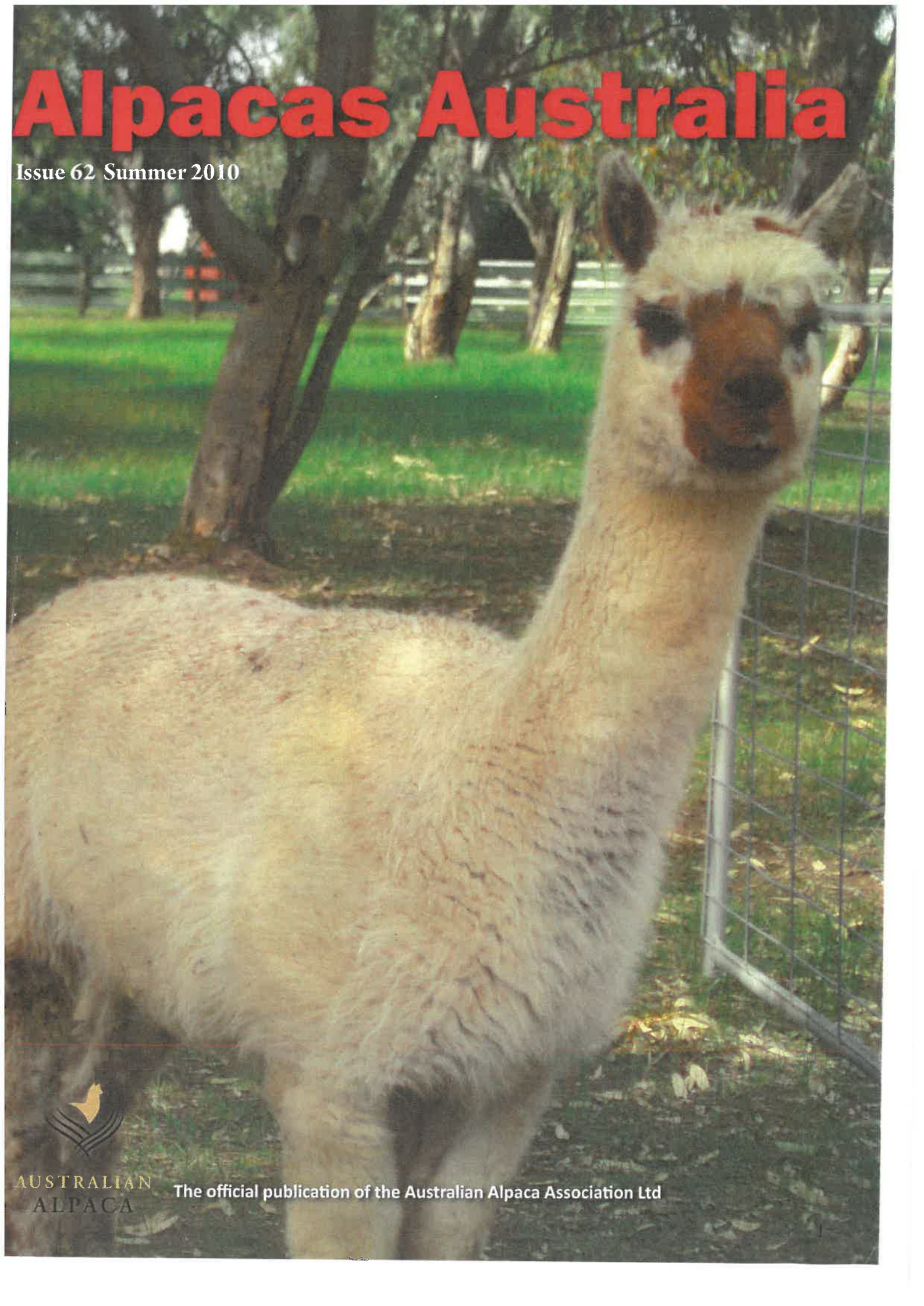


# Alpacas Australia

Issue 62 Summer 2010



AUSTRALIAN  
ALPACA

The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd



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Organic Publishing LTD  
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PO Box 1312 Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006  
Telephone +61 (0)7 326 29175  
E-mail | [liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au](mailto:liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au) W | [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

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Liz Fistonich, Organic Publishing LTD  
PO Box 1312 Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006  
Telephone +61 (0)7 326 29175  
E-mail | [liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au](mailto:liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au) W | [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

## ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION

For information please contact:  
Liz Fistonich, Organic Publishing LTD  
PO Box 1312 Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006  
Telephone +61 (0)7 326 29175  
E-mail | [liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au](mailto:liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au) W | [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

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Precious Design  
PO Box 1312 Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006  
Telephone +61 (0)7 326 29175  
E-mail | [liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au](mailto:liz@alpacasaustralia.com.au)

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COVER  
PHOTOGRAPH  
COURTESY OF:

Tanya  
Vandenberg  
Vanderanch  
Alpacas  
[vanderanch@netspace.net.au](mailto:vanderanch@netspace.net.au)  
Article on page 12



# Presidents Note....



I had thought that I had done my last Presidential editorial with the publication of edition #61, but such is the frequency of our new magazine, I have been called upon to write another.

So, like Lazarus, I rise to offer yet another polemic, which I promise to be my last.

An issue close to the hearts of all alpaca breeders is cost and value. Gone are the days when an alpaca could command twenty thousand dollars just for being alive, and when the price of a pregnant female would advance by a thousand dollars for every month of its pregnancy. In those heady days the payment of subscriptions, transfers, and registrations were mere pettifoggery to the main game of selling livestock.

Alas that is no longer the case, and the cost of sustaining, let alone growing and improving a herd is now a core concern to all breeders.

It is right and appropriate that the AAA Board concern themselves with this issue, and to that end there has been much discussion on how we can reduce the costs of belonging to the AAA, without an unacceptable reduction in our services.

Suggestions ultimately centre on lowering our fees and/or increasing our efficiencies. Done in isolation, lowering fees must inevitably result in a reduction of services, and those who wish to go that path in isolation might care to suggest which services they would like to see reduced.

It is the feeling of the Board that members feel as strongly about reducing fees as they do about maintaining services. To achieve that end, we are left with only one solution:

increase efficiencies. It is for this reason that we will continue to encourage and reward those who avail themselves of what we hope will be increasing opportunities for online transactions in favour of office-based transactions. We will look for more savings through the application of internet solutions to a range of existing association activities, and look for web-based opportunities to increase the income accruing to the association through services such as sales catalogues and a search engine for show archives. We will continue to look at ways in which we can extend the reach and relevance of the IAR. We have outsourced the magazine, and plan to take it on-line so that we can expand the reach and value of advertising within the magazine.

There are those still with limited access to the internet, either by choice or circumstances, but like horse drawn carriages, ice chests, and kerosene lamps, cheque books and letters are destined to become anachronisms of a past age in a new world dominated by the imperative of rapid transfer of funds and information. Defiance and complaint will not alter that fact, however ulcerogenic, and the internet is destined to become as universal as the motorcar, the electric light and the refrigerator. No future world can plan to accommodate the nay-sayers who must, instead, accommodate the new world. The AAA will be a late addition to the institutions and organisations that have long since made that decision. For the Amish amongst our members, there will be toleration and understanding, but at a personal cost which they will not welcome.

Another topic of discussion is a reduction in the size of the office staff or of the Board. Salaries are a major expense, but are also the foundation of our services. Can our staff be better utilised, or the office more efficiently organised? This question is bound to be the troubled focus of the incoming Board after the AGM. The members, themselves will not escape the hard decisions: a motion to reduce the number of directors from nine to seven will be put to the AGM, potentially reducing the cost of travel and accommodation at future board meetings, but at the cost of reducing representation at board level.

Whatever direction is taken by the new Board, members can be confident that it will be acutely sensitive to the call for reduced costs and increased efficiencies in delivering services to the membership, but members need to understand and be prepared for the inevitable implications of such measures.

It has been my great privilege to serve as the President of the AAA and Chairman of its Board over the past four years, and I thank the members for that opportunity. As an ordinary voting member, I wish the new President and Board the very best vision, inspiration and leadership to guide the industry over the coming years. The AAA has every reason to be proud of the quality and commitment of the directors who continue to serve it.

*Dr Ian M Davison, President.*





**W**elcome to issue 62 of Alpacas Australia, I trust you enjoy the pages of this magazine as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. We have a diverse range of articles this month and I would like to thank our contributing authors who have been an absolute pleasure to work with. It is great having such wonderful support from the industry especially as we are still learning about Alpacas.

Last month we published an article on worming (pages 18 - 23) and I must apologise, we actually published the wrong version. This version is one that was written a couple of years ago and it was to be updated however as we are all human and errors occur this did not happen. A couple

of the photographs were also incorrectly labelled - again apologies if this caused any confusion and of course apologies to Elizabeth Garner-Paulin for publishing the wrong version of her article.

I would also like to thank La Viande Alpacas for allowing us to publish their recipes on pages 24 and 25 of issue 61.

Again thank you to all who have contributed and provided us with the lovely well wishes and support and yes, we would love you to submit articles to us for publication.

Regards,

*Liz.*



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# Royal Queensland Show 2010

By  
*Barbara Mills*

Our show continues to grow each year and we had an increase in entries again this year with 137 alpacas entered. We had entries from far South as Sydney and as far North as Rockhampton.

Our judge was Peter Kennedy, along with Apprentice Judge Chris Williams. The Exhibitors appreciated their comments and judging style.

Fleece entries were down which was isappointing. Champion Huacaya Fleece went to **Jolimont Kelmen** exhibited by

Hunter Alpacas and Champion Suri Fleece was awarded to **Surilana Donaldo** exhibited by Shangrilah Alpacas. It was also disappointing that we only had a couple of members offer to liaise with the public at the fleece display and hand out information to the public. In contrast the Queensland Branch of the Llama Association of Australasia who put on an impressive display each year (and who only have eleven members in Queensland) managed to get volunteers to promote llamas every day of the ten day show; our thanks to Bob and Sylva Barns who are also members of the AAA who continue to have alpacas represented in



their llama display. We are in a prime spot in the children's petting zoo area with the volume of people attending the Show approximately 240,000 per day, we missed a vital chance to promote our industry (and our own studs for that matter). This can only help to move stock as some members dearly need. So if any members have a penchant for preparing displays and marketing we dearly need your services.

Beautiful weather on the day alpacas entered the Pavilion on Monday and record numbers of crowds. This year Rockhampton Grammar School and Loganlea State High School sent agricultural students to assist the alpaca section. We only have three hours to setup the show and prepare pens before alpacas start arriving and their assistance to exhibitors bringing their equipment in was invaluable. Thanks to those members who also assisted me in setting up and to run the Show, it was a great team effort this year!

Our MCs at the event, Jeff Willis and Graeme Smith, gave an ongoing commentary for the public which also was an opportunity to market our industry. Thanks again to them.

Supreme Huacaya was won by **Hilldale Park Silken Prince** owned by Ann Harker and Barry Hambrook of Hilldale Park Alpacas - Armidale. Supreme Suri was won by **Humminghills Oliver Twist** owned by Sue and Dennis Boyle of Humminghills Alpacas - Carool.

This year was the Inaugural Junior Handlers Competition at this show. We had eighteen entrants and Junior Handlers who had never attempted the competition brushed off nerves and tackled the task with great enthusiasm. They were all keen to find out their scores so that they could improve next time. It was lovely to hear applause from the crowd as each went through the course. Winners were presented with ribbons and every entrant received a Medallion. I would encourage all shows to run such events as it highlights that alpacas are easily handled and in a commercial sense if every Junior Handler then wants to get their own alpaca, it would assist in selling our stock.

This is the last year I will be convening the Show and it will be interesting to see how the redevelopment of the Ekka site will affect our show in the future. To date we have had no feedback from the RNA Show Society. With growing numbers each year we hopefully will look forward to a better venue and facilities for alpacas and exhibitors alike. The pressures of other fleece breed sections increasing will also impact on our show as we all vie for space.

Pepperina Alpacas – Royal Queensland Show Convenor  
4 McAllister Rd, Forest Hill QLD 4342  
Mobile: 0417637497 Phone: 0754654232



## Male Alpaca sells for \$165,000 at Windsong Valley Sale

By Jenny Cohan - Handler.

Sunday 19th 2010 saw one of Australia's finest male alpacas sell for \$165,000 at the Windsong Valley Alpaca Stud herd dispersal, conducted at Corincancha stud in Napoleons, VIC.

The alpaca known as Firedragon, a six-year-old male with a dense fleece cutting 4.1 kilograms of skirted fleece, was purchased by Matthew and Catherine Lloyd from E.P. Cambridge Alpaca Stud, South Australia. The Corincancha Alpaca Stud principals Benoit and Philippa Ernst who manage the Windsong Valley herd, said the strong sale would boost the Australian alpaca industry.

Mr Ernst said the herd was not pet industry stock, but stock that was the beginning of a commercial fibre herd? and also commented that "The industry has been quiet and now it's taken off like a rocket. The market is jumping in leaps and bounds, which gives confidence to the market and breeders."

The Ernst's have been in the industry for twenty years and now plan to retire.

In brief, 138 animals were sold for \$889,790 (incl GST) with the average sale being \$6447. The top selling male was



- Firedragon and the top selling female was Lot 49, Windsong Valley Starbright, and she sold for \$23,100 and was also purchased by Matthew Lloyd.

- Landmark's Ballarat branch manager, Adrian Smith said the sale was an outstanding result and passed all expectations.
- Landmark has conducted many alpaca auctions with this dispersal being one of the most successful in many years.
- Over two-hundred people attended the dispersal by Landmark with both local and overseas buyers present.
- In the photo left to right are the purchasers Matthew & Cathy Lloyd - EP Cambridge, Andrew Sloan - Landmark Auctioneer, Wilson Beer - Landmark Alpaca Specialist and

### THE KELLY AND WINDSOR UNDER BLANKET

Following on from my article last month on alpaca pillows, this month I am reviewing the Kelly and Windsor under-blanket.

I am totally convinced now that the only linen to be slept on ever must be made from Alpaca fleece. After the success of our pillows I received overwhelming permission from my husband to invest in an Alpaca under blanket for our bed. Even before I had completed opening the package our cat decided it was a product far too good for his human carers and whilst still in the plastic bag tried to fashion it to allow his own slumber to commence.

Prising it from his sweet kitty paws we put our new under blanket on the bed, we were very impressed at the softness and feel of the blanket. The acid test was still to come; to sleep on the blanket.

I can with hand on heart say in all honesty that the comfort of this new under blanket by far exceeds any other product I have ever slept on; it is as close to sleeping on a cloud as I can imagine. I can highly recommend the Kelly and Windsor under blanket and while your investment will be more than for a standard woollen under blanket, I can suggest it is probably the best value for money you will ever spend on your sleep.

*Editors Note: This editorial is associated with paid advertising*





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# Matter Matters

## - The Five Worst Things a Fibre Processor Can Receive

by Gayle Herring

I have been involved in the alpaca industry for over seventeen years, initially as a breeder with over one hundred alpacas currently in my herd, and now also as a fibre processor. About three years ago my husband and I imported a fibre processing mill, and now I have the pleasure of processing my own alpaca fleece, as well as fleece from all over Australia.

Whilst I enjoy the experience of turning fleece from these stunning animals into yarn, there are a number of things from a processing view that I hate to receive. The following is my

### Top Five list:

5. DM (Disgusting Matter) – What you don't want to see when you open up a fleece to process it; dead mice, a family of dead baby rats or large dags.

4. VM (Vegetable Matter) – With any alpaca that lives its life outdoors, there will always be some contamination of the fleece, which tends not to be an issue with higher micron fleeces as the VM falls out fairly easily. However with finer fleeces VM can be a real issue, as although the machinery does a great job at removing VM, it cannot remove it all. Another issue with VM is that it gets caught on the various rollers, which causes additional cleaning of the machinery and in turn prolongs the processing time.

3. BM (Burr Matter) – Burrs are really just another form of vegetable matter, however they are one of the most insidious, time consuming, and difficult to remove. Most of the time they get caught on the rollers but if one happens to get through it is crushed into many tiny pieces that are then spread throughout the fleece.

