice for male stud services in our industry.

There are a number of reasons given by breeders as to why they don't offer this level of confidence to their clients. These centre around the problem of absent or neglectful owners. If the owner is not there during the labour and the cria dies because it's stuck, or membranes cover its nose, for example, it's hard to argue that a free return service should be provided. Or what if the alpaca is harassed by dogs, or is stressed by heat or travel? The male has done its job and this loss is the owner's problem, they say.

I've heard about a variation on the guarantee whereby a free return service is offered if the cria dies up to the day before delivery. This covers failure on the animal's part (but not labour) and excludes owner absence or neglect (which could be seen as the same thing if we're talking about full-term pregnant alpacas).

The problem with all this is that a live cria guarantee is not solely about the male or female failing in reproduction. It is not about who did what and when. It does not seek to blame the owners, the vet, the agisting stud or to have them blame each other. It does not take away the need to educate owners about how to properly care for their alpacas.

The guarantee is about goodwill. It is an important gesture that helps limit the female alpaca owner's losses. Remember, the guarantee comes into effect when there's a dead cria and when the female's owner has lost up to 12 month's production. The guarantee is a commitment to that owner to assist breeding. It is also low-cost.

The service fee includes this commitment. Just as a female may become pregnant on the first service or may take many matings over many months, the guarantee simply extends the

period to the birth of a live cria. (On this basis, some service fees are easier to earn than others.) Of course, a problem arises when a male is at a particular stud for only a limited period, or when that male is partly owned, non-owned or leased. A cria loss 12 months down the track may pose logistical problems.

These types of situations are, I think, at the root of many of the arguments I've heard from those who do not give a live cria guarantee. Where the male is non-owned, for example, how can the servicing stud carry the "liability" when the male may have left months ago?

I think studs can resolve these issues easily – by offering to provide a free return service to a stud male standing at the time, should the original male no longer be available.

Interestingly, the studs that I know which offer a live cria guarantee report very few losses. In fact, one stud said it had never lost a cria; another recalls one or two out of several hundred matings. Another stud is confident enough of its position to extend the live cria guarantee to include neonatal death.

I recall reading an interview with Siimon Reynolds, the advertising man (of 'Grim Reaper' fame) who talked about the importance of money-back guarantees for products. He said something along the lines of only a few per cent of buyers will claim their money back, but a guarantee is responsible for the vast majority of business coming in. In other words, guarantees give confidence, at low cost.

For an industry which relies on attracting new entrants and on those new entrants liking what they see and deciding to stay, a live cria guarantee makes good business sense.

Krista Mogensen
Anicca Alpacas, Wartook Vic

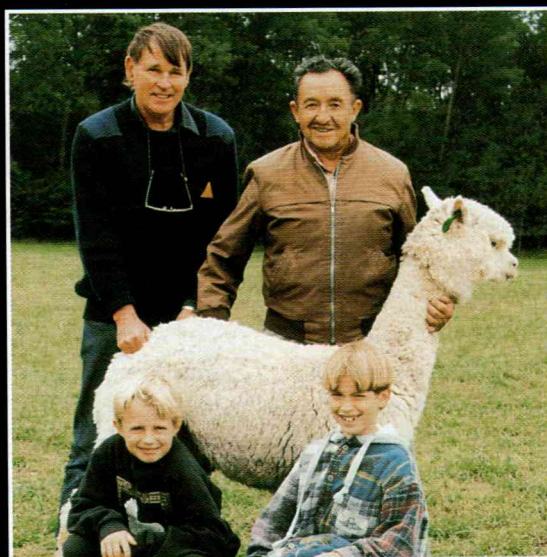
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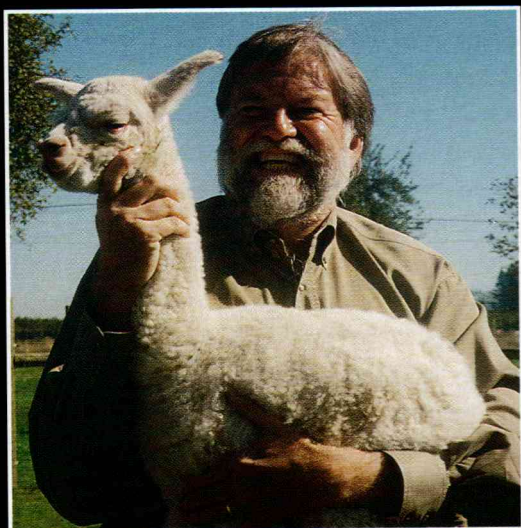
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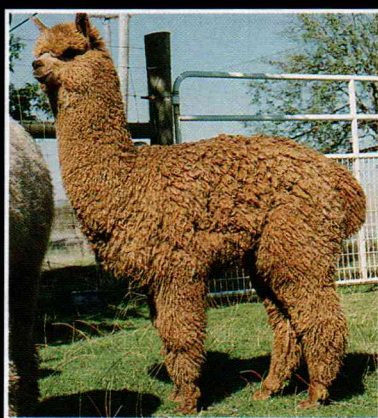
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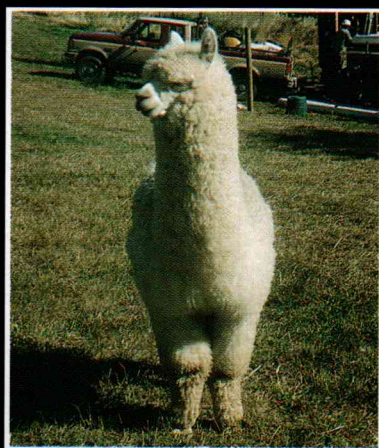


'Peruvian Don Corleone'

Solid White

21.8 micron 4.3 SD

19.7 CV at 12 months



'Peruvian Baldermero'

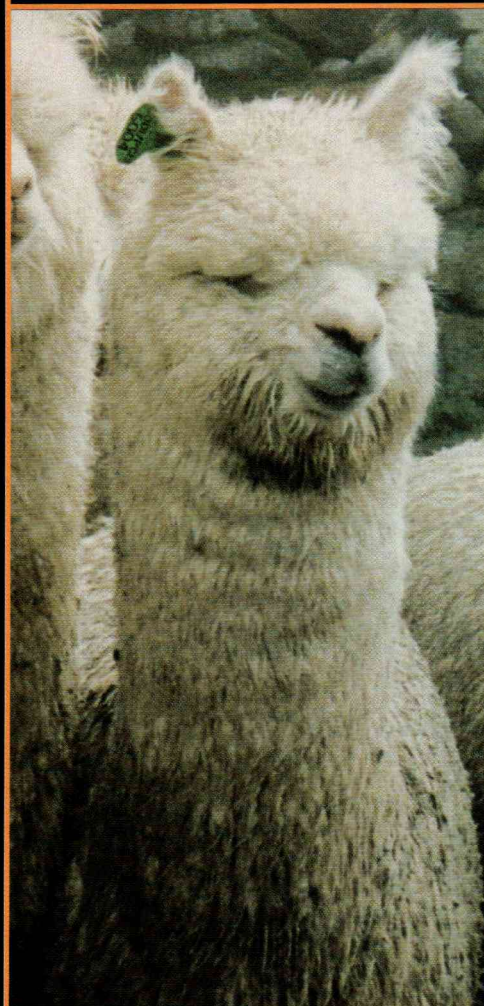
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ASSESSING HUACAYA FIBER THROUGH THE EYE OF A BREEDER

by Mike Safley

Animal breeding is a creative art form. The aesthetic qualities of an animal are painted in the mind's eye of the breeder and manifested in the pasture as three dimensional art, fashioned with chromosomes, selected from the palette of DNA available from specific animals in the artist's general herd. To many alpaca breeders, their animals are living sculptures constructed of flesh, bone and fleece.

