



ALPACAS AUSTRALIA

The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

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Inside this issue:

2004 National Alpaca Show • "Alpaca Light" • Environmental Management • Judging the Judges

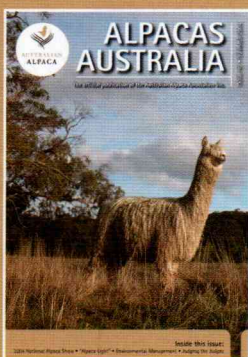
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COVER

"Suri Alpaca"
Photograph:
Benoît Ernst,
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Also see page 18
Suri News

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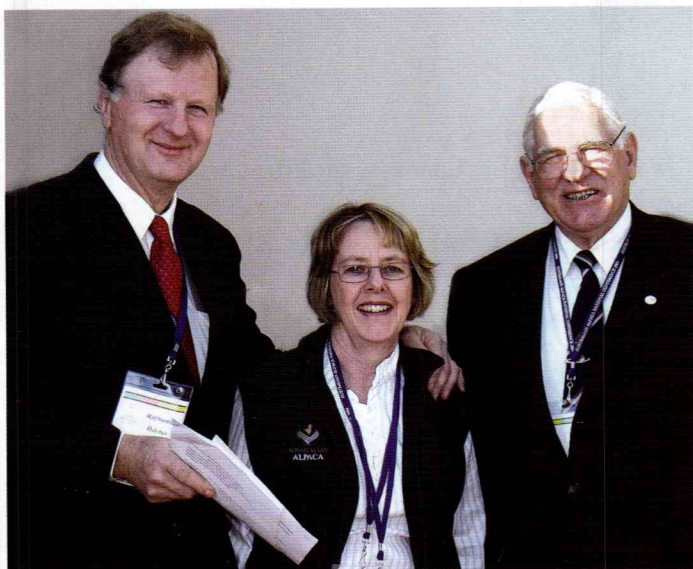
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A Message from the President



AAA Inc. National President, Kerry Dwyer (right) pictured at the National Conference with Conference Convenor, Raymond Haynes (left) and AAA Inc. National Office Administration Manager, Jenny Jones (centre).

No sooner has our Conference finished than we must commence preparation for 2006. Getting a venue to accommodate 300 participants in multiple sessions is a good problem to have. We are indebted to our Tasmanian Region members, ably led by Raymond Haynes, for a great success in Hobart at this year's Conference.

However the task of organising, promoting and running these large events is becoming too big for volunteers and we must be prepared to recognise our limitations before we burn everyone out. We are examining our options for professional conference organisers and the next venue.

As you read this we will have completed another National Show and Sale in Canberra, convened by Paul Haslin and his team from NSW, and the next task is to determine where next and by whom. Such events showcase our industry and the growth in the past 5 years has been astounding.

Experimental use of TV advertising to attract the general public seems to have been successful and will be in the mix for future events. Increased public awareness of our industry means new opportunities for members to improve their alpaca business and your Association keeps that goal at the forefront.

I want to wish our staff and every member and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2005. ■ Kerry Dwyer, President

Australian Alpaca Attracts Vice Regal Interest at Hamilton Sheepvention

by **Rosemary Johnstone** > Retiring Hamilton Sheepvention Co-convenor



Three facets of the alpaca world – the producer, the customer resplendent in the end product and the next generation – Adrienne's 3 year old daughter, Sarah. Photograph: Jeffery Hill, Adelyn Alpacas, VIC.

This year's very successful Hamilton Sheepvention Alpaca Show, held early August, was the largest ever with a record number of entries on display. Sheepvention was officially opened by His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC who was accompanied by his wife, Her Excellency Mrs Marlena Jeffery.

With a number of elite alpacas on display, the Show provided the perfect opportunity for the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery to witness the depth of this unique industry as they lingered to watch the judging of a class.

Mrs Jeffery indicated that the fabric of her stylish suit was also alpaca, and when the Show Compere delightfully shared this fact with the audience their resounding round of applause gained a broad smile from the lady herself.

A special highlight of the Alpaca Show was an impromptu addition to the program when Mrs Jeffery awarded the Mature Male Champion Medallion to *Fine Choice Peruvian Ultimo* exhibited by Adrienne Clarke of Fine Choice Alpacas, SA.

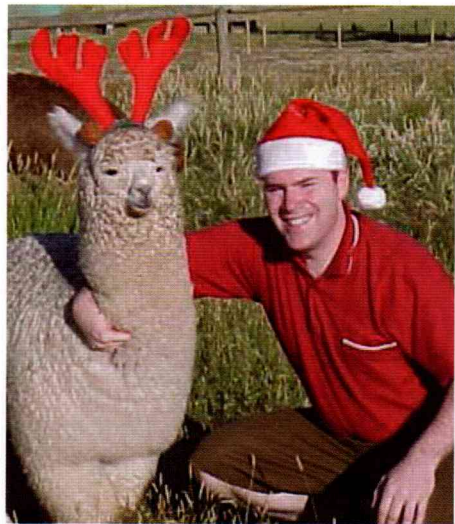
It is wonderful to see such esteemed interest in our growing industry.

Briefly Speaking

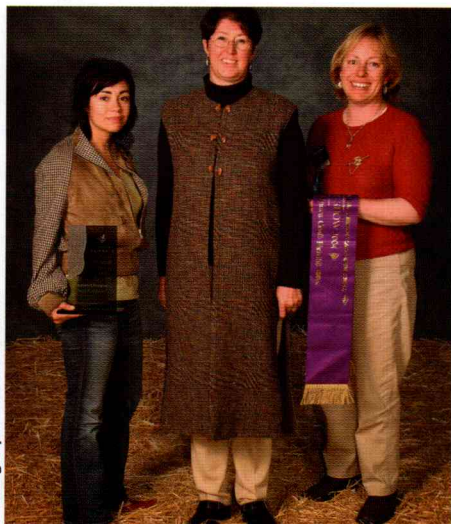
Merry Xmas

Seasons Greetings for a safe and happy holiday season from everyone at the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. and *Alpacas Australia* Magazine.

Photograph courtesy Barbara & Adrian Corkeron, Jinchilla Alpacas, VIC



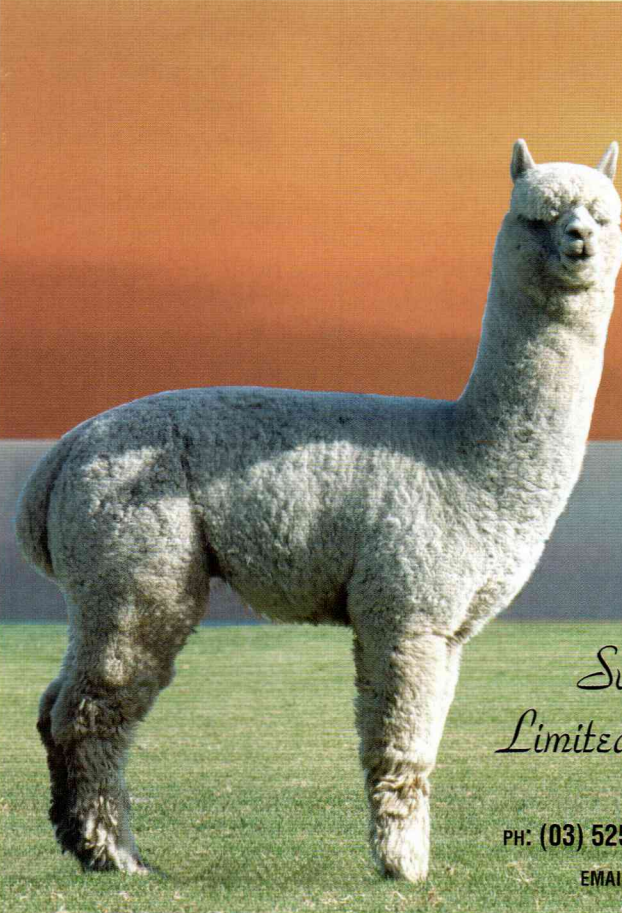
Photograph ©Cath Norman



Photograph ©Cath Norman

2004 National Show

Congratulations to all winners at this year's National Show. An extensive pictorial coverage of Champion Alpacas and Fleece is featured on pages 36 and 37. Pictured (below right) **Champion Junior Judge, Elyse Strong** of Mariah Hill Alpaca Ranch, Vic; and (below left) modelling her **Supreme Champion Craft Exhibit, Megan Cleland**. Megan's elegant sleeveless coat was hand woven from commercially spun alpaca yarn featuring both natural coloured and hand dyed yarns. Pictured with Megan are **Heather Dunn**, Craft Show convenor (right) and designer **Lorena Laing** (left).



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# Double Trouble

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Margaret Binks**  
> Pentland Alpaca Stud, WA

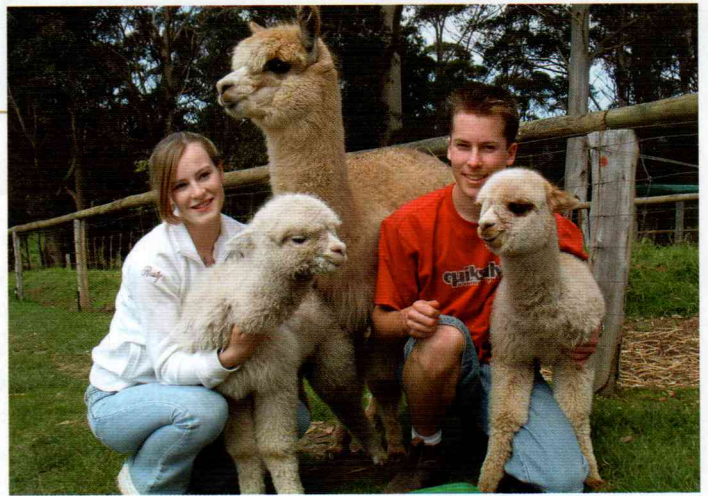
Twins in alpacas are extremely rare and this is believed to be only the fifth live twin birth in Australia.

On Monday 21 June at about 4.30pm (when all self-respecting pregnant alpacas have already given birth for the day), our son-in-law, Stephen, headed down the paddock on the four-wheel bike to gather leaves for the koalas' evening feed. He radioed in, "Laurie, can you come down here, an alpaca is giving birth". Laurie went off down the paddock and as I watched from the top of the hill, I saw him walk into the middle of a big gathering of alpacas, and come out with a wet, white alpaca in his hands with Stephen following, driving a fawn adult, *Pentland Paramount*. I began to wander down to the paddock too, then saw the procession stop for a while, Laurie put the white alpaca on the ground, and go back to where the birth had taken place appearing to be looking for something.

By the time I reached them, the two men were standing and watching with a look of great awe on their faces as another alpaca baby was discovered, fawn this time. Their searching had been for another alpaca which may have given birth also, or afterbirth, or ANYTHING which would dispel the theory that twins had just been born. But not to be! Laurie picked up both babies - they were very small and very wet - and we started the long, slow walk up to the shed. Stephen rode ahead to alert our daughter, Deb to get a warm spot in the shed ready.

By the time Laurie and I arrived at the shed, ever-practical Deb and Stephen had set up a pen with a heat lamp, and were standing by with towels and a hair dryer. I think Laurie and I were still both in shock as Deb and Stephen took over the survival procedure. While Deb rubbed and blow-dried, I thawed some goat colostrum, found a marsupial teat, warmed the milk and went back to the shed. By this time, we had ascertained that they were female, one weighing 3.95kgs and the other 3.45kgs - very small, fragile and cold. Eventually we got a bit of milk into each of them and set them down in cushion under the heat lamp.

Throughout the next two nights, the cria were given more goat colostrum mixed with mother's milk. Later on we were able to lift them up under Paramount allowing them to suck directly from her. All up it was a very time-consuming and nail-biting operation, as they were so small and vulnerable. Other than one person who arrived on the farm when they had just been born, one special friend and our family, we told no-one about the birth, as we were not at all sure that they were going to make it, especially the first-born white one.



Binks grandchildren Catherine Boylen (holding "Minuet") and Ryan Maddams (holding "Melody") with the twins' mother "Pentland Paramount"

By Friday we started to feel that we would be lucky enough to save them, especially the bigger fawn one, and Deb started spreading the word to Tourist Bureaus, and local media. Monday morning found GWN (local television station) on our doorstep, wanting some footage for that night's TV news, and both Albany newspapers wanting photos and information about the event.

The next big decision was names - our daughter Wendy is a co-owner of Paramount, and she wanted names that tied them together as twins (e.g. Yin and Yang or Snugglepot and Cuddlepie), so to find the names and have a consensus from the three of us was not easy. We finally decided that as their arrival had created quite a 'song and dance' in our lives, they would be named Melody and Minuet.

Early in the piece we were quite concerned for Minuet, as she had been very slow to put on weight and her back legs were a bit wobbly, but she proved to be a very determined little thing. At time of writing the twins are now three months old. Minuet has reached 13.9kgs and Melody is an amazing 17.7kgs. From a mere 500gms difference in birth weight, they are now 4kgs apart! They were both so small that no cria coats were of any use, so we bought two small dog coats and used them for quite some time. The twins are still having Divetelact top-ups each day, but under protest as Paramount is mostly feeding them herself. As a first time Mum, she must be wondering about her lot in life - one day a carefree teenager, and the next day two babies to tend. Oblivious to the excitement is the twins' dad, *Jolimont Warrior*.

Minuet's back legs are much improved, although still noticeably weak but both the girls continue to grow and we know we are extremely lucky to have saved them both. While naturally from a stud point of view, we would have much preferred to have one good, strong baby instead of the twins, from a tourist farm angle they have been a great drawcard, and many lovely photos have been taken of human twin children holding alpaca twins. We also know that we were very fortunate to have had twin females, as our research indicates that in twin births of one male/one female it is highly unlikely that the female will be fertile. That remains to be seen and it will also be interesting to see in the future if they ever catch up to the other alpacas of their age, or if they will always be small, especially Minuet. ■



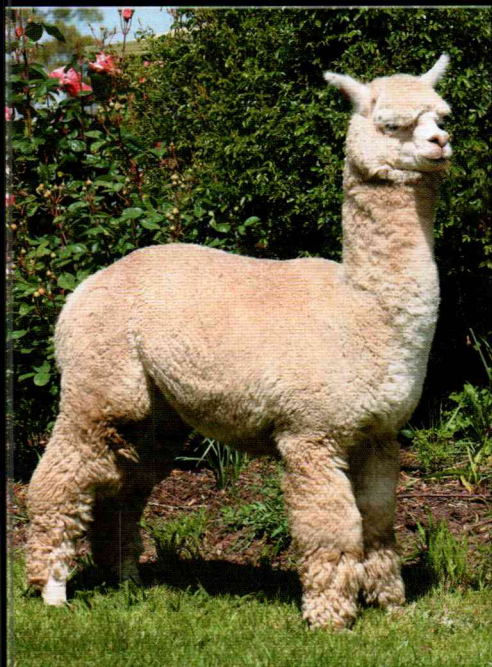
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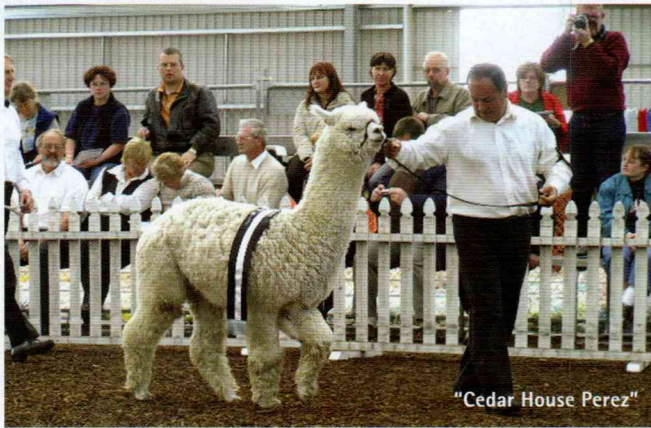
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# New Zealand's 1st National Alpaca Show

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Wendy Billington** > Cedar House Alpaca Stud, NSW

Christchurch, New Zealand, 9 and 10 October 2004



"Cedar House Perez"

The New Zealanders are to be congratulated on a fantastic effort for their 1st National Alpaca Show that we attended on the weekend of October 9th and 10th. The inaugural two-day event attracted just over 200 entries with some travelling from as far as Rotorua on the North Island.

A contributing factor to the success of the show was the professional and highly skilled performance of the judge, Amanda VandenBosch from the USA who was charged with the task of awarding red ribbons for First place and blue ribbons for Second place, as is the way in NZ.

The choice of venue was excellent with a huge show ring decorated in a silver, white and black theme. It looked stunning. I believe that Anne Rogers was the team leader of the ring decoration crew.

The line-up of Champions for the final Supreme Champion represented many of Australia's leading bloodlines. It was a credit to the New Zealanders to see the quality in this final stage and it is obvious that New Zealand breeders are taking the fibre quality into consideration as much as the breeders here in Australia.

The **Supreme Champion Huacaya**, *Cedar House Perez*, owned by Sherlin Alpacas, Christchurch, was a superbly conformed, mature 4.5 year old male exhibiting excellent density, fineness and brightness to his fleece. The **Supreme Champion Suri**, *Hadstock N.Z. Imperial*, owned by Homestead Farm Alpacas, Ashburton, represented the very best of density, locking and overall excellence in the Suri breed.

The award for **Champion Huacaya Fleece** went to *Valley of Peace Royal Amora* and for **Champion Suri Fleece** to *Hadstock N.Z. Double Shot*.

Next year's National is planned to be on the North Island. Until then, good luck with your breeding and congratulations on a great effort by all this year. ■



"Hadstock N.Z. Imperial"

**Editor's note:**

## Royal Auckland Show 2004 – Fleece Results

In the August 2004 issue of *Alpacas Australia* Carolyn Jinks contributed a story about New Zealand's Royal Auckland Show which was held at Easter time. Carolyn was in New Zealand accompanying her husband, Allan, who was judging the event, and we thank her for bringing the news about the winners back home across the Tasman. It's always interesting to follow the fortunes of Australian bloodlines that have made the crossing and particularly to hear that they, or their offspring, are succeeding in the show ring.

Also interesting to read about is the influence of Australian bloodlines in this year's Royal Auckland Show winning fleece entries, which were inadvertently omitted from the article.

Congratulations to the following successful fleece exhibitors:

**Champion Huacaya Fleece** - *NZ Southern Tucson Gold*  
Owned by Nic Cooper and Linda Blake of NZ Southern Alpacas

**Reserve Champion Huacaya Fleece** - *NZ Southern Capri*  
Owned by Nic Cooper and Linda Blake of NZ Southern Alpacas

**Champion Suri Fleece** - *Pinjarra Top Gun*  
Owned by Hans Roecoert, Waitakere Alpacas

**Reserve Champion Suri Fleece** - *Canchones Armani*  
Owned by Hans Roecoert, Waitakere Alpacas

The full results for both the 1st New Zealand National Show and the 2004 Royal Auckland Show are available to view on the Alpaca Association New Zealand (AANZ) web site at [www.alpaca.org.nz](http://www.alpaca.org.nz) ■





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- The 8th **Advanced Alpaca Breeding & Reproduction Workshop with Dr Jim Watts**. Saturday 2 April 2005.
- The 6th **Coolaroo Classic 2005**, featuring an elite auction of champion & advanced bloodlines, many bred utilising Embryo transfer technology on SRS® breeding principles. Sunday 3 April 2005.
- **Fashion in the Fields**, presented by the Alpaca Centre Australia. Sunday 3 April 2005.

For a comprehensive information kit, or to register for the SRS® workshop or the Coolaroo Classic 2005 catalogue, please contact Lisa Kell on:  
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# Breeding for a Prosperous Commercial Alpaca Future in Australia

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Aldous Hicks** > Coolaroo Alpaca Stud, NSW

For the Australian alpaca industry in general and specifically today's alpaca owners to prosper financially from their alpaca investment in the future, developing a commercial alpaca will be determined by the success or otherwise of delivering products that competitive markets demand. The products will be based on fibre, meat or animals.

The Australian and New Zealand alpaca scene is different to most other alpaca owning countries. The small human population limits the future growth of an industry underpinned by lifestyle considerations, since Australia now contains the largest herd of alpacas outside of Peru. In per capita terms, Australia already has approximately 25 times more alpacas than the US. The supply of animals to emerging markets is potentially a medium term opportunity for the Australian alpaca breeder. Clearly, geographically, Australia is at a disadvantage to Canada, Peru and Chile when it comes to supplying animals to the UK and European markets, however it is advantaged for the Asian market.

Fibre based products today deliver in Peru a third-world subsistence level of financial return to the grower. Hence, there are orders of magnitude increases required in the financial viability of today's alpacas.

The success of alpaca fibre breeding for the qualities of density and length using the SRS® Breeding System indicates with good confidence that the required level of financial return is there to be had.

## The Commercial Value of an Alpaca Today Based on Fibre Production

For some in the alpaca industry today it is too early to analyse the potential future commercial fibre issues, because the alpaca industry is essentially an animal trading industry based on lifestyle market demands, with animal marketing issues holding sway. For others, the commerciality of the industry will never be of interest, because it is joy of the animal that is at the forefront of their involvement with alpacas. However, there are some in the industry who are looking forward to a financially viable association with alpacas based on fibre production in the not too distant future. It is to these people that the following discussion is addressed.

In general and average terms, today's alpacas, whether they be Australian, Peruvian or North American produce 2-6 kilograms of 25-35 micron fibre for a period of about twelve years. Clearly there are exceptions, with some animals producing more kilograms and some growing much finer fibre, especially baby alpaca. For discussion purposes here, we are talking about averages.

The value of the annual fibre production over the productive life of the animal, I suggest, can range between \$5 and \$30 per kilogram (kg) in today's money, depending on many factors. Some will say, "I got \$60 per kilo the other day". These are exceptions and are unlikely to be the rule in the commercial future. Just like the 11.5 micron 90 kg bale of merino wool produced recently. It is expected to bring a per kilo price in the thousands of dollars. However, it is not a representative bale of merino wool.

Using accepted methods of estimating financial value (Net Present Value NPV @ 10%), and taking the extreme combinations of kgs and price per kgs, i.e. 2 kg @ \$5 per kg and 6 kgs @ \$30 per kg, we can calculate an alpaca's worth purely from its gross fibre sales value. Please note we are talking about "gross" value derived from fibre production only. Other considerations of value, like animal rarity, animal trading value, lifestyle value and so forth, are not considered. Please also note, we are discussing "gross" fibre sales value, which does not including operating costs.

I estimate an alpaca's present value based on its gross fibre value at between \$58 and \$1,160. However, presently an average annual alpaca fibre production would be 3 kgs @ say \$8 per kg producing a value of \$155 per animal over its productive life. By way of comparison, today the average Australian merino sheep is producing 4.5 kgs of clean 21 micron wool and receiving, depending on various factors, about \$7.50 per kilo clean wool. This produces a gross fibre sales value (NPV based calculation) of about \$160 for the life of the animal. Based on the assumptions made, today the average alpaca is about the same value from a gross fibre sales value perspective as an average merino sheep.

The main fibre-specific cost in running a fibre breeding operation is the shearing cost. Presently the average cost of shearing a fibre growing alpaca is higher than shearing an average merino sheep. I have heard estimates of the cost to shear an alpaca from "a bit more" to "more than double" the cost of shearing a merino. Taking shearing costs into account, the average fibre value of a merino is now \$135, which is now higher than for an alpaca at \$90. Please remember we are talking fibre-related values only.



However, from the dramatic drop in national Australian merino sheep numbers (170 million to less than 100 million in 10 years) mainly due to matings to meat sheep, we know that the fibre return delivered to the average merino grower is presently insufficient to maintain merino sheep growing numbers. Clearly today's average merino fibre value alone is insufficient to financially sustain merino wool breeding and growers.

## Improvements from SRS® Alpaca Breeding

From the SRS® breeding programme carried out at Coolaroo over the last seven years, it is clear that the alpaca has a bright future as a fibre growing animal.

As previously stated, the SRS® Breeding System has the characteristics of fibre density and length underpinning its breeding selections. This system has delivered very positive results over the past seven years. Table 1 below summarises these results.

Table 1. Follicle and fibre measurements (mean  $\pm$  standard error) of selection fibre density and length of fibres.

| Trait                                   | Before SRS® selection       | After 7 years of SRS® selection |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Follicle density (per mm <sup>2</sup> ) | 25.8 $\pm$ 1.5 <sup>a</sup> | 53.3 $\pm$ 2.6 <sup>b</sup>     |
| Follicles per group                     | 24.3 $\pm$ 0.3 <sup>a</sup> | 36.3 $\pm$ 0.2 <sup>b</sup>     |
| Primary fibre diameter ( $\mu$ m)       | 39.4 $\pm$ 0.9 <sup>a</sup> | 33.7 $\pm$ 0.7 <sup>b</sup>     |
| Secondary fibre diameter ( $\mu$ m)     | 29.3 $\pm$ 0.9 <sup>a</sup> | 24.0 $\pm$ 0.6 <sup>b</sup>     |
| Number of animals                       | 20                          | 22                              |

In the seven years, the author estimates that from this breeding improvement, the gross fibre value over the productive life of the alpacas in the test sample has increased from around \$100 to \$250. Clearly, from the \$250 figure it can be seen that dramatic improvements have been made in only seven years.

The question is what can be achieved in the next seven years? Estimates are made in the final section of this article.

## Why Does SRS® Select for Density and Length rather than Micron and Weight?

Fibre breeding reasoning is surely rather straightforward. Micron determines fleece value. The lower the micron of the fibre grown, the higher the value received for that fleece by the grower. So, if you select for lower micron by using "trusty" histograms, and if you select sensibly and consistently from your histogram information, surely you will breed animals with lower micron and hence of more value! That is all OK, except lower microns also means lower weight of fibre produced, all other things being equal. So while the lower microns produce higher value, does the higher micron return compensate for the loss in return from the reduced fibre weight grown?



Fig 1. Fine crimping, thick staples represent low density and entangled fibres and slow growing fibres.