2. HM (Hard Matter) – Whilst vegetable matter is a problem, what a processor does not want to see in a fleece is hard matter as it can physically damage the machinery if not removed before processing. Common objects that we come across include stones, barbwire, toe nails, mothballs and sticks.

1. LM (Live Matter) – Fleece that has been left in storage can have an infestation of moths or their larvae stage, caterpillars. It is the caterpillars that do the damage, munching on the fibre and turning it into tiny worthless lengths. The risk of moth spread and subsequent contamination of other fleece in the mill is enormous.

So if you want to get the most out of your fleece, here are a few handy tips to consider:

- Ensure your fleece is well skirted and remove as much contamination as possible.
- Don't put your fleece in old shopping bags or chaff bags for storage because some plastics disintegrate and can contaminate your fleece.
- Have your animals shorn early before your grasses seed or dry off to minimise VM contamination.
- Ensure you store your fleece in a pest free environment.

For more information please contact Gayle Herring, Fibre Naturally. Email: [gayle@fibenaturally.com.au](mailto:gayle@fibenaturally.com.au). Ph: 0407 729 227





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# THE WORTHY WETHER

By Tanya Vandenberg

**F**or over three years a very special appaloosa wether named Jannarie T.J has graced our paddocks. He may not have ticked all the boxes to join those elite males who make stud status, but he certainly ticks all our boxes. He is our worthy wether.

T.J was purchased with another male Jannarie Tarkyn, a cute little black and white, after seeing them on an internet sales page. From the first few weeks it was clear their personalities couldn't have been more opposite. T.J, the serious one and Tarkyn the adventurer.

We had noticed poo outside their paddock, but it took us two weeks to finally catch Tarkyn out. Tarkyn's adventurous spirit had him escaping from all our paddocks. If T.J became boring and wasn't keeping up then Tarkyn would head into the neighbours paddocks to see what fun could be had with the Arabian horses.

We were very saddened to lose Tarkyn to an unknown cause

about a year later. We were shocked as he had shown no sign of injury or illness. But this set us on a journey to find a suitable companion for T.J., our only pre-requisite was a colour match to Tarkyn. We came across a lovely older pregnant female whose colour matched almost perfectly, so began our next step into the alpaca industry together with a few nerves as we had never bred anything before. Our herd has now grown to seven females (and growing, as most of them are pregnant) and T.J.

T.J is just as important as our females. He is their protector, guardian, teacher and big brother. He is even tempered, confident, reliable and strong. He is packaged in a big boned body with soft brown eyes and long lashes and has a warm and caring nature. He wrestles with our young males, reprimanding them if need be. He alerts the herd with a loud alarm at the first sign of something unusual and will stand at the front ready to lead the troops into battle.

He continues to astound us with his skills and his strong



bond to the herd, most recently when one of our first time mums, Beauty, delivered her baby boy. It was much to her surprise and she had a tough time accepting that the leggy little newborn was hers and she walked away, leaving him, and joined the rest of the grazing herd.

So in stepped T.J midwife displaying a new set of skills we never knew about. His capabilities were captivating and impressive. Standing over the little cria whilst he positioned himself into the kush position. As the minutes passed he began to nudge him until he was attempting to stand, he continued to do this until he was steady and attempting to suckle - T.J made no fuss of the clumsy little cria fumbling under him. T.J then moved in large circles around Beauty with the little cria closely following, patiently and persistently until Beauty finally became interested and had the realisation that the little one belonged to her and she was a mum with a job to do.

U AT  
P

We called Beauty's little cria "Prince Edward", Teddy for short and we wish we could give you a happy update on his progress but unfortunately Teddy was euthanized on the 24<sup>th</sup>

of March 2010.

We had noticed him straining on the poo pile, which at first we thought to be constipation, which we treated him for which seemed to ease the discomfort. But the following day the straining, rocking and discomfort was back. We called the vet who discovered a lump near his back leg, under his tummy. She could massage it back into the stomach so her diagnosis was possibly a hernia and an ultra-sound was arranged to confirm her theory. We were optimistic as hernias were something that could be repaired and had been done at the clinic before.

The results of the ultra-sound confirmed a hernia, but not the common type it was in a complicated area and the vet had not performed an operation of this type before, thus our quote for the operation was in excess of \$3000 with no certainty of Teddy making it through the operation. Money that we just didn't have and a vet who wasn't able to set us up a payment plan to suit our budget.

It was a very sad few days and weeks. I struggled to say his name without becoming a sobbing mess. The toughest time for me was feeding out and looking at Beauty as she came to terms with losing her baby, Teddy was quite the mummy's boy. I felt so much guilt because I ultimately made the choice

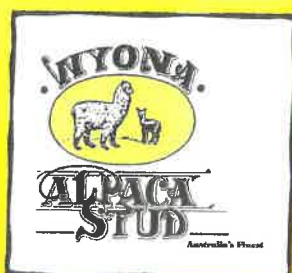
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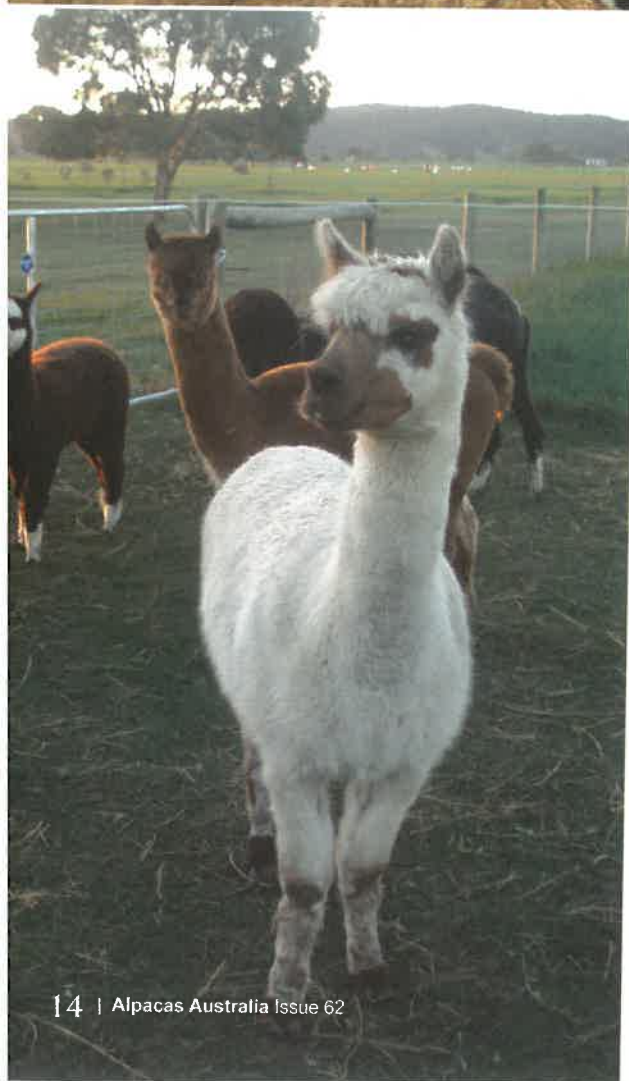
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• not to operate. I was sure she hated me.  
• But animals are amazing creatures, they have a way of talking to us without having to say a word. It was Beauty's strength that helped me most. It was several days later that she came over to me and just put her head on my hand, and without a word spoken I felt forgiven and all would be okay.  
• On a brighter note, Beauty is pregnant and is due around the end of January and we eagerly await the arrival of baby "Teddy Too" or "Princess Edwina". And we can rest assured that T.J will be close by to welcome them into the wonderful world of alpacas.

• It was this incident that finally prompted me to acknowledge T.J as one of our herd. It was something I had often thought about but never acted on. I contacted Diane and Rudy Balde from Jannarie Alpacas, not knowing if they would still have his papers so long after we purchased him, but they did and were happy and helpful in transferring him to our herd. Just like they were when we first met them when purchasing T.J and Tarkyn. T.J is and always will be a wether, but his is now officially our wether. Our wonderful worthy wether precious and valuable.

• Tanya Vandenberg  
• Vanderanch Alpacas  
• [vanderanch@netspace.net.au](mailto:vanderanch@netspace.net.au)  
• PH 03 53422454



# Simply Sustainable Field Day Returns to Windellama

*Saturday 6 November 2010*

*By Heather Caulfield*

Sustainability is once again the focus for the annual Windellama Small Farms Field Day which will be held on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2010. For seventeen years this family-oriented event has been providing visitors from Canberra, Sydney and the Southern Tablelands with an educational and fun day out.

This year the Field Day includes numerous sustainability and rural-focused exhibits, lectures, market stalls and live entertainment. Featured exhibits include solar and wind energy suppliers; mud brick builders; alpacas, cattle, goats and sheep and apiarists; wineries and olive growing; farm forestry; native bush soaps; nurseries and garden supplies; waste and grey water solutions; tractors and other farm machinery and more.

Reptile awareness demonstrations will be held throughout the day and the ever-popular Cow Pat Competition will again be conducted during the afternoon. There will also be craft and market stall holders, vintage machinery, local spinners and weavers, and local emergency services.

There's entertainment for all ages with live music, plus



*2009 Field Day - A demonstration by Irene Turner and Warren Yates from the Goulburn Weavers and Spinners*

hot and cold food and refreshments available throughout the day. The dedicated children's area includes a jumping castle, face painting, animal nursery, biscuit decorating, and pre-schooler craft activities.

Compact and personable, the Windellama Small Farms Field Day is a time-friendly and personable way to learn more about the reality of small farm holdings and achieving sustainability in every day life. Entry is \$5 per adult, \$3 per pensioner and all school children are free. Ample parking is available.

The Windellama Small Farms Field Day is held at the local community hall and grounds which are centrally located at the corner of Oallen Ford Road and Windellama Road. Windellama is located 40 kilometres south-east of Goulburn and is approximately two hours from Liverpool, or one hour from Canberra.

For further information about the Windellama Small Farms Field Day, to find out how to get there or to enquire about exhibiting

please visit: [http://www.windellama.com.au/field\\_day/index.html](http://www.windellama.com.au/field_day/index.html)

heather caulfield t: +612 4844 5120 Skype: caulfield.scorrar



# *Professional Photography*

- A Must for Stud Animals

*by Karen Hodges*





For the past thirty-five years I have been an Arabian horse breeder. My horses are living art and I want them depicted that way in photographs. I have found by having a standard of excellence when photographing animals, they are displayed at their best.

Photography is an art! I believe that all animals should be portrayed at their best. There is no point in "happy snaps" when trying to show a stud animal. Dogs, horses, cats and alpacas are no different. They must give the viewer the best advantage to see what they are buying.

I have been on photo shoots where the stud animal is a lovely specimen, but the surroundings are not suitable for a "great shot". These days with photo enhancement it is easy to alter both the confirmation of an animal and extract a less than desirable back ground; neither are really legal. It could be explained as "false advertising". I do not try and enhance any of my photos, and can honestly say that no animal I have photographed has had any alteration at all. Consequently, the buyer is seeing the true product.

All show and stud animals have advantages that should be displayed in a photo. The "cute" shot might be okay as an extra, but should never be used as the stud's promotion. The real breeder is going to see past that and want to see the animal's true conformation.

As a photographer, I believe in giving my clients the best photos of their stud stock that I can. If the product being presented to me is dirty and unruly, I won't accept the position as photographer. The animal should be presented to the photographer as it would be to the judge.

I have arranged my stud to have areas that are used for photography, so the backgrounds are right. The animal is either posed against that background or allowed float past it while I am clicking away at seven frames a second.

Great shots can just happen, but mostly - they are created.

*Editors Note: this is an editorial associated with paid advertising. Contact details are on page 46.*





# CRESWICK WOOLLEN MILLS

For a limited time take advantage of this amazing offer for all Alpaca Australia readers. Receive an additional 10% off all Alpaca products online at [www.creswickwool.com.au](http://www.creswickwool.com.au).

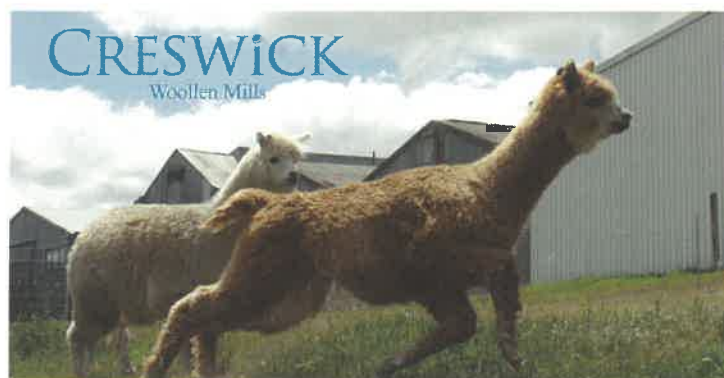
Creswick Woollen Mills have a beautiful range of Alpaca blankets, throws, socks, scarves, gloves and beanies all made in Australia.

Creswick Woollen Mills is proud to host their 6th annual Shearing the Alpacas event on Saturday 30th & Sunday

31st October at 10am. Alpacas are usually shorn mid to late spring in preparation of the long, hot summers. It takes great knowledge and skill to shear an Alpaca, so bring the whole family down to experience this memorable occasion together with the breeders, shearers and the Alpacas themselves!

For all upcoming events please visit their website [www.creswickwool.com.au](http://www.creswickwool.com.au).

*Editors Note: This editorial is associated with paid advertising*



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# VISTA DEL SUD ALPACAS



## We love alpacas!

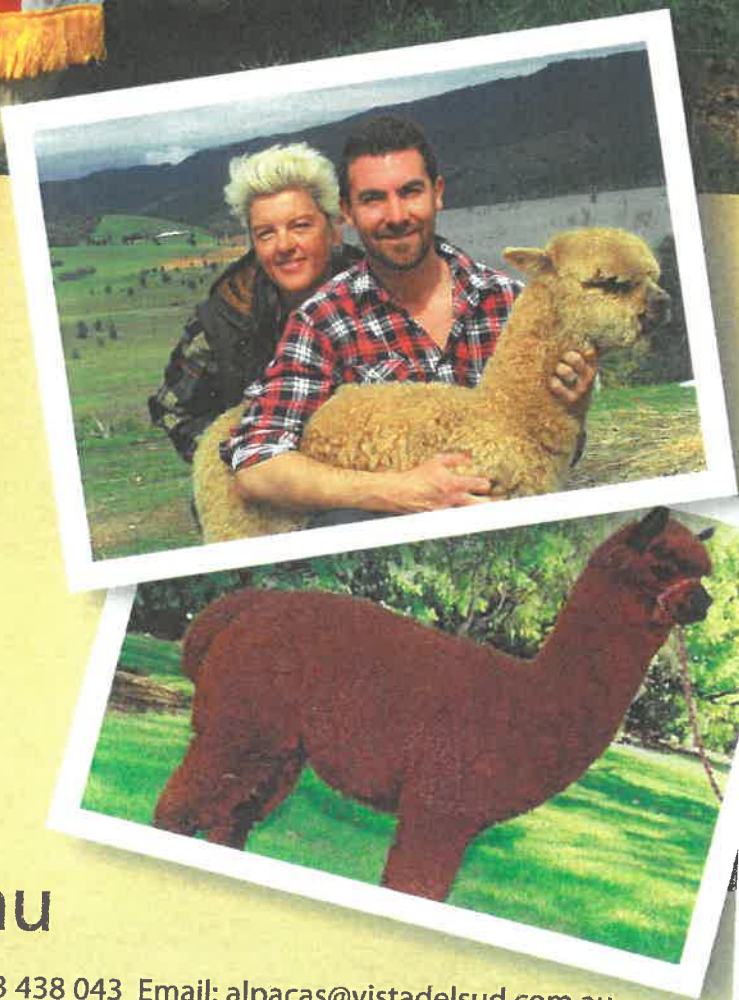
And life on our beautiful farm located at Howes Creek on the banks of Lake Eildon, just outside Mansfield in Victoria.

