



ALPACAS AUSTRALIA

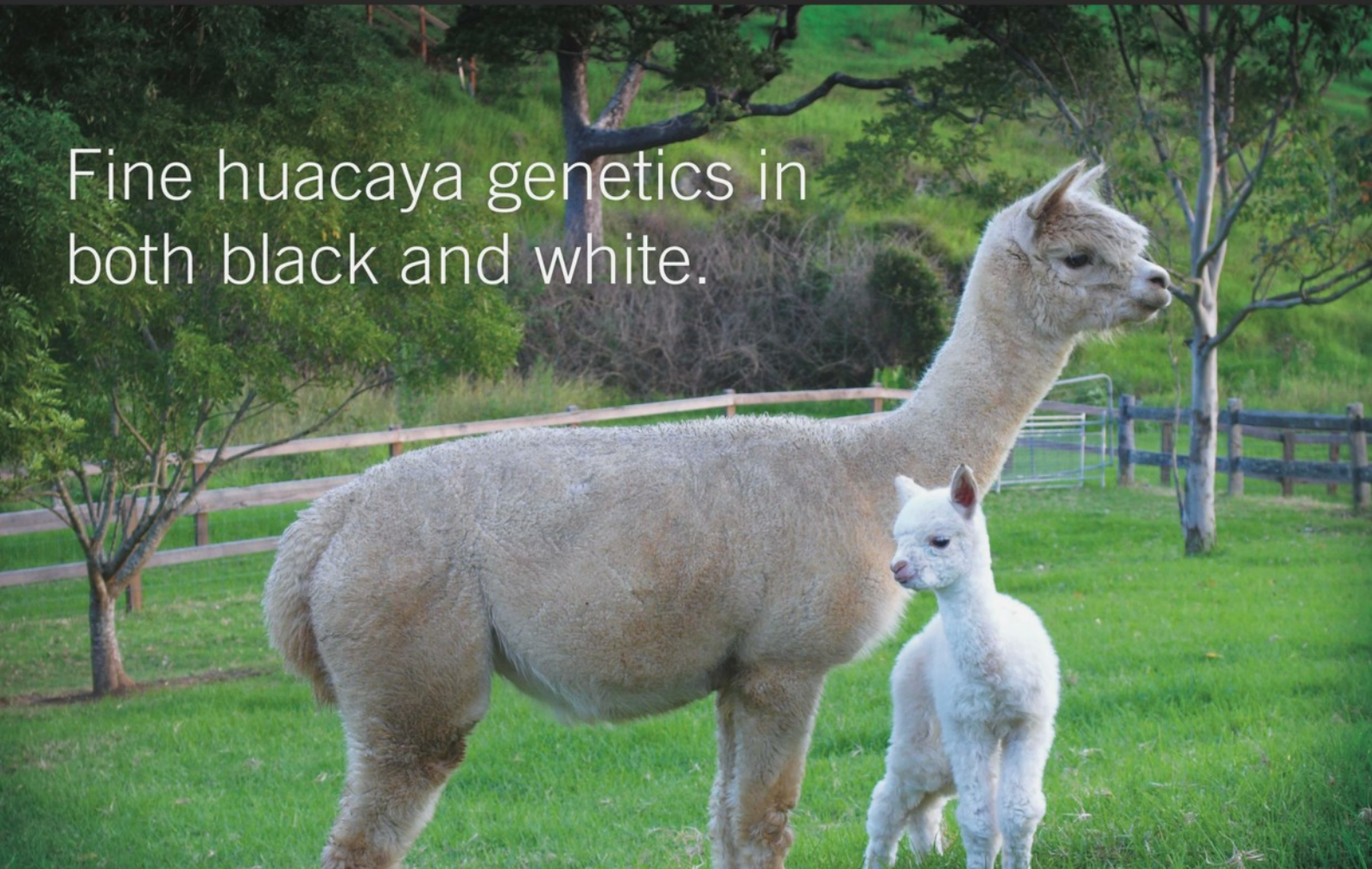
The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd



In this issue:

- National Show & Sale
- Blending Alpaca
- Reading Adverts

Fine huacaya genetics in both black and white.



FEATURED STUD MALES



**BANKSIA PARK
MYSTIC CHALLENGE ET**

Millpaca Alpaca Stud are proud to own this true to type male. His brilliant show record confirms he has perfect conformation with a beautiful soft, dense fleece with excellent structure.

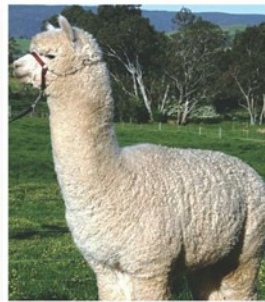
2012 - Mic 28.9 - SD 5.7 - CV 19.8



**KOORANA PARK
BLACK KNIGHT**

Black Knight was again placed 1st in his class at the national show. He has the fleece characteristics of a seedstock (wool) stud male. Black Knight is a true to type blue/black male with fleece demonstrating fibre diameter uniformity, good density, lustre and soft handle.

2012 - Mic 27.4 - SD 4.8 - CV 17.6



**SHANBROOKE
ACCOYO INVINCIBLE**

Invincible carries an incredible bright lustrous fleece that handles like silk. His fleece character is a bold bundling deep amplitude crimp that peels open into individual staples. He has good width of chest on a large frame with sound bone. His follicular density is 63.1 with a secondary to primary ratio of 11.

2012 - Mic 24 - SD 4.7 - CV 19.8
Fleece weight 6.1kg



**CANCHONES
YATAGAN ET**

Canchones Yatagan is a blue black male with exceptional substance of bone, luster and handle. Do to his quality and follicular density he is a SRS recommended male.

2012 - Mic 29.9 - SD 6.5 - CV 21.8

Publisher

Alpacas Australia is published by the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.
ABN 30 067 146 481
ACN 067 146 481

Unit 2, 613 Whitehorse Rd, Mitcham Victoria 3132 Australia
(PO Box 1076, Mitcham North Victoria 3132)

Telephone +61 (0)3 9873 7700 Fax +61 (0)3 9873 7711
Email: alpaca@alpaca.asn.au Internet: www.alpaca.asn.au

Editor

Esme Graham Telephone: 07 34253405
Email: alpacas@paltarrapark.com.au

Designed and Produced

By Oak Grove Graphics
PO Box 4059, Candelo NSW 2550
Telephone +61 (0)2 6493 2036
info@oakgrovegraphics.com.au
www.oakgrovegraphics.com.au

Copyright

All material appearing in Alpacas Australia is subject to copyright.
Reproduction in whole or part is not permitted without the written
permission of the publisher.

Liability

Views expressed by the contributors to this publication, and the
advertisements appearing in this publication, are not necessarily
endorsed by the Association.

Every care is taken in compiling the contents of this publication, but the
Association assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information
contained in the text or advertisements.

ISSN 1328-8318



Contributions are accepted at the sole discretion of the publisher and
the publisher reserves the right to edit contributions for style or content.
No correspondence will be entered into as to why a contribution may
have been rejected or edited. In submitting articles for publication
contributors accept, acknowledge and agree with these terms.



Cover: Suris © Penelope Beveridge

Contents

Message From Our President	4
News & Views.....	5
Social Media For Dummies.....	6
AAA National Conference	9
Fleece.....	10
Insight Peru.....	12
2013 royal Adelaide Show.....	14
Are You In The Correct Class?.....	16
4th World alpaca Conference.....	19
Ovulation Inducing Factor.....	21
Blending Alpaca.....	22
Reading Between The Lines.....	25
Handy Hints.....	31
National Show & Sale.....	32
Wild Dogs & Dingoes.....	40
Queensland Royal.....	41
2013 International Photography Awards.....	44
Breeding To Your Environment.....	45
Paca Pics.....	51

Advertisers

Millpaca.....	2
AAA National Conference.....	8
Alpaca Dynamics.....	11
MTA Travel.....	13
Vista Del Sud Alpacas.....	15
Flowerdale Alpacas.....	17
Millduck Alpacas.....	18
Illawarra Prime Alpaca.....	26-27
GrandeVerge Alpaca Supplies.....	31
Caramia Alpacas.....	31
Farmbitz.....	43
Pfeiffer Park Alpacas.....	43
Chiverton Alpacas.....	50
Wendy Voon.....	50
Didohama Alpacas.....	50
Currabungla Alpacas.....	50
Peter Cook.....	50
Gunnamatta Alpacas.....	50
Surilana.....	52

President's Message

Welcome to the final Edition of the Alpacas Australia magazine for 2013.

The AAA is a vibrant organisation recognised as the peak body representing the alpaca industry. Throughout the year there have been many shows and promotional displays and these events are an indication of the belief that this industry is here to stay. Our endeavours are proof that we, as an organisation, have volunteers and members who are at the forefront of the AAA's activities and resulting achievements.

Our National Show and Sale was held at the Bendigo Exhibition Centre in early October. A record number of entries in the halter classes provided an impressive display of animals penned in the huge shed, and a quality line up of animals for our Judges, Angela Preuss and Kylie Martin, to assess. Our fleece Judge, Karen Caldwell, spent several days assessing the fleece entries and was also the Overjudge for our Junior Judging competition held on Sunday morning.

A separate ring was provided for our Junior events, with the Paraders competition attracting over 20 entries on its first inclusion in the National Show program. There was something on offer each night, with the Paella stand providing sustenance for members who attended the AGM on Thursday, an outstanding parade of alpaca fashion at the Bendigo Art Gallery on Friday, and on Saturday everyone had the opportunity to let their hair down at the Big Shed Bash. The National Auction was held on Sunday afternoon, with 11 studs offering an outstanding line-up of alpacas, with impressive results. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in this event, it takes a large team to plan, organise, and cover all of the tasks and roles – both front and back of house – to deliver a successful outcome.

In late September I attended the World Alpaca Conference (WAC) and Alpaca Expo, held in Hamilton, New Zealand. The Alpaca Expo is the NZ equivalent of our National Show and Sale, and combining this with the WAC provided overseas visitors with an opportunity to attend the show prior to the conference sessions. The show ring was in the main hall with the trade stands, and the major event sponsors were provided with pens to display their animals in the central walkway leading in from the main entrance, providing an inviting and exceptional introduction to visitors. The AANZ trade stand was given maximum exposure at the main entrance, providing the opportunity for the association to promote the NZ alpaca industry ahead of individual members and studs. AAA were represented with a trade stand at the event promoting international membership, the Alpacas Australia magazine, our 2013 National Auction animal lineup, and the 2014 National Conference.