Alpaca breeders can create alpacas with coarse, straight hair or soft, curvy locks as fine as Rembrandt's brush strokes. Each breeder needs to decide what fleece character and style he wants his alpacas to produce. Since breeding alpacas is an economic venture, as well as an artistic pursuit,

Northwest Alpacas decided to found their fleece ideals on those traits which are most valuable to textile manufacturers.

The market place creates price premiums for certain fleece characteristics. Studies have determined that manufacturers pay for all natural fiber based on the criteria listed in Table 1.

Alpaca breeders should select alpacas for their breeding programs that will produce commercially valuable fiber. Carefully selecting for fiber fineness, length, uniformity, and an absence of medullation requires an understanding of what to look for on the live alpaca. Density and crimp are signposts that a breeder can use to help select outstanding alpacas. Annually measuring all these traits is extremely important if breeders expect to make qualitative gain in their herds.

Selecting for several traits simultaneously can reduce the likelihood of definitive progress. Some characteristics are antagonistic. Fineness and density are a good example. 'You must first fix the density trait before selecting for fineness,' says Don Julio Barreda. He has found that if you attempt to select for both traits at the same time, density suffers.

Fineness

Fineness is the primary determinant of price because a fiber's micron count determines its end use. Fine fiber is generally more valuable because it creates apparel which can be worn next to the skin. Coarse fiber is used for carpet wool. There are a whole range of uses between these two extremes, each demanding a specific diameter of fiber.

Table 1

| CHARACTERISTIC | % OF VALUE |
|--|---|
| Fineness or average diameter The primary determinant of value in the textile market is micron count. | 65 – 80% |
| Staple length Determines which spinning system will be used, woolen or worsted. | 15 – 20% |
| Tensile strength Alpaca fiber is not sold based on tensile strength because it is rarely, if ever, too weak to spin. | 5 – 10% |
| Cleanliness The price of alpaca fleece is not impacted by cleanliness in South America, but it is in North America and Australia. | 5 – 10% |
| Color Alpaca fiber is the only natural fiber which can command a premium based on color. | Depending on current fashion |
| Degree of medullation A highly medullated fleece indicates an alpaca which may have llama blood in its background or is poorly selected. | Generally reflected in average fineness or % of fiber over 30 microns |

Fine fiber is rare and in short supply. Approximately 7% of all alpaca fiber in Peru grades Baby at 21-22 microns. Most fiber animals grow fleece of more than 24-25 microns. Garments made of fiber averaging more than 21 or 22 microns often itches or feels prickly to the wearer. Cloth made of fleece containing 5% of fiber over 30 microns also itches, even if it averages only 21 microns.

Fineness is highly heritable. The mating of fine males to fine females produces finely fibered cria. When selecting a male for fineness, breeders should place a premium on older males with low micron counts. (See later, on crimp.)

Staple Length

Alpaca fiber's staple length is important. Length commands a premium in the textile market. Length increases the manufacturers' ability to spin finer and stronger yarns for weaving. Fiber must be at least 2.5 inches and preferably 3.5 inches or more to be used in the worsted system. The finest garments are made from worsted yarn. Short fibers used in woolen yarn generally sell at a discount.

Staple length is heritable. By measuring the length of the staple annually at each shearing, breeders can determine which alpacas are genetically predisposed to grow longer fiber. This measurement can be very effective as a selection guideline within a herd since all the alpacas can be presumed to have a similar environment and diet. All other things being equal, a longer staple will equate to a higher volume of fleece.

Uniformity

There is considerable research which establishes that a more uniform fleece is more 'spinnable'. A fleece with a co-efficient of variation that is 5% less than a fleece of comparable micron will spin a yarn that performs as if the fleece is one micron finer. The most effective way to select for uniformity is to breed for alpacas with a lower average micron count. A finer fleece generally has less standard deviation. Many breeders believe that a cria with a lower standard deviation is more likely to maintain fine fiber as it ages.

In the field, an alpaca with a uniform fleece can be detected in several ways. A uniform fleece opens cleanly, like a book, not a rose. The fleece won't appear webby or cross fibered. It cracks or breaks open cleanly, without tangle. (See photos A and B.) The crimp style found in the fleece will have the same look and structure at the shoulder, midside, and hip. When the crimp or lock structure extends down the legs, under the belly, and up the neck, the fleece tends to be more uniform.

Ideally, color should be uniform over the entire body of the alpaca. When producing fleece for commercial sale, breeders should avoid selecting alpacas with secondary colors which require additional labor to sort. Also, different colors within the fleece do not take dye evenly.



Photo A: Accoyo plantel female fleece. The fleece opens like a book, clean and uniform.



Photo B: The fleece 'cracks' on the alpaca as it moves and turns. This is an indication of both density and uniformity.

Medulation

Medulated fibers are the coarse, thick bristles that constitute the second coat of guard hair often found on a llama. Alpacas should be selected against this trait. Medulated fiber often exceeds 40 microns and can range up to 100 microns.

A breeder can visually detect medulated fiber on an alpaca. Most alpacas have medulated fiber in their chest or apron and in the britch and belly. A breeder's goal is to first eliminate guard hair from the blanket area and then from the entire animal.

When assessing medulation, study the right hand tail of the histogram for evidence of coarse fiber. The percentage of fiber over 30 microns is quantified on most histograms and is a guide to the amount of medulated fiber in a given fleece.

A breeder can cut a lock of fleece from an alpaca and then look for thick fibers among the finer ones. Pull at the lock from the tip, if an inordinate number of thick fibers slide from the lock the alpaca is likely to have a medulated fleece.

Selecting for Density

From the breeder's point of view, density is one of the alpaca's most important production traits. Ultimately, the purchase price for fiber of any grade is based on its weight. On the other hand, the textile manufacture doesn't place any value on an individual alpaca's density.

A breeder can determine an alpaca's genetic predisposition to density very simply: weigh the alpaca's entire fleece annually at shearing time. When assessing an unshorn animal in the field, density can be determined in at least six different ways.

- 1 By feel; grab a handful of fleece. If your hand feels empty, the alpaca has a light fleece. If it feels full, the fleece is

dense. This measuring technique allows you to quickly compare a number of alpacas in a given herd.

- 2 Inspect the fleece's individual locks. If they are compact, firm, thick, and solid, the entire animal is likely to be dense. (See photo C.)
- 3 Part the fleece and inspect the skin. If you see a lot of skin, the animal will tend to have a lighter fleece.



Photo C: Accoyo's Victor. The lock formation in this fleece is solid, well-defined and boldly crimped.