As boutique breeders with a small high quality herd of coloured and white huacaya, we only offer a select number for sale each year. Focusing on elite proven genetics, our aim is to breed healthy mid-sized alpacas with an attractive 'typey' appearance, friendly nature and beautiful big soft fleece displaying consistent structure over the entire body.

Please visit our website for details of our magnificent stud males and information about other services we offer including caring agistment and show preparation. Or call us for a chat or to arrange a visit to Vista del Sud.

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# DIY Catalogue

## The Do-It-Yourself alpaca sale or auction e-catalogue

Philip and Kristi Prehm, Optimate Group Pty Ltd.

Are you wanting to produce your own alpaca sale or auction catalogue but baulking at the cost (several thousand dollars to have a catalogue laid out, printed, bound and posted to two thousand breeders Australia-wide)? What if you could produce a catalogue on your computer in PDF format ready for emailing, publishing on your website, faxing or posting by snail mail?

What if you had some computer software that did the entire layout, imported your photos, drew your pedigree trees for you, and saved you hours of work on the animal lots and on the catalogue as a whole? AND what if it also provided a Buyer Information page, an About Us page, a Location page and a Notes page for you to modify as you saw fit? AND what if it also bookended the whole thing with a stylish front cover and back cover drawn from your own photos and information?

With our new product DIY Catalogue ([www.diycatalogue.com.au](http://www.diycatalogue.com.au)), the Do-It-Yourself alpaca sale or auction e-catalogue,

you can have all this. Simply have your info and photos ready to go, follow the simple steps in the step-by-step Wizard, and the software does the rest. You can immediately accept the catalogue produced, or tweak any part of it. Come back any number of times to change an animal Lot, or even produce a second or third catalogue.

The catalogue is saved as a PDF, allowing you to upload it to your own website or email it to your customers or print it out and fax or post it.

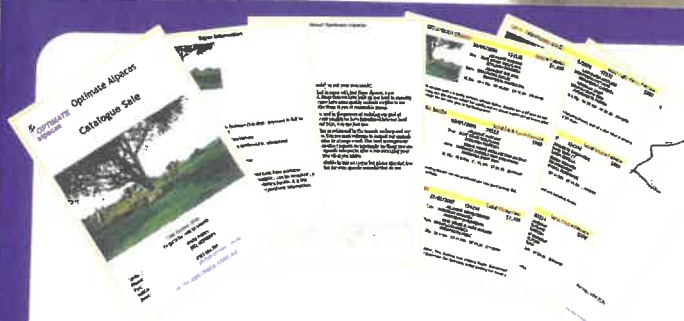
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Image courtesy of Currumbong Alpacas



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# Alpaca Dental Health

## An Introduction

By Allison Quagliani

**W**hen people ask me what I do for a living and I respond with "Alpaca Dentist" it invariably evokes the question of what drove me to enter this field. It was a tooth problem with one of my own alpacas that sparked my initial interest in alpaca's teeth. I had trouble finding someone to fix this problem and realised the need for someone to take more interest in the dental requirements of these animals.

I commenced my studies in 2004 and along with my tutor we designed and had made all the necessary equipment and instruments required for the exclusive dental care of alpacas. In January 2006 Alpaca Dental Services was formed and I commenced treating dental disorders in alpacas. I've since been able to share some of my knowledge speaking at open days, regional meetings and conferences within Australia

I regularly travel throughout Victoria with my mobile clinic and to date have examined and contributed to the wellbeing of thousands of alpacas.

More and more owners are becoming increasingly aware of how important it is for an alpaca to be able to graze and chew

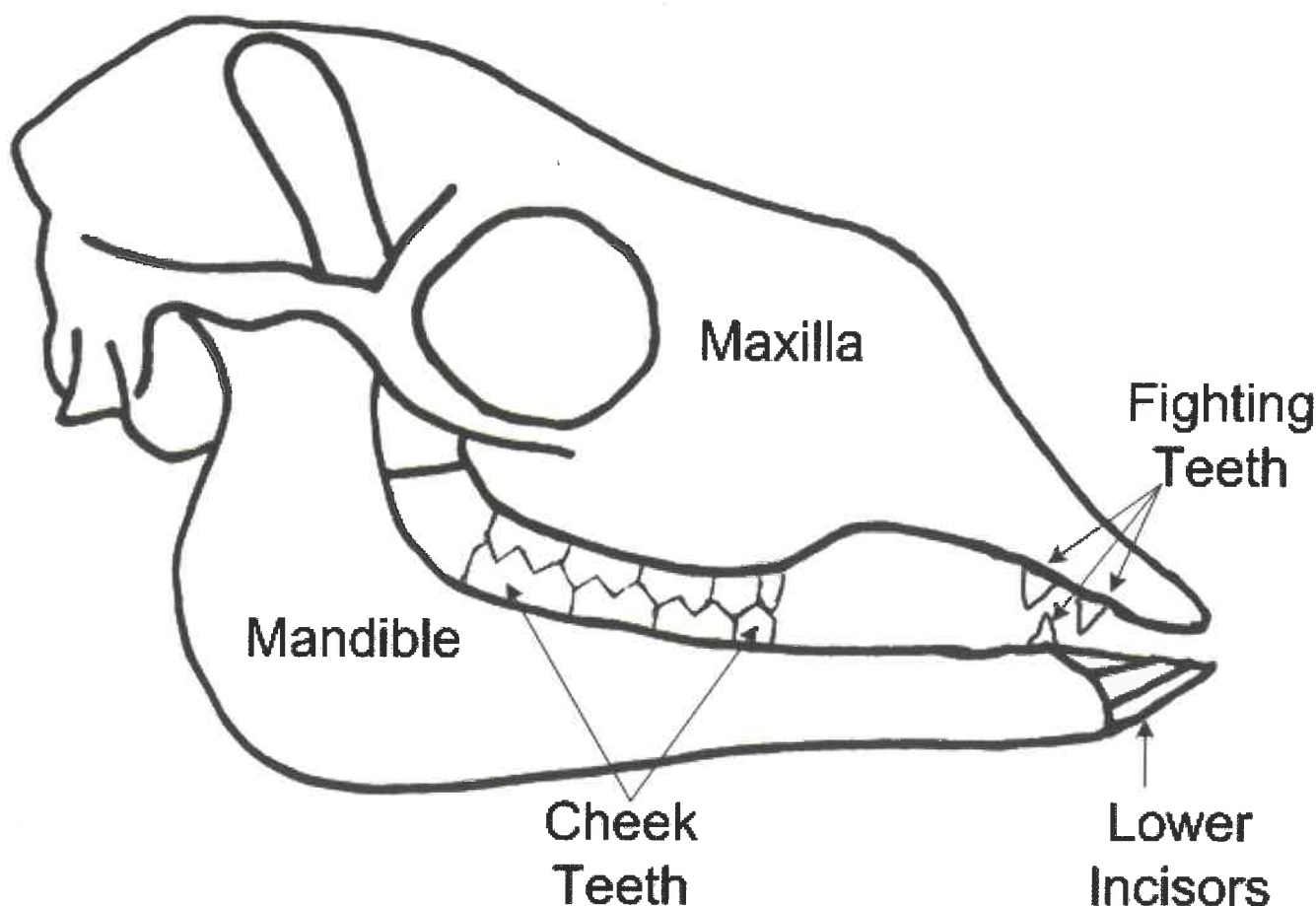
as comfortably and efficiently as possible. As in other animals, the mouth is the first stage of the digestive tract and since alpacas spend more than half their lives grazing and chewing a correctly conformed, well functioning mouth should be high on our checklist when looking to purchase or breed for the next generation.

In this article I will outline some basic dental anatomy and in the next few issues endeavour to show you 'the good, the bad and the ugly'.

### Basic Dental Anatomy

An adult alpaca has 30-32 permanent teeth. These are made up of incisors, fighting teeth, premolars and molars. There are six incisors in the lower jaw at the front of the mouth. The incisors are designed to fit snugly with the dental pad of the upper jaw and are used for grazing.

Behind the incisors on each side of the mouth are the fighting teeth. Males generally have large, well developed fighting teeth. As their name suggests these teeth are well







*Fighting Teeth*

designed to rip and tear during fights for dominance, sometimes causing injuries to opponents. Females often have fighting teeth but they are usually small and don't seem to cause any issues.

At the back of the mouth in both the upper and lower jaws are the premolars and molars. Also known as the cheek teeth or grinders, these teeth do all the hard work grinding the food to a consistency suitable for swallowing.

During an alpacas life it will have two sets of teeth, a deciduous (or baby) set, some of which are present at birth and a permanent set. The deciduous teeth are replaced by the new teeth at specific times in an alpaca's life and this process should be complete by the time the alpaca is around four years old. If you look in your alpacas mouths at certain ages you will be able to see some of the changes that occur.

### Occlusion and Malocclusion

Alpaca teeth develop and grow below the gums, being fed by blood vessels and nerves housed in the pulp chamber. The teeth erupt through the gums and start to wear as soon as they meet the dental pad or the teeth in the opposing jaw. The teeth keep erupting through the gums at the rate at which they are worn. How quickly the teeth wear is dependent largely upon the type of feed we give them, inherent dental quality and occlusion of the teeth.

To occlude is to meet closely or fit into each other. In dentistry malocclusion is the inability of the teeth in the top and bottom jaws to occlude together properly.

Malocclusions cause varying degrees of discomfort or pain to the animal. A tooth not being worn by an opposing tooth will keep erupting and will eventually hit against the opposing gum and jaw causing extreme pain. While times are good and food is plentiful the discomfort may not seem so obvious. When times are tougher, for example during times of drought, late pregnancy or lactation the effects of malocclusions become more pronounced.

In future articles I will discuss malocclusions further and endeavour to help you recognise the signs in your own alpacas.

Allison Quagliani  
Alpaca Dental Services  
Tel 03 5942 7316 Mob 0427 654 330  
allison@alpacadentist.com.au  
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*Incisors of a Six Month's Old Alpaca*



*Incisors of an Adult Alpaca*



# Alpacas - Livestock for the 21st century farmer

*by Julie McClen - Oak Grove Alpacas*





**W**e live in a world becoming greener by the day, green as it relates to an environmental conscience that is. Most modern consumers have an understanding of the concepts behind environmental sustainability and new catch- phrases relating to environmental issues are populating our language at a rapid rate. Carbon footprint, eco-friendly, global warming and sustainable agriculture, are but a few of the members of the new dialect of environment, joining those more established terms like recycling and greenies.

Add to this growing environmental consciousness the desire by consumers to consider the welfare of the livestock that provide the raw products of fleece, leather, milk and meat to name but a few, and you have a farming environment like no other in the history of agriculture.

With global animal rights groups like PETA drawing attention to the practice of mulesing sheep and battery farming of chickens, severe economic consequences are occurring for farmers unable to adapt, with some countries now banning imports of animal products whose husbandry involves such practices on the blacklist of animal rights organisations worldwide.

But all of these issues are something, as alpaca breeders, we look on from a distance. We have livestock designed by nature to fit perfectly with the greener consciousness of the 21st century.

The eco-friendly traits of alpacas are something as an industry we could better use to our advantage, by promoting alpacas as livestock suitable to Australian conditions, and appealing to the environmental groups whose influence is growing stronger each year. They in turn could lend their support to the promotion of alpacas as an environmentally friendly alternative to sheep or goats.

How can anyone fail to be impressed by the alpaca's soft padded feet putting less pressure on our fragile soils than other livestock, and even our native animals? At 39 kPa the static load-weight of an alpaca is much better than sheep at 82 kPa, cattle at 185 kPa and man at 95 kPa, and even better than our native kangaroo coming in at 46 kPa. Their soft feet do not damage our shallow top soils like other harder hooved livestock and they do not rip out grasses damaging the roots, or ringbark trees, therefore compaction is less, fertility is maintained, less soil erosion occurs and less weed invasion is likely.

Alpacas do well on native grasses and as browsers they tend to select a variety of plants to eat, so biodiversity is maintained and since native pastures require less fertiliser this can in turn reduce waterway contamination from chemical run off.

The practice of alpacas to have communal dung piles that



they tend not to graze around reduces worm burdens and therefore the need for chemical drenches is also reduced, and the ease of manure collection offers the opportunity for another side line to supplement farm income and improve soil fertility naturally. Due to their clean breach and the lifting of their tail to urinate and defecate, they do not require crutching or mulesing, now a major issue for the sheep industry. They tend not to suffer from fly strike or parasites like other livestock and this also reduces the use of chemicals in the farming process.

Their fibre is produced in a variety of natural colours lending itself perfectly to producing products from undyed fibre, a process which requires environmentally damaging chemicals. The lower grease content in alpaca fibre also requires less chemical use in the scour process further enhancing its ability to appeal to the growing natural and organic markets worldwide.

So when you are next promoting the farming of alpacas, don't forget to mention they are 'green' long before the term was even adopted to represent the environmentally conscious!



# A Pathway to a Viable Alpaca Fleece Industry

Paul Vallely Owner/Manager Australian Alpaca Fibre Testing

The Australian Alpaca community has for many years been bombarded with volumes written about the development of a viable alpaca fleece industry. The ideas being offered to breeders on how to produce better fleeces and how to effectively market them have been heavily fertilised with all sorts of rhetoric, promises and claims.

While many of these ideas have floundered, there is one approach that has already forged a pathway to a viable alpaca fleece industry, with successes recorded in the areas of genetic improvement, marketing initiatives and product promotion.

The concept is simply referred to as 'Premium Alpaca'.

Premium Alpaca is not an association requiring payment of fees. Nor is it a system that takes any of the decision-making away from breeders. It is simply a set of breeding and marketing tools that breeders can select from in order to enhance the fleece aspect of their farming activities. The scheme receives administrative input from a number of alpaca breeders throughout Australia and industry-related businesses.

The foundation upon which Premium Alpaca operates is that it latches onto the growing demand for high quality natural fibre suitable for the burgeoning luxury garment market.

While some pundits spell gloom to the luxury garment market owing to the global financial crisis, the wise are aware that now is the time to embrace opportunities being offered from 'reborn' quality apparel markets.

The obvious question 'what is Premium Alpaca?' is not easily answered as the concept must remain sensitive to the ever changing moods of the apparel market. In essence however, it is alpaca fibre (irrespective of colour or whether it comes from suri or huacaya) that meets the key demand drivers for top shelf textile processing and manufacturing.

The creators of Premium Alpaca have repeatedly evaluated the key drivers for high grade fleeces. These evaluations have included feedback from noted researchers, fashion houses, manufacturers and processors such as Merino Gold, Creswick Woollen Mills, Michells of Peru, CSIRO, Ermenegildo Zegna, Jo Sharp Knitwear and many others. The feedback is remarkably similar.

By far, the main driver is fibre diameter with soft handling

luxury garments requiring ultrafine type microns. For ultrafine, the maximum was 19 microns with speciality products geared for even lower microns. The other drivers are that the fleece must have very low levels of coarse fibres, very low levels of contamination, particularly cross colour contamination and have appropriate staple length of around 70mm to 100mm for huacaya – the jury is still out for suri due to market contradictions.

Blending of Premium Alpaca fibre with inferior types is not an option as the integrity of the yarn type is not to be compromised through increased fibre variation and coarseness.

In order to produce these beautiful fleece types, the Premium Fleece concept recommends a general breeding regime that encompasses the scientific principles of genetic improvement through direct selection of highly heritable traits. (Brien 2006, Kondinan 1998 and Hynd 1997). It also incorporates indexing of multiple traits such as combining breeding values for fibre diameter, fleece weight and standard deviation of fibre diameter (SD) so that a number of key fleece and body traits can be pursued concurrently. These principles have been scientifically proven over time and form the basis of flock improvement in the Australian wool industry (Kondinan 1998).

The breeding principles rely on the science of genetics that tell us it is far more effective to measure the very traits that form the breeding objectives rather than select for traits that are merely correlated to the desired fleece traits (Hynd 1997). In other words, if you want to decrease fibre diameter, then you should measure and select for fibre diameter – not indirect traits that might be related to fibre diameter.