For those of you who were unable to attend the WAC in New Zealand, don't despair. Adelaide will be hosting our 2014 National Conference – promoting Australian Alpaca Excellence - during May 9 – 11, giving you a valid reason to take some time off, hear the latest from the panel of expert speakers, spend time connecting with alpaca industry participants, and perhaps extend your trip to include the farm tours, wineries and fantastic attractions within easy reach of Adelaide.

I hope you are able to find some quiet time to yourself to read this edition of the Alpacas Australia magazine in the hectic time that heralds the end of the calendar year.

Kind regards

Michelle Malt
AAA President



Deadline for articles & advertising Issue 71

14th January 2014

Magazine Due - March 2014

All editorial contributions should be typed and preferably submitted electronically as a Word document.
Photographs should be digital, high resolution, sent as attachments, to ensure good reproduction.

Advertising should match specs provided by the AAA office.

News & Views

AAA official publicists green, green grass communications invite you to keep in touch and share your alpaca business highlights with them as they evolve.

GGG are on alert, always on the lookout for new happenings and developments that might be suitable for sharing with Australian and international media.

It can be very surprising what makes a good story, so we invite you to keep in touch with us. Help educate the world about Australian Alpaca - the result just might be a media story that supports your business, and the entire Australian Alpaca industry.

green, green grass communications:

Karen Davies: karen@ggrass.com.au
Tracy Bell: tracy@ggrass.com.au



Christmas Gift Vouchers



Why not give an alpaca product gift voucher this Christmas?

The following businesses offer gift vouchers.

Janella Alpacas – Quality Alpaca Products & Giftware
Ph 0419484589
www.janella.com.au/shop

Marlyn Alpacas
www.marlynalpaca.com.au Ph. 02 98410949
Email: info@marlynalpaca.com.au

Creswick Wollen Mills
Ph 03 98185055
6 Roche St., Hawthorne, Vic 3122
www.creswickwool.com.au

Stevley Park Suris
www.stevleypark.com.au
Email: stevleypark@bigpond.com

Knitalpaca
www.knitalpaca.com.au Ph 03 52359208 or 0417399565
Email: laurisrjephcott@bigpond.com

APOLOGY

In our last Issue of Alpacas Australia Magazine we inadvertently used the wrong photo of the Melbourne Royal Supreme Champion Huacaya.

This is the correct photo (at left) showing:

Supreme Huacaya - Shanbrooke Pure Evolution with Judge Steve Ridout and owner Ron Condon.

Social media for Dummies!

Though many of us prefer being outdoors to looking at computer screens, the days when businesses could safely avoid social media are long past.

Successful businesses are now complementing their traditional methods with new tools for creating and maintaining their customer bases – tools that are just as useful in the Alpaca industry as they are in all other industries.

So, how easy and effective is it to use social media for your business, through the three major platforms – Facebook, Twitter and blogging? Each of these represents a different level and type of engagement with your audience, who may be existing customers, potential customers, or people interested in any aspect of the Australian alpaca industry.



Facebook

Facebook is a great place to start using social media for your business, because it has many useful options that are easy to master. First off, sign up for an account – it's free and only takes minutes. You can sign up as an individual, or you can create a page. First off, we recommend you sign up for an individual account, so you can look around and familiarise yourself with how it works. From your account you can view and comment on Australian Alpaca Association's own page, and see how the AAA uses Facebook to keep a body of viewers updated on events and give them the chance to engage with us.

The next step is to create a page specifically for your business. Again, this is free, and it functions as a space to advertise your business. You can do this from the very front page, and once you've put in your business name, you can choose to sign in with your personal account, or to create a new business account (it doesn't make much difference which way you do it, unless you don't want a personal account and choose to keep it business-only). When you've done this, you can invite people to 'Like' your page, and essentially, you're giving your business its own voice, so it can comment on other pages, make friends, and get involved. Of course, this is all still you – but your activity, as your business, will be focused on your business goals and interests. So, instead of commenting on articles or news through your own name, why not engage as your business, and present your business as up-to-date and involved in your industry?

Remember to use your business branding on your page. If you don't have a logo, it's definitely worth investing in one. Facebook is a visual medium as well as a textual one, so it's important to have good, eye-catching images wherever you can across your

profile and posts. For example, you could include a photo with a story about your newest cria, recent additions to your herd, or the latest alpaca fashion.

While social media can be a time waster if you get distracted by what other people are doing, it is never the less a good idea to allow time to look at what similar business are doing and get ideas to help you with your own social media content. "Liking" their pages and becoming Facebook friends is a good idea, because this will not only keep you updated on their activity, but will help to build your network by accessing theirs.



Twitter

The other most popular social media platform is undoubtedly Twitter, and it is a very different tool to Facebook. Twitter is primarily text focused – and not much text at that! Each post, or 'Tweet', can contain a maximum of 160 characters, which boils down to about 35 words. This makes it ideal for updates and brief news, and is good for directing people elsewhere with a link.

For new users, Twitter can be a confusing place, and has a lot of its own terms. The most common one is the hashtag (#), which precedes a topic, such as #alpacabreeding. This is used to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in Twitter Search. Hashtagged words that become very popular are often Trending Topics (you might see this on TV programmes that have a list of What's Trending on Twitter). If you want to connect to a specific user, you use the @ symbol before their name. If you do this in a Tweet, it will appear on that user's own page. If you want to see the Tweets from someone, simply "Follow" them, and they can do the same to you.

Even though it looks and functions differently from Facebook, the reasons for using Twitter are similar. You can follow people in or

connected with your industry, and follow businesses you want to be associated with. By putting yourself out there, you will become available to potential customers.

The best way to maintain your presence is by including links to interesting articles or videos, offering tips related to your business, or sharing news and events. A good rule of thumb is to consider whether your Tweet will be of interest to your audience – something relevant to them, of potential impact, or something out of the ordinary they might not know about. Try to suggest in your Tweets why this information would interest certain readers.

You could link to new research relating to Alpaca breeding; “Alpaca breeders – see the latest report [link]. Interesting reading!” Or share an article about the benefits of keeping alpacas; “Thinking about keeping alpacas? Great ideas here: [Link]”. Or you could advertise a sale; “New farm shop opened. Drop in to find great alpaca garments!” including a picture of your products.

A good rule to remember is to offer information, not just advertise. It’s fine to advertise – you’re a business, after all – but you also want to be giving something back to your community of followers. You can do this by keeping them informed of what’s going on in the industry, or simply by sharing related content they might enjoy, like the occasional funny alpaca photo.

Another great way to use both Twitter and Facebook is to notify your social media community of new content on your website. A blog is a great addition to your social media arsenal, because it allows you to present a detailed picture of what your business does, as well as giving something back to your community in the form of information and advice. By writing about what your business does, you’re letting potential customers know about you, while also offering your expert advice to people considering entering the industry or who are looking for solutions for their own needs.

Keeping a blog also shows that you’re engaged with your industry, and that your business values good communication. Potential customers can look to your blog to learn more about you, and if they see well-written, informative, interesting posts, they’ll feel positive about doing business with you. They might also want to stay connected with you, so they’ll go to your Facebook page and ‘Like’ it, or ‘Follow’ you on Twitter.



Blogger

The easiest place to set up a blog is on www.blogger.com. This is Google’s blogging platform, and it’s very easy to use. You’ll need a Google account, which doesn’t mean you have to have a Gmail address – you can sign up with any email address. It’s free to register for Google and Blogger, and free to set up your blog. You can then link your blog to your website, as well as to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. There are many other blogging platforms available too.

If you have a blog, it’s important to publicise it; and yes, you guessed it – Facebook and Twitter can help you do it. When you post something new on your blog, be sure to give a link to the blog post in a short Tweet or Facebook post to let people know. By making the information easily accessible, you’re more likely to get people reading your blog, and thus keep yourself in the minds of these future customers.

The tools of social media reflect the nature of the technology – they all support each other, while also offering different ways of getting your message out there. For best results, use all three together. You don’t have to do it all the time – spending an hour per week, or half an hour twice a week, on social media may be enough to keep yourself in the minds of your customers and associates. It’s also a fantastic way to create a strong image for your business – your brand, essentially – to let people know who you are, what you do, and how you do it. Your tone on social media sets the tone for your business, so by being helpful and friendly on Facebook and Twitter, and sharing your expertise on your blog, you can put your best face forward to the world to support and grow your business.



Australian Alpaca Excellence Conference 2014

CONFERENCE - 9-11 May 2014

FARM TOURS - 12 May 2014

Workshops

Cria Birthing

Adrienne Clarke of Ambersun Alpacas births 400 to 500 cria each year at her Fleurieu Peninsula stud. In one of six sessions of no more than 10 participants, Adrienne will take you through how to assist at a birth, and share her expert practical knowledge.

Fodder Selection & Quality

Dr Jane Vaughan is one of Australia's few expert alpaca veterinary specialists with many years at the technology forefront. Dr Vaughan invites you to bring along samples of the hay, chaff and grain you feed your herd for analysis and advice on this major input into the health of your animals.

Understanding the Genetics of Suri

As one of Australia's leading Suri breeders, Fiona Vanderbeek is an expert on its complex code of genetics. This interactive session will demystify the terminology and concepts surrounding the Suri. Break the code to developing silken Suri fleece to new quality levels.

Lectures

Dr Laura Hardefeldt	Assessing the sick neonatal cria, weight loss and lack of thrift in young camelids
Bryan McLeod	Soil, plant and animal nutrition
Dr Andrew Padula	Camelid immunoglobulins - new opportunities for the Australian alpaca industry
Allison Quagliani	Dental issues
Greg Rundle	Is your alpaca farm a business or a hobby?
Robyn Betts	Commercial uses of Suri fibre
Dr Kylie Munyard	Alpaca pigmentation genetics: Why is my alpaca that colour?
Dr Jane Vaughan	Alpaca nutrition, alpaca reproduction 101, advanced alpaca reproduction
Dr Simon De Graaf	Artificial breeding technologies
Julianne Gelber	Suri fabric project

TOUR 1

{MORNING}

LIFESTYLE ALPACA BREEDING Haylilla Alpacas

- 100 Coloured Huacayas in stunning McLaren Vale Wine Region
- Co-owned stud sires for carefully selected genetics
- Farm Walk, morning tea & local wines

{AFTERNOON}

BROAD SCALE ALPACA BUSINESS Ambersun Alpacas

- 20 years breeding champions
- 1000 stud animals on prime rural land
- Australia's largest Leopard Appaloosa herd
- Lunch & tastings from Fleurieu Prime Alpaca

OR

TOUR 2

{MORNING}

GREEN ALPACA PRACTICES Softfoot Alpaca Stud

- 300 acres with sustainability focus
- Environmental husbandry and shearing innovation
- Commercially relevant stud with purpose-built handling facilities
- Gourmet Bush Food served

{AFTERNOON}

CHAMPION GENETICS & FOCUSED ANIMAL MGMT Yaringa Alpacas

- Specialising in coloured Huacayas with champion bloodlines
- Large herd managed with small enterprise ideals
- Winning fleece and on-site yarn project

Who should attend?

