Alpacas Australia

The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.



Special Fleece Issue



Champion sire. Champion Progeny. Camelot Tor, Supreme Champion nine times.

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Details at www.flowerdalealpacas.net P 0419 549 666.

GRAND FLOWERDALE ALPACAS

Alpacas Australia Issue 59 • Summer 2009



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Tumi Alpacas outside back cover
Vista del Sud Alpacas

Fleece Industry

- 18 ... International Fibre Arts Competition
- 20 ... Bellissimo Surissimo
- 22 ... Fleece: The Ambassador for our Industry
- 26 ... Velieris comes from the Latin word for Fleece
- 28 ... Insights from a Cutting Edge Merino Breeder
- 30 ... A 'Superb Stunning Suri Creation'®
- 34 ... Skirting Suri a Textile Process
- 36 ... Why Breed for Ultrafine Alpaca? Consider the Vicuña
- 46 ... Why use a Fibre Testing Laboratory for Alpacas?
- 50 ... KUNA by ALPACA 111
- 51 ... Australian Alpaca Connection's Latest News
- 56 ... Alpaca Ultimate: A Brief Update
- 73 ... A Most Valuable Asset

Research and Development

- 14 ... Advancing Artificial Insemination in Alpacas
- 58 ... AGE Trait Leader List Now Published

Animal Health and Welfare

- 38 ... Black Saturday
- 39 ... Sophie's 'Twins'

Showing and Judging

- 4 ... 16th AAA Ltd. National Show and Sale
- 16 ... 2nd International Fleece Show
- 52 ... 2009 Royal Shows

Marketing

48 ... Breeders go Digital with Breedersales.com

Industry

- 24 ... The Highcroft Teeth Trimmer
- 32 ... LaViandé a Current and Future Market
- 42 ... Giving Back
- 57 ... Chilean Vets visit Australian Alpaca Breeders
- 60 ... Maximising your Return from Alpacas... Value Adding
- 66 ... Alpaca Visions in Early Australia
- 69 ... Bob Richardson Awarded Honorary Life Membership

Breeder Profile

70 ... Pioneers Retire: Allan and Carolyn Jinks

In every issue

- 2 ... President's Message
- 3 ... Briefly Speaking
- 74 ... Business Card Directory
- 76 ... PacaPics
- 78 ... Upcoming Events
- 80 ... Advertising
- 80 ... Order Form

Cover 2009 AAA Ltd. National Show Champion Alpaca Photograph



(detail) by

Diane Bulpit

see page 12.

A Message from the President



Presidency of the AAA brings with it some onerous responsibilities, not the least of which is to construct regular editorials for newsletters and magazines which are variously informative, interesting, entertaining or useful. All the better if they are relevant; best of all, be they also passionate.

For this edition, I have started with the last. Passion. A passion for our industry, its integrity, its promotion and its advancement. It concerns fleece, and how to get it.

Fleeced, that is.

The global alpaca industry has absorbed a great deal of investment money over the past 20 years, and is seen by some outside the industry as populated by guileless superannuated retirees anxious to divorce their life savings. Where there is honey, there are bees. Where there is carrion, there are vultures. Where there is money, there are carpetbaggers. (Historically, these were the entrepreneurs who moved from the North to the South of the USA after the Civil War, carrying their all in carpet bags, seeking to get rich from the reconstruction of the South, but having neither prior nor present interest in the welfare of Southerners).

Following the success of the World Alpaca Conference in 2008, one such entrepreneur has decided that it would be a profitable idea to draw upon the energy and goodwill of that event to promote his own event, this an International Alpaca Congress, for which he is currently trawling the world alpaca websites looking for speakers, subscribers, and advertisers. Whilst many high profile speakers have declined his invitation, he has gathered together a coterie of speakers with the promise of an opportunity to promote their services and products in support of a tax-deductible vacation in Spain. The programme, purporting to be aimed at new entrants to the industry, includes one tantalising topic, single-handedly addressing the Kinetic Intelligence of Alpaca Fibre, and Brain and Body Preferred Response. Manufacturing and Management Systems to Increase the Valuable Sentient Properties of Alpaca Fibre. Fashion Designers, Interior Designers and the Hospitality Industry's Orientation Towards Organic Textiles.

Nothing wrong with that, I hear you say (and rightly so) in a free world where people can speak their mind freely, and spend their dollars wherever they wish. Excepting that potential registrants or advertisers may confuse this man with someone who has the authority to speak on behalf of the global alpaca industry; or with someone who has significant experience in the alpaca industry; or that his International Alpaca Congress has been anointed to replace the World Alpaca Conference.

None are true.

That event was held in Sydney in 2008 and the USA in 2009, and is being considered for Peru in 2011 and the UK thereafter. That event, widely supported by national alpaca associations from around the world, is an event which promotes education over exploitation, international cooperation over personal profit, and is generated from within the industry, not by someone sensing an opportunity from without.

The convenor of this new event is Mr Alan Stables. The estimable Mr Stables is an entrepreneur of prolific output, with expertise and wisdom to impart in a list of esoteric and arcane pastimes. All are supported by websites following a simple formula (see http://www.alanbstables.com/checkoptin/). To further explore Mr Stables' veritable stable of skills and knowledge, check out http://www.alanbstables.com/ and explore, variously, advice revealing how to farm ostriches, worms, milk goats, algae, rabbits, poultry, and most recently alpacas; make malasadas, red wine, sushi, chutney, and lemonade; choose a residential care facility or a mountain bike; do the moon walk, avoid the swine flu, earn cash-for-comments, use an i-pod; or just seek further information on shipping, magic tricks, genealogy, property investment, finance recruitment, air guns, pesticides, skins and hides, the Eurovision song contest (and how to enter), or Harry Potter books. Many sites are supported by a book which you can buy online. His most recent dalliance appears to be the production of special interest calendars (models, goats, alpacas, air guns, diabetes, lobsters, candles, soaps - all the usual favourites), listing "fun facts" next to photos related to the special interest. My favourite can be found at http://www.alanbstables.com/calendars/diabetes_calendar.pdf and is the April page of the 2010 Diabetes Calendar, which lists Fun Fact #4: Diabetes is the 7th Leading cause of death in the US for people aged 25 years and older.

Mr Stables is unerringly ethical, however, and generously includes a generic disclaimer for all his enterprises as follows:

"Every effort has been made to accurately represent our product and it's potential. Any claims made of actual earnings or examples of actual results can be verified upon request. The testimonials and examples used are exceptional results, don't apply to the average purchaser and are not intended to represent or guarantee that anyone will achieve the same or similar results. Each individual's success depends on his or her background, dedication, desire and motivation. As with any business endeavor, there is an inherent risk of loss of capital and there is no guarantee that you will earn any

We are in no way responsible for any loss or damage caused as a result of acting upon any advice or opinion expressed on this page or in any of the links on this website or from any emails sent from us." (sic)

I am full of admiration for Mr Stables' eclectic skills, interests, and expertise. And especially his interest in fleece. My point in writing this editorial is none other than to bring to the readers' attention the veritable wealth of untapped wisdom and experience which he brings to the global alpaca industry. I look forward to reading his master tome, How to Start an Alpaca Farm, and sharing the secrets of his keynote address on 7 Ways to Market your Alpacas for Competitive Advantage.

Should anyone chance a subscription (other than the sponsored speakers), could we please have their notes from Mr Stables' keynote address? And given the focus of this issue of Alpacas Australia, we look forward to sharing Mr Stables' advice on how to extract the most from the alpaca industry.

Dr Ian Davison, President

Briefly Speaking

We hope you enjoy the new look Alpacas Australia magazine. The magazine will now be published two times per year in June and December. In this issue, in order to bring you a more informative magazine, we have sourced a wide variety of articles whilst retaining old favourites like Paca Pics and our popular pictorial coverage of the AAA Ltd. National Show.

In this issue our focus is on fleece and experienced breeders and textile specialists have contributed articles giving tips on everything from avoiding vegetable matter to creating exquisite suri alpaca fabric for haute couture fashion.

We say thank you to our regular advertisers for their continued support and we welcome aboard some new advertisers, all of whom might just have that product or service that you need for your alpaca enterprise.

Please enjoy reading this bumper issue. Oh, and we would love to hear from you if you have a story to share or if there are any topics that you would like to read about in Alpacas Australia. Please send your articles and ideas to the editor.

National Alpaca Week

National Alpaca Week 2010 will be held in early May and will again offer the opportunity for AAA Regions, individual breeders and/or groups of breeders to promote alpacas in their local areas, with a co-ordinated marketing approach supported by the AAA.

Dates and detailed information about open farms, educational events, spinning demonstrations and product displays etc. will be published on the AAA web site www.alpaca.asn.au as they are confirmed so make sure to check for activities in your local area. For further information please contact the AAA Ltd. National Office in the New Year.

Have you moved?

Please remember to notify the AAA Ltd. National Office of address changes, including telephone, fax and email address, if applicable.

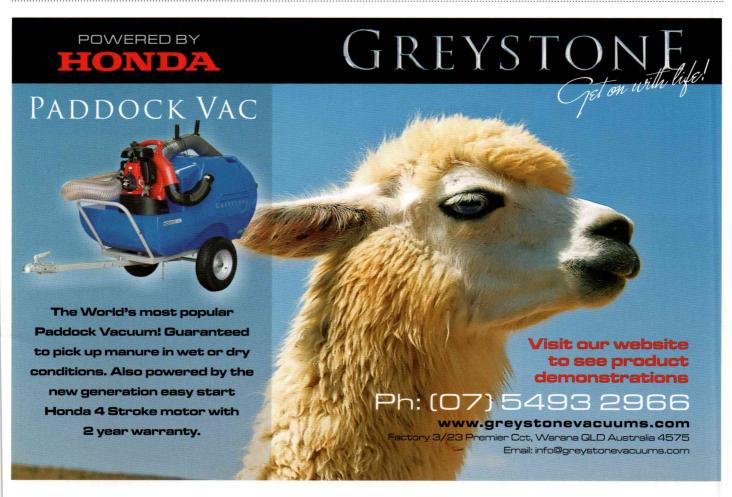
Season's Greetings

The AAA Ltd. National Office will be closing for the Christmas/New Year break on Wednesday 23 December 2009 and re-opening on Tuesday 12 January 2010.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season from everyone at the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. and Alpacas Australia magazine.



photo by Rhoswyn Joyce • Croftdown Alpaca Stud, NSW



16th AAA Ltd. National Show and Sale

Compiled by Sandra Wright, Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.

Photography by Cath Norman

From Mike Peters, National Show Convenor

The National Show and Sale to be held in Adelaide - there were plenty who thought it couldn't be done, but here we are with it all behind us and an unquestionable success. As Convenor I have to point out the obvious and say that none of the tremendous results we saw would have, indeed could have been achieved without the unfaltering efforts of the team of volunteers. Many put their own lives on the backburner to breathe life in to what seemed like a near impossible task. I must take this opportunity to thank our barn manager, Derrick Hall, for his efforts which were mistakenly not mentioned in the weekend program. After all is said and done the stars of the show would have been hard to accommodate without him!

When we first saw the venue we knew we had found what would undoubtedly be one of the top alpaca show facilities Australia has ever seen and we were not to be disappointed. The big win for us was securing the 24 hour a day air conditioning in the animal shed. Comments were made that never had alpacas held up so well for any show, leave alone a National. The National Show is a unique opportunity to showcase our elite alpaca genetics to the world and to have the ability to ensure that the alpacas could be presented in the best possible condition was a great feeling, arguably our best accomplishment.

support of our amazingly generous sponsors. Softfoot Alpacas, Waradene Alpacas, Ambersun Alpacas and Wyterrica Alpacas all gave us their backing and showed tremendous support (both financial and moral) of all our efforts! I can't thank you all enough.

None of this would have happened without the

RANR, who officially opened the show.

The dinner was a great event and fun was had by all. A fun dinner quiz was a novel ice breaker on tables where not everyone knew everyone else. The fun auction, a long standing tradition of the National Show and Sale, provided entertainment and proved ever successful in its ability to raise funds. The evening was so jam packed that the poor man who had provided the disco barely had time to turn a tune! The most rewarding part which had caused much comment was seeing that 60% of the dinner guests chose to sample LaViande as their main course choice. I haven't heard a bad word about it and can personally vouch for just how tasty it was!

Now to the nuts and bolts of the event – the showing and judging. As ever the proceedings were slickly run and things ran smoothly on the whole. I have to admit there were one or two nervous moments on day one when I and indeed many of the exhibitors couldn't see us finishing the judging in time. Thankfully everyone was there to participate happily and if that meant long days then most said so be it. We really do appreciate everyone showing such huge support of the show and a special thanks has to go to those who travelled from far and wide to participate. It is this sort of attitude that makes our Australian National a true picture of the greatness of our industry. The comments from our judges, Wendy Billington and Amanda VandenBosch were favourable and testament to the quality of the national herd. My sincere congratulations go to all the winners in all sections of the Show.

I must also offer my sincere appreciation to all the AAA Ltd. office staff who worked tirelessly in assisting with the show. Thank you also to all those who made the trek from interstate to assist in the set up of the show itself, your generous efforts and assistance did not go unnoticed.

Issues with the event seem to be few and far between which is very gratifying but that doesn't mean we will sit back patting ourselves on the back. A few suggestions have already been gratefully received for ways to improve but we are always happy to receive further comments and ideas from you, the people who saw it from the 'other' perspective.

Mike Peters with the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC

From Kerry and Jolyon Porter, Alpaca Section Convenors

After many months of planning the National Show and Sale it went off without a single major problem. For those that attended, and there were lots of you, some things didn't quite work out as planned, but there was nothing we couldn't overcome so hopefully you didn't notice!

With a near record number of animal entries (672), and a facility that we hadn't used before that presented new problems to be encountered, we were really going to be tested in our endeavours to put this show together. However, with a very capable team of locals supplemented by the generous help of some experienced key personnel from interstate, we managed to keep the show running smoothly and pretty well 'on time' all weekend.

The nous shown by exhibitors in being on the ball and ready to go with each class was greatly appreciated by the small team of Stewards. Thanks to all the volunteers and exhibitors who made the animal show such a success.





From Kylie Martin and Ron Reid, Fleece Section Co-Judges

The number of huacaya fleeces (123) was similar to last year however suri entries (37) were somewhat down in numbers. The overall quality of fleeces presented for judging was quite pleasing with depth in most classes. The Supreme Huacaya was a very bright fleece with excellent uniformity within the staple and throughout the fleece, and had a beautiful handle and fineness. The Supreme Suri was an older fleece with excellent bulk and had an excellent lock formation with good lustre, handle and fineness for age.

A suggestion that we would like to make to breeders is not to 'over show' your best fleeces as some of those entered were a little 'tired' and this did detract from their presentation. As the National Show is the pinnacle of the show calendar, why not save the best for this event? We encourage breeders to select their best fleeces from the current shearing season and hold onto them for next year's National Show.

Finally, preparing fleeces for showing is quite time consuming and it is so important to ensure that skirting is done thoroughly with the removal of second cuts and contamination where possible. Remember, it may be just half a point that separates your fleece from being awarded a champion or first place – that little extra preparation could make the difference.

From David Rouse, Fleece Section Convenor

Another successful National Fleece Show! Thanks to those members who contributed to the event. Although entries were slightly down from 2008 the quality of fleece submitted was not; again fleece test results indicated that the national herd continues to improve with regard to fleece fineness, handle and character.

A revised judging score system was used at this year's event placing greater emphasis on the quality of the fleece as against the weight of the fleece. As a result some exhibitors were disappointed in the points awarded when compared to previous events; this is an issue for further review.

On the issue of the number of fleece exhibitors perhaps it is time for us to consider running a National Fleece Show earlier in the year (independent of the National Animal Show and Sale) in April / May when fleeces are fresh and at their best.

My thanks go to the South Australian Region members along with Southern NSW Region members who gave of their time and assisted in running this event. A great team!

From Wendy Billington, Animal Section Co-Judge

On the Suris...

We were both very impressed with the high quality of the white suri in particular. Amanda commented to me that the white suri were of a very high standard compared with other countries and that of the USA. Presentation of the suri was excellent and given the task under limited time we were able to give considerable attention to our search for the difference between those animals presented for judging. We were pleased to see shorn suri attending the National Show and those exhibitors who managed to do this are to be commended. We were both of the opinion that suri do look stunning in long fleeces however we both felt that with the one year re-growth it is an excellent way to really see the qualities of the suri fleece and its characteristics. So with this in mind shorn suri are to be welcomed into the judging ring and to become part of the older age group classes. With more and more of the older stock coming in to the ring we should begin to see more champions appearing in those re-growth fleeces as we do in the huacaya.

On the Huacaya...

What a fantastic show! We both had the best time judging this event and enjoyed the great atmosphere between the exhibitors and ourselves. We had moved over some fabulous suris and were really ready for the huge huacaya task ahead. The speed of the animals entering the ring, the precision of the stewards and the obvious lack of misadventure in the background meant that all went smoothly for us and we were able to assess the record numbers in record time, with results that we felt very happy with. Congratulations to everyone who exhibited and be assured that the quality of the animals was of a very high standard. We were seriously looking for fine qualities in the fleeces and felt that everyone presented us with excellent stock to select from. The facility was also excellent with plenty of room to display in the show ring. It was a pleasure for both of us to be invited to judge such a huge and wonderful show.

From Amanda VandenBosch, Animal Section Co-Judge

With great honor I accepted the invitation to come to Australia from the United States to judge the 2009 Australian National Alpaca Show. As a native from the United Kingdom, I had the good fortune in the late eighties to work at Lindsay Park Stud, a thoroughbred farm. With LPS being in the Barossa Valley, SA I had great memories of champagne and wine consumption.

On arrival at the venue I was very impressed with the facility; there was ample seating for the audience and spectators, along with a good sized show ring. The facility was well ventilated so the alpacas were comfortable and not sweating, so they were shown in their best light. I met my Co-Judge, Wendy Billington and we strategized as to how we were going to complete the 600+ ticket of entries in the time span we were allotted. Ian Vanderbeek, Chief Steward, did a fine job keeping us apprised of our number of entries, our progress and he cracked the whip as needed to help us get completed.

On day one, we judged 178 suris and were very impressed with the quality of the whites and lights, these alpacas demonstrating excellent fineness, lustre and density. It truly was a pleasure to judge and award these ribbons. As we moved to the darker colours there was not the same degree of depth but some excellent silky, lustrous fleeces were presented. We completed the day with huacayas with some strong competition. The huacayas showed some great depth holding fine, uniform fleeces, with great staple length and density. During the judging a video camera zoomed in on fleece shots and the alpacas as we moved down the line. This was very educational and I believe very well received. After each class Wendy and I would alternate giving oral reasons on the place-getters, giving the exhibitors and audience a clear understanding of the placements. It was a very positive experience for me to see the overall quality presented and a pleasure to co-judge and be part of a successful National Show.

PS. I also managed to sample a good piece of the Barossa Valley prior to returning home!



Supreme Champion Huacaya

Champion Senior Male

Ambersun El Salvador

Supreme Champion Suri

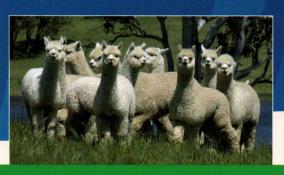
Champion Senior Male

Kurrawa Tari O FT



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National Huacaya Champions

Champion Junior Female Shanbrooke Accoyo Sensation ET



R Champion Junior Female Andean Gold Morning Glory

Champion Junior Male Ambersun Baroque





R Champion Junior Male Banksia Park VCK Carbine ET

Champion Intermediate Female Malakai Fire N Ice



R Champion Intermediate Female Illawarra Diadem ET

Champion Intermediate Male Ambersun Momentum





Champion Adult Female Shanbrooke Accoyo Charisma ET



R Champion Adult Female EP Cambridge On A Roll

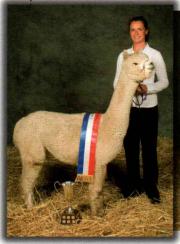
Champion Adult Male EP Cambridge Prerogative



R Champion Adult Male Ambersun Yukon

Champion Senior Female Ambersun White Tulip

Champion Senior Male Ambersun El Salvador



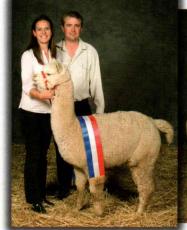


R Champion Senior Female Shanbrooke Traditions Legacy

R Champion Senior Male : Elysion Jupiter

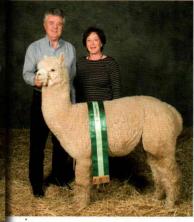
Champion Mature Female EP Cambridge Peruvian Amethyst

Champion Mature Male Jolimont Warrior





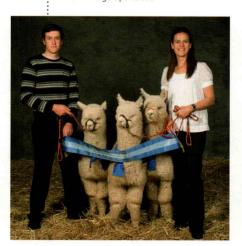




R Champion Mature Female : Ambersun Peruvian Impression

R Champion Mature Male Camelot Tor

Sire's Progeny EP Cambridge Spartacus



Dam's Progeny Shanbrooke Accoyo Taquile



National Suri Champions

Champion Junior Female Surilana Melbourne

Champion Junior Male Surilana Turning Point



R Champion Junior Female

R Champion Junior Male Kurrawa Aiming High ET

Kurrawa Just A Delight ET

Champion Intermediate Female

Kurrawa Jaeda ET

R Champion Intermediate Female Surilana Panama

Champion Intermediate Male

Kurrawa Bite The Bullet

R Champion Intermediate Male not awarded

Champion Adult Female Surilana Capriole

Champion Adult Male Surilana Illuminate ET









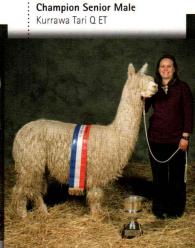
R Champion Adult Female Surilana Polaris

R Champion Adult Male Surilana Pavillion ET

Champion Senior Female Baarrooka Kim Wilde ET



R Champion Senior Female Bedrock Certina



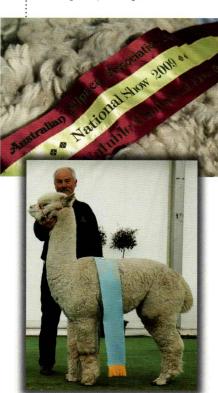
R Champion Senior Male Surilana Donaldo

National Fleece Champions

Supreme Champion Huacaya Fleece Bill Plunkett Perpetual Trophy Champion 12 to under 18 months Wyndarra Designer



Most Valuable Commercial Huacaya Fleece Windsong Valley Firedragon



Supreme Champion Suri Fleece Champion 18 to under 30 months Kurrawa Snapshot



Editor's note: The full results are available on the AAA web site at http://www.alpaca.asn.au/pub/news/results/results.shtml

From Mark Short, Photography and Junior Art Sections Judge

It was a pleasure to judge this year's entries in the Photography Section and the task of choosing the winners was not an easy one. Ultimately the Champion Alpaca Photograph (shown below) was awarded to Diane Bulpit for her exhibit that captured the brilliance and colour of one of those special times of the day. Most photographers dream of capturing a special moment of light and composition like that.



The junior entries were excellent with the Champion Junior Photograph (shown below) being awarded to Ariana McCauley for capturing so beautifully the photogenic appeal of the alpaca.





Back this year by popular demand was the Art section for Juniors. The standard of entries was very high and all the young exhibitors are to be congratulated on their work. The Champion Junior Artist for 2009 was awarded to Olivia Watson whose triptych portraits (shown left) were a pleasure to judge. Please, all junior artists, keep up the great work, you never know where it may lead to in your career. Well done to all exhibitors!

From Sandy Retallick, Alpaca Craft Section Judge

The National Show Craft competition this year featured 87 exhibits in categories of spinning, felting, weaving, knitting, crochet and an inaugural pelt section. Scoring for judging the entries was divided into two sections: 60% of the marks were assigned for construction skills and 40% assigned for visual appeal. Entries that displayed a variety of skills in construction and design and that promoted the visual or tactile qualities of

alpaca were most successful. Skill of construction is generally considered the most important component of craft. The art of craft however, lies in the visual appeal of even the most skillfully constructed of articles. Visual appeal covers a spectrum of criteria including the article shape, effectiveness of overall design and use of colour. Where colour combinations occur, the marrying of tone is also considered.

In a commercial context, first impressions are a vital component in the designing of products. Consumers are variously attracted in the first five seconds by visual impact or novel packaging, and fashionable and reputable brands.



Supreme Champion Alpaca Craft Lorraine Barnett



Champion Junior Craft Jayson Synnot

Considerations by consumers of need, quality and value are generally assessed last, on an average of a further fifteen seconds. The saying in the commercial design world is, 'twenty seconds to live or die'. So how does this relate to craft? As alpaca craft producers the commercial reality is that the items we create ideally need to make an impact in those first few seconds and best exemplify the qualities of alpaca fibre. Be it showmanship or quiet beauty, both have their place in the art of craft.

Thanks must go to all of the entrants in the competition. Your active use of fibre promotes the alpaca final product which so many of us believe in and your participation needs to be encouraged and recognised by us all.