In addition, the Premium Fibre approach can also involve the advanced breeding system of Genetic Improvement Fleece Technology (GIFT) (Vallely 2009). This system involves reducing 'across fleece' variation by testing for three recognised sites over the alpaca. It also incorporates reducing the incidence of coarse fibres by measuring 'across staple' variation.

To this end, a significant number of alpaca breeders who have adopted the Premium Fleece concept have recorded substantial improvement in their fleece statistics. It might be noted that some of their fleeces are now selling for more than \$150.00



The next aspect of Premium Fleece covers how the fleeces are marketed.

Some years ago, an attempt was made to consign a bale of ultrafine type alpaca fleeces. The scheme was referred to as the 'Golden Bale'. Unfortunately, the scheme largely failed as the fleeces were not correctly tested before consignment. Building on the lessons of the Golden Bale and successes with similar projects in the ultrafine wool industry, the Ultrafine Bale Scheme

was initiated in 2005. The scheme has resulted in a number of consigned bales that have averaged around 18.0 microns. The bales also achieved very low levels of variation in fibre diameter and length. The first bale set an Australian record with an average diameter of 17.9 microns.

The success of the Ultrafine Bale scheme lies in the grid testing of all fleeces using OFDA2000 equipment as part of the fleece screening process.

Due to the success of the scheme, a number of processors have approached the operators of the Ultrafine Bale Scheme in the hope of securing future ultrafine consignments. Late in 2009, the operators of the scheme reached agreement with The House of Alpaca, Australia and Michells of Peru to consign and process ultrafine fleeces of all colours with prices being paid currently up to \$70 per kilo.

In some cases, breeders are retaining ownership of their fleeces through to yarn or garment stage so they are able to use the final product to promote their studs or simply enjoy owning the glamorous results of their efforts. The Ultrafine Scheme has been incorporated into the Alpaca Premium concept.

The final component of Premium Fleece is the marketing and promotion of the quality fibre.

The supply of premium alpaca fibre must be linked to brand recognition. Premium Alpaca brands and labels will include positive messages of welfare driven husbandry, environmentally conscious practices, quality assurance systems and images of luxury and comfort. For this reason, the Australian Ultrafine Bale Scheme has created a protected trademark under which the quality controlled system of fleece screening and consigning will take place.

The labelling will also include 'personalised stories' of how

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the fibre is grown and how the alpacas are cared for.

The most effective marketing program, however, will be wasted unless a consistent supply of premium alpaca fibre is being produced. For this reason, a series of Premium Fleece workshops are conducted throughout Australia aimed at informing breeders of the details of Premium Alpaca, including specifics of how to breed for quality fleece types. To date, seven workshops have been conducted with over 200 alpaca breeders attending.

Given comments from breeders who have become involved in the concept, the expected increase in fleece values form only part of the benefits; the sense of achievement from producing some of the worlds most sought after fleeces is starting to breathe new life into producing the fibre of the gods.

### References:

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Please note, the writer of this paper discloses his commercial interest in the area of fibre measurement.

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flowers, menthol in the foliage. Supreme herbal tonics and digestive aids. Aphrodisiac for male creatures. Can dry off milk.

Uses: Gastrates, hyperacidity, flatulence, colic, indigestion, vomiting, diarrhoea, pneumonia. Nervous conditions and to strengthen the stomach.

**Chives**, *Allium schoenoprasum* Lillacea. Reed like leaves, purple clusters of flowers. Leaves are very sought after by creatures, a couple who bought two wethers from us and come back every year for shearing lost all theirs by the back door, because the boys took such a liking to them.

Uses: Tonic and internal cleanser, wormer.

**Aloe Vera**, *Aloe* Lillaceae Dry sandy places, cactus like. The only plant that survived from the Garden of Eden.

Uses: Constipation, indigestion, worms, urinary, mastitis, skin ailments, wounds or sores.

**Comfrey**, *Symphytum officinale* Borginacea. Moist places. Large prickly leaves and blue pink flowers. Fodder plant once. Knits bone.

Uses: Mending bones. Cure of all internal haemorrhages, including uterine. It has allantoin and cholin, healing agents. Internal ulcers, pulmonary ailments and Arthritis.

**Wormwood**, *Artemesia absinthium* Compositae. Greyish foliage, silky down, small yellow flowers, Bitter tasting, penetrating odour because it has absinthate of potassium, a green camphorated oil in the leaves. Worm expellant and tonic. Protects against contagious diseases, insecticide. Good for pregnant creatures, good for difficult birth. Give as a brew with sage and honey.

**Fumitory**, *Fumaria officinalis* Fumariacea Fern like, dusty grey, pinkish flowers.

Uses: Liver herb, jaundice, eczema.

A lady in Victoria who had a wether who used to wander in the garden, found he ate a lot of this herb and his staggers cleared up. A liver disease.

**Parsley**, *Petroselinum Crispum* Umbelliferae

Uses: Enricher of the blood, iron and copper. Apol, possesses carminative properties. Urinary system, female complaints., rheumatic and dropsy. Kidneys and bladder,

stones, congestion, obesity, worms, constipation and colic. **Yarrow**, *Achillea Millefolium* Compositae Fine feathered leaves, white flowers. Wound herb. Used as fodder by

Dutch farmers.

Uses----- Pneumonia, pleurisy, haemorrhages

**Tansy**, *Chrysanthemum Vulgare* Compositae Dark fern like leaves, yellow flowers. Worm expellant. Debility, fevers and dropsy.

Part Two will be continued in the next issue.

*The author bases this dietary information on her own experiences and is not a qualified veterinariann*

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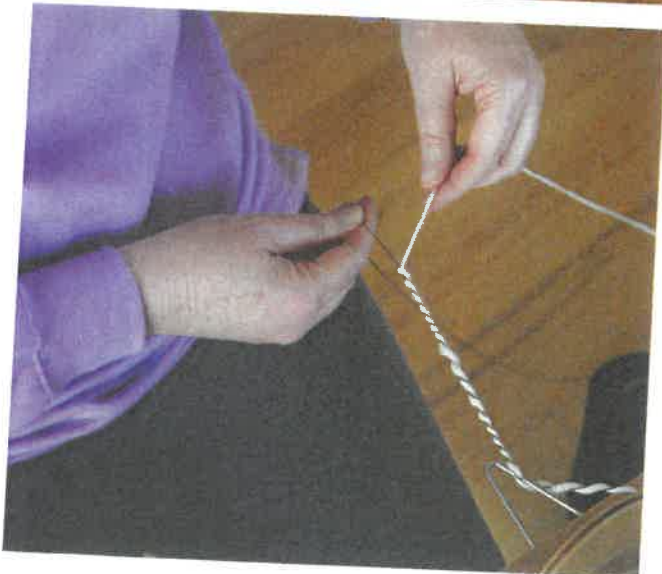
# Spiral Yarns using Alpaca

By Heather Dunn

**A**lpaca has lovely natural shades but it dyes beautifully as well, so why not enjoy the softness of the fibre with some serious colour?

This yarn is easy to spin, exploits the colours in the tops and creates a lovely textured scarf. Before we get to spin the yarn for this scarf, let's just take five minutes to get our spinning wheels running smoothly.

Those new to spinning, often don't realise how critical it is to have everything running smoothly and in alignment. Spinning should be effortless; you shouldn't need to chase your wheel around the room as you treadle. To make your wheel easier to treadle and therefore spin on, check these things on your wheel. On Ashford wheels, check all screws are tight on the frame and maiden heads. Make sure the flyer whorl lines up with the drive wheel so that the drive band doesn't jump off all the time. Don't have



the drive band too tight, it just adds to friction and difficulty in spinning. On the flyer, make sure the maiden heads are lined up and not turned in and touching the flyer (more friction); there should be a bit of play. Don't over tighten the scotch tension either as all these contribute to difficult treadling. The spring should not be stretched. If you find you need to over tighten the tension it's usually an alignment problem in the flyer. Clean all the oil points and then oil the wheel, don't over do it; just a drop at each point.

On other wheels, make sure it's oiled (or not, according to manufacturers instructions- some have dry bearings and nylon bushes etc), that the drive band is not too tight and lined up with the flyer whorl and the flyer shaft is lightly oiled (just a drop) where the bobbin makes contact. The trick with effortless spinning is not having the drive band too tight; just enough tension to do the job, everything else lined up and oiled then you won't notice the treadling. For more information go to the Reference section of [www.braesidealpaca.com.au](http://www.braesidealpaca.com.au).

## Now to our yarn

Source or spin a fine yarn or single, about lace weight or 2/20's. In the sample I have used a fine merino yarn. Fine silk works as well, but I find the merino (or alpaca) not as slippery.

For the slub, set your wheel up with a light tension and a ratio of around 7:1 (see my website for an article on ratios). Pull off a section of tops (about 50cm), then strip down to three or four sections, don't go too fine. Stripping down is separating the top length ways (see Figure 1). This method keeps definition in the colours, whereas simply spinning from the end of the top will cause too much colour blending.

Attach the fibre to your leader yarn and spin 30cm or so and then make your first slub. Take your front hand and pinch the fibre behind the drafting triangle and draft forward a short way (Figure 2). Put your front thumb and forefinger back at the point of twist and spin on until the next slub. Keep inserting slubs either regularly or at random (I prefer the latter), until you have run out of top. Don't over spin; the twist will migrate to the finer sections of the yarn and get too ropey. Equally under spun slub yarn will pill and pull apart so not too soft either!

Once you have filled your bobbin (I get 100 grams onto a Majacraft bobbin), it's time to ply. Put your slub bobbin on a Lazy Kate along with your preprepared single (or sit your cone or ball of commercial yarn nearby). On a similar ratio to your spinning, treadle in the opposite direction to your slub yarn and attach both yarns to the leader, and allow to wind on. Now your slub yarn is going to spiral around the finer yarn- it's almost an unbalanced ply. Hold the fine yarn fairly firmly in one hand and in your other hand; hold the slub yarn at a slight angle (Fig 3), with a bit less tension. As you ply, allow the slub single to wrap the finer yarn- not to



cover it, more like a barber's pole effect. When you get to a slub, make sure it spirals evenly so the fine yarn stabilises the slub and holds it firmly. As you ply (like when you spin), keep your hands moving. If you need to check something;

### Stop Treading!

Continue to the end of your slub yarn. Well Done! Leave it to rest on the bobbin for a while, I usually leave it overnight, and then wind into a skein using a niddy noddy. Tie off in four spots loosely. When you take it off the niddy noddy it may appear unbalanced, but most or all of this will wash out. Wash your yarn by soaking for five minutes in Unicorn Fibre Wash and warm water, then rinse in lukewarm water and Unicorn Fibre Rinse. Let the water out of the tub, squeeze some of the water out and then drip dry (I hang it in the shower recess). This slightly blocks the yarn. When dry wind into a ball.

### To make the scarf

Choose 10mm or larger knitting needles. Cast on 30 stitches and then knit 4 rows.  
Row 5- Knit 4, Yarn forward, \*make one purlwise, purl 2 together. Repeat from \* until the last 4 stitches, yarn back and knit 4 stitches.  
Repeat Row 5 until you have nearly run out of yarn and then knit 4 rows, and cast off loosely. Give the scarf a slight tug to pull into shape and then wrap it around your neck!

© Heather Dunn2010

Heather Dunn and her husband Peter, run Braeside Alpacas which is a small herd of alpacas bred for hand spinning, coloured Corriedales for hand spinning and a website complete with an online shop. Heather and Peter are also

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# Start With a FOCUS

by Lezley Golding – Stevley Park Suris, Victoria

So, you have looked into those big brown almond shaped eyes and been smitten by the alpaca, you just have to have one. Then you think to yourself, I know nothing about these inquisitive but curious creatures. What do I do next?

This is the point where you need to start asking yourself many questions and commence defining your focus and perhaps business plan. In all aspects of life having a focus and goals is most important. The alpaca industry is well established in Australia now it is relatively easy for the new breeder entering the industry to have their questions answered and be able to 'Start with a Focus'.

The following is a guide only and hopefully will help you decide how you can move forward in the alpaca industry with this exquisite animal.

Ask yourself a list of questions – here are some to start with

- Do I own or have access to acreage?
- How much land is required?
- Do I want to agist my animals?
- Do I want a couple of non-breeding pets to mow the grass?

- Do I want alpacas as herd protectors?
- Do I want breeding females?
- Do I prefer Huacaya or Suri?
- Do I want White, or a specific colour?
- What do I want to do with the fleece?

## Visit Established Breeders

Okay, so let's assume you have asked yourself these and many more questions, and this has prompted you to visit established breeders and allowed you to get some hands-on experience with alpaca's, i.e. husbandry [toe nails, injections, halter training]. Shearing time is a good time to handle animals and learn a lot about fleece. New breeders will find most established alpaca breeders will make themselves available to help and advise.

## Find a Mentor

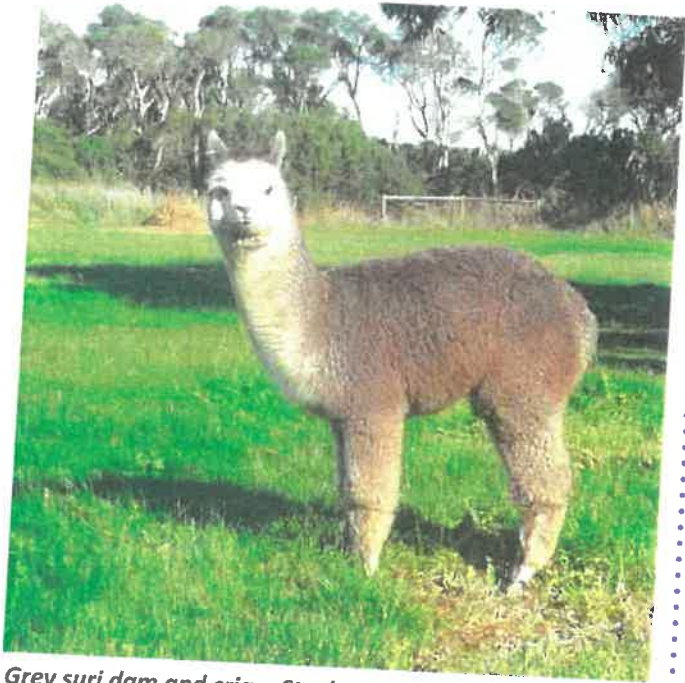
At this stage it is good to find yourself a mentor that you are comfortable with. Be guided by them, remember they have been in the industry longer than you and have a wealth of knowledge ready to impart.

## Become a Member of the Australian Alpaca Association (AAA)

By joining the AAA, you will gain access to a wealth of knowledge. Become involved in your local region. Check out their website and attend as many workshops as possible. Go







Grey suri dam and cria - Stevley Park Suris



Grey huacaya - Chiverton Alpacas

watching your alpacas. By doing this you will get to know your alpacas and know what is normal and when something is wrong.

#### Your Starter Pack

You need to consider what sort of starter pack you want. Breeders will advise and make up a package that suits your land size, budget and breeding goals.

#### Diversify Your Genetics with Outside Matings

Buying a stud male in your first few years of operation will limit your genetic herd diversity. Your dollars are better spent carefully selecting outside matings from proven stud sires selected to improve and enhance your initial female stock.

Your herd will not improve, if you never look outside your own fence line.

#### Farm Setup

Owning your own land means you can have your animals with you. Starting off with a small number of breeding females, gives you time to learn as you breed up. Setting up your farm initially to handle your small number of animals can be as easy as a laneway and a couple of spare gates to act as a 'catch pen.' This will allow you to bring your animals into a smaller area and make handling easier. It's a good idea to invest time in your animals and halter train each if they are not when you purchase them.

Although alpacas look like they can manage very cold and very hot days/nights, they do need access to shelter, but again this does not have to be an expensive shed. A shelter can be as simple as some trees or a shelter made from old pallets and shade cloth.

Alpacas are not renowned for escaping from paddocks and generally will stick close by their mates if they do. It's a good idea to have ring lock type fencing at least on the boundary and stud male paddocks. Barbed wire fencing should be avoided.