- Experienced and established Alpaca operators
- Alpaca owners and non-owners considering Alpaca industry investment
- Large-scale Alpaca stud operators
- Boutique scale Alpaca stud operators
- Alpaca industry channel partners – fleece, meat & hide distributors, marketers, buyers & sellers
- Alpaca handlers & judges
- Primary producers considering converting to or adding alpaca to their land management strategies
- Rural media, consultants, and advisors
- Agricultural and veterinary science students
- Rural & large animal veterinary science specialists
- All others interested in the Australian Alpaca Industry

To register go to www.alpaca.asn.au

Australian Alpaca

THE SMART FUTURE



Adelaide
9-11 May
2014

alpaca
excellence 2014

“...Whether you're a smallholding alpaca producer, a larger scale operator, an associated industry partner, or you're just thinking of entering our expanding industry, the Australian Alpaca Excellence Conference 2014 is for you.”

Michelle Malt
President - Australian Alpaca Association

or call (03) 9873 7700

Fleece Collection

A New Zealand Perspective

Jenny Durno - Thorburn Alpaca NZ (November 2012)

Fleece - The whole point for having alpacas, or an inconvenient by-product?

We have all had the conversations about last year's clip still under the bed or in the shed with another lot about to be shorn. Some people seem to be doing great things with their fleece and some are mulching the garden with it. There are those who have worked out how to get the most out of their own fleece and those who have taken things a step further and are buying from other people to turn alpaca fleece into a business. We talked to some of the breeders who were taking things a step further.

Would you describe your herd as primarily for breeding or for fleece production?

Most respondents started by breeding for better and better animals producing finer quality fibre. Once they 'had a shedful' they took more interest in doing something constructive with the fleece. In our sample it appears that this stage takes about five years. (Something to do with the size of the shed?) Minimum numbers of animals for those who were doing more than selling bags to the bulk buyers for lack of any option seemed to be about 25 – 30 animals. However respondents agreed that however few females you started with, 25 was how many you would end up with after five years of breeding.

What would you like your fleece to be used for, ideally?

Our active members want to realize the dream of high end New Zealand produced products from fine suri garments to quality feltwear, knitwear and woven items.

None are averse to pooling fleece to get the critical mass but all agreed the infrastructure was not reliable yet for ensuring that quality was retained throughout a bale. None were involved in a collective with others although some had tried it and were disappointed.

Do you have it processed and if so, what do you get done?

Yes, they get the raw fleece carded and spun or felted by the few businesses offering these services. No one felt the charges were usury; these businesses had their own costs structures to contend with; but the high cost of processing inhibited larger scale processing. The smaller mills were not keeping up with demand so putting more fleece through their processing was not going to help to lower their charges. Any development of further processing mills, especially larger ones, was followed with keen interest. (If we had \$1000 from each person who told me they would have invested in buying the ex-Lincoln University equipment after the Suri project, we would be challenging the cashmere market right now...)



What happens/ed to your fleece and products - past, present and future?

No one admitted to burning it, not out loud. Some agreed it ended up with the man in the truck who pays you one day when you least expect it, but most had identified ways of using the entire fleece in one way or another. High quality blankets turned into spun fibre for knitting or weaving and the rest was either felted or sold for duvet or insulation.

Product was mainly sold website by website with the occasional market or on-site shop. No one was exporting multiple items – just responding if they had an online overseas request for a single item. Asked if they would be interested in pooling product in a single, well promoted outlet, most demurred – they are in competition with each other and couldn't see how pooling product would serve them. Scared of the competition? No! They were worried that the competition would let them down. Who would set the standards? Any such initiative would require strong leadership and clear boundaries before our sample members would participate.

Will you change what you do in future? Why have you made this decision?

There were a variety of answers to this question but the trend was the same. Members had set out to produce high end top quality fleece and great products which would put themselves and New Zealand on the map. The Italian high fashion houses would be banging on the doors. When reality handed them a clip which included older animals, multiple colours and bellies, they pragmatically moved into less esoteric items which nevertheless helped pay for the zinc nuts. The broad scope of responses to the challenge of using this lesser material in fact seemed to reflect the true New Zealand psyche of being able to think on the hoof, work with what we've got.

Any plans to work with anyone else? Would you? How?

Some members were already cooperating with one other member and saw the scope to expand this. Pooling of coloured fleece seemed to be the only way to make those fleeces commercially viable so the tipping point for cooperation here was close. All agreed that they would participate in a well-run initiative to pool fleece, process larger quantities of similar micron fibre or even market to larger, probably overseas, markets. Would they run it? Answers ranged from; 'Who, little old me?!' to 'Who would be paying me to take this risk?' (Applications welcome.)

Does your fleece activity bring you a profit?

Those who kept figures, adhered to budgets and counted the cost of looking after their animals mainly said no, not yet, although they had faith that it was going to happen soon. Encouragingly there were some who had a variety of products selling in some established, albeit local, markets, who were turning a profit; enough to justify the expense of having alpacas walking in the fields.

Who do you see as your competitors?

This was a delicate question to include as we are such a small community I didn't know what I would do if I got answers like, 'That wretched woman down the road is stealing all my fibre customers,' or 'It depends on who gets to the Farmers' Market first.' However, overwhelmingly the answer was 'Merino.' Alpaca people consider themselves one when they look at the marketing machine which is New Zealand Merino. Our product is strong,

soft and luxurious. Merino is strong, soft and luxurious and has an established market. Do we emulate them? Join them? Or do something imaginatively different?

Do we have a New Zealand Alpaca Industry?

We COULD have. The animals are too expensive for us to be viable yet. Our member population is too heavily skewed to the smaller breeders who do not have the capital or critical mass to progress. The processing capacity is not there and what we have is too expensive. But we are getting closer. There are some exciting initiatives in some quarters and everyone is watching those developments with great interest. There is no commercial jealousy here – the whole industry is excited and admiring of any progress made, and just waiting for leadership. 'Tell us where you want our fleece,' they are saying, 'and we will participate.'

The New Zealand Alpaca community has come through a financial downturn with too many animals and not enough market for them. The members I spoke to believe that the fleece industry is going to lead us back to commercial viability.

Thanks to all the people who responded to my questions, especially for the thoughtful contributions of Jenny Ellwood-Wade, Cuesta Weaving, Jenny Phillips, Minffordd Alpacas and Alpaca Essentials and Maree Churchill of El dos Cadena Alpacas. Numerous others have also contributed their experiences and the culture of support and cooperation was very heartening.



alpacadynamics.com.au

For all your alpaca health, husbandry, show, & shearing supplies
e: sales@alpacadynamics.com.au • 02 4573 1177 or 0415 904 674

*Be prepared for cria season -
cria coats, Impact, milk replacer,
vitamins, supplements, needles,
syringes, reference books...
if you need it... we have it!*

**VISIT OUR ONLINE SHOP TODAY &
PLACE YOUR ORDER - IT'S EASY!**

**Owned & operated by alpaca breeders with over 17yrs experience within the industry:
Alicia Anderson & Cheryl Kosaras (visit Regal House Alpacas - www.regalhousealpacas.com.au)**

insight Peru

By Stuart Randell
Photos courtesy of Dr Ian Davison

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2013

Goose-bumps

This morning, the first of the cataract surgery patients returned to our clinic for their post-operative review. One by one, their bandages were removed, and we were able to see the results - a moment that I think will always give me goose-bumps.

It is a fact that I have observed in a previous posting, but I think it bears repeating; in developed countries like Australia, cataract surgery is generally performed on patients who can already see quite well. In this remote corner of Peru, the relentless progression of cataract disease, without any prospect of medical intervention, means that these patients quite literally went to surgery yesterday profoundly blind.

To watch their faces as they see their world again with new sight is an unforgettable experience, both exhilarating and deeply moving. Perhaps the most poignant moment this morning was when an elderly man, who had been encouraged to come to our clinic when two of our team saw him fall heavily in the street, and who was totally dependant on his wife to lead him, stood up, walked over to each of us in turn, looked directly into our faces, shook our hands vigorously, and then made his way across the crowded room to the door completely unaided. His life will never be the same - and neither will ours.



SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2013

Playing Marbles

In the 21st century, it sometimes seems to me that children have become so engulfed by technology that they have lost the ability to play without digital assistance. They entertain themselves with video games, android phone apps, Nintendo and computer games almost before they are old enough to walk. It was a refreshing change to learn today that the current craze among Peruvian children is playing marbles. I have it on good advice (from one of the mothers) that spinning tops will inevitably be next. What a refreshing trip down memory lane!





Yesterday and today, Mark and Shelley travelled off to the nearby villages of Yanque and Achoma to run paediatric clinics. As they have been everywhere, the locals were enthusiastic and welcoming, and the children, with their engaging smiles and boundless energy, were simply fabulous.

There were some significant diagnoses made that will no doubt transform the lives of the affected children; pause and give that a moment's thought - when you change the life of one child for the better, you enable them to tap into potential, opportunities, and dreams that would have been lost - in all likelihood (without the advantage of the readily accessible specialist medical attention that we take for granted) forever.

There was, of course, the expected procession of children with coughs and colds and minor problems as well, but it seems inevitable that this will happen here. With such limited local services, an opportunity to see a doctor is not to be missed.

Life in the Andes is hard, and abject poverty a fact of life, but if you were to stroll into the yard outside the clinic at Achoma, or Yanque, or Chivay any day of the week, you would see happy children, laughing, chasing, kicking balls, climbing trees, loving life....and playing marbles.

InSight Peru is an initiative of the Australian Alpaca Association, in partnership with Quechua Benefit, and with the generous support of Ramsay Health Care, the South Nowra Rotary Club, and the Shoalhaven Medical Association.

The 2013 "RAAATs" are: Smita Agarwa, Craig Cameron, Shelley Clarke, Ian Davison, Mark de Souza, Janie Hicks, Fiona Martin, Brooke Morrison, Stuart Randell, Rob Rix, Anthony Roccon and Linda Wright (The title "King RAAAT" must go to Ian Davison, who has been the driving force behind InSight Peru from its inception.) ☺



**Dreaming of a Holiday
in South America?**
or anywhere else?

Karine Raiz
Alpaca Breeder, Travel Agent & Traveller

0417 240 705
kraiz@mtatravel.com.au

MTA mobile travel agents
Licence TAG903

South Australian Alpaca Breed Championships



2013 Royal Adelaide Show Report

By Lea Richens, Councillor, Royal Adelaide Show Supervisor, Alpaca Section

Overall, from a Supervisor's point of view - Wow! What a Show.