From Mark Short. **National Auction Convenor**

I would like to thank all breeders who nominated their best alpacas for this year's National Auction and to congratulate the owners of the 11 animals that were ultimately presented for auction, along with the two wild card entries. All auction animals underwent a rigorous selection process and thanks must also go to Ron Reid for his time and effort in travelling around the country to assess the nominated alpacas.

Ten alpacas were sold under the hammer, with the top priced huacaya selling for \$78,000 and the top priced suri realizing \$36,000. The total sale revenue was \$282,000 giving an average price per lot of \$28,200. Southern Australian Livestock ran an exciting auction and the prices achieved were on a par with other years. In view of the current economic climate, locally and globally, I think that most vendors would have been pleased with the results.



Top priced huacaya Ambersun El Salvador



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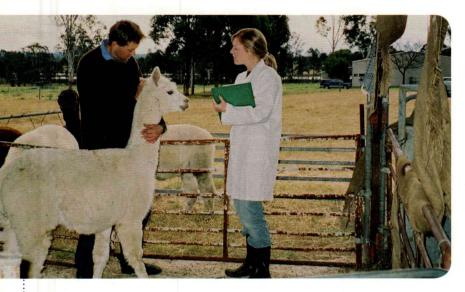
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Advancing Artificial Insemination in Alpacas

Dr Claire Kershaw-YoungPost-doctoral Research Fellow,
Faculty of Veterinary Science,
The University of Sydney

As the alpaca industry in Australia grows and increasing numbers of breeders aim to improve genetic gain in the herd, the need for the development of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) such as sperm cryopreservation and artificial insemination in camelids increases. The use of these technologies is well developed in many domesticated farm animals such as sheep and dairy cows and has had significant economic impacts in the industry. Unfortunately, in alpacas, the development of assisted reproductive technologies are limited because the protocols established in other domestic species for semen collection, spermatozoa cryopreservation and artificial insemination are unsuccessful in camelids.



Dr Claire Kershaw-Young and Byron Biffin (farm manager) with the alpaca herd at The University of Sydney, Camden NSW

In the Faculty of Veterinary Science at The University of Sydney funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation we are undertaking research to advance artificial insemination in alpacas, particularly with frozen-thawed semen. Artificial insemination involves the deposition of spermatozoa into the reproductive tract of a receptive female, and requires semen collection, the ability to assess, process and preserve the semen (cryopreservation), and finally an effective, reliable artificial insemination (AI) protocol. The development of these techniques has the potential to enhance the alpaca breeding industry worldwide.

Semen collection in the alpaca using a mannequin fitted with an artificial vagina.



Using cryopreserved (frozen) sperm in an artificial insemination program has numerous advantages over natural mating. In particular, AI may facilitate the widespread use of genetically elite males thereby increasing the rate of genetic gain. Semen cryopreservation enables 1) the long term storage of spermatozoa enabling genes from genetically superior males to be preserved indefinitely and 2) the transportation of spermatozoa from stud males throughout Australia or internationally. Artificial insemination also reduces or eliminates the need to maintain males on a farm as semen can be provided and

transported from outside sources. Additionally, AI eliminates direct male-female contact and hence controls the spread of disease.

We have established a reliable, effective semen collection protocol in which a male alpaca is trained to mate with an alpaca mannequin fitted with an artificial vagina. Semen collection using this method enables spermatozoa parameters associated with fertility such as concentration (number of spermatozoa per ml of ejaculate) and motility (percentage of sperm moving in each ejaculate) to be assessed and can therefore be used to identify males with high fertility.

Semen is comprised of spermatozoa (derived from the testes) and seminal plasma derived from testes, prostate gland and bulbourethral gland secretions. In alpacas the seminal plasma is extremely viscous and entraps spermatozoa limiting its motility. This highly viscous seminal plasma is currently the major impediment to the development of AI in alpacas because it inhibits the cryopreservation of spermatozoa. Numerous researchers worldwide have undertaken research to develop a suitable cryopreservation technique for alpaca and camel sperm, however the viscous seminal plasma prevents the mixing of alpaca semen with the cryoprotectant agents required to protect the spermatozoa during the freezing process. Additionally, the highly viscous semen prevents the extraction of spermatozoa from the semen to enable freezing in the absence of seminal plasma. Consequently, following cryopreservation, when the spermatozoa are thawed they exhibit low fertilising ability. Reducing the seminal plasma viscosity can overcome the deleterious effect of seminal plasma on cryopreservation, and thereby advance the development of cryopreservation protocols in alpacas.

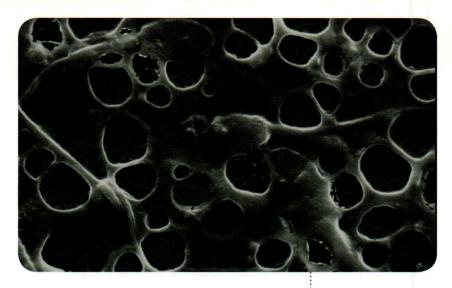
Until the cause of the viscous component is determined and techniques are devised to reduce the viscosity without impairing sperm function, the development of semen cryopreservation and hence alpaca AI breeding programmes in alpacas will remain limited. We are therefore researching

the components of the seminal plasma that are responsible for viscosity and developing protocols to reduce the viscosity without compromising sperm integrity.

It has been postulated that the viscous seminal plasma is caused by proteins or possibly glycosaminoglycans (GAGs) which are large chains of carbohydrates attached to proteins. We have identified that GAGs are present in alpaca seminal plasma in concentrations 20 times greater than those seen in ram seminal plasma, suggesting that GAGs may cause seminal plasma viscosity in alpacas. Additionally we determined that GAGs are predominantly secreted by the bulbourethral gland in alpacas. These findings suggest that enzymes which target and digest GAGs may reduce seminal plasma viscosity or that reducing the contribution of the bulbourethral gland to the seminal plasma may be effective in reducing viscosity. Based on these findings Cassie Stuart (an Animal Veterinary Bioscience honours student) has been researching the use of GAG enzymes to reduce alpaca semen viscosity. Although the GAG enzymes did reduce semen viscosity without affecting sperm function, the viscosity was not completely eliminated and therefore the enzymes were considered unsuitable. However a protease enzyme, papain, which degrades all proteins, completely eliminated alpaca semen viscosity within minutes of treatment, and although it had some detrimental effects on sperm integrity and function, further investigations are currently being carried out to try to prevent this. This research provides two important pieces of information. Firstly it suggests that it is proteins and not GAGs that are responsible for the viscous semen observed in alpacas, because the GAG enzyme had a limited effect on viscosity, whereas papain - a protein enzyme - completely eliminated the viscosity. Secondly, it is possible that treating alpaca semen with papain may aid the development of alpaca semen cryopreservation protocols via the reduction in semen viscosity.

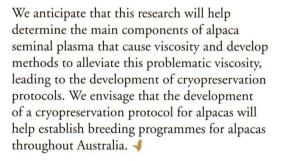
Our research also aims to determine the cause of the viscous seminal plasma. Using advanced proteomic analysis we aim to identify the proteins associated with semen viscosity in alpacas. In doing so, we hope to uncover any potential enzymes that might be used to break down this specific protein. The main advantage to using a specific protein to reduce semen viscosity is that this enzyme is unlikely to have any detrimental effect on sperm function as it will only target the protein responsible for viscosity rather than all proteins within the semen (and possibly sperm) as is the case for papain.

Another aspect of our research is to determine the functional role that seminal plasma has on alpaca sperm such as if the seminal plasma enhances the fertilising ability of spermatozoa, so that suitable freezing and thawing protocols can be established. This requires spermatozoa



Alpaca spermatozoa entrapped in the viscous seminal plasma

collected from the epididymes of castrated alpaca males, as these spermatozoa have not been in contact with seminal plasma. Unfortunately due to the restricted availability of alpaca testes for research, progress in this area of research is limited. A method for the cryopreservation of alpaca spermatozoa collected from the epididymes of castrated alpaca males has been established in our laboratory by Dr Katherine Morton and Professor Chis Maxwell. Although this requires the castration of males and may therefore not be viable for many alpaca breeders, it provides hope that a protocol for the cryopreservation of ejaculated spermatozoa in alpacas is possible. Additionally, these epididymal samples provide a good source of cryopreserved spermatozoa for further research. We are always in need of alpaca testes from males of two years and over, and so, following castration, if you would like to donate your alpaca testes for research or would like any further information please contact Dr Claire Kershaw-Young at claire.young@vetsci.usyd.edu.au or telephone 02 9351 3463.





Viscous alpaca semen :

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2nd International Fleece Show

Lyn Dickson, AAA Ltd. accredited Judge, NSW

Earlier this year I was privileged to be one of the judges at the 2nd International Fleece Show that was run in conjunction with the AOBA (Alpaca Owners & Breeders of America) National Show held in Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

The initial concept was that the World Alpaca Conference would be organised by AOBA as part of their annual National Show & Conference, to follow on from the very successful 1st World Alpaca Conference held in Sydney last year. However, for various reasons, the World Alpaca Conference did not really materialise, even though there were a few international lecturers presenting (including some Australians) and a smattering of international attendees.

There were 935 fleeces entered into the 2nd International Fleece Show (from the USA, Canada and Australia) and anyone who has ever organised a fleece show of any kind will understand the logistical nightmare involved. However it was done in true American style with tremendous professionalism and panache.



The final display featuring over 900 fleeces with their rosettes was a sight to behold, to the enormous credit of the Convenor - or Fleece Show Superintendent in American parlance - Al Beatty, and his large army of volunteers (and paid staff). Unfortunately the concept of international

competition, as instigated by Australia the previous year, with prizes for the country with the highest point-score fleeces was lost in the translation.

The Australian fleeces that were entered performed extremely well and of the 44 entries from 'Down Under' there were 37 rosettes awarded, plus a Colour Champion (suri) and two Reserve Colour Champions (also suri). Among those 37 prizes there were 11 first places - so congratulations to all! The owners of the Australian entries that won any prize should feel justifiably proud, as the standard of exhibits at this level was extremely competitive.

Without wishing in any way to detract from the all-round success of the Aussie exhibits, it is interesting to note that it is, in fact, much easier to receive an award in an American Show under AOBA rules than it is here under our AAA rules. And that is because in a show of this size, the classes are split by colour, age, sex, and size of class (a similar concept for our own Showing & Judging reference panel to perhaps consider for our very large fleece shows like the AAA National).

For example, if you enter a junior white fleece, it is in a separate class for male or female and then once the class size reaches 15 entries, it is split in half, and the ribbons go up to 6 places, irrespective of the number of exhibits in the class. So in a class of say 16 entries, which is split into two classes of 8, 12 out of 16 entries will receive awards!

In the very large colour sections with over 70 entries, they were split into eight separate classes. This makes for very happy exhibitors, a majority of whom receive awards, and I guess that's a big positive. However it does detract from the show awards being a benchmarking exercise, certainly for the minor placings, depending of course on the overall quality in the class.

Notwithstanding any of that, the quality was extremely high in the whites and light colours. Also the top fleeces in the colours were of an excellent standard. I had the honour of judging the (Huacaya) Beige, Light Fawn and Brown Males, plus the Grey Females. I also judged the Multi and Indefinite (don't ask) Male classes.



The Champion White Male Suri Fleece was won by Kurrawa Shavari ET exhibited by the Clark family from Kurrawa Alpacas, Bellbrae, VIC.

The Reserve Champion Black Male Suri Fleece was won by Karri Heights Omega, exhibited by Lorraine Naylor & Robert Wright, Karri Heights Stud, Youngs Siding, WA.

The Reserve Champion Fawn Male Suri Fleece was won by Baarrooka Lethal Weapon, entered by Julie Wilkinson from Baarrooka, Strathbogie, VIC.

Harriet & Ian Davison & Celia Cook of Illawarra Alpacas, Cambewarra, NSW were awarded the trophy for the highest score for huacaya fleece entered by a first time exhibitor at the AOBA Show, with Plantel Illawarra Bardot ET.

In the same category for the highest scoring suri fleece entered by a first time exhibitor, the trophy went to Anne, Bob & Natasha Clark of Kurrawa for Kurrawa Shavari ET.

Full results of the 2nd International Fleece Show are available on the AAA web site at:http://www.alpaca.asn.au/pub/news/results/results.shtml

For the first time in my judging career I awarded a fleece over 90 points, and thinking that the brain had succumbed to the jet-lag factor, I requested one of the other judges to come and second-score it. Without seeing my score sheet, he scored it half a point up on my total, confirming the beauty of the specimen I had before me!

The AOBA score card at that time was identical to our Australian score card ¹, so for those of you who show fleeces and are familiar with the process, you now have an idea of the standard of the fleeces the judges were seeing. The White Colour Champion at the 2nd International Fleece Show scored 95.5 points!

There are no Supreme Championships awarded under AOBA rules, something that I believe detracts from the overall competition. However at the end of the Fleece Show, all the judges assembled and nominated a contender from each of the sections they had judged for the following prizes (in both suri and huacaya) for the whole show: Best Prepared, Best Crimp (or Lock for Suris), Best Brightness (Lustre for Suris), Best Handle and Judges' Choice.

While initially thinking this seemed like overkill from a more laid-back Aussie perspective, I later realised that in a fleece show of this size it was an opportunity to reward some of those very special fleeces. So at the end of three days judging when five judges from three different countries (USA, Canada and Australia) were beginning to feel a bit tired and emotional, we gathered to award the above-mentioned prizes. I should add that the same five judges had hitherto enjoyed a wonderful camaraderie and had epitomised all the qualities required for world peace.

After what seemed like a very long time in a no-holds barred contest, we finally arrived at the decisions, with several egos taking a major battering and previously cordial international relationships shattered! Showing my true colours as a non-impartial Aussie, after the event, I was particularly disappointed to learn that two of the huacaya fleeces to just miss out on prizes had been Australian fleeces, vociferously championed by a Canadian judge.

It's very exciting to see alpaca fleeces reaching this level of excellence. I always make a point of looking at Merino fleece competitions at the various Australian Royal Shows and Sheep Shows whenever possible, and observe with envy the near perfect scores of the winning fleeces. Based on this year's International Alpaca Fleece Show, it was apparent that the international standard for huacaya and suri fleeces is certainly reaching new heights.



Because of my fleece judging commitments over three days, I saw very little of the rest of the AOBA National Halter Show. However it was wonderful to get hands on some of the animal exhibits at the end of the show when judging was completed. There were over 1,300 alpacas shown in four rings under six different judges over a three day period, and I comment once again on the logistics that come with an event of this magnitude. The professionalism of the organising team was apparent, and AOBA allow a huge budget for this annual event as a major marketing opportunity for their members. Many alpacas are bought and sold as a result of just being present at this premier event in the American alpaca calendar.

I was fortunate to be invited to judge at the 2nd International Fleece Show and the opportunity to be a part of a major international alpaca event will remain a much-valued experience. I would recommend others to avail themselves of any opportunity to attend such overseas events if possible, as we have much in common with the rest of the world, and must remain open to ideas and knowledge in the alpaca industry on a global basis. \checkmark



2nd International Fleece Show judges (I-r) Lyn Dickson (Australia), Cheryl Gehly (USA), Cameron Holt (Australia), Jill MacLeod (Canada), Kristin Buhrmann (Canada).

¹ Note: The Australian fleece scoring system has recently changed and direct comparisons will no longer be possible with the differentiations in the new AAA Ltd. scoring system.

Editor's note: The following information was supplied by Jenny Jackson, Chair, AAA Ltd. Showing & Judging reference panel.

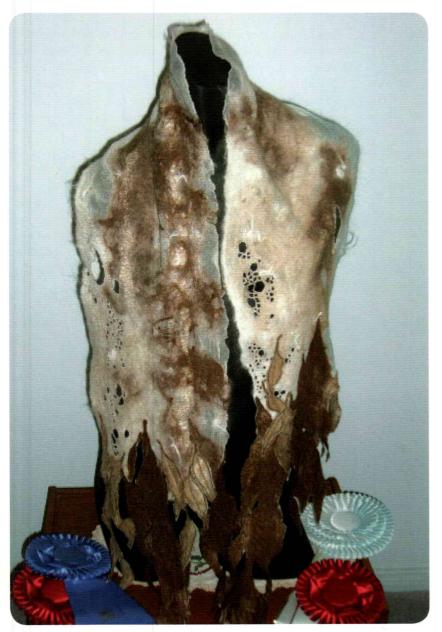
Fleece Judging Changes: As of July 2009 our AAA Ltd. fleece scoring system was updated. At time of writing the intended 6 month initial trial is nearing completion. The new system has been trialled at a number of shows and the response has been mostly positive. Feedback from the score sheets, Fleece Stewards and Judges indicate that some minor changes may be required. These suggestions will be addressed and any further alterations will be in place for the 2010 showing season. Exhibitors can expect the overall scores for their fleeces to be lower than previously. This is across the board for all fleeces with the best fleeces scoring in the high 70s. Improvements in our fibre quality will be reflected in higher scores coming through.

International Fibre Arts Competition

Marilyn Nicholls, Woodward Farm Alpacas

2009 AOBA National Conference

After the success of the International Alpaca Fleece Show last year in Sydney it was exciting to hear that the USA was going to continue the promotion of this event by holding it in conjunction with their National Conference in Ohio this year. I was also pleased to see in the programme that there were sections for International Fibre Arts and Skeins in their Fiber Competition.



I am an alpaca breeder and a textile artist and I use alpaca fleece predominantly in my work. I have always felt it is important to support the Craft Section in our own National show, so I thought that it would be interesting to send some work over to the USA. It was not the easiest of exercises to complete the required entry form and adjust to slightly different entry requirements, but after

a number of emails to the American Owners & Breeders' Association (AOBA) I managed to send three pieces of work and hoped they arrived safely.

It would have been a valuable experience to have been able to be at the conference but this was not possible. At the conclusion of the show I was pleased to find out that Australian breeders had had success in the fleece classes and I awaited the results for the Fibre Arts section to be posted on the AOBA web site. After a number of emails back and forth unfortunately I was unable to find out the results so I eagerly awaited the return of my entries. Finally they arrived.

I was delighted to find that I had received a 1st in the Handwork - Felt - Accessories Class (Advanced), 2nd in the All Handwork - Knit - Garment (Advanced) and 2nd in the All Handwork - Felt - Hearth & Home (Advanced). I was also awarded the Judge's Choice - Hobby Artist.

It has been an interesting experience to participate in a competition of this sort outside one's own country, and to receive details of the scoring system used in assessing the work presented was very useful. Points were awarded for Visual Appeal (25), Craftsmanship (60), Creativity and Innovation (10) and Written Description (5) for a total of 100 points. The judge then added constructive comments at the end of the score sheet.

In writing this I am hoping that it will give encouragement to those alpaca breeders who use their wonderful fleece to create not only garments, but also to look beyond the wearable, into the creative art aspect to which the fleece lends itself. I would also like to encourage them to take the plunge and participate in art and craft competitions as another way to promote alpaca fibre.

For all the results of the International Fleece Show and International Fibre Arts competition visit http://www.alpacashows.com/2009results.asp

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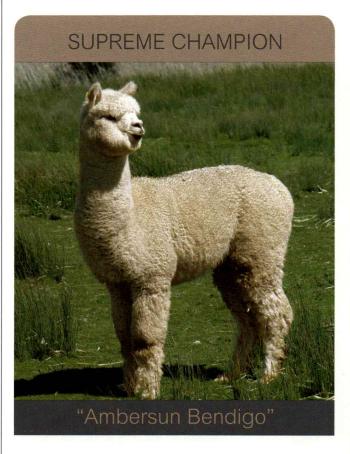
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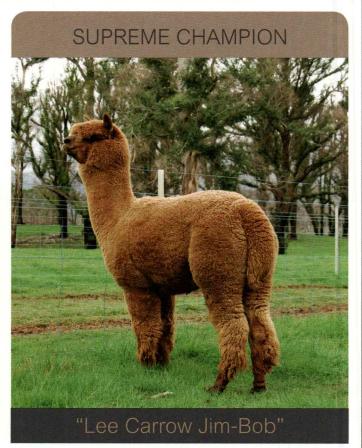


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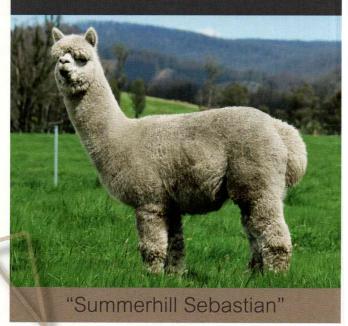
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RESERVE CHAMPION



Bellissimo Surissimo

Julienne Gelber Bumble Hill Alpacas, NSW

Designer suri fleece for the most discerning mills and designers

In March 2009, I flew to New Zealand to examine a woven sample blanket of suri fabric at the offices of AgResearch at the Lincoln University. The sampler was 'hot off the loom' and woven using a number of weave designs and yarn combinations to give 40 plus weave/weight possibilities.

> Four suri breeders stood anxiously around the table as the bolt unrolled. Despite the sampler being washed only and half rotary pressed, the outcome was exhilarating - already apparent was the wonderful lustre and soft handle that characterises suri fleece on the animal. The first stage processing had done nothing to diminish its luminosity. The mill's technicians were fulsome in their praise of the way in which the suri fibre had scoured, gilled and converted to yarn. There were no problems in weaving either. Eureka!

> Both the Textile Processing Manager and the mill's finishing expert were now most enthusiastic to take the project to the next stage - six fully finished fabric pieces utilizing various finishing routes to capture and enhance the natural lustre and softness of the suri fibre.

The final pieces were unveiled on 8 July 2009 to the ecstatic 'true believers'. They were magnificent. The excitement in the room was palpable. The quality of the fabric and the suri fibre's performance in the mill exceeded our wildest expectations. AgResearch commented on the fabric's properties...

"...the finished fabrics have an extremely soft/silky handle with exceptional drape."

We had a beautiful product and it was a world first.

Working with AgResearch was exciting and satisfying for the project breeders and the research personnel alike. The Textile Processing Manager commented...

"the processing team just love a challenge and the suri project got everyone involved. It was a pleasure to work with people who have a vision and the drive and confidence in their passion and who actively do something to achieve their end goal."

For the author it was the culmination of 14 years of dreaming, hoping and planning.

I saw my first suri alpacas at sunset, their silken locks ruffled by the soft wind, turned to liquid gold. I imagined a herd of these elegant animals roaming our farm, producing perfect bales of this glorious, noble fibre from which the finest fabrics would be created; soft, lustrous and caressing, woven from the fleece of this wondrous creature. That was 14 years ago and the beginning of my love affair with suri fibre.



But no one told me that suri fibre was considered impossible to process when it was finer than 25 microns! And I was enthralled by a far lower micron, in the range of 20-22 micron or even finer, which I was positive could be woven into something as exquisite as any pashmina or chantouche.

Without the breed experience and no one to point out to me that the early suri imports into Australia were often broad micron, had poor density and comparatively primitive fleeces, it was soon apparent that my dream could take some time to achieve. But I felt sure that with my wool and textiles background I could understand what high end processing would demand of this fibre and began to plan a breeding programme to refine the suri fibre produced by my herd.

Our Ten Year Objective was a luxurious suri fibre dripping with lustre, an exquisite handle and uniformity of length and micron.

Eight years later, to elicit a response to the significant improvement in the quality of our herd, I began to show samples of our suri fibre to top mills in Europe. Most complimented the quality, some were wildly enthusiastic about the ultra fine baby fleece, but most dismissed the fibre as too difficult to process - it would be too slippery for the high speed equipment which ran hot, too light and long for the scour, the tops wouldn't have hauteur etc. etc ... (Okay, but it was a work in progress and our total production was too low for even a pilot run in a European mill).

Determined to bring this fibre to market in products other than brushed coating, we approached the New Zealand government's experimental mill at Lincoln University, called then WRONZ, but now rebadged as AgResearch. Since the demise of the Australian textile sector and the closure of the CSIRO scour and mill in Geelong, New Zealand has become a mecca for Australians seeking high quality processing, manufacturing and design.

AgResearch Limited is New Zealand's old WRONZ (the equivalent of the CSIRO) facility at Lincoln University. The textiles section consists of teams of scientists and technical people with a vast knowledge in all aspects of fibres and fibre processing as well as a small-scale fibre processing plant with equipment to process fibre from scouring through to finished fabrics and carpets.





The first two contacts with AgResearch, two years apart, were unsuccessful. The mill's technical personnel were sceptical about the performance of the fibre in the micron range proposed for the cloth, and reluctant to work with 100% suri, preferring to blend a percentage of wool to make the fibre easier to process. They didn't believe that we were growing fibre of sufficient uniformity to undertake a successful trial. So we gathered a cohort of like minded suri breeders in Australia and New Zealand and further refined our production; selecting animals with higher curvature in their fibre and embedding that in the herds' genetics, shearing when the fibre was shorter, tightening the micron range and length standard deviation, classing only the softest and most lustrous fleece. And we finally seduced them. In early 2007 they saw for the first time samples of suri fleece they could delight in. And we could collect sufficient raw fibre for a run.