However, surely we can be a bit cleverer and make breeding selections based on micron and weight, so that while the micron of the fibre goes down, the weight of the fibre grown goes up. Unfortunately, nature is not that simple. Selecting for fibre weight can produce a number of outcomes. Increasing the fibre weight of fleeces grown will mean selecting for a number of fibre outcomes. The first outcome is increasing the diameter of the fibres, because for the same number of fibres, increasing the diameter of the fibre increases the fleece's weight, all other things being equal. Secondly, decreasing the yield of clean fibre (which means growing fibre with a higher grease and suint content) will increase fleece weight. Thirdly, increasing the length of the fibre and fourthly increasing the number of fibres on the animal's body will increase fleece weight also. The problem is, which of the four outcomes will the genes select? Or will it be a mixture of outcomes?

The first of these outcomes indicates breeding confusion. Breeding selection is for a decrease in micron on one hand while selecting for an increase in micron on the other. No further comment is needed. The second outcome has already been experienced in Australia, by way of the importation of Vermont sheep from the US in the 1890's. These sheep were low yielding super-high-grease-content sheep, which had seriously deleterious consequences for the Australian merino industry. The third and fourth outcomes, increase fibre length and increased number of fibres, are positive fibre breeding outcomes.



Fig 2. Fibre bundles signify high density and aligned fibres. This alpaca's fleece opens freely. It has high follicle density (48 follicles per square millimetre) and extensive secondary follicle branching (S/P ratio of 12.1 to 1). The fleece is long.

It is argued here that selecting for micron from histograms and measured fleece weights is conceptually problematical. There is a further problem. The actual measurements from the histogram include factors for statistical error, an alpaca's age and the nutrition it has received. Selecting for weight also includes factors of nutrition, foreign and vegetable matter, and shearing consistency. Clearly, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove these factors so that a clear fibre-only micron or weight measurement is produced from which important breeding selections are to be made. ☺



These issues indicate real questions about breeding selections based on micron measurements from histograms and fleece weights produced from shearing sheds. Further, real life results in the merino industry over many years confirmed that alternative breeding methods were required.

## SRS® and Density and Length

At the Coolaroo Alpaca Stud, selecting for the visual fleece markers used in the SRS® breeding system has produced a marked increase in the fibre density (the number of fibre follicles per square millimetre). These findings (refer Table 1) are consistent with Moore's pre-papilla cell hypothesis of the regulation of wool follicle formation and fibre size (Moore et al, 1998).

From a fibre outcome point of view, it would seem that selecting for fibre density means that the only breeding gain that would appear to be achieved is the same fibre diameter but more fibres. However, selecting for density in merino sheep, angora goats and now alpacas at the Coolaroo Alpaca Stud has confirmed that breeding for density has many other outcomes.

These include:

- > less 'guard hair' produced, which means less medullation, less prickly and higher quality garments
- > longer and thinner staples, which means more fibre and better textile manufacturing
- > secondary follicle branching, which means many more fibres
- > reduced primary and secondary fibre diameters, means reduced micron.

And as it turns out, selecting for density is selecting genes that produced organised fibre producing skins. And it is through organised fibre growing skins that alpaca fibre production can be enhanced to levels that produce first-world financially viable alpacas.

Measuring fibre density also has its problems, though far less so than microns and weight. Once an alpaca is born the number of fibre follicles on the fibre-bearing surface of the alpaca is fixed. So as the animal grows, the follicle density will decrease as the animal's surface area increases. However, age factors developed over many years of measuring density in merinos and angoras allow adjustments to be made when alpacas are density tested before they are fully grown. Though clearly, by taking measurements when an animal is mature, any doubts are removed. And the level of secondary follicle branching associated with density will not change over the life of the animal or under different nutritional regimes, like histogram and fleece weights do.

It should be stated that, the SRS® breeding system's visual markers are very accurate in determining superior density animals, simply by visually appraising the animal. Actual density testing is only really required for the odd very good animal or after a few years as a monitor of progress of selection in the progeny.

## What is the Fibre Density of Better Alpacas?

A survey of follicle and fibre traits of 63 Huacaya adult alpacas in Peruvian herds was recently conducted (Watts and Hicks, 2002). The animals sampled were considered by the owners as the best in their herds. Follicle density of the animals averaged 42.7 follicles per square millimetre with an average of 32.7 follicles per follicle group.

The highest density alpaca was an 18 month old male with 75 follicles per square millimetre. An animal of similar high density, a 14 month old male, was identified in the Coolaroo herd in May 2004. It has a density of 91 follicles per square millimetre, 41 follicles per group and has a mean fibre diameter of 18.5 microns.

## Density and "False Density"

Fibre density is considered one of the important traits when determining the quality of an alpaca's fibre. Certainly, alpaca judges in the show ring often mention higher fibre density, along with fibre descriptive terms like finer, softer, more lustrous and so on, when appraising an animal's fleece qualities. However, on what basis are judges and others quantifying density?

As previously stated, the SRS® Breeding System is based on selection for density and length. Hence, appraising density is one of the key capabilities of the SRS® fleece marker system, which has been developed over 30 years, as the only non-measured accurate method of appraising an animal's fibre density. An animal with superior SRS® fleece markers will be a superior density animal to one with inferior SRS® fleece markers.

Grabbing fleece in your hand and squeezing it (hand grab), or touching both sides of an alpaca with open palms and imparting inwards pressure to appraise the resistance (touching both sides), or lifting up the fleece (lifting) to obtain a weight/density indication are all methods that are likely to lead to a "false density" assessment. The "hand grab" method is more likely an indication of entangled, unaligned and disorganised fibres, indicating a very low-density fibred animal. Obtaining greater resistance with the "touching both sides" method is likely to be an indication of an animal exhibiting much higher diameter primary fibres than one where less resistance is felt. A "lifting" test is more likely to provide an assessment of greater suint content and higher diameter fibres than higher density or more fleece.

The "hand grab", "touching both sides" and "lifting" density selection methods are inclined to produce the "false density" outcome exhibited in Figure 3.

Finally, the concept of "false density" is well understood by those implementing the SRS® Breeding System, because density is the most important criteria for an SRS® breeder to accurately assess. In summary, an accurate determination of real density is determined by the SRS® fleece markers. And SRS® fleece markers can be identified and practiced in a one-day hands-on workshop.



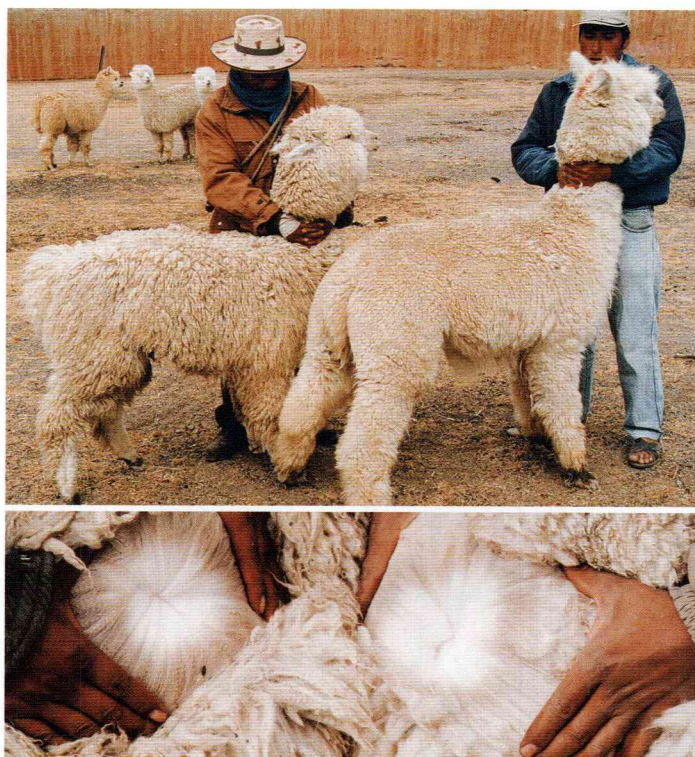


Fig 3. (Alpaca & fleece - right) Associated typically with a fibre diameter of about 28 microns in the adult alpaca. There are only about 24 follicles/mm<sup>2</sup> of skin with S/P ratio of about 7:1. The wool is about 80mm long for 12 months growth. The fibres grow at the rate of about 0.26mm/day. The combination of low density and low length returns a low fleece weight, typically about 2 kgs/12 months wool growth.

(Alpaca & fleece - left) Exhibit an improvement of about 50% in the density and length of fibres grown by the alpaca. Staples and crimp are visible in the fleece. Staples are thin (about 0.5-1cm in diameter). The crimp is well defined with medium frequency. There are about 45 wool follicles/mm<sup>2</sup> of skin with a S/P ratio of 12:1).

The breeder incorrectly favoured the animal on the right.

## SRS® Fibre Breeding Goals

SRS® Alpaca Breeding System has set the goal of breeding alpacas of high fibre density and length (Watts and Hicks, 2002). This is expected to be an animal with a fibre density greater than 75 follicles per square millimetre, at least 63 follicles per group, with fine primary and secondary fibres of about 16 microns and totally free of any medullation. The fibres are expected to grow at the rate of at least 0.70 millimetres per day. Such animals should produce a fleece weight of at least 7.0 kilograms for 12 months growth and will require shearing twice a year.

Implementing the SRS® Alpaca Breeding System augmented by the availability of breeding technologies like embryo transfer (ET) and artificial insemination (AI) becoming commercially available, means that breeding numbers of SRS® Alpacas will be a reality sooner rather than later. Such an SRS® Alpaca is estimated by the author to have a gross fibre value over the productive life of the alpaca approaching \$1,300, or approximately \$1,200 after shearing.

If there is any validity in these figures, they will allow Australian alpaca owners to prosper financially from their alpaca investment from fibre production additional to income derived from other income streams the animal may invite. ■

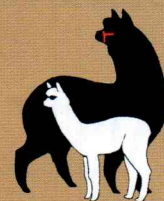
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# SWAN VALLEY

## ALPACA STUD

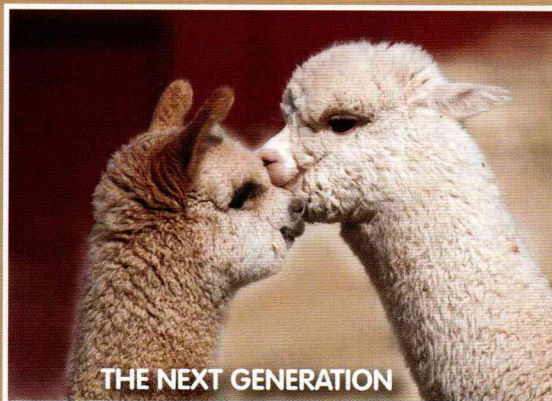


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# Judging the Judges

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Jeffry Farman** > Flowerdale Estate Alpacas, VIC

In June, 27 AAA Inc. Judges from all states attended a three day Judges' School in Melbourne, to be updated on judging techniques, to practice their skills and try new approaches. We breeders that show alpacas will all be better off for their efforts.



In the practical judging sessions at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds, three judging rings were used simultaneously, under Maggie Krieger's direction.

**W**e like to know, when entering the operating theatre that our surgeon is right up to date with his skills training. Likewise with our airline pilots, it is important to know that their knowledge is current when the aircraft taxis in preparation for take-off. It is equally so when we enter the show ring, to face the judge with our would-be champion alpaca. So, I found it most reassuring to know that there is a process in Australia to ensure our alpaca judges are right up to date, on a world scale, with their judging skills and techniques.

Along with a few other breeders I had been asked to supply alpacas for the Judges' School. I had also been invited to be MC for the weekend event that ran from Friday afternoon to Sunday night. Each day the call was from 7am through to 10pm.

Everyone worked at a frenetic pace with lectures, study, practical work, exams, multiple judging sessions and critiques that were recorded on video and played back at night in front of all the other judges. They all worked so incredibly hard, for three days. When I accepted the invitation I had no idea how intense, physically draining and intellectually taxing the commitment would be. And I wasn't even one of the judges!

## Ensuring we maintain the high standard of Australian judging

Earlier feedback from the judges had helped the AAA Showing and Judging Sub-committee establish that they needed help in three important areas: conformation, Suris, and oral reasoning (feedback to exhibitors in the show ring). Many months of meetings and discussions followed to ensure the best outcomes were achieved. All judges were required to attend and their successful completion of not one but two exams was mandatory, to enable re-accreditation for continuing to judge at shows.

The committee, headed by Bill Plunkett, then invited international alpaca judge and trainer, Maggie Krieger to design and facilitate the program and Cameron Holt was asked to run a session on fleece evaluation.

## A challenging and rigorous program of activities

The weekend started on Friday afternoon with training and practical assessments on suri fleeces, led by Cameron Holt. Assessment of huacaya fleeces followed, including



the judging of the Most Valuable Fleece. The mathematics applied here was quite challenging for most participants. However by the end of the session everyone was up to speed. Then before dinner all judges had to sit for the first of two certification examinations.

After dinner, an Open Forum had been arranged, giving judges an opportunity to debate some of the proposals and supporting papers that had been put forward for consideration. Some were quite controversial. Consequently the discussion was lively but productive. This resulted in quite a late night, yet a good start to the weekend.



No lip was left unturned, for the judges.

On Saturday morning, under Maggie Krieger's guidance the group was led through a presentation on conformation. There was a fascinating section on the stance and gait irregularities in alpacas arising from poor body conformation. A session on oral reasoning vocabulary followed, identifying positive and negative terminology. Then, after lunch, it was all on board the coach headed for the Melbourne Showgrounds for the first of several sessions judging in the show ring under Maggie's watchful eye. I must say these sessions would have been quite daunting for even the most experienced judges. All had to provide their critiques in front of their colleagues. These were videotaped.



Judging critiques were videotaped for later analysis and feedback. For some, this was quite confronting, particularly having to do so in front of their peers.

Back at the conference centre the second exam for certification was taken by all judges. After dinner everyone was called together to watch the video sessions and provide constructive criticism. This was probably the most challenging experience for many of the judges. It was also quite hilarious at times.

After the weekend was over, I asked Maggie to give us her thoughts on the program. Here's what she said.

### What new concepts were you hoping to pass on before the training started?

"One aspect of judging that I have frequently found poorly executed in the show ring is the oral reasoning required at the close of the judgment of a class. This is where the judge is required to explain in detail the reason why he/she placed the alpacas judged in the ranking they received at the close of the judging session. I had hoped to introduce the Australian judges to some new ideas in this area. Amongst the ideas was a concept of avoiding being highly critical of negative traits in alpacas. Instead of directly criticizing an individual alpaca, using the positive trait of the alpaca placed above it to illustrate the negative in the one below", Maggie explained.

She went on to say, "In my own experience of evolving, as a respected alpaca judge, I have found that one critical piece of the puzzle has been the ability to organize one's mind in a very short period of time under huge pressure and stress. So the ring procedure and assessment methodology needs to be the same with every alpaca to create order in the mind and avoid missing any information on any one animal. The sequence of inspection is therefore very important for organizing the mind. This helps tremendously when it comes to giving oral reasons at the end of a class. These were a couple of the ideas that I thought to pass on prior to the conference," she said.

### What were the key differences/strengths observed with the Australian way of judging?

Maggie commented to me that, "The main difference I observed was in the descriptive language! We had quite a few very heated discussions pertaining to words used in the show ring that maybe had an "Australian" flavour. So the participating candidates received harassment from me about use of language. In turn I was harassed about Canadian language and we all agreed to disagree on some of the points!"

She also said, "Another difference I noticed was the need for judges in Australia to pay more attention to conformation issues in the alpacas. This is quite markedly the opposite of the North American situation where there is much more emphasis on conformation. There was major discussion at one point about the dangers of allowing conformation to slip by unnoticed in the show ring and the negative impact that may have down the road on the gene pool." ☺



## What do you feel was achieved over the two day conference?

Maggie summed up, "It was a most incredible two days for me to work with a great group of people in helping them hone their skills. There was some incredibly hard work done and some very gutsy and courageous performances. One of the requirements for assessment was that each candidate had to stand up in front of a video camera and perform their oral reasons in front of the rest of the group. This footage was then analyzed in the evening and criticized by the group, using it as a teaching tool for everyone to benefit. To do that in front of one's peers is no mean feat. However, the improvement in every individual was quite amazing in such a short period of time. The entertainment value in some cases was no less than deserving of an Oscar too".

Another point made by Maggie was that there was a great sense of pulling together as a group. Since all the participants had to be exposed to some very nerve-racking situations and they were all in the same boat there was a tremendous sense of empathy and support for each other throughout the group. This served to bring everyone together in a very united way. As a result, another outcome was the ability to have some really open discussions with the group about judging issues, show rules, legal aspects of judging and showing and many other topics pertaining to judging that were of tremendous help to the Showing Committee members present.

She concluded by saying, "One person commented to me that they had never had such a positive experience with a group of judges such as this before and they felt that it would be very beneficial to the judging fraternity for the future. I see this cohesion of the group as a huge benefit to the Australian show industry in general. If that benefit came from any input that I was able to have through teaching this group of amazing people, then I feel extremely privileged to have been part of such a positive influence on the show industry through what I love to do best - share my knowledge of alpacas and judging".

## Summing up by the judges

There is no doubt that the 2004 Judges' School was considered to be of real benefit to all the judges. Experienced and newer judges all agreed they had gained many new insights and techniques they would be able to bring to bear in future judging assignments.

As an observer, I was enormously impressed with the planning and preparation that went into the event. Although there were numerous people, including breeders who contributed to the weekend, none worked harder than Bill Plunkett. His contribution was spread out over many months. There's no doubt by the end of it Bill would have been quite exhausted. None the less he would have been very pleased with the combined effort.

The way the judges worked so hard to improve their skills and submitted themselves to examinations of their knowledge and demonstrations of their skills is something for us to be mindful of when we next enter the show ring. As a breeder I will, in future, be more appreciative of the personal contribution made by our judges (who are all volunteers) to 'raise the bar' of professionalism in our industry. ■

## Maggie Krieger

*Physiotherapist, author, llama and alpaca farmer, teacher and judge.*

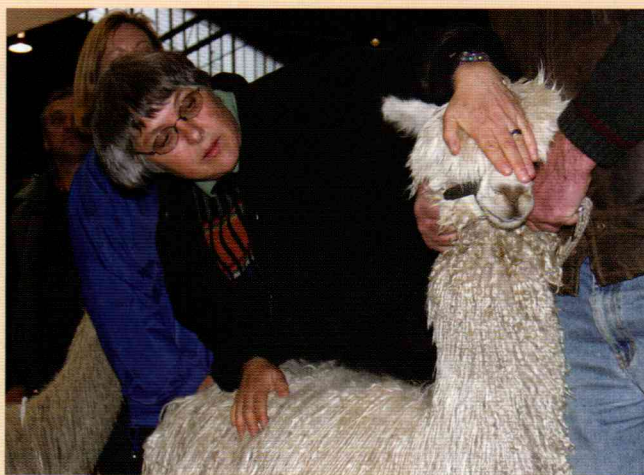
Life with Camelids started for Maggie about 17½ years ago, on their Saltspring Island Farm in British Columbia, Canada. At that time, with her husband Richard, she purchased their first llama herd. Alpacas joined the llamas a year and a half later with a group of animals the Kriegers purchased and imported from New Zealand.

About a year after acquiring their first animals she commenced training as a llama and alpaca judge through the then premier show organisation of North America, ALSA. Maggie found that the movement analysis training she had received as a Physiotherapist had given her an ability to analyse movement of alpacas or llamas in the show ring, so this stood her in great stead in honing her skills as a camelid judge. The fibre judgement also came fairly easily as she had spent most of her life working with fibres as a hand knitter.

Once she completed her ALSA training as an alpaca judge, not being content with the level of expertise this gave her, she made her way down to Peru to commence an apprenticeship with Dr. Sumar at the Arequipa Expo in 1993. A year later she was invited to judge the Expo with Dr. Sumar and was awarded certification as an alpaca judge under the International Alpaca Association of Peru. This situation has also given Maggie the distinction of being the only woman ever to have judged in the Peruvian show ring and also the only non-Peruvian to have been invited to judge in Peru.

Maggie's judging experience has included judging many shows - both fleece and halter - all over the world, including Australia, England, Peru, Canada and the US. As well she has instructed in all those countries.

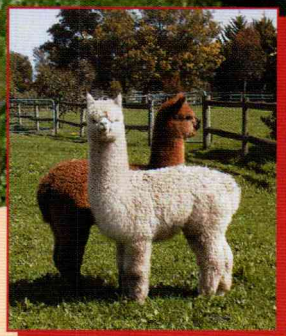
Maggie Krieger was eminently well qualified to facilitate the Australian Judges' School in Melbourne this year.



Conformation and suris were the main focus for the weekend. Maggie explained that North American judges are a lot harder on conformation issues.



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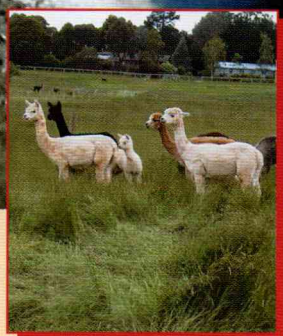
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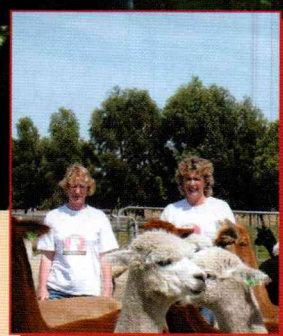
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# Taxing Tails

EDUCATION ARTICLE by **John Fisher** FCA, Tax Agent  
(and the usual spaghetti alphabet) > Fire Mountain Alpacas, NSW



## Part 2: Options for claiming the costs of your car.

**W**ell the election is over, the Tax Act is still at over 10,000 pages (thankfully Parliament is not sitting at the moment), the shearing is finished, the new shearing shed has performed its duty for our small herd and is probably available for rent as a party location for noisy teenagers (takers can apply to the lady chair of our financially diminished agricultural enterprise) and I am back at my desk to pen a few good ideas on the complexity of the tax system for you.

### Car Expenses

I think that the task I have set myself to explain the options for claiming the costs of your car has turned out to be a slightly bigger hurdle than first envisaged - a bit like Mark Webber trying to win a GP in a Jaguar. After a spin or two off the track I think I am under control and heading down the straight for the chequered flag - and in less than 5 pages too!

Before we get too involved in the detail the \$64,000 question is **"What is business usage?"**

Basically it's all very simple - business travel expenses are tax deductible. But, travel expenses to and from home are not deductible - unless of course you have to make a detour for business purposes to visit a customer, drop off your fleece, carry the shearing table back to your neighbours, deliver an alpaca for mating, etc. However, a short detour to drop into the Post Office would not qualify. See, I told you - clear as mud.

Let me try a couple of examples that may help:

- > Taking your alpacas to the show would qualify as business travel.
- > Taking your stud male down the road for a fee-paying service would be business related.
- > A quick zip down to the accountant's office to finish your BAS statement would be a business trip
- > Taking a trip to your local town would be business related provided you could show that the principal purpose was to go to the Co-op for more fodder; to the bank to deposit the fleece proceeds; to the vet for some advice; and that the visit to your Mum's for morning tea was incidental to the main purpose which was to, say, visit the Co-op.

There are four methods to choose from for claiming deductions. You can choose which one you use and change your decision each year, or even if you replace your vehicle.

### 1. The Set Rate Per Kilometre Method

This is the simplest method available. It applies if you wish to claim a deduction for motor vehicle usage up to 5,000 kilometres. You can use this method if your usage is more than 5,000 kilometres provided you are prepared to forgo the excess claim over 5,000 kilometres.

The Tax Office sets the rates each year and they are different depending on the size of the horses (well not strictly correct as the regulations actually deal with the size of the engine).

| Engine Capacity   |                | Rate per km |          |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Non Rotary Engine | Rotary Engine  | 2002/3      | 2003/4   |
| Up to 1600cc      | Up to 800cc    | 50 cents    | 51 cents |
| 1601cc - 2600cc   | 801cc - 1300cc | 60 cents    | 61cents  |
| Over 2600cc       | Over 1300cc    | 61 cents    | 62 cents |

Interestingly two people may own the car and each claim business usage of the car under this option up to the maximum of 5,000 kilometres.

For those of you who hate all the record keeping that is required for tax matters these days, this may be the option for you, as you can use this method which avoids the necessity to keep a log book or to produce receipts and tax invoices for all the expenses.

### 2. Actual Cost Method

This is the big one. If you have lots of costs, huge repair bills or travel many business kilometres a year then this is for you. Of course the record keeping will drive you to distraction.

Under this method the total operating costs of the vehicle are added up and apportioned between business and private use. A log book must be kept for twelve consecutive weeks to determine the business use percentage and this is valid for five years provided the pattern of use does not significantly change - (buying an extra vehicle, moving an extra 40 kilometres from town would probably be deemed to be significant). If the facts change significantly then it's off to the newsagent to buy a new logbook.



Car expense includes all the expenses of running your vehicle - fuel, oil, maintenance, smash repair bills, tyres, insurance, registration, depreciation, lease payments, interest on a loan to buy the car, driver enhancement training. You need to keep all the relevant records - i.e. tax invoices or receipts.

Depreciation can be claimed up to the depreciation cost limit which is adjusted each year - well, most years - the limit for 2004 is the same as for 2003 and is set at \$57,009. If the vehicle cost more than this amount you cannot claim depreciation on the excess.

### 3. One Third of Actual Expense Method

If your vehicle has travelled more than 5,000 business kilometres in a year you would be ineligible to use the set rate per kilometre method, and if you just cannot get around to keeping a logbook then this may be the method for you. You may elect to use this method which entitles you to claim a deduction of 33% of your total motor vehicle costs for the year - i.e. 33% of your motor vehicle costs are assumed to be business related.

However, note that you are still required to keep proof of the expenses incurred (receipts or tax invoices) and you must be able to show that the car has travelled 5,000 business kilometres. For example you might pop down to the Co-op every week, a round trip of 60 kilometres so it would be pretty easy to show you had 5,000+ business kilometres for the year. If your travel is irregular or has no set destination then you need to keep some sort of record to validate the kilometres travelled - this can be in the back of your son's old exercise book or in your diary.

If you don't own or use the car for a full year then a proportionate claim is available.

### 4. Twelve Percent of Cost Method

I think this method is for people who own expensive vehicles but hate keeping records. If you drive a 1972 Ford ute (because Dad said they go forever and you never really got over Moffat at Bathurst) that cost \$2,500 this method gives you a pretty raw deal.

Anyway, if you must, you can use this method provided your vehicle has travelled more than 5,000 business kilometres in a year. You are allowed a deduction of 12% of the capital cost of the vehicle up to the depreciation cost limit of \$57,009. There is no requirement to keep a log book or any records of expenses however you need to be able to show that you did indeed travel more than 5,000 business kilometres in the year - refer my comments above.