#### Many Uses for Alpaca Fibre

As the industry has grown, fibre uses has progressed from the traditional handcrafts (knitting yarn, felting, spinning, weaving) to commercially woven fabric, clothing, bedding throws, and rugs. For the lesser quality fleeces carpet and insulation products are now being produced.

#### In Closing

Once you have decided to grow alpacas, you have asked your questions and done your research; you will be in a more focused position and will intelligently embark upon this very pleasurable and rewarding journey.

#### About the Author

Lezley Golding has been in the industry since 2001 and runs a herd of approx seventy coloured suri alpacas in West Gippsland, Victoria. [www.stevleypark.com.au](http://www.stevleypark.com.au)

to shows, meet other breeders, look at and get your hands on other animals.

#### Suri or Huacaya?

You will find that after you have done some research, spend time with both Suri and Huacaya, you will have decided on a preference. Suris are the rarer fleece type of the two, although there is a market for both fleece types.

#### Observation [A Very Important Tool]

Don't feel guilty if you find yourself wanting to spend time



# SPS

Stevley  
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Suri



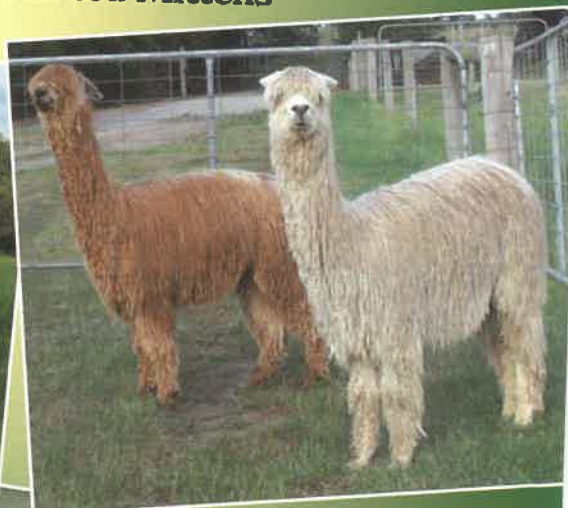
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Lezley and Steve Golding  
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03 5941 5561 0417 506 855



# GRAND ALPACA SUPPLEMENT

Written by: John Fistonich

**G**rand Alpaca is not new to the market. The combination of ingredients has been used in a variety of countries around the world for several years, until recently being reformatted by us to help alpaca be as healthy as they can be.

Being browsers and light on the land is a positive characteristic of the alpaca, but as a mammal the alpaca still has a minimum daily requirement of vitamins, minerals, electrolytes and so on. And that's where Grand Alpaca comes in.

Especially formulated to supply the alpaca with its minimum daily requirements, Grand Alpaca is now available in Australia.

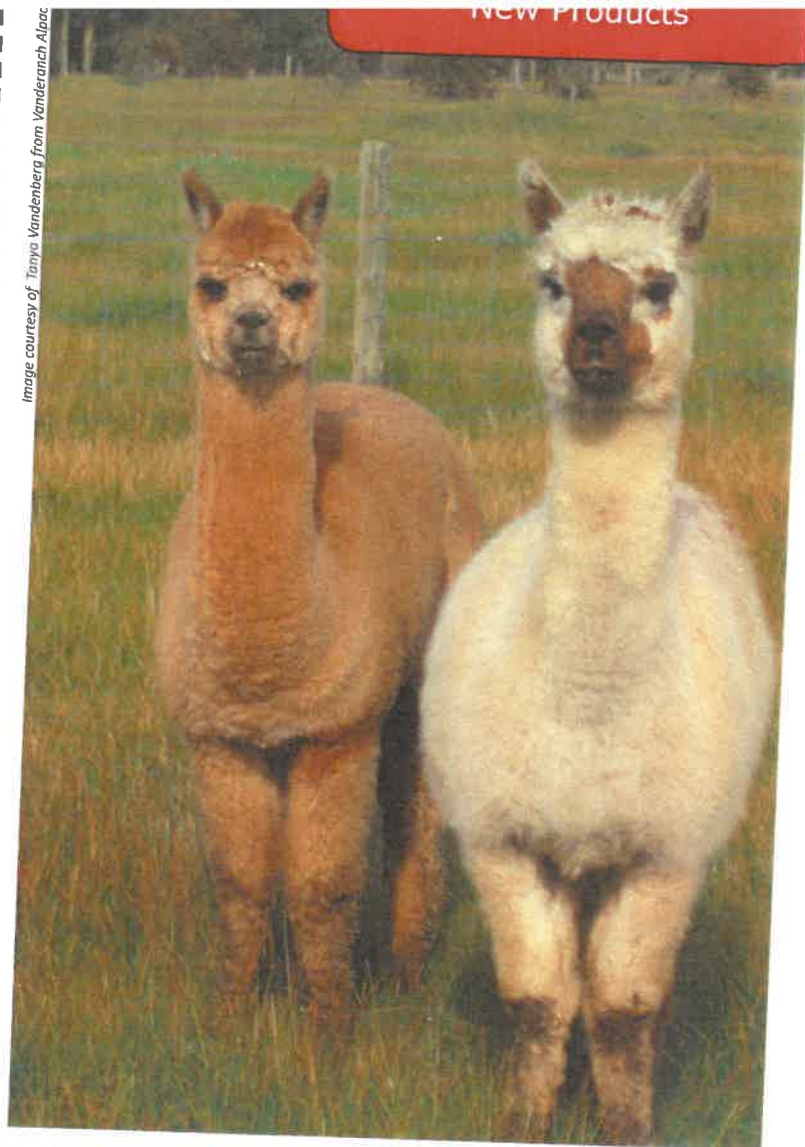
Grand Alpaca is a specifically formulated blend of natural ingredients that are combined in such a way to allow the various components to have the greatest bio-availability and therefore give the alpaca the best possible chance at being as healthy as possible. Many people will give their animal a handful of this or a pinch of that with dinner but fail to realise that they may only be supplying a part of what the alpaca needs to grow superior fleece or perhaps remain as healthy as possible during pregnancy (A special pregnancy version will be available soon).

Grand Alpaca is a specifically formulated blend of kelp, mint, garlic and a natural yeast extract that acts as a pro-biotic enhancing the uptake of the nutrients from whatever the alpaca eats including the grass. Easy to dose once a day, you simply top dress the alpaca's meal a little at first to allow them to get used to the taste (not bad just different) increasing to the full dose over the coming days. Once they are used to it, some of the animals will actually lick the blend from your hand in its dry form.

Animals that are users of the formula that is Grand Alpaca take a couple of weeks to show a difference. Generally the animal utilises the vitamins, minerals and other components of the product to bring itself up to optimum health, then the changes begin to be seen on the outside; the coat or fleece will improve, older animals move more easily and the animal generally appears healthier. After a few months you will notice that the feed requirement actually decreases as the pro-biotic kicks in and enhances the nutrient uptake. So the question I have for you is this. How healthy do you want your alpaca to be? And that's not to say your alpaca aren't healthy now, but none of us can see what's going on inside; making available the tools the alpaca needs is all we are doing with Grand Alpaca.

[john@alpacasaustralia.com.au](mailto:john@alpacasaustralia.com.au) phone 07 3102 4494 or 0405 249615

Image courtesy of Tanya Vandenberg from Vanderan Alpaca



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# Alpacas 101

*Start out making fibre your priority!*

*By Julie McClen - Oak Grove Alpacas*

Starting out in alpacas can be confusing, and navigating the maze of opinions, information and sometimes well intended misinformation, can at times be daunting for the new alpaca owner.

Setting up your farm for alpacas, visiting alpaca shows and studs, talking with a variety of breeders, or working out a budget for your starter herd are the easy parts. Knowing which alpacas to buy and why you should buy them can get quite a bit more complicated.

Most articles aimed at newcomers give a good outline of the basics to chew over, but don't really offer anything particular to sink your teeth into. Over the years I have met many new breeders that haven't been told more than the absolute basics about alpaca fleece. Most of my new clients are hungry for real in depth information on assessing fleece, and feel confused by an industry that claims to be a fibre industry, yet doesn't appear to have a commercial fibre focus as its core.

But first let me be clear, you will not make a living from alpaca fibre itself if you don't run thousands of alpacas, and this is no different than in the merino wool industry. But you can achieve returns on your fibre that cover your shearing and general husbandry costs at least, and maybe even have something left over in the piggy bank.

When looking at alpacas to buy, don't let yourself be swayed

by that cute face or big name genetics-make a breeding plan before you look and don't buy an animal if it doesn't fit your plan! Apart from the obvious issues of the animals you buy being in good health, having good conformation, being able to reproduce well and raise strong healthy progeny, there is the big issue of fleece.

Alpacas are fibre producers and this whole industry revolves around the fleece, how fine is it, what crimp style does it have, what bundling, what lustre? It's endless and often confusing for the newcomer unfamiliar with fibre terminology. Yet in many ways breeders often seem to lose sight of the big picture - that the long term future is in the fleece. We are the pioneers in a very young industry, and the future of commercial quality Australian alpaca fibre is in our hands, lets get it right!

If you take anything from this article, let it be this - The Australian Alpaca industry needs to seriously concentrate on fibre traits that create the best return for the grower, if we want to have a viable commercial future and not just be a pet/show industry. But can you do both? Can you win show ribbons confirming your alpacas have good conformation and fleece character, as well as have fleece with high commercial value? Yes, you can.

But if your budget is limited you may need to compromise a little, and be aware that achieving your perfect alpaca type can often be a multiple step process. Start out with alpacas that exhibit those traits that are at the top of your want list



and are the most heritable, then work on introducing the other traits by careful selection of stud sires to produce more well rounded progeny, without losing what you already have.

The last five years have seen many changes within this industry, and the focus has started to shift toward breeding alpacas whose fleece has a higher dollar value, especially since several new buyers have entered the market offering better prices for fine quality fibre.

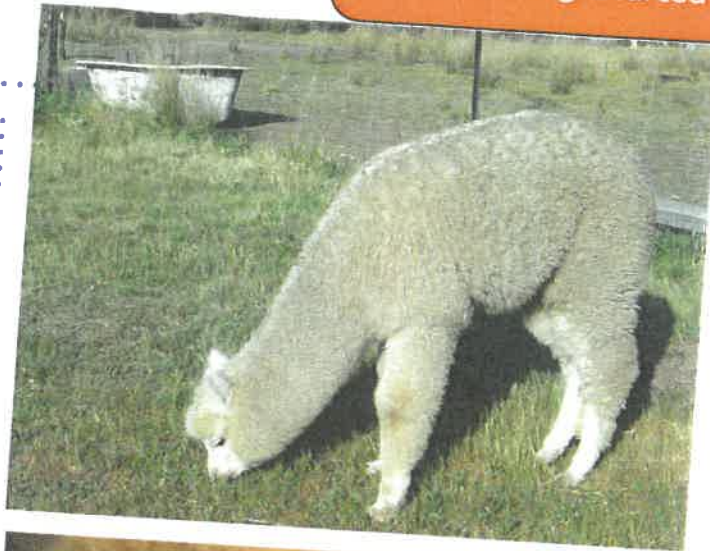
Currently, if you want to cover your shearing costs from your fibre returns you need to produce higher value fibre or a huge amount of lesser quality fibre.

However most breeding alpacas don't produce 4kg's plus of useable fibre, so you need to make every kilo count. If you breed alpacas that have finer fleece, and more importantly can stay finer for longer, then your fleece has a much greater value per kg for more years. Therefore those animals producing this valuable ultrafine to fine fleece for more than a year or two, and producing progeny that do the same, are themselves becoming more valuable to an industry looking toward commercial viability.

But quite often our industry has disregarded these valuable fleece traits in favour of fleece that looks nice but can be worth only a few dollars a kilo. So if you really want to breed alpacas that can win show ribbons, but also produce a fleece that has commercial value you need to know what to look for.

To be able to ascertain which alpacas are high-value fibre producers, you need to consider more than just how a fleece looks.

- Fibre Statistics - ask to see the yearly fleece histograms for an animal, not just the first fleece test, and be sure to check the dates of the fibre test compared to the date of birth, to know how old the animal was when tested. If possible ask to also see the parents and siblings fleece tests, to see if there is a pattern related to fibre traits, such as staying fine or blowing out in micron as they age.
- Know what you are looking at - understand what Micron, SD, CV and CF mean and what they should be for quality high value fleece. Be aware that handle does not determine commercial fleece price! Handle is highly subjective and can easily be influenced for example by dust in the fleece. Humans are about 23% accurate for estimating micron correctly, machines are closer to 90%.
- Take note of the body score, under nourished animals tend to be finer because of their environment and may well increase in micron at your place if feed quality is better.



- Understand what determines the value of fleece. Micron, comfort factor, correct length, and not being tender are factors that influence fleece value much more than crimp style or lustre for example.

Most importantly, do your research!

Ask the hard questions of the people offering to sell you animals, if they can't answer to your satisfaction - don't be afraid to walk away.

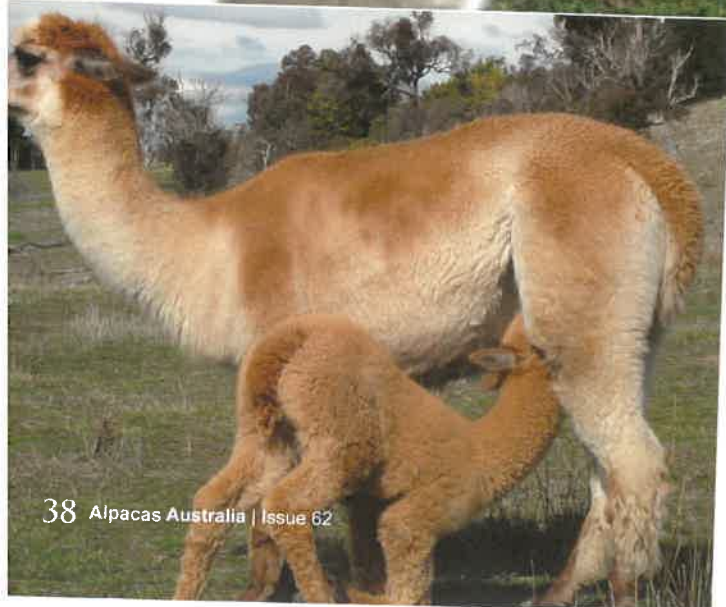
Just be aware that all the show ribbons and famous genetics in the world are not guarantees of animals producing fibre of high commercial value. To achieve the best of both worlds, you need to delve deeper and look past the pretty faces, the famous names and the show ring, and see what's really happening with the fleece. Making fibre your first priority is a huge step in the right direction toward securing your place in the future of the commercial alpaca fibre industry.

*Julie McClen is a partner in Oak Grove Alpacas located in Canelo NSW, further information explaining fibre terminology and other resources related to fibre can be found on the Oak Grove website at [www.oakgrove.com.au](http://www.oakgrove.com.au)*





# Curumbong Alpaca



**A** mere ten years ago the first five females and two wethers arrived at their new home with Curumbong Alpaca. A year later and the first cria arrival swelled the herd to eight. Now fast forward to this year and the herd stands at 103 made up of 62 breeding females with seven of Curumbong's own stud males and a combination of wethers, female weanlings and young males.

The last two years have been kind to Curumbong with the hard work showing through at the 2009 Royal Canberra Show securing the 'Supreme Huacaya Fleece' (Curumbong Golding) and the 'Champion Huacaya Skirted Fleece 6 to under 12 months' (Curumbong Goldaming) titles. This year Curumbong Golding again shone through taking the 'Reserve Champion Saddle of Skirted Huacaya Fleece 18 months and under 30 months' title at the Royal Sydney show while Curumbong Canber was taking the 'Champion Huacaya Skirted Fleece 60 months and over' gong at the Royal Canberra.

Odette and Bill have made the decision to reduce their herd size as they get a little older, ensuring that they can give the absolute best attention and care to the reduced numbers and continue their work improving herd and fleece as they go. You can view their catalogue sale which ends at the end of 2010 by visiting their website on the opposing page. The strategy has paid off too with a total of eleven fleeces being accepted into the 2010 Ultrafine Bale Scheme in the categories between 16.1 and 19 microns.