Thus in October 2007 an agreement to proceed to a fully documented trial was formalised between the interested parties (four wildly enthusiastic suri breeders - three from NZ and one Australian) and a circumspect technical department at AgResearch. Suri fibre from both sides of the Tasman was collected, scrutinised, classed and reclassed to meet the mill's tight specification, and was finally delivered into AgResearch in June 2008. The waiting began...

So from where the name, Surissimo and what does it describe? Surissimo is the fibre outcome of 12 years of breeding suris to deliver fibre that performed better in processing, a fleece that is significantly different to current suri alpaca fibre. And the whole fibre delivery chain is different to that of the huacaya alpaca, too. The author decided to brand this new generation of suri fibre, to differentiate it from suri fibre that is randomly harvested from herds where little attention is paid to the fibre's destination once shorn.

Our suri fibre is Surissimo - and it rhymes with bellissimo (Italian for very beautiful). It naturally promises high lustre, nourishment and a silky cool handle. But it is produced from animals owned by a group of specialist breeders focussed on high quality performance fibre. Suri breeders dedicated to ongoing improvement of the breed through further enhancement of the suri genetics, best management practices in husbandry, nourishment and the whole farm environment AND total quality management along the entire farm to mill delivery path.

Fleece: The Ambassador for our Industry

Heather Dunn Braeside Alpacas, NSW

Alpaca is a wonderful fibre to hand spin or felt. A lovely fleece transformed by a skilled craftsperson is an ambassador for our animals. When selling fleece to craftspeople, we as breeders have to get it right. If we don't, people won't come back, and I've known people to shun the fibre altogether because of a purchase gone sour. To have customers returning for more, breeders must firstly address the challenging issues of what happens to the fleece in the paddock.

When alpacas are carrying their first fleece, it has the annoying tendency to pick up and hold an enormous amount of rubbish. Once the tips have been shorn off, the next fleece resists collecting so much material. So you may have a beautiful cria fleece that is off the scale statistics wise, but is useless as a craft fleece because of the vegetable matter (VM). Remember, alpacas are completely indifferent to the fibre on their back. They really couldn't care less.

Seeds and rubbish in fleece can be minimized by groundcover. Maintaining groundcover on your pastures and shearing before seeds set reduces the burden.

Please don't sell fleeces to craftspeople that are encrusted with vegetable matter: they simply won't come back.



White cria saddle (insitu) that is encrusted with VM.

If you have earmarked a cria fleece for a craft sale, consider trimming the saddle a month or so before shearing. I use hand shears and stand in a small pen of weanlings and trim them as they walk by. It doesn't take long and by shearing time the tip has regrouped and the VM is largely gone. Next is dirt. Alpacas roll, we all know that.

Rolling can be minimised prior to shearing by moving the animals into a well grassed paddock and scattering poo in the dust bowls; they won't use them when poo is there. Dirt also migrates to the tips of the fleece when the rain washes dust down the staple to the tip. It settles there and rots the tip making it tender. This is particularly noticeable in cria fleece and those animals which have fleeces described as tippy (often hairy as well).

Tip rot is not easy to manage, it can be trimmed, but it has to be pointed out to a purchaser.

If they hand prepare, they may be happy to trim every tip, but if they are going to use a drum carder, or pay to get it carded, they could be disappointed with the results, and won't come back.

I recommend to my customers that they wash their fleece prior to processing by hand.

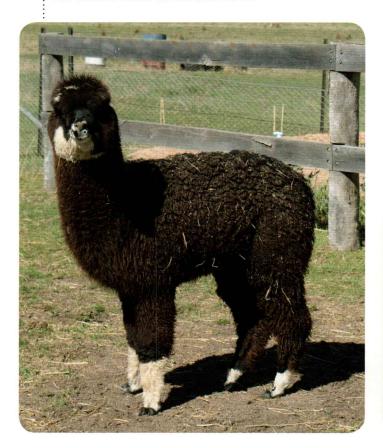
It's easy to do and protects their precious and often expensive wheels from excessive wear. I use and recommend Unicorn Power Scour and Unicorn Fibre Rinse to wash fleece. This product is fully biodegradable, uses less to do more, at lower temperatures and completely removes dirt from the fibre.

Hairy fleeces are basically an age, breeding or shearing issue. Breeders, if you take nothing else from this article, take this:

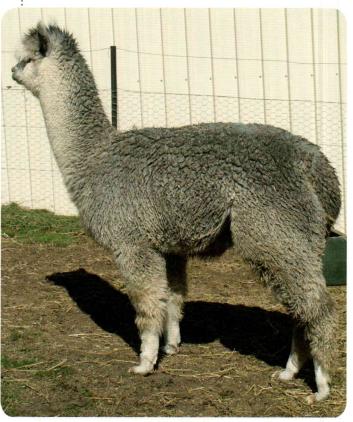
Hairy fleece doesn't make good felt.

It makes awful harsh felt with fibres that halo, prickle and refuse to dye. Don't recommend these to felters or craftspeople; they won't come back.

Black cria which has also been encrusted with VM.



This alpaca is less than 12 months old, but she was shorn at 3 months. She has been in the same paddock as the other two pictured and very little VM has adhered to the fleece, once her cria tips were removed.



When shearing, make sure the fleece is well skirted, that hair from the belly is removed as well as the VM encrusted patch at the base of the neck. Most spinners only want the saddle; I give the skirted necks away.

Once you have addressed all the issues and have a lovely fleece to sell, the next thing is presentation.

I find clear plastic bags are best, garbage bags don't allow people to inspect the fleece while still bagged; they are for garbage. If you fold the fleece in half prior to bagging (which I do), be prepared to tip the fleece out and show the customer the tips. In the bag, include the weight, the price, the animal's name (for reorder possibilities), and if you like, the micron. Some people feel the need to know the statistics, most go on their handle. Don't over price your fleece. It takes an average spinner 4 hours to prepare and spin enough yarn to fill one bobbin. They need 2 bobbins to ply, and 16 plyed bobbins to knit a jumper (roughly). The fleece is just a component of the jumper, the raw material, not the main game.

I hope this article has highlighted the need to treat craftspeople as valued customers, presenting them with quality fleece that they can prepare and use with pleasure. I sell fleece Australia wide on the internet to people who can't stick their hand in the bag until they receive it in the post. I achieve this by honest descriptions; clear photos, reasonable prices, and only presenting fibre to my customers that I would want to spin myself. And they do come back.

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The Highcroft Teeth Trimmer

Chris Highet Harrogate, South Australia

The development of the Highcroft Teeth Trimmer came about in the late 80s when its inventor, Chris Highet was involved with breeding and running 700 Angora goats.

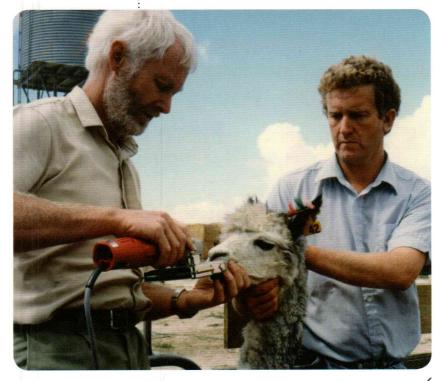
He was domesticating some 50 feral goats as recipients for a large embryo transplant, when he found a lot had bad mouths (loose and long overgrown teeth).

Being involved in the mechanical engineering field, Chris designed, developed and eventually mass produced the current Highcroft Teeth Trimmer, which fits on a 100mm Makita Angle Grinder.

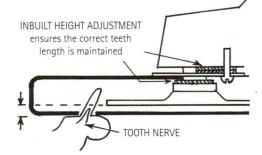
Highcroft Teeth Trimmer attached to a Makita grinder.



Chris Highet and Alan Hamilton trimming an alpaca's teeth.



Height adjusting spacers of the teeth trimmer for alpaca.



During the 80s and 90s Chris marketed this unit for the sheep industry and demonstrated it at field days across Australia from east to west. This resulted in over 5,000 units going into the sheep industry.

It was at the 1990 Lucindale Field Day in the south east of South Australia, that Alan Hamilton of Australian Alpaca Pty. Ltd.
Lockhart, NSW noticed the Highcroft Teeth Trimmer. Alan had just imported 200 alpacas into Australia – the largest single flock outside South America at that time. The animals were on a farm quarantine property, not far from Keith, also in South Australia's south east. Alan could see the potential of using the Highcroft Teeth Trimmer to trim some of his alpacas' teeth, so a date was set to enter the quarantine property and investigate the potential of its use to rectify the offending mouths.

On inspecting the dental pattern of the alpaca teeth, Chris and Alan found that the small 'U' shaped slot on the under side of the guard that allowed sheep teeth to enter the gag, was perfect for alpaca. The only adjustment required was to raise the height of the cutting disc from its lowest setting of 3 to 4 mm which is used for sheep, to the highest setting by adding existing spacers. This setting then left the alpaca teeth 12 to 15 mm long, cutting the two center incisors down level with the adjacent teeth. Some mouths had teeth 65 mm long and were successfully trimmed, albeit the teeth had to be trimmed 12 mm at a time, resulting in at least four cuts.

Since this trial the Highcroft Teeth Trimmer has been purchased and used by breeders and Veterinarians here and overseas, with units being exported to the USA, Peru, Canada, England and through Europe, Japan and South Africa.

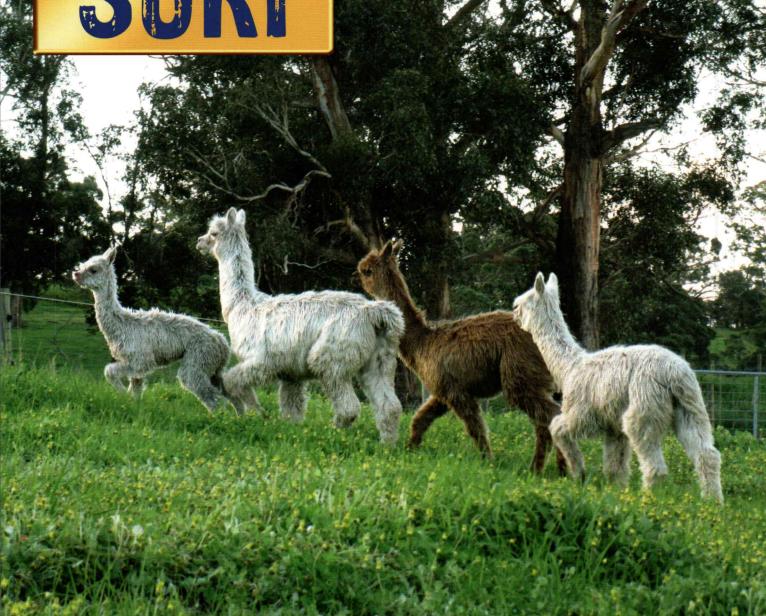
Editor's note: The AAA Ltd. Animal Health, Husbandry & Welfare reference panel recommends that breeders, who would be aware of the implications of animal welfare issues, should not implement tooth grinding as a routine husbandry measure and should seek qualified advice in the event that the procedure is considered to be necessary.

For further information email: higheten@lm.net.au

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Velieris (velie-ris) ...

Robyn Betts Jaegar Alpacas, VIC

... comes from the Latin word for fleece

Velieris Pty. Ltd. has been operating in Victoria as an alpaca carpet manufacturer for just over two years, supported by a philosophy of natural colours, environmental awareness in manufacturing and promoting the qualities of alpaca fleece. This article is the result of an interview with Ed Holman, Operations Manager and Robert Arduca, a Director with Velieris.

> Velieris Pty. Ltd. put itself on the map for the Australian alpaca and natural fibre industry when it successfully tendered for the CSIRO small fibre scour. The anxieties within Australia's raw and natural fibre industry about the future scouring of small lots of natural fibre have been allayed with Velieris securing the scour, and working with the industry to set up a commercial system enabling fibre processors to utilise the scouring service.

> This company's support for fleece growers (alpaca, angora, coloured wool, cashmere and ultra fine wool) will enable Australia's rare and natural fibre industry to continue its slow but consistent growth on the international textile stage.

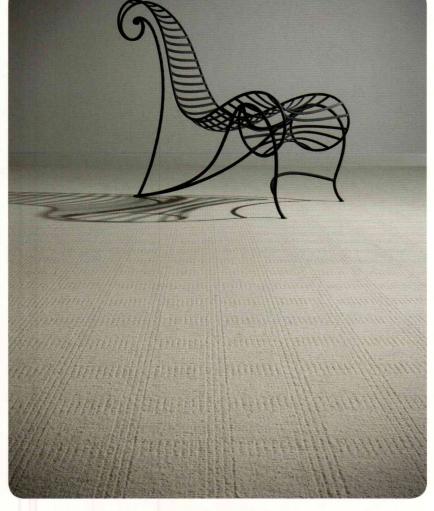
The re-commissioning of the scour, to be completed before the end of 2009, will also support the Velieris company's aim to have a complete vertical manufacturing process enabling raw and greasy fleece to be processed into carpet within a single operation and site.

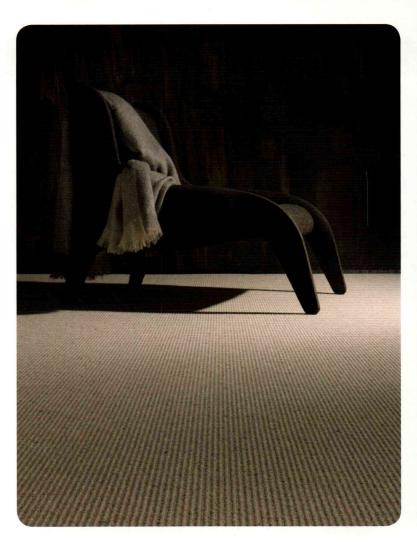
In accordance with the philosophy and aims of this carpet manufacturing company, alpaca fibre (huacaya) is blended with wool and minimal synthetics to produce both cut pile and loop pile carpets and rugs. The product development process has introduced the unique qualities of alpaca fibre to design natural coloured carpet and to enhance the 'feel' of the carpet - there is no getting away from that soft handle of alpaca fibre.

The alpaca fibre's high level of abrasiveness compared to wool increases the carpet's durability and maintenance. This provides an environmental alternative to using synthetic fibres for this purpose.

The blending of the natural and pure colour of alpaca fibre means that the colour range of the Velieris products - blue-black, grey, rusty reds and browns, white and beige, are produced without the introduction of a chemical dyeing process.

Currently Velieris is using strong (over 30 micron) white and coloured huacaya of between 100-150mm in length. This fibre is primarily accessed from Peru but Velieris are very keen to source Australian supplies and suppliers. The criteria for the fibre is specific for quality carpet and rug production and this could present the Australian alpaca industry with a problem because the current emphasis is on breeding fine, soft handling fleece. These issues are similar in all natural fibre industries. In Australia and New Zealand specific breeds of sheep produce fibre that is appropriate for the carpet manufacturing process.







There are opportunities for Australian alpaca growers and breeders who do have strong-fleeced animals to seriously consider developing their herd's fibre characteristics to meet an increasing and continuing demand for Australian strong alpaca fibre in a range of colours.

Velieris is prepared to buy raw fleece directly from growers which meets its specific manufacturing requirements. It could therefore be possible for alpaca breeders to work together to identify and provide a suitable fleece product in required quantities, for the alpaca carpet industry. It could be possible to develop a focus whereby strong micron fleeced alpacas could be shorn every 18 months to achieve the required fibre length and to develop a real commercial potential for these animals.

Suri alpaca breeders need not feel left out. According to Ed Holman, the Velieris company is intending to research and test the inclusion of suri alpaca fibre within their carpet manufacturing process. Suri alpaca fibre does have a disadvantage of being a slippery fibre which can encounter processing difficulties. However, the fibre also has advantages of fibre length (growing over 110mm in 12 months from second plus fleeces), lustre – even in strong micron fleece, and handle. These qualities are all relative to strong micron fibre and to the carpet production process. Coloured suris also complement the Velieris goal to produce and blend natural colour fibre.

Velieris is manufacturing, in Australia, an Australian product for the local and international market. The company's aim to utilise alpaca fibre – both huacaya and suri – to support Australian alpaca breeders and to have a complete on-shore operation, provides the Australian alpaca industry with a future to use and value strong fibred and coloured alpacas. Commercial partnerships between Australian alpaca breeders and Velieris provides an economic value for the production of a high quality product from alpacas that up to now the industry has regarded as redundant.

For more information email: www.velieris.com



Insights from a Cutting Edge Merino Breeder

Julie McClen Oakgrove Alpacas, NSW

Over the last few years Armidale based merino breeder, Tim Robertson has been working on producing some of the finest 'paddock grown' ultrafine merino wool ever grown in Australia. All natural animal fibres have many similar traits and the lessons learnt in the wool industry are quite often valuable sources of information to us in the alpaca industry. I caught up with Tim again recently and asked him if he would share some insights about breeding for ultrafine merinos. Here are the results of that interview.

What is your history with breeding Merinos?

I first started helping my father choosing rams when I was about 11. Since then I've been passionate about breeding ultrafine merinos. For the last five years I've worked on refining breeding and management techniques to take it to the next level.

What is your breeding program focus?

My focus is to create a sub-12 micron bale of paddock-grown wool. I have a core flock and this is integrated with bloodlines from carefully selected external flocks. This is in conjunction with other likeminded business partners with similar breeding objectives. We use AI and embryo transfers as well as natural mating.

What results have you achieved with this breeding program?

Last year we beat our previous world record by producing a 12.6 micron bale which sold for \$440/kilo. We have reduced our hogget (young merino) micron average by .5 microns per year over the last four years.

What influenced your decision to breed for the finest of ultrafine wool?

I could see that the future of the wool market lies in creating a luxury niche. Unless you're growing huge quantities of wool, then a higher profit per head is obviously the aim. I love the challenge and of course the properties of such a wonderful product.

How is the term 'ultrafine' defined in the wool industry?

Ultrafine is a very loose term, but usually wool is considered ultrafine if it is less than 16.5 microns. Angelfleece's (trading name) standard for ultrafine is sub 13.5 microns.

Why aren't your ultrafine merinos shedded like most of the cutting edge ultrafines?

There are several reasons for this. One of the most important to me is the ethical considerations of keeping sheep caged, and possibly in individual pens. I also don't approve of the feeding regimes involved. Growing sheep naturally and achieving a similar micron product has obvious cost benefits. I think the quality of the paddock-grown wool is superior, with a better handle, plus I love the challenge of developing the right breeding program and getting the management balance just right.

How did you achieve the same level of ultrafine wool without shedding?

Forty years knowledge, including careful breeding and management, good record keeping, and an 'eye' for animal selection.

How important is fibre testing to the successful growing of ultrafine wool?

Testing has been crucial to our success. We have tested all of our top-end fleeces (for example 2009 will see over 3,000 fleeces tested) for the past five years. Even a top wool classer cannot possibly rank 3,000 fleeces which have an average of 13.5 microns. Angelfleece wool is collected after shearing into a central location, tested and classed accordingly to ensure quality and consistency across the range. We also use test results as a crucial part of our breeding program.

In your experience which breeding methods have produced the best results in reducing micron?

Again, we have found that AI and embryo transfer work, based on past years' tests are really important to our program, as well as good old fashioned product knowledge - knowing what to look for in the conformation of the animal plus the attributes of the wool.

Which breeding methods, if any, have you found to be counter productive to reducing micron?

Having a larger bodied flock will of course produce a greater average weight per fleece, but I have found that it is the smaller proportioned animals that seem to produce the finest wool. Growers at this end of the market cannot rely on using visual traits alone to attempt to reduce micron.

What sort of fleece weights are common in ultrafine merinos?

Angelfleece averages are: Hogget 1.5 kg - 2 tooth 2.5 kg - Adult 3.0 kg

Does the financial return on ultrafine wool outweigh the reduction in fleece weight?

The above fleece weights may not sound impressive, but when you consider that two years ago we sold wool for \$540 per kilo, we're pretty pleased with those weights!

Why is ultrafine wool so highly valued?

In my fairly subjective opinion, it is one of the most beautiful, luxurious and rare products on the planet. Its amazing qualities, both production and wearability, make it perfect for all types of luxury clothing, from next-to-skin to elegant Italian suits.

What percentage of the world's merino wool is ultrafine?

I'm not exactly sure, but very small. My guess is three tonnes of 12 micron and perhaps ten tonnes of 13. Wool in the 14-15 micron bracket is becoming quite common.

Do you have any advice to alpaca wool growers on which options they should pursue to make their alpaca businesses more profitable?

Test and record, and learn as much as possible about management including pasture management, and the effects of appropriate nutrition on fibre production. Consult with other similar industries such as fine wool production for information and advice. As with any business, knowing your figures is really important. For example, your return per hectare, costs versus income. I imagine that like most newer industries, economies of scale will change as the national flock size increases. I would also suggest that smaller or new producers combine across the industry to develop some savvy marketing ideas.

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A 'Superb Stunning Suri Creation' ©

Fiona Laughton

Beavona Lodge Suri Alpacas QLD

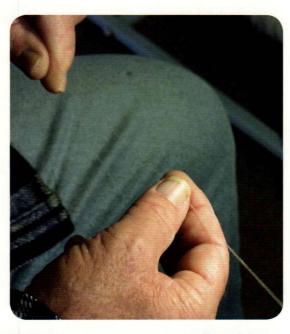
Photos by Susan Wall **Photography** (photos copyrighted)

: The model is Ryley Walsh

What a wonderful life's journey we are on! Who would have thought that these magnificent suri alpacas would present so many opportunities for the enrichment of our lives?

Since falling in love with suri alpacas and believing passionately that their silky, soft fleece is suited to more than just blending, Beaver (Darrel) Laughton has progressed from teaching himself to spin suri on a drop spindle (and it did drop - repeatedly) to mastering the fibre on his traditional wheel and starting our "Superb Stunning Suri Creations" @ label. Being told, "You can't spin suri" was like waving a red flag at a bull! His response was, "This is what I have, so this is what I'll spin". And spin he did – with mesmerizing results.

Hand spinning really does showcase the magnificence of this exotic fibre, confirming its place at the forefront of the luxury natural fibre market.





When the catalogues for the World Alpaca Conference / AOBA National Show in America were circulated, and Beaver saw that there was a hand spinning section, he took some of the under 20 micron yarn he had spun for our second wedding dress and mailed two skeins off for the competition: one skein of 100% suri used in the main body of the dress and another skein of 50% suri / 50% bombyx silk used in the lace overlay and veil. The criterion was for yardage (50 yd), not weight, as in Australia. At the same time he skeined off enough for an entry into the Queensland Royal Show.

Even though the Queensland Royal Show (EKKA) was held after the World Conference / AOBA National Show, Beaver had the results for the EKKA back first. He was lucky enough to be awarded a first in his class as well as ...

"Best Exhibit - Spinning" for the third year running.

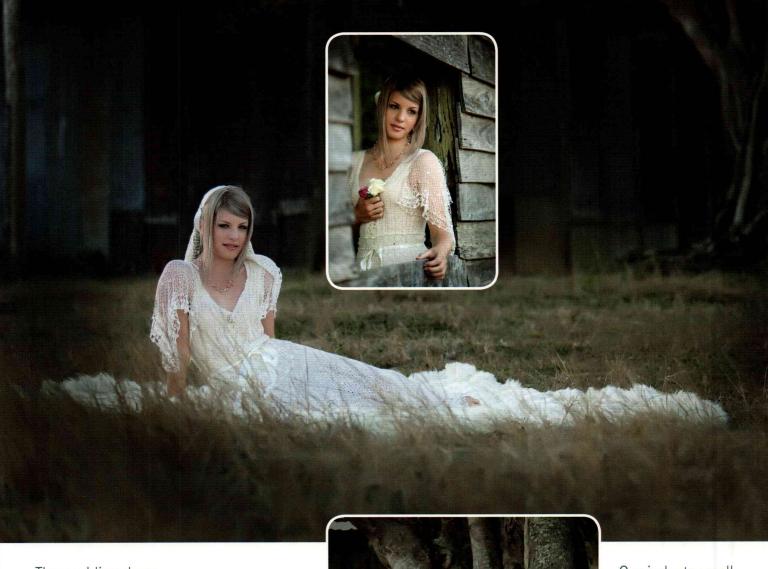
Interestingly, when the skeins sent to the American competition were returned, they included a detailed score card not dissimilar to the AAA Ltd. fleece judging scorecards.

The suri / silk skein achieved a 1st place with a score of 96/100 and the judge's comment was...

"This is just lovely. Combining the two different fibers made the plying a little more obvious. Truly beautiful work."

However the real surprise was the 100% suri skein with a score of 100/100 and the judge's comment...

"Wow! I need a magnifying glass." This skein was also awarded "Judge's choice", similar to Champion.



The wedding dress...

The spinning of the yarn required for the outfit was started in January 2008 and took 335 hours plus 50 hours hand combing of the fibre in preparation.