- 4 Look at the alpaca's head. If it has a strong, dense wool cap that grows at right angles to the skin, the balance of the animal will tend to be dense. If the forelock lays down or hangs, the animal probably has fewer hair follicles per square inch and is therefore less dense. (Photos D, E and F.)
- 5 Look at an alpaca's overall fiber coverage. Does the fiber extend down the legs? Look carefully at the front of the back legs. Do you see fiber or skin and bone? Are the cheeks well fleeced or is the face open and without coverage? More coverage indicates higher density. (See photo F.)
- 6 Does the fleece 'crack' vertically when the animal walks or turns his body? 'Cracking' indicates a dense and uniform fleece. (See photo B.)

Visual assessments will never replace a scale, but they can give you a quick appraisal of an animal's density. This is particularly important when selecting animals for purchase if production records are not available.

What crimp can tell a breeder about an alpaca

The term 'crimp' has become a very familiar term to alpaca breeders. Crimp is defined as the natural wave formation of the fiber, expressed as crimps per unit of length. Visually, crimp is most notable in the well organized staples or locks

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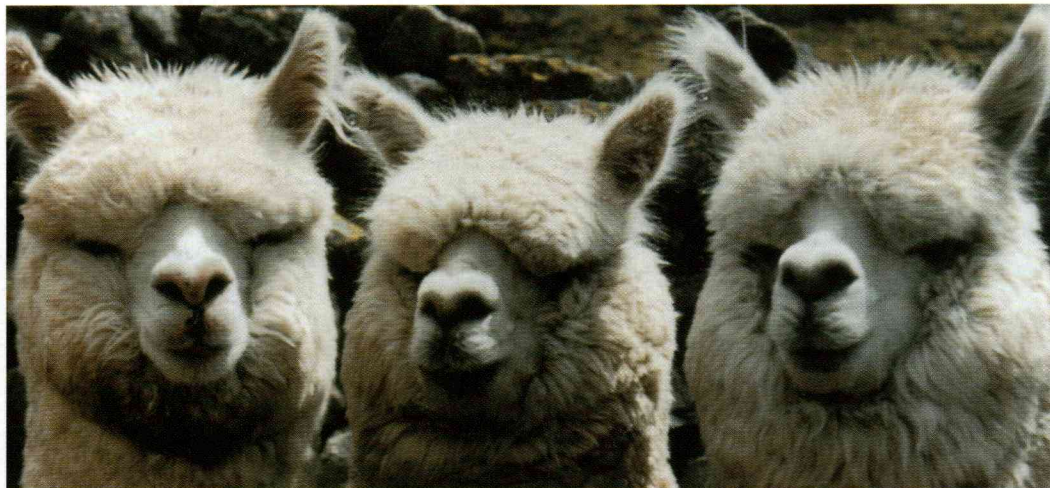


Photo D (left): This Alpaca has a weak wool cap which lays down and an 'open' face. She produces about 2.5 pounds of fiber per year.
 Photo E (right): three of Accoyo's plantel herd sires. Well covered head with dense wool caps. Note the tight V formed at the eye by the convergence of head and cheek fleece.

found in the fleece. Crimp also occurs along the shaft of a single fiber. This has been defined by Cameron Holt, of the Melbourne College of Textiles, as crinkle. There is a general relationship between fiber fineness and crimp. (See photo G.)

Textile manufacturers don't pay a premium based solely on crimp. For

many years wool graders used crimp per inch to predict fineness and, therefore, price. But, with the advent of sophisticated electronic measuring devices, there is less and less reliance on crimp as an indication of fineness by manufacturers.

However, crimp assessment is still a useful selection tool for the alpaca

breeder grading animals in his herd or for purchase.

To understand why crimp is an important trait in alpacas, we must first understand why some fleeces exhibit crimp and others do not.

Fine alpaca and sheep fiber have dual cortical cells, para and ortho. In coarse fibers a hollow core may be visi-

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ble (medulla) and the cortex is less distinct. The cortical cells in alpaca fiber constitute a variable fraction of the fiber mass, being the lowest in coarse and the highest in fine fiber where the fraction may be 90%

Alpaca fiber and wool have a bilateral structure. That is to say, the paracortex and orthocortex grow side by side. It is this structure which is believed to give wool and alpaca fiber its crimp. Think of a single fiber as a rope made of two independent strands which are twisted together. When twisted ever more tightly, the rope kinks or 'crimps'. Research in 1953 by a Japanese scientist found that the orthocortex was always observed on the outside of the crimp curve as shown in Illustration 1.

As alpacas age, their crimp tends to broaden and disappear. The fleece becomes coarser each year. The orthocortex also tends to disappear as micron count increases. Breeders should understand this phenomenon and be more reliant on genotype than phenotype when assessing the crimp producing capacity of alpacas, particularly older males.

Dr. Jim Watts, a well respected animal researcher and wool specialist, has spent several years studying alpaca fleece characteristics on behalf of Coolaroo Alpaca Stud in New South Wales, Australia.

He had this to say about crimp as a characteristic in 'Advanced Alpaca Production, Breeding from Fibre to Fabric':

'Because alpaca fiber crimps or waves at regular time intervals, faster growing fibers automatically display bolder crimp or wave frequencies. Do not assume that bolder crimp equates to stronger fiber diameter; from recent textile research of Merino wool it is now known that bold, deep crimping wools are the softest, finest and best processing fibers. In the huacaya

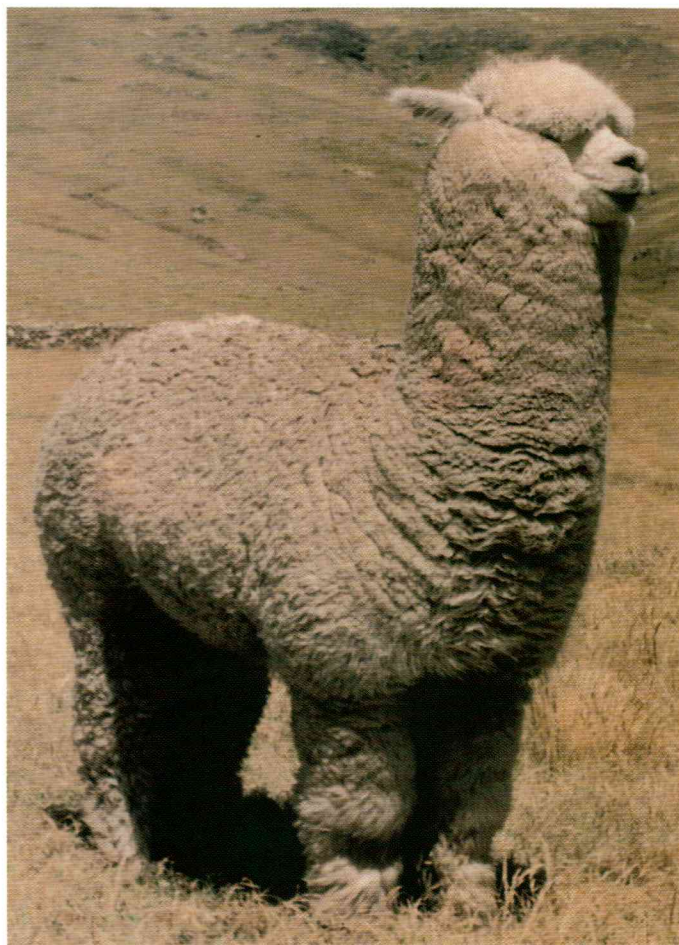


Photo F: Accoyo's Shere Khan. This picture speaks for itself and is worth a thousand words.

alpaca we should be looking for and breeding these bold, deep crimping wools.'