Once again, the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA Inc enjoyed record entries in its competitive sections – more than 31,000 in total. Record alpaca fleece entries at 126 made for a splendid display in their glass fronted cabinets along the eastern wall of the Pavilion and spilling into the adjacent Expo Pavilion. Alpaca entries at 200+ ensured keen competition and included a strong contingent of talented Juniors who did themselves proud.

An Alpaca feature in the Show Magazine, a front page feature in the Advertiser, an interview on ABC Country Hour, a future segment on Channel 10's Totally Wild, a special invite to the Royal Melbourne Show for the Jut Jura Shearing Team, and alpaca and fleece competitions which, from both exhibitors' and the public's perspectives, ran smoothly, a year to remember.

High entry numbers did present some challenges, but challenges which were welcome. The original two judging days became three with Junior Handlers, Junior Judge, Production Classes and two shearing demonstrations providing a full program on the Sunday. Special thanks to our popular and well respected Judge, Peter Kennedy, for his expertise and flexibility in working with the late changes, and for extending his stay to oversee our Junior Judge Section.

This year the Society invited six University of Adelaide final year veterinary students, under the supervision of three experienced veterinarians, to undertake pre show inspections in a number of

*Grand Champion Suri - Prados Sandor with owner Sarah Wheeler
Grand Champion Huacaya - Cambridge Streetwise with handler Alex Harrington Smith*

livestock areas, including alpacas, a practice likely to be expanded next year and beyond.

Every successful Show depends upon the hard work and support of the many people working behind the scenes. Thanks firstly, to all exhibitors for your valued participation and support, and congratulations to all ribbon and award winners. Thanks too, to all stewards and marshals, with special thanks to Vaughan Wilson for running the Fleece competition and, together with his fleece stewards, for presenting such a brilliant display.

To all Sponsors, to the shearing team whose demonstrations again attracted large public audiences, to those exhibitors who remained, with their alpacas, at the Show for its nine day duration, to all the Urrbrae students who assisted with cleaning, exercising, pen set up and departure, to everyone who helped in any way, a huge thank you.

Next year is the 175th anniversary of the Royal Adelaide Show and promises to be an exciting year for all involved. May I invite your participation in 2014.

Royal Adelaide Show Results are available on AAA SA Region's website - www.aaasa.com.au

We Can Help You....



Accelerate your breeding program & alpaca business.

We source **WORLD CLASS STUD STOCK** for local & international clients.

We offer friendly & honest advice with a comprehensive range of **AGISTMENT, SHOWING & SALES** services.



Blue Grass Waterloo Sunset



Shanbrook Gold Perfection

Join our **EMBRYO TRANSFER** program.

We offer full service & partnership opportunities to **reduce cost, time & risk.**

Utilise our expertise, facilities & range of **ELITE STUD MALES & DONOR FEMALES.**

Take advantage of the outstanding results we have achieved with Dr Jane Vaughan.



Dean & Jenny Ford



+61 3 5779 1225 | 0413 438 043



alpacas@vistadelsud.com.au



www.vistadelsud.com.au

**VISTA
DEL SUD
ALPACAS**



Are you in the correct class ?

Showing & Judging Reference Panel.

As most would be aware, when showing, you enter your alpaca in the class that reflects the alpaca's gender, age and colour.

In other words if your alpaca is female, 14 months old and black, it will be entered in the Black Intermediate (12 – 18mths old) Female class.

There is nothing more frustrating for Convenors, Inspection Stewards and Judges alike to have animals incorrectly entered in classes.

It can also be very embarrassing for you as an Exhibitor to be asked to leave the show ring and or disqualified because you are in the incorrect class.

And yet it does happen.

Let us work through the three class criteria:

Gender:

We appreciate the determining of gender may not come naturally to all, especially those who have limited livestock experience and are new to the industry. If you fall into this category it is suggested you ask your friendly alpaca support person or local vet to explain the different genitalia.

When completing your entry form take care in ensuring you are entering your alpaca in the appropriate class ie male or female.

On the day of the show – make sure you take your alpaca into the correct "gender" class. Sounds simple but people do go into the incorrect class.

Bearing in mind the female classes within the age categories are always run first, if you take your female into a male class, not only will you be asked to leave the ring – but you will have missed your class.

Age:

In addition to being based on gender, classes are grouped according to the age of the alpaca.

For example:

- Junior classes 6 – 12 months old
- Intermediate classes 12 – 18 months old
- Adult classes 18 – 24 months old

The Show Schedule lists all the classes.



The critical thing when filling out your entry form and determining the appropriate age class – is to work out the age of your alpaca at the date of the show.

Some fall into the trap of focussing on the age of the alpaca at the time of completing the paperwork. It is easy to make a mistake when your alpaca is about to go up into the next age bracket.

If you enter your female as an Intermediate (12 – 18 mths) when on the day of the show she has become an Adult (18 mths) – if the error is identified after entering the show ring you will be disqualified.

Colour:

The Exhibitor enters their alpaca as per the colour on the alpaca's registration certificate in the appropriate colour class when completing the show entry form.

On arrival at the show, the Inspection Steward will, amongst other things, check the colour of the alpaca to ensure it is entered in the appropriate colour class. This is done using the AAA Alpaca Fleece Colour Chart. The Inspection Steward will consult with the Exhibitor, and if necessary the Chief Steward, if it is felt the alpaca is entered in the incorrect coloured class.

Again – there can be serious consequences if your animal goes into the incorrect colour class. For example if the alpaca is dark fawn, but entered in the brown class the Judge may refuse to judge the animal based on incorrect colour. In this instance you

will have missed your class as the Medium/Dark Fawn class precedes the brown class.

It is acknowledged that the colour of some alpaca are on the cusp of two colours in which instance the Steward will attempt to make the best call. In some instances the Judge will be asked to decide on the colour (with a different handler holding the alpaca).

Is appropriate to note that the primary purpose of the Colour Chart, which falls under the jurisdiction of those responsible for the AAA Registration process, is to assist owners in determining the registration colour of their alpaca.

Most would be aware that the AAA has recently produced a new colour chart which reflects international colours and codes eg bay black and true black. This further break down of the colour black (as for brown and grey) on the new colour chart is irrelevant from a Showing and Judging perspective. Shows continue to have one brown, one black and one grey class.

In conclusion, please take care when filling out your paperwork and entering your class on the day of the show.

If we can all "get it right" and be in the "correct class" the show will run more smoothly and there will be less disappointment.

There is no avoiding **"It is your responsibility to ensure your alpaca is presented in the ring in the correct class"**.

Happy showing! ☺

Workshops for new breeders.

The Program.

Includes classroom and hands-on sessions in the barn, working with alpacas. Learn how to select quality alpacas - recognise good conformation and desirable fleece traits. Understand pedigrees, and fleece reports.

Learn how to trim toe-nails, give vaccinations, drench, body condition scoring, weigh and shear your alpaca. Matings, spit-offs, birthing, new cria care. Train alpacas to walk on a lead.

Discover how to breed to succeed. What animals should I start with? Do I need my own stud male? What facilities will be needed? Farm layout - fencing, laneways, catch pens.

Learn how to establish a successful alpaca business plan.

The Venue.

CountryPlace, in the Dandenongs, is an award-winning, residential, retreat. Stay in luxury accommodation. Enjoy fabulous food.

The individual price is \$425 (\$625 couple). The package includes en-suite accommodation for Saturday night, breakfast, morning teas,

Saturday and Sunday lunch, Saturday night dinner, and workshop materials.

Bookings.

All details and booking forms are at www.flowerdalealpacas.net
Or phone Jen on 03 9728 7070.





MillDuck Genetics

Consistently Competitive

“Best Colour in Show”

2013: (Major Shows)

- **MillDuck Oregon**
- **MillDuck Preston**
- MillDuck Oregon
- MillDuck Pittsburgh
- **MillDuck Oregon**

- Best Brown**
- Best Black**
- Best Brown
- Best Brown
- Supreme Brown**

- AAA National**
- AAA National**
- Sydney Royal
- Melbourne Royal
- Colourbration**

2012: (Major Shows)

- **MillDuck Oregon**
- MillDuck Namatjira
- MillDuck Oregon
- MillDuck Namatjira
- **MillDuck Oxford**
- MillDuck Oregon

- Best Brown**
- Best Brown
- Supreme Brown
- Premier Brown
- Supreme Med/Dark Fawn**
- Best Brown

- AAA National**
- Sydney Royal
- Colourama
- AlpacaFest
- Colourbration**
- Melbourne Royal

2011: (Major Shows)

- MillDuck Manhattan
- MillDuck Nikki-Louise
- MillDuck Manhattan
- MillDuck Nikki-Louise
- MillDuck Mandela
- MillDuck Maddox
- MillDuck Manhattan
- MillDuck Namatjira

- Best Med/Dark Fawn
- Best Brown
- Premier Med/Dark Fawn
- Premier Brown
- Premier Black
- Supreme Brown
- Supreme Med/Dark Fawn
- Best Brown

- Sydney Royal
- Sydney Royal
- AlpacaFest
- AlpacaFest
- AlpacaFest
- Colour Classic
- Colour Classic
- Melbourne Royal

...Colour Your World!

MillDuck Oregon
Best Brown in Show
2012 & 2013 AAA National



4th World Alpaca Conference

By Dinah Fisher

The fourth World Alpaca Conference (WAC) was held at Claudelands Event Centre in Hamilton, New Zealand from September 20th to 24th this year.

The WAC actually consisted of several events including the Alpaca Expo, the NZ equivalent of the AAA National Show and Sale, an international fleece show and the conference itself. There were about 130 local delegates and more than 70 from various countries including Hungary, Canada, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. Australia was also well represented with more than 50 delegates in attendance.

The event kicked off with the Expo and the facilities for this were excellent with plenty of space for the trade stands, the sponsor's pens and the catering area to all be comfortably co-located around the show ring. The halter class judges for the event were well known NZ Judge, Paul Garland and Australian Judge Angela Preuss.

The excellent media coverage included a 30 minute television program called "Destination Central" which was filmed on location at the Expo on Thursday morning and broadcast that evening.