Again, if you don't own the car or use it for a full year then a proportionate claim is available.

### Exceptions to substantiation rules

Some expenses are unable to be supported by documents. Examples may be bridge and road tolls, parking metres, petrol and car wash expenses. Keeping a diary note of the expense incurred can support these claims, and this will be accepted by the tax office up to a total of \$200 in a year.

In addition there are some specific exemptions from the substantiation rules as far as private and business use recording goes. The relevant ones for alpaca owners are:

- > Motor cycles
- > Panel vans
- > Utes
- > Trucks
- > Road vehicles designed to carry less than one tonne
  - provided they're not designed mainly to carry passengers.
- > A vehicle that is unregistered throughout the whole year of income and is used principally for business purposes.

In each of these cases it is required that the private use of the vehicle is restricted to travel between home and work and travel incidental to business travel.

It is often difficult to obtain a receipt or tax invoice for fuel and oil and it is accepted that these costs can be estimated based on the odometer records. Your logbook should show the odometer reading at the beginning and end of the year, the engine capacity of the vehicle, the make, model and registration number. City fuel costs are published quarterly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and country taxpayers can get similar information from your local petrol distributor stating average retail price. If you do not know the fuel consumption of your vehicle you can get data by going to a website called [www.greenhouse.gov.au/fuelguide](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/fuelguide)

**Example.** Bill lives in Armidale and has a 1992 Ford Falcon Sedan 4 litre manual that uses unleaded petrol. His odometer records for the year show 146,500 kms at the beginning of the year and 186,500 kms at the end of the year - 40,000 kms for the year.

The fuel guide shows that the car uses 12 L/100kms for city driving. Fuel prices can be obtained from [www.aaa.asn.au/petrol.htm](http://www.aaa.asn.au/petrol.htm) and are available for most major areas.

For Armidale the average fuel price for 2003/4 was 98.6 cents/litre.

The estimated petrol costs are:  
 $40,000\text{kms} \times 12/100 \times 98.6 = \$4,733$

I am sure you have heard of the line from the public servant - "I'm from the tax office and I'm here to help you". A taxpayer recently had a tax officer help him prepare a tax return as he had been injured in a work accident and needed assistance whilst he was in ill health. On assessment some claims were disallowed and The Administrative Appeals Tribunal agreed with the amendments including the appropriateness of the 50% tax penalty. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

Next issue I will have a go at the Commercial Loss Rules - these can restrict your ability to claim your farming losses against other income and are squarely aimed at hobby farmers and small enterprises. ■



# Suri News

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Angela Preuss** > Suri Sub-committee

The Suri Sub-committee has been active on a number of fronts in the last few months.

## National Suri Extravaganza Weekend – Queen's Birthday Weekend June 2005

Put this weekend in your diary now so you don't miss this inaugural National Suri Weekend. While organisation is still in its infancy, the plan is to tailor an event that will capture the imagination of all suri breeders. Activities will include our first ever National Suri Sale - so start choosing your animals now! We will be looking for animals covering the range of suris from broad ribbon winning whites through to coloured F1's.

There will be plenty of education sessions; maybe a Suri Show (or if not, a mock show where the participants get a chance to be the judges!); fashion parades and stud male displays to enable breeders to see a large number of suri males in the one spot; and plenty of time for getting to know one another. The venue will be centrally located and at the moment the odds-on favourite is Wagga Wagga, NSW but we will confirm this at a later date. Anyone wanting to contribute ideas for the weekend should direct them to Angela Preuss at [pinjarraalpacas.com](mailto:pinjarraalpacas.com) or Jill Short at [SurilanaAlpacas.wgbfarm@netcon.net.au](mailto:SurilanaAlpacas.wgbfarm@netcon.net.au)

## Showing

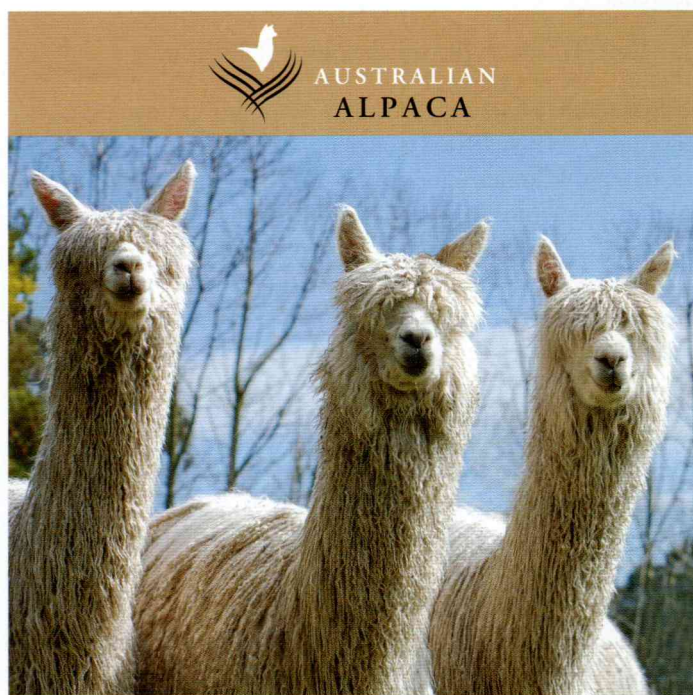
Suri breeders Australia wide have been very pro active in supporting the 2004 Spring Shows. This year's National Show had a record number of over 120 suri entries. This is an increase of more than 25% on suri entries from last year and represents about a third of all the alpaca entries.

It was fantastic to have over 60 suris available for the Suri Judging School, run by Maggie Krieger in June this year. It was an excellent opportunity for judges from Australia and New Zealand to assess a large number of suris of differing qualities. It was a very intensive few days for our judges, but one that we know they benefited from greatly.

## Research and Development

Two draft briefs, relating to suri fibre have been prepared and will be sent to the suri breeders for their comments.

- Project 1** Involves research into the measurement and causes of lustre in suri fibre.
- Project 2** Involves research into the impact of various locking styles of suri fibre on the processing procedures and final product.



We are also investigating a new processor who will be able to process suri fleece of any length. This may be an opportunity to utilise the fantastic quality, but overgrown fleeces we currently have stored at AAFL or in our sheds. The new mill will be operational before Christmas and we will let breeders know what we propose to do regarding trialling the process and/or developing product.

We have sourced photographs illustrating categories of lustre and different locking types to put together charts for consistently identifying these characteristics in suri fleece. This will be most important in developing consistent criteria for inclusion as AGE traits.

## Fibre

It is good to see that AAFL is supporting suri so strongly. The stockpile of suri fibre at AAFL has now been classed.

A number of exciting options are being investigated to utilise this pool of fibre, as well as fibre from this year's clip. The latest initiative, a suri 'golden bale', is the result of a recent Suri Sub-committee brainstorming session.

There is a lot of wonderful, fine and valuable, mainly first fleece suri on Australian farms that we believe is highly desirable to yarn makers and designers. It is possibly of a quality that Peru cannot produce.



Hopefully by mid 2005 AAFL will have collected and classed at least 100kg-250kg of this quality to offer, by auction or direct sale, to top Italian or Japanese spinners. The industry is hoping to get quite a lot of promotional mileage out of the bale, both locally and abroad, so do support the collection with your very best fleece.

Tied in with the suri 'golden bale' promotion, a couple of NSW suri breeders are planning to attend Pitti Imagine Filati in July 2005 to represent Australian suri fleece producers and AAFL, and hopefully to generate interest in the suri 'golden bale'.

Mike Talbot from AAFL and Julianne Gelber from Bumble Hill Alpacas, NSW are also working with New Zealand processors to produce a superior quality suri wrap/shawl, to promote elite Australian suri product.

## New Suri Banners

The AAA Inc. has produced new banners featuring suris (pictured left) that have been distributed to all AAA Inc. Regions for use in their local marketing campaigns.

The banners are identical in size and style to the banners featuring huacayas that are already in use. Thanks should go to Michael Nicholson from McGregors International for the fantastic photo and the patience it took for him to get the right shot!

## Suri Promotional Brochures

Don't forget that we still have a lot of suri promotional brochures available for Regional events. Most Regions were supplied with these brochures last year. If you need more brochures please contact Julie Wilkinson at Baarrooka Alpacas at [jwilkinson@baarrooka.com.au](mailto:jwilkinson@baarrooka.com.au)


## Suri Pages on AAA Web site

It is proposed that generic information about suri, research articles, fibre initiatives, Suri Sub-committee information etc. will be posted to the public section of the AAA web site. These pages will act as a focal point for information and a positive promotion of the suri aspect of the Australian Alpaca industry.

## Suri Survey

To have a clear picture of the suri population in Australia with regard to numbers, types and colours, the Suri Sub-committee plans to survey members to collate this information.

**Just a reminder to mark down the Queen's Birthday weekend in June 2005 for the Suri Extravaganza, an event not to be missed!** More information on this weekend, as well as other developments in suri research, showing, fleece etc. will be available in the Suri Sub-committee article in the next issue of *Alpacas Australia*. ■

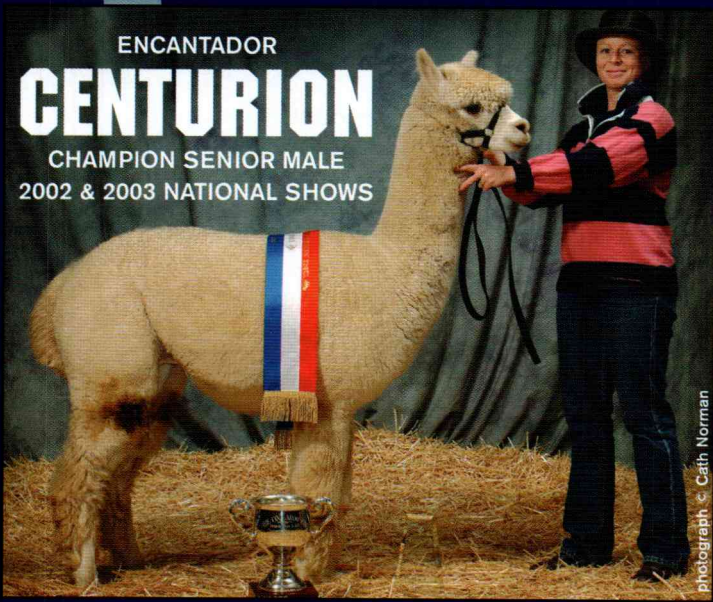


# ALPACANDES ALPACA STUD

MN-3  
Cert. No  
A010/2003/05

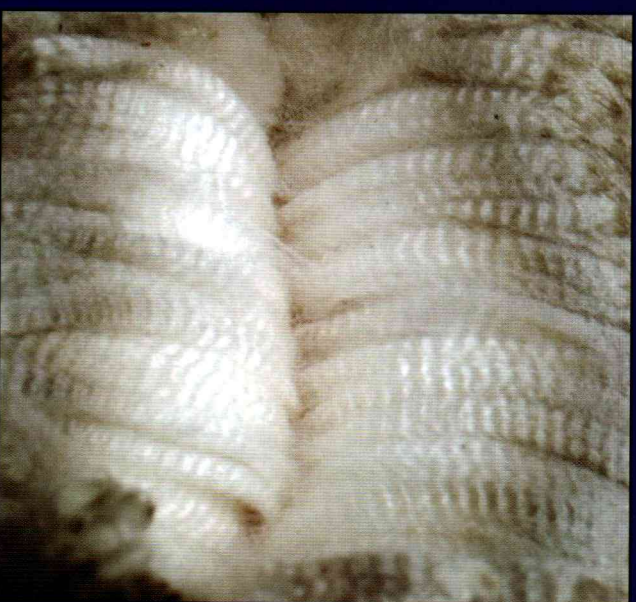
76 Arcadia Rd, GALSTON, NSW 2159  
Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth  
Ph: 02 9653 1696 Fax: 02 9653 1040  
Email: [alpacandes@ozemail.com.au](mailto:alpacandes@ozemail.com.au)

"Dorroughby" Kenyu Rd, BOOROWA, NSW 2586  
Kylie, Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth  
Ph & Fax: 02 6385 8305  
Email: [dorroughby@bigpond.com.au](mailto:dorroughby@bigpond.com.au)



ENCANTADOR  
**CENTURION**  
CHAMPION SENIOR MALE  
2002 & 2003 NATIONAL SHOWS

photograph © Cath Norman



SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM BOTH PROPERTIES • ON FARM (MN2/3, also non-assessed facilities available)  
• DRIVE BYS • MOBILE SERVICING CAN BE ARRANGED • MULTIPLE MATING DISCOUNTS APPLY



# Home Spun – DIY Marketing

MARKETING ARTICLE by **Michael van den Bos** > McGregors International, NSW

## The sacred art of advertising

*"Like liquid into this chalk"*

*"Which bank?"*

*"A glass and a half of full cream dairy milk"*

*"Oh! What a feeling"*

The above quotes are tag lines of advertisements that have appeared in the media. Do they ring a bell? Contrary to how some people think advertising works, it will not make consumers rush out and buy your product. What it will do is keep your business top of mind so next time your target audiences are thinking about buying a product or service you have to offer, they will consider your business.

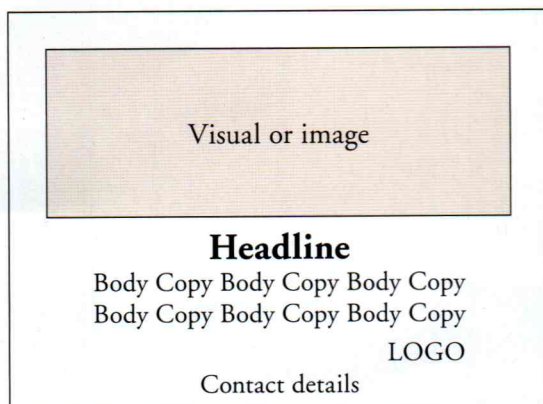
For example, you may have noticed that McDonalds advertises around lunchtime so when it comes time to make that all important decision of what to have for lunch, McDonalds will be one of the options.

Another way to look at it, according to Fairfax Cone, a US advertising guru, is that advertising is what you do when you can't go see somebody. Either way, advertising could be just the ticket for your alpaca business.

### You can do it

When it comes to your alpacas, loving them is not enough if your potential customers don't know anything about you. Advertising can help you to communicate to your target audience and to differentiate your farm from your competitors. The trick is that your advertisement needs to be clear, easily understood, express a unique, compelling benefit and break through all the other advertising clutter. But, with alpacas, that should not be too hard.

Following is an example of a simple, effective layout for a print advertisement.



However, what really makes an advertisement effective is the content. Whatever the creative elements used, it is the capacity of the ad to deliver a strong message that is important, as this will drive recall. In other words, it is what you say that triggers the interest of the consumer.

For example, Knock-knock. The door opens and the person who opens the door frowns. The salesperson says, "You should buy this product because it will make your life easier." The person who answered the door replies, "Come on in, show me." The concept of 'here's what my product will do for you' is really what is behind your creative strategy for developing an advertisement.

And one last thing – make the headline strong; five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy.

### Where should I advertise?

Not only does your target audience help form your key messages, it is the basis of deciding where to advertise, that and a little thing called budget. From a national AAA Inc. marketing perspective, the following are the two main target audience groups:

- 1) Lifestylers
  - > major market for breeders
  - > 'sea change', people who are thinking of, or have, moved out of the city to small farms
  - > first introduced to alpacas at a show or some other form of promotional day
  - > people who buy small farms
  - > majority of alpaca breeders are women over 50 years of age
- 2) 2nd/3rd generation farmers
  - > younger farmers who are open to new livestock options

The local newspaper is probably the best medium by which to cost effectively reach a wide target audience. Metropolitan papers should also be considered as well as rural/lifestyle type publications.



## Buying ad space

To be effective, advertisements need to be scheduled so they appear regularly, or at the right time, in publications that the target audience reads. Advertisements will not work unless they appear in the right place, and are read by people who care about what the alpaca industry has to offer.

To get the best return from your investment when purchasing advertising space, consider the following:

- > **Range** - What percentage of the target audience uses the medium?
- > **Affinity** - Suitability of a medium for the target audience
- > **Spread** - National, regional and community
- > **Cost of one placement** - What effect does it have on your budget?
- > **Technical Facilities** - Cost of producing the advertisement

Most media outlets have this information on hand and will be able to supply you with a media kit or rate card that outlines the above details. Once you have decided which media outlet you would like to advertise with, the following will also determine the effectiveness of your advertisement.

- > **Size and design** - will the advertisement dominate the surroundings or cut through the clutter? An advertisement must attract attention rather than blend in with its surroundings.
- > **Position** - if possible, place the advertisement near articles, features or other advertisements that appeal to the target audience. Ideally, an advertisement should be placed down at the right hand side as more people tend to focus on this side of the page.
- > **Editorial articles** - as well as the advertisement, offer the newspaper an article about your farm and link it in with the industry in general. This article may be published free of charge.
- > **Classified Advertisements** - also consider placing advertisements in classified sections, as this is a usual source of information for readers.
- > **Timing** - a good tip is to advertise during periods when you typically conduct strong business - 'fish where the fish are biting'.

## Advertising mediums

Advertising does not have to mean only print. Radio is a very strong medium in which to advertise, as it is the medium of the spoken word. It is the quickest and most comprehensive form of communication that allows your business to speak on a one-to-one level with target audiences.

It can also be a very cost effective way to communicate to target audiences. Table 1 (right), is an example of advertising rates on a selection of metropolitan and regional stations. As with print, it is important to understand how many and the type of people who listen to the station to ensure you are reaching your target audience.


Table 1.

| Station          | Costs                                                                                          | Coverage                                                                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2LT (rural)      | \$36 (30 sec) prime listening; breakfast and drive                                             | Based in Lithgow, also covers Blue Mts & Bathurst. People 35+                               |
| Hawkesbury Radio | \$220 & \$110 each extra ad. Book 3 months in advance and receive 10% off + 1 extra ad per day | Covers Penrith, Hornsby, Windsor & Kingswood. Part of Southern Cross Broadcasting Australia |
| 2GB              | Standard Mon-Sun \$300 per spot                                                                | Leading AM talkback radio station in metro Sydney                                           |

Other mediums to consider include web sites and TV, which has a high reach in target demographics and a strong visual impact. A common perception is that television is too expensive - but this may not necessarily be the case. In terms of buying space, broadcast distribution is divided into zones and if you are located outside a metropolitan area it can be cheaper than you think, with prices from around \$30 for day time TV to around \$400 during peak hour.


## That's a wrap

Observe advertisements that are published or broadcast that catch your attention and break through the clutter - they will provide a good template. And, when it comes time to develop your own ad, make sure you trigger the interest of your target audiences and ensure that your key messages, information and branding is consistent and integrated with all your other marketing activities. The underlying key is KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid. This will get you the biggest bang for your buck! ■



**BUNGALOOK**

**Alpaca Headstalls**



..... are designed to fit alpacas. They come with leads attached and are **ideal** for training Cria.

The Bungalook Headstall holds the lead rope in the best position for controlling the alpaca. The animal is not discomforted by the irritation of a nose strap pulling across the soft tissue of the nose and is able to give its attention to your leading lesson.

Available in Large & Small sizes in  
Black, Brown, Blue & Red

Credit card orders welcome  
\$27.50 each (inc. GST)  
plus postage (\$5 for up to 6 headstalls)

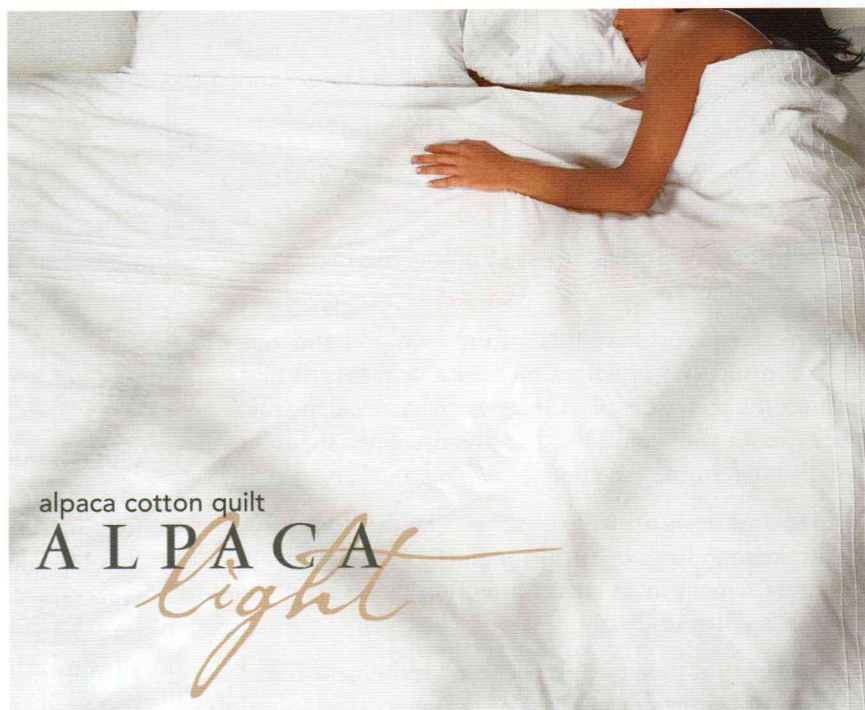
**Send your order with choice of colours and sizes to**  
**Bungalook Alpaca Farm**  
**P.O. Box 204 Lakes Entrance**  
**Vic 3909 Australia**  
**Ph/Fax: 03 51552464**  
**E-mail: bungalook@b150.aone.net.au**  
**Web site:**  
**<http://www.gippsnet.com.au/bungalook/halter.htm>**



# Another Innovation from the Kelly & Windsor Alpaca Bedding Collection

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Trevor Beuth** > Managing Director, Kelly & Windsor Australia Pty Ltd

A combination of lateral thinking, innovation, design creativity, manufacturing expertise, brand management, product development, market awareness and sales management have created a completely new range of unique and exclusive bedding products made from Australian Alpaca fleece which has significant potential in the Australian and possibly overseas markets for years to come.



The latest word in business circles is “Innovation”, which has been identified as being of growing importance in economic growth and competitive success especially in the Australian manufacturing industries. While the concept of business and process innovation is relatively new, its potential to create new opportunities for products and services is now beginning to be understood and developed.

This particularly applies to a new industry such as alpaca, where traditional natural and man made fibre products are comparatively well developed after years of research and experience.

In February 2003, Kelly & Windsor released a new brand of winter bedding products made from Australian alpaca which are not only new but innovative. It is the innovation which has been central in the brand vision of the Kelly & Windsor alpaca quilts, underblankets and pillows in a crowded and very competitive bedding market. Indeed the use of the word innovation is part of the brand's marque which has been a central point of our marketing program to differentiate our alpaca bedding collections from other natural fibre products.

In May of 2004, Michael Talbot, Managing Director of Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. initiated a new concept with its strategic partners to capitalize on the outstanding

feature of alpaca fleece i.e. its natural lightweight and thermal properties. The “Alpaca Light” concept was primarily aimed toward the creation of a range of alpaca products that could be sold in the warmer months thereby establishing a year round demand for alpaca fleece. While I found the concept was particularly appealing, it posed an unusual dilemma for Kelly & Windsor: our bedding products were designed and promoted as being warmer than alternative natural fibres. How could we then create a new collection of alpaca bedding products that were somehow “cooler”?

The obvious solution to the warmer/cooler dilemma could have been to simply make a bedding range that was lighter in weight i.e. less filling in a quilt. While this solution seemed logical it wasn't particularly exciting or innovative. It was during dinner on a Saturday night early in June that an idea suddenly occurred to me. Why don't we be a little innovative and experiment with a blend of alpaca fleece and cotton in a new “Alpaca Light” range of quilts. The rationale was simple: alpaca fleece is light, soft, with good thermal transfer properties and is moisture absorbent, while Australian cotton is a natural fibre, has a complementary softness and has moisture absorbency properties. A perfect combination for summer.



The "Alpaca Light" concept was primarily aimed toward the creation of a range of alpaca products that could be sold in the warmer months thereby establishing a year round demand for alpaca fleece.



On the following Monday still full of excitement, I gave the AAFL "light" project high priority and by the end of that week we had completed a preliminary story board presentation on our new "Alpaca Light" bedding range with a "Summer Softness" and "Cool Comfort" theme.

The creation of an "Alpaca Light" bedding collection also provided us with an innovative solution to a marketing problem. In the months before Mike Talbot's initiative, we were experiencing difficulties in selling and marketing our warm winter alpaca/wool blend bedding range into several market sectors i.e. warm to hot climates especially in Queensland and Western Australia, climate controlled environments such as apartments and to those consumers who were just "hot sleepers", no matter what their climate.

While the marketing concept was being developed, the real challenge was ahead: could a quilt actually be manufactured with a blend of alpaca and cotton? It had never been done before and the processing of each of these fibres was known to be difficult on their own let alone together. How would they work together given the significant differences between their properties in staple length, smoothness, tensile strength and elongation? What would be the optimal blend ratio and weight given that cotton has little loft? Would a blend provide the desired softness and handle that was required to match the concept?

After several days of trials the first prototype "Alpaca Light" quilts were completed and tested. The result was better than expected in that the alpaca/cotton quilts were beautifully soft, lightweight and did not look too bulky which would have been negatively perceived as being too hot or heavy. The "Alpaca Light" concept was then finished off with a new and contemporary style of packaging for the quilt, underlay and pillow.

In late June 2004, after a fast track development of less than one month, the new range was then presented to selected key retailers on a pilot basis to gauge interest and feedback. To my delight, the response was very positive from all the retailers but especially the Domayne group who immediately confirmed an order for delivery to all of their stores for their national spring/summer catalogue promotion in September 2004.

From a commercial viewpoint, there were also several other aspects that were important in the "Alpaca Light" program. Would there be enough demand in the bedding market to justify the expense and resources required to launch a new brand? Was the sales price vs cost equation workable especially when 100% cotton quilts were abundant in the market at far cheaper prices? Did we as a small boutique manufacturer have adequate resources to launch a second alpaca brand so soon after our first range was being established in the market? Would there be enough alpaca fleece available to support a new range especially when our export demand was growing at the same time of the year?