At Northwest Alpacas, crimp definition is a used as a selec-

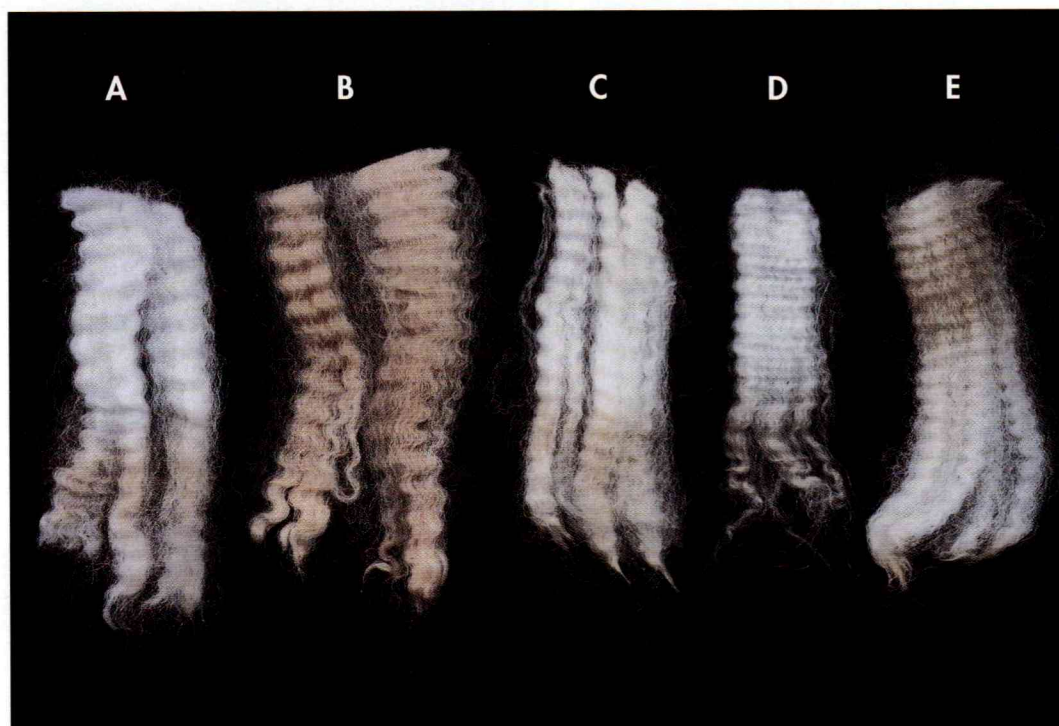
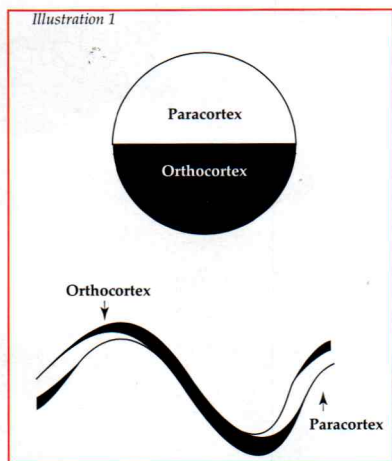


Photo G:

- A Accoyo's Legend at 7 years of age. 5 crimps/inch; 1-97 crimps/cm; 23.6 microns.*
- B Accoyo's Victor at 7 years of age. 5.5 crimps/inch; 2.17 crimps/cm; 22.6 microns.*
- C Accoyo's El Moustachio at 8 years of age. 6 crimps/inch; 2.36 crimps/cm; 23.5 microns.*
- D NWA's Antonio at 12 months of age. 6.5 crimps/inch; 2.56 crimps/cm; 18.5 microns.*
- E Peruvian Hemingway at 8 years of age. 7 crimps/inch; 2.76 crimps/cm; 22.2 microns.*

tion criteria. The crimp found in an alpaca's fleece is evidence of the following characteristics:

- 1 Crimp generally indicates fineness. Typically, the more crimps per inch, the finer the fiber. While this is not always true, it does serve as a visual guide while assessing alpacas in the field. See photo G. The most accurate way to measure fiber fineness is with a LASARSCAN or OFDA machine.



- 2 Crimp is an indication of density. A dense, crimped fleece often has a well organized lock and staple structure that allows for more and longer fiber to occupy a smaller space, much like a well folded newspaper occupies less space than one which has been wadded up in an unorganized fashion and piled on the floor.
- 3 Crimp indicates uniformity in the fleece. A highly uniform fleece will typically exhibit the same crimp characteristics over the entire body of the animal.
- 4 The presence of crimp indicates a lack of medullation in the fleece. Coarse medullated fibers lack orthocortex, grow straight, and do not crimp.
- 5 Once it is processed, a well crimped staple measures longer than a comparable length staple without crimp. Understanding this allows the breeder to select for longer staple length

by breeding crimp into the alpacas' fleece.

- 6 A fleece with high crimp definition will stay cleaner and more compact from one shearing to the next.

Alpaca breeding is truly art. Men like Julio Barreda have studied the craft, learned the techniques and passionately applied them over many generations. The symmetry, elegance, form and function of their alpacas are testimony to their talent. The challenge is for each of us to serve our apprenticeship and evolve our own style of alpaca art. Good luck!

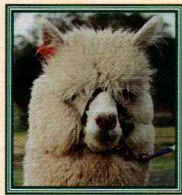
[Mike Safley and his family run Northwest Alpacas in Hillsboro, Oregon. He is a past president of AOBA and a frequent contributor to Alpacas Australia and to the American Alpacas magazine. Mike was a guest at last year's Alpaca Industry Seminar where he gave a fascinating slide presentation entitled 'Vicuna Roundup'.]