This helped to attract the general public over the weekend and provided some additional custom for the trade stands, particularly those that were displaying and selling garments and other product.

Bedding and the surface in the show ring seem to be subjects of perennial interest for those who organise shows. At the Expo the bedding was shredded cardboard which, while it didn't seem to present grooming problems for those displaying and showing their alpacas, did start to turn to mush under foot by the end of the 4 days. The alpacas seemed very comfortable on the live turf that was laid over the concrete floor for the show ring but it did prove a little uneven and treacherous for some of the alpaca handlers.

The International Fleece Show was also judged by an Australian, Lyn Dickson, who was highly complementary about the standard of the more than 400 entries. As it had done for previous international fleece shows, AAA once again coordinated the freight of the Australian entries with 24 fleeces dispatched from the AAA office in Mitcham. Thanks are due to David Williams for checking and collating the Australian entries and preparing them for shipment. It was pleasing that these fleeces did very well in the Competition. Australian alpaca studs Arcadian, Blackgate



Lodge, Bumble Hill, Pfeiffer Park, Softfoot and Yaringa all brought home ribbons and trophies, championships and reserve championships. A special congratulations to Blackgate Lodge for bringing home the trophy for International Supreme Champion Huacaya Fleece for the fleece from Blackgate Lodge Zara.

The AANZ National Alpaca Auction late on Sunday afternoon promised to be exciting with some animals with pedigrees well worthy of the journey back across the Tasman to "the West Island" as New Zealanders call Australia, however it proved to be disappointing with only 2 of the 6 alpacas on offer being knocked down to successful bidders on the night.

The Conference content itself was divided into 3 streams: fibre, health and breeding. There was also a parallel veterinary stream for camelid veterinarians.

In his opening remarks AANZ President, Kit Johnson gave a brief summary of the current state of the NZ alpaca industry. The Association has 500 members and 25,000 alpacas on their alpaca registry. In Kit's opinion the "breeding up phase" of alpaca farming is now passing and many NZ alpaca growers are now expanding their activities into other aspects of the industry in addition to breeding. This and the fact that New Zealand is fortunate in having retained some of its infrastructure for value adding from the wool industry, including 2 scours and 2 mills, may account for all the value adding activity that was in evidence in the trade stands at the Expo.

These remaining commercial scours and mills are aligning themselves to niche markets for rare natural fibres and are developing expertise in processing alpaca. The fibre stream of the conference with speakers like Andy Nailard from Bruce Woollen Mill, Peter Chatterton from Design Spun and Chris Stewart from Escorial were very informative and inspirational and as a consequence I didn't venture into the health or breeding presentations which I am reliably informed were also very interesting with engaging speakers covering diverse content.



The guest speaker at the Conference Dinner at Vilagrad Wines on Monday, September 23 was Professor Changsheng Dong from Shanxi Agricultural University in north west China. Professor Changsheng established and runs what he believes to be the only agricultural research centre in the world which is dedicated to researching 3 aspects of alpaca production: genetics, reproduction and fibre. The Professor was the first person to import alpacas into China and his herd is based on those original imports which came from Coolaroo Alpacas in NSW. The topic for Changsheng's presentation at the dinner was "The Development, Achievements and Future of Alpacas in China". At the end of his presentation the Professor announced that China would be delighted to host the next WAC in 2015.

AANZ employs only one staffer, the Association's excellent Office Manager, Toni Soppit, so it is highly dependent on the efforts of their members to stage their events. They have plenty of experience running annual conferences but for WAC 2013 they pulled out all the stops to ensure that international visitors had an identifiably NZ experience. The branding and marketing for the event was already well advanced when AANZ President, Kit Johnson pitched WAC 2013 to attendees at WAC 2012 more than 18 months earlier at Keble College Oxford, UK. All the Expo documents had a polished and eye catching graphic identity and the booklet of conference papers was included up front so that it was possible to annotate the various speakers' content with notes from the presentations. Regular conference goers will know that the conference bags are always the focus of discussion and attention and this was no different at WAC 2013. The bags were hand felted in NZ national colours of black and white by Miriam Dixon of Karismac Alpacas and met with universal appreciation from the delegates.

WAC 2013 has certainly set the bar high for future alpaca farming conferences. Many of the members of the organising committee for our next AAA National Conference "Alpaca Excellence" to take place in Adelaide May 9-11 2014 were delegates in New Zealand. They are keen to ensure that the conference program in Adelaide next year is exciting and engaging for all the delegates irrespective of whether they are new to the industry or "old hands". There are new developments in Australian research programmes and other aspects of the industry that are included in the proposed program for the AAA 2014 National Conference. ☺

Ovulation-inducing factor

Implications for reproduction

By Michael Robin, Photo by Liam Richards

University of Saskatchewan led team unlocks link between sex and the female brain.

An international team of scientists led by Gregg Adams at the University of Saskatchewan has discovered that a protein in semen acts on the female brain to prompt ovulation, and is the same molecule that regulates the growth, maintenance, and survival of nerve cells. Male mammals have accessory sex glands that contribute seminal fluid to semen, but the role of this fluid and the glands that produce it are not well understood.

“From the results of our research, we now know that these glands produce large amounts of a protein that has a direct effect on the female,” says Adams, a professor of veterinary biomedical sciences at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the U of S.

The work, which appears in the August 20, 2012 issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), raises intriguing questions about fertility in mammals, including humans.

The team characterized the protein, dubbed ovulation-inducing factor (OIF), that they have found in the semen of all species of mammal they have looked at so far. In the process of discovering its identity, the team compared OIF to thousands of other proteins, including nerve growth factor (NGF) which is found primarily in nerve cells throughout the body.

Members of the U of S-led research team (left to right): Roger Pierson, Gregg Adams and Karin van Straaten.

“To our surprise, it turns out they are the same molecule,” Adams says. “Even more surprising is that the effects of NGF in the female were not recognized earlier, since it’s so abundant in seminal plasma.”

While OIF/NGF may function differently from animal to animal, it is present in all mammals studied so far, from llamas, cattle and koalas to pigs, rabbits, mice, and humans. This implies an important role in reproduction in all mammals. Just how it works, its role in various species, and its clinical relevance to human infertility are a few of the questions that remain to be answered.

OIF/NGF in the semen acts as a hormonal signal, working through the hypothalamus of the female brain and the pituitary gland. This triggers the release of other hormones that signal the ovaries to release an egg (or eggs, depending on the species).

For this latest study, the team looked at two species: llamas and cattle. Llamas are “induced ovulators,” that is, they ovulate only when they have been inseminated. Cows – and humans – are “spontaneous ovulators,” meaning that a regular buildup of hormones stimulates the release of an egg. Using a variety of techniques, the researchers compared OIF and NGF and found them to have the same size and to cause the same effects across species. Work at the Canadian Light Source synchrotron at the U of S confirmed the structure of the molecule.

“The idea that a substance in mammalian semen has a direct effect on the female brain is a new one,” Adams explains. “This latest finding broadens our understanding of the mechanisms that regulate ovulation and raises some intriguing questions about fertility.”

The team includes Marcelo Ratto and Ximena Valderrama from the Universidad Austral de Chile in Valdivia, Chile, as well as Adams, Yvonne Leduc, Karin van Straaten and Roger Pierson from the U of S. This research was funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Alpaca Research Foundation, the Chilean National Science and Technology Research Council, the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).



Blending Alpaca

with other fibres

Heather Dunn, Crookwell, NSW

Some people are going to look at this topic and say "Why change perfection?"

Why indeed. The word Alpaca, after years of marketing by enthusiastic breeders and the AAA, conjures up thoughts of softness, thermal qualities, light and lustre.

Some manufacturers actually blend their synthetic fibres with alpaca so that it can be called an "alpaca blend". Some of these blends are 5% alpaca, barely a whisper of our fibre amongst a rock concert of acrylics.

Today we will look at blending that gives alpaca the ascendancy, which can beef up the lustre of an otherwise lovely batch, provide a halo, flashes of colour, extra elasticity, or drape.

Blends that make people pick up a yarn and say "wow, look at this!"



Alpaca blended with other fibres gives yarns that are individual and unique. Shown are a selection using dyed and natural colours in alpaca silk, mohair, and wool.

Alpaca is not the perfect fibre; it's just different. It has been described as an enigma. Soft, yet strong, lightweight, yet warm. In amongst other natural fibres it's not that fine in micron. With superfine merino measuring just 12u, silk around 12u, alpaca lags behind. However it has a perceived softness and fineness that we all recognise and as a craft person, can exploit.

This softness relates to the scale height of alpaca fibre relative to other fibres and the frequency of these scales along the fibre. These scales are also tough, resisting abrasion twice as effectively as wool.

The mean scale height in alpaca has been measured at approximately 0.4u whereas wool is double that. The frequency of these protrusions is also lower in alpaca than other fibres (Holt 1996).

This softness in relation to cell height, rather than a direct correlation with micron, is important when considering fibres to blend with alpaca.

Early trials with alpaca and wool blends of similar micron were disappointing. The handle of the wool used was harsher than the alpaca, even though they had similar measured microns.

Why Blend?

In the craft industry, blending individualises yarn, making garments one off and unique. Exotic fibres such as silk, cashmere and angora can enhance the appeal of alpaca. The challenge is not to lose the alpaca's qualities in the blend, but to make it an enhanced tactile experience. Blending natural shaded alpaca with contrasting and vibrantly dyed fibres such as silk, tencel, mohair or wool can lift a flat coloured yarn into one with light, shade and interest.

Black alpaca is an effective foil to the qualities of kid mohair dyed in jewel like colours. Blended with silk and then overdyed, black alpaca produces a dazzling yarn, with lustrous colour peeping through the black fibre.

If dyeing is not an option, blending with other natural shades like tussah silk and coloured wool also gives yarns of lustre and drape. Blending can also be used to extend alpaca of a particular colour or type, which is either uncommon or special.

There are a few points to consider when deciding to make that individual yarn and samples should be worked to ascertain the blend that fits the project in mind.

You have to ask yourself what is the effect that you want to achieve? This will impact on the types of fibre that you choose to blend with.

Below is a list of fibres and the effects they can impose on the base fibre. The level of effect is dependant on the amount of blending that takes place (i.e. a homogenous blend or a light blend that leaves slubs of different fibre through the yarn), and the ratio of alpaca to the other fibres.



Silk

This comes in three main types in Australia.

Silk Cap

Silk Cap is a collection of boiled cocoons drawn over a frame to create a “cap” of about 25 grams of silk. This is a slubby silk that has very long fibres and is often used as a contrasting single plied with alpaca to add interest. It dyes very well, with brilliant uptake and moderate lustre.