We are still working through some of these issues but in the meantime, we decided to "just do it" anyway. The result is that at time of writing, some 16 days after launching the "Alpaca Light" bedding range, we are nearly sold out from our first production run and are already receiving repeat orders from retailers across Australia. ■

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*For more information about "Alpaca Light" contact:*

*Trevor Beuth, Managing Director*

*Kelly & Windsor Australia Pty Ltd*

*17 Adrian Road, Campbellfield Vic 3061*

*Phone 03 9357 0116 Fax 03 9357 0461*

*sales@kellyandwindsor.com www.kellyandwindsor.com*



# History and Mystery of ET Unravelled

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE ARTICLE compiled by **Sandra Wright** > Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

Embryo Transfer (ET) technology is progressing at a rapid rate from its "conception" (*pardon the pun*) only a few short years ago here in Australia to the current level of genetic gain that it is now allowing breeders to achieve within the national herd.

## When did commercial embryo transfers in alpacas begin in Australia?

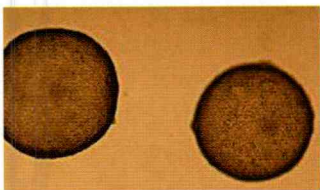
On 26 April 2001 three female alpacas were mated at Benleigh Alpaca Stud in Victoria and on 3 May 2001 the pioneering team of Dr David Hopkins and Dr Jane Vaughan flushed these females to retrieve the embryos. The harvested embryos were then implanted into recipient females that had been earlier prepared with drugs. Interestingly, one of the donors provided two embryos even though drugs to specifically multi ovulate the females had not been used. (Note: Multi ovulation practice was documented in *Alpacas Australia*, Issue 44, Winter 2004).

Although all embryo transfers were performed on the same day, there was a four week variation in gestation of the four cria ultimately born at Benleigh in 2002 – the world's first commercial ET alpacas. Back then and still now, all cria born by ET at Benleigh have been healthy and recipient females have acted as any other doting mother.

## Some basic facts about ET

### *Are the animals conscious while harvesting and transfer of embryos takes place?*

All females are sedated during the procedures.



### *What does an embryo look like and can you tell the sex?*

Embryos are observed under a microscope but are also visible by the naked eye, but sexing is not possible at this stage.

### *What benefits are there in the practice of ET?*

By flushing a number of embryos per year from high quality females mated to top males, a greater number of high quality cria are born. The recipients selected are females with good maternal histories but which may have undesirable traits e.g. poor or multi coloured fleece, blue eyes etc. thus the usefulness of these females in the herd is retained.

### *What costs are involved?*

Costs are variable but include drugs for animals used in the program, stud service fees if males are not owned, travel for Veterinarians, flushing costs and implantation fees. At the moment few Veterinarians are performing ET. Conception rate is similar to normal matings but the reality of breeding a greater number of improved quality animals in a shorter time frame is the important consideration.

### *Throughout the initial stages of ET in Australia breeders have been following its progress and are now keen to reap the benefits of the science. So, who would buy an embryo?*

A breeder who has studied pedigrees and feels the potential genetic gain outweighs the risk of purchase. Some such breeders were invited to give their reasons for choosing this option...

### *Dave Goulden of Premier Alpacas, New Zealand writes:*

Our decision to purchase an unborn alpaca of unknown sex and quality was not taken lightly. Upon purchasing our chosen embryo for a world record price at the Benleigh auction in October 2003, I had acquaintances ready to have me certified on the spot and some openly ridiculed the purchase. However on 21 April 2004, a telephone call from Carolyn Jinks made our dreams come true, our embryo had just turned into a gorgeous, light fawn female cria called *Premier Carolyn J*.

Ever since picking out *Benleigh Flame's* fleece from over one hundred fleeces after the Benleigh shearing one year, and then seeing the alpaca herself, I had wanted to purchase her. She had everything we wanted in our breeding programme plus the genetics in her lineage. Every year for three years when I visited Benleigh the answer was always the same, she was not for sale. Then there was an even better opportunity, to purchase a cria out of *Benleigh Flame* and by *Benleigh Bellissimo*. This mating brought together nearly all the great Purumbete lines of *Sweet Freedom*, *Inti*, *White Flamingo*, *Maid of the Mist*, *Ice Star* and one of the males I consider the best, *Purumbete Highlander* was present in both the sire and the dam's lineage.

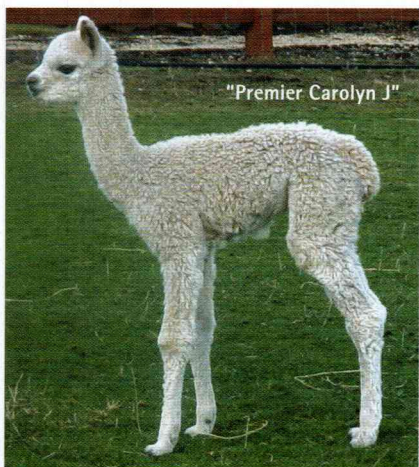
Whilst it is true that the sire has, under traditional breeding methods, greater ability to change the quality of a herd (for better and for worse) as he is able to produce more offspring, the dam has equal genetic merit and with the advent of embryo transfer and the development of super-ovulation, becomes even more important in determining the progress of a breeding programme.

Over thirty years breeding plants professionally has demonstrated that success in breeding comes from very careful choice of parents and the ability to select from large populations of progeny. Animal breeding is no different and in alpacas with a very long generation interval and single births, embryo transfer will increase the rate of progress. This advancement in technology is not a magical answer. It will still require the accumulation of the right genes in the breeding lines, good husbandry, and the ability for breeders to set the attributes they require in their breeding programme and then observe them in progeny. The old successful merino stud masters did not have the scientific principles but they spent



the time to observe the attributes in their sheep and they were above all, patient, carefully pyramiding the genes and developing their bloodlines.

*Premier Carolyn J* has a big future in store for her. Are we disappointed that she was not a he? Not at all, we had hoped for a female and even had her first two matings sorted out before she was born, not chosen from the 'fashionable' males being offered but on the basis of proven genetic background, the genes we wish to pyramid, and the attributes we are aiming for in our perfect alpaca. Performance not Promotion of stud males is what Produces Perfection in Progeny and yes, these boys do exist but you will have to find them.



Regrets? Only one, she is still an Aussie resident because of her chosen mates to be and we cannot enjoy seeing her play in the paddock when we return home from the salt mine each day. But she is only a three hour flight away and what better excuse for a trip now and again.

**Russell Nelson from New Zealand**, who has purchased females carrying ETs also highlighted the opportunity for greater female genetic influence, rather than relying to a large extent on the sires. He added that this gives high quality older females, who may find it difficult to carry a normal pregnancy, an opportunity to continue to provide genetic material through embryos.



One of the first female ET cria to be born in 2002, was later sold as a pregnant female to **Miriam and Peter Dixon of New Zealand** who summed up their feelings with the following prose.

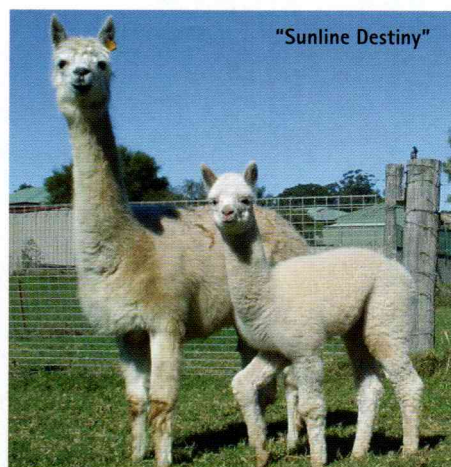
The full circle...

*From across the ocean into our lives came a lovely young lady  
Gentle in nature with a pretty face and sweet demeanor  
Light in foot and always awake, her colour was perfect  
Light fawn on the outside and rich to the touch  
Density and depth was hidden beneath  
She looked at us with soft eyes of brown  
Our hearts just melted and were glad she was part of the team  
ET Recital was her chosen name Embryo Transfer what was that?  
The books we perused and soon we had knowledge  
How wonderful that she was one of the first to arrive  
Then to the world she gave us a cria – soft and beautiful, pale cream she appeared  
Delighted we praised our ET her efforts and named her wee girl 'Symphony' –  
To us she was perfect*

**Jeff Willis from Sunline Alpacas, Queensland** writes:

At the Benleigh auction last year my wife, Jill and I purchased *Flock House P9492*, pregnant with an embryo transfer of about 3-4 months gestation. This experienced mum was purchased because of the quality of the embryo she possessed, the result of a mating between *Purumbete Brigantine*, and one of Benleigh's best breeding females, *Benleigh Callao*. We had earlier purchased a female of this same pairing, and were certain this ET cria would be of a similar quality.

We are hoping to improve the genetics of our fledgling herd and this was a much quicker, more certain way to do it.



We have been interested in the ET program but lack the facilities or the capital to do it ourselves, so this was a great opportunity to capitalise on the 'good genes' and successful breeding program at Benleigh. Our baby, *Sunline Destiny ET* was

born in April 2004 - a lovely, solid light fawn female weighing 8.5 kg - the first ET cria born in Queensland. She has thrived on her surrogate mum's generous milk supply and now, at nearly 5 months, is 35 kg. She is growing up really fast and has excellent conformation and a lovely dense, crimped fleece. We've always believed that 'nature' - the best genetics available, and 'nurture' - an experienced recipient female, would result in a cria with an advantage over many others, and *Sunline Destiny ET* will be proof of this belief.

**Today Embryo Transfer in alpacas is not creating world news as it did in 2002, but is now gradually being used as a tool to increase the number of high quality alpacas in participating herds.**

"The health and well-being of our alpacas is of paramount importance," says Allan Jinks of Benleigh Alpaca Stud where the pioneering progress was made. "We have proven that females used in the program continue to have normal pregnancies after a designated number of flushes. We are also successfully using an excellent older female in the program, who under normal circumstances may not carry a full term pregnancy, so the benefits are extensive".

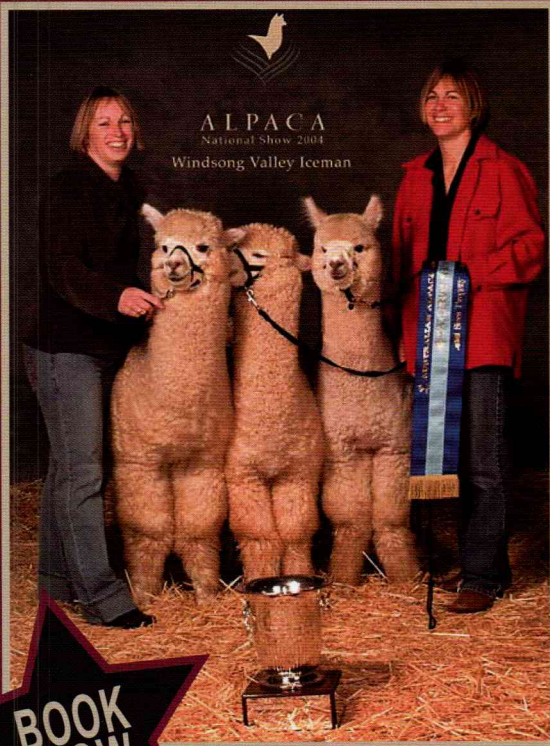
The team of vets who pioneered ET in alpacas is currently working on the development of AI (artificial insemination) proving that the science of reproduction in the alpaca industry is ongoing and that Australia is among the leaders of the world with technology. These practices, which are commonplace in other livestock industries, have been more challenging in the alpaca. It is yet another step in the short history of alpacas in Australia and for those involved it is exciting to be at the cutting edge of research and technology. ■



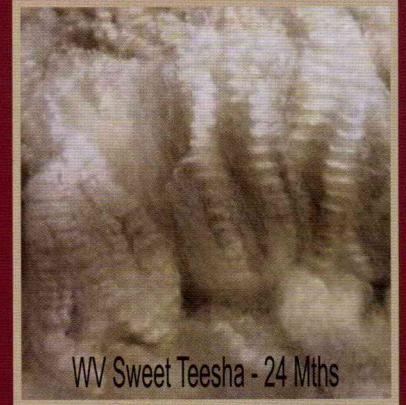
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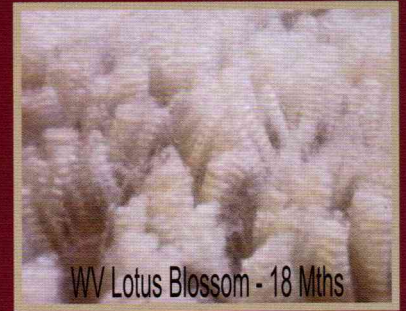
WV Kitiyama - 13 Mths



WV Sweet Teesha - 24 Mths



WV Tutankhamen - 8 Mths

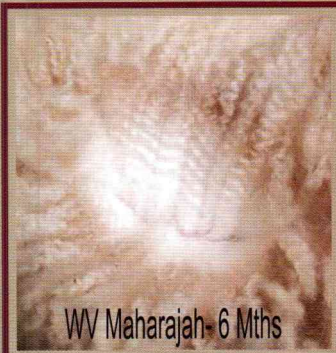


WV Lotus Blossom - 18 Mths

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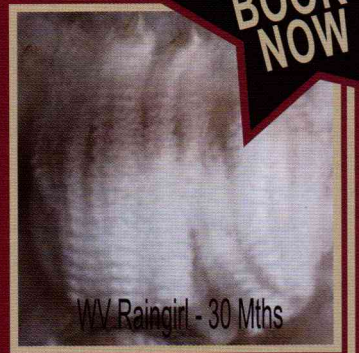


WV Maharajah - 6 Mths

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# Alpaca Markets

INDUSTRY ARTICLE compiled by **Sandra Wright** > Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

## Two Markets – Two Promotions

by **Ann Henderson** > Queensland Regional Marketing Representative

Explaining the commercial potential of an Alpaca industry to established sheep breeders, and the long term objectives of breeding up quality animals to interested small acreage prospects, is the defining challenge in the QLD region. With this in mind two quite different promotional opportunities are included in the QLD calendar to cater for this region's diverse geographic profile.

**Farm Fantastic**, at Caboolture on the Sunshine Coast hinterland, is billed as a Rural Home & Lifestyle Expo and is designed for the small to medium acreage market in a rapidly expanding part of south-east QLD. Held over three days in July, Farm Fantastic regularly attracts around 23,000 visitors interested in the merchandise and services on display on the field days' 600 sites. The inclusion of Saturday and Sunday in the schedule allows for the needs of the widest audience from the area. As in previous years QLD Region members created a popular exhibit for the Farm Fantastic visitors. Pens of alpacas owned by individual studs were presented alongside a stall featuring alpaca merchandise and a Regional stand. Manned by members on a roster basis, and backed by the Region's display panels, this stand provided a focal information point for visitors. AlpacaMark sample bags containing magazines and information sheets were a popular give-away at the stand and proved to be walking billboards around the grounds.

Commencing on 31 August, the 3-day **Heritage Toowoomba Agshow** catered for a different market. Scheduled mid-week, Agshow specifically targets the rural market from central and western QLD to northern NSW, and attracts over 50,000 visitors annually. As well as \$320 million worth of agricultural machinery on display, stud bull sales (grossing over \$1 million in 2003), stud pig sales and even working dog trials ensure something



for everyone in rural industry. While not on the scale of the other livestock industries alpacas made a good showing, taking over a whole pavilion. Pens of Huacayas and Suris were on show alongside merchandise, fleece and spinning displays, a stand providing industry information and handouts, and a continuous Power Point presentation of alpaca facts. The profile of the visitors to the pavilion was informative; people came from as far as Winton in central QLD to Casino in NSW and districts halfway to the Northern Territory border. Sheep breeders were interested to get their hands on animals and fleece, while small acreage owners closer to the city of Toowoomba made enquiries about the animals and the industry. A constant topic was the use of alpacas as herd guards. Queried on their suitability for guarding deer, one exhibitor, unsure of the right advice, dialled up Victorian breeder, Bill Robbins – and the slightly startled visitor found himself getting guidance on using alpacas with his deer direct from an experienced breeder.

Following both Farm Fantastic and Agshow, the Region-designed mini seminars were held for potential breeders. Based on informed presentations from breeders, these seminars prove valuable in promoting awareness of alpacas and attracting new entrants to the industry. ■

## WA Central Region Sale Day – Best Ever!

by **Corinne Gurry** > Winterbrook Alpacas, WA

In September the WA Central Region hosted its third successful Alpaca Sale Day. Despite the threat of inclement weather, thousands of people attended the outdoor venue to see what WA breeders had on offer.

Thirty breeders participated on the day either with animals for sale, craft for sale or on display, or promoting their stud males and information about the industry. The sales statistics of the day were impressive by any standards with 85% of members represented on the day selling an animal. Of the 30 breeders in attendance, 21 had animals for sale, and between them they sold 36 animals. Over \$100,000 changed hands, with the average price for females being \$4,000. The highest price paid for a stud male was \$10,500. As with most sale days, additional sales were also made in the days and weeks after the event.

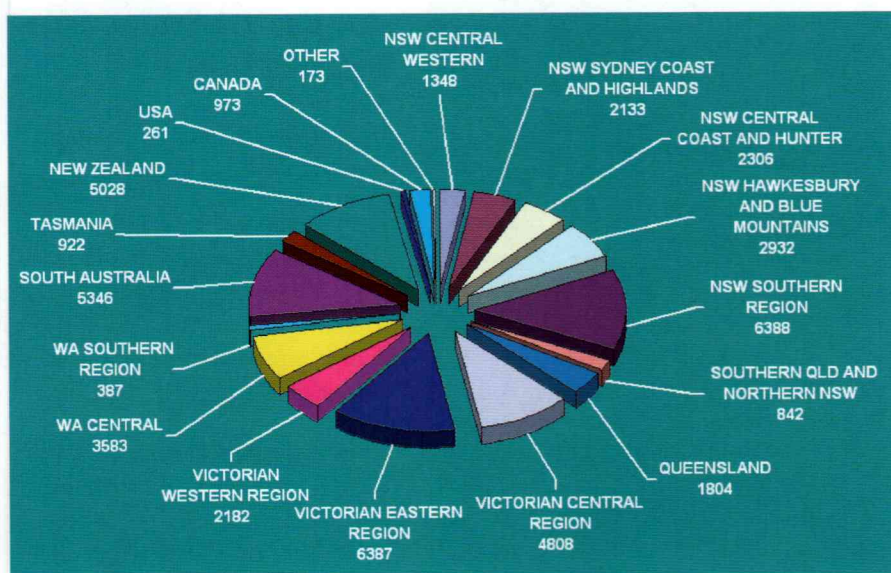
Another impressive statistic is the low cost of staging the event. The total budget for the day was only \$6,000, with most of that offset by sponsorships, pen fees and a sausage sizzle operated by regional members. As with all such events, success is due to hard working members who contribute their time and effort. The sale day committee headed up by Mark Jessop included Helen Jessop, Ron Raynor, Gwyn Bell, Len Rose and Corinne Gurry. The committee was also supported by dozens of members who carried out the myriad of tasks necessary for such an event.

The sale day is now an integral part of the alpaca calendar in Western Australia, and provides a valuable outlet for breeders of all sizes to boost their income from alpacas. ■



# Where are alpacas in Australia?

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Lynne Moynihan** > Member Services Fleece Officer, Australian Alpaca Association Inc.



Alpacas have invaded every State of Australia.

Graphic depicting registered alpacas and distribution by AAA Inc. Region. The graphic also includes animals registered to overseas interests.

Figures as at 15 September 2004.

Note: USA and Canada represent alpacas located in Australia but the owners do not reside in Australia. Other represents owners and alpacas located in Australia but not assigned to a Region. New Zealand represents alpacas registered on the IAR but owners and alpacas are located in New Zealand.

After mapping out the locations of herds with in excess of five alpacas it became clear that the concentration of alpaca herds in most States of Australia do tend to congregate around the Capital City of each State with the exceptions being NSW and Victoria.

In NSW, although a large number are situated around Sydney, a fair proportion is dispersed along the full length of the coastline and the pathway between Sydney and Canberra. Victoria has herds primarily around Melbourne and Geelong with a large number spreading throughout country areas.

Alpaca breeders have generally always been forthcoming with information and support to anyone who enquires about the alpaca industry. Perhaps this is why the locations of alpaca herds are clearly in close proximity to others (with exception) creating 'pockets' of breeders.

These pockets enable easier access for servicing members by the Regional representatives and Fleece Liaison Officers (FLOs) of the AAA Inc. as well as for the pro-active breeders in marketing their animals and alpaca stud services. Another advantage of these pockets is the easy access by breeders within these pockets to other services, whether it is member, social or commercially based.

FLOs offer support to breeders by advising how to best prepare an alpaca clip; providing information about shearing or fleece preparation workshops within your Region; supplying details of where the closest collection point is located for you to deliver your clip; and providing information about transportation of your clip to Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. (AAFL). This information can also be accessed by contacting the Fleece Officer at the AAA Inc. National Office.

Growers are distributed through a vast area of Australia and it is difficult to have completely satisfactory and viable transport solutions for each and every one of them.

I would welcome a telephone call (03) 9873 7700, or e-mail [lynne@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:lynne@alpaca.asn.au) if you have any concerns about transport or any other fleece issue and I will endeavour to find appropriate solutions.

## When is my alpaca fleece required?

### Timing of Supply from Farm-gate to Retailer

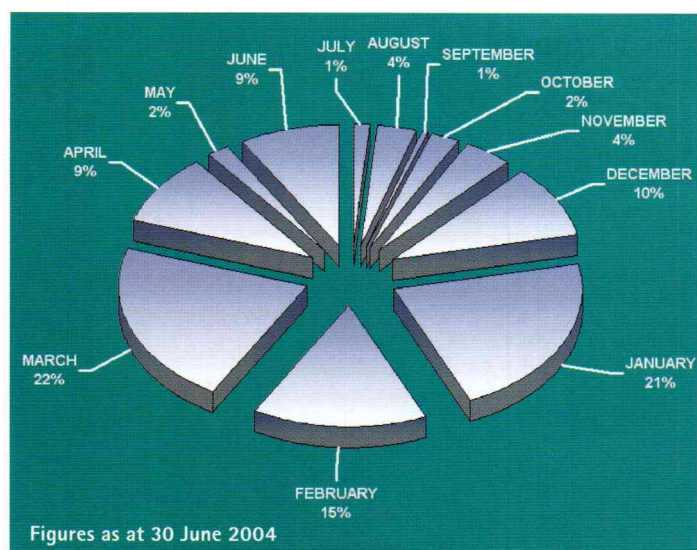
The demand for products of any sort can vary greatly with the seasons. The demand for alpaca products in Australia is mostly required to be on the retailers' shelves during autumn, winter and spring months. This is imperative to understand so that shearing is timely and delivery of fleece to the collection centre is at the most opportune time. A bulk delivery at this time could well translate into cost savings for scouring, transport and handling.

Alpaca fleece has many processes to go through before it is developed into an end product and strategic partners, manufacturers and retailers need to plan well in advance for selling the finished products.

Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd received an encouraging 40,000 kgs of the National clip during the 2003-2004 financial year. The bulk of the clip however was received in the period from January to March 2004 (refer graphic right).

This resulted in AAFL not having sufficient time to process the clip so that their customers, strategic partners and particularly retailers could have product on the shelves for the winter season.





The processes that alpaca fleece has to go through to finish up on a retailer's shelf are:

- > Shearing
- > Skirting and preparation
- > Baling
- > Transport
- > Receipt at collection point
- > Transport
- > Receipt at Collection Centre in Sunshine, VIC
- > Classing
- > Baling
- > Transport
- > Scouring
- > Baling
- > Transport
- > On-selling to strategic partners or individual customers
- > Processing of fleece into yarn or top
- > Manufacture of finished product
- > Finished product on retail shelf

Working back from the retailer's requirements, which consist of set time frames for the finished product to have optimum resulting sales which are seasonal, it is apparent that the current clip is not arriving at the most opportune time for all of the above processes to occur. This adversely affects the alpaca industry as a whole and should be addressed immediately. The ideal time for fleece to be received at the Collection Centre is between October and November.

Here are some points to make note of:

- > When your fleece has been pre-classed it should be placed into its appropriate vented plastic bag ready for selling. If pre-classing is not done at the time of shearing the chances are that it will not get done.
- > Separating the different colours and areas of the one clip into separate bags is important as this will prevent contamination of colours and short, course and valuable saddle areas. If you have a valuable saddle, say at 19 microns and 10cm length, then it is mixed with the leg fleece which may be 24 microns and 7cm length, you will have **de-valued** the saddle area at current prices from being worth **\$60 a kilo** to just **\$5 a kilo**.
- > When making up bales they should be pressed and this is where it is important to use vented plastic bags otherwise the plastic bags may split open when being pressed and cause contamination within the bale (you can vent the

plastic bag by not closing off or tying the bag). A wool press is the ideal tool to be used and most collection points will either have one, or have access to one. In the event one is not available you will have to compromise.

- > Freighting bales makes for easy handling and secure loads. Freight companies do charge per bale. That is regardless of the weight of that bale. The more you can press into a bale, the less you will have to pay per kilo of fleece. Transport prices do vary depending on where you are and where you are sending the bale. *(This is one reason why your fleece should be sent to one of the collection points set up through the FLOs as they have arrangements in place to have bales picked up from these collection points).*
- > To have timely supply for the processors and manufacturers of Australian Alpaca at least **75%** of your consignments are required to be in the store **prior to mid December**.
- > Only **22%** of the total clip consigned last financial year was received before December 2003.
- > AAFL is an integral part of collection. There is not another business in Australia performing in the same capacity. AAFL is value adding for consumers and strategic partners and expanding markets, which means more recognition of Australian Alpaca. That in turn causes more demand for Australian Alpaca.
- > With the current national herd increasing at around 20% per annum, it is vital to secure an ongoing timely supply of alpaca fleece for the development of the end product which will enhance the current interest and enthusiasm alpacas in Australia are experiencing. ■



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# Donna, a Brain Damaged Cria

HEALTH AND WELFARE ARTICLE by **Merilyn Mathews** > Daisy Bank Alpacas, NSW

I decided that I would tell this story to make the point that supportive care is so important while we are waiting for drugs to work their magic.