Their breeding objective now is to breed white and light fawn alpacas. In the past they were breeding many colours and also suris. Bill and Odette believe the Alpacas for sale are of good value.

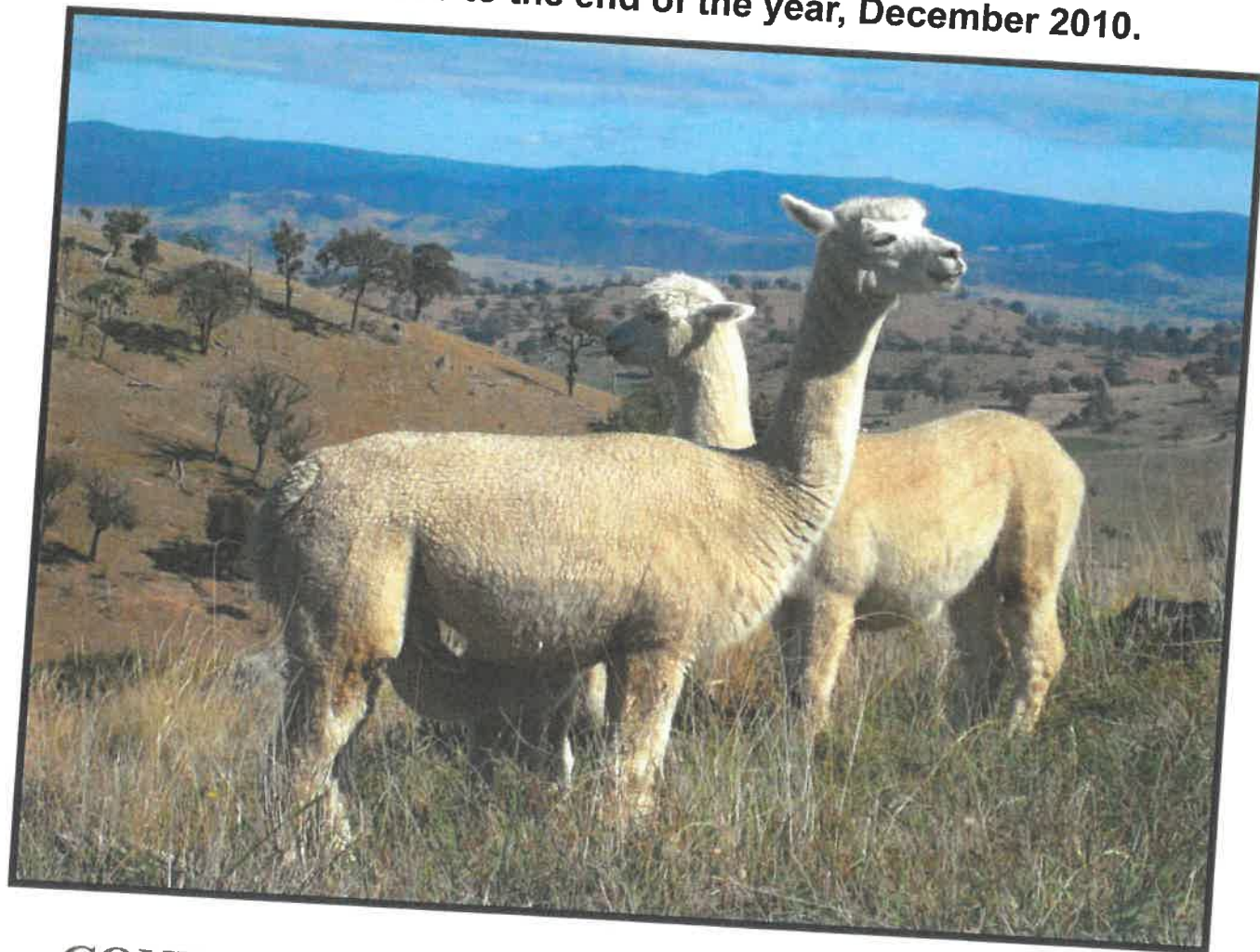
*Editors Note: This is an editorial associated with paid advertising*



**2010**

# Catalogue Sale

Sale continues to the end of the year, December 2010.



**CONTACT:**

**PHONE:**

**MOBILE:**

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**Odette and Bill Mayne**

**(02) 6230 9192**

**0427 309192**

**omayne@bigpond.com**

**[www.currumbongalpacas.com](http://www.currumbongalpacas.com)**





# The Tipping Point

*Written by John Bell, AAA Director - Industry Development portfolio and Liz Fistonich- Editor Alpacas Australia*

No Australian breeder would pretend that the alpaca market is as buoyant as it was some years ago; with a relatively small population the issues of market elasticity were always going to impact on Australia before other New World alpaca countries.

As the potential to make money on animal sales becomes more challenging, the greater is the need to focus on developing a commercial farming operation based on the value of the whole animal, encompassing the traditional triangle of fleece and meat and hides common to all livestock industries.

Whereas the return on fleece was, until now, not uppermost in the minds of Australian growers, this will inevitably start to change and indeed it could be argued that the challenge it brings may well be beneficial for the industry in the longer

term.

With the quality of Australian alpaca genetics and animal health, Australia is better positioned than most to make the transition to commercial alpaca farming. As we look to the future, perhaps the key issue for Australian breeders is to differentiate our product on quality and branding. For the moment, that focus needs to be on fleece to maximise our returns.

## Australian Fibre Marketing

For several years growers have supported Australian Alpaca Fleece Limited (AAFL), believing that the cooperative approach would ultimately provide better returns. However, the amount still sitting in grower sheds, the recent member



survey and the small amount of fleece being dispatched to the AAFL this year would seem to indicate a loss of grower confidence in this marketing methodology.

It has been argued by AAFL that growers have unrealistic price expectations and that the quality of fleece being received by AAFL is frequently of no commercial value and is, in any case, bound by world alpaca fibre prices. Many growers were disappointed when AAFL suspended buying Australian fibre last year. However, every challenge also brings opportunities, and indeed new buyers have emerged, prices have improved for many growers, and the world of alpaca fibre marketing in Australia has changed irrevocably.

As we look forward is there another option for growers?

#### Grower Control

The notion of Grower Clusters aims to better provide groups of growers with options for selling their fleece, enabling them to have their fleece classed directly in front of them.

In order to maximise the financial return growers either need to spend their time in sorting, skirting and, if qualified, classing their annual production, or pay a classer to do it for them. By supervising this operation growers can be confident when offering their fleece for sale, and the buyer will be confident in the quality they are buying. The cost of this operation when combined with other growers will not be expensive.

#### What are Grower clusters?

Grower clusters are groups of growers who wish to cooperate together working at a convenient central geographic location for the classing and baling of their fleeces.

The key concepts are:

- Growers organise themselves, working with those people with whom they wish to work
- They participate in the classing of their own fleeces to gain experience

Or

- They pay a professional classer (approved by the buyer group) on a "per fleece" or daily cost recovery basis. Logically if they have to pay for the classing they are unlikely to submit rubbish.
- Using fleece statistics where available
- They produce bales of *Quality Assured* fleece whereby the buyers have confidence in the classing, creating an alignment of expectations between buyer and seller.
- They may choose to sell to the selected buyer or to retain it and offer it to others, have it processed or whatever they choose, but critically the fleece remains in their ownership until such time as it has been paid for.
- The Growers can assure the buyers that their product is Australian Alpaca, branded as such
- No direct involvement of the AAA
- Commercial arrangements directly between their chosen buyer group(s) and themselves

- Building self sufficiency and market awareness for growers

Every grower will make their own commercial decisions but working with other growers cooperatively makes sense.

#### How to start a Cluster?

The first step is to establish a critical mass of like minded growers; buyers are not interested in small volumes of different colours and are unlikely to pay much for it.

Choose growers that you can work with, not just because they live close by.

Discuss how the cooperation might work; each group may be slightly different.

Contact several potential buyers to see if they are interested in working with your group and determine what they are looking for in respect of quantity, colour, micron & length.

The AAA maintains a list of potential buyers on the website, but before you contact them please do make sure that you know approximately what volumes you think that you might be able to deliver.

#### Present a Commercial Image

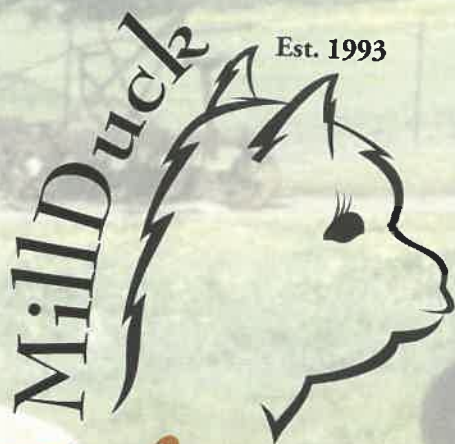
Your product needs to be presented to your buyer in a similar manner to how they would receive delivery from Peru i.e. Correctly classed, pressed in bulk in bales( no bags) and correctly identified on the bale in the language of the buyer. To this end you will need new nylon woolpacks (approximately \$11ea), bale fasteners and access to a wool press. Ensure you weigh and identify your bales.

Several growers have already formed these groups and have been rewarded with returns on their fleece far greater than they have ever experienced over many years.

The concept of grower clusters requires nothing more than the volition and enthusiasm of its own members. It is not an AAA initiative, and requires no input or supervision from the AAA. It is, very simply, a concept which members of the AAA might like to investigate and progress on their own terms. The sole interest of the AAA is in maximising the return for growers and securing the future of the alpaca fleece industry, and implies no favour to any method of collection, distribution, or purchaser of alpaca fleece other than that which achieves these ends.







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*See you at the Nationals!*

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# DESIGN FEATURES IN SPINNING WHEELS

There are three basic designs - Double Banded, Scotch Tension and Irish Brake.

Double banded machines have both the flyer and the bobbin driven. The speed of each is determined by the whorl or pulley size, on which each drive band runs. The ratio between these two parts is fixed, one being slower or faster than the other. Overall, this system is a very rigid. Some people do run their treadle wheels with loose drive bands, creating a slipping effect on the pulleys (or whorls). This slipping will occur when hesitating in the drafting. The effect over comes the rigid nature of the two driven parts. It allows some measure of irregular drafting without affecting the quality of yarn making. Some treadle wheels can handle this well, but others do not. With Double Banded spinning wheels, the person normally needs to maintain an exact feed and drafting rate, relevant to the treading rate, to

obtain a perfectly even yarn.

The single banded machines are more flexible, as the free turning part can be braked to run at different speeds to create many varied and different ratios. There are two types of single banded spinning wheels, depending on which part has the brake. The Irish Brake system has a free turning flyer with a cord acting as a brake; the Scotch Tension system has a cord restricting the free turning bobbin and acts as a brake. These two systems are often referred to as bobbin led or flyer led (Leading meaning the driven part). The Scotch tension (flyer led) has a friction brake cord in a groove at the end of the bobbin. This is tensioned to create a drag in the wooden groove. This is quite a good system, although the tension cord needs to be pulled tighter frequently, to make the bobbin slow down, to keep the ratio the same. This is due to the growing diameter of the



filling bobbin which gathers in faster as the filled diameter increases. You still need to keep a consistent feed rate in drafting, to match the flyer speed. With the bobbin being braked, the ratio to the flyer is set.

The speed of the flyer, on any type of spinning wheel, determines the pull in rate. With the driven flyer, the speed of drafting must match the speed of the flyer otherwise unevenness of the yarn will occur. For most experienced people, this is quite acceptable, changing and matching both speeds as they do their spinning.

The Irish brake design is the most versatile and the most variable. This is because it is largely self regulating, with no constant changing of the bobbin brake tension, as occurs with the Scotch Tension system. Also there is no need to match drafting rates to the speed of a driven flyer as occurs in the Scotch tension design. The Irish brake system is the same system as used in modern mills today. The only variation is they have their bobbins mounted vertical instead of horizontal.

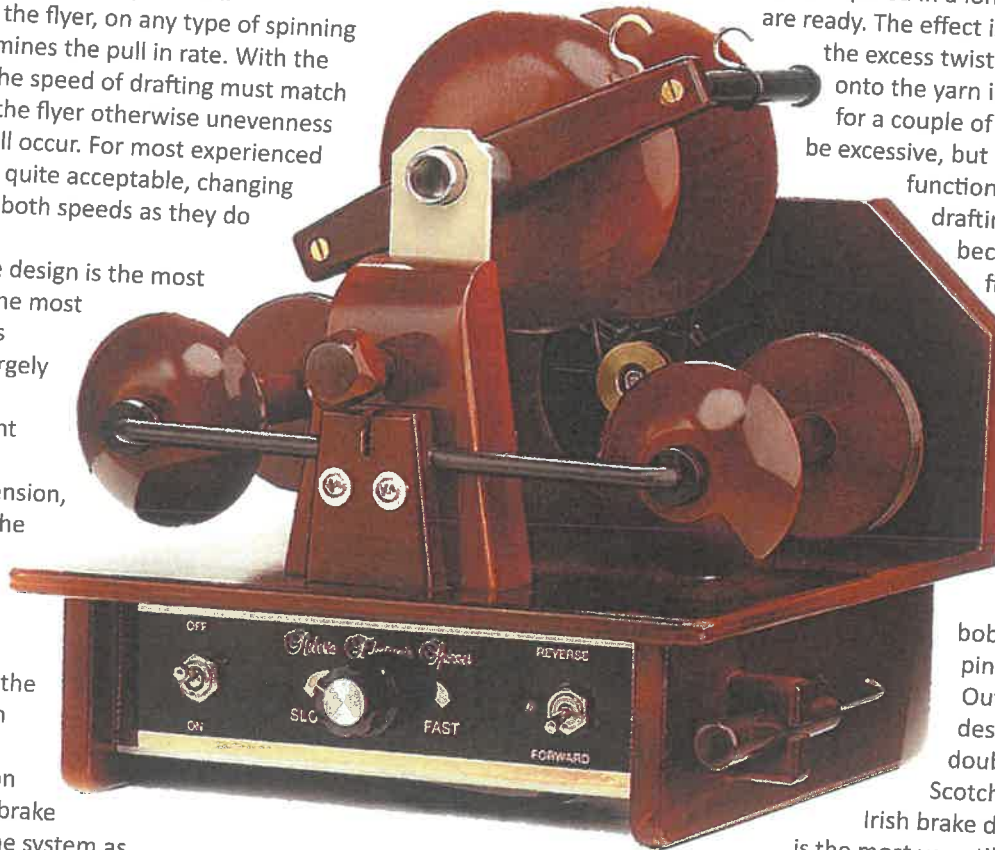
The Irish Brake system (bobbin driven) can alter the type of yarn by three methods.

1. Alter the speed of the driven bobbin. This affects the twist rate only.
  2. Alter the natural speed of the free turning flyer on the tension device, by setting the brake tension. This alters the draw in rate.
  3. Alter the hold-back to the spinner when drafting (i.e. feed in slower or faster against the pull.)
- Consider this scenario: The bobbin is running quite quickly, pulling in the yarn, across the free turning flyer. If you hold back against this effect, the flyer will increase in speed to match the bobbin speed, because the yarn is travelling over it. (It will overcome any tension effect on the brake cord.) With the bobbin and flyer now running at the same pace, no yarn can gather on the centre of the bobbin, so you can keep holding the yarn in one place for a couple of minutes if you wanted, and the yarn would not break. The twist

effect will continue and the yarn will curl up. This is due to the yarn being at right angles to the turning bobbin. This additional twist can be dissipated in a long draw, when you are ready. The effect is to self regulate the excess twist. Obviously holding onto the yarn in the same spot for a couple of minutes would be excessive, but it illustrates the function. If irregular

drafting is happening because of difficult fibre, the flyer will change speed to suit what is happening and any unevenness of the twist, will self regulate between the point of loading on the bobbin and the pinch fingers.

Out of the three designs - i.e. double banded, Scotch tension and Irish brake design, the latter is the most versatile and easiest to get good results, even with irregular drafting.