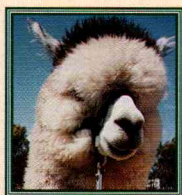
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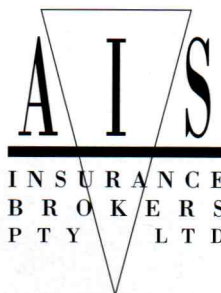
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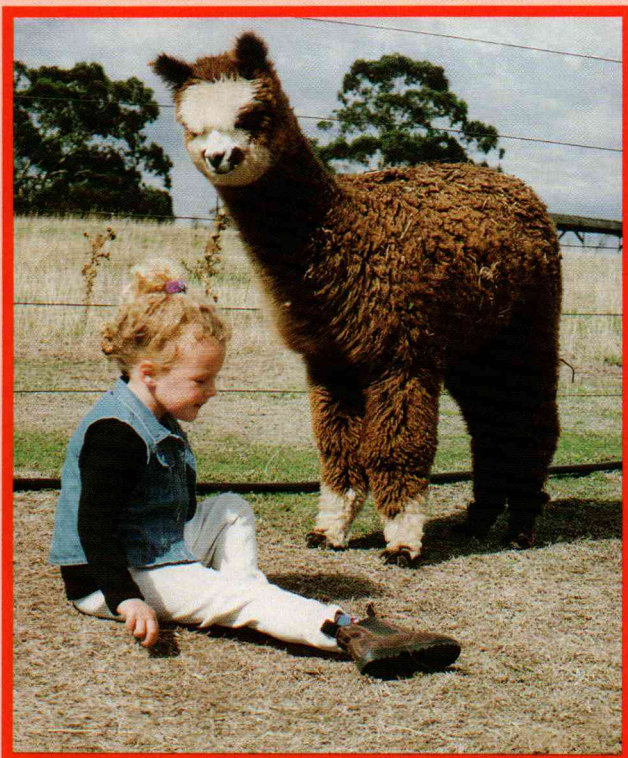
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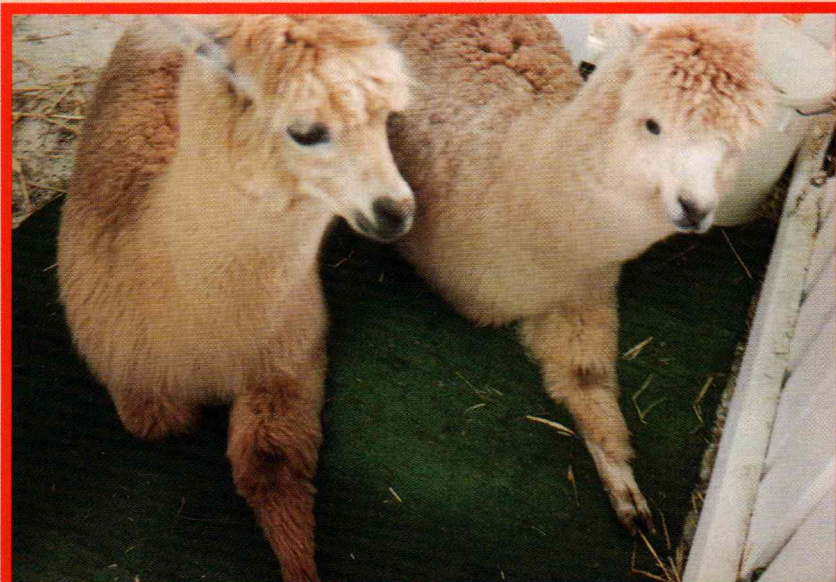


**‘Are you sure
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'Here's looking at you, kid.'

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'Put your left foot in and shake it all about...'

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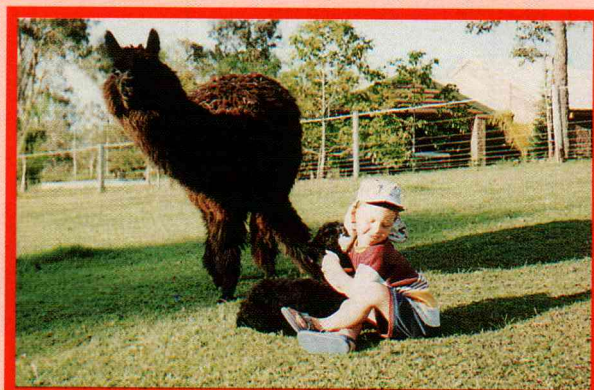
**'Thought I'd go underground 'til
I grow some more fleece!'**

**Susie Clark,
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'Oh, yuck! It's llama!'

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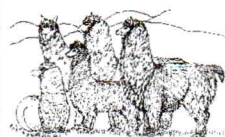
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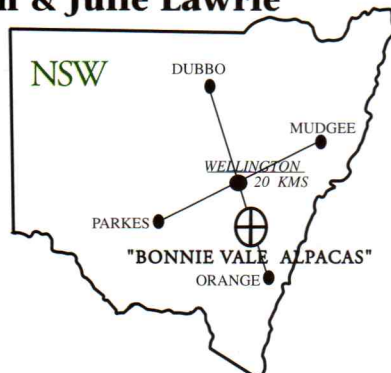


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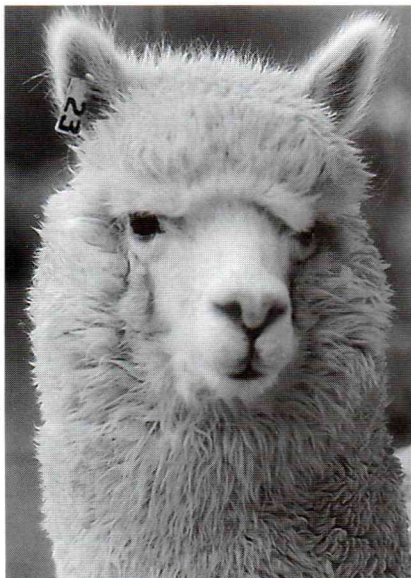
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VOLUME 4 OF THE HERD BOOK is your guide to 'who's who' in the national alpaca herd. Buy it in conventional book format or load it up on to your computer, because it's also available on diskette for both IBMs and Macs. At only \$17 for hard-copy and \$19 for ASCII format diskette, it's great value.

HERD BOOK VOL 4

COAT COLOUR TABLES, version 2 is now out. This represents the next stage in authors, Bill Wall and Ron Cole's project of studying coat colour inheritance in alpacas – a very important piece of research for the industry. Version 2 includes the material published in version 1 which has been expanded by subsequent animal registrations. Base data comes from the International Alpaca Register, as maintained by the Association. While the tables represent visible colour characteristics of animals, i.e., they represent phenotype, not genotype, Bill and Ron are also working on the genetics of colour inheritance as part of this project. Their findings to date and current research directions will form part of their paper to be delivered at the 1997 Industry Seminar to be held in Sydney in July.

COAT COLOUR TABLES VERSION 2

At only \$22.00, the tables are excellent value for those interested in studying the inheritance of coat colour in Australian alpacas. For those who would like the tables on disk, contact Wall Cole Consultants Pty Ltd direct (076 355 390). Material can be formatted to suit Mac or IBM programs. Cost is a mere \$20.00.

SHOWING GUIDELINES MANUAL

THE SHOWING GUIDELINES MANUAL is a new concept for the Association. The text has been updated, re-ordered and largely re-written and the publication is now presented in a smart ringed binder. Its loose-leaf format allows text to be updated without the need for a full reprint of the manual. Apart from the guidelines themselves, there are excellent sections on preparing animals for showing, preparation of fleeces and judging criteria. Also included is the Association's approved listing for alpaca animal and fleece classes.

For only \$19.00 subscribers will receive the binder and text. Updates, complete with detailed filing instructions, will be free of charge.