It was late morning on February 9 2004, and Deli, one of our maiden girls, was in labour. Deli is a large framed girl who has always been a bit more aloof than her peers. All seemed to be going well; the cria's head was delivered and one front leg fully extended. However, the other leg was only partly extended and progress appeared to have stopped. It took perhaps 5 minutes for Deli to allow me to assist, and I tried pulling on the non-extended leg, to no avail. I raced to get my birthing kit and donned a long glove with plenty of lubricant. As I gently pushed my arm in to feel along the leg, I could hear the cria gasping for breath. As quickly as possible, I pushed the leg back a bit and then eased it forward. I estimate this entire process would have taken less than a minute.

As soon as the leg was free, the cria came out in a rush. I was delighted to see it was a lovely solid white female; our first by *Jolimont The Don*. She seemed exhausted and didn't try to stand up for 20 to 30 minutes. When she did finally try to stand, she seemed to have no control over her legs. After each attempt she would sleep for about 30 minutes. Geoff had arrived home by this time, and we moved her to a shady spot and watched her, deciding that an appropriate name would be Prima Donna. After 3 hours I rang the vet, concerned that she had not had a drink and that she would become dehydrated and, of course, that she hadn't had that at all important colostrum.

The vet suggested giving her 30mls of Divetelact as he thinks that it is tolerated better than straight glucose, yet contains enough glucose to give an energy boost. This seemed to work well and she became more alert. At this point Deli was grazing, but coming back regularly to check on her. We moved them into the shed for the night, and Geoff lifted Deli onto her side and I put the cria to her udder. Donna drank quite well from this unusual position, and when she finished I gently expressed another 20mls and gave it to her in a bottle with a marsupial teat. We repeated the process about 10.00 pm, but this time she drank quite strongly and there was no need to express. Then we left them alone to get some rest. At this stage Donna seemed alert and happy in a cush position, but was still unable to stand.

In the morning Geoff again lifted Deli onto her side, and Donna had another good drink. However, Deli was clearly not going to tolerate this treatment again without considerable protest. Donna was still unable to stand so I took her to the vet for an assessment.



The verdict was brain damage caused by hypoxia. In other words, not enough oxygen got to her brain sometime during the birthing process. The vet suggested that we wait a few days, as her young brain might be able to build some new pathways around the damage, and learn to cope with it. He stressed that some brain-damaged animals do well and others don't, so to hope for the best.

We decided to bottle feed Donna, as the last thing we wanted to do was stress Deli unduly. I had read Carolyn Jinks' article in the winter 2003 issue of *Alpacas Australia*, about a female of theirs who had refused to feed her cria. After more than a week she came around and was still able to feed, despite the fact that she had not been milked. In Carolyn's opinion, milking the female only makes their udder sore and they are less likely to begin feeding. Donna was a full term cria of 9.6 kg, so would need to drink 960 mls of milk per day. This meant feeding her every 1½ to 2 hours because she didn't drink much at a time.

During the course of the day she was learning to stand, and by the following morning was standing on her own. Deli was fairly happy coming and going through the stable doors as she liked, and keeping a close eye on Donna. We had Deli and cria in a double stall, and left the third stall open so her paddock mates could visit regularly. A plentiful supply of hay kept them coming back and I think their presence helped to keep Deli fairly calm, even when she had to be confined in the stall during subsequent days.

The morning of the third day after birth found Donna's left side responding to her wishes to move, and a half hour later the right side followed suit. Then came the first tentative steps which rapidly became more confident. She walked in a stiff legged manner, but was navigating around the stall, taking an interest in her surroundings. This necessitated keeping the stable door shut, but Deli seemed quite happy to be let out every time I fed Donna, and she willingly came back after about 10 minutes of freedom.



The following day was cooler and I decided that if Donna was to learn to walk as well as possible then she needed more space. I put a coat on her as the wind was cold, and she ventured out into the small paddock in front of the house with Deli. I kept an eye on them, and she seemed to be managing fairly well, and resting often. After 2 hours I called the girls into the yards and picked Donna up to put her back in the shed for the night. She felt very hot, and when I looked closely at her I noticed that her eyes were very red rimmed and slightly protuberant. Her breathing also sounded laboured and congested and her temperature was 39.1°. My instincts were telling me to act quickly as this was a very sick cria.

I called the vet, explained the situation, and asked if we could come in straight away. Yes, they would stay open until we got there. On arrival the vet took a look at her and quickly started a drip in her jugular vein, giving her a dose of antibiotic and 200mls of intravenous fluid. The diagnosis was pneumonia and septicaemia. Her eyes looked red and bulging because her brain was swollen due to the septicaemia and her temperature was recorded at 38.2°. According to the vet the fact that her temperature was falling quickly meant that she was deteriorating and her systems were failing. The fluid he gave her was to prevent shock, dehydration and kidney failure, a frequent cause of death in these cases. He gave me some oral antibiotic and instructed me to keep her warm and in the shed for a few days. Keeping her fluid intake up was a major concern.

The next morning she looked a bit better, and was managing to drink nearly the required amount. Her temperature was 38.1°, and I was beginning to hope. She took her medication well, but had lost about 500 grams. This seemed reasonable, all things considered. Her walking, when she had the energy, was improving. Deli was coping with all of the attention very well, and still quite willing to come back after her walks and visits with her friends. There was no sign of Donna drinking from mum though, but I was still hoping that nature would take its course.

The two weeks of very hot weather we experienced last February was just starting, and I was very thankful that we had insulated the roof of the shed and had put in ample windows for ventilation. We would open it up at night and close it in the morning to keep it as cool as possible. I put a big pedestal fan on the two girls during the day, but with the outside temperature around 40°, it was a real battle to keep Donna's temperature down. By mid afternoon she would be getting febrile, around 38.8°, and I would bring her into the house for an hour or two. Once inside with the air conditioning her temperature would fall quite rapidly and she was quite content to sit on the floor causing no problems at all. Meanwhile Deli kept an eye on us from outside.

The second night after her trip to the vet I was very worried about her. Her eyes looked quite red and she seemed lethargic. Her respirations had become a bit grunty. I made a phone call to the vet and I was reassured that all that could be done medically had been done. All the vet could offer at this stage was a further infusion of fluid. However, as I felt that she had been drinking quite well and wasn't dehydrated he suggested that an anti-inflammatory might help, if we had anything suitable.

My daughter's dog had developed a painful leg and we had some Metacam that she had used. The vet advised to try that and give an additional dose of the antibiotic orally that night. He also told me that only 10% of cases like this survive, so we decided to give her the medication and her final bottle of the day, and put her back with Deli for the night. I really dreaded looking in the shed the next day.

Morning came and she was sitting there with her head up when I looked in, and somehow I felt that this little cria was on the mend. However, the care continued for a few more days of monitoring temperatures and bringing her inside during the afternoon when her temperature started to climb. A day later she started refusing her bottle, and I dared to hope that Mother Nature was giving us a helping hand. Sure enough, I peeked through the window and saw Donna under Deli having a good drink. I felt as though I had just been given my life back, and was overjoyed.

I thought of how valuable Carolyn Jinks' article had been to me, and how stressful it would have been for Deli, and for us, if we had tried to milk her. I am sure she would have found it very upsetting, because she doesn't enjoy being handled. Some of the factors that keep a sick cria going are:

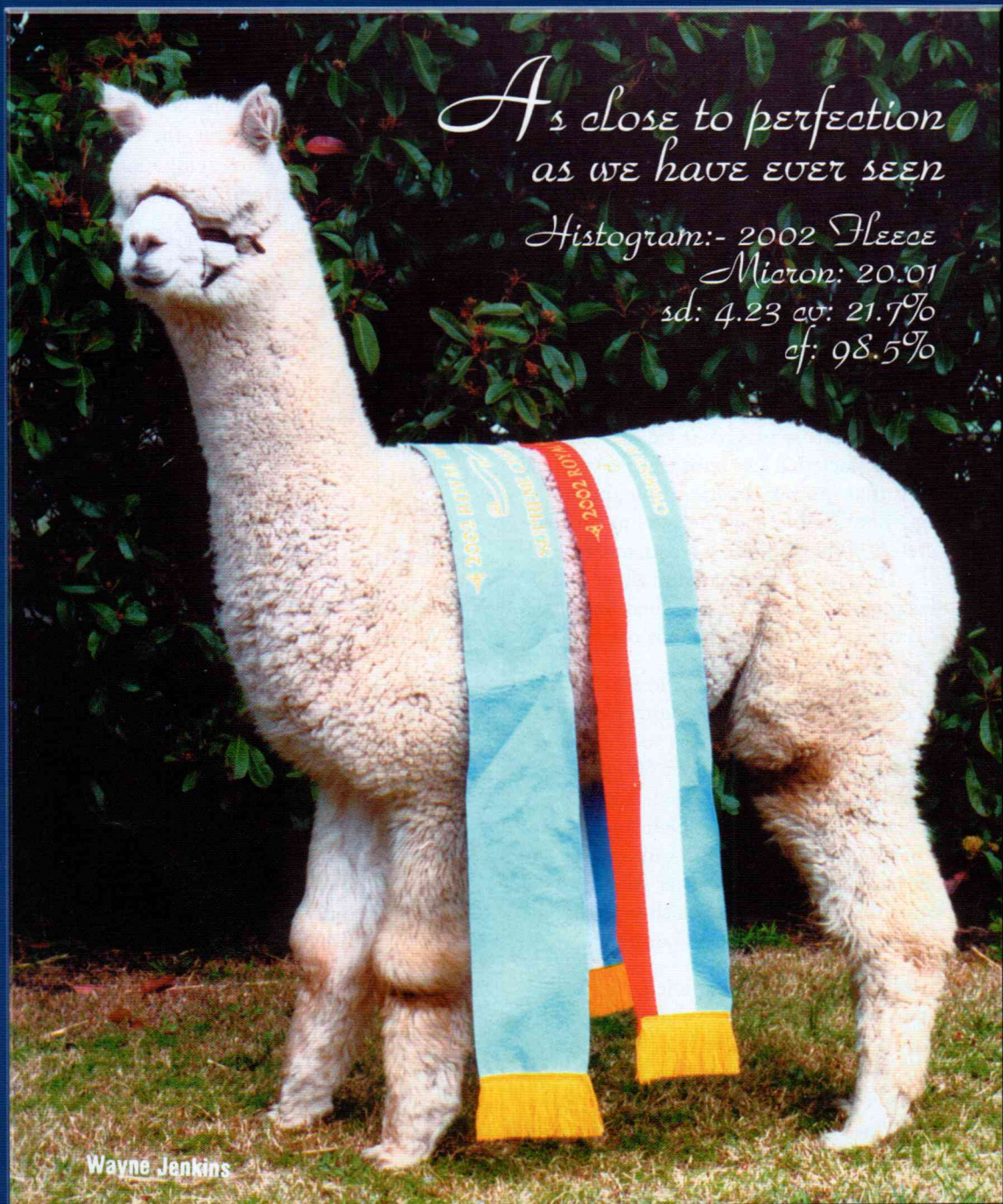
- > **making sure that they get enough fluids,**
- > **monitoring their temperature, keeping them warm or cool, depending on conditions,**
- > **trying to maintain a non stressful environment for mother and cria. This includes making an abnormal situation as "normal" as possible, especially for the mother. (Not always easy, I know!)**

Donna required an additional course of antibiotics to totally cure her pneumonia. However, two weeks after her rather traumatic birth, she was out in the maternity paddock with the other females and crias. Over the following months her motor skills improved. At first she tripped and fell a lot, having a short, leg jerking spasm on the ground, before getting up and continuing on. She often twisted her neck over her back, looking very strange indeed. She walks with her front legs more widely spaced than normally would be the case, to help maintain her balance. This puts some strain on her front legs and knee joints. We have given her regular doses of Vitamin AD&E to help keep her front legs as straight as possible. Her toenails have needed regular trimming, as they have tended to grow to the side a bit due to her gait.

Donna is now a weanling and still walks rather stiffly, somewhat like a spastic human with cerebral palsy. If another animal bumps into her with any force, she loses her balance and stumbles. However, she is still improving and gets around without a problem. She will never walk as freely as nature intended, but she seems to have normal intelligence and interacts with the herd like any other alpaca. She mooches the occasional feed from our hands, but is certainly not a pet. She runs with the other youngsters in a lolloping sort of way, and I look at her and feel very proud of this tough little girl who survived against the odds. ■



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Due: April 2005

Deadline: Friday 11 February

### Issue 47: Winter

Due: August 2005

Deadline: Friday 3 June

### Issue 48: Summer

Due: December 2005

Deadline: Friday 7 October

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# Upcoming Events

## January

### 15 Apollo Bay Fleece Show: VIC

Venue: Apollo Bay Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece Judging  
Contact: Maree McCosh (03) 5565 9413

### 15 Paca Picnic: TAS

Venue: Parliament House Lawns,  
Salamanca Place, Hobart  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Alan Froome (03) 6266 6092

### 30 Bungendore Show: NSW

Venue: Bungendore Showgrounds  
Highlights: Animal and fleece  
promotional display  
Contact: John van der Straaten  
(02) 6238 3590

## February

### 5 Berry Show: NSW

Venue: Berry Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece Judging (10am 28 Jan)  
Alpaca Judging (10am 5 Feb)  
Contact: Kevin Watson (02) 4448 6267

### 5 Crookwell Show: NSW

Venue: Crookwell Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece judging;  
alpaca promotional display  
Contact: Penny Pittard (02) 4837 3394

### 5 Nimmitabel Show: NSW

Venue: Nimmitabel Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Lynne Dominish (02) 4683 3675

### 11-13 Seymour Alternative Farming Expo: VIC

Venue: King's Park, Seymour  
Highlights: Alpaca judging; Promotional display  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210

### 19 Far South Coast National Show: NSW

Venue: Bega Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & Fleece Judging  
Contact: Susan Nielson (02) 6493 2602

### 19 Robertson Show: NSW

Venue: Robertson Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging (19 Feb);  
Craft competition (24 Feb)  
Contact: Heather Vickery (02) 4885 2852

### 25-27 Royal Canberra Show: ACT

Venue: EPIC (Showgrounds)  
Highlights: Fleece Judging (9am 25 Feb)  
Alpaca Judging (9am 26 Feb)  
Junior Judging, displays etc.  
(9am 27 Feb)  
Contact: John van der Straaten  
(02) 6238 3590  
Carolyn Austin (02) 6227 6224

### 27 Berwick Show: VIC

Venue: Berwick Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140

## March

### 4-5 Braidwood Show: NSW

Venue: Braidwood Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Dot Ware (02) 4847 1233

### 4-6 Castle Hill Show: NSW

Venue: Castle Hill Showgrounds  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657

### 5 Boorowa Show: NSW

Venue: Boorowa Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Kylie Martin (02) 6385 8305

### 5 Delegate Show: NSW

Venue: Delegate Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Richard Dixon (02) 6456 3676

### 5 Warragul Show: VIC

Venue: Warragul Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140

### 6 Dalgety Show: NSW

Venue: Dalgety Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Richard Dixon (02) 6456 3676

### 11 Wagin Woolarama Fleece Show: WA

Venue: Wagin  
Highlights: Fleece judging  
Contact: Mark Jessop (08) 9574 7280

### 12 Yass Show: NSW

Venue: Yass Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Geoff Shephard (02) 6226 3332

### 12 Cooma Show: NSW

Venue: Cooma Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece judging; promotional display  
Contact: Richard Dixon (02) 6456 3676

### 18-31 Royal Sydney Show: NSW

Venue: Showgrounds, Homebush  
Highlights: 2005 Feature Breed - Suri Alpaca  
Fleece judging prior to show &  
on display throughout show;  
Fashion parade (27 Mar);  
Huacaya judging (28 Mar);  
Suri judging (29 Mar);  
Junior judging (30 Mar)  
Contact: Jeanne Brown, Breed Captain  
(02) 4576 3333

### 19 Goulburn Show: NSW

Venue: Goulburn Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece judging; promotional display  
Contact: Jacki Waugh (02) 4829 8157

### 19 Wodonga Show: VIC

Venue: Wodonga Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Wendy Hart (03) 5872 2050

### 19 Mt Pleasant Show: SA

Venue: Mt Pleasant Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Jolyon Porter (08) 8568 5254

### 26 Red Hill Show: VIC

Venue: Red Hill Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140

## April

### 2-3 Mt Barker Show: SA

Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging (3 Apr)  
Contact: Greg Ruckett (08) 8388 0888

### 8-10 Bathurst Royal Show: NSW

Venue: Bathurst Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece judging (7 Apr);  
Alpaca judging (10 Apr)  
Contact: Kate Bailey (02) 6887 1233

### 8-10 Hawkesbury Show: NSW

Venue: Hawkesbury Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657

### 13-16 Toowoomba Royal Show: QLD

Venue: Toowoomba Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging; promotional display  
Contact: Ann Henderson (07) 4630 9418

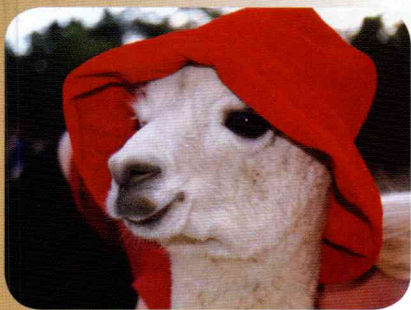
### 14-17 Lardner Park - Farmworld: VIC

Venue: Lardner Park, Warragul  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Nick Veltjens (03) 5978 8666

### 23-24 Alpaca Autumn Show: WA

Venue: Whiteman Park  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Mark Jessop (08) 9574 7280





< Like my trendy hat? >

Melissa Semmler  
Lyndoch, SA



< Right idea, wrong mother! >

Irene & Mark Garner  
Alpacapeña, NSW



< What a lazy boy! >

Geoff & Sheryl Simper  
Blu Haven Lodge Alpacas, NSW



< When are they coming home? >

Jan Bentley  
Mundawora Alpacas, SA



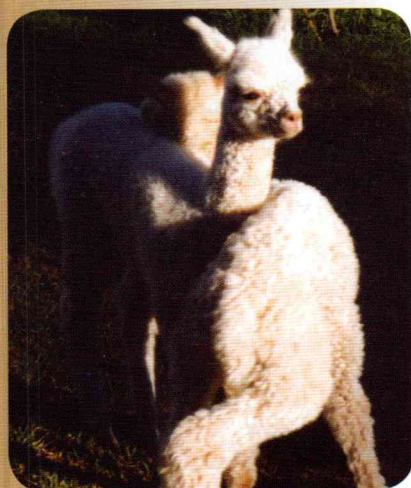
< Look Mum! I'm prettier and cuter  
than your alpaca >

Warren & Kerrie Elgar  
Shogun Alpacas, NSW



< At least you could kiss me >

Heather Pain  
Threshold Alpacas, VIC



< Oh, what a tangled web we weave >

Dianne & Kevin King  
Wynwood Alpacas, NSW



< Yee-ha >

Audienne Watt  
Maldienna Alpacas, QLD



< Teaching fox alert >

Trish & Sean Munley  
Trisean Alpacas, VIC



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< The feed you miss is the one you never get >

Kim Jenkins  
Watership Down Alpacas, NSW



< It must be love >

Merril Henriksen  
Bellabimbi Alpacas, NSW



< Stargazing >

Bob Et Judy Richardson  
Clearview Alpacas, NSW



< Please, please have a drink >

Odette Mayne  
Currumbong Alpacas, ACT



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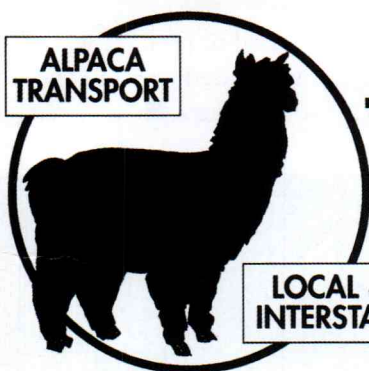
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to support this concept is that suris are basically single-coated alpacas with a very low level of medullated fibre. Moreover suri hair is not unlike Angora goat hair, Komondor dog hair, or Beaudet du Poitou donkey hair, all man-made breeds of animals. The lock type of hair does not seem to exist in wild animals and is obviously a mutation, which seems to need man's help to perpetuate. We therefore think that a few suri genes in huacayas are a good thing but that the presence of huacaya genes in suris is undesirable.

Paradoxically, we also believe that suris have more llama genes than huacayas. Reasons for such a concept include: (i) suris are often quite tall, (ii) suri ears can be rather long and their tip somewhat round, (iii) suri back lines are straighter, and (iv) suri necks are longer than in the huacaya.

We also suspect that the suri phenotype is inherited as a haplotype. As far as we are aware, this possibility was first suggested by Dr Raul Ponzoni<sup>9</sup>. It is simply not possible that a single gene (the S gene) can be responsible for all the differences observed between suris and huacayas. In this haplotype, the S gene may well be responsible for the presence of locks, whereas the other genes would code for the other important characteristics of the suri fleece, such as lustre, low scale height, fast fibre growth rate, low level of medullation... etc. We now know that the S [suri] allele is dominant over the s [huacaya] allele, but the other genes present in the haplotype may well be recessive. This would explain that the fleece in first crosses (F1's) is not always of the same quality as in the purebred suris. For those of you with an interest in genetics, I would even suggest that crossing over may sometimes be happening in the middle of such a haplotype, and could explain the occurrence of the "chili" type, also referred to as "wasu".<sup>10</sup> But I should stop my suppositions here, as I unfortunately have no hard data to support these ideas.

## What we have learnt

Breeding suris teaches you patience. In 5 years, we have learnt a great deal: how maidens require more care to become pregnant, how young males should be treated with caution in order to avoid the "berserk male syndrome", how easy these animals are to look after and to train. Suris are not more flighty than huacayas. They simply have more personality! They respond well to being treated gently but some individuals require a firmer hand.

We are extremely fortunate to have the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.(AAA) as an organised, structured, dynamic association. The registry is the best asset our industry can rely on, a major difference with the South American countries. The AAA has now involved our industry in an Across-herd Genetic Evaluation (AGE) scheme, which means that breeders will now be given powerful tools to help them in their breeding programs. More recently, the creation of the Suri Sub-committee augurs well for the future of this breed.

As the Chair of the Animal Health, Husbandry and Welfare Sub-committee in 2003-2004, I have learnt a great deal about our association and its resources. If you are really serious about breeding suris, I can only urge you to participate by putting your hand up and accepting a position either at the National or at the Regional level.

## The future

We see Alcazar Suri Stud as becoming a stud stock producer. We intend to remain small, with a small number of high-quality suris. We do not intend to become a commercial enterprise producing fleece, but rather sell breeding stock to those who want to produce fleece.

Whether our breeders are to be used to produce white suris, as we do, or coloured ones, or to be used over huacayas, there will always be a place for pure suris. ■



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# "Keeping the Suri Pure"

BREEDER PROFILE by **Dr Pierre Baychelier** > Alcazar Suri Stud, NSW

Alcazar Suri Stud is a young progressive stud created in 1999 by Pierre Baychelier and Brenton Spehr.



## How it all started

It all started with the purchase of a book about permaculture. At this stage, both Brenton and I were still living in the middle of the big smoke. Within one year, we had moved to the Blue Mountains and qualified as Permaculture Designers. Within two years, we had purchased our first suris. We now have moved to a larger property, 125 acres of gently undulating pasture nestled in the middle of the Kanimbla Valley, and own a growing herd of suris.

## Our philosophy

Because we are small, we have decided to remain very focused. We breed only suris, concentrating on white (with the odd surprise). We also have decided not to cross our suris with huacayas. Hence our by-line of "Keeping the Suri Pure". We believe that the suri is an endangered breed, which must be saved, to preserve the fabulous characteristics of its fleece. It is not the purpose of this short article to remind you of these attributes, which can be found elsewhere. <sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</sup>

We are pushing the concept of purity even further by practising inbreeding. We have just started to experiment with our suris and, so far, are delighted with the results. We believe that we can manage inbreeding in our suris, as long as we keep the inbreeding coefficient below 25%<sup>7</sup>. The suri breed is not yet fixed and the practice of inbreeding, coupled with stringent selection, is the only way to develop a true suri breed.

One of the reasons for which we have adopted such a focused approach is due to the limited number of suris we own. Another reason is that, when we started, quality suris were mainly solid white. The rare coloured suris available for sale at the time were almost all first crosses (F1's).

We pay more importance to pedigrees than to show records. We would rather buy an average-quality suri, born in Australia, with a verifiable pedigree, than a stunning looking imported suri, without any assurance that it may not be a first cross.

We are trying to concentrate on developing a herd of similar looking suris, which "breed true". We think that consistency in the progeny and homogeneity of a herd is more important than owning a few show champions.<sup>6, 7, 8</sup>



## What we believe

Suris are well adapted to the Australian climate, as heat is more of an issue in our country than cold weather. Suris love the sun and the heat.

We believe that suris are more advanced than huacayas, in terms of selection. It is said that the Merino sheep has reached at least 90% of its genetic improvement potential, whereas the huacaya is at no more than 50%.<sup>11</sup> We would then suggest that pure suris are approximately at 75%. Indirect evidence



**Blue Grass Queen of the Night**, her 2001 full sister, has shown herself to be a quality performer at the Southern (NSW) Regional and Canberra Royal of 2002. The next cria of Leading Lady, **Blue Grass Amazing Grace** (again by *Jolimont Warrior*), followed in those footsteps winning her class at the 2003 Sydney Royal and featuring at the 2003 Canberra Royal and 2004 Hawkesbury Shows.

This is a female family on the way up.

### FORESTGLEN QUEEN OF SHEBA (2001)

*Forestglen Salome* (1998) was a half-sister to *Forestglen Margharita*, a placegetter at the NSW Central Coast-Hunter Regional Show of 1997 and would go on to feature in the fleece classes at the Charles Ledger Show of 1999. The Charles Ledger has since developed into the highest class show in NSW, surpassing the Sydney Royal, mainly because of the autumn scheduling of the latter.

Salome's mating to El Dorado resulted in **Forestglen Queen of Sheba**, a white girl born in March 2001. Immediately after reaching six months of age, Queen of Sheba went to the Charles Ledger Show and won the Champion ribbon. A few weeks later, at the National Show, she repeated that success. Six months later, represented at the Sydney Royal, Queen of Sheba scored a ribbon in the toughest fleece class of the show.

As a producer, Queen of Sheba made her mark straight away, her 2003 cria by *Shanbrooke Accoyo Rasputin* being **Forestglen Rameses** who placed in the National Show that year and went on to make 2004 a stellar year at the major

NSW shows and at the Canberra Royal. Broad ribbons came at the Southern NSW Regional and at Castle Hill. Awards to Rameses at the Canberra and Sydney Royals, Bathurst, Boorowa and the Central-West Regional were further proof of Queen of Sheba's genetics.