**The Roberta Electronic spinner  
- combo version-**

It is important to know, that on any spinning wheel design that it is the flyer speed that determines the pull in rate. However on a bobbin led machine it is the opposite way, in regard to flyer speed. Normally on a scotch tension or the double banded designs, the faster the flyer goes, the more pull in. On a bobbin led design the slower the flyer goes, the more pull in, because there is more of a direct flow of the yarn, to the driven bobbin. The slower flyer in this case, allows a faster loading onto the bobbin, which is running at a set speed.

There has always been a little bit of bias against the bobbin led design. This was because of the traditional leather bearings that are normally used. They can create a fairly strong draw in, if they are not properly lubricated with Vaseline or grease. Light sewing machine type oil is ineffective in the leather bearings to give the flyer absolute free turning. As the flyer speed determines the pull in rate, without good lubrication the free turning flyer will run



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karenho@iprimus.com.au

slower (the same effect as applying the brake cord). The pull in, then may be excessive for the type of yarn wanted. The adjustment on the tension cord on the flyer can then only alter the draw in rate from a medium pull in, to a heavy pull in rate. If the flyer is lubricated well and is absolutely free turning, a very light pull in would occur (no brake tension applied.) In this situation you can regulate the draw in rate from next to nothing, right up to as strong as you wish. Unfortunately this impact of lubrication on the Irish Brake design (bobbin led) is not fully understood by most people. They then would proceed to experiment with the tension device, making things even worse for themselves.

**The improved version of the Roberta electronic spinner now has polymer flyer bearing supports** instead of the traditional leather. This has overcome the negative feature of the normal fairly strong pull in on the bobbin led system, which will occur (as above) because of poor lubricating or lack of lubricating. Now people who spin can obtain all of the advantages of the bobbin led design in the Roberta electronic spinner, starting off at a light pull in, (even to spin cotton), right up to any pull in rate desired for the drafting.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, or ask any question about spinning wheel designs, feel free to contact me on our e mail address below.

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## October

1 - 2 BURNIE SHOW - TAS  
Venue: Wivenhoe Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Carl Cronshaw 03 6362 2107

2 SEYMOUR SHOW - VIC  
Venue: King's Park, Seymour  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Rod and Ann Sales 03 5433 3789

4 STRATHALBYN SHOW - SA  
Venue: Strathalbyn Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Jan Bentley 08 8556 0256

7 - 9 ROYAL LAUNCESTON SHOW - TAS  
Venue: Inveresk Rail Yards, Launceston  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Lyn Koitka 03 6363 1369

8 - 10 NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL ALPACA  
EXPO - NZ  
Venue: Christchurch  
Contact: [www.alpacaexpo.co.nz](http://www.alpacaexpo.co.nz)

9 WANGARATTA SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Wangaratta Oval  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Peter Harris 03 5765 2396

9 SUNBURY SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Sunbury Showground  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Jenny Errey 03 9457 5735

14 - 17 17<sup>th</sup> AAA LTD. NATIONAL SHOW and  
SALE - NSW  
Venue: Australian Equine and Livestock  
Events Centre, Tamworth  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging,  
Alpaca craft, art and photography  
competitions, Alpaca auction 17 October  
Contact: AAA Ltd. National Office 03  
9873 7700

16 CLARE SHOW - SA  
Venue: Clare Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Tracey Earl 08 8847 2017

17 LANCEFIELD SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Lancefield Showground  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Jenny Errey 03 9457 5735

19 - 21 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FIELD DAYS -  
NSW  
Venue: Borenore via Orange  
Highlights: Fleece judging, promotional  
display  
Contact: John Lawrie 02 6846 7292 or  
Kate Bailey 02 6887 1233

23 BENDIGO SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Bendigo Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Vicki Hilder 03 5429 1803

30 SALE SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Sale Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Bob McLeod 03 5629 1140

31 WARRNAMBOOL SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Warrnambool Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Andrew McCosh 03 5565 9413

## November

5 COLAC SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Colac Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Chris Bayley 03 5264 1739

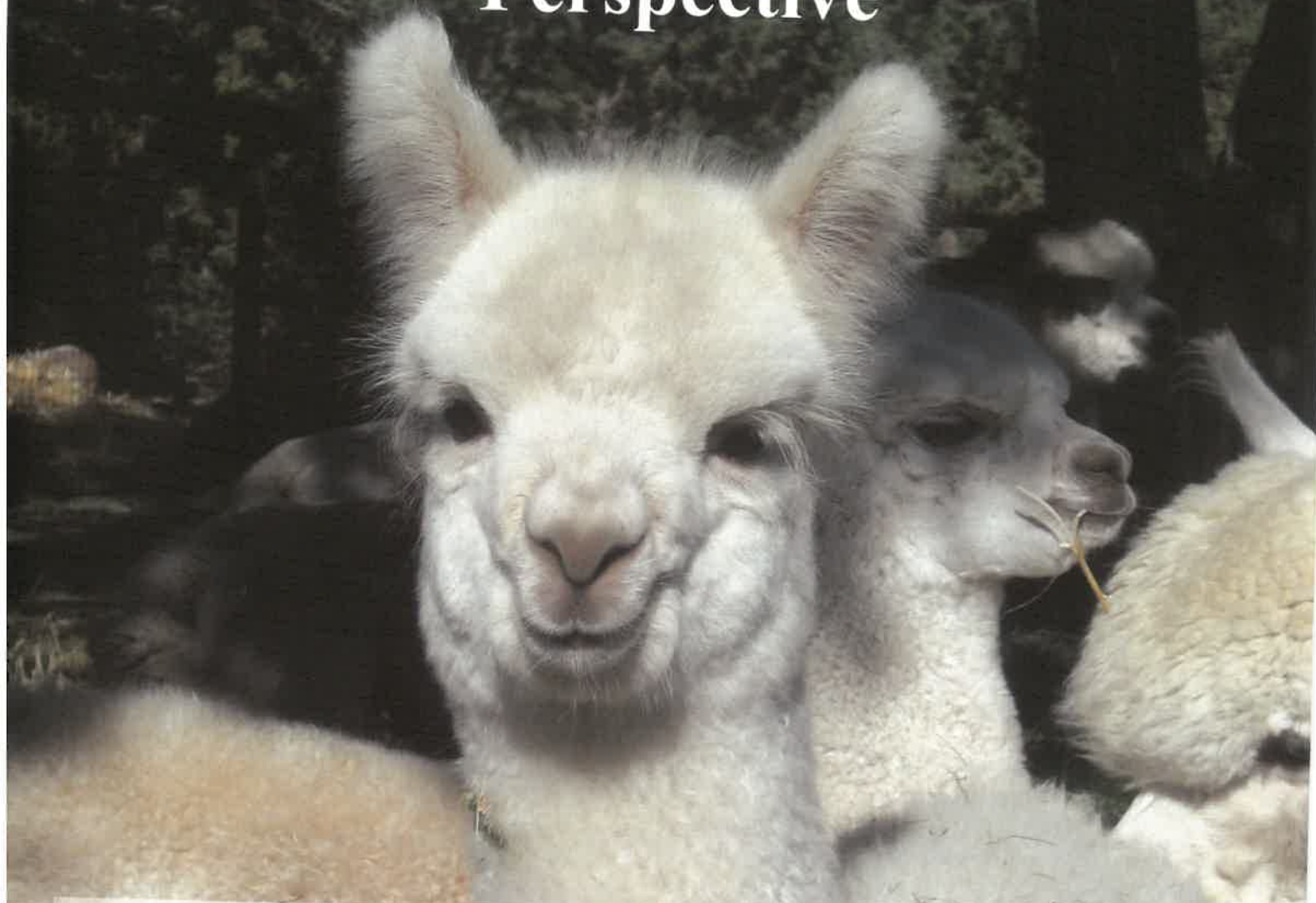
12 - 13 ALBANY SHOW - WA  
Venue: Albany Showground  
Highlights: Fleece judging 11/11;  
Alpaca judging 12/11  
Contact: Greg Smith 08 9845 2454

13 ALEXANDRA SHOW - VIC  
Venue: Alexandra Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Bob McLeod 03 5629 1140

13 HUON SHOW - TAS  
Venue: Ranelagh  
Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging  
Contact: Mark Jessop 03 6266 4380



# Camelid Husbandry...A Trainer's Perspective



If you love alpacas, there is nothing better than watching a new baby struggle to its feet and take the first steps. It is heaps of fun, but with the pleasure comes responsibility. An alpaca breeder must deal with many issues an owner does not: intact male(s), prenatal nutrition, birthing and-most importantly-bringing up a new baby. This new baby will eventually go to a new home and should know how to act when he or she arrives.

Your animal handling and training philosophy is very important when it comes to raising animals. There are many ways to approach husbandry issues. You will be faced with conflicting opinions on everything from medical choices to nutrition and in particular how to bring up the baby. Deciding what is reasonable and respectful is your job as the owner/breeder. I offer my perspectives on husbandry issues as a breeder of camelids and a professional handler trainer, as food for thought.

## Breeding Males and Pregnant Females

In my opinion breeding males should be handled the same way that gelded males and females are handled... respectfully. Intact males are the most likely to fight back when handled physically and the least likely to give up when wrestled. It is therefore even more important not to practice these behaviours with intact males, treat them with respect and expect the same in return.

When it comes to breeding, allowing males and females to get acquainted and breed with some semblance of privacy is important. Don't take the fact that you are alpaca breeder literally! Some owners involve themselves so completely in the breeding act that I fear we will some day hybridize.

## To stud or not to stud

Think seriously about not keeping an intact male if you only intend to have one or maybe two babies a year. Housing a male next to open females allowing him to breed once





*Being born is hard work. A good rest in the sun is always nice.*

or twice a year is almost guaranteed to create an overly aggressive breeding male. This can also give rise to other potential behavioural problems. If you only have one or two females, it may be best to pay for stud service rather than keeping an intact male on site.

#### Expecting females

Pregnant females are often put into a special category when it comes to training and handling. I am often asked whether or not a pregnant alpaca should be brought to a clinic or if pregnant females who live at the clinic site should be used as part of the clinic. It is ironic that we think nothing of giving a rectal exam to determine pregnancy but are reluctant to halter these same animals and take them for a walk. Personally, I make no distinction regarding handling or training when it comes to a female's state of pregnancy other than the very first and very last few weeks of gestation.

It is logical that in the first few weeks of gestation even a moderate amount of stress could interfere with conception. It is easy to give this amount of time off from training or handling, so it is best to wait. When it comes to late gestation I would suggest leaving females to their own devices in the last weeks of pregnancy when they are highly hormonal and very uncomfortable. Injections, toenails and shearing can be done before the last trimester.

Many people make a practice of separating females into a special paddock when they become due. While this may be convenient for the herd manager, I think this is very stressful for the pregnant female. Alpacas become very bonded to other specific alpacas. Separating a female from her cohorts and forcing her to forge a place in a new group is far more

stressful than we think. If you must move your pregnant females to a new paddock it would be best to do it sooner than later. If possible determine which animals with which she spends time and move those animals together. Moving the animals two to three months prior to the due date instead of the last weeks will create much less stress.

#### Birthing

I am a minimalist when it comes to herd management, preferring to do as little as possible to disrupt natural behaviour.

When it comes to birthing I believe that even with the best intent, we humans cause more difficulties than we prevent. Birthing is the business of the mother. Human caretakers, no matter how well intentioned, are not really welcome and cause additional stress. I wrote an article years ago suggesting that the two most important items in your birthing kit are a pair of binoculars and a piece of rope - the binoculars to observe respectfully from a distance and the rope to tie your hands together!

Certainly when a mother is in trouble it is our duty to help. This is by far the exception rather than the rule. By involving yourself in the birth process in an effort to make things easier for the mother, you will never know what is normal. The moment you "help" you have interfered and changed the dynamics completely. You must learn to wait. If you are new at raising camelids, do your homework and research what is normal\*. Call your veterinarian or an experienced breeder to observe with you if you have any doubts. Always call the veterinarian if you think you have a birthing



call the veterinarian if you think you have a birthing emergency.

While we humans are not welcome at the birth, the rest of the herd most definitely is. It is highly stressful for camelids of either species to be separated from their herd mates at the time of birthing. In my experience, the herd is interested but respectful of the birth process. Once the baby is born the herd welcomes the newborn and after a good look, wanders off leaving mother and baby to bond. If you have young females in the herd, I think it is invaluable for them to observe the birthing process.

Once the baby is on the ground, leaving mother and baby alone for at least 24 hours is the safest and most respectful policy. Mother and baby have lots of instinctive activities to perform that are critical to their health and well being. This process is like a ballet for two. We humans come crashing on to the stage, mess up the timing and create havoc.

### Bringing up Baby.

The easiest, most effective way of influencing a baby's behaviour is to work with his or her mother. Mom is the law as well as the major influence in a baby's life. Invest some time creating a trusting relationship with your adult female, and you will profoundly affect the attitude of every baby she bears.

Whether you begin at the beginning with a baby born on your farm or you buy a young alpaca and continue his or her education, raising a camelid is a delight. With this joy comes a huge amount of responsibility. You are shaping the life of an animal that will be relating to humans for 20-25 years. Camelids that don't get along well in our world are often doomed to a lifetime of misunderstanding with humans and in some extreme cases must be euthanized. Babies of any kind are impressionable and have a short attention span. I think it is a great idea to take advantage of early training opportunities to teach young alpacas how the world works.

Most camelids will accept human leadership early on without question. As the leader it is incumbent upon you to behave respectfully and with integrity. It is important to set limits that will be consistent and appropriate as your baby grows from 30 to 200 pounds.

You must remain vigilant when you are with your babies even when you are not "training" them. Animals make no distinction between training sessions and the rest of the day. If you insist that your baby be respectful and observe your personal space in the training pen and then encourage disrespectful behaviour in the field when company wants to pet the baby, you could be headed for trouble.



*The herd loves to greet a new baby and the mother, while protective is perfectly capable of managing the interactions of the herd and the baby.*

- If you are going to spend time teaching, it only makes sense to make sure that your student is able to listen. A baby alpaca must be present for learning and be able to focus. Overly long lessons mean you are preaching to a choir that isn't there. In order to concentrate on a lesson, the baby must feel safe enough to let go of instinctive behaviour and pay attention to the handler.

- At first it is best to structure lessons with mama alpaca in attendance followed by lessons with a peer group if available. Lessons occur in a catch pen that is safe and secure, pleasant and convenient to the living quarters. An ideal arrangement is to set up your facility so that your baby creep doubles as the classroom.

- While I don't agree with the imprinting (intense, repetitive, conditioning of newborn alpacas also known in the behavioural world as "flooding") approach, I also disagree with the practice of waiting to do any handling until babies are ready to be weaned. You certainly don't want to make a sudden appearance as the "Grand Poohbah" at six months of age. This is long after your babies have already decided that you are just an interesting barn "thingee." Once the baby and mother have bonded and you are sure that the baby is healthy (in most cases at two to three days old) it is appropriate for you to become an important part of the baby's life. Lessons should be short, easy, non-stressful and be designed to introduce you as a gentle, firm leadership presence.



## Baby Steps

It is a good idea to work a bit with the mother first. She will have a better sense of what you intend to do with her baby and will be more relaxed. Your first goal is to teach the baby to override his flight response and accept your touch all over his body while standing in balance and without restraint. Work with a new baby in a catch pen or mini catch pen with his mother present. A bag of juicy hay, warm water with a bit of molasses mixed in, or other special post-natal treats can be offered to your new mom at this time. Next time: specific lessons to get the relationship you have with your new baby off to a respectful and pleasant beginning.

This column is excerpted from Marty's new book "The Camelid Companion".