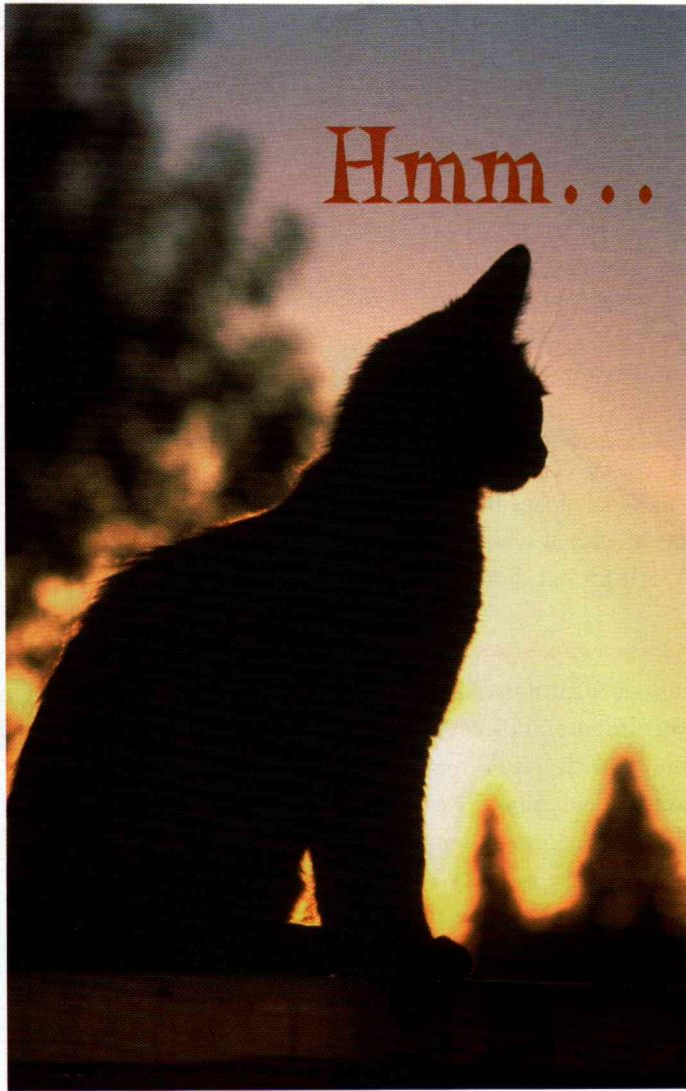
LLAMA AND ALPACA NEONATAL CARE, Brad Smith, Karen Timm and Pat Long, Clay Press, Jackson, California (1996). This well known team of authors has updated and expanded their previous booklet of notes and turned them into a well organised booklet for the alpaca and llama breeder. The text is well supplemented with diagrams, panels listing key facts and plenty of amusing cartoons.

LLAMA AND ALPACA NEONATAL CARE SMITH, TIMS AND LONG

The content is laid out in chapter sequence that reflects how things happen. The first chapter is a review of female anatomy, followed by preparing for birth, on to birthing, dystocias, care of newborn, problems of newborn and care of the dam. The section on managing problems of the newborn is greatly expanded. Sections on behaviour are included. An owner focus is obviously borne in mind and pertinent questions and answers are found throughout, linking text and ideas that flow from each question. The new edition has acquired a much more readable style than the older seminar note style edition.

If you breed camelids, get yourself a copy! *[Available at the end of June for \$50.00 per copy.]*

Review by veterinarian, Ewen McMillan.



Hmm... Cats and Alpacas

Marty McGee

No tame animal has lost less of its native dignity or maintained more of its ancient reserve. The domestic cat might rebel tomorrow.

William Conway, Archbishop of Armagh

When it comes to management, alpacas are a little bit goat, a little bit sheep and a little bit horse. But, when it comes to behaviour and their relationships with people, alpacas are a lot like cats.

I realise that there is a risk of stereotyping both alpacas and cats in the process of this exercise, however it is done with the utmost respect for both animals. I have been a cat owner for 13 years and involved intimately with alpacas as well as llamas for 15 years. In that time, six cats have shared hearth and home and innumerable alpacas have crossed my path. Not, perhaps, a large enough sample to be truly scientific, but enough for educated speculation. Comments from people who live with both cats and alpacas have reinforced my own perceptions.

In the course of preparing to write this article, I read through many books about cats. The same words are used

over and over to describe cats: *graceful, mysterious, aloof, magical, aristocratic*. The same words frequently appear in descriptions of alpacas. Many famous writers have been quoted regarding their feelings about cats. In many cases the word alpaca could be easily substituted.

Collette, a French writer said, 'There are no ordinary cats'.

Agnes Repplier, an American essayist said, 'It is impossible for a lover of cats to banish these alert, gentle and discriminating little friends, who give us just enough of their regard and complaisance to make us hunger for more.'

As if they sense a brotherhood, the alpacas themselves seem to have an affinity for cats. When dogs go out to the barn, alpacas seem to be mildly interested. When the cats make an appearance the alpacas stop what they are doing (even if it is eating!) and minutely investigate the cat.

At first glance, you might not see the full range of similarities, but look more closely. There are certain physiological and physical resemblances. Alpacas and cats are both induced ovulators and breed with the female in the sternal position. At a walk, alpacas and cats move similarly beginning from the left hind, followed by the left front, then the right hind and finally the right front. Both animals are narrow in the chest and deep through the rib. Much of their body language and behaviour is similar. Irritated cats and alpacas both flatten their ears against their heads, switch their tails – and spit. Both animals are quiet, clean, don't smell and go to the bathroom in the same place. Intact males of both species scream at each other at the top of their lungs.

Alpacas that are sufficiently intimate with their people will, like a cat, rub their heads on you. And, like cats, alpacas prefer to initiate contact with human beings. Both species are generally leery of strangers and do not appreciate having their personal space invaded without some formal introduction. A cat's curiosity is legendary – witness the expression, 'Curiosity killed the cat'. Most any alpaca owner would agree that alpacas rank right up at the top of the curiosity scale and it often leads to dangerous situations.

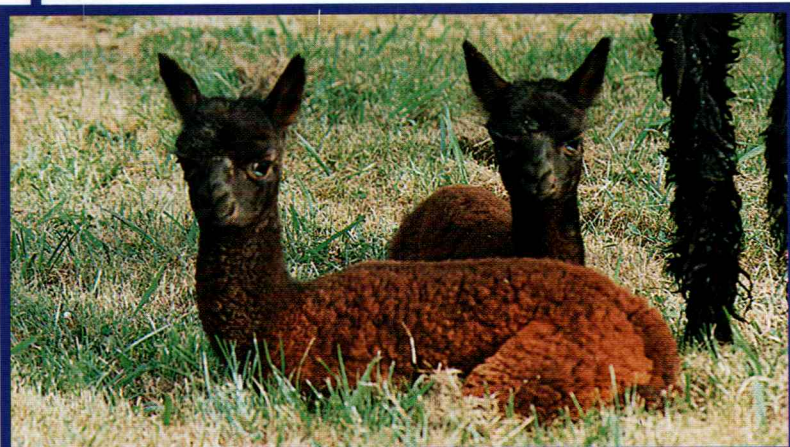
What about brains? The intelligence of cats is often the subject of debate, given their legendary lack of enthusiasm for

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The twins just after birth - Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. The alpaca with the bandaged leg, Cuddlepie on the left, had difficulty feeding and weighed only 4.3 kilograms.