Interestingly, Maureen Carey of Forestglen Alpacas, has obviously decided that the El Dorado male line "nicks" well with this family, for she has since bred superior animals in *Forestglen Sherherisade* (a three-quarter sister to Queen of Sheba being by *Forestglen Maestro*, one of El Dorado's most successful sire sons, out of Salome) and *Forestglen Ruben*, a half-brother by El Dorado to Salome, Queen of Sheba's mother.

### PLENTY OF OTHER PRODUCERS

Have you heard of *Coolaroo PJS Silhouette*, *Timbertop Miss Twiggy* or *Cedar House Honeysuckle*? Perhaps not. They weren't top notch show performers themselves, for whatever reasons, but they have all produced multiple winners at the best levels. And again all are daughters of El Dorado.

An impressive feature of this list is the variety of covering sires with which El Dorado females have done the job. It's not as though they have all been champions themselves, so El Dorado himself must have added that little bit extra.

In the second and final part of this article, I'll look more into the variety of genetic combinations, all including *Purumbete El Dorado* as the damsire, that have been successful for breeders. And I'll examine the geographic spread of the El Dorado influence. ■



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He took out broad ribbons as an intermediate male at Farm Vision, Albury and Wodonga before capping off the season with a blue ribbon in the fawn intermediate class at the Melbourne Royal, outside the National generally regarded as Australia's most important showing event.

That year, Domino went to the champion import *Cedar House Peruvian Ayaviri*, and her 2000 cria, *Pinjarra Money Penny* has proven her class at Stringybark.

## SHANBROOKE SOCIETY LASS (1996)

Society Lass is a medium fawn female born in September 1996, a daughter of the Haldane import, *Purrumbete Showpiece* who would be immortalised by the exploits of her family, which includes *Shanbrooke Elite*, *Purrumbete Bright Star* (producer of a string of Swan Valley show performers) and *Summerhill Sundance* (a son of El Dorado), as well as Society Lass.

Society Lass first appeared at show in 1997, when she was Champion Junior Female at Ballarat and Supreme Champion at the prestigious Melbourne Royal. The next year she was Champion Senior Female at both the Melbourne Royal and National Shows. By 1999 she was Champion Mature Female at the National and added the Supreme Champion Fleece at Tocal on the way through. She was still going to show in 2001 and still beating the best the industry could offer as Champion Mature Senior Female at the National Show.

But Society Lass wasn't spending all her time in the show ring. In early 1998 she was mated to the imported male *Somerset Peruvian Excellence* and by year's end had delivered a male cria in *Shanbrooke Society Excellence*. He had immediate success in the show ring, being named Supreme Champion at Dandenong in 1999 as a junior, and placing at the National in the junior fawn class. The following year he won his class at the Melbourne Royal and was Champion Senior Male at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show.

Society Lass' next cria was a fawn girl by *Shanbrooke Peruvian Signature* (SLF), born in early 2000 and named *Shanbrooke Society Attraction*. She was destined for immediate success, becoming Reserve Champion Junior Female at the Melbourne Royal and National Shows of 2000. 2001 saw success at the Hamilton Sheepvention (Reserve Champion Intermediate Female) and a placing at the National Show. As a mature female, she was named Reserve Champion at the 2002 Melbourne Royal and was again placed at the National, so here was a genuinely top class girl.

In 2002, Society Lass produced her third cria, this time a solid light fawn boy by *ILR Colorado Extreme* (SW), *Shanbrooke Society Expression*. Whilst he wouldn't match his dam's show exploits (for very few could), he was obviously a very high quality alpaca, as blue ribbons at the Melbourne Royal of 2002 and 2003, and placings at the 2003 National and 2004 Sydney Royal proved. Along the way, he went to Stringybark in 2002 to win everything offered.

This year, Society Lass dominated the Melbourne Royal in a unique way, her crias *Shanbrooke Society Designer Girl ET* and *Shanbrooke Society Class Act* becoming Champion Female and Male respectively, thanks to embryonic transfer technology. The sires were *Shanbrooke Accoyo Tulaco* and *Shanbrooke Accoyo El-Prado*.

So, to five different sires, *Shanbrooke Society Lass* has produced five champions, two girls and three boys; and there was ET thrown in. Top drawer performer and top drawer progeny – a breeder's dream. And there is little doubt that this family will continue to produce winners and emphasise this as the dominant branch of the superb Showpiece distaff.

## ACHERON SHIRALEE (1996)

Shiralee is a daughter of the high quality, light brown Chilean import, *Acheron Querida Pequena*, which had taken out the blue ribbon in the Female (24 months and over) class at the 1994 National.

And being by El Dorado, Shiralee had a genetic advantage. And this soon showed out, being named Reserve Champion Junior Female of the 1996 National Show. Shiralee has gone on to produce quality offspring.

*Denmarham Brave Heart*, the 1998 son of *Peruvian Primero*, won his class at the National Show that year and, in alpaca and fleece classes, won consistently at broad ribbon level at Whittlesea, Dandenong and Traralgon over 1998 and 1999. He has now had success at stud in NSW.

His younger full brother, *Denmarham Lion Heart*, has successes at Stringybark and Traralgon to his credit.

## BLUE GRASS LEADING LADY (1998)

Here is a family of blue bloods.

A solid light fawn daughter of El Dorado and *Purrumbete Vanilla* (herself a quality producer of alpacas like *Blue Grass Cushla* – dam of the Canberra Royal Champion Junior Female of 2002 in *Blue Grass Winter Princess*, *Blue Grass Bollinger*, a multiple broad ribbon winner and *Blue Grass Centurion*, the 2003 National Supreme Champion); *Blue Grass Leading Lady* won Reserve Champion Junior Female at the National and Central-North (NSW) Regional of 1998 and at the foremost shows of 1999, Supreme Champion at the Sydney Royal, Charles Ledger and Canberra Royal Shows.

Back in the show ring at five years of age in 2003, she showed she still had what it takes with a broad ribbon at Whittlesea.

Her first cria of distinction came along in 2000, *Blue Grass Leading Lady 2* (by *Shanbrooke High Society*) taking out a Championship at the 2001 National and showing up locally at Goulburn as Champion Fleece the next year. Keeping up the standard, her own daughter, *Blue Grass Leading Lady 3* (by *Jolimont Warrior*) has starred at Canberra, Boorowa, Castle Hill and Wodonga in 2004 after a placing in the tough Junior Female (Fawn) class at the 2003 National.



## PURRUMBETE COMPASS ROSE (1994)

Compass Rose is a daughter of El Dorado from *Purrumbete Sun Dial*, who ranks with fellow Haldane imports *Purrumbete Showpiece*, *Purrumbete True Perfection* and *Purrumbete Ice Star* as matriarchs of the greatest families in the Australian database, with probably only *Purrumbete Sweet Freedom* their superior. This same Sun Dial family would produce quality animals like *Purrumbete Wedding Bells*, *Purrumbete Minderoo* and *Shanbrooke High Society*.

Compass Rose was from the very first crop of El Dorado: only four of his (registered) progeny were on the ground by the time she came along in July 1994. She was shown intermittently from 1996 to 1999 and went straight to the top of the class. In 1996, the NSW regions conducted a combined show, an extremely competitive event that would soon be superseded by four separate regional shows. Compass Rose competed as a Senior Female and became Supreme Champion. At the National Show that year she was Reserve Champion Senior Female, an achievement she repeated two years later. At five years of age, she again went to the National and showed all her class to become Reserve Champion Mature Female of 1999: quality, consistency, staying power.

Her first cria was *Purrumbete Monarch*, a 1996 white boy who was placed at the Sydney Royal as a junior and went on to broad ribbons at the Melbourne Royal and National Shows of 1997. Following his National Show effort, he was sold for \$35,000. The following year, he demonstrated his ongoing quality with the Supreme Champion Fleece award at the Canberra and Sydney Royals. He has gone on to be a successful sire, with Sires Progeny placings at the Sydney Royal and at Castle Hill.

While Monarch was out strutting his stuff, Compass Rose was delivering *Shanbrooke Casanova*, another solid white boy. The best son of the Peruvian import *Jolimont Galliano I*, Casanova first appeared at show in 1998, with a placing at the National Show as a Junior. Between 1998 and 2000, Casanova was a regular and successful show attendee around the NSW regionals, always a contender and often a broad ribbon winner. From 2001, he was also seen at various Queensland shows, where he became a regular Champion and Reserve Champion in his class, right up to last year. By now, of course, he also rates mentions in the Sires Progeny class, again with success: Queensland Royal 2002, the NSW regional shows for Central-West and Southern in 2003, Gold Coast 2003 and Toowoomba this year.

*Shanbrooke Rose Perfection*, the 1999 white daughter of Compass Rose by *Somerset Peruvian Excellence*, stormed through the 2000 show season: Supreme (and Junior Female) Champion at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show, before going on to being Reserve Champion Intermediate Female at the Melbourne Royal and then the National Show. While pregnant to *ILR Colorado Extreme* in 2001, she found time to be Champion Senior Female at the Hamilton Sheepvention.

The 2000 cria of Compass Rose was a solid white boy by *Jolimont Sculptor* – a dream mating if ever there was one. The result was *Shanbrooke Statement* and he

was immediately successful at Hamilton, Geelong and Stringybark in 2001 before being Reserve Champion Junior Male at the Melbourne Royal. Sold to Illawarra Alpacas in the NSW Shoalhaven region, he then represented his new owners successfully at the local shows, including a Reserve Champion Adult Male broad ribbon at the Central Coast-Hunter Regional of 2002.

## PURRUMBETE SIREN 2

Siren 2 was mature age before she won a broad ribbon, but she had placed at the National in 1996 to hint of her class. In 1998 and 1999 she won broad ribbons at the Perth Royal, after cleaning up at Albany. She has started quite a dynasty.

*Pentland Serena*, her 1997 daughter by *Peruvian Sonoma*, took out broad ribbons at Albany as a junior, and has produced Champions in *Pentland Julietta* (Albany, 2001) and *Marriglen Kathryn* (WA Autumn and Perth Royal Shows in 2004).

Siren's next cria was *Pentland Messiah*, a 1998 boy by *Purrumbete Highlander* (SW), and he was good enough to gain a placing at the Melbourne Wool Show of 1999.

In 2000, a female by *Pperuvian Pluro* was named *Pentland Dylana*, and she won broad ribbons at Albany and Kelmscott between 2000 and 2003, including a Supreme Champion at the former in her junior year.

*Pentland Adagio*, a 2001 male by *Pentland Valeroso* was the next of Siren's offspring to shine, this time at Albany in 2001-2003 before becoming Champion Mature Male at the Perth Royal, by now one of the highest quality shows in the land, in 2004.

And there are hopes for even more from this family, with *Pentland Sorceress*, again by Valeroso, showing up at Albany and Wagin in the past 12 months.

## PINJARRA DOMINO (1995)

Domino is another with impressive progenitors. Her granddam *Purrumbete Pretty Woman* was a National Show placegetter (as a senior female) in 1994, and her mother *Pinjarra Bathsheba* (by *Purrumbete Don-Quixote*, another successful damsire) was Reserve Champion at that same show in the 12 months and over female class.

The mating of Bathsheba with El Dorado always had outstanding potential, and so it showed with *Pinjarra Domino*.

Domino went to the 1996 Royal Melbourne Show, won her class and went on to become Reserve Champion Junior Female. Soon afterwards, at the National, she went one better as Champion Junior Female and a year later was still in the awards when winning a class blue ribbon at the Sydney Royal.

Domino's best progeny has been *Pinjarra Microsoft*, another solid medium fawn – this time a male – by *Purrumbete Highlander*. So this 1997 mating of the two outstanding bloodlines of the day really worked, for Microsoft had a most successful 1999 in the show ring. ☺



# A Measure of Greatness

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Matt Ridley** > Blaydon Alpacas, NSW

## Purrumbete El Dorado A Damsire of Distinction (Part 1)

**W**hen asked to name the most important or influential sire in Australia recently, a small survey group almost unanimously included *Purrumbete Highlander*, and rightly so.

*Purrumbete Highlander's* progeny dominated the show ring for almost a decade, and many of his sons have made their mark at stud, including *Purrumbete Brigantine*, *Jurustalle Hamish*, *Parnabrae Brutus*, *Purrumbete Hot Shot*, *Purrumbete Minderoo*, *Adelyn Highland Mist* and *Cedar House Lucifer*. His daughters have also carried his genes forward with distinction: *Coonawarra Eleanor*, *Purrumbete Alpine Mist*, *Purrumbete Clarity*, *Moore Park Highland Princess*, *Purrumbete Tuscany*, *Benleigh Highland Lass*, *Benleigh Highland Belle* and *Purrumbete Minty* have all produced show winners of the highest quality.

And there are others that can rightly claim to be among the highest echelon of Australian sires, such as the Haldane imports *Purrumbete Ledgers Dream* and *Purrumbete Inti*.

In more recent years, the Peruvian imports like *ILR Pppervian Auzengate 6010*, *Jolimont Sculptor*, *Jolimont Conquistador* (and his own son *Jolimont Warrior*) and *Windsong Valley Royal Inca* have shared the honours with the established stars.

When it comes to suris, *Peruvian Senator G153* (and his seemingly innumerable sire sons) stands supreme, with *ILR Helado S170 Aloa* probably the most dominant of recent times.

### What is a "Damsire"?

But, year in and year out, there is one statistic that almost never varies: the daughters of *Purrumbete El Dorado* just keep producing show winners. And they do it in all colours, in all States, and to sires of varying quality – from excellent to dubious.

In the thoroughbred world, "broodmare sires" are treated reverentially. In the US, daughters of *Princequillo* and *Damascus* (both French-bred) became almost unprocurable. The same happened in France (and later Australia) with *Faux Tirage*, and Australia's own *Todman* – a brilliantly bred stallion who had little success with his racing progeny – became another whose daughters were much sought after.

When these stallions went to stud, they were all extremely well-performed racehorses with impeccable pedigrees; they were all very expensive; and they all went to major studs. Major thoroughbred studs promote their stallions in many ways, but one avenue is to give the stallions the highest possible quality "book" of mares in their first two seasons. So the very best home-bred mares were used. In this way, the stallion had an advantage over his competitors: there were more progeny on the ground (and so potentially more race wins to achieve) and they had the best possible mates.

But if, after as little as two racing seasons, the progeny didn't win races (or include a champion, which was the more likely objective), the stallion was usually left to fend for himself as far as broodmares were concerned – the stud had done all it could. So there was left behind a batch of extremely well-bred broodmares, all by a sire that may not have succeeded in producing race winners.

These progeny carried outstanding genetics, and in the generations to come, it was these that would carry the day – almost without regard to any subsequent covering sire.

But back to alpacas. El Dorado was, and still is, a successful sire in his own right. Just look at some of the champions he has produced: *Blue Grass Leading Lady*, *Shanbrooke Enchanter*, *Shanbrooke Enchantment*, *Shanbrooke Society Lass*, *Purrumbete Compass Rose*, *Forestglen Maestro*, *Forestglen Queen of Sheba* and so on. It continues unabated in 2004, his son *Starline Golden Star* taking out a broad ribbon at the Sydney Royal.

As impressive as that record is, we find that an even more important trait of El Dorado is his ability to sire daughters that will, in turn, produce alpacas of the highest quality. Following the thoroughbred theme, I'll call El Dorado a "damsire" of distinction.

### Are these the Greatest Daughters of El Dorado?

Consider a female alpaca that wins shows, perhaps as Supreme Champion at the Melbourne Royal, and then herself is dam of broad ribbon winners at the top line shows. That's everybody's dream. Well that's what El Dorado has achieved. Dream of owning, for example *Purrumbete Compass Rose*, *Purrumbete Siren 2*, *Shanbrooke Society Lass*, *Blue Grass Leading Lady*, *Acheron Shiralee*, *Pinjarra Domino*, or *Forestglen Queen of Sheba*.

*Let's look at these in more detail.*



# Ledger's Legend

*Well poor Charlie Ledger he tried very hard  
To establish alpacas in Australia's backyard  
He never succeeded but now time has shown  
That they call Australia home.*

*There's mainly huacayas but a few suri too  
Enjoying Australia – and not in a zoo  
They're paying their way  
And the herd has now grown  
As they call Australia home.*

*All the early knockers, said it wouldn't work  
Keeping alpacas away  
But now the herd is growing and showing  
That alpacas are here to stay-ay.*

*And we like to think of Charles Ledger's dream  
Now alpacas are part of the great Aussie scene  
So let's raise our voices and let it be known  
That they call Australia, they call Australia  
That they call Australia home.*



## A Stunning Garment

A stunning garment produced from 400 grams of alpaca tops has been paraded on the catwalk throughout Australia this year. Kaye McNeill is an alpaca breeder of both suri and huacaya and has had a wonderful experience in creating and developing the best that alpaca fibre has to offer in a fine luxurious felted cloth.

Kaye used alpaca tops – 85% alpaca, 15% silk blend to produce an artistic and stunning piece to highlight the traits of alpaca fleece, those being drape, flow, lustre and softness of handle.

The 400 grams of alpaca top was pre-felted into cloth measuring an amazing 6 metres x 1.8 metres, then the dress was further felted into shape, as one would do a sculptural piece. The garment was cobweb felted and was placed first in the Felted alpaca section at the inaugural 2003 National Alpaca Craft Show, and was the only alpaca garment selected by The Australian Wool & Fibre Awards (TAWFA) 2004 to be in the top 100 garments that were paraded some 47 times throughout the country. One major event being the Sydney Royal Show 2004.

To wear this dress is to feel wrapped in delicate softness, uniquely lightweight, only 400 grams. The title of the piece is *"King Neptune's Daughter"*, a dress that a mystical soul would have worn.





# Ledger's Legend

## A History of Alpaca in Australia

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Michael Goodwin** > Wingood Alpacas, TAS > Producer  
PHOTOGRAPHY by **Jan Perkins**



### The making of a cabaret

"Never perform on stage with animals or children" - an old theatre saying. So what did we do? We did both!

Since 1996 when my wife and I bought our first alpacas I have wanted to produce a stage show featuring live alpacas. I have a background in the performing arts as a manager and producer and these skills gave me the ability to achieve this but what was missing was an appropriate opportunity. The National Alpaca Conference in Hobart was the answer.

As a member of the conference organising committee I was asked to take charge of music and entertainment. My committee colleagues enthusiastically endorsed my proposal to produce a cabaret style show featuring live alpacas and once the budget had been agreed to I was let loose.

The first task was to put together a rough outline of the show - what the theme was to be; how would it incorporate live alpacas; how long should it be; what staging facilities were available at the conference centre and would they allow live animals on stage; and most importantly, who would write and direct it?

After thinking about several options for the theme it was decided that the show would take a lighthearted look at the history of alpaca in Australia.

Next, who was available to write and direct the show? We are fortunate in having a huge resource of theatre talent in Tasmania. Top of the wish list was Daryl Peebles, writer, director, comedian, magician and all round raconteur and always in heavy demand. Luck was with us; Daryl was not only available but also very enthusiastic about it, even the live alpaca bit.

Armed with a copy of Gabriele Gramiccia's book, *The Life of Charles Ledger* and a couple of box loads of alpaca magazines and newsletters Daryl spent the next few weeks researching and drafting the scenario and script. "I need two comedians - actors, an authentic South American Band, four dancers, a choreographer, three or four models, three or four alpacas with handlers, Queen Victoria, authentic South American costumes and photographs of alpacas in South America and Australia". This was Daryl's opening comment when we met to discuss the first drafts. "No worries mate", said I, thinking to myself, "this is going to be bigger than Ben Hur".

The South American band was easy to fix. **Arauco Libre** is a Hobart based band whose members are mostly political refugees who fled the Pinochete regime in Chile. German Duarte, the director of the band was due to visit Chile soon and agreed to buy the authentic costumes while he was there.

Comedy duo Colin Dean and Andrew Colrain, **The Red Hot Cols** were engaged as the actors. Katie-Jane Thompson, one of the models, was persuaded to play the part of Queen Victoria. She and the other models came from a leading local modelling agency, **Studio e**. Jacquie Coad, a well known dancer and choreographer put together the dance component.

Finding suitable alpacas was a bit of a challenge. Several were auditioned and finally we came up with three first class well-behaved alpacas. Another challenge was that the alpacas would only be on stage with the whole cast for their one and only rehearsal two hours before the show. To say the least, this was a 'seat of the pants' situation. But thanks to Daryl's professionalism and experience the whole thing came together very well.

One of the many highlights of *Ledger's Legend* was the finale, which involved the full cast and audience singing a song specially written by Daryl. Many people have asked if they could have a copy of the words and Daryl has kindly agreed to have them published in this article (refer next page).

*Ledger's Legend* was intended to be a humorous look at the history of alpaca in Australia. As part of the fun we included a couple of sketches involving two well-known Australian alpaca industry identities. Dianne Condon and Bill Robbins kindly agreed to be our subjects and we thank them warmly for their cooperation. We understand that Dianne will be wearing a black wig at future shows. Producing *Ledger's Legend* was a lot of fun and hard work over several months, but thanks to the support of the conference organising committee, the AAA Inc. National Office staff, a great cast of actors, musicians, dancers, models and last, but by no means least, Daryl Peebles, we pulled it off and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. And if you were at the performance, we hope you also enjoyed it. ■



Animal husbandry was also well addressed in several sessions dealing with problems of conception, foetal well-being, understanding the fine points of alpaca behaviour (another highly entertaining and insightful talk by Eric Hoffman), and a half-day workshop at Terrabarb Stud, New Norfolk, where six presenters gave valuable hints particularly for newcomers to the industry.

For the more experienced there were sessions on the latest R&D across the industry on topics ranging from variations in fleece and interpretations of fibre tests, artificial insemination, the AGE program, fibre density and length, measuring the softness of alpaca fibres, genetics of suri breeding, evolution of an 'Australian alpaca' and new R&D directions. There was also a valuable workshop on marketing and the future of the alpaca industry, with important hints on marketing strategies at both the national and local level.

The Conference ended with a provocative debate on the future for alpacas in Australia, the future of the AAA and the structure of the industry.

The *Conference Proceedings*, containing the text of all the talks, is an invaluable reference document and will remain so for years to come. If you were not at the Conference to receive a copy, you can purchase it from the AAA Inc. National Office.

All in all, we received a very positive response to the Conference from those who participated. The venue at Wrest Point Convention Centre at the water's edge, with spectacular views across the Derwent and towards Mount Wellington, the facilities for the multi-session conference and the several accommodation options all pleased people, as did the all-Tasmanian food conference dinner.

## Post-script

I sincerely hope that all participants who visited Tasmania for the Conference went away with happy feelings about Tasmania and that you will continue to have fond memories of your time here. Please come back in a more leisurely way for a holiday sometime and do drop in to see studs in our Region while you are here.

I would like to place on record my thanks to all those who contributed so much time and energy to the running of the Conference. Not only did the members of the Steering Committee play a vital role over the many months of planning and preparing, as well as during the Conference, but the speakers, the AAA National Office Staff, stall-holders and all members of the Tasmanian Region played important parts in guaranteeing its success. In addition over 30 volunteers, coordinated by Irene Allston, helped ensure the smooth running of the event. Finally, my special love and thanks to my wife Ros, who supported me above and beyond my wildest expectations throughout the running of the 2004 Conference. ■

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It was therefore essential that all the papers presented at the Conference be carefully prepared and presented in a *Conference Proceedings* available as a reference book following the Conference, so that everyone could at least read the papers they had not been able to attend.

Next we had to address the needs of beginners who, in particular, need 'hands-on' guidance on animal husbandry and animal health. A field workshop at Terrabarb Alpaca Stud, Barbara and Terry Hanlon's property at New Norfolk, was particularly well attended with close to 100 registrants spending Sunday afternoon in training with the experts.

It was most important that we should also make the whole experience fun. We thus placed a lot of effort into innovative ideas for entertainment. We were delighted that Government House agreed to host an evening reception for our guests. We then wanted to show some of the beautiful historical aspects of Hobart to our visitors via a guided-walk through Battery Point. And to cap off the entertainment we decided to compose a special alpaca cabaret produced by Michael Goodwin using acting and musical skills from around Hobart, including a very popular South American band.

## The Day arrives

Of course we undertook a pretty comprehensive publicity campaign to persuade AAA members, members of the public and guests to come to the conference. We hoped it would work. In the end very close to 300 people registered. This was a wonderful turnout, making the Hobart Conference the largest National Conference ever held.

## Stalls come out in a rush

One of the most attractive areas in the Conference was the Exhibition Hall, where 17 stall-holders set out their items for show and sale in very attractive displays. Again, this was a great turn-out and it was particularly appreciated by all participants who had the chance to buy goods at reduced prices and see products and equipment useful in the industry.

## Presentations at the Conference

The test of any conference must be the quality of information communicated and those who came to Hobart were certainly presented with a feast. The three keynote speakers, Professors David Anderson and Chris Cebra, and Eric Hoffman, all gave several illustrated talks on their special fields and generously answered a battery of questions in great detail afterwards. Their lectures were supplemented by Australian experts in a wide variety of other areas of importance to our industry. A brief description of the sessions will give some idea of the diverse range of topics covered and should send those of you not able to be there rushing off to purchase your copy of the *Conference Proceedings*.

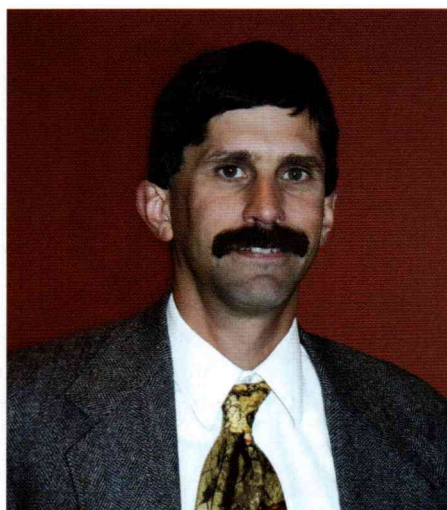
Eric Hoffman gave us a fascinating introduction to the whole conference with his lavishly illustrated talk, *The Ancestral Beginnings of the Alpaca*, exploring the similarities and differences between the various camelid species and tracing the high point of alpaca fibre production under the Incas, when this precious commodity was the highest form of currency, such that only members of the royal family were permitted to wear it.