Bombyx Silk

This silk is from the Bombyx mori moth, which is completely domesticated and is presented in a combed top. It’s got knockout lustre, and fibres of more manageable length, as they have been cut during processing. It is the finest silk and lends lustre drape and softness to alpaca. Because the fibres are shorter, it can be blended into the alpaca very evenly if desired.

Tussah Silk

This is also known as wild silk as these little moths refuse to be domesticated. The silk can come in a range of colours from white (bleached), through to a coffee colour (lovely with fawn). It is a coarser silk varying between 14 and 18 micron, and it is not quite so lustrous as Bombyx silk. Tussah dyes very well and its natural shades can be overdyed and then blended with the warm range of alpaca colours to add interest, depth and lustre to the yarn.

Wool

What a huge range of wool we have in Australia! Generally the merino types are better to blend with alpaca, as the handle is similar. However I have used finer Corriedale with a low CV and got a very good result. Be careful with handle here, and blend like with like. Blending with wool gives the yarn elasticity, and enhances its thermal qualities. Wool also dyes well and combed tops come in a dazzling range of colours. However wool is a bit flat lustre wise, and a bit of silk will help to lift the light refraction qualities of the yarn.

Mohair

This fibre is shorn off the Angora goat. As the goat ages the fibre dramatically deteriorates in quality. Be very discerning when purchasing mohair, choosing kid or young goat that is silky soft. SRS mohair is a fabulous fibre that lends a soft lustre to alpaca and creates a lovely halo of fuzz in the yarn as it is handled. Mohair takes dye brilliantly and can be used to provide flashes of colour throughout a yarn.

Angora

This is fibre from rabbits. It is short, very fine and very soft. It can come in a range of natural colours, and provides the soft

halo of fuzz that would make the yarn very appealing and warm. It needs to be blended with shorter alpaca; maybe 4-month-old cria would create a luxury yarn.

Cashmere

This is the under down of cashmere goats, and like angora is very soft and short in length. It has to be dehaired and don’t buy any to blend that hasn’t been dehaired, as the prickle factor will sky rocket.

Tencel

This is a man made fibre using wood pulp. It dyes well and has a sheen that is softer than silk. It is also very soft to handle and has excellent drape.

Nylon

Another man made fibre it can lend a more brassy lustre to a blend, and comes in top form for handspinners.

Soy silk and corn silk are also out there and can be used to hand on to the yarn extra lustre and handle. This list is not exhaustive. To add texture to yarns in the form of slubs, you can use silk, wool or cotton noils.

Length of fibre

When designing a blend you need to consider the comparative length of the fibres in the proposed yarn. If there is a large disparity of length (eg; cashmere with overgrown cria), you will find that despite being well carded that during drafting in the spinning process you will have a hand full of the shorter fibre and most of the longer fibre on the bobbin.

Very long fibres can also be a challenge to incorporate into a blend, particularly in a carding process. With hand operated drum carders, the maximum length of any of the fibres in the blend should be about 125mm. Longer fibres can be used if combed and blended on the combs. Here the length of fibres should be just about the same, as the shorter fibres will be removed by the action of the combs. A board carder can handle longer fibres than the drum (where they can wrap around the drum and have to be cut off).

Micron and handle

The design of your blend should not detract from the original handle of your base fibre, in this case the alpaca. Using fibres such as silk and cashmere can actually make the resultant fibre softer than if the alpaca had been spun on its own. For example a grey fleece that was hard to come by but a bit coarse could be improved by running 10% kid mohair (by weight) through the carding process. Most of the fibres that I use in the blending equation are considerably finer than the alpaca base.

Degree of blending

When considering a yarn with a mix of fibres, thought has to be given to the degree of blending. At one end of the scale is the homogenous blend. This is when alpaca and its complimentary fibre is carded or combed, until the individual fibres are

thoroughly mixed into the resultant bat or top. Two colours can be blended homogeneously, like 70% white and 30% black to achieve grey. At the other end of the scale are flashes of the complimentary fibre as highlights in the yarn. Silk is good for this and is often blended into the yarn while spinning.

In between is various levels where you the crafts person wishes to allow each different fibre to shine through or become part of the crowd.

Another aspect is availability of fibres and their cost. Silk, cashmere, soy silk, tencel and angora are all expensive fibres, so cost is an issue. However these fibres can make a huge statement in the yarn with blends as low as 10%. Merino tops are a cost effective fibre to blend with and can lend their good points to a yarn with a blend below 20%. Dyed fibres blended into alpaca can lift an otherwise flat colour. There are tonnes of fawn alpaca out there. Mix it with 10% silk dyed in autumn shades, in a rough hand blend and the yarn is far from flat.

Blending techniques

Carding is the most common way to blend fibre. There are drum carders, board carders, and hand carders out there for the crafts person. These all employ carding cloth to separate and brush fibres into bats, that can be rolled into rolags. Choose tools with the finest cloth available as alpaca responds better to this and the complimentary fibres will mix better on finer cloth.

With a drum carder, I tend to card the alpaca first, then feed it through again with the fibres in the blend. Each time this is done is called a pass. Two passes gives a rough blend where each different fibre can be identified in the mix. If I want it blended further, then I break each bat up lengthwise and feed it through the carder again. The more passes the more blended the batt will be.

The yarn that is spun from carded fibre is generally loftier with more air trapped amongst the fibres and makes a lighter garment.



Examples of carding equipment available to the crafts person. Left to Right: Board Carder, Hand Carders and Drum Carder.



Just 2 examples of the many combs available to the crafts person. At left are Viking Combs and holder, imported from USA. On the right is a set of mini combs made in Australia.

Combing of fibres is something that is relatively new to Australian crafts people. The tools had to be imported and were expensive. Now there are some manufactures in Australia and New Zealand, which makes this an option. When making the decision to comb to blend, the fibres must of a similar length. Each pass with the combs will take out short fibres, which is waste (which could be carded into another blend), so a disparity will leave one fibre in the combs and one in the tops. Once again the number of passes with the combs will determine the degree of blending. Static electricity can be an issue here. I use a mix of water and bath oil (a few drops) misted onto the fibre. Another method is running the combs through a conditioning paper used in clothes dryers.

Using a processor

There are a few in Australia that can do custom blends for you. The main issue is the minimum lot size, the costs involved and the turnaround time. Before you commit large amounts of fibre to the processor, try doing a few blends by hand to get an idea of what you want (eg the percentage of silk to alpaca). The maxim "rubbish in - rubbish out" is absolute here. If you want a superior product you must use the best batch of even alpaca and blending fibre. If the fibre is just being carded (and not combed) then fleece with no VM will give the best result. Any burrs will simply be evenly distributed (blended!) throughout your batts. Combing will eliminate the VM, but yield will decrease quite dramatically.

Throughout this paper I have mentioned dyeing alpaca or its blends. Don't be afraid to go here. So far we haven't been able to breed a hot pink alpaca, and unless it rains all year we are unlikely to! Dyeing alpaca broadens its appeal and allows people who look sallow in natural shades to shine. A combination of dyed and natural shades gives natural shades that aren't that popular (red brown comes to mind) a new lease of life. I use chemical dyes, which are easy to obtain and use, and put less wear and tear on the fibre, as they can be cured in the microwave or steamed on the stove. The colours are also repeatable. The samples shown today are testament to the fact that alpaca dyes very well and has universal appeal.

Go forth and blend. Experiment using fibres to hand to create individual and exotic yarns to make your next garment a crowd stopper.

Reading between the lines

How to decode alpaca advertisements

Stephen Mulholland, Ph.D

Successfully running an alpaca breeding operation requires expertise in many different fields.

These skills range from understanding genetic principles (genotype vs phenotype; knowing what traits are strongly-, weakly-, or non-heritable; trait measurement and quantification) to mastering the routine management tasks (nutrition, body-condition scoring, parasite management, birthing and cria care). One skill many owners neglect is shopping.

Yes, shopping.

When it comes time to arrange a stud service, or buy a breeding quality male or female, you must often rely on reading advertisements to find the animals that best match your breeding goals. The problem is that decoding those advertisements is a skill in itself.

The decisions you make are very important, and not just because it can involve spending thousands of dollars. The breeding choices you make today will affect your herd, and in small part the national herd, for years to come.

Two points to keep in mind:

1. Nobody is selling their best animals. (Unless we are talking about a whole-herd dispersal of someone going out of business - and if they're going out of business you might want to know why.) Every animal for sale is being culled, permanently removed from that breeder's program. Find out why, and make sure the answer satisfies you. Animals that aren't living up to expectations, or that have problems, are always the first to be sold.

2. Remember, they're trying to sell you something. We've all been to the seminars on how to market and sell products to improve our business. That's what they're doing to you now. Marketing is the art of promoting the good while concealing the bad. Engage your scepticism. People regularly enter into alpaca purchase deals with much less critical thought and careful research than when buying products of equivalent cost, like a used car.

The advertisements are usually in the alpaca magazine, or on the web. Structurally these adverts are very similar in composition and information, and I'm going to break down the analysis into four pieces:

- the text
- the shows
- the stats and
- the picture

The Text

This is where the seller describes the animal for sale and tries to convince you that it is worth the money. What can you learn, and how can text deceive or misinform?

First of all, watch out for grandiose yet meaningless adjectives. "Superb", "Outstanding", "Excellent"... they all sound so good, but what do they mean? Compared to what? Everyone is going to describe their animals in the best possible terms. If you go through an advert and cross out all the adjectives without specific meaning or reference, it's amazing how differently they read (and just how little information is actually present).

Also consider that some words can have many meanings. A breeder may describe a fleece as "soft handling", but this descriptor is both highly subjective and is also strongly influenced by (non-heritable) environmental factors - right down to the soil type that the alpacas dust bathe in. Another common example is crimp styles. These vary hugely, and descriptions of crimp quality and quantity should be left to the stats or the photos, which we'll get to below.

I am also wary of adverts that focus on all the "famous names" in an animal's background. Remember, every wether was the product of a herd sire. There are plenty of scrubbers that came from very famous and high-quality sires and dams. Each animal should stand on its own merits, not just on a list of (possibly quite distant) relatives.

I like to see text that tells me useful things about the animal which you wouldn't otherwise know. For example, if an animal has never needed to be drenched, that might be indicative of a strong natural resistance to parasites (which is heritable). Or perhaps you might see a female advertised with "five matings has given us five cria, she always gets pregnant on the first go", demonstrating the sort of fecundity we should all be breeding into our blood lines. That is the kind of useful information that can help you select animals that would improve your herd.