The dress was started in March 2009 and was completed at the end of September 2009. The final product – the wedding dress – weighing only 380g has exceeded all expectation, it really is breathtaking. There are 4,981 metres of yarn in the gown and veil.

This really is a special achievement – even more so during the International Year of Natural Fibres. The opportunity to show off the breathtaking beauty and the versatility of our suri fleeces to the world has been an honour. ◀

Our industry really is limited only by the imagination and passion of the breeders.

LaViandé – a Current and Future Market

Steve Ridout LaViandé, VIC

LaViandé has been operating for approximately 18 months and in that time we have found many areas that require further research to obtain that optimum 'meat alpaca', not a term that many breeders will come to accept quickly but ultimately this line will be the backbone of the industry for years to come. It will underpin a growing market for the fleece, stud stock industry and even viability of the smaller cottage market.

As of today our largest hurdle is marketing of the product, not just LaViandé but alpaca meat in general; educating others outside the industry, that we as a breed society have developed the industry to become a viable livestock industry complete with a bi-product other than fleece.

The meat itself has very good health benefits which can overshadow others that we can compete with so marketing is crucial to its success.

Broadacre farmers are now looking at the industry as diversity that they can consider.

Acceptance from within the industry is here today, most breeders do accept that the meat side of the industry needs to exist to ensure the viability of the alpaca industry generally.

Promoting LaViandé domestically to boutique markets is, I think, the level at which we see the business being successful in Australia whilst the larger markets for our products are offshore.

Marketing LaViandé overseas has its hurdles, overseas protocols for the slaughter and consumption of alpaca meat have not been written. Other meats that are widely consumed have these protocols in place.

LaViandé is a new product to export with accredited abattoirs hard to come by. Whole slaughter lines in abattoirs need to be shut down, cleaned and inspected for the slaughter process as per the overseas protocols. This process is inspected and then accredited by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS).

We have selected various countries where we see the acceptance of alpaca meat will provide potential market places.

Contacting the respective bodies (our equivalent to AQIS) in those countries where we see potential is a long and arduous task. Most countries' protocols are different from each other, discussion with and assistance from AQIS is ongoing.

Seasonal demands on meat cuts result in many lines being slow to sell. Marketing, pricing and awareness of the product are crucial at those times. Although stating this we see the future being bright with many more consumers wanting the product and overseas markets showing interest.

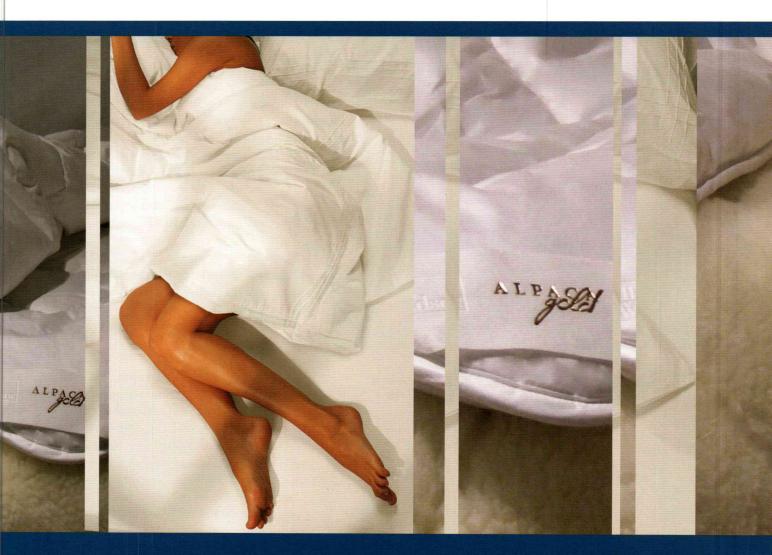
We have also been working with outside parties on hide development and veterinary research into many areas of the alpaca that would not have been made possible unless the slaughter of alpaca took place.







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Skirting Suri – a Textile Process

Robyn Betts Jaegar Alpacas, VIC

As soon as an alpaca – suri or huacaya – is restrained on the shearing table or floor, its fleece becomes a commercial commodity. The genetics, breeding, awards and animal's name and temperament are no longer important. The priority at that point is to obtain the highest commercial yield possible from individual and groups of alpacas with the key being 'consistency'. That means aiming to have consistency within a single skirted fleece and within the total fleece clip of your alpaca herd.



With practice it is possible to identify the variations in micron and 'handle' as well as the visual fleece characteristics of lustre and locking.

In order to achieve fleece consistency it is important to understand the various components of each animal's fleece.

Suri alpacas – the focus of this article – have fleeces where there can be difficulty identifying the head and tail of the fleece once it is shorn off the animal. However, this positioning will help to understand the likely occurrence of micron, style and fleece length variations.

A suri fleece can be sorted into three or four class lines each having a separate commercial value and processing purpose. These sections are:

- > **Saddle and back** usually 90-140mm in length, optimum characteristic style for that animal (locking, lustre, handle and colour) and optimum micron (19-25 micron on average) for that animal.
- Neck and upper legs usually 70-100mm in length, different style to saddle and back, stronger micron (usually 21-28 micron) with a likelihood of medullated fibre.
- > Brisket, belly, lower legs and saddle skirtings – usually 50-90mm in length, minimal if any style, concentrated guard hair and strong to very strong micron.

It is possible that across the saddle and back sections there may be a variation of micron and style which could be classed into A1 and A2 sections. However, each class of fleece from this section has a commercial value but combining the sections will provide a 'best fit' value – often the lesser of the two gradings. It is therefore vital that suri fleece is skirted into these separate sections and each section is as consistent as possible in micron, handle, length and style.

Following this process across a whole herd clip will result in two primary lines of suri fleece according to the fleece prices and gradings stated by AAFL, and this has the potential to then increase the commercial value and quality of your suri fleece clip.

Huacaya fleece is also classified by micron and style, the style including crimp consistency and its relationship to micron. However, the suri fleece doesn't have this obvious visual characteristic so much of the suri skirting process is based around 'feel'. Across the saddle, it is possible to 'feel' marked differences in micron and handle (the silkiness and softness). A suri saddle can also have a variation of medullated fibre (hollow guard hairs) and this can be difficult to identify if the fleece is tightly locked. It is important to recognise that the overall micron and standard deviation of a saddle and 'feel' of a fleece can be influenced by weather, nutrition, animal age, health, and vegetable matter. It is highly probable that a suri alpaca's saddle is a combination of two fleece classes even if the length and lustre appear the same.

The saddle and back will have edge skirtings that can be put into 'the pieces' pile and there also may be medullated sections within the saddle which may need to be included as pieces rather than retained as saddle fleece. This is usually likely for suri-crosses where the fibre is confused between the suri and huacaya styles. It is important to skirt suri-cross fleece for length and 'feel' consistency – pulling out the stronger micron bits of the saddle fleece to go into the pieces line. However, a well skirted suri cross fleece – the saddle and back – of good spinning length (110-120 mm) and

handle, with minimal guard hair and vegetable matter is appreciated by hand spinners. It can be combined with similar fleece types and processed through the many mini-mill businesses as 8 or 12 ply knitting yarn thereby offering breeders a commercially valued product which wouldn't necessarily be achieved through selling to larger alpaca fleece and fibre buyers.

Depending on the age and gender (e.g. breeding females) of the suri, the neck and upper leg fleece may have a very good quality and style but be of shorter length or they may have a style consistent to the skirted pieces - length, minimal style and medium micron. These factors need to determine in which fleece line this fibre will be classified.

Younger males in their first to third fleeces may display moderately styled and uniform length neck fleece and this should not be regarded as pieces. This short length fleece with moderate micron and style can be used as a third line of fleece or can be marketed to spinners or processed as outerwear yarn and blended with other natural fibres. This length of fibre is very good for a knitted processing system.

If these good necks and upper legs are not separated from the brisket (heavily medullated fibre) then they will be classed as pieces and priced accordingly.

Skirting suri fleece is primarily about 'feel' and with practise it is possible to identify the variations in micron and non-visual style (handle) as well as the visual fibre characteristics.

Skirting suri fleece does take practise and persistence and it requires the alpaca breeder and grower to take off that particular hat and put on the textile and fibre hat. That can be difficult, when as breeders we want the best outcome from the genetics we are using and wanting to promote.

Aim for consistent length, micron and style.

The aim of the skirting exercise is consistency - ending up with lines of fleece that are consistent for the commercial market.

This is in contrast to identifying the fleece from specific areas of the animal's body (necks, saddle, brisket)

as the fleece lines. Skirting suri fleece as a process of sorting and classing can result in the identification of clear fleece lines and this information can be an extremely useful tool to increase the commercial yield of your fleece clip and to make future breeding decisions.



The neck and upper leg fleece may show very good quality and style but be of a shorter length.

For more information about skirting suri fleece contact: robyn@jaegaralpacas.com.au





Why Breed for Ultrafine Alpaca?...

Julie McClen Oak Grove Alpacas, NSW

Photos courtesy of J.H. Cutler, Sydney

Photographer Richard Weinstein

Vicuña fabric.

...Consider the Vicuña

Over recent years my interest in fine alpaca fibre and my involvement with the creation of the first Ultrafine Bale, has led me to research the role of Ultrafine alpaca fibre in relation to the world fibre market.

The word Ultrafine is a term commonly used in the merino wool industry, and was first introduced into the Australian alpaca industry by Alpaca Ultimate to describe the micron range in that first Ultrafine Bale.

In merinos the term Ultrafine loosely applies to fibre around 16.5-15.5 micron or lower, and since alpaca has on average a 2-3 micron finer handle to the equivalent micron in a merino, it was thought fair that the term Ultrafine could be applied to alpaca of around 18.5 micron or less.

So why all this interest in 'Ultrafine alpaca'?

The answer is simple, the finer the fibre, the more valuable the fibre is on the world fibre market.



Why is finer fibre more valuable and why has it always been this way, and will probably always be so?

Because as humans we possess a sensitive outer covering called skin. Our skin enjoys the sensation of softness, producing a pleasurable experience. Ultrafine camelid fibre offers this softness as well as exceptional warmth without the weight associated with other fibres. We value those things that bring us pleasure and comfort, and Ultrafine alpaca fibre is highly prized for these reasons. Combine this desirability factor with the natural scarcity of very fine fibres and you create a situation where demand is greater than the supply, this increases the value and therefore the price paid per kilo for ultrafine fibres the world over.

This premium price factor is nowhere more evident than in the trade of vicuña fibre. The vicuña, the scientifically proven ancestor of the alpaca, has the finest natural fibre in the world averaging around 12.5 micron. The vicuña however only grows around 5cm of fleece every two years and this biannual clip weighs about 500 grams. The vicuña only produces fawn fibre and it also has to be de-haired. Vicuña are wild animals that have to be rounded up in an event known as the 'Chakku', which has traditionally involved many hundreds of Peruvian farmers and villagers.

So all things considered, why do the Peruvians bother to go to all this trouble for such a small amount of fleece?

Because, this rare fibre sells for around \$700-\$1,000+ per kilo.

The vicuña fibre is processed into an incredibly lightweight, soft, warm fabric which is sold to exclusive tailors the world over. Recently I interviewed John Cutler of J.H. Cutler, bespoke tailors established in 1884, and located in Sydney, who create high end clothing for their clients. They purchase vicuña fabric wholesale for between \$2,500 and \$5,000 per metre, from which on one particular occasion they created a world class, full length men's coat which retailed at \$50,000.

John talks of the vicuña fabric's unique qualities of superior warmth coupled with a luxuriously soft handle, but without the bulk and weight normally associated with such high thermal properties. He knows it is hard for Australians to value the degree of warmth offered by vicuña since we live in a relatively warm climate, but the European market sets a premium on these traits where keeping warm can, in the coldest of countries, sometimes be a matter of life and death. He believes that if we could supply sufficient quantities, there would be a market for Ultrafine alpaca fibre that could come close to matching the vicuña in micron, but be superior in length and quantity. As well Ultrafine alpaca would open up new colour options, as white fibre can be dyed, whereas vicuña is limited in this area.

Australian alpaca breeders already breed some of the finest alpacas in the world and we have the benefit of a wool fibre technology background. Aiming for alpacas to start Ultrafine and be around 20 micron or less at 5 years old is a goal already being achieved by some in our industry. As well, to maintain blow out to no more than 25 micron in its



Breeding for Ultrafine alpaca is the logical path for those wanting to maximise the financial return per animal on their fleece. With Ultrafine alpaca fibre achieving up to \$66 per kilo in recent times, which is at least conservatively 5+ times that of the price paid for 23 micron fleece, you would have to cut over 10 kilos of 23 micron fleece to match the value of only 2 kilos of Ultrafine. Combine this difference over a few years and you have quite a substantial difference in return on the fleece of these two different micron alpacas. Furthermore, the husbandry, shearing and feed costs for both animals are the same, so it is much more viable to breed a herd of Ultrafine alpacas than a herd of mid twenty micron alpacas, even if they do cut higher fleece weights.

Despite fluctuations in world fibre prices, the finest fibre has always made the most per kilo, so breeding an alpaca that stays Ultrafine to Superfine for several years at least, will ensure the grower is positioned to maximise the return on their fleece production. Once numbers of these Ultrafine alpacas increase, we will start to have a viable amount of Ultrafine fibre to negotiate higher prices with textile manufacturers on the world market. It's not going to happen in a hurry, but as the saying goes, 'all good things take time!'



Black Saturday

Heather Pain Threshold Alpacas, VIC

I'm just a small breeder, one who has toyed with the idea of giving up many times after continual bad luck with crias dying and no female baby in sight. That was until early December 2008 when I found my first baby girl skipping around the paddock. We were elated and thought we had turned the corner. Then Black Saturday happened.

I was caught on the road trying to get to our property after being told there were grass fires there. That was an understatement. Police had blocked roads and there were fire trucks everywhere; there was smoke and fire all around. As I reached the corner where our property is situated another police block wouldn't let me on to the property where my 12 alpacas, 15 horses and 5 goats were. I wasn't allowed onto the property for two more days because of the danger. Many lives were lost on our road and it was designated as a crime scene.

Friends managed to get onto the property on the Sunday morning to check their horses and all my animals. They used whatever was at hand to begin with until they could get some medical supplies.

We had two very badly burnt alpacas which got caught in a fenced dam. Their feet were so bad we thought we would lose them and one had a nasty burn on her side. I found an entire pad in a paddock one day. We also had five very badly burnt goats and scorched ponies. We had the occasional vet visit our property for the first three weeks until we were able to see the vets in Whittlesea who were brilliant, so mostly we cared for our animals on our own with the help of a few amazing friends who have horses agisted with us.

Dressing the feet was the worst thing imaginable and everyone learnt what to do, how to inject and how to avoid the spit. We knew they were getting

better when they began to spit. The only things we could do to treat the wounds was disinfect, apply ointment such as Pottie's White Ointment (before we got that we used any burn creams from the chemist or manuka honey), and keep the wounds moist with saline and very padded dressings. To begin with we changed dressings on the feet twice a day, progressing to every few days as the pain was so great. We kept them on antibiotics and pain killers for about six weeks. The side wound was cleaned with saline and treated with ointments, again Pottie's or Silvadene.

When my husband first moved the alpacas (with the help of the Ranger) into a makeshift yard where they stayed for five months, he had to roll them into horse blankets and carry them. The goats just sat there dazed. A CFA member from Kinglake had actually had to douse the flames on one goat. All have survived and at time of writing, five months later, the alpacas have been released into a paddock to run and skip and frolic and are showing more than a little interest in the boys in another paddock.

We are all weary to our bones but we are alive. We saved the animals and had our second baby girl born a month after the fires. Of course she had to be called Phoenix Jewel.

So, who knows, we may be back in the show ring again one day.

Burn treated with Pottie's White Ointment.



Burnt feet pictured four months after Black Saturday.



Sophie's 'Twins'

Rose Sherriff. Riverdee Alpacas, VIC

Two weeks after Black Saturday, our lives are turned upside down. Family and friends have lost their homes and some tragically, their lives. My workplace in Healesville is surrounded by fires, so for now I have lost my job.

Late Friday afternoon Sophie went into labor. It was her first baby and she is a special favorite so I was a little apprehensive. However all seemed well and a healthy female was born.

Early Sunday *Rosie* went into labor and she was quite agitated, squealing and generally making a big fuss. This was not her first cria, she was an experienced mum. Finally choosing a thick dust bowl in a gully she deposited the baby. He looked like a soggy wet marshmallow dipped in cocoa. I don't usually like to intervene but I had to move him to higher clean ground. I wiped his mouth and face so he could breathe and at least see. He was strong from the start and on his feet very quickly but Rosie didn't accept him and wouldn't let him nurse. After a couple of hours it was obvious we were to have trouble with mum. Oxytocin injections failed to have any effect on her motherly instinct and even though she was producing milk Rosie refused to give it up, sitting down and squealing loudly if we tried to intervene.

I was trying desperately to also feed Sophie's baby as I was not sure she was nursing properly. She never came out from under mum with milk on her mouth, usually just looking about and playing with the teats. I tried feeding her milk formula but could only manage about 2 x 50ml bottles a day - she really didn't want it. Rosie's baby was taking the bottle well so feeding him was a lot easier. I kept him with his mum, still praying her motherly instincts would kick in and she would let him drink.

Monday morning, another hot day forecast. Warburton was put on high alert and people were advised to evacuate. The highway was busy with one way traffic out of town. We had a memorial service to attend and I fed the male cria and left him with mum knowing it would be a long day if she didn't accept him.

On returning that evening we found him alone in the shed, crying and pacing the wall looking for a drink. He was hungry and mum was down the paddock happily grazing with the other two girls. I was relieved at least that he was still on his feet and I fed him his bottle, picked him up and carried him out the gate. Rosie paid no notice; she didn't seem sorry to see him go.

The plan was to put him in with Sophie for supplementary feeding although still being careful not to let him take over from her own cria. I kept him in the shed at night so he could see Sophie but not feed, hoping to give her little girl time alone with mum. Sophie was wonderful and happily accepted both cria as her own. They all bonded straight away and became a close knit family of three, looking so natural that everyone thought they were twins.

I weighed each cria daily hoping to see weight gain. I kept records of feeds. They both seemed to hold their birth weight of approx 9 kg for the first week and into the second week they were gaining weight daily which was a great relief. I named them after our beloved cousins, Leigh and Charm who were lost in their home at Steeles Creek on Black Saturday. Leigh and Charm were an amazing couple who lived their passion for the environment, their lives testament to dedicated ecological and conservation work.

Now, many months later our beautiful 'little twins' continue to thrive and grow healthier and stronger each day. They are still together. Leigh is very independent and outgoing; Charm is very outgoing and friendly, like mum, and a bit of a daredevil often getting through electric fences and prancing about just because she can. They continue to make me smile. They have their own passion and love of life and I'm so glad they got the chance to experience it.

Sophie and the twins at 1 week old. Leigh (left) and Charm (right).





Twins at 8 months old and not quite weaned!

WORKSHOPS FOR









NEW BREEDERS.

Large numbers of people from all over Australia and New Zealand have attended these residential weekend workshops at Flowerdale Estate, to learn about the wonderful world of breeding alpacas.

The Program.

Includes classroom learning and hands-on sessions in the barn, working with alpacas. Learn how to select quality alpacas. Recognise good conformation and quality fleece. Read pedigree certificates, fleece reports and histograms.

Learn how to look after your alpaca's health. Trim toe nails, administer vaccinations, drenching, chuckering, body condition scoring, weighing, shearing. Special equipment needed. Learn how to understand their nutritional needs. Digestion, vitamins, grasses and supplementary feeding.

Learn how to "breed to succeed." What animals should I start with? Do I need a stud male? Matings, spit-offs, birthing, new cria care, weaning.

Learn how to set up a farm. What facilities will be needed? Plans and layouts. Fencing, laneways, shelter, watering systems. Pasture improvement.

Learn how to establish a successful alpaca business. Goal setting, business plans and marketing. Numbers needed to be viable? Train alpacas to walk on a lead. Show preparation. Transport.

The Venue.

Flowerdale Estate is an award-winning, residential, corporate retreat for up to 60 people. Stay in luxury accommodation and let the chefs tempt you with their award-winning menus. These workshops have also provided a wonderful opportunity for alpaca breeders to network and socialize. Many lasting friendships have started at these special weekend events.



The Weekend Package.

Why not make it a special weekend? Relax in the heated pool. Play some tennis. Workout in the gym. Enjoy a sauna or challenge someone to a game of pool. At the end of the day, relax with a pre-dinner drink and a savoury or two. The individual price is \$425 (\$625 couple). The package includes en-suite accommodation for Saturday night, Saturday and Sunday lunch, morning teas, Saturday night dinner, use of recreational facilities, workshop tuition and all course materials.

Bookings.

Complete details and booking forms are on the website at www.flowerdalealpacas.net Or phone Jen on 03 9728 7000.

January Workshop

2010 gets underway with the first workshop on January 16 & 17.



Giving Back

John Bell Eversprings Suri Stud, WA

When my wife Gwyn and I visited the Arequipa Alpaca Fiesta in 2007 we met a Norwegian couple whose story stayed with us as a model of selfless dedication to others less fortunate. I thought that their story might be inspirational to others, other breeders or organizations who benefit from alpacas and who feel as though they might want to support the alpaceros in Peru, alpaca breeders who are significantly less fortunate than the alpaca breeders in the developed world.



In Norway there is a long history and culture of handicrafts and productive activity to be undertaken during the long and cold winter nights. Per Svendsen and Kari Hestnes have built a business to cater for this market and in achieving their own success are helping children on the other side of the globe. This is their story which we thought might be interesting to other alpaca breeders.

it stays in shape, it's warm, but still breathes, and a lot of people have less skin irritations.

As the recognition of alpaca grew, their business grew too: they had to hire more people, move their business out of their living room and indeed it grew more than they had ever dreamt possible. Today they have a vibrant, successful business importing up to 30 tons of alpaca yarn every year but they have not forgotten the people who have made their success possible - the alpaceros and their families in the altiplano of the Andes.

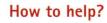
In the beginning

Ten years ago, Per and Kari first met when Kari ran her own coloured yarn shop in Oslo, Norway, and Per sold wonderful alpaca yarn and soft, colourful shawls to her. It soon became clear that they were kindred spirits and their relationship became more intimate and they moved out of the city and started up their business, Du Store Alpakka AS, together. Slowly they built their business, importing yarn from Michell y Cía (one of the largest Peruvian producers of yarns and alpaca garments), distributing it from their own home and going around Norway to trade shows where they could sell their products. The years passed and knitters all around Norway started to understand the benefits of alpaca yarn. Some of their customers never knit with anything else, they say they prefer it to other yarns because it is softer,

More than a business

Per and Kari visited Peru in 2004 to see their main suppliers, Michell y Cía. S.A. During that visit they were walking around the altiplano near the Michell research station in Mallkini when they stumbled across two children - Mirasol (translation - watch the sun), a 7 year old girl at the time, and her little brother, Alex - herding their family's 350 alpacas while their parents were away at the market.

The children had skin sores and ragged clothes. The poverty for these alpaca herders is grinding: no education, poor food, no electricity and poor sanitation and only minimal shelter in freezing conditions. Of course Per and Kari helped with treating the immediate sores but their plight awakened a deeper need in Per and Kari, the need to give back to those who contributed to their own success and they vowed at that time to do everything that they could to help the children.



Now fully motivated to help the children of the altiplano the challenge for Per and Kari was how best to do so. Working on the basis that the children are the future, they felt that by providing better education they could open up a whole new world of opportunity for the next generations.

Schools in that part of the world are of relatively poor standard and are often at great distance



from the villages. The Peruvian Government has limited financial ability to improve the education in such remote communities and in Mallkini the children have to walk 3-4 hours every day to the local school. As a result many of the children had to live at the school, far from home, during the week and try to feed themselves by growing potatoes. The local standard of living by developed country standards is simply incomprehensible.

Making it happen

Having noble ideas is one thing but the real challenge is the dedication and the execution. When Per and Kari returned to Norway the idea was refined further - the building of a boarding school for the children of the alpaceros.

Per and Kari then started to network to find others who wanted to make a difference and contribute financially. By serendipity and with the support of Michell their work soon caught the attention of the Canadian, Peter Mulley who, at the time, had been working in the yarn industry for some 25 years and who was inspired by the notion. Peter took the initiative to start an international collaboration, mainly clients of Michell, and formed the Mirasol collection, featuring several lovely types of yarn sold in Canada, US, UK, Scandinavia and the Benelux countries, the idea being that a percentage of the Mirasol yarn sales would be contributed by the buyers and the manufacturers to support the project.