The twins at 3 1/2 months - Cuddlepie weighs 16 kgs and Snugglepot 24 kgs- with Di-Vetelact being a major factor in their thriving good health

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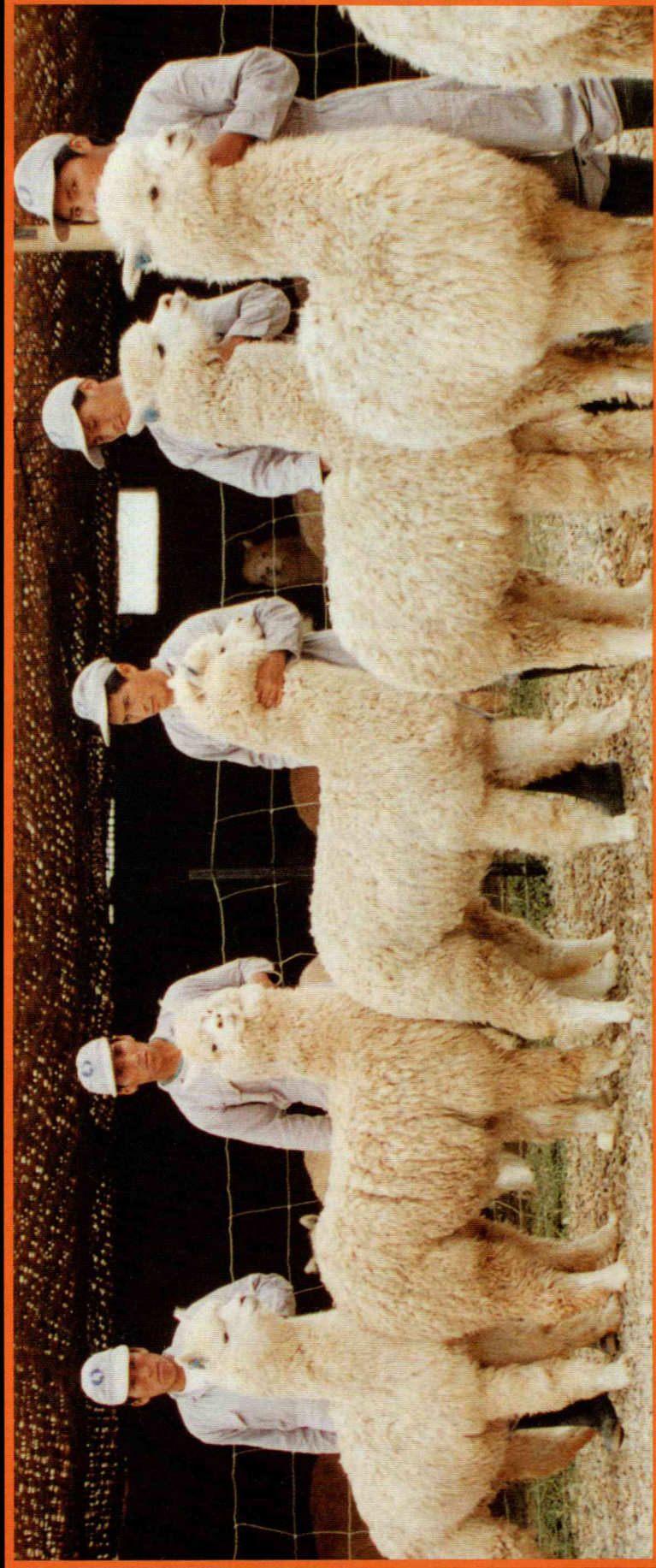
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traditional training. Paul Corey, in his book, *Are Cats People?* described the problem this way: 'Most humans, being self-oriented, feel that any mammal who doesn't try to act like a human is *ipso facto* stupid. In this intelligence comparison game cats get very low marks. Of all domestic mammals, felines show the greatest resistance to behaving like a human.'

Alpacas and cats are often only obliging training subjects if there is either food or a leadline/leash involved.

Dr Frank Miller, the author of a daily syndicated veterinary column offered this interesting observation when asked, 'Are cats as smart as monkeys?' He replied, 'It would be foolish to attempt to make a monkey out of a cat. However, one of the areas in which cats demonstrate learning attributed formerly only to primates is that of learning by observation, a process not easy for animals. Yet aside from primates, felines are the first and only species proven in the laboratory to perform tasks faster when they've been allowed to watch others in the learning process.'

Alpaca owners very often report that their alpacas show a marked ability to learn faster when allowed to watch other alpacas.

Historically, cats and alpacas also share some commonality. Both animals were embraced by ancient cultures. The cat was worshipped as a god in ancient Egypt for over 2000 years. Some authorities claim that the cat was tamed by 3,500 BC and deified by c. 3,000 BC. At around 950 BC the Egyptian goddess Bastet emerged as the primary goddess. She was depicted as having a human body with a cat's head and often with a cat's limbs and tail. According to the *Cat Catalog* (billed as the ultimate cat book), 'As representatives of Bastet, Egyptian cats had an awesome responsibility. Bastet was not only goddess of sexuality and fertility, but she was also the embodiment of the time-honoured ideal of virgin motherhood. How the Egyptians combined these two concepts is hard to imagine but they worked it out.'

In the Incan culture (1,200 AD) the alpacas' close cousin (and fellow cat enthusiast), the llama, was used as pack animal, but was also of religious significance. The llama was often the focus of spiritual and fertility rites and was held in great esteem. A llama foetus was buried under the house to bring good luck and a pure white llama was often sacrificed to ensure a good harvest. Cats clearly had the better deal. Egyptian worship of the cat reached such intensity that the penalty for taking a cat's life was death. Cats' food was cut into little pieces lest they choke and they were often encouraged to eat from their masters' plates. Eventually, cats as gods outnumbered their human counterparts.

According to Bureau of Census figures originating with the American Veterinary Medical Association, cats are the number one companion animal in the United States. There are 54.5 million feline-owning households. A trip to the



library will convince you that a dog may be man's best friend, but cats are more fun to write about. In my library, there are far more cat books than books devoted to any other single species. The introduction to *The Literary Cat, Quips Quotes and Observations* was, in my opinion, an amazingly accurate description of the attraction we human beings feel for both creatures.

'No wonder the ancient Egyptians worshipped cats as gods – is there an animal with more dignity, more aloof serenity, and innate grandeur? What other domestic creature behaves like an honored guest and is treated as an equal?

'Cats fix us with their gaze and put us in our place. They beguile us with their startling affection and charm us with the beauty of their fluid bodies. They amaze us with their composure and delight us with their agility.

'Try to capture a cat with a generalization and you will be proven wrong, for cats are mercurial – as swift in mood as they are in movement, playful one moment, elusive the next. Communicative today, reclusive tomorrow, their motivations remain unknowable, yet their presence becomes essential to our lives.

'Cats do as they please, and for that we admire – and even revere – them. They treat us as companions, demanding and receiving our respect as their due. The fact that they choose to spend their lives with us is a gift we accept gratefully.'

With the range of companion animals available, why are certain people attracted to dogs, cats, alpacas, exotic animals, or even snakes? There are, in fact, 5 million Americans who are very bonded to their slithery buddies. Over 70 years ago, G. Stanley Hall put forth the theory that a person's age determined the preference for a certain type of pet. According to Hall, children under five preferred cats because they were smaller and less demanding. Once a child reached the middle years of eight to twelve, their preference would switch to the more active and mobile dog. Once in adolescence, the preference would again change back to cats because of the more independent feline personality. While this theory was inven-

tive, it proved to be very inaccurate. According to the book *The Loving Bond*, a compilation of articles edited by Phil Arkow about the Human Animal Bond, current research indicates that childhood experiences which influence learned responses to various animals and domestic situations hold the key to why certain people prefer certain animals.