I'm also forgiving of people who mention some flaws in the animal. No animal is perfect. If it was perfect, it wouldn't be for sale! It's a good sign if a seller is willing to be up-front with imperfections.

If your impulse is to avoid any animal with a listed problem you need to stop and think. Would you rather be making an informed decision, knowing the true strengths and weaknesses of what you are buying, or do you want to wait until after the purchase to discover why the seller was so keen to move the animal on? (Like when you find out the male you just bought is an escape artist who can only be contained by deer fencing!). MORE>



Fleece and Genetics alone will not support a commercially viable Alpaca Industry.

The Australian Alpaca Industry has come a long way in only a few decades and is now recognised worldwide as a leader in genetics.

But the annual fleece clip is still low and it will take many more years of breeding before a high yield, low micron fleece industry is internationally competitive.

Illawarra Prime Alpaca is pioneering a commercial future for large scale alpaca farming. This is based on both the integrated production of both fine and uniform fleece, and high quality lean meat and luxury pelts for local and overseas markets.

In even the best managed herds, more than half the alpacas are just costing money to keep.

Genetics is part science, part numbers game. Throughout the process you will produce animals that will shine and be your next round of stud animals, but what of the ones that don't make the grade?

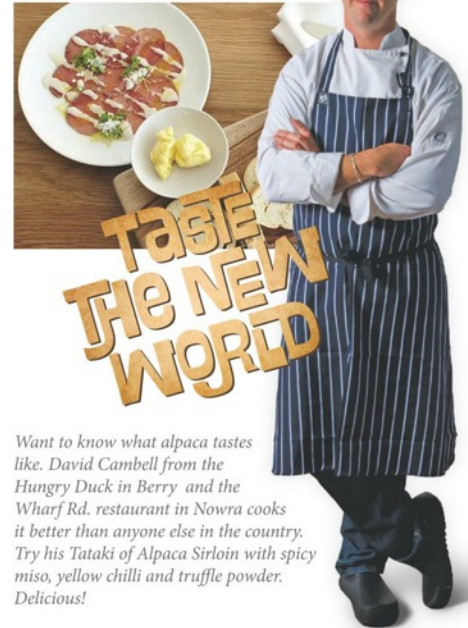
"Growth of the alpaca meat industry means being able to acquire animals more often for market, which frees up some of the breeders' paddocks to then spend that money to buy better genetics and better stud animals to increase their herds"

Ian Frith, CEO Illawarra Prime Alpaca

Imagine the sheep industry trying to thrive on just fleece and genetics alone.

Building the third pillar of the Alpaca Industry is still a long way from complete but with careful planning and our philosophy of introduction to the public through the restaurant trade, IPA is making significant headway. We have been selling Alpaca meat into restaurants for the past 18 months. It has been well received and new state-of-the-art production facilities are under construction. We even have a PHD study being produced on Alpaca meat at Sydney University.

We are committed to not only introducing the Australian public to a new meat that is both nutritious and delicious, but putting the alpaca industry on a firm and viable footing for the future.



Want to know what alpaca tastes like. David Cambell from the Hungry Duck in Berry and the Wharf Rd. restaurant in Nowra cooks it better than anyone else in the country. Try his Tataki of Alpaca Sirloin with spicy miso, yellow chilli and truffle powder. Delicious!



COMMITTED TO CREATING A SUSTAINABLE ALPACA INDUSTRY

Contact Ian Frith for more information on (02) 4464 1728 or 0458 801 016 or visit our website

www.primealpaca.com.au



The Shows

Show credits are often provided, particularly in stud male listings. Once again you need to apply a critical eye. How big was the show, and how competitive were the classes? Coming in first in a field of 3 is quite different than first in a field of 30. And yes, you do get animals that come in second in a field of one - the judge didn't think they were worthy of a first place ribbon!

Shows apply a set of criteria to each animal, but those may not be the same criteria you find important in your breeding program. Most classes at shows are based entirely on phenotype (what the animal looks like) and not the genotype (their genes, and thus the quality of cria they will produce). Shows are also somewhat subjective, as different judges have their own likes and dislikes.

So show results can be both informative and deceptive. You need to do some research, and discover if the results being presented are actually relevant for your decision-making process. Many very high-quality animals are never shown at all.

The Stats

This is where the fibre details are presented. Once again, this can be a real mixed bag, and you need to carefully examine the facts presented.

A lot of information can be presented in a few short lines, and the seller should be providing all of it: mean micron, SD, staple length, crimp frequency, fleece weight. I know that some farms don't weigh or test all their fleeces every year (a poor practice, in my opinion), but when it comes to stud males all the information should be there for every year. The studs make the biggest genetic contribution to the herd, so there is no excuse to not collect and share all their fleece statistics.

In an older animal there might not be space to show all the stats from every year. There should be representative numbers, and it all should be available on request. As an animal ages, inevitably the quality and quantity of fleece starts to slip - fibre gets coarser, staple length gets shorter, and the crimp structure changes. You need to know how long they maintain a quality fleece. Two years? Five years? Ten years?

If the advertisement only shows results from long ago, it may well mean that the animal now has a very low quality fleece. Be very suspicious of the advert for a 7 year old that only shows cria fleece stats.

Don't accept or reject an animal based solely on its first or last fleece. Alpaca change over time, and only by having and studying the full fleece record from every year can you build a fair measure of its worth.

It can also be very helpful to get extra information about the health of the animal to compare to its fleece stats. Animals under stress can have finer fleeces. Poor nutrition can also result in finer fleeces. But such animals are not genetically fine. Once you clear them of parasites, feed them up, and give them a good home you may find they've "suddenly" gotten quite coarse. Sellers should possess and willingly provide such health information upon request.

The Photo

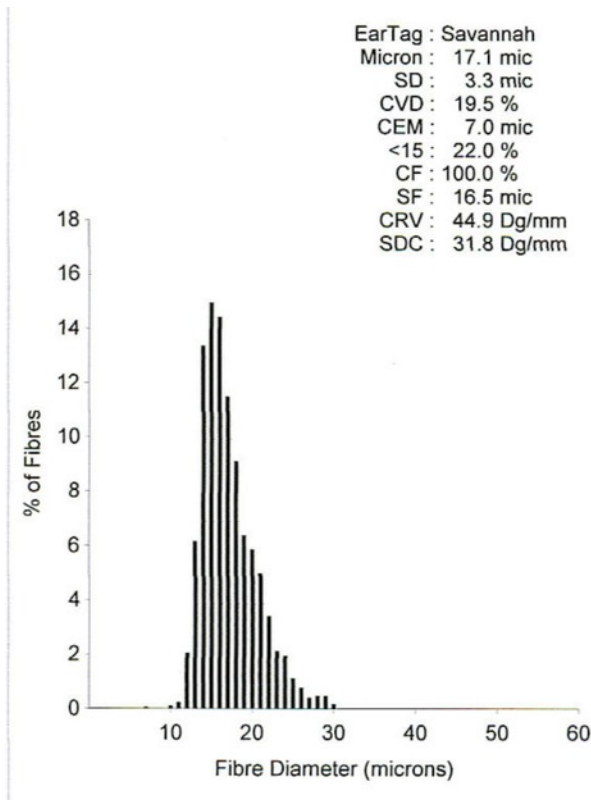
It's been said a photo is worth a thousand words, but what words?

How good or bad an animal looks in a photo can be more a measure of a skill of the photographer than the actual qualities of the animal. And in our experience, some alpaca are just more naturally photogenic than others.

As they are used now, most photos are mainly useful for determining the actual color of the animal (since the registry-listed color is so often wrong, and the color-choices available to register don't match the color genetics of camelids).

When was the photo taken? A picture taken of a vigorous two year old may have little relation to what it looks like five years later. Similarly, photos of fleece need to be dated as fleece quality can change radically year on year.

Some pictures show massively fleeced animals. Just how much growth is that? 9 months? 12 months? 24 months? You can't tell from the photo.



Heavy fleeces can hide a multitude of sins. Years ago I attended a field day where the convener was "helpfully" showing us how to carefully scissors-trim a fleece to hide the guard hair and conformation faults!

If the seller has already provided all the fleece stats then you already know what sort of fibre production it is capable of. A photo of a recently-shorn animal lets you assess its conformation. High-quality, high-resolution photos of fleeced animals can be useful for getting a measure of the guard hair present, but this is not likely to be in the top-level of an advert due to the file-size. If you're interested in an animal, ask the seller if they can provide such a photo.

Beyond the advertisement, doing your research

Before committing to spending thousands of dollars, you want to make sure that you are getting good value for money. Spending more does not mean you are getting a better animal.

Find out what you can about the progeny of your potential purchase. The progeny are a window into the genotype, and give you an idea what you can expect in your own future cria. If progeny aren't available, you can check out close relatives (full- and half-brothers and sisters) to see how the animals have performed over time, and give you some indication what you can expect.

Go and see the animal for yourself if practical. This can also be a chance to examine close relatives and offspring on the property, if they're available. Give the animal a thorough check, teeth to toes. Just because the male is certified (possibly at a quite young age) doesn't mean he might not have subsequently grown into a significant disqualifying fault. This has happened.

If the animal has a good amount of fleece, take your own side-sample for independent testing. I've come across a couple of animals that "suddenly" got 5 microns coarser the day they were sold. If the owner refuses to let you take a sample, just walk away. Would you buy a used car if the seller refused to let it be checked by an independent mechanic?

Finally, remember you're there to assess the animal, not the seller. Mean people can sell quality animals at good prices, and nice-seeming people can sell over-priced problem animals. Don't get caught up in the emotion of the moment (as best you can, I certainly know how tough it can be). It might be helpful to put together a checklist of what good and bad things to look out for before you go and see the animal. That way you don't get distracted (accidentally or deliberately) while there.

And don't forget to bargain. The seller wants to make a sale. The listed price is not set in stone. If there are equivalent animals for sale at better prices online, see if you can get the seller to match price.

Example Advertisements

Example 1: A typical stud advertisement

This advertisement actually tells you very little, and has a couple of glaring omissions

Text - Lot of nice superlative adjectives, which tell you nothing specific. The fact that he came from an award-winning sire

doesn't mean Supremo is necessarily any good. There is also no mention of the dam, who contributed half of Supremo's genes. Adjectives like 'crimpy' don't reveal anything about the actual crimp structure of the fleece.

Shows - I'm not familiar with those shows. Were they competitive? And I notice he hasn't won anything since he turned 2 years old. Why not?

Stats - This animal is six, yet we only have the first (cria) fleece listed. Also, there is no information about staple length or fleece weight - and these are all vital stats if you are breeding for a fibre-producing animal!