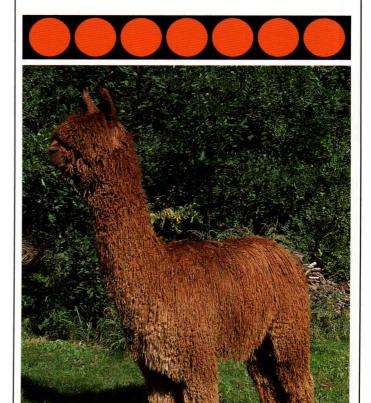
To make it all happen is almost another story, one of dedication and a series of obstacles to be overcome, bureaucracy, distance, project management and a host of headaches never imagined at the start. Their partners, Michell y Cía, provided invaluable support by providing the land, taking care of all the official applications, hiring leaders and teachers, organizing visits to the school and general promotion of the project in Peru. The Michell support has given the school significant credibility and support from organizations within Peru and the initiative is a part of the Michell Social Responsibility program.

Additional support to the project has also been gratefully received from other individuals and organisations such as:

- the Anglo-American Prescott School of Arequipa, who have contributed with large donations of school furniture and materials.
- Quechua Benefit organization (through Mike Safley and Mario Pedroza from the USA), who bought all the books for the School library,
- the Mount Rainier Christian Center from Washington State, USA, who have donated a motorbike, and
- Mr Paolo Zegna, from Italy, who donated a number of bicycles for the children of Mirasol.

Introducing

DURANGO



DURANGO - The Future of Coloured Suri New to Baarrooka's Elite Stud Male Line-up

Durango is a top quality coloured suri imported from the US. He is a 7-year old male, a multiple champion himself who has sired many champion progeny. He is 3/4 Accoyo and his sire is the incomparable DDF Peruvian Macgyver.

Fibre Statistics at 2 yrs: 18.5 mic, 4.0 sd, 98.6 CF Skin Biopsy at 7 yrs: Follicle density 47.8, S:P: 12.6



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Today

Some US\$200,000.00 later, in 2007 the construction work was completed and it started operating as a Boarding House.

As of March 2009 the project has become a recognised primary school and has:

- > 45 students from 1st to 6th grade in primary school,
- > 8 children of 4 and 5 years old in Kindergarten, and
- > 8 high school students who live in the house, but attend high schools elsewhere in the region.

The building stands as a testament to the contributions of Per, Kari, Peter Mulley, Michell y Cía and the rest of the Mirasol supporters. Yet the journey is not yet over, the basic infrastructure is in place but the challenges ahead are funding for teachers, food and clothing for the children, utensils, books and teaching aids.

The project offers the children a warm, safe place to stay Monday to Friday, to receive educational support and to be well clothed and fed.

The ongoing school maintenance costs (approximately \$7,500 per month) are largely funded by the sales of the Mirasol brand yarn, 9% of the FOB value is deposited by the client, directly into the Mirasol account and with Michell y Cía also contributing. Per and Kari additionally contribute US\$1.50 per ball of Mirasol yarn sold in Norway and the Mirasol brand is one of their top selling yarns.

What next?

Well the next challenge is to build additional facilities so that high school students can also study at the school. Over the next horizon is the hope for dental care and health facilities for the neighbourhood. Per and Kari are as enthusiastic as ever and say that it is all a fairytale and a dream come true, and they hope more people will be inspired and support this project. As they modestly say, "It is possible to make big changes even if you are just an ordinary person".



More information?

If you think that this is a worthwhile initiative and you are in a position to contribute in any way, however small, then Per and Kari encourage you to contact either themselves or Lourdes de Vizcarra at Michell y Cía to discuss how you might help.

Michell y Cia participate in various Social Responsibility initiatives including the *Wawakuna Awanku Project*, which has been implemented in various national schools where children are taught to do loom knitting on homemade looms, producing articles which they sell for their own benefit. For that project, Michell provides the looms and the yarn for the knitting.

Per and Kari

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The Mirasol Project: http://www.mirasolperu.com/



With such an impressive pedigree it is no surprise that Softfoot Ryjel has been a multi-champion in the ring and supreme fleece champion. His progeny are displaying the same extremely dense, well structured fleece and lovely gentle nature.

Stud fee \$770 with discount packages and payment options available.

NEW TO THE INDUSTRY? Let us help you with your breeding strategy. Come and visit our beautiful farm just outside Mansfield or call us for a chat. We also offer agistment and the opportunity to partner with us in the purchase and breeding of quality alpacas.

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Why use a Fibre Testing Laboratory for Alpacas?

Tony Schlink (B. Agric. Sci., (Hons.), Ph.D., Dip. Econ. Stat., C.I.T.)

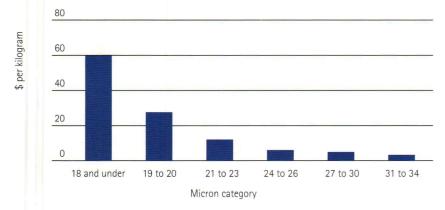
Measurement is an important component for the successful management of any industry and this applies equally to the alpaca industry. The importance of measurement is summed up in the following quote, 'You can't manage what you can't measure. This quote is attributed to Dr Edward Denning who revolutionised Japanese manufacturing after the Second World War with the implementation of quality assurance.

Underlying the role of measurement in quality assurance is the accuracy of measurement. Animal fibres industries have traditionally relied on visual and manual appraisal for quality, with some success, over the millenniums. However, all visual and manual appraisal systems are subject to operator errors and there have been extensive efforts over time to replace manual/visual measurements with appropriate instrumentation. Many of these developments in animal fibre measurements have been driven by the wool industry. Fortunately, if an instrument can measure wool, it can also measure alpaca fleeces with appropriate calibration using standard alpaca samples. The wool industry has access to a number of internationally accredited testing houses for international wool trading, as well as what are termed fleece testing laboratories for wool producers. These fleece testing laboratories are suitable for testing alpaca fleeces at a reasonable price. There are also now available portable fibre diameter testing systems (Laserscan and OFDA2000) that can accurately measure fibre diameter in the shearing shed while the animals are being shorn. However, in the wool industry these systems are more suitable for larger sheds (2,000 to 3,000 sheep), three or more days of operation, as well as the type of fleece being shorn.

Why undertake testing in the first place, as it has a cost, and we have been using manual/visual systems for generations to improve fibre quality? is an improvement in accuracy over manual/visual systems for alpaca breeding and fleece classing.

The major advantage of instrument based testing

Figure 1: Effect of micron on alpaca fleece price



Visual estimates of fibre diameter have approximately 23% chance of predicting the true fibre diameter compared to 90% for testing instruments. Fleece weighing is claimed to be 30-40% more accurate than a classer's estimate. Test instruments provide improved accuracy to ensure the correct allocation of fleeces at classing, as well as animals for breeding purposes. This instrumentation is an aid in selecting the best animal and ensuring that they are given all possibilities to pass on their genes to the next generation of offspring. Since the heritability of fibre diameter is high, the combination of accurate measurement and modern breeding programmes can ensure rapid progress in both quantity and quality over time.

All fibre testing laboratories, including the portable ones, will test for fibre diameter. Fibre diameter is the most important fibre measurement, and together with clean fleece weight are the primary determinants of fleece value. Fibre diameter measured in microns accounts for approximately 70% of the value of the fleece, and thus this measurement is of the greatest importance in animal fibre industries. Fibre diameter is one of the primary determinants of the potential fabric types that can be produced from the specified fibres. As a rule of thumb; the finer the fleece, the lighter the weight of fabric that can be produced. Prices paid for alpaca fleece in the last year (AAFL and Alpaca Ultimate) clearly show this micron price differentiation (see Figure 1).

Long term trends in micron price also show this price differentiation for micron (see the Schnieder Group web site www.gschneider.com). The Peruvian government has decided to intervene within the alpaca market in Peru and is buying quantities of alpaca fleeces and setting a 'floor price'. This has disturbed the current international price structures but it is unlikely to affect the long term importance of micron in the fibre markets.

Measurement of hair originated with Robert Hooke in 1664 and fibre diameter measurement was used by the French in the 1700s to reduce fibre diameter in a Rambouillet sheep breeding programme to match and surpass the wool quality of the then unavailable Spanish Merinos. Modern micron measurement was made possible with the development of the airflow system for routine

measurement of fibre diameter. Airflow has now been replaced, to a large extent, by OFDA or Laserscan systems that can accurately measure fibre diameter. As well as reporting micron, they also produce measurements of variation of fibre diameter in fleece samples tested.

The estimates of variation are standard deviation (SD) and coefficient of variation (CVD). Standard deviation is reported as a micron figure and is a measure of the degree of variation of fibre fineness above and below the average. If you have an average fibre diameter of 20 microns with a standard deviation of 4 microns, this accounts for 66% of the fibres in the population measured and includes all fibres between 16 and 24 microns. This is equal to one standard deviation unit (4 microns) either side of the average fibre diameter and is thus a measure of the spread of fibre diameters in the fleece sample being measured. For selection purposes the smaller the standard deviation the better, this reduces the chance of coarse fibres being in the population and causing discomfort in the resultant fabric when worn next to the skin. In summary, standard deviation is a measure of fibre diameter spread, it is a measure of the spread of fibre diameter in the population around a mean value, it is very sensitive to very coarse or fine fibres in the population and if all data in the population is the same, then standard deviation is zero.

Coefficient of variation is a measure of the variation relative to the average fibre diameter of the sample and is reported as a percentage figure. Once again taking our 20 micron alpaca sample with a standard deviation of 4 microns, we will have a coefficient of variation of 20%. However, if we have a 28 micron alpaca fleece with a coefficient of variation of 20% the standard deviation for this fleece is 5.6 microns. CVD should only be used to compare fleeces with the same average fibre diameter. A very good description of the use of CVD can be found in the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food's Farm note 46/98. Thus, standard deviation and coefficient of variation provides two perspectives on the variability of fibre diameter in fleeces.

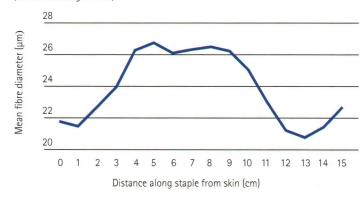
Reductions in standard deviation can be achieved by simply reducing average fibre diameter, whereas coefficient of variation is more difficult to reduce. Coefficient of variation is used to predict spinning fineness. Spinning fineness is a measure of yarn properties where a 5% reduction in coefficient of variation is equivalent to a one micron reduction in fibre diameter for yarn properties. From a breeding perspective, it is easier to reduce fibre diameter by one micron than to reduce coefficient of variation by 5%. Coefficient of variation is also used in sheep breeding, as a low cost alternative to measuring staple strength, to improve staple strength in breeding programmes.

To obtain an estimate of the average micron requires that the samples collected are representative of the fleece. Bruce McGregor in a RIRDC funded project closely examined options for determining average micron and micron variation in fleeces. This study concluded that, "If alpacas are to be selected for low mean fibre diameter, CV, low incidence of medullated fibres and other characteristics, then the saddle grid sampling technique should be used." If you are interested in reducing fibre diameter and increasing fleece weight then a standard mid-side sample was recommended. The full article is available on the Victorian Department of Primary Industries web site http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/home (AG1000).

Dr McGregor's article also investigated along staple variation in fibre diameter. Alpaca fibre growth responds to nutrition and

in doing so increases both fibre diameter and length growth rate. The OFDA2000 has the capacity to rapidly measure along staple fibre diameter that represents the changing nutritional and physiological status of alpacas during the year. In an ideal world the fibre diameter should be the same along the length of the fibre but this is rarely the case. McGregor measured fibre diameter change along the staple that was harvested in November (see Figure 2). Diameter varies from 21 microns to a maximum of 27 microns. The average fibre diameter for a fleece also hides this annual variation in fibre diameter and is only partially observed in standard deviation and coefficient of variation measurements.

Figure 2: Changes in mean fibre diameter samples harvested in November (Source: McGregor 2007).



This variation in fibre diameter along the staple is an historical image of the physiological and nutritional changes that have occurred in the alpaca's life between shearings. Using your knowledge of these annual events, you can change your management and nutritional inputs to reduce the magnitude of fibre diameter changes in the future. This will result in a staple with a higher staple strength and thus improved processing performance. The peak in fibre diameter is easier to reduce through nutritional management and this will reduce average fibre diameter and potentially improves the fibre price. The use of along staple micron profiles can lead to improved nutritional management, as well as an improved produce available to the market.

Measurement of fibre diameter can provide you with a tool to manage your animal on farm as well as a guide to classing and breeding potential. With appropriate indexing programmes such as AGE (Across-herd Genetic Evaluation) it is possible to reduce micron by more than 1.5 microns and maintain fleece weight over a 10 year period. If you wish to increase fleece weight then the reduction in average micron will be reduced.

Although we have improved our alpacas, archaeologists believe that Inca Empire alpacas were significantly finer than those currently available in either Peru or overseas. Mummies of two year old alpacas buried for approximately 1,000 years had uniform fibres of 17.9 microns. These mummified animals were believed to be flock culls sacrificed to the gods!

To return to fabrics fit for royalty, speak to your testing laboratory. It will be a well worthwhile exercise and the cost in Australia is reasonable compared to your overseas colleagues. Our USA colleagues are paying the equivalent of approximately \$10.50, but thanks to our wool producing industry, Australian micron testing prices are significantly lower at only up to a few dollars per test. Depending on which laboratory you are dealing with they can offer other tests such as yield, staple strength and length, etc. that will aid you in your decision making to return to Inca quality fibre and fabrics fit for royalty.

Breeders go Digital with Breedersales.com

: Breedersales

Breedersales.com, a new website which allows breeders and primary producers to research, buy or sell animals, livestock, live seedstock, semen and embryos, has leading alpaca breeders exploring the possibilities of a new online marketplace.

Created by a young breeder and primary producer from Deniliquin, Chris Doherty - and his two business partners, Will Clennett from Hobart and Lewis Romano from Melbourne, the trio have seen healthy interest in their innovation from leading alpaca studs around the country.

"We are thrilled that so many major alpaca studs are embracing the site," says Breedersales partner, Will Clennett. "Already we have Flowerdale Estate Alpacas, Surilana, and EP Cambridge - some of the largest and most renowned stud farms in the world using the service. We've had solid numbers from cattle, sheep and horse breeders too, but the alpaca breeding community's positive response to the site has been by far the largest. It's been outstanding."

Breedersales launched its web site at the Royal Agricultural Show of Victoria in late September, taking its web site live after many months of hard work. The response from breeders confirms that while the site is still in its infancy, it is something that breeders across Australia have been waiting for.

"When people see the site they realise the possibilities. A site such as this can sell animals, genetic material and services not just to the local community but to potential markets right around the country, even the world. With the tools we've added for assessing pedigree, you can also do your research all in one place and if you have questions, contact the breeder directly," explains Chris Doherty.

"Being in primary production myself I know how hard it's been until now to get the best available genetics for my family property. The resources available to buyers have been limited. I thought there has to be a better way. When we all sat down and thought about it - there was," says Chris.

It's free to register on Breedersales.com and free to set up your own personalised home page regardless of whether you are a private seller, stud farm or agent. You can also customise your news and weather options and get breeding news and event updates. For pricing options on annual subscriptions and classified pricing options, or to search the site and see what's on offer, visit Breedersales.com.

Fast Facts on Breedersales.com

- > Launched on 17 September 2009 on the first day of the Royal Melbourne Show in Victoria in the Livestock Pavilion.
- Created by two young guys who found the traditional way of sourcing livestock and breeding material difficult.
- Sellers can list Cattle, Sheep, Horses and Alpacas.
- Buy or sell animals, livestock, live seedstock, semen and embryos for breeding and primary production.
- The aim of Breedersales is not only to create a thriving marketplace for breeders and primary producers, but to bring the entire Australian breeding community together.
- A great way to sell to buyers anywhere in Australia, not just in your local area which can potentially open up new markets and opportunities for agribusiness.
- More than just a classified site Breedersales offers business profiles, classified ads, promotion of upcoming sale days, web links to business, stock/genetic info, photo and video uploads of animals, and sire history and breeder stats.
- Registration and setting up your own profile is free.
- Range of packages available for advertising ranging from \$1200 for an annual subscription with your own profile, dedicated web address and 10 free classifieds at any time, through to one off classifieds and upcoming sale notices from \$200 each.
- Packages for agents are also available and listing of stock agents on the Breedersales directory is free.

For further information, images or interviews please contact: Will Clennett or Chris Doherty 03 8844 4883

Mob: 0429 123328 E-mail: will.clennett@breedersales.com Will Clennett E-mail: chris.doherty@breedersales.com Mob: 0432 534153 Chris Doherty



Australia's online destination for breeders is here. With tools that let you research, buy or sell animals, livestock, live seedstock, semen and embryos it's destined to become a favourite with breeders and primary producers. Visit www.breedersales.com or call 03 8844 4883 today.



KUNA by ALPACA 111

Monica Polar KUNA Brand Manager The KUNA label is owned by Grupo Inca Peru, and is marketed in Australia and New Zealand by Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd.

KUNA was conceived with the idea of producing top quality, fashionable garments, so that customers could feel the softness of the best selection of natural fibers, mainly from Andean alpacas and vicunas.

"Feel the hand of the Andes" summarizes KUNA's work philosophy and social compromise: sensitivity and respect for the environment; pride in its origins and the achievement of having united thousands of small breeders living in the Andes, craftsmen and textile technicians with the globalized fashion world; with the satisfaction of its customers its first goal.

KUNA merges the magical world of textures and colours, which constitute the millennial textile heritage of Peru, with the application of stateof-the-art technology and avant-garde vision of the artistic field of design. One of its greatest achievements is the Gold of the Andes collection, created after a careful selection process of South American camelids' fibers: vicuna, guanaco, alpaca and llama.



Winter '09/10 collection

KUNA is showcasing a wide range of styles focusing on the use of Royal Alpaca, for the coming winter. Transitional garments created in soft and light knitwear using baby alpaca and baby alpaca/silk in jersey or irregular structures; big thick cables inspired by Irish arans; felted knit fabrics are used on light coats and jackets; bulky but light garments are also included.

The A shape and bell sleeves are some of the features in the collection. Knitted fabric jackets made using different textures; oversized vests which can be used on top of shirts of fine tops.

Accessories as always are fun, rolling in different ways, tube scarves that can be rolled twice, wide ponchos which can be worn on top of any layer.

The colours have been inspired by five different themes:

Autumn Leaves: Warm colours that include ochre, reds, browns and neutral shades.

Berry Tones: A set of berry shades, purple, fuchsia and violet.

Inky Blues: Deep blues with a touch of turquoise.

Orange Pops: Beiges and light camels mixed with intense oranges.

Seasonal Neutrals: Beige, Light Honey, Ivory and Black, of course.

KUNA is expanding its presence in the world gradually. It is being positioned as one of the top brands in Latin America, showcasing a unique concept. Nowadays, KUNA products are found in twenty flagship stores in Peru, three in Chile, two in Argentina and one in Dubai. Its presence has extended also to Uruguay, USA and Australia fulfilling INCALPACA'S vision, "To dress the world with the finest Peruvian fibers".



For further enquiries in Australia, Asia and New Zealand, contact us at Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. on 03 9311 0933 or visit www.aafl.com.au

Australian Alpaca Connection's Latest News



For the first time at AAFL we have a spring/ summer range, including knitwear for men and women and a selection of lightweight scarves and shawls, perfect wraps for cooler summer nights. Please visit our web site to see these new garments and accessories www.aafl.com.au



The most exciting news for men is a limited edition reefer jacket. These jackets will be individually numbered, ranging from sizes 46-58 and are made of the most beautiful alpaca/wool blend cloth. The jackets have a superb handle with a composition of 50% Royal Alpaca and 50% 14.5 micron merino wool. Attractively priced, they are extremely good value and will certainly rival our competition in cashmere.



For more information please contact Jennifer Worland at the AAFL office on 03 9311 0933 ext 2 or visit www.aafl.com.au

Donkey / Pink

Charcoal / Cherry 4

Khaki / Rust



2009 Royal Shows

Sydney Royal Easter Show

by Paul Haslin > Breed Captain Photography by Hayley Deeks

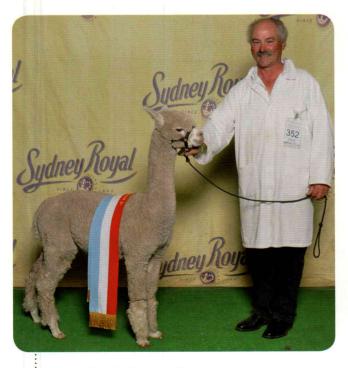
Although it was a little while back now this is the first chance we have had to report nationally on the Sydney Royal Easter Show. With just over 350 entries, the alpaca judging brought together an impressive array of quality from around the country. Our judges were Julie Bird from NSW and Angela Preuss from Victoria.

After two full days of serious deliberation they selected Coricancha Isadora, an intermediate female, as Supreme Champion Huacaya and Kurrawa Tariq Q ET, a senior male, as Supreme Champion Suri. The RAS presents a sash for the Most Successful Exhibitor in each section, calculated on a points tally for placings throughout the judging. These awards went to Shanbrooke (Huacaya) and Kurrawa (Suri).

In the fleece section the Supreme Suri Fleece, from 41 entries, was Bumble Hill Krishna exhibited by Julienne Gelber, and from an impressive 142 Huacaya fleece entries the Supreme Huacaya Fleece award went to Adori Avalanche, exhibited by Rick Hodgson.

The Sydney Royal provides our industry with an unparalleled opportunity to show off all things alpaca to over a quarter of a million people who pass through the pavilion over the five days of alpaca exhibition.

And this opportunity was not wasted, with fashion parades and infotainment sessions regularly staged to engage the visitors. With an impressive display of fleece and a stylish information booth to deal with a steady stream of enquiries the alpaca pavilion has become one of the key attractions at the Sydney Royal.



Supreme Champion Huacaya - Coricancha Isadora



: Supreme Champion Suri - Kurrawa Tariq Q ET

Royal Melbourne Show

by **Geoff Hargreaves** > Convenor

The large increase in entry fees together with uncertainty surrounding the capacity and location of the venue resulted in a drop in exhibitors and entries this year. On the positive side, the cooperation of exhibitors in the timely notification of withdrawals and accurate estimation of the number of pens required, made possible good accommodation within a restrictive pavilion.

We continue to receive excellent service from the team of stewards and officials in cooperation with staff from the RASV. The alpaca competition is held as a model within the management and staff of the Melbourne Royal.

Fleeces were judged prior to the show by Angela Preuss who gave her comments during the three days in September. The champion fleece winners were *Kurrawa Serial Thriller ET* (suri) and *Jigaru Moonlight Serenade* (huacaya). An excellent display of placed fleeces together with those from the sheep competition was mounted in the foyer to the main animal pavilion for the ten days of the show.

The hot competition for Most Successful Huacaya Exhibitor ended with Canchones winning by one point from Shanbrooke, narrowly ahead of Ambersun. Remarkably, Ambersun, with a show team of 12 animals, also won seven of the ten

championships and three reserve championships plus the Supreme Huacaya Championship with *Ambersun Momentum*. Judges, Kylie Martin and Lyn Dickson frequently remarked on the close and excellent competition, twice calling for additional ribbons.

Surilana were consistent winners on the Sunday, easily winning Most Successful Suri Exhibitor, four championships, three reserve championships and the Supreme Suri Championship with Surilana Illuminate ET. The judges commented on the world class standard of Victorian suris and the excellent depth of the competition.

Overjudge, Angela Preuss commended Megan Behler on her judging and oral presentation skills at the end of the Junior Judging event on the Sunday afternoon. Regional committees and convenors of regional shows are encouraged to organize junior judge training and competitions to promote skill development in our younger members.

The Junior Handler competition continues to be a big audience attraction. This event received a boost this year from trophy sponsorship by Ambersun Alpacas. Pied piper, Rhys Owen, entertained the audience as well as testing the competitors in their skills and knowledge. Congratulations to all who made this a memorable part of a great show.



: Supreme Champion Huacaya - Ambersun Momentum



Supreme Champion Suri - Surilana Illuminate ET

Royal Perth Show

by **Ron Raynor** > WA Central Region President and **Bob Garnant** > Countryman Newspaper Photographs by **Bob Garnant**

Over 250 alpacas faced the judges, Julie Bird and Richard Watson at this year's Royal Perth Show. Two days of judging resulted in *Banksia Park Accoyo Intrepid ET* being awarded Supreme Huacaya and *Katydid Xquisite Chimes* winning Supreme Suri.

The Supreme Huacaya came from the Adult Male (fawn) class and the Supreme Suri from the Intermediate Female (fawn) class.



Supreme Champion Huacaya -Banksia Park Accoyo Intrepid ET



Supreme Champion Suri -Katydid Xquisite Chimes

For Banksia Park principals George and Jenny Jackson, and their daughter Sophie, this year's Royal Show marked a remarkable achievement in their breeding program. With their feat of establishing the world's largest embryo transfer program they have been able to fast-track genetic improvement and produce consistent show winning progeny. Six of the Huacaya Champion sections went to Banksia Park animals. The Jacksons also won the Huacaya Sires Progeny with three alpacas sired by Somerset Accoyo Challenger. With the award's presentation, tears of sadness fell for this great alpaca that had recently passed away. Most alpaca breeders in Australia and many around the world have heard of *Challenger* who is now one of the legends of Australian alpaca breeding.