“

*I first became acquainted with Marty McGee Bennett at a clinic that I attended at Towrang NSW several years ago. I became a Camelidynamics distributor soon after and am currently the only official distributor of her products in*

*Australia. It has been a real pleasure for me to be associated with Marty as she is the ultimate professional. Her handling and training books, DVDs and all of the handling equipment, halters etc. are top quality and virtually a lifetime investment. It is a rare occasion that a piece of equipment fails and it is always replaced without question.*

*Part of my role as distributor is organising training clinics in Australia. This year Marty conducted three clinics, one in Tasmania and two in NSW. The feedback was excellent from those who attended and the next visit is tentatively planned for 2013. Anyone interested in receiving information as the time gets closer can contact me at [merilyn@daisybankalpacos.com.au](mailto:merilyn@daisybankalpacos.com.au).*

Merilyn Mathews  
Daisy Bank Alpacos

”

*When you work with a baby let them have access to the mother for safety. Work with the mother first and she will be less protective.*





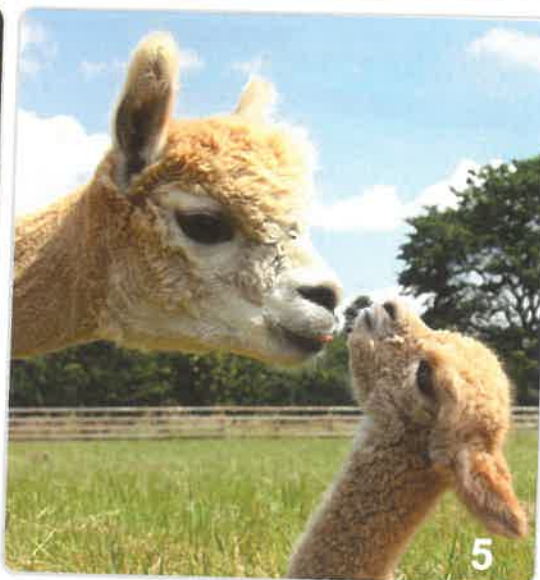


AUSTRALIAN  
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# Pacapics



AUSTRALIAN  
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1. Lesley Maxwell Kurralea & Ironbark Ridge Alpacas "Who needs a stuffed soft toy when I have my very own cuddly cria."
2. Jan Rendall Babazeeka Alpacas Maylene
3. "Reflections" as she wandered around the duck pond
4. Lindsay Nutley Northern Rivers NSW "Coco with mum in the background"
5. Graham and Jenny MacHarg, Fowberry Alpacas, York, North Yorkshire, U.K. "Please mum no more licking"
6. Lindsay Nutley Northern Rivers NSW Coco on Day One just having a little breather after all the excitement



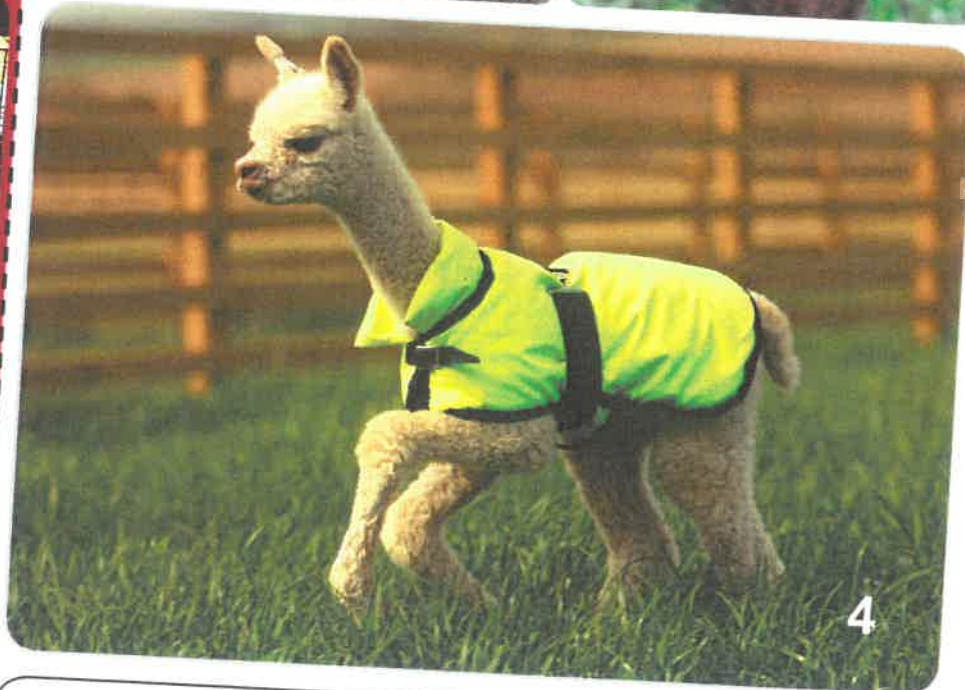


AUSTRALIAN  
ALPACA

# Pacapics



AUSTRALIAN  
ALPACA



I recently organised the alpaca sale day in Gidgegannup and these photos were taken at the end of the day. Thought you might consider using them in the alpacas magazine.

One of the Paradise Alpacas girls decided she didn't want to leave, and as always Jenny Jackson had the solution....  
Not sure if the caption could read, 'Move over Marty McGee, this is halter training Jenny Jackson style.' Or something else you think more appropriate.

Hope you like them

Angela Bartels  
Treechange Alpacas

1. Jan Rendall Babazeeka Alpacas "GOOD SHOT!" of one of our pacas being spat on
2. Lindsay Nutley Northern Rivers NSW Coco Day Two I'm dry, I'm cute and I'm ready to go!
3. "Ok boys pay attention" Helen Chalmers NSW Brindaview
4. Graham and Jenny MacHarg, Fowberry Alpacas, York, North Yorkshire, U.K. "Wheres Mum"





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# The Australian Alpaca Association National Auction

**O**n the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at the 17<sup>th</sup> National Show and Sale in Tamworth the AAA National Auction will take place and will include a range of outstanding alpacas which have been selected after a rigorous inspection and selection process.

There are ten alpacas featured in the auction catalogue and up to two wild card entries may be offered to Champions at the 2010 National Show. These nominations will be subject to the same inspection standards as the original ten entries.

Telephone and on-line bidding are being offered. For telephone bidding contact the auctioneer Daniel McCulloch 0429 613 332 before midday local time on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October. For on-line bidding for international and absentee bidders visit the website [www.auctionsplus.com.au](http://www.auctionsplus.com.au) to register. The on-line and telephone bidders' information on the wild card details will be posted on [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au) by Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

This years entries includes alpaca donated by two Gold Sponsors; Wyona Alpaca Stud, sincere thanks to Karen Caldwell and Bumble Hill Alpacas and to Julianne and Frank Gelber.

## Just a few of the entries include:

Wyona Hathor from Wyona Alpaca Stud is a medium fan Huacaya female, she shows advanced characteristics of fleece, frame and temperament. Her show results include: 1<sup>st</sup> Junior Fawn Female and Champion Fawn Female of Show, Vic Colourbration 2010 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Junior Mid Dark Fawn Female Vic AlpacaFest 2010 and her Fleece results July 2010 (1<sup>st</sup> fleece), Micron 18.5, SD 4.3, CV 23.1 and CF 95.5.

Bumble Hill Picot from Bumble Hill Alpacas is a solid white

suri female. She is a lovely suri female that is well grown with ideal conformation and good bone. "Picot" show results include: Reserve Champion Intermediate Suri, Central Western (NSW) Region Show 2010. Her fleece results July 2010 (2<sup>nd</sup> fleece), Micron 20.1, SD 4.1, CV 20.4, CF 98.5.

Distinction Caramel Cream from Alpacas of Distinction is a solid dark fawn pregnant Huacaya female. She is a beautifully upstanding, extremely correct, even coloured female and is confirmed pregnant to Autumn Lane Bariloché (IAR-104192) Her July 2010 (3<sup>rd</sup> Fleece) results are, Micron 21.8, SD 4.5, CV 20.8 and CF 95.6.

Kurrawa Sweet about Me from Kurrawa Alpacas is a solid white suri female. She has that "wow factor" with excellent conformation and presence. Her show results include Champion Intermediate Suri Ballarat Sheep and Alpaca Show 2010 and Supreme Champion Suri, Ballarat Sheep and Alpaca Show 2010. Her fleece results July 2010 (1<sup>st</sup> fleece) are Micron 20.4, SD 5.0, CV 24.4, CF 95.5.

Fleur de Lys Silver Rose from Fleur de Lys Alpacas is a light grey Huacaya female. She is a stunning light grey maiden and will be an asset to breeders pursuing elite quality in colour. Her fleece results July 2010 (1<sup>st</sup> fleece) were Micron 18.2, SD 4.6, CV 25.4 and CF 98.7.

Jandarra Conchita from Jandarra Alpacas is a solid white Huacaya female. She is an outstanding alpaca who exhibits excellent bone structure. Her show results include Junior Champion Female Bega Show 2010 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Junior White female Royal Canberra Show 2010. Her July 2010 fleece results (2<sup>nd</sup> fleece) were Micron 19.3, SD 3.8, CV 19.5 and CF 99.2.

## Fleur de Lys Alpacas

### Fleur de Lys Silver Rose



Complimented for the style and character in her fleece, Silver Rose is self assured and full of charm. She is a beautiful light grey maiden who will be an asset to those pursuing excellence.

**Lee Sadler and Greg Scarlett - 0414 585 955**



**ALPACAS OF DISTINCTION**  
WHEN ONLY THE BEST WILL DO



**Karen Caldwell**  
Wyona Alpaca Stud  
(02) 6383 3531  
[www.wyonaalpacaastud.com.au](http://www.wyonaalpacaastud.com.au)  
[wyona1@activ8.net.au](mailto:wyona1@activ8.net.au)

**Contact:**

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**Shane Read**  
Daer Enahs Alpaca Stud  
0429 300 070

[daerenahs@clearmail.com.au](mailto:daerenahs@clearmail.com.au)



# Kurrawa Alpacas

**R**obert, Ann and Natasha Clark are the 'hands-on principals' of Kurrawa Alpacas, with Natasha and Ann responsible for the stud's Development and Breeding programs, whilst Robert specialises in the financial aspects. With Alpaca MAP MN3 and AAA Q Status and a 130 acre property on Victoria's beautiful Surf Coast, especially set up for alpacas, the stud has the facilities available for outside alpaca breeders, including sales and services to our award winning males.

1991 -- Kurrawa first purchase six huacaya.

2000 -- Kurrawa first purchase six suris.

In the period since then, we have developed Kurrawa into a major respected alpaca stud by the utilisation of very strict criteria in our selective breeding programs, and have competed at most, if not all the major alpaca shows with ever increasing success.

We have won many of the top awards at the National Shows having competed at most since their inception, and will be taking a large show team to Tamworth this year.

Since 2003 Kurrawa has regularly had alpacas accepted into the National Sale and this year we are proud to offer one of our show team female Suri's, "Kurrawa Sweet About Me", a lovely young female sired by Kurrawa Tari Q ET, the Supreme Suri at the National Show 2009. "Sweet About Me" is to be sold with a service to any "Elite" Kurrawa Suri male.

She would be a great acquisition to any serious suri breeder seeking to upgrade their genetics.



# Jandarra Alpacas

**L**ocated in a beautiful part of Australia, renowned for its pristine coastline and temperate climate, Jandarra Alpacas are located six hours from both Sydney and Melbourne and three hours from Canberra - a remote location for a serious alpaca breeder.

With hard work and a lot of time travelling, Robert and Helen Crowe have overcome the obstacles of remoteness to pursue their goal of breeding elite alpacas. They believe in quality and not

quantity with a herd consisting of approximately twenty alpacas. Their results over the last few years, include Royal and national show broad ribbons-a testament to their pursuit of elite genetics.

They are proud to have their efforts acknowledged by having Jandarra Conchita selected for the Elite National Auction.





# **The 17th National Show and Sale AELEC**

14th to 17th October 2010

*What a great place to.....*



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**Enjoy the Venue**



**Meet the Breeders**



**See Tamworth**



**See the Fleeces**



**Congratulate the  
Champions**





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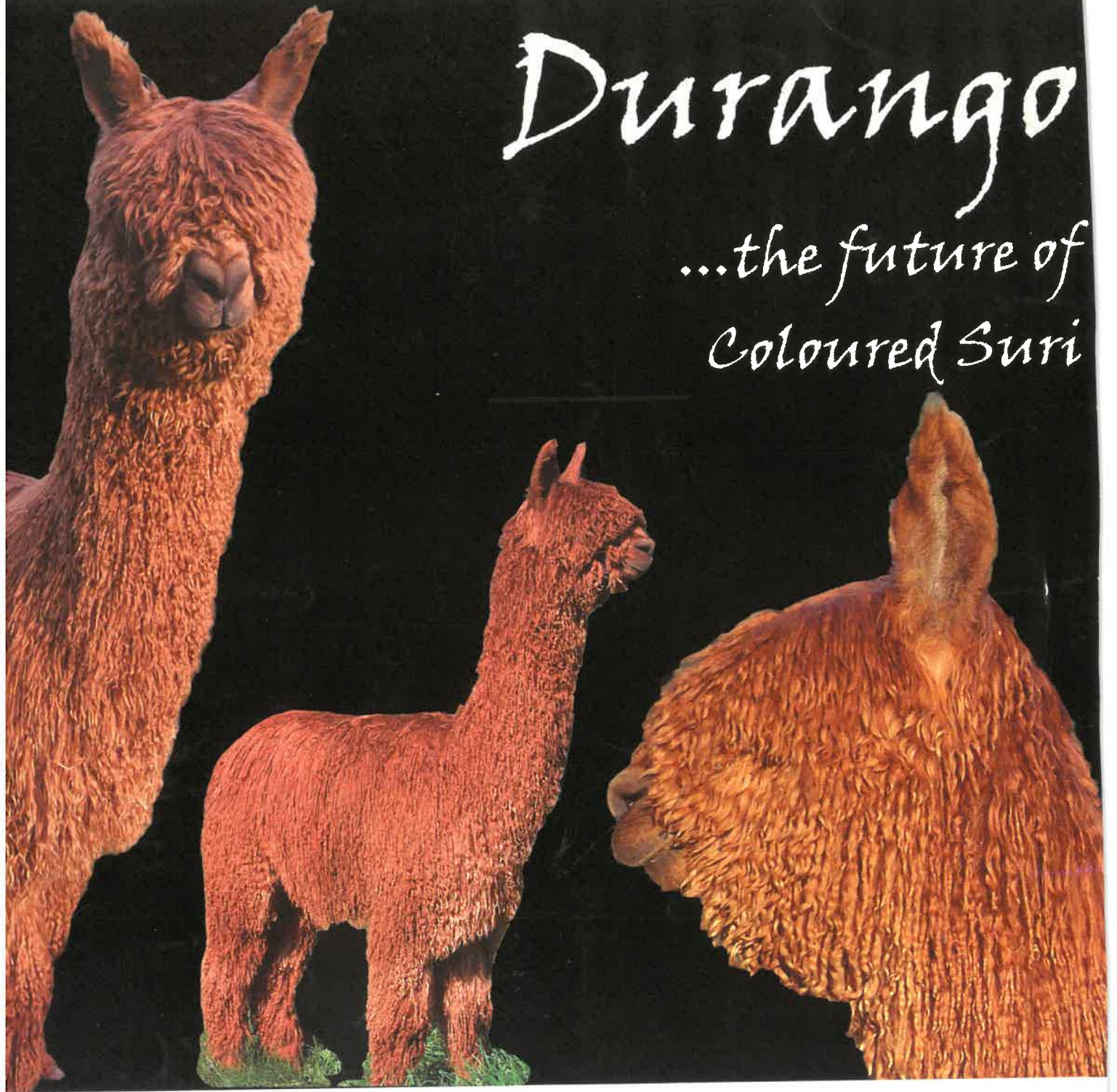
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# Durango

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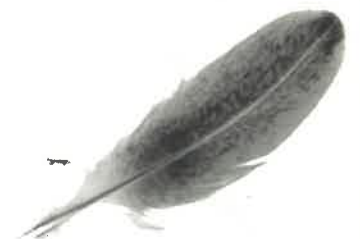


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# BAARROOKA

PO Box 20 Strathbogie, Vic 3666 | 03 5790 5288 | 0407 889 611

[jwilkinson@baarrooka.com.au](mailto:jwilkinson@baarrooka.com.au)

[www.baarrooka.com](http://www.baarrooka.com)