Photo - Cute, but I can't see his shape or conformation. He also looks more like a medium fawn to me.

Upperdowntown Supremo

IAR: ABC12345 DOB: 12/12/07
Sire: Upperdowntown Maximo
Dam: Neverheardof Sophie
Colour: Light Fawn

Fleece: 2008
18.4 micron, 4.2 SD, 22.8CV,
98.6 CF

Supremo is a proud, upstanding male. His sire, Maximo, was a multiple supreme-award show winner. Supremo's fine, crimpy fleece is of the highest quality. He was a ribbon winner at the 2008 Outer Nowhereville show, and supreme champion at the 2009 West Island show.



Upperdowntown Supremo

IAR: ABC12345

Fleece Photo: Nov 2011

Animal Photo: Jan 2011

Sire: Upperdowntown Maxmio

Dam: Neverheardof Sophie

DoB: 12/12/07

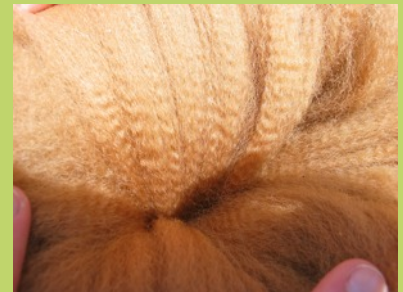
Colour: Registered Light Fawn, is actually Medium Fawn

Supremo is a healthy, handsome lad. He has always maintained a BCS of 4+, even when running on hill country without supplements. He has never needed to be drenched. His oldest daughters have all gone on to have healthy, quick-growing cria. All his offspring are still under 23 micron. Fibre stats for all offspring available on request.

Supremo's cria fleece won him the 2008 Outer Nowhereville show, and he was supreme champion at the 2009 West Island show. In January 2013 he won senior male (out of a field of 5) at the East Island show.

Shear	Micron	SD	Crimps/In Staple (mm)	Shear Weight (kg)
Nov. 2008 (1 st)	18.44.2	9	135*	3.2
Dec. 2010 (3 rd)	20.65.1	7	110	4.2
Nov. 2011 (4 th)	22.44.9	6	100*	4.0*
Nov. 2012 (5 th)	25.75.6	5	100	4.4

*Annualized results. All fibre tests conducted by ODFA at NZWTA



Example 2: A slightly better stud advertisement

This advert provides a bit more info that could be used to decide if this is the right animal for you.

Text - It starts with the standard (mostly meaningless) superlatives, then gets into useful facts. Good signs of health (body score and lack of drenching). Offspring that are fecund, and good milk producers. Fleece information on the offspring. This information is not enough on its own to make a multi-thousand dollar decision, but it is enough to attract attention. You still need to ask for more info, which is helpfully offered.

Shows - A little more info this time, explicitly stating that it was a cria fleece that won him the first show. Now there are also some more recent show results, with information on how competitive the field was. You would still need to uncover more information about these shows to know if the wins are meaningful.

Stats - This is much better! While one fleece is skipped (the second shear), we can see how the fleece has progressed thus

far. Including weight, staple, and crimp structure provides a much more complete picture of what sort of fleece this male produces. Providing shear dates and noting which results are annualized is also useful.

Photo - Now we can see the male's conformation, and have an idea what his fleece looks like. Both the photos are dated, so we know it shows Supremo when he was age 3 to 4. Even though he is now a rising 6 year old, these photos give at least some idea what he is like as a fully-grown adult. You may want to ask for more recent photos, or take the advert along when you go to check him out in person to see how much he's changed. ☺

Handy Hints

Clover Rose and her Mum Roselander (Rosie) were taken ill. Rosie had lost a lot of condition and Clover Rose just couldn't stand one day.

We took them both to the Tamborine Mountain Veterinary Surgery where after many tests concluded either a virus or a deficiency in B1 (thiamine).

They came home about one week later. Rosie recovered well but little Clover Rose was still trying to regain her strength to stand. She had been shuffling around on her belly but still couldn't maintain her weight.

We fashioned this sling for her and she seemed to enjoy being "back on her feet". We only placed her in the sling for up to an hour at a time but it gave her a chance to stretch her legs.

Submitted by Melleah Mewett - The Lost Plot Alpacas ☺



CARAMIA ALPACAS

Q Alpaca 10/0373

As a result of illness we need to sell our herd of about 50 suri alpacas with only 4 Huacayas.

Many have been shown and awarded.

All the girls are empty, waiting for your male. Half of them are black and the rest include most other colours.

Prices range from \$400 to \$2500.

We offer 20% discount on packages of 3 or more, and invite offers for the whole herd or herd and 10 acre property.

Contact Karl & Barbara Kappes on (03) 5664 4460 or kb3956@gmail.com for appointments, photos and information.

I get everything I need at

www.grandeverge.com

sales@grandeverge.com

ph: 02 6562 7888

Mark and Kim Irving
Alpaca Breeders' Online Supplies



National Show & Sale

The 2013 halter show began on Thursday 10th October with state Minister for Agriculture Peter Walsh officially opening proceedings.

With 672 animals entered the breeders had travelled from as far afield as Rockhampton in Queensland and a large contingent of West Australians made the long trip across the Nullarbor.

Volunteers, led by convenor Steve Pate, started the set up on Monday in the brand new exhibition building at the Prince of Wales Showgrounds in Bendigo.

The halter judges Angela Preuss and Kylie Martin worked well together and kept the judging program on schedule for the 4 days, culminating with the best of colour awards and the supreme champion huacaya and suri on Sunday morning.

Congratulations to Cathy & Mathew Lloyd of EP Cambridge who won Supreme Huacaya with EP Cambridge Streetwise, and Julie Wilkinson from Baarrooka the winner of the Supreme Suri – Baarrooka Durango's Echo.

The Bendigo Shire provided significant support for the event including a great public relations program with numerous articles

and photos appearing in the Bendigo Advertiser, promotion of the show and Fashion Fiesta on Bendigo Tourism websites and publications and several news stories on WIN TV throughout regional Australia. This publicity and paid advertisements run in local and national newspapers delivered record crowds to the show. Selecting a regional venue was a very successful strategy with easy access and affordable accommodation for exhibitors and visitors.

The cost of the venue was significantly less than those in capital cities and the visitors were more likely to be from rural areas and genuinely interested in farming alpacas.

There were a significant number of breeders from New Zealand and Europe in attendance and sales at both the auction on Sunday and privately from pens across the four days were at levels not seen in recent years. A huge plasma screen allowed all in attendance to see the fleeces of each entry up close when inspected by the judges thanks to some excellent camera work and great technology.

Canchones, Softfoot and Millpaca were the promotional partners for the halter shows and provided both the funds required to stage the event in this manner and fabulous displays around the show ring. The breeder promotional displays at the end of each row of pens were fully subscribed and provided colour and the opportunity for visitors to learn more about the breed and the breeders. The level of enthusiasm for all facets of the industry was palpable.

By Jenny Ford

Supreme Huacaya - EP Cambridge Streetwise, Judges Kylie Martin & Angela Preuss, Supreme Suri - Baarrooka Durango's Echo



This year the NSS2013 Fleece Show received 300 entries.

Congratulations to all the winners and placegetters.

This year's main trophy winners were:

Most Valuable Commercial Fleece

Aingeal Ridge II Flinders \$71.30

Grand Champion (Highest Score)

Blackgate Lodge Sunseeker 84.5 pts

Supreme Huacaya Fleece

Blackgate Lodge Sunseeker 84.5 pts

Supreme Suri Fleece

Ambleside Aladdin ET 83.5 pts

Sire's Progeny Huacaya (Inaugural)

Windsong Valley Kichirou (Group A)

Dam's Progeny Huacaya (Inaugural)

Blackgate Lodge Sonnette

Judge Karen Caldwell was delighted by the consistent high standard and competitiveness of the ribbon winning entries as she worked her way over 3 days through the 258 fleeces and 300 entries to be assessed. The broad ribbon winners were all very worthy exhibits and demonstrated superior fleece qualities all alpaca breeders should be aiming to achieve.

Some Huacaya entrants let their scores down with poor skirting and/or clear inclusion of neck fleece material. Karen's message to exhibitors at the trophy presentation session emphasised that, to reduce penalty point deductions applied by judges and to maximise points allocated, exhibitors need to improve skirting technique and to remove all fleece material detracting from the overall consistency of the fleece material entered. Also, some clear tenderness was unfortunately evident in a number of the Suri fleece entrants received. However, overall it was clear to see that nationally we have an expanding pool of high quality animals across all colours producing wonderful fleeces and this augurs well for the future of our industry.

New classes this year were Sire's Progeny and Dam's Progeny classes for Huacaya and Suri entrants. A very competitive 13 and 11 entries respectively were received in the Huacaya section and the Inaugural winners are to be congratulated on the outstanding quality of these entries.

This year, for the first time, sees the full publication of results for every entrant judged including the fleece testing fibre diameter (FD) results and all entries points allocation.

Fleece testing for the Huacaya fleeces was conducted this year using the internationally recognised and highly accurate OFDA100 technology. This technique analyses the whole rather than part of the 6 representative grid samples taken from each fleece. Some entrants commented on the broader range SD's observed



Grand Champion (Highest Score) Blackgate Lodge Sunseeker



Supreme Suri Fleece Ambleside Aladdin ET

across the board using this technique. However, the results may be indicative of the inclusion of lesser quality fleece material such as neck and/or skirtings and exhibitors should note this when preparing fleeces in the future for the National and Royal Shows where grid sampling and testing of fleeces is conducted.

Thanks again go to the Catholic College, Bendigo for allowing us to use their wonderful Trade Training Centre facilities for the collection, sorting, weighing, sampling and judging activities of all fleeces received. And huge vote of thanks to the team of willing volunteers who put in long hard days to make the event happen – you were all terrific people to work with.

Jennifer Errey, NSS2013 Fleece Show Manager



Most Valuable Commercial Fleece Aingeal Ridge II Flinders



Supreme Huacaya Fleece Blackgate Lodge Sunseeker

Art/Photography/Craft

The Photography and Art Sections of the National Show had a total of 57 entries over a number of classes. The judge, Peter Hughes, Domain Co-ordinator, Arts at the Catholic College Bendigo, was impressed by the range and quality of entrants and by the size and diversity of the National Show.

The Champion photograph was entered by Julienne Gelber of Bumble Hill Alpacas.

Reserve Champion photograph was by Cathy Proctor of Ausfinesuris.

The Champion Junior Photograph was by Bethany Hartill

Reserve by Jonee Phillips.



In