Papers in the sessions on fleece production and processing ranged over alpaca design and anatomy, the selection of alpacas for fleece, uses of alpaca fleece in the cottage industry for spinning, weaving, felting etc., and blending with other fibres such as silk, mohair, wool etc. to achieve special effects, and also the current and potential state of the commercial fleece industry.

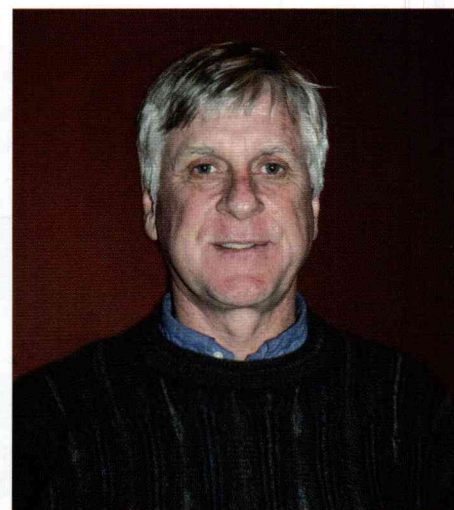
In the sessions focussing on animal health, David Anderson and Chris Cebra gave us the most up-to-date knowledge on liver disease, metabolism and digestion, digestive disorders, nutrition and energy metabolism, rickets, neonatology and lactation. The extensive question time after each of these papers showed how relevant this material was to all breeders. Failure to understand these complex issues can quickly lead to severe problems and the death of seemingly healthy animals in a very short time. We were also given information on common surgical procedures and a valuable checklist of pointers to assessing the health of our animals. ☺



Professor David Anderson



Professor Chris Cebra



Eric Hoffman



# AAA National Conference, Hobart 20-22 August 2004

EDUCATION ARTICLE by **Raymond Haynes** > Convenor, AAA National Conference  
PHOTOGRAPHY by **Jan Perkins**

From all the comments we have received, both during and after the Conference, it would seem that the 2004 AAA Inc. National Conference fulfilled our highest expectations, setting new standards of professional excellence and creating innovative benchmarks for an industry that is on the cusp of sustainable growth and excellence.



Conference delegates were welcomed to Tasmania at a cocktail party held at Government House

## Introduction

When planning a conference one often wonders, ... "is it all worth it?" In hindsight the answer is a resounding, "YES". But in the process of strategically planning a conference, in trying to estimate the attendance and thus cope with problems associated with attendance numbers, and in trying to be both innovative in providing a stimulating and enjoyable program, while addressing the diverse expectations that people may have in coming to a Conference, one often suffers qualms about the enterprise.

One clearly should not embark on the process of organizing a large conference without similar prior experience, but even if that experience does exist, one still has to persuade the local members of the Region to be committed to being closely involved in the planning and execution of the whole event.

## Best laid plans

Members of the Tasmanian Region wanted to design a conference with wide diversity, with a high level of professional content and delivery, and the potential to address the needs of everyone – from beginners entering the industry through to those who are long-time breeders. We also wanted to contrast the Australian industry against, arguably, our nearest international competitor, the USA.

We thus set out to attract the very best speakers from the USA in camelid health, animal husbandry and experience of the industry. We were therefore delighted when Professor David Anderson from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Ohio State University, Professor Chris Cebra from Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Eric Hoffman, with 30 years experience in the industry and author of *The Complete Alpaca Book*, accepted our invitation. Complementing these speakers a further 31 Australian experts presented their perception of the industry from an Australian perspective.

It was never going to be possible for any participant to listen to all the presentations or attend all the events. Our industry has grown to the point where only through parallel streaming of the presentations could we provide the range of needed options to address the interests of the diverse audience. Using this approach we designed the sessions to best match the needs of three streams: beginners, small herd owners and the large breeders. ☞





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The Code of Practice will provide guidance to members in terms of environmental management. It is voluntary and while members will be encouraged to comply with it, there will be no auditing of compliance, nor any 'punishment' for noncompliance. Members should recognise the benefits of compliance with the Code of Practice, as indicated previously.

After a period of time, if there are a sufficient number of enterprises which have prepared and implemented an EMS, the Working Party (or another group) can be trained to undertake external audits of such EMSs to gauge their effectiveness and performance.

## Conclusions

The Environmental Management Working Party has identified that there is a need to develop and implement environmental management policies and procedures for the alpaca industry. With this regard, they have recommended that an Environment Policy be prepared to indicate the commitment of the industry to sustainable agricultural practices and an Industry Code of Practice be developed to provide guidance to members in terms of implementing environmental management procedures for their enterprise.

The role of the AAA is seen as:

- > a facilitator in encouraging improved environmental performance from all members;

- > providing information based on best available scientific knowledge to members, including legal information;
- > supporting members in developing EMS through training and information and support networks;
- > developing key performance indicators for the industry, benchmarking current status and monitoring progress of the industry as a whole; and
- > reporting back on progress to members.

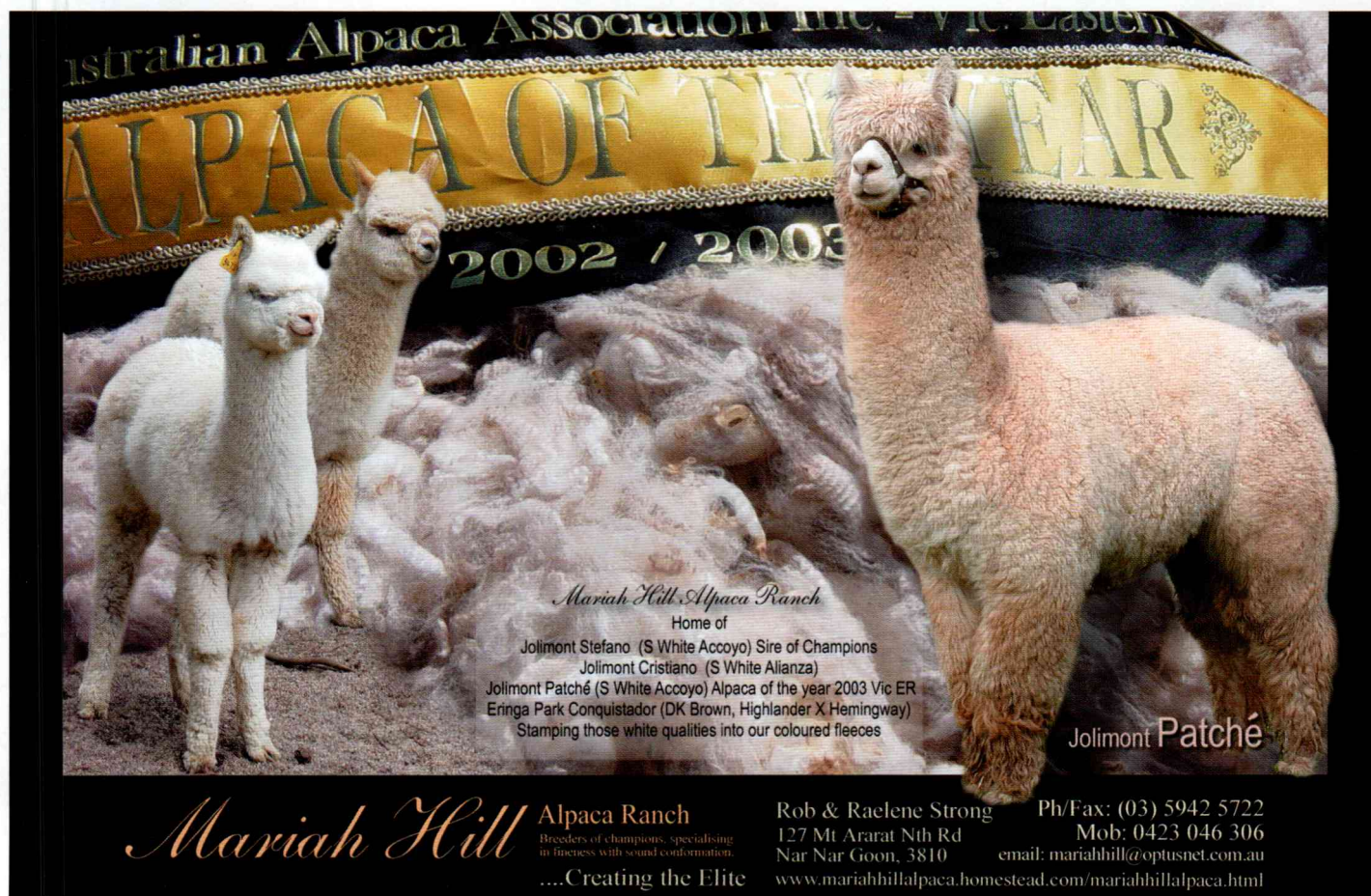
All members are encouraged to contribute and participate in the development of the Environment Policy and Code of Practice and to implement environmental management practises for their farm or enterprise. ■

## References

- Lawrie, John (2004) *Role of Alpacas in the Future of Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture in Australia*. "Alpacas Australia", Issue 43, p 7-10
- Merrell, John (2002) *Alpacas and Sustainable Agriculture*. Gateway Farms Alpacas website

## Contacts

- |                                 |                                    |
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## Potential Impacts of Alpaca Farming

While in some cases alpacas may be a 'better option', farming alpacas does have environmental impacts and, in some cases, these impacts can be significant if not managed carefully. Potential issues include impacts on:

- > Air: e.g. dust, odour, spray drift, greenhouse gases;
- > Land: e.g. soil erosion, compaction, contamination, salinity;
- > Water: e.g. contamination, salinity, nutrient;
- > Resource use: e.g. non-renewable energy, timber, mineral and water extraction;
- > Biodiversity: variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms which are found in all of the above environments (and rely on them to survive), hence it is important to recognise the interrelationships between sectors of the environment; and
- > Social Environment: e.g. staff, visitors, neighbours, tourists, suppliers, customers, etc. Includes occupational health and safety issues, equity issues (non-exploitation of third world countries, e.g. Peru), European and Aboriginal heritage and archaeology. Economic considerations relate to cost of environmental management, equity, purchasing decisions, etc.

The impact of alpacas on the environment will vary according to location, climate, land type, proximity to sensitive environments, stocking rates and management practices.

## Environmental Management in Agriculture – Why?

There are a number of reasons why it is important to protect the ecological diversity and value of our agricultural lands and minimise the detrimental effects our activities have on the land, water resources, the atmosphere and other people and their property. Whether your alpaca farm is in the urban fringe, irrigated intensive agriculture regions or broadacre and rangeland conditions, there are issues that must be considered in terms of minimising environmental impacts. Some of these considerations include:

- > the historic impacts of agriculture in Australia over the past 200 years (e.g. loss of habitats, extinction of plants and animals, erosion, salinity);
- > a limit to the resources available;
- > Government Environmental Protection legislation (resulting in fines and/or jail terms for causing environmental harm);
- > demand from consumers and retailers;
- > the business advantages of a documented environmental management system; and
- > possible financial gains through the value of natural on-farm resources; reduced chemical use; lower insurance premiums; reduced compliance costs; avoidance of prosecution; and possible access to niche markets where a premium is paid for environmentally sustainable products.

## The AAA Approach

There are a number of options for implementing Environmental Management Systems (EMS) within the alpaca industry. The objectives and level of commitment can vary from an interest in improving environmental performance and seeking market opportunities at one end to implementing an internationally-accredited EMS protocol (ISO 14001) at the other.

The Environmental Management Working Party has recommended that the AAA initially prepare an Environment Policy and develop an industry Code of Practice for environmental performance, in consultation with members.

This programme has commenced with Phase 1, involving workshops with each of the Regions focussed on:

- > environmental awareness;
- > environmental management in agriculture; and
- > identifying the environmental impacts of alpaca farming.

The workshop scheduled at the National Conference (Phase 2) discussed:

- > a draft Environment Policy;
- > and the need to prioritise, identify measurement and corrective actions, responsibilities and resources for each of the impacts identified in Phase 1.

The Environment Policy will be endorsed by AAA National Committee (NATCOM) and placed on the AAA web site. The impacts and actions sessions will feed into the preparation of the Industry Code of Practice. Once a draft Code of Practice has been prepared, it will be issued to members for comment and feedback before finalisation by the Working Party and ratification by NATCOM.

A next step could be the preparation of an EMS manual for the alpaca industry which could be funded by AAA and Commonwealth grants. Such a manual could then be adapted by individual breeders to suit their conditions. Workshops to facilitate preparation of individual EMSs could be undertaken at a regional level, in much the same way as the AGE Workshops.

It is VITAL that the process proceed with full consultation and commitment from the membership. Members need to take ownership of the concept and be involved in the preparation of the Environment Policy and Code of Practice so that it is relevant to their circumstances and meets the needs of all members, whether big or small. Members will be encouraged (and expected) to contribute to the development of these environmental management policies and tools.



# Environmental Management of Alpacas – an Introduction

EDUCATION ARTICLE by **Julie Wilkinson**, B.Ed. M.EnSc. > Synnot & Wilkinson Environmental Consultants & Baarrooka Alpaca Stud, VIC

All members are encouraged to contribute and participate in the development of the Environment Policy and Code of Practice and to implement environmental management practises for their farm or enterprise.

## Introduction

As with all agricultural pursuits, alpaca farming has the potential to impact on the environment in a multitude of ways. These impacts can be positive or negative. How we manage the alpaca industry will determine the extent of such impacts and the sustainability of alpaca farming on agricultural land. There are legal, ethical and financial reasons for ensuring our activities do not cause environmental harm.

The environmental management of alpaca farming is an issue for the industry as a whole. The Australian Alpaca Association Inc. (AAA) has a responsibility to undertake research and development and provide information to its members. A working party has been set up to investigate and develop an environmental management process for the Australian alpaca industry.

The Environmental Management Working Party (part of the Research & Development Sub-committee) has commenced a series of Environmental Awareness Seminars for each of the 14 Regions throughout Australia. This was followed up by a presentation and an interactive workshop presented at the AAA Conference in Hobart in August, 2004. A detailed paper on that presentation is included in the Conference Proceedings that are available to purchase from the AAA National Office.

This paper covers the issues raised in the initial Environmental Awareness Seminar. Its purpose is to educate, as well as to obtain input into the draft environmental management documents being prepared by the working party. Members are encouraged to comment on this paper, either directly to the EMS Working Party (contact details page 45) or through the Message/Discussion Board in the Members Section of the AAA web site. The working party recognises the importance of consulting widely with the members and there will be many opportunities for input during the development of policies and guidelines. These documents will be business management tools for members to guide them in developing environmentally sustainable businesses. They are not prescriptive and are voluntary.

## Background

Individual farmers and alpaca breeders are not islands. They do not operate as individuals within the industry. Just as they can impact positively or negatively on the industry, so too can the industry impact on them and their business. Each component of the supply chain has an impact on the acceptance and marketability of the product, hence the importance of an industry-wide policy, particularly in regard to risk-assessment and environmental management processes. Consider the impact on all facets of the industry if the media picked up on a child suffering an anaphylactic reaction from pesticide residues in the new David Jones alpaca doonas. Similarly, what would happen if someone took a sample of viande from an upmarket restaurant in the Blue Mountains and found, on analysis, that it contained residues of chemicals not acceptable to the World Health Organisation because alpaca farmers are using off-label drenches and supplements? It is important that each component of the supply chain considers and takes steps to control or address the potential impacts of others within the supply chain.

## Environmental Benefits of Alpacas

There have been many claims of the environmental benefits of alpacas. When compared with other livestock, alpacas have:

- > padded feet which minimise compaction and soil erosion;
- > communal dung piles which facilitate manure management;
- > high immunity/low susceptibility to parasites, minimising chemical use; and
- > efficient digestion which reduces pasture pressures and fertiliser use and allows wider range of suitable forage types, including native pastures (Merrell 2002, Lawrie 2004).

Despite these claims for environmental benefits, they are only made in comparison with some other livestock or agricultural activities. Replacing cattle with alpacas on degraded land may be seen as an environmental benefit, but clearing native habitats to establish an alpaca farm is not. ☞



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Mark, Paddy's River  
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Bruce, Toora  
Keith, Mirboo  
Chris, Mt Macedon  
Sharon, Pearcedale

David, Tarago  
Hugo, Harden  
Barbara, Berrybank  
Jolyon, Birdwood  
Kye, Birdwood  
Terry, Lobethal  
Loretta, Springton  
Geoff, Skye  
Carol, Bargo  
Alan, Hobart  
Keith, Galston

Bronwyn, Armidale  
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Graeme, Glossodia  
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## Royal Adelaide Show

by **Jolyon Porter** > Show Convenor

provided and Rick made time to talk to around 30 members answering questions concerning our industry.

Also appreciated was the support of Victorian breeders, Ian and Carol Earle from Warramunga Downs Alpacas, and Bob and Helen McLeod from Kalpara Park Alpacas, who had been staying in Tasmania, and who participated in the Hobart Royal Show as well as the Burnie and Launceston Shows. Their involvement is much appreciated by the Tasmanian Region Committee in helping to further improve show conditions in Tasmania.

The Supreme Champion Fleece was awarded to *Clarence Point Bayden*, a white huacaya exhibited by Glenn and Jean Bruce of Clarence Point Alpacas.

Supreme Champion Huacaya was awarded to *Lyra Appia*, exhibited by Dominic Lane of Viracocha Alpacas and Supreme Champion Suri was *Wyterrica Marcel*, again exhibited by Dominic Lane.

*Wyterrica Marcel* was adjudged Supreme Suri Champion in all three shows for the year, and consequently he was awarded Tasmanian Alpaca of the Year, an award donated by Serena Lodge Alpacas. ■



Wyterrica Marcel (Supreme CH Suri)

The Royal Adelaide Show was the subject of some controversy in the lead up due to the Show Society's decision to increase the level of bio-security, which was taken a few years ago. They decided that all susceptible livestock, which entered the Show Grounds, would need to be checked tested for John's Disease as the minimum requirement. The staggered implementation of this plan meant that it was the turn of alpacas and goats this year. Needless to say this brought about a certain level of consternation amongst those not on the JD MAP. The lead in time for testing and receiving results, and the cost and worth of testing, and a feared significant drop in animal numbers were among the top concerns. Despite a number of representations to rescind or vary the requirements, they were all unsuccessful and it was decided that "the show must go on".

As the show drew nearer it was obvious that numbers were going to be down, but not as significantly as feared by some. In the end we had 132 animals entered (second highest to date) and 30 fleeces – still good numbers for the RAS.

The Alpaca Section is judged on the first day of the show (Friday), with the fleece judging held on the following day and being carried out in the shed where members of the public can view the proceedings.

The weather for Friday turned out to be just perfect, bright and sunny and about 20 degrees. Unfortunately the animals did sweat a bit overnight and

some looked somewhat flat, but any judge worth their salt should be able to compensate for this, and Wendy Billington did a stalwart job. As usual, some of the younger classes were quite large and took some sorting through, but Wendy kept up the pace and the day went smoothly.

Whilst the ribbons were spread fairly well through the exhibitors, the Championships were well and truly dominated by EP Cambridge Alpacas. In the Fleece Section though, it was Arcadian Alpacas who took home the honours.

However, congratulations must go to all exhibitors who helped generate a high level of interest in the industry. This was evident in the number of information kits that were handed out to members of the public at the Region's stand in the Expo marquee. Over 200 kits were distributed and only to those that indicated a desire to enter the industry, not the 'tyre kickers' - they were supplied with basic information flyers.

Finally, thanks to all those volunteers who make such events work, without you they just would not happen. ■



Arcady Augustus (Champion Huacaya Fleece)



EP Cambridge Valour (Supreme CH Huacaya)



Cedar House Sensational (Supreme CH Suri)



## Royal Brisbane Show

by **Camilla Smith** > Show Convenor • Photos by **Diana Stewart-Koster**

As I write this report the 2004 Brisbane Royal is officially over and as my mind moves into holiday mode and I head for Tasmania... an added bonus this year with the Association's biennial Conference being held in Hobart... I reflect on the events that created yet another successful alpaca showing. In past years being located within one of the oldest buildings in the show grounds was always a problem and I am sure we all noticed a distinct difference this year with the facilities being more functional and practical. However some things will never change and you, the exhibitors, remain one of the greatest strengths we have in this industry

Sharing the vision of our industry, within the agricultural environment of the Brisbane Royal, with a united and professional approach continues to spread confidence to prospective farmers.

Although we are only experiencing marginal growth in numbers of animals exhibited, the quality continues to improve. Our judge, Kylie Martin, drew on her expertise to assess the quality of those animals paraded before her and awarded ribbons accordingly. At the conclusion of judging Kylie made time to offer constructive comments for future showings and to speak with any exhibitors that sought her advice.

This was our second year for fleece judging and what a picture they made in the improved presentation stand. The various coloured alpaca fleeces situated between white angora and white sheep wool created quite a sight. The number of fleece entries was disappointing again this year, with only an increase of four making 24 in total. Remember, this is

a 'Fleece Industry', so please consider selecting a 'Show Fleece' at your next shearing so that we can look forward to increased competition in 2005.

Again this year we pay tribute to Bob and Sylva Barns for their "Camelid Country" display in the Sheep and Wool pavilion. The display became an even greater attraction this year with the addition of an adult and a juvenile camel to accompany the alpacas and llamas. Over 100 show patrons registered their interest in receiving further information from the AAA Inc.

The Show Association is nurturing a learning environment within the Sheep and Wool pavilion and this year we were invited to take part in their education programme. The participating volunteers, led by Jenny Mackay, Liz Coles and Rosemary Eva presented short talks to school groups and other interested visitors. Information sheets and fleece samples were also distributed. This was an enjoyable learning experience for everyone and one in which I would encourage more involvement by breeders. To our members who volunteered their time to be stewards, photographer, speakers and helpers in so many ways, I would like to sincerely thank you. To AAA Inc. National President, Kerry Dwyer and to the judge, Kylie Martin, thank you for your contributions. The Royal's success is only made possible through the generous support, commitment, and involvement of many individuals.

The 2004 Brisbane Royal, the highlight on Queensland's calendar, has again provided a glimpse of our exciting Alpaca Industry. ■



**Andean Park Ringmaster** (Supreme CH Huacaya)



**Paltarra Alby** (Supreme CH Suri)

## Royal Hobart Show

by **Alan Froome** > Show Convenor

This year's Royal Hobart Show was held in very warm conditions and with record numbers of alpacas being shown. Due to the marked increase in numbers from 45 animals in 2003 to 70 this year (including 26 suris) a large 40 m x 10 m marquee was provided as our designated area.

The conditions inside the marquee were like those more usually found in mainland shows, where the heat generated from being under canvas had an adverse effect on our animals' fleeces with even the suris sweating from the heat.

With this problem in mind our thoughts now turn to 2005 when we anticipate having to have an area large enough to cater for around 100 animal entries.

On his first visit to Tasmania, the judge, Rick Hodgson of New South Wales, took a little longer than normal carrying out his duties due to the increased numbers on offer, but all the while he delivered informative comment when each class had been finished.

Once again when judging was completed, as is tradition on Hobart Alpaca Days, an informative get-together with a light supper was



**Lyra Appia** (Supreme CH Huacaya)



Junior Male (*Marriglen Mars*), Reserve Champion Junior Male (*Marriglen Delta*) and Champion Intermediate Female (*Marriglen Kathryn*). The popular owners of Bedrock Alpacas, Chris and Tara Ravenhill enjoyed their success in winning Champion Senior Female with *Bedrock Possum*.

Barry Brewerton of Southdown Park Suris received the good news while at home in the far North West town of Wickham that his *Southdown Park Cirion* was this year's Champion Adult Suri Male. Barry used to make the long trek south for the show but this year stayed home and unfortunately missed the pleasure of taking his champion into the ring.

In her commentary, the judge, Dianne Condon of Victoria, mentioned that the Huacayas had maintained their very high quality since her last visit and that she was most impressed with the excellent quality of the Suris presented for judging.

The constant stream of visitors to our attractive industry display and information stand demonstrated an indication of the continued strong interest in alpacas. The information stand is staffed by exhibitors throughout the show and interest was so strong that they ran out of some promotion material. More than 4,000 "I love alpacas" stickers were handed out to children and some of the adults visiting the alpaca pavilion during the first three days. This led to rationing of the remaining 2,000 stickers over the next five days and a fair bit of good-natured banter about the value and scarcity of the stickers. Many visitors to the information stand had especially sought out the display to get information about entering the industry.

The future for sales of wethered alpacas at good prices looks strong with dozens of enquiries from farmers about the sheep guarding ability of alpacas. There were many positive comments received from farmers who have been using up to 14 wethers on their farms and have been recommending them to others in the sheep industry. Another feature of the show was the display of craft items that had been made and loaned to the display by many breeders. The display was co-ordinated and set up by Helen Jessop who was able to source a wide variety of items that provided a good example of the range of products that can be made from alpaca fleece.

The full results of the 2004 Perth Royal Show can be viewed on the AAA Inc. web site - [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au) ■

## Royal Melbourne Show

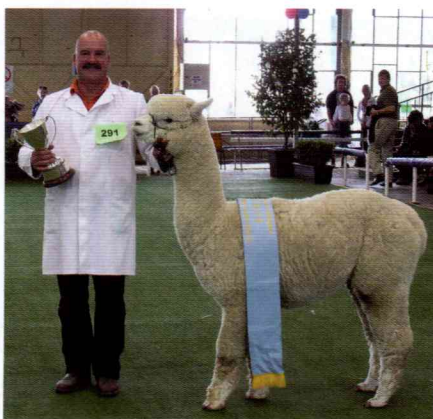
by **Geoff Hargreaves** > Show Convenor

This three day premier event continues to attract as many animals as can be housed in the old RAS facilities but there seems to be no limit to the growing quality of the animals exhibited. The pattern of the past few years has been one of a slight decline in exhibitor numbers but an increase in the size of show teams. It is pleasing to see new exhibitors that are confident enough in their breeding programs to enter into this competition. Penning was set up for 296 Huacaya and 72 Suri alpacas and fleece entries were at a record 52 Huacaya and 11 Suri for this show. Exhibitors came from all parts of Victoria and South Australia, NSW and Tasmania (three this year!).

### What a Challenge!

While fleece judge, Natasha Clark worked her way through the unexpected large number of fleeces, Huacaya judge, Allan Jinks commenced a nine hour challenge over two days to arrive at the Huacaya Supreme Champion on Saturday afternoon.