Banksia Park Khan ET was the sire of six Huacaya champions at the show demonstrating the impact that he is now having on alpaca breeding in Western Australia.

The Most Valuable Huacaya Fleece of the show was shorn from *Encantador Manchurian Warrior* and the Supreme Huacaya Fleece was shorn from *Rivergum Rise Sinbad*.

In the Suri Judging it was the fourth Supreme Suri win for Katydid Alpaca Stud this year when Katydid Xquisite Chimes was successful for Kath Williams. The Suri Sires Progeny was won by El Prado Cortez and the Supreme Suri Fleece was shorn from Surilana Tito Man, exhibited by Lawithick Alpacas.

Royal Launceston Show

by Irina Abbott > Convenor

This year the Royal Launceston Show coincided with the AAA National Show so it was gratifying to see a lot of breeders choosing to support this important regional show. The show society was very pleased to secure the services of Judge Richard Watson, who is highly experienced and enthusiastic about supporting the industry.

There were 85 animals present and the standard was comparable to the mainland states according to Richard, who commented that the standard of animal has increased significantly since he was last judging in the state a few years ago. After due deliberation *Olmec Merlin* was selected as Supreme Champion Huacaya and *Serena Lodge Prince Rozario* as Supreme Champion Suri. In the fleece section the

Champion Huacaya Fleece was awarded to *Jolimont Lawson* and the Champion Suri Fleece award went to *Serena Lodge Lady Peppa*.

The show society implemented a few changes this year which improved visitor interest and numbers. The animal nursery was situated beside the alpaca pavilion so many people followed the signs to the end of the grounds and then went on to inspect the alpacas. The pavilion had a South American flavour on the Saturday because the Cavy Club had over 100 animals co-located beside the alpaca section. The co-location was deemed a success and our committee next year will be looking at ways to promote the South American theme for the pavilion and further enhance the visitor experience. Thanks go to those members and friends who willingly pitched in and helped prior to, and on the day of judging.

Royal Queensland Show

by Barbara Mills > Convenor

This year we had wonderful weather again at the Royal Queensland Show 2009 held at the RNA Ekka at Bowen Hills in Brisbane. Crowds were down slightly this year due to the Swine Flu threat and perhaps the global financial problems.

After many discussions and emails with the Department of Primary Industries Queensland and Biosecurity Queensland, our keen, unassessed NSW exhibitors were allowed to cross the border for the show. In accordance with requirements we made extra special efforts with biosecurity measures at this year's show which will of course continue to improve each year. The lack of an AlpacaMap accredited vet in Queensland made it difficult for a time but finally a Cattlemap APAV accredited vet, Dr Annabelle Giles thankfully agreed to assist in auditing the show venue.

We had 50 entries (17 suri and 33 huacaya) which was an increase of 14 from last year, mostly in the suri classes. There is still room to accommodate more fleece entries next year, so hopefully members will get their fleeces ready following the conference that is to be held early next year. The conference will be jointly co-ordinated by the Queensland and South Queensland & Northern NSW Regions and will include education sessions on how to prepare show fleeces with the opportunity to have fleeces scrutinized under the critical eye of a judge.

There were 127 entries (54 suri and 73 huacaya), almost the same numbers as last year. Judge Natasha Clark and Apprentice Jillian Holmes did an excellent job throughout the judging. A small group of alpacas participated in the Grand Parade which is televised every year.

Congratulations to Ann Harker and Barry Hambrook of Hilldale Park Alpacas who won Supreme Huacaya with their proud upstanding male, *Hilldale Park Spartan*. Congratulations also to John and Esme Graham with their beautiful female suri, *Paltarra Carla* who took out Supreme Suri at the show. Both studs took home handsome crystal candlestick trophies, so they will be looking to win again next year to get the pair!

The Queensland Alpaca of the Year award was also announced at the close of the show. *Sunline Galaxy*, owned by Jeff and Jill Willis was the Queensland Huacaya of the Year and *Paltarra Khamsin*, owned by John and Esme Graham was the Queensland Suri of the Year.

Thanks to our volunteer members who assisted with the show. Thanks also to those members who gave their time to man the camelid stand run by Bob and Sylva's display grows each year and looks very professional. The service to the alpaca industry by these members year after year cannot be calculated – thank you both for your passion and drive. And finally to the exhibitors, it was great to see old friends return again and a few new members bravely attempting first Royal Shows.



Supreme Champion Huacaya - Hilldale Park Spartan



: Supreme Champion Suri - Paltarra Carla

Editor's note: The full results of all the above mentioned shows are available on the AAA web site at http://www.alpaca.asn.au/pub/news/results/results.shtml

Alpaca Ultimate: A Brief Update

Brian Kitson Adobe Park Alpacas, NZ

Alpaca Ultimate is a partnership between Penny Pittard (Currabungla Alpacas), Merilyn Mathews (Daisy Bank Alpacas) and Brian Kitson and Maggie Sewell (Adobe Park Alpacas, NZ), as well as our associate, Julie McClen (Oak Grove Alpacas).

We strongly believe that this industry must take an active role in (a) gaining an in-depth understanding of alpaca fleece and (b) developing local processing facilities to utilize the fleece we have available at present. We hope that others within the industry will also take up this challenge, so that the industry may develop a competitive market for all types of alpaca fleece. We like the concept of this happening within the alpaca industry, as the knowledge and understanding gained is fundamental to the development of this industry.

Currently there is a financial incentive towards breeding for finer fleeces. In the future the drive to develop premium product will see other traits such as crimp also being rewarded. This will allow the development of alpaca product that is clearly Australasian and which hopefully has a clear distinction from other natural fibres.

In developing the business model utilized by *Alpaca Ultimate* we felt that there needed to be an objective means for evaluating fleeces and that growers needed to be paid for their fleece promptly. We believe this has been achieved.

A longer term objective is to improve the returns on fleece, but this is really dependent on the scale of activities, the development of suitable processing infrastructure and the development of product that is capable of being sold at a premium.

Our fleece specifications are the direct result of discussions with processors. Simply put, we are trying to gain as much uniformity as possible for each fleece lot sent for processing. Fleece specifications are available on www.alpacaultimate.com.au

Currently we are buying clean white huacaya fleece from 14-28 micron and 80-120 mm staple length. On receipt of the fleece it is grid tested on an OFDA 2000. After checking for length, degree of skirting, guard hair, chalkiness, breaks, handle, appearance etc. the fleece is sorted in two micron increments.

A consolidated report of fleeces that are submitted by each grower is prepared and this is the basis for payment to that grower. Payment is made two months after the fleeces have been tested. In general we are finding that the bulk of the fleeces we test are grid sampling about two micron higher than the midside sample.

The model for product development was 'borrowed' from that used successfully by *Adobe Park Alpacas*. Initially this will be a range of mid weight fabrics (275gm/m2) and various counts of knitting yarn. To date the fabric has been 100% alpaca or 85% alpaca/15% silk.

There has been a fairly steep learning curve in respect to warp and weft densities, abrasion resistance, seam slippage etc. The resultant product is structurally stable and has an excellent drape and lustre and has been well received by garment designers. With consolidation this will be expanded to a range of knitted and woven products that will be available for sale in Australia and elsewhere on a wholesale and retail basis.



Chilean Vets visit Australian Alpaca Breeders

Víctor H. Parraguez DVM MSc and Luis A. Raggi, DVM PhD, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, University of Chile. E-mail: vparragu@uchile.cl

The Chilean government, by means of the Foundation for Agrarian Innovation (FIA, Agricultural Ministry), is developing a program to improve the camelid production systems in Andean Aymara farms. This program, named "Programa de innovación territorial en la región de Arica y Parinacota de la AFC ganadera aymará en camélidos domésticos y silvestres" (Territorial innovation program in the Arica-Parinacota region, for the small breeders of domestic and wild camelids) is being developed by the University of Chile and is coordinated by two veterinarians, Dr. Luis A. Raggi, Director of the Program, and Dr. Víctor H. Parraguez, Sub-Director. The program considers different aspects of the camelid production system, with the most important being: Reproduction and Health, Andean Prairie Management and Improvement, Camelid Products Commercialization.



As a relevant part of the program some visits to important countries in camelid production were arranged. Despite its short time farming alpacas, Australia is actually considered the world leader in at least two aspects of alpaca breeding: genetic improvement and associative organization of the breeders. Under our scope, these aspects have been the key for a successful alpaca production.

Taking this into account we established contact with Dr. Bruce McGregor (Australian fibre specialist who we met in a Camelid meeting in Peru) and Jenny Jones, Administration Manager of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd., who arranged for us to visit a number of alpaca breeders in Victoria.

After a 16 hour flight we arrived in Sydney, where we stayed for a few hours before boarding a flight to Melbourne. Dr. McGregor met us at the airport and took us to our hotel where we began a meeting immediately after arriving. Firstly, we talked about the Chilean camelid production, which is characterized by: being concentrated in highlands (3500-4500m above sea level) in the northern region, close to Peru and Bolivia; being the main economic resource for native Aymara

farmers, a very poor population with low educational level and subsistence economy; small herds where coexist alpacas, llamas and sheep; traditional management of the herd, without appropriate technologies; absence of prairie management with insufficient nutritional offer, and very scarce infrastructure like fences or shearing buildings. Later, we were very impressed by a presentation about alpaca fibre quality given by Dr. McGregor.

On the next day we began our site visits, starting with Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. where we inspected the different types of alpaca fibre produced in Australia, as well as the selection and classification procedures. We also visited the AAFL showroom, which was an excellent experience due to the wide variety and high quality of the products.

On our third day in Melbourne, we hired a car to start our visits to different farms in Victoria. With the 'help' of the car's GPS we arrived on time at the first farm on our schedule, Malakai where we inspected Shane Carey's alpacas and discussed his breeding system. We were then joined for lunch by Philippa and Benoit Ernst who took us to a park for koala observation afterwards and then onto their stud, Coricancha. On day four we visited Russell and Jillian Holmes at Jigaru Alpacas where we observed their animals as well as the expertise of Jillian in alpaca's qualification. Next day we went to Surilana to appreciate beautiful Suri alpacas. The stud veterinarian was doing ultrasound pregnancy diagnosis, so we could observe the success of the embryo transfer done beforehand. Moreover, after a delicious lunch, we had the opportunity to observe the shearing technique usually used with the alpacas and sheep.

The next stud on our schedule was Flowerdale Estate which was memorable for not only giving us the opportunity to observe excellent animals, buildings and management techniques, but also because on this day the Victorian bushfires began. The sky became cloudy with smoke and the night was illuminated by red light from the nearest fires.

Our last visit to the stud, Canchones was cancelled due to the fires, as were our plans to return to Melbourne to take our flight to Sydney, because all the roads to Melbourne were closed. Our hosts Jeffry and Haydn Farman advised us that we would have to take the motorway to Sydney. Nine hours later we were in Sydney... safe and sound!

Finally, we have to say that in addition to the knowledge about the Australian alpaca production system acquired along the visit, we think that the most important aspect in this experience was to meet friendly, kind people. We thank everyone who made possible our excellent visit.

AGE Trait Leader List Now Published

Col Langford AGE Consultant

The AGE (Across-herd Genetic Evaluation) Working Party has decided to publish what we are calling a Trait Leader List which contains the fifty highest ranked alpacas which have been entered into the AGE program, based on an equal emphasis on fleece weight and fineness.

This represents an exciting new development for the AGE as it allows breeders to directly compare objectively the genetic worth of animals.

Publication of the list will allow breeders to identify sires or dams which they may wish to use in their breeding, selection or purchase decisions. The lists will be published progressively on the AAA web site and updated after each new analysis.

The Trait Leader List is not recommending one sire over another; rather it provides a starting point for interested breeders to identify sires suitable to their objective, taking a balanced approach as previously

stated. Breeders considering these sires must look carefully at the individual trait Alpaca Breeding Values (ABVs) as well as other traits in their breeding objective but not in the data. This is not a ranking of sires' value to the industry. It is a useful starting point, as it provides genetic performance for some very important alpaca traits (but not all), that the industry has never had before. A balanced approach to breeding uses a combination of genetic information (ABVs) and phenotypic selection.

Trait Leader - SIRES for the Fibre Value Index (Equal emphasis on increasing fleece weight and reducing fibre diameter). Based on DATA ANALYSIS March 2009.

Breeders considering these sires must look carefully at the individual trait ABVs as well as other traits in their breeding objective but not in the data. A balanced approach to breeding uses a combination of genetic information (ABVs) and phenotypic selection.

Association	IAR No*	Animal Name	Index value	Rank
AAA	62620	Illawarra Yucatan	152.1	1
AAA	62650	Illawarra Yohimbine	145.2	2
AANZ	51792	Hadstock N.Z. Robert	142.6	3
AAA	39592	Halcyon Filigree Hal	139.7	4
AAA	* *	* *	135.4	5
AANZ	51843	Hadstock N.Z. Fitzroy	130.4	6
AAA	54232	Illawarra Xtatic	130.0	7
AAA	* *	**	129.2	8
AAA	29512	Shingleback Ajax	128.1	9
AAA	* *	**	127.8	10
AAA	* *	**	126.6	11
AAA	53690	Shingleback Saturn	126.6	12
AANZ	77884	Silverstream Czar	126.0	13
AAA	* *	* *	125.9	14
AAA	32128	Jingana Tantalus	125.1	15
AAA	* *	* *	124.4	16
AANZ	* *	**	123.6	17
AAA	* *	* *	123.4	18
AAA	* *	**	123.2	19
AAA	* *	* *	123.2	20
AAA	60061	Blackgate Lodge Francisco	122.5	21
AANZ	14523	Purrumbete Snowlander	122.2	22
AANZ	89068	Silverhill Victor	121.8	23
AAA	71009	Clearview Illustrious	121.2	24
AANZ	* *	* *	119.7	25

There are 747 sires within the latest AGE analysis and the Trait Leaders comprise the highest 6.7% for the genetic traits reported. There are 2,136 dams and their Trait Leaders comprise the highest 2.3%.

These alpacas are therefore the elite animals for the genetic traits (under the chosen weighting) listed within the sires and dams entered into the AGE to date.

The first list to be published will be the list for the Fibre Value Index which places equal emphasis on increasing fleece weight and reducing fibre diameter. There will be lists for both sires and dams and they will be followed by Trait Leader Lists for all the other traits reported in the AGE program.

The table will show whether the animals are from Australia or New Zealand, and will include the animal's IAR number and name together with the index value and rank. (Future tables will list the ABV for the particular trait being reported).

The IAR number and animal name allows breeders to identify the owners of these sires.

You may recall from AGE presentations that an animal's ABVs are based firstly on its own performance and also the subsequent performance of its progeny.

In the Trait Leader table for the sires it can be seen that the IAR number and names are missing for some animals. This is because these animals have not been entered into the AGE, but their ABVs have been derived from the performances of progeny which have been enrolled into AGE. It is not possible to reveal the identity of these sires unless the owner enters the animal or their herd into the AGE program.

Data entry for the next AGE analysis will close on 15 February 2010, with reports to breeders in early March. So if you want to find out whether your sire is on the Trait Leader List enter your herd into the AGE without delay.

Association	IAR No*	Animal Name	Index value	Rank
AAA	* *	* *	118.8	26
AANZ	* *	* *	117.9	27
AANZ	* *	* *	117.7	28
AAA	* *	* *	117.3	29
AANZ	71452	Warralinga-Gorge Showdown	117.1	30
AAA	* *	**	117.1	31
AAA	* *	**	117.0	32
AAA	* *	**	116.8	33
AAA	* *	* *	116.7	34
AANZ	* *	**	116.6	35
AANZ	* *	**	116.5	36
AAA	54237	Illawarra Xenon	116.4	37
AAA	* *	**	116.4	38
AANZ	62136	Forestglen Rameses	116.4	39
AAA	58111	Halcyon Humdinger	116.3	40
AAA	* *	* *	115.6	41
AANZ	52027	Pentland Sundancer	115.4	42
AAA	32121	Jingana Ra	115.1	43
AAA	* *	**	114.9	44
AAA	* *	**	114.9	45
AAA	* *	**	114.9	46
AAA	* *	**	114.6	47
AANZ	48901	Ruamahanga Russian Fudge	114.4	48
AANZ	* *	**	114.4	49
AAA	* *	**	114.4	50

- Breeders/owners of these animals can be determined by using the IAR database.
- ** These animals have not been entered into the AGE, but their ABVs have been derived from the performances of progeny which have been enrolled into AGE.

Maximising your Return from Alpacas ...

Cameron Holt
Pambula Beach, NSW

... Value Adding

Today's alpaca breeders have not fully explored potential earnings from 'the total alpaca'.

There is a strong push for co-operatives and fibre development into commercial products as well as a small number of breeders who are developing products at a craft/boutique level. One could argue that not all breeders could do this, and this is probably right. Value adding takes a lot of hard work, design skills and an ability to sense what the market will purchase, but the opportunity is there for all.

There are four main groups where income can be derived

- Sell fleece: Sell alpaca fibre directly to a fibre broker or processor for a current international greasy fibre price, or sell alpaca fibre directly to a co-operative (of whom you are a member) for a fibre price, and receive a yearly dividend. Alternatively, sell to a hand spinner or craft person for a higher price. This would require more stringent fleece preparation, as hand spinners want fleece that is completely free of vegetable matter.
- 2 Develop and value add your fibre either at a craft/boutique level or if you have the volume of fibre, then at the commercial level.
- 3 Animal sales: Stud sales, matings, sale of excess stock and guard animals. You can also become a broker and / or supply agistment to your clients.
- 4 Carcass: Meat and skin sales.

So, now to look at the various options in more detail.

Sell Fleece

Co-operatives (co-op)

You can sell your alpaca fibre directly to a co-op or the like for a current international greasy fibre price. There are normally handling costs like classing and freight but note the impact of supply and demand. The total production of alpaca fibre worldwide (supply) and the demand from international fashion industries are the major factors in the final value of the alpaca fibre. Whilst supply is low and demand is maintained, a premium should always be available for this 'fibre from the Gods'. Breeders of alpaca fibre should keep in mind that the premium prices are paid for the finer fibre.

As this article is going to print, the alpaca fibre industries are suffering a decline in prices which is said to be mainly caused by the severe global recession. Breeders should refer to their co-op or fibre purchasing broker, for their latest price structure.

The following web sites are sources of information on current prices around the world:

- > Australia . . . AAFL www.aafl.com.au
- > Canada ... CCFC www.fibrecoop.ca
- > USA AFCNA . . www.afcna.com
- > Alpha Tops prices www.alphatops.com

Co-ops offer a place to sell fibre and, if the breeder is a shareholder of the co-op, the opportunity to share in the net return by way of bonuses or product. Some co-ops will sell raw fibre to industry in commercial lots and some will value add.

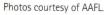
In Australia the first co-op was established in 1995. It was a breeder organisation that worked hard to find and create markets for alpaca fibre. They funded research to find uses for the fibre, and invested significant monies into purchasing textile machinery. Early production was in doonas, yarn, rugs, blankets, socks etc. However, the mill was considered not to be profitable and was closed. The co-op then formed strategic partnerships and high quality cloth was made, albeit blended with Merino wool due to the lack of fine alpaca fibre. It was at this stage that the co-op decided to support the strategic partners by withdrawing from its own creation of product. It became the co-op's job to supply well classed, raw fibre for product manufacture.

Currently Australia has around 115,000 alpacas producing an average of 2 kgs per animal. This would mean a total of 230,000 kgs of which the co-op (now known as Australian Alpaca Fleece Limited, established in 2004) is hoping to receive over 100,000 kgs in the 2008/09 season.

Along with all other animal fibres there has been a reduction in demand for products, which in turn reduces the price that processors are prepared to pay for the raw product. At the 2009 AAA Ltd. National Show AAFL announced that they have set up a small dedicated classing facility in Arequipa, Peru. It is their belief that the savings in classing, scouring and value adding brought about by this initiative will add more return to Australian growers. AAFL's vision for the year 2020 is for receivals of around 3.5 million kgs.

AAFL have created their own logo "Australian Alpaca Connection" (owned by all shareholders of AAFL). This was done to value add as there was insufficient margin in just buying and selling fleece. AAFL's goal is to expand the label into the Northern Hemisphere so they can sell products over the full calendar year.









In conjunction with its strategic partners AAFL is producing fine spinning yarns, dress and work socks, blankets and throw rugs, quilts and underblankets, knitwear, coats, scarves and shawls, and wall hangings.

One of AAFL's clients is Waverley Woollen Mills in Tasmania. This mill is Australia's oldest mill, built in 1874 on Distillery Creek in Launceston. The mill was known for its supply of soft water from the creek and the large water wheel which was used to drive the machinery. WWM is also famous for its master weavers in the early days and now some 135 years later this mill is processing alpaca tops produced by AAFL from Australian alpacas. The mill purchases white alpaca tops of around 22 microns to make a boucle fancy yarn which they use to weave alpaca blankets and throw rugs.

These examples indicate what is possible as a co-op or organisation like AAFL expands with grower support of their fibre. Without grower support this would not be possible.

Fibre broker or processor

Australia

Creswick Woollen Mills (CWM) was founded in 1947 in Creswick, a historic gold mining town located near Ballarat. The Mill has a long tradition of manufacturing high quality natural fibre products for the Australian and overseas markets. As Australia's last remaining coloured woollen spinning mill of its type, CWM processes wool and alpaca fleece purchased from Australian farmers wherever possible. Creswick have a wide range of Australian made and imported products utilizing cashmere, alpaca, merino, cotton, silk and bamboo. CWM is increasing the quantity of fibre sourced directly from alpaca breeders every year and is committed to ongoing manufacturing in Australia. They have a goal to use Australian alpaca fibre in Australian made products. CWM do not process alpaca breeders' own fleece to be returned to them. They only purchase fibre and have implemented a system to ensure that each kilogram provided by a breeder is tracked. As a consequence each breeder will have the opportunity to buy product from a spinning batch containing their fleece.



The CWM alpaca product range includes blankets, throws, billabong picnic blankets, socks and fashion accessories



The mill only runs a woollen : line (no worsted spinning).

Australia and New Zealand

Please refer to page 56 for a comprehensive article on Alpaca Ultimate.

Britain

In Britain, another purchaser and processor of fibre is UK Alpaca Ltd of Devon, UK run by Chas Brooke and Rachel Hebditch. Chas and Rachel are alpaca breeders with over twelve years of alpaca experience and are some of the early pioneers of the British alpaca industry. Through their fibre company they purchase approximately 4 tons of huacaya per year grading it into two micron groups, 20 microns and finer and 21-26 microns. They also class into five colour groups. Their basic aim is to supply the wholesale side of textiles, where they supply coned yarn to a number of manufacturers and knitwear designers and also support the retail sector through internet and mail order with their knitting yarns. The product is British grown and manufactured. They have their raw fibre carded, combed and worsted spun in a working museum in Uffculme. They hope to start processing suri this year (2009).

Small commercial enterprises (mini mills)

Many owners of mini mills around the world are value adding, either for themselves or processing fibre into yarn for alpaca breeders. **Anne Marie and Trevor Harwood** of Echo Beach Alpacas at Mt Barker, South Australia purchased their mini mill in 2004. They were spurred on by the lack of such equipment in Australia at the time and saw the need for small breeders to be able to value add their products. Although the throughput is relatively low (1 person = 6 kg a day) the quality of the finished item is excellent (the output of an average mini mill is around 12-16 kg per day).

Anne's mill consists of a variety of machines which take the raw fibre and convert it into various forms. The process is carried out using a semi worsted system. Anne runs two lines - huacaya and suri - and processes fleeces from breeders around Australia into rovings for handspinners, yarn in 2-10 ply, batts and felt. They also buy fleece from breeders to value add by processing into product for sale.

Anne is a weaver and uses the coarser fibres from the older alpacas for rug wool. She also makes a range of handbags and wall hangings from felt. Doonas and dog beds are also made from the fibres which aren't good enough for yarn.



Selling to a hand spinner

Breeders who decide to sell fleece to handspinners should not see it as a way to offload fleece that would otherwise not be sold. Handspinners are our surrogate ambassadors for the alpaca fibre and they should have access to well priced, reasonably clean, soft handling fleece that has good character and style, and is free from vegetable matter (VM). Both good and bad fleece will carry your name well beyond the first transaction.



Please refer to page 22 for a comprehensive article by a noted hand spinner, Heather Dunn.

Develop Fleece

Craft / boutique

These areas are perfectly placed in a niche market for those alpaca breeders who wish to value add their own fibre. This area enables the smaller breeder to indulge themselves with coloured alpacas whose colours will suit those buyers who frequent these boutiques for hand/machine spun and manufactured garments.

The first process in the chain is to establish where you will have your fibre spun. Small mills would probably take quantities of around 100 kg of similar micron, length and acceptable style. Colours could be blended to your particular needs. Smaller quantities may go to a mini mill with around 10 kg minimum lots. Larger commercial mills would prefer 3,000-4,000 kg in a run. However, mills will adapt to clients' needs and these figures may be reduced with negotiation.