Current research also indicates that individuals who are drawn to a specific type of animal usually have either similar or complementary personality characteristics with it. Aline Kidd is a professor of psychology at Mills College. Her husband, Rev. Robert Kidd is a chaplain and serves on the Animal and Human Research Subcommittees at the V.A. Medical Centre in Martinez California. They are collaborating on research involving the human personality and human/companion animal bonding.

According to their research there are significant differences between persons who strongly prefer one type of pet and those who prefer another. According to the Kidds, male dog and male horse owners are stereotypically assertive, dominant and 'masculine'. They are low in the need to care for others and show a preference for the larger, more aggressive breeds of dogs and horses.

Horsewomen in the show world tend to be similar to male horse owners. Women who have horses strictly as pets tend to display more traditional feminine behaviours.

Turtle owners, as one might expect, are generally hard working, reliable, considerate, believe the world to be lawful and are steadily goal oriented. They also tend to be upwardly mobile because they are usually discontented with their present status in life. Bird owners on the other hand are contented, courteous, expressive, nurturant and unpretentious. Bird owners of both sexes are generally social.

So what about cat people?

According to Kidd and Kidd, 'Cat people of both sexes demonstrate a need to be, or at least to feel, independent and are low in need to care for others. Additionally male owners of cats are low in aggressiveness... Cats and their owners are primarily independent and somewhat aloof.'

More insight into the alpaca owner's psyche might lie in the exotic animal owners description since alpacas, even though technically farm animals, are still a might unusual. Perhaps alpaca people are a blend of the two. The Kidds found exotic animal owners to be, 'Relaxed, informal, novelty-seeking, changeable, unconventional, somewhat unpredictable, and unable to tolerate routines.'

Bill Hayward, in his book *Cat People* photographed and interviewed people about their cats. I found similarities between Hayward's cat people interviews and the many articles and books I have read about alpacas and alpaca people.

Mr Hayward interviewed Jane Pauley, formerly of the *Today Show*.

She said of cats, 'Cat people can be so selfless; it takes quite a person to love a cat who does not obviously adore you. While there are some cats who will jump up and kiss you when you come in, there are other cats who won't give you the time of day unless it is dinner hour. A cat person will love that cat just as much and maybe a little more. I have found that when you are all wound up, the best tranquilizer in the world is to get one of your cats and stroke it for twenty minutes.'

Many alpaca owners have been quoted about the so-called martini effect of a few minutes spent with alpacas.

Ruth Levy, a teacher interviewed by Bill Hayward, said of cats, 'If a cat becomes attached to you, you really feel that you've succeeded.'

Rosanna Hart, in her book, *Alpacas for Love and Money*, said, 'While alpacas vary greatly in personality, they

generally enjoy people. They completely lack the slavish devotion of dogs. There is typically more aloofness in an alpaca. You can go on vacation without worrying that your alpacas will pine for you.'

Wanda Toscanini Horowitz said in the book *Cat People*, 'I love cats because they are so beautiful aesthetically. They are like sculpture walking around the house.' Alpacas are very often referred to as living works of art or kinetic sculpture.

Comparisons are sometimes useful and, in this case perhaps, interesting. But a similarity to cats can hardly explain the attraction alpaca and llama enthusiasts feel for their animals. A good friend of mine once said of our llamas, 'I think llamas must be the closest thing to a unicorn that you could see without dying.'

Perhaps the magic of alpacas lies in the fact that they are completely unique and not really like any other animal. On the other hand, Michael Joseph, an English publisher said of cats, 'His friendship is not easily won but it is something worth having.' Most of us would agree the same thing is true of alpacas.

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Marty McGee

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Issue 20: Spring

Due: September 1997

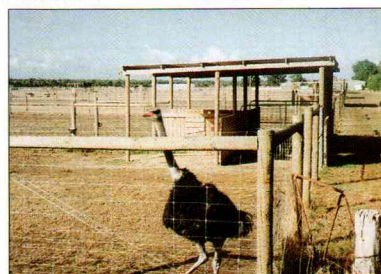
Deadline: Friday 18 July

Issue 21: Summer

Due: December 1997

Deadline: Friday 17 October

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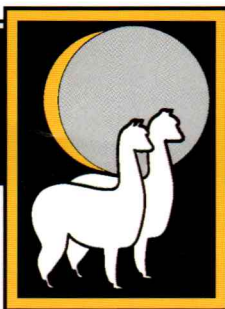
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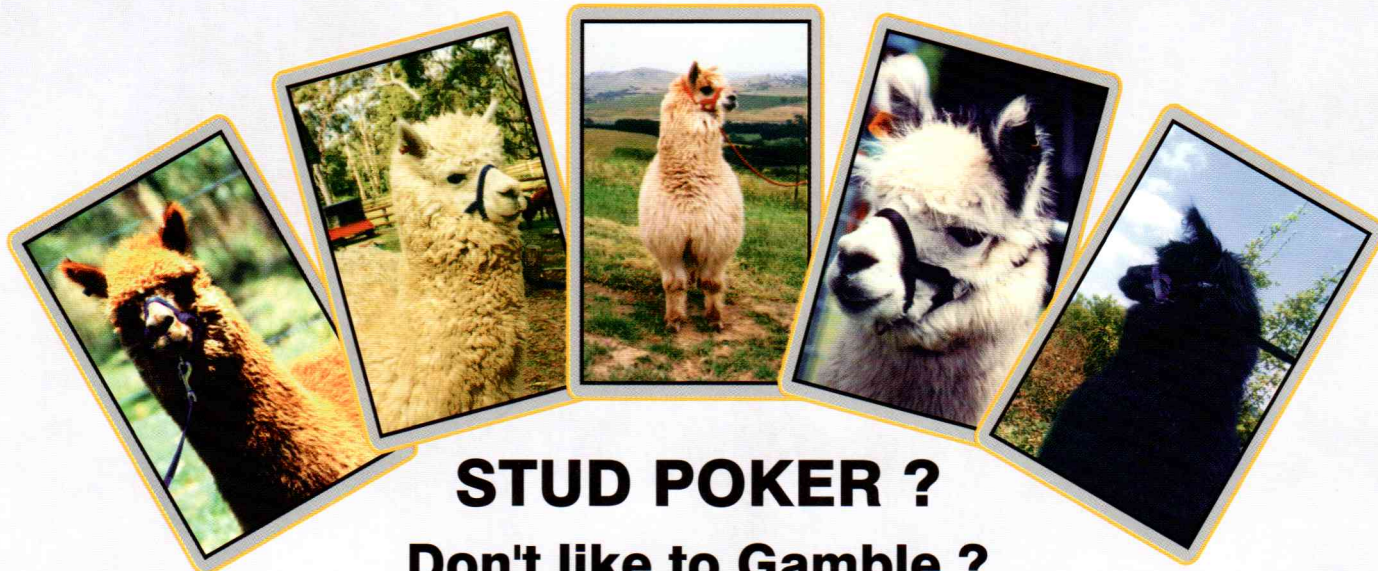
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