The depth of quality of animals in the ring was evident in the standard of the large junior classes and the judge's comments as he awarded his placings. Interest of alpaca breeders and the public was held right into the Saturday and reached a palpable tension as *Jolimont Warrior*, *Jolimont Sculptor 2* and *Fine Choice Peruvian Ultimo* led in the white and fawn mature males. Warrior won the blue and went on to take the Huacaya Supreme Championship in a line up of brilliant champions.



*Jolimont Warrior* (Supreme CH Huacaya)

Geoff Halpin presented the Capalba Park Perpetual Trophy and the AAA Show Committee trophy was presented by RAS Deputy President, John Fox. John commended the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. and its alpaca breeders on their obvious professionalism and he expressed the gratitude of the RAS for the excellence the alpaca competition has brought to the Royal Melbourne Show.

### Suri Interest!

On Sunday morning, following Elise Strong's excellent performance in the Junior Judging event, Carol Mathew stepped out to judge strong, even classes of Suri alpacas. It was pleasing to see the Suri numbers hold up well with the boost provided by the status of Feature Breed in 2003. Carol commented on the improving quality of Suris in Australia as seen in the standard and depth of this competition. *Surilana Alpacas* won three of the seven championships with adult male *Surilana Nureyev* becoming the Supreme Champion. Congratulations Jill Short! The AAFL trophy for Champion Huacaya Fleece was awarded to Lutz and Lynn Jacoby with *Narraburra Cin-Cin* and Barbara Linley and Anne Bean won the Champion Suri Fleece trophy with *Ambleside Prince*, also taking out the Reserve Champion award.

### Watch Out For 2005!

Look at this for a promotional opportunity! The 2005 show will be the RASV's 150th, the new facilities will be open (we hope) and alpacas will be the feature breed!! ■



*Surilana Nureyev* (Supreme CH Suri)



# The Royals 2004

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE compiled by **Sandra Wright** > Australian Alpaca Association Inc.



Show attraction, the Flag Throwers from Arezzo, Italy, flank Tara Ravenhill modelling an alpaca wedding dress and Supreme Suri "Wesuri Lucia"

Wesuri Alpacas continued their dominance of the Suri Sections in WA by winning the Supreme award for the second year in a row. This year their Supreme Suri was a Junior White Female, *Wesuri Lucia*, sired by their male, *Wesuri Heritage Prince Allianz*. Wesuri animals were successful in four of the championship sections with *Wesuri Heritage Prince Allianz* also winning the Suri Progeny award.

The Huacaya Progeny award was won by *Windsong Valley Royal Inca* for the fourth consecutive year. The Supreme Fleece awards were won by Banksia Park's *Somerset Accoyo Challenger* in the Huacaya section and by Wesuri's *Wesuri Heritage Abran* in the Suri section. The most valuable fleece award went to *Windsong Valley Philosopher*. Banksia Park's *Somerset Accoyo Challenger* was closely associated with a number of successes at the show, being the sire of the Champion and Reserve Champion Junior Males and then winning Supreme Huacaya Fleece in his own right. It's not often that a sire and his progeny both feature in the Championship awards at the same show.

The largest smiles though were probably on the faces of three breeders who won Royal Show Championship ribbons for the first time. Miles Morcombe of Marriglen Alpacas celebrated a long involvement in the industry with his best show success ever by winning Champion

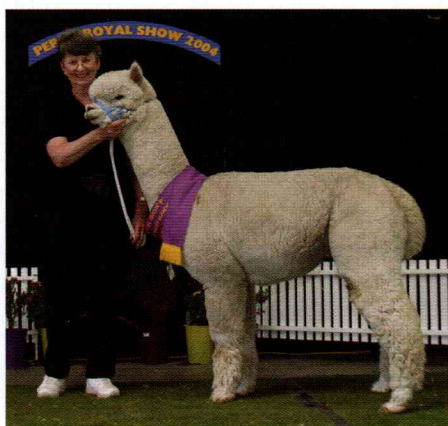
## Royal Perth Show

by **Ron Raynor** > WA Central Region Marketing Representative  
Photos courtesy > **Countryman Newspaper WA**; Photographer > **Bob Garnant**

The 2004 Perth Royal Show was held from Saturday 2 October to Saturday 9 October and once again showcased the WA alpaca industry as a positive and vibrant industry. With the show convenor, Ron Reid away in Peru at an international judging accreditation course, his excellent lieutenants in Betty Zani and Steve Bennetts ensured everything went smoothly and at the usual high standard of WA Shows.

Entries for this year's Show were down 20% on last year's numbers and was probably a reflection of the difficulty that many breeders are having in attending for the full eight days of the show. There is strong support for the 'show animal' attendance to be reduced to three days and for nearby breeders to provide approximately 50 'display' alpacas for the remaining five days of the show. Whether this change can be achieved in 2005 will depend on approaches to be made to the Royal Agricultural Society.

Encantador Alpacas were jubilant after winning their back-to-back Supreme Huacaya Award with *Blue Grass Centurion*. "BG" as most people call him, has now won Supreme awards at four shows including the 2003 and 2004 Perth Royal Shows and the 2003 AAA Inc. National Show. Encantador have exhibited the Supreme Champion at the last three Perth Royal Shows having also won in 2002 with *Encantador Artisan*.



*Blue Grass Centurion* (Supreme CH Huacaya)



*Wesuri Lucia* (Supreme CH Suri)





## 2004 NATIONAL SHOW SUPREME CHAMPION SURI

CH Adult Male *Surilana Nureyev*

JUDGES *Jude Anderson and Amanda VandenBosch*

EXHIBITOR *Surilana*



CH Junior Female  
*Surilana Origami*



Res. CH Junior Female  
*Baarrooka Marilene*



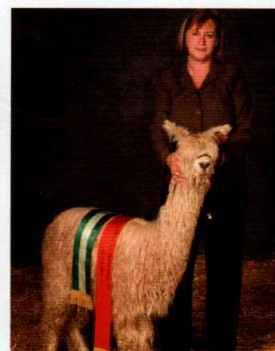
CH Junior Male  
*Surilana Odin*



Res. CH Junior Male  
*Surilana Odysseus*



CH Intermediate Female  
*Tambo Downs Tatiana*



Res. CH Intermediate Female  
*Surilana Noni*



CH Intermediate Male  
*Kurrawa Akira*



Res CH Intermediate Male  
*Cedar House Whirlwind*



CH Adult Female  
*Surilana Nubile Nymph*



Res. CH Adult Female  
*Surilana Nina*



Res. CH Adult Male  
*EP Cambridge Vitalic*



CH Senior Male  
*Cedar House Sensational*



Res. CH Senior Male  
*Cedar House Sultan of Silk*



Sires Progeny  
*Surilana Icalon*

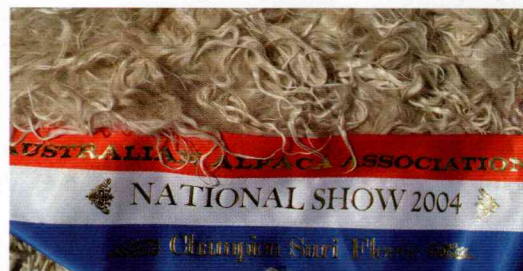


FULL RESULTS  
AVAILABLE ON  
THE AAA INC.  
WEB SITE

[www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

## 2004 NATIONAL SHOW CHAMPION FLEECES

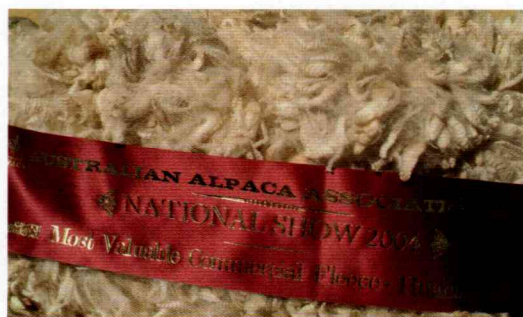
JUDGE *Kylie Martin*



CHAMPION SURI FLEECE *Wykeham Park Liberty*

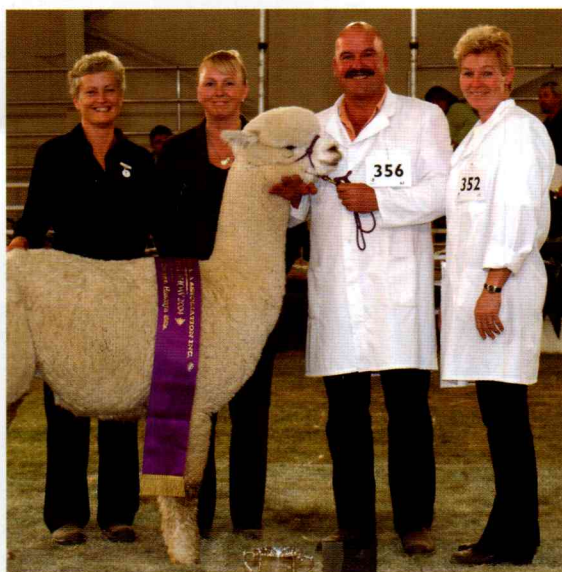


SUPREME CHAMPION HUACAYA FLEECE  
*Shanbrooke Accoyo Taquile*



MOST VALUABLE COMMERCIAL FLEECE - HUACAYA  
*Arcady Augustus*





## 2004 NATIONAL SHOW SUPREME CHAMPION HUACAYA

**CH Mature Male** *Jolimont Warrior*

**JUDGES** Jude Anderson and Amanda VandenBosch

**EXHIBITORS** Ambersun Alpacas and Ichiban Alpacas



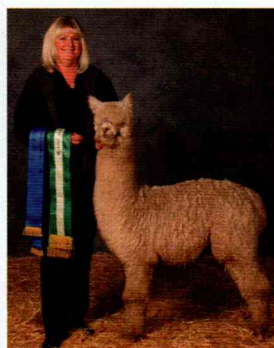
**CH Junior Female**  
*EP Cambridge Sculptress*



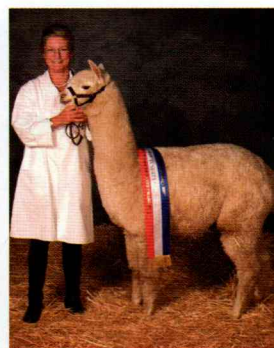
**Res. CH Junior Female**  
*Beringya Downs Silk Vision*



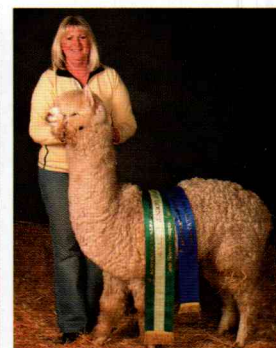
**CH Junior Male**  
*Patagonia Celtic Triumph*



**Res. CH Junior Male**  
*Shanbrooke Society Class Act*



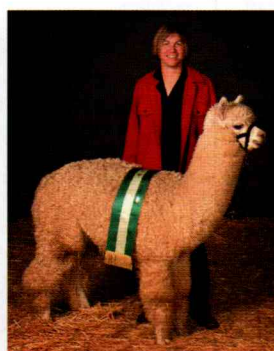
**CH Intermediate Female**  
*Illawarra Yasmine*



**Res. CH Intermediate Female**  
*Shanbrooke Star Attraction*



**CH Intermediate Male**  
*EP Cambridge Valour*



**Res CH Intermediate Male**  
*Windsong Valley Kenjiro*



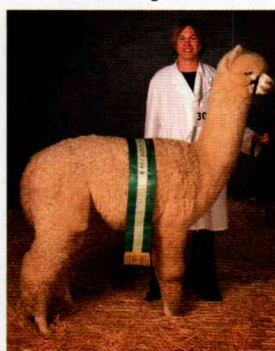
**CH Adult Female**  
*Shanbrooke Yavari's Passion*



**Res CH Adult Female**  
*Swan Valley Super Elegant*



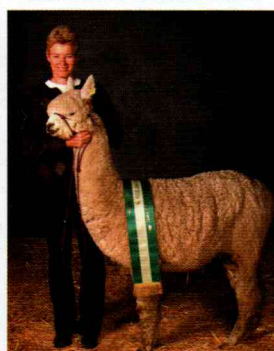
**CH Adult Male**  
*Blue Grass Centurion*



**Res. CH Adult Male**  
*Windsong Valley Tutankhamen*



**CH Senior Female**  
*EP Cambridge Showtime*



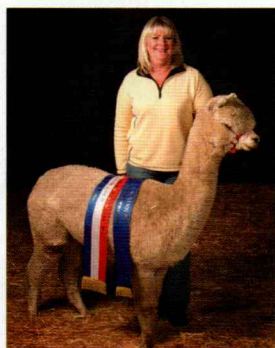
**Res. CH Senior Female**  
*Ambersun Palomina*



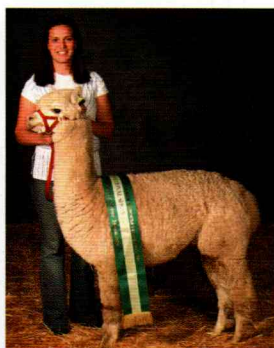
**CH Senior Male**  
*Blue Grass Waterloo Sunset*



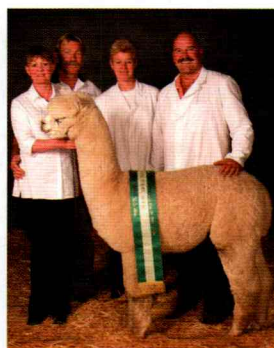
**Res. CH Senior Male**  
*Jolimont Gianmarco*



**CH Mature Female**  
*Shanbrooke Accoyo Juanita*



**Res. CH Mature Female**  
*EP Cambridge Peruvian Savanna*



**Res. CH Mature Male**  
*Fine Choice Peruvian Ultimo*



**Sires Progeny**  
*Windsong Valley Iceman*





# Surilana

*Setting the Suri Standard*

## 2004 NATIONAL

### **Junior Female Champion:**

Surilana Origami –  
Sire Surilana Icalon

### **Junior Male Champion:**

Surilana Odin –  
Sire Surilana Icalon

### **Reserve Junior Male Champion:**

Surilana Odysseus –  
Sire Surilana Icalon

### **Reserve Intermediate Female Champion:**

Surilana Noni –  
Sire Surilana Icalon

### **Adult Female Champion:**

Surilana Nubile Nymph  
– Sire Surilana Bosisto

### **Reserve Adult Female Champion:**

Surilana Nina –  
Sire Surilana T-Pito

### **Supreme Champion & Champion Adult Male:**

Surilana Nureyev –  
Sire Surilana Zosimo

## PROGENY CLASSES (10 entries)

### **1st Place**

Surilana Icalon

### **2nd Place**

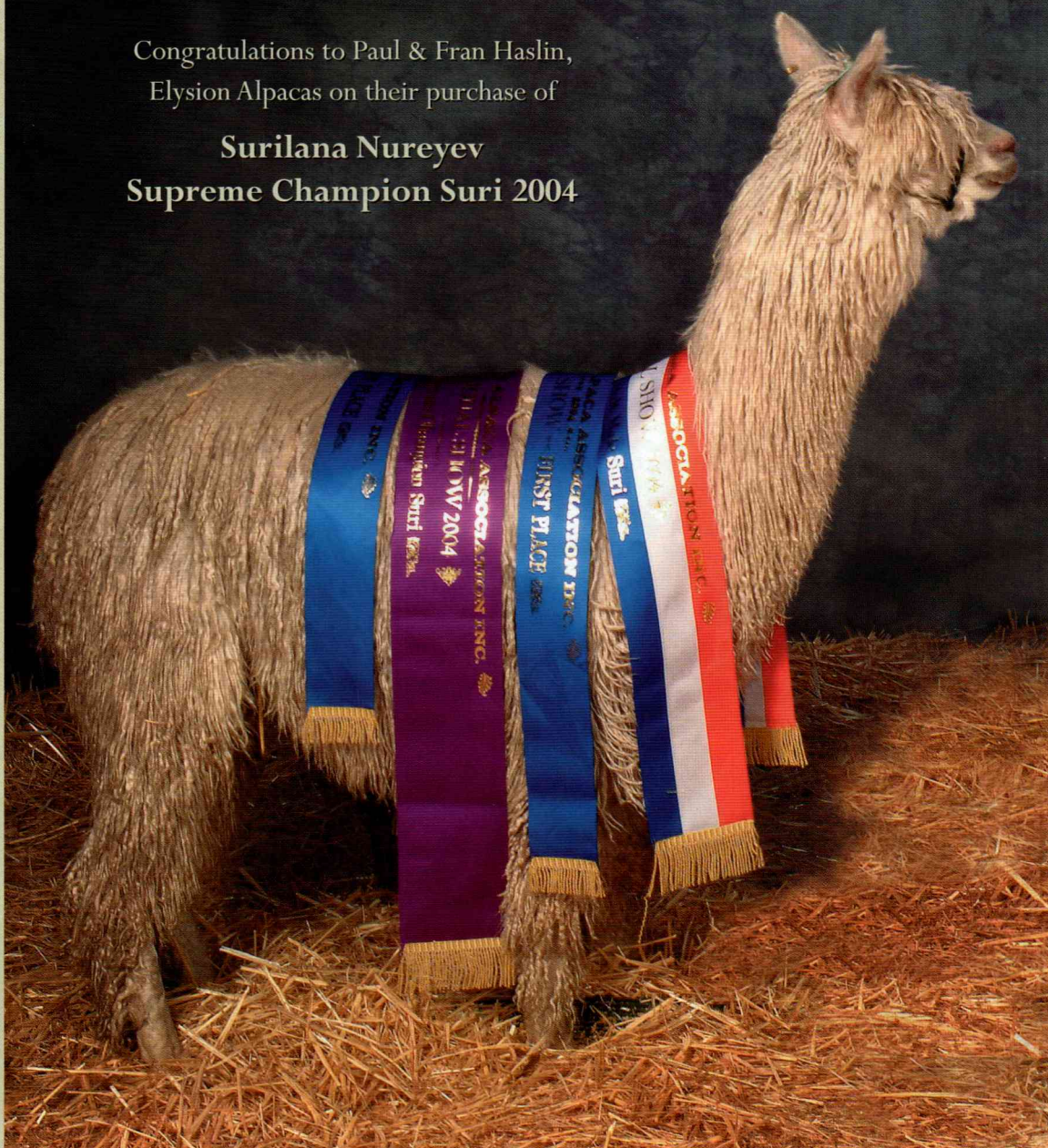
Surilana Zosimo

### **3rd Place**

Surilana Icalon

Congratulations to Paul & Fran Haslin,  
Elysion Alpacas on their purchase of

**Surilana Nureyev**  
**Supreme Champion Suri 2004**



*In response to many requests, 50 only outside services  
are being offered to the Surilana Accoyo Males.*

*Maximum services per Stud – 5*

*Services allocated in order of bookings*

*Stud Fee: \$2,000*

To add lustre, density and bone to your Suris contact:

Jill Short (03) 5424 8534 or email: [wgbfarm@netcon.net.au](mailto:wgbfarm@netcon.net.au)



# 2004 National Show and Sale

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Paul Haslin** > Show Convenor  
PHOTOGRAPHY by **Cath Norman**



The champions are now back in their paddocks, probably shorn and blissfully unaware that they were the stars of the pinnacle event on the Australian alpaca calendar.

The last few years has seen the National Show and Sale grow from being the premier alpaca show to a world class event embracing all aspects of the alpaca industry. Once again, at the end of October, we saw the best alpacas from all states of Australia converge on Canberra to join together with manufacturers, suppliers, craft artists and all those with an interest in alpacas to create a showcase for Australian Alpaca. As the well-oiled volunteer team swung into action the benefits of returning to a proven venue came into play, allowing improvements and innovations to be considered and implemented.

The purchase by the Association of a full set of custom-built pen panels made for easy set up of an efficient stabling pavilion while a revised pre-show inspection system, where exhibitors brought their animals to the inspectors at the marshalling areas saved immense time and effort.

Handlers were asked to trial a procedure of showing their exhibit's teeth to the judges in the show ring, an interesting improvement in hygiene for judges and alpacas, and all exhibitors handled this with skill.

During the show exhibitors and visitors were kept in touch with the show ring by live video feed and in their spare time took full advantage of the "café plaza" facilities to enjoy a coffee and catch up with colleagues. Meanwhile, another innovation – the Help Desk – took care of a steady stream of questions, problems and did some wonderful public relations work. But arguably the innovation with the greatest visual impact was the turf that was laid in the show ring and painted with the AlpacaMark.

This event enjoyed unprecedented media attention with regular press, radio and TV interviews taking place. Several media reporters started with a somewhat cynical approach to this industry "which is always talking itself up" to come to express admiration at the enthusiasm and cohesive direction and planning from all participants.

The most difficult task facing any convenor, especially of an event of this magnitude, is to find the funds to pay the bills. This year our fund raising activities, the silent auction, trophy sponsorships and dinner auction were supported in the usual enthusiastic manner by donors and purchasers. However, we needed more. So the concept of Gold Sponsorship was born and, to our delight, was taken up by two premier studs, **Ambersun Alpacas** from SA and **Illawarra Alpacas** from NSW. Each of these breeders donated a female alpaca to be auctioned with proceeds funding the event. We certainly hope that this feature might be the start of a regular opportunity for the Association and participating studs.

Congratulations to all of the hard working organizing team and to all the exhibitors of animals, fleece, craft and trade areas. The professional and good natured participation by all clearly demonstrates the strength of our enterprise.

As is evident from the photo gallery (pages 36 and 37), the judges chose their champions well. The fortunate winners are now enjoying their coveted framed photo trophies hanging on the wall while the stars of the show graze contentedly in their paddocks.

*And, a few words from the Auction Convenor, Graeme Dickson:* "The 2004 National Auction in Canberra was another success, thanks to the nine vendors, two gold sponsors and two 'wild card' entries. Of the 13 animals presented at the Auction, 10 were sold on the day achieving a gross value of \$304,225 including GST. Our thanks go to members who assisted in organizing the event and their selections and the vendors were rewarded for submitting their best quality stock. For those considering submissions into next year's 2005 National Auction, this event has now, beyond doubt, established itself in obtaining top prices for the best genetics". ■



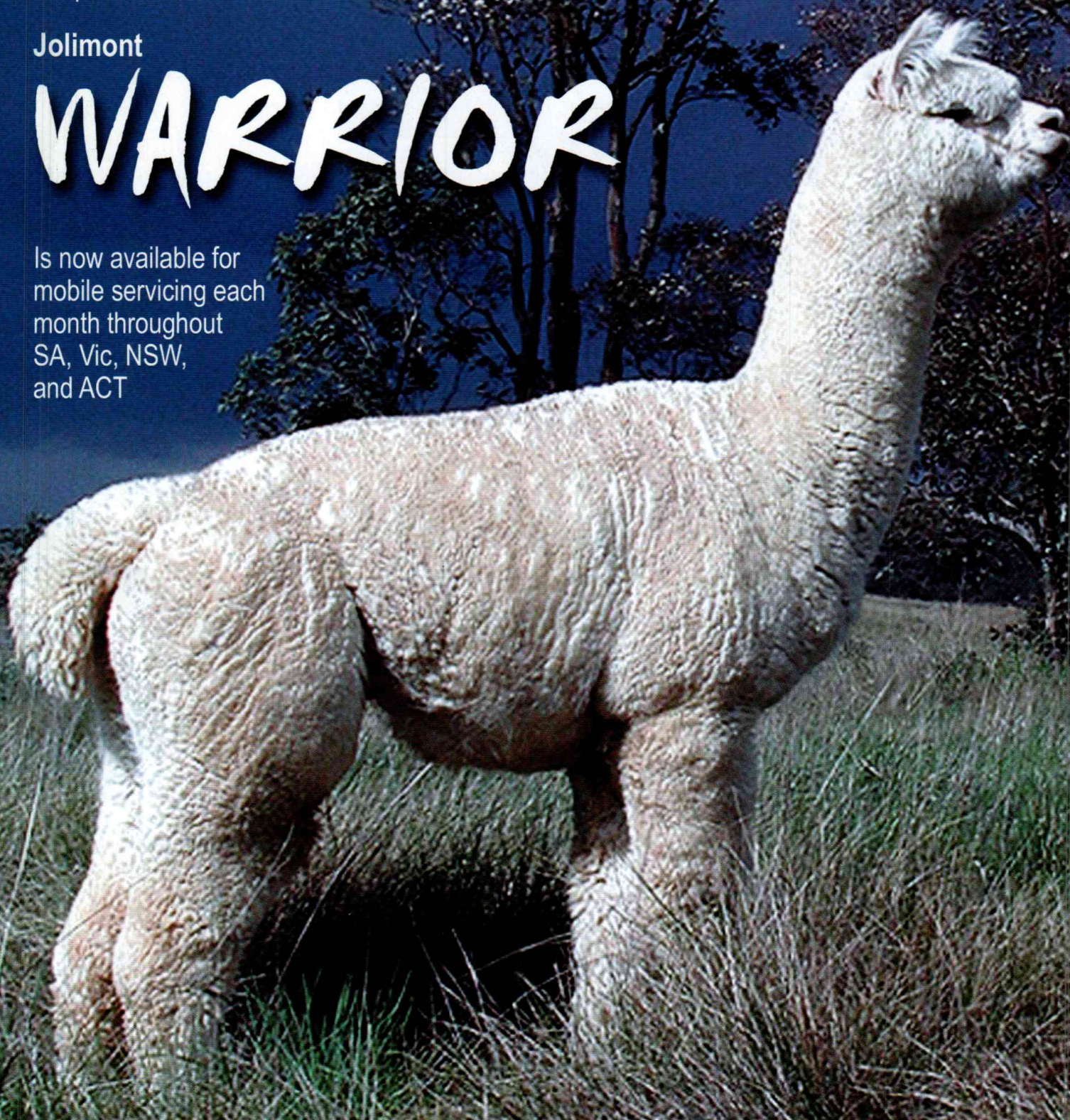
*Ambersun Alpacas &  
Ichiban Alpacas*

are pleased to announce that

Jolimont

# WARRIOR

Is now available for  
mobile servicing each  
month throughout  
SA, Vic, NSW,  
and ACT



**AAA National Show 2004 Supreme Champion Huacaya**

Photo: J. Mavros

Contact: [www.ambersunalpacas.com/warrior](http://www.ambersunalpacas.com/warrior)

Chris: 0417 826 762