When deciding on choice of processing you obviously need to be aware of what you are making as an end product as this will decide the machine settings and whether the fibre is to be processed on the woollen or worsted system. Remember, whatever you do, prepare your fibre correctly because reputations are made and broken very easily in this industry.

Value Adding

An example of a breeder successfully value adding is Kerry Bettinson from Toft Alpacas, United Kingdom, who value adds the family fleece as well as purchasing fibre from other breeders to create her products. Kerry creates her own designs and has set her goal as producing and selling British alpaca products direct to customers as well as selling to retail outlets.

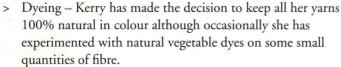


She processes some 3,000 kg of natural colours which she produces into yarns of 2 and 4 ply, double knit and aran weight knitting yarns. Kerry tries to only use the first and second fleeces in her main fabric lines and the coarse fibre below 30 microns is used for handbags and similar products.

Kerry sells finished product and yarn. She has her own trailer which displays the goods and she attends community shows as well as alpaca shows. Her web site is also set up for sales, both locally and internationally. She wholesales to shops and has her own farm boutique where all the products are available for sale.

Kerry has shown a very proactive approach by outsourcing craftspeople to make her designs that she in turn sells to an eagerly awaiting clientele. Her goal is to get her own "In Town Boutique" established in London or somewhere similar.





- Knitting there is a team of over 30 hand knitters who work with her yarn and to her design. She prefers simplicity in the design to allow the alpaca to be shown at its best.
- Weaving her woven shawls and blankets are also outsourced to craftspeople in the UK.
- Haute Couture Kerry has a few master hand weavers who occasionally will do exclusive one off pieces to be included in her overall group of products.



Felting - a small amount of felting is also carried out and this is used to produce the handbag range. A lot of the leg fibre is used to make these products. These coarser fibres are hard wearing and through felting become bulky and well structured fabrics.

The Toft Alpaca Shop now does the bulk of selling on-line, and regularly ship internationally. They also wholesale knitted products into boutiques and yarn direct to knitwear designers globally. Toft's fleeces will make up less than 10% of all British alpaca fleece processed this year. They will begin to purchase suri as well towards the end of this year.

Another alpaca breeder, Kelly Cumming from Kelowna in Canada, is a collector of bears. She has now taken to making these bears from alpaca fibre (not the skin). An example of this is Cody made especially for my wife and me as a limited one of one edition. This bear is in honour of the rare Kermode Bear of British Columbia. This shows the uniqueness and scope alpaca fibre has for value adding.



Sandy Retallick, has a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Applied and Visual Art and, along with her husband Gary runs the Softfoot Alpaca Stud in South Australia. Gary and Sandy process their own fibre into yarn. Their recent batch was of 19-22 microns with an 'egg shell coloured' yarn, in keeping with their wish for natural colours.

Her belief in acquiring superior qualities of alpaca fibre led Sandy to produce and fund a collection of alpaca design garments. She designs most of her own garments and focuses on the high fashion, haute couture end of the market. Fibre is sourced mostly from locally produced alpaca and she has also used imported alpaca fabric. The designing is kept in the family as Sandy and her daughter, textile artist Clancy Morgan, co-design the garments.



Grey bikini and skirt hand crocheted with natural coloured varn.



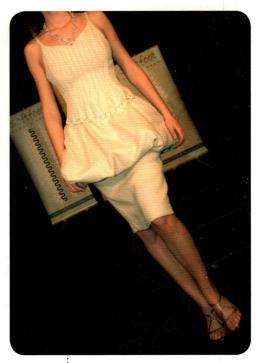
A cream bikini hand crocheted with the beach dress made with nuno fabric (felted fabric achieved by hydro entanglement where the alpaca fibre is fused onto the silk). Judy Craig from Becreatif applied this process. 80% alpaca 20% sheep's wool.



A Macquarie Textiles fabric. A blended weave of alpaca and cotton, the garment was designed by Sandy and Clancy.



Short coat with hood using woven blanket fabric of 100% alpaca produced by Creswick Mills. The houndstooth trousers (blend of alpaca, cotton and silk) are by Macquarie Textiles.



Balloon sleeveless top and skirt made from Stansborough fabric, NZ. The lightweight fabric is 80% alpaca and 20% sheep's wool.

Animal sales

The alpaca breeder is either at a stud level or at a commercial level. Although most breeders think they are at the stud level, stud level is determined by the level of excellence and the repeatability of that excellence. Those at stud level have the potential to make income from the sale of stud males/females and also income from stud matings. Those at the commercial level, along with the stud breeders, have the potential to sell alpacas of a commercial status to those who wish to breed at that level. Excess stock to the breeders' requirements is also part of income.

One of the attributes of the alpaca is as a guard or protector of sheep and goats. In Australia, where alpacas have been running with sheep, lambing has increased in some herds by 60% and in others, by over 100%. Of course the alpacas should be white if the sheep or goats carry white fibre. These guard animals are mainly used against foxes but are not as successful where packs of dogs/wolves/mountain lions etc. are located. This is another source of income for those who can avail themselves of this situation.

Breeders can act as a broker (selling agent) for other breeders or can offer agistment i.e. board and lodging for a client's animals in return for a weekly fee. If you intend to take animals on to your property for either agistment, re-selling or even housing for matings you need to make sure you cost the expenses involved e.g. food, labour, as well as having adequate pastures available to graze the extra alpacas.

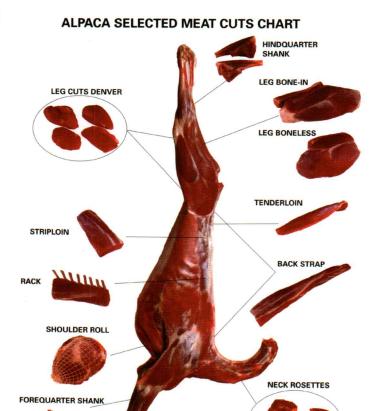
All breeders should have a business plan which indicates the total number of animals that will be running in the herd as well as those that will be available for sale.

Carcass

Meat

Then there is the taboo subject of the carcass – meat – an 'unpalatable' subject for some breeders but it will become part of the total income package from the alpaca per se.

Please refer to page 32 for a comprehensive article on LaViandé.



Skin

More work on the commercial side is needed. However, the skins are good for leather products and wall hangings. At the moment returns should be upwards of \$150, depending on quality.



Summary

The alpaca has the potential to provide you with income from fleece, animals, reproduction and carcass. Breeders need to decide on the type of alpaca, fleece quality and colour they wish to breed. In turn the decision needs to be made on what value adding they intend to do with their fleece.

Every alpaca breeder certainly has the right to decide what they do with their fibre. Some breeders with only a few animals are very keen to do craft work and there is certainly reward for those that follow that line. As mentioned earlier there will be those breeders with larger quantities that can have commercial yarn made, and from there the manufacture of garments. The important thing I see for the alpaca industry to really be successful is to have that continuing supply of product in the market place. The product must be of high quality in order to get the buyers returning for more. I would like to think that those who are value adding their fibre do send a proportion to the local co-op (if one exists), because this is where we will develop volume and out of this comes the ability to create high quality product in repeatable quantities.

So the question is, "Do I process all my fibre into garments or sell it to the co-op and concentrate on animal breeding, or a combination of both?"

Remember, if you develop a craft/boutique approach, do you have the potential to market your product? New Zealand, Canada and Britain with their tourist trade are well placed to sell product as are other countries in a similar situation.

Ultimately, for a successful alpaca industry, you need a successful fibre handling centre/co-op (albeit it in private ownership) or you need active value adding breeders. When the industry is small it is paramount that support is given in some form by breed societies and breeders.

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Author - Cameron Holt, Pambula Beach, NSW.

Cameron has had some 45 years in the fibre industry, namely as a wool broker, sheep classer, judge, and educator. He is currently judging and training Judges for the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. and in his role as Senior Fleece Judge and trainer for AOBA, has been involved in the training of AOBA judges as well as judging. He travels internationally, judging for various alpaca groups in other countries. Cameron, a leading alpaca fibre expert, still continues his educational clinics and lectures throughout the world. In his semi retirement of grandchildren, golf, fishing and community support, still manages to find time to continue with publications and research into alpaca fibre characteristics and allied areas.



Alpaca Visions in Early Australia

Matt Ridley Blaydon Alpacas, NSW

We've seen Ledgers Dream, Ledgers Boy and even the ironically-named Ledgers Luck but, had things been a little different in the nineteenth century, we may also have had Elders Dream, Moens Miracle, Elders El Dorado and Haighs Hope.

Charles Ledger is the name usually associated with the introduction of alpacas to Australia, and the 1858 arrival in Sydney of his alpaca shipment is generally accepted as the first attempt to start an industry.1 Alpacas were being (usually illegally) exported from South America by the nineteenth century, and it was not surprising that they would eventually find their way to Australia. The colony of New South Wales began in 1788 with shiploads of convicts, marines, sailors and sheep. 2 Captain Arthur Phillip had picked up 220 sheep of various breeds in Cape Town, and still had about 70 survivors by the time the fleet arrived in Sydney.

Food was the first priority and few sheep avoided the butchers' knives. Those that did survive, combined with imports from India, Spain, South Africa and California, would form the basis of Australia's sheep industry, an industry that would become a foundation stone upon which the colony was to be built. In 1800, there were about 6,000 sheep in the Sydney area, over 20,000 by 1805 and in 1838 one and a half million, despite at least three major droughts since 1813.

NSW was a blank canvas, and the newcomers even the bureaucrats – were open to new ideas. Anyone having travelled half way across the world to start a new life was also likely to be willing to try almost anything to make a living. Even the government showed initiative: as early as 1803 Governor Philip Gidley King proposed that alpacas be raised in the colony.³

Prior to Ledger, however, there had been several alpaca ventures in the new colony, and there was plenty of interest in developing an alpaca industry. By the 1840s, there had been attempts to bring alpacas into the colony. In 1842, Ledger had been asked to buy ten alpacas for shipment to Europe, and this he did successfully with six going to France and four to England. He also learned of an order for 16 alpacas to be sent to England for Queen Victoria. Immediately the alpacas had departed Arica, the local authorities (probably because they had not been included in the money trail) invoked a previously dormant 1829 decree prohibiting the export of alpacas. This stopped a further order for 40 alpacas bound for Germany.

But, in 1844, a shipment of 400 alpacas to England arranged by Messrs Moen and Mariott ended disastrously, all but three animals dying on the journey and the remainder within days of their arrival. But the wheels of commerce had been suitably oiled, and Ledger noted: "Most undoubtedly, had not Don Maro Escovedo, an interested party with Messrs Moen and Mariott, been Prefect at the time of the Department, so large a number could never have been collected." A combination of over driving the alpacas to the port of embarkation, insufficient food and water, and the probable poisoning of that fodder by the ammonia from guano stowed nearby meant that the alpacas never had a realistic chance of making it to England.

In 1847 a Tasmanian firm sought out an agent in South America to invest £200 in purchasing alpacas, but this was thwarted by the export ban. South American governments had by now imposed a general export ban on Camelids. There was a commercial, and even a bureaucratic, disdain for the ban and, three years later, a company was actually formed in Sydney, and a ship chartered, in another unsuccessful attempt to import alpacas.

Sydney businessman Thomas Mort had realised the potential of alpacas. Raised in Manchester, England amongst the cotton mills and merchant houses, and by now a major player in the Australian wool industry, Mort had advocated the establishment of an Australian cotton industry, and held the unusually far-sighted view that, by encouraging industries such as cotton, silk (and later alpacas), Australia's wool and textile industries would benefit: he was very impressed by the efforts of Titus Salt, and suggested that the wider the use of cotton, silk and alpaca, the broader would be the market for wool. 4

Following TS Mort's death on 9 May 1878, a bronze statue, sculpted by Pierce Connolly, was erected in Macquarie Place, Sydney, as a mark of the esteem and respect in which he was held.



In September 1850, Mort presented a paper to the Australian Society⁵ in which he suggested that alpacas would thrive under local conditions. He wanted to start an alpaca industry and, by November that year, had organised two public meetings that led to £820 - of an estimated £1,000 requirement - in subscriptions being pledged. Mort, John Lamb, Robert Tooth and Francis Mitchell were the principal fund raisers, and Mort and the firm of Mort & Brown each contributed £50. It was planned to engage Charles Ledger to acquire alpacas in South America and bring them to NSW. 6 The Victorian Government even inquired into 'the suitability of the alpaca to this Colony, and the method by which its introduction may be best accomplished.' In its 1856 report, the Committee reported:

'The long sierra of the Grampians, extending from Mount Williams to Mount Zero, the extensive Pyrenees, the Mount Macedon range, the mountain tracts of Gipps Land, or the lofty plateaux bounding the Glenelg River, these and the many other elevated localities, comprising millions of acres, would be portions of the Colony in which it might be calculated the Alpaca would find a most suitable home.' 7

By 1860, 'alpacas were old news to the cognoscenti of the colony. A speculative shipment of four hundred, on its way to Port Phillip, called at Twofold Bay (near Eden, NSW) in 1853 8 (and) more recently Titus Salt had sent two small consignments to South Australia in 1857 and 1858; ten llamas and cross breds had arrived in Sydney in November 1858 (and) had been sold for £600 and taken to Moreton Bay; twenty-three others purchased in London by a Melbourne syndicate had been on view in Melbourne since February 1859 ... a few, like Thomas Holt⁹, preserved an intense interest in the scheme ...' 10 The story of this November 1858 shipment of 33 llamas (probably including alpacas and crossbreds) almost rivals that of Ledger's epic journey.



The Melbourne syndicate that purchased the animals was led by Edward Wilson (pictured left), founder of *The Age* newspaper. The animals were the remnants of an original herd of llamas and crossbreds acquired by US businessman Ernest (or Eugene) Roehn in 1856. Bought in Peru,

they were marched along an old Inca trail to Guayaquil, Ecuador's main port, and then on to Panama. The next part of the trek was across the isthmus and into the US and, in all, the animals covered over 6,600 kilometres. 'The principal mortality occurred on the isthmus, where, from want of food, hot weather, snakes, scorpions etc, some twenty of them died.'

From here they were shipped to Baltimore and then New York. Businessman Benjamin Hector Gee then sent them to his home country, England. They were exhibited in Glasgow and Birmingham before being pastured at Ealing Common in London, where they were noticed by Mr Lloyd of Lloyd, Beilby & Co, Royal Exchange Sydney, who eventually packed 10 of them off to Wilson's group in Australia.11

Meanwhile, in England, Titus Salt had acquired a small herd of alpacas from the Earl of Derby of horse racing fame. To test the adaptability of the animal to Australian conditions, in 1857 he sent two males and three females to South Australian friend in Dr Matthew Moorehouse, a physician from North Adelaide whose rural property was at Riverton, as well as some to JF Haigh.

In May 1845, GS Kingston, Honorary Secretary of the RAS of South Australia, had offered a prize of 10 guineas to the first person to import a male and female alpaca. The following letter 12 refers to the arrival one Saturday morning in March 1857 on the Marshal Pelissier of two male and two female alpacas 13 to be transhipped by the Rebecca to Port Lincoln on the way to Haigh's Tiatuckia Station. Three of the alpacas were solid black and the other a black with white on its neck. One was said to be pregnant. The shipment also included Angora goats, a ram and some ewes. The story still persists today that there is liquorice growing on Tiatuckia which came in hay with these animals. 14

Dear Sir.

I see by yesterday's Argus that four fine alpacas (have) just arrived at Adelaide ... What a pity it is that we cannot manage to procure a few hundreds to form a nucleus wherewith to stock the colony. Here is a splendid animal, whose fleece is worth at present from 2s 9d to 3s 6d per pound, very hardy, can pick up a living where sheep would starve, and whose flesh is a delicate and wholesome food; and yet, for the sake of two or three thousand pounds, year after year goes by and nothing is done towards introducing what, in the course of a few years, would be a source of invaluable wealth to the colony. I happen to know the length and breadth of South America pretty well. During a residence of four years there, I have had both alpacas and llamas in my possession, and am therefore able to give you a short and truthful account .. my only object is to induce, if possible, some of our principal men to take the subject in hand and thereby confer a great and lasting benefit both upon themselves and their adopted country.

... the alpaca. They are the fellows I should like to see over here. They are something like sheep, but a far more graceful and elegant animal, with the large expressive eyes of the deer. The fleece is beautifully soft and very long, almost like floss silk and it shines in the sun ... their usual colours are grey, white, black, and mottled; their flesh is excellent eating ... I kept two of these animals at San Colonia for 22 months, the female had young twice - two at one birth, and one at another. ... The female, when she had young ones, would attack a dog with great fury, and generally managed to send him howling away, however large. No dingo would think of attacking their young ...

Whether the authorities allowed them to leave the country or not would be a matter of the most perfect indifference to me. I would contract a few gauchos to drive them right across the Pampas, if I were going to procure any myself, and, upon their safe delivery at any sea port on the La Plata, pay for them. A good roomy schooner could be easily chartered at Buenos Aires, or Monte Video, and so run across, via the Cape of Good Hope. By taking them across the Pampas all collision with the authorities would be avoided ...

I will leave off with the remark that the experiment of introducing the alpaca and llama need not be a costly one - 2,600 pounds to 3,000 pounds, with care and economy, would bring over a fine flock of them. Fifty or sixty might be picked up in a tour through Europe. I know a nobleman in Spain who used at one time to have seventy or eighty of them, and they often have surplus stock to dispose of at the different zoological gardens.

Indeed, alpacas attracted Vice-Regal attention for, in 1858, South Australian Governor Sir Richard McDonnell visited Haigh's alpacas and Angora goats at Tiatuckia Station.

There are several intriguing links between Haigh and today's Australian industry. Haigh, originally from Bradford, Yorkshire and a nephew (or perhaps brother-in-law) of Titus Salt, had settled on the Eyre Peninsula in 1849. With WR Mortlock, he owned a sheep property at Sherringa before unsuccessfully seeking his fortune in the Bendigo goldfields. After managing a pastoral company for AL Elder (of the family that established the pastoral conglomerate) and WS Peter at Warrow, he moved to 'Tiatuckia', just out of Port Lincoln.



Haigh died in 1867 and the stock was sold off and the alpacas went to Sir Thomas Elder (pictured left). At the Royal Adelaide Show that year, Elder exhibited a black male alpaca and won £2 in prize money. More than a century after his death, however, JF Haigh would still have a huge impact on alpacas in Australia. Local Angora goat breeder, writer and artist Roger Haldane was visiting Percy Baillie, then owner of Tiatuckia homestead,

to draw the building for his Port Lincoln Sketchbook. In 1978, Baillie provided some notes for Haldane on the introduction of Angoras to South Australia and these documents mentioned that Haigh had also owned alpacas. A remarkably lateral thinker and innovator, Haldane would go on to become the first major importer of the Australian alpaca renaissance.

In 1861 the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria was formed. It would soon merge with the Zoological Society and, by the end of 1862, most of the animals of the two societies had been moved from the Botanic Gardens to Royal Park. The society's largest early venture was a government sponsored importation of llamas and alpacas. 15

'... in 1862, (D W) Duffield 16 with the consent of the Bolivian government shipped 500 pure alpacas, disastrously as it turned out, direct to Melbourne.' 17 Duffield had approached Edward Wilson stating that he had used his connections to obtain a 'concession' from the Bolivian and Peruvian Governments to export 1,500 alpacas. He chartered the clipper Julia Farmer out of Lima with the initial shipment of 500, but only 193 survived the journey to land in Melbourne in October 1862, and very few, if any, of those survived four months.

Focus on the Future - Brisbane 2010

(a joint Qld region and Sth. Qld / Nth. NSW region educational event)

Date: 27th & 28th February 2010 Venue: 'Riverglenn' Conference Centre at Indooroopilly, Brisbane

- Accommodation is available on site and at adjacent near city motels/hotels etc.
- Topics pertinent to the future of our industry and animals will be put up on both the Qld and Sth Qld / Nth NSW regional web sites shortly.
- · Early bookings recommended.
- · All AAA members and new breeders most welcome.
- Affordable cost.
- Knowledge is power, so come, enhance your future and maximise your investment.

Contact: Neil Macleod on 07 5499 9590

That some of these may have survived is suggested in an article by Sue Northfield 18 in which she talks of the 'Alpaca Paddock' at

'When the newly-formed club (St Kilda) applied to the council for a ground they were allowed to play on the "Alpaca Paddock" which was a patch of land next to the St Kilda Railway Station where the St Kilda Park State School now stands and next to the present site of the St Kilda Bowling Club.

The site was so-called as several years earlier a Bolivian gentleman named de Flores had sent half a dozen alpacas to Melbourne and the St Kilda Council had kept the animals in a fenced-in enclosure with the idea of breeding them commercially. Unfortunately the animals did not thrive and the project failed.'

Another clue to their origins is provided in JB Cooper's History of St Kilda, in which states that six alpacas, part of an importation from Bolivia that landed at Sandridge on 10 February 1859, were pastured at Albert Park in 1864 after being at South Yarra and Royal Park. 19

But the best known importation was that of Charles Ledger. On 28 November 1858, The Salvadora berthed in Sydney carrying 243 animals. It was the culmination of six years' work and, despite the high hopes of Ledger and his supporters, would eventually ruin him financially, physically and mentally.

REFERENCES

- 1 The definitive work on Ledger's life is Gramaccia, Professor Gabriele The Life of Charles Ledger (1818-1905) MacMillan, London 1988.
- Merinos of all types would be introduced from the Cape Colony (South Africa) in 1797 (see www.merinos.com.au/history).
- There are few records, and I rely here on the research of Berry Carter in his submission Import, Breeding & Use of Llamas in Australia of 1 November 1982.
- Barnard, Alan (1961) Visions and Profits Melbourne University Press.
- 5 Later revised and reprinted as "The Alpaca or Peruvian Sheep", in J Cox & Co, Australian Almanac for the Year 1857 (Sydney, 1857) pp 56-60 as quoted in Barnard (1961) op cit.
- Noted in Mort & Brown's produce circular in The Sydney Morning Herald of 8 and 23 November, 1850 as quoted in Barnard (1961) op cit.
- Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Alpaca, published 7 March 1856. The contempt with which the rest of the world held the South American export ban is shown by two extracts: 'the Alpaca can be easily obtained by an evasion of the law' and 'if at the will of the imbecile Godoy a flock was furnished to the Empress Josephine, without question, if the same earnestness of purpose be displayed - the same clear wish and intention - a successful result might possibly accrue!
- Sydney Empire, 25 March 1853.
- Thomas Holt was a financial backer of the Charles Ledger project. He was also a wool merchant who, with fellow businessman Thomas Mort and Anglican clergyman Reverend William Horatio Walsh, formed The Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) in 1849.
- 10 Barnard (1961) op cit p48.
- 11 Article from The Illustrated London News, July 10, 1858 as quoted in "First UK Llama Flock", Alpacas Australia, Winter 1994).
- 12 Published in Alpacas Australia, Winter 1993.
- 13 Reported as one male and three females in "'Meeting John Frederick Haigh" by Sue Haldane, Alpacas Australia, Winter 1996.
- 14 Tiatuckia Station, Southern Eyre Peninsula Family History Group at www.plain.sa.gov.au/~opinact/ li_familyhist
- 15 Probably the 'Duffield' shipment. See 'Fear of circuses: founding the National Museum of Victoria' by David Goodman in The Australian Journal of Media & Culture Vol 3 No 1 (1990) http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom
- 16 David Walter Duffield's son Walter Geoffrey would become a famous astronomer and the first Director of the Commonwealth Solar Observatory.
- 17 Carter, Berry Lama Down Under, Agmedia, Melbourne, 1996.
- 18 "Alpacas make it to the Hall of Fame" by Sue Northfield in Alpacas Australia, Winter, 2003.
- 19 Cooper, J.B., "The History of St. Kilda From Its First Settlement to a City and After, 1840 to 1930", 2 vols., Printers Pty. Ltd., 1931 as quoted by Sharon Gray in The Age 1 November 1995 p19.

Bob Richardson Awarded ...

Sandra Wright Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.

Photo by Lance Trigg Photographics, VIC

... Honorary Life Membership of the AAA

At the AAA Ltd. Annual General Meeting on 11 October 2009 Bob Richardson of Clearview Alpacas, NSW was awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the AAA.



Bob Richardson (right) presented with Honorary Life Membership by AAA President, Ian Davison.

Bob was born in Melbourne during the Second World War and grew up on three different Victorian farms producing soft fruit, dairy and poultry. However in 1961, putting farming life on hold for a while, Bob joined the RAAF and qualified as a fighter pilot in 1963, marrying Judy and taking her to start a family in Malaysia in that year. Their subsequent 40+ year family life has been quite adventurous, living in England twice and in every Australian mainland state, and finding time along the way to raise two children.

Bob spent many years as an experimental test pilot specialising in fast-jet aircraft and was actively involved in the operational development of the RAAF's Mirages, F/A-18 Hornets and F111Cs, flying 5500 hours in over 40 types from sailplanes to the F-16. In his later career he specialised in strategic defence planning and in RAAF personnel management, finally spending several years as an Air Vice-Marshal looking after RAAF personnel and resources management and later, Deputy Chief of Air Force. After part-time Reserve duty, conducting a major review of the Defence Cadets organization, Bob completely retired from the RAAF in 2003.

Special recognition of Bob's service to the RAAF was made on Australia Day 1995 when he was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for Outstanding Service to the Royal Australian Air Force as the Air Officer Commanding Training Command.

While all this sounds like quite enough to keep anyone busy, in late 1993 Bob and Judy bought their first two alpacas, deciding on alpacas as a future 'lifestyle and semi-retirement enterprise'. Then in 1997 as Bob was retiring from the full-time Air Force they bought a newly sub-divided 48 hectare (120 acres) sheep property near Yass, built a large and comfortable home, sheds, fences, yards, alpaca shelters and 10 km of fencing - and thought that life would then be easier and more relaxed! However that was certainly not to be the case.

During those early years of alpaca ownership Bob held a very strong belief in the potential for the Australian alpaca industry and was an active member of the AAA Southern NSW Region committee ultimately assuming the role of Vice President in 1998. In the same year Bob was elected to the National Committee of the AAA, his goal being to improve governance, financial planning and administration, and member communications. Re-elected to National Committee twice more over ensuing years, Bob was elected as National Vice President in 2001 and again in 2003.

In 2003 the AAA introduced a new Across-herd Genetic Evaluation (AGE) service to assist all members to achieve their individual breeding objectives. Bob's understanding of the importance of genetic improvement to accelerate the industry's growth saw him take on the role of Chairman of the working party that was established to investigate and implement the program.

Further to his commitment to the AAA Bob was also an inaugural director of Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd., and is currently the AAFL Secretary. In addition Bob is not averse to rolling up his sleeves and getting his hands dirty and has been the AAFL Fleece Liaison Officer for the Southern NSW Region for many years.

Clearly the old adage, "If you want something done, ask a busy person", applies to Bob and his contribution to the Australian alpaca industry is exceptional. His performance as farmer, family man and friend is exceptional too.

Pioneers Retire

Carolyn Jinks Benleigh Alpaca Stud, VIC

Allan and Carolyn Jinks created Benleigh Alpaca Stud and a host of history

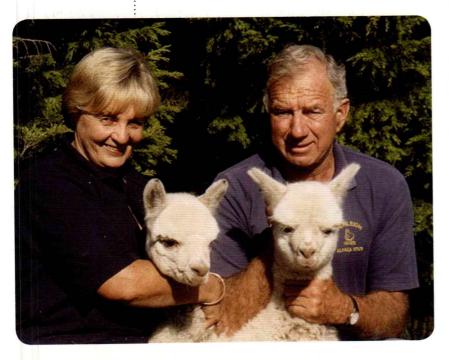
The 1980s were a difficult and challenging time for us. Severe drought in 1982-83, our house burning down in 1985 and chemical residue being found on some parts of our property in 1987 created some of the biggest challenges any farmers could handle.

'Benleigh' on the beautiful Bellarine Peninsula near Geelong, a rich fertile farming area, was partially affected by dieldrin due to its inclusion in the superphosphate used to plant potatoes. A class action formed by Victorian potato growers was successful against the Victorian Government, but as we were forced to stop grazing cattle, we were also forced into finding an alternative farming enterprise, and as 'real' farmers know, the key to survival is to be open-minded.

Knowing we had no choice but to change direction we looked into many other options including proteas, ostrich and emu, but these did not feel right for us and it was following the screening of a documentary showing alpacas owned by Geoff and Nancy Halpin of Victoria, that we began our research in that direction.

Wow! This was just the start of a life changing experience.

Carolyn and Allan Jinks.



Searching for our future

Travelling to New Zealand, we met an Australian, Roger Haldane (later considered to be the 'Father of the Alpaca Industry' in Australia) and Alan Hamilton, an Aussie farmer and entrepreneur, both of whom had imported Chilean alpacas into New Zealand. We also met Dr George Davis of MAF in NZ, who had been allocated alpacas for research at Invermay in the South Island, and Murray Bruce from Waimate, who shared interests in alpaca imports, as well as the Bassett Smiths, who sold many alpacas to Australians entirely by photographs! (There are so many stories about those days it is now hard to believe how it all happened). It is quite ironic that in 1989 we were buying alpacas from New Zealand to bring to Australia and these days many are going back there.

Unlike our previously conservative farming life, we amazed many who thought we were crazy for selecting 12 females and 1 male to import even though there was really no information available about alpacas. We were so naïve in thinking that it was really only another breed of animal to care for - that complacent attitude soon ended!

Portia and Hercules

Frustrated with red tape and very eager to have alpacas on our property, we also bought a pair of alpacas from Cherie Bridges (the original editor of Alpacas Australia magazine) and planned to 'practise' with these two until our other alpacas arrived from New Zealand.

We took Portia (a black female) and Hercules (a grey male) to every possible show to promote alpacas and fascinated crowds wherever we went. At the Geelong Show, Dr Ewen McMillan came to see our new animals and we jokingly said, "You can become an alpaca vet". What a statement! Ewen later became the most experienced alpaca vet in the southern hemisphere with around 1,200 alpacas in his practice.

'AL-PACKERS' arrive

Eventually our group of animals arrived from New Zealand in crates marked 'AL-PACKERS'.

Not only our expected 13, but another 100 from Murray Bruce who wanted us to breed and market them for him in Australia. Being used to large numbers of sheep and cattle, we were not fazed by 113 alpacas until we realized just how different these animals really were.

Our instructions from NZ were to 'breed and sell' so we put two males in with the 111 females and were amazed when, after mating four each they looked exhaustedly at the paddock of females all sitting down hoping they would be next! These males developed a massive 'headache', and sat in the corner of the paddock to recover. What a difference to a ram or bull's performance!

First birth at Benleigh - Benleigh Ophelia

Unbeknown to us, our original pair had mated and the sweet temperament of Portia changed to the 'spitting pregnant female'. Deciding that Portia was acting strangely one morning, Allan checked her out before heading off to an alpaca meeting in Melbourne and said, "No way will she deliver - her udder is not developed". Two hours later there was a head and two legs showing and Portia was walking round and round in circles.

Having seen many lambs and calves born, and this being so different, I thought the cria must be stuck so I frantically called the vet, but by the time they arrived (two came to see a newborn alpaca) the cria had arrived. Thus began my fascination with the neonatal care of alpacas, which ultimately led to mail order 'Cria Care Kits' and co-authoring books on the subject.

Learning curve for us all

Working with Dr Ewen McMillan and the team at Bellarine Veterinary Surgery was a great experience as together we discovered best practices for alpaca management. Whenever an issue became apparent Ewen would work with us for answers and as a frequent lecturer at AAA conferences he was able to help many breeders. As an example: We would tell him that some cria was not walking well - he would test and find answers - vitamin D deficiency. It was a rewarding and exciting time which included all final year Veterinary students from Melbourne University spending every Tuesday at Benleigh undergoing practical studies on alpacas - mating, scanning, neonatal care etc.

Historic beginnings

The birth of the alpaca industry in Australia

In 1990 the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. was formed with Geoff Halpin as inaugural President, and the first AAA conference was held at Glenormiston Agricultural College in Victoria with US speakers including Dr Brad Smith and Eric Hoffman.

We may have been a small group but we had big ideas and it needs to be noted that at this first seminar, Brad Smith spoke on Embryo Transfer in Llamas! How exciting it has been to be at the start of a new agricultural industry in Australia and over the years watching it grow to where it is today.

First Alpaca Auction

In 1991, the first alpaca auction was held at Oaklands Junction in Victoria. With over 700 people in attendance it was named the 'Alpaca Classic Auction' - the event was the brainchild of vendors Alan Hamilton, Cherie Bridges, Roger Haldane, Allan and myself.

The huge effort put into this event, which included a fashion parade, returned a gross of \$445,000 for 21 alpacas that were auctioned by Andrew Sloan who still continues in this role today, and this became the forerunner to today's AAA annual auctions.

Rapid changes to our lives and the industry

Time passed so quickly in those first few years. Goals were set, achievements and disappointments were dealt with, skills in marketing were developed and the computer documentation of everything we did at our stud was implemented.

The growth and expansion in both the quality of the breed and the emerging industry were dramatic with the arrival of Peruvian stock in Australia.

Registration of stock, standardisation of quarantine requirements and the formation of the Camelid Veterinary Association also occurred in these early days.

The alpaca was becoming known worldwide and we attended both the first AOBA conference in 1992 and later the first auction of Peruvian stock in the US.

Allan became an inaugural judge with the AAA and travelled to Peru in 1994, in a small group which included Maggie Kreiger and Eric Hoffman, in an effort to learn everything possible about alpacas. (A trip to Peru in those days was fraught with danger as it was the end of the era of the Shining Path terrorists - quite unlike the tourist trips now available).

Allan served on the AAA National Committee for ten years and during that time the AAA Regional system as now operates, began at Benleigh. It was much less sophisticated in those days, and began as a way of encouraging owners to share knowledge and work together to promote and show alpacas.

What are some of our most memorable moments?

Showing: Being the first stud in Australia to win National Supreme Champion and National Supreme Champion Fleece in the same year, then the following year winning 'back to back' Supreme Champions, plus winning many Supreme and age Championships throughout the years.

Awards: Being the first alpaca breeder recipients of the Commonwealth Bank Entrepreneurial Farming Award and also the presentation of an award from BPW (Business Professional Women) as a pioneer in a new industry. Another was Allan being awarded a Life Membership by the AAA.

Embryo Transfer: In 2001 we agreed to be part of the research team with Drs David Hopkins and Jane Vaughan in embryo transfer of alpacas. Witnessing that first embryo before implantation is a never to be forgotten experience and waiting for the birth of the world's first commercial ET cria was SO exciting. For those who now practise the procedure it has become quite commonplace but those first ET cria made world history.

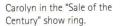


Carolyn with Drs David Hopkins and Jane Vaughan and three ET cria from Morena in one year.

2003 - 'Sale of the Century': We once again did a 'major first' and held a reduction auction without reserve prices. The 22 high quality lots offered at the twilight sale on the Saturday followed by 69 lots on the Sunday, grossed over \$1,000,000 with the top price male Purrumbete Brigantine selling for \$145,000 - an amount that has remained a record for a private auction.



Purrumbete Brigantine sold for \$145,000 to Penny and John Pittard.





Highlights

There are so many other adventures and learning experiences - running an AQIS quarantine station which saw seven shipments arrive from New Zealand and later many more going back there; trips to the UK and also to China; speaking at many conferences, both in Australia and overseas on neonatal care; co-authoring books with Dr Ewen McMillan on this subject, the ABC (Antenatal Birthing and Cria Care) currently being sold in many countries today has been a special part of my alpaca experience; and the many shows Allan has judged over the years are high on his list of great memories.

It has been a fantastic 20 years in learning, breeding, sharing knowledge and caring for alpacas, but the many wonderful friends we have made through owning these special animals has to be the greatest highlight of all.

As we change direction once again, the Association that we were instrumental in forming and the alpacas in which we have witnessed quantum leaps from those first imports will continue to be of great interest to us.

To all who have bought into the Benleigh bloodlines we say 'thank you' and wish every breeder, whatever their goals, success and as much happiness as we have had.

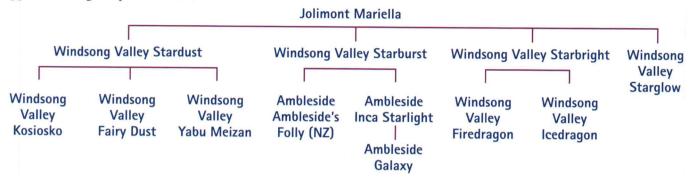
A Most Valuable Asset

Matt Ridley Blaydon Alpacas, NSW

Is the Most Valuable Commercial Fleece ribbon the most important title in the alpaca industry? This award recognizes all that the industry stands for... and dreams of.

Blackgate Lodge Alpacas has dominated the Most Valuable Commercial Fleece title at the AAA National Show since Blackgate Lodge Sollinca triumphed in 2001, but it was Alpaca Australia Pty Limited's Windsong Valley Firedragon which changed the script at the 2009 National Show in Adelaide. There is no doubt that this family will have a major impact on the breed in Australasia for, as Firedragon was being awarded his title, his youngest half-sister Windsong Valley Royal Dragon (SMF) won a ribbon in the junior class and his own daughter Ellen Vale Sienna (SLBR) accepted a blue ribbon, both at the same show.

Windsong Valley Firedragon's female family has been a source of champions since the original Peruvian dam, Jolimont Mariella (SW), dropped Windsong Valley Stardust (W) in 1997.



Stardust became Champion Female at the 1998 Royal Perth Show. Her second registered cria became Windsong Valley Kosiosko (SW) and this son of Purrumbete Highlander went to stud after being:

Ch Huacaya Fleece 9-18 Mths Albany 02; 3rd HF9-18W National 02; 2nd M18-30W Royal Perth 02; Res Ch Fleece WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 03; Sup Ch Fleece Albany 03; Sup Ch Fleece 30+ Mths Wagin Woolarama 05; Ch Fleece 48-60 Mths Royal Perth 06; 1st placings in the Sires Progeny classes at the 07 Royal Melbourne and National Shows.

Kosiosko's three-quarter brother, Windsong Valley Yabu Meizan (W) - by Highlander's son Windsong Valley Iceman (SW) - also did well at show including:

3rd M12-18F Royal Perth 04; 1st HF12-18W/LF Fairbridge 05; and Res Ch Senior Male WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 06.

Meanwhile, Windsong Valley took a dividend when Stardust's 2002 daughter Windsong Valley Fairy Dust (SW) sold to Cedar House Alpacas for \$40,700 at the National Sale of 2006.

Mariella's next daughter, Windsong Valley Starburst (SLF) has produce show standard progeny in both Australia and New Zealand, perhaps not surprising considering her sire was Purrumbete Ledgers Dream (SW). These progeny include Ambleside's Folly (NZ) (LF), now at stud across the Tasman, and Ambleside Inca Starlight (LF), the dam of 08 Nimmitabel Sup Champion Ambleside Galaxy (SW).

Then Windsong Valley Starbright came along in 1999, again the result of a Highlander mating. Starbright took all before her at show: Sup Ch WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 01; Ch Senior Female WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 01; 1st F18-30F WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 01; Ch Fleece 18-30 National 02; Ch Senior Female Royal Perth 01; 1st HF18-30W/LF WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 03; Ch Fleece 30+ National 03; Ch Fleece 30-48 Mths Wagin Woolarama 04; 1st HF30-48W/LF WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) 04; Res Ch Fleece 48-60 Mths National 04; Res Ch Fleece 60+ Mths Wagin Woolarama 06; Ch Fleece 60+ Mths National 06; 1st HF60+W National 06

Starbright's second cria was Windsong Valley Firedragon (SLF). His almost destined show success began in 2006:

Res Ch Adult Male Royal Perth 06; 2nd HF12-18F National 06; 3rd HF30-48W International Fleece Show 08; Sup Ch H-BM (NSW) Reg 08; Sup Ch Ballarat Alpaca 08; Res Ch Mature Male National 08; Sup Ch AlpacaFest (VicWest) 08; Sup Ch Royal Melbourne 08; Res Ch Mature Male Royal Canberra 09; Ch Mature Male Royal Sydney 09; Ch Mature Male AlpacaFest (VicWest) 09; Res Ch Mature Male Royal Melbourne 09.

And all this before his 2009 National title.

Mariella's 2003 daughter Windsong Valley Starglow (SW) was in 2004:

Ch Junior Female WA Autumn Classic (Whiteman Park) and Res Ch Intermediate Female at the Royal Perth before placing at the National Show.

Firedragon's half-brother Windsong Valley Icedragon (SW) has also done well:

5th F6-12W Royal Perth 06; Res Ch Intermediate Female National 06; 6th HF18-30W International Fleece Show 08.

Firedragon had gone to stud in 2007 and, from just four registered crias so far, has already sired two major show winners in Bedrock Kaida (SMF) 1st M12-18M/DF WA Autumn (Whiteman Park) 2009 and Ellen Vale Sienna.

His Jolimont Warrior sire-line credentials will ensure he's kept busy in the serving pen in future.



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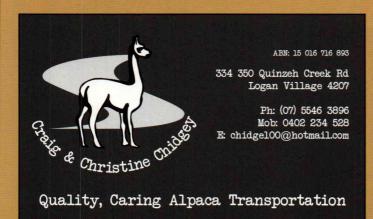
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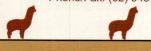
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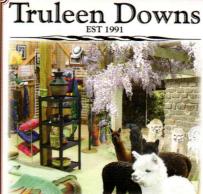
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Send your photos to: The Editor, Alpacas Australia, PO Box 1076, Mitcham North, VIC 3132. Email sandra@alpaca.asn.au



★ WINNER ★

Ha. This alpaca is just like my Dad - eating out of the palm of my hand! Mark Irving • Grandeverge Alpacas, NSW



Can we help? Ann Livermore • Erragolia Alpacas, QLD



Let's see who can pose the best. Denise Durrant • Alcatraz Alpacas, WA



Can you keep a secret? The meals are great here. Sally + George Turner • Piccolo Alpaca Farm, WA



Peek-a-boo! Des Johnson • Hinchcliffe Alpacas, QLD



Just had an injection, it hurt, but I love you just the same. Beverley Burns • Mandala Alpacas, NSW



Where did you get those eyes? Louisa Vale • Themeda Alpacas, VIC



Hello little one! Mel Semmler • Painted Pines Alpacas, SA



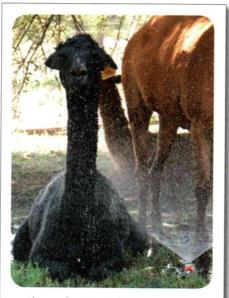
I've got it open before! Rosemarie Mason • Glen Rose Alpacas, VIC



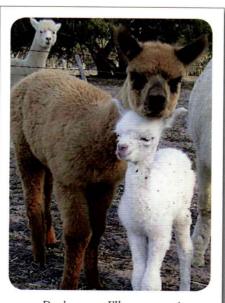
One of us is on the wrong side of the fence! Grace Hunter • Hillside Alpacas, TAS



Just a quick peck on the cheek! Debbie O'Neill • Signature Alpacas, NSW



Ah, my favourite place on a hot day! Denise Tiyce-Mathews • Shalom Alpacas, NSW



Don't worry, I'll protect you! Angela Smyth • Gwandalan Alpacas, VIC



Hay! Look at me. Deborah Price • Beveridge Alpacas, VIC



Does this coat suit me? Lindy Brown • Lindisfarne Alpacas, NSW



Whispering sweet nothings. Lorraine Ivins • Glenoma Alpacas, NSW



Stop that! It tickles. Des Johnson • Hinchcliffe Alpacas, QLD



ate	Event	State	Venue	Highlights	Contact	
ANUA	ARY					
6	Paca Picnic	TAS	Parliament House Lawns, Hobart	Promotional display	Mike Dowd 03 6239 6223	
EBRU	JARY					
4	Crookwell Show	NSW	Crookwell Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Jim Styles 02 4829 2356	
9-21	Seymour Alternative Farming Expo	VIC	King's Park, Seymour	King's Park, Seymour Promotional display		
20	Bega Show	NSW	Bega Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Lyn Kerr 02 6493 2524	
 27	Berwick Show	VIC	Berwick Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Bob McLeod 03 5629 1140	
27-28	Royal Canberra Show	ACT	EPIC (Showgrounds)	Alpaca + fleece judging	Susan Nielson 02 6493 2602/0418 684 688	
27-28	"Focus on the Future" Conference	QLD	Riverglenn Conference Centre, Indooroopilly	Guest speakers, demonstrations	Neil Macleod 07 5499 9590	
MARC	Н					
ГВА	Wauchope Lasiandra Festival	NSW	Wauchope NSW	Promotional display	Sandra Vella 02 6564 2046	
6	Booroowa Show	NSW	Boorowa Showgrounds	Alpaca judging	Jim Styles 02 4829 2356	
7	Royal Bathurst Show	NSW	Bathurst Showgrounds	Fleece judging 25 February, Alpaca judging 7 March	Kate Bailey 02 6887 1233	
13	Wodonga Show	VIC	Wodonga Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Wendy Hart 03 5872 2050	
13	Wynyard Colourbration Show	TAS	Wynyard Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Lyn Koitka 03 6363 1369	
13-14	Greenbank Show	QLD	Greenbank Showgrounds	Promotional display	Steve Rowley 07 5546 3971	
14	Castle Hill	NSW	Castle Hill Showgrounds	Alpaca judging, promotional display	Sue Maynard 02 9653 2277	
20-21	Goulburn Show	NSW	Goulburn Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Jim Styles 02 4829 2356	
20	Mount Pleasant Show	SA	Mount Pleasant Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Kerry Porter 08 8568 5254	
20	Camden Show	NSW	Camden Showgrounds	Alpaca judging	Ray Seymour 02 4636 6909	
25-28	Farmworld 2010	VIC	Lardner Park, Warragul	Promotional display	Jenny Miles 03 5623 6654	
27	Red Hill Show	VIC	Red Hill Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Bob McLeod 03 5629 1140	
APRI			经产品工程的			
2-4	Royal Sydney Show	NSW	Showgrounds, Homebush	Alpaca + fleece judging, fashion parades	Paul Haslin 02 4878 9429	
9-10	Nanango Colourbration Show	QLD	Nanango Showgrounds	Alpaca judging 10 April	Doris Drew 07 4163 3383	

Date	Event	State	Venue	Highlights	Contact	
10	Paca Picnic	TAS	Sheffield Mural Festival	Promotional display	Ken Manning 03 6362 2343	
15-17	Toowoomba Royal Show	QLD	Toowoomba Showgrounds Alpaca judging		Julie Macgregor 07 3202 3113	
17-18	Whiteman Park Show	WA	Whiteman Park	Alpaca + fleece judging	Ron Reid 08 9296 4888	
23-25	Hawkesbury Show	NSW	Clarendon Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Cheryl Kosaras 02 4573 1177	
24	New England Alpaca Show	NSW	Uralla, NSW	Alpaca + fleece judging	Sandra Vella 02 6564 2046	
27-28	MacLean Show	NSW	Maclean Showgrounds	Maclean Showgrounds Promotional display		
30-1 May	Grafton Show	NSW	Grafton Showgrounds	Grafton Showgrounds Alpaca + fleece judging		
30-2 May	Tocal Field Days	NSW	Tocal, NSW	Promotional display	Sandra Vella 02 6564 2046	
MAY						
TBA	National Alpaca Week		Various – nationwide	Open farms, displays	AAA Ltd. National Office 03 9873 7700	
TBA	Epic Alpaca Display + Sale	NSW	EPIC, Canberra Alpaca sales, promotional display		Jim Styles 02 4829 2356	
2	Alpacas at the Vineyard	NSW	Sherwood, NSW Promotional display		Sandra Vella 02 6564 2046	
6-8	AgFest	TAS	Carrick	Promotional display	Carl Cronshaw 03 6362 2107	
6-8	Ipswich Show	QLD	Ipswich Showgrounds	Ipswich Showgrounds Alpaca + fleece judging 8 May		
6-8	AgroTrend	QLD	Bundaberg Showgrounds	Promotional display	Marc Mullette 0401 071 574	
13-15	Gympie Show	QLD	Gympie Showgrounds	Alpaca judging 15 May	Marc Mullette 0401 071 574	
15-16	Stawell Show	VIC	Stawell Showgrounds	Alpaca + fleece judging	Jenny Errey 03 9457 5735	
16	New Breeders Seminar	NSW	Albury area	Lectures, demonstrations	Jim Styles 02 4829 2356	
16	Open Day Farm Workshops	TAS	Various – statewide	Promotional display	Carl Cronshaw 03 6362 2107	
28-29	Campbell Town Show	TAS	Campbell Town	Promotional display	Lyn Koitka 03 6363 1369	
JUNE						
ГВА	Alpacas on Parade	NSW	Port Macquarie, NSW	Alpaca sales, display	Sandra Vella 02 6564 2046	
6	Gidgegannup Small Farms + Sale Day	WA	Gidgegannup Showgrounds	Alpaca sales, promotional display	Liz Benwell 08 9571 8810	
19-20	AlpacaFest	VIC	Werribee Park	Alpaca + fleece judging	Chris Bayley 03 5264 1739	



Issue 60: Winter

Due: June 2010

Deadline: Friday 9 April 2010

Issue 61: Summer

Due: December 2010

Deadline: Friday 1 October 2010

	Casual Rate				x 2 issues				Production (if required)			
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Half page	770.00	539.00	700.00	490.00	712.00	506.00	648.00	460.00	253.00	165.00	230.00	150.00
Third page	718.00	425.00	653.00	387.00	661.00	396.00	601.00	360.00	209.00	132.00	190.00	120.00
Quarter page	666.00	310.00	606.00	282.00	609.00	287.00	554.00	261.00	165.00	99.00	150.00	90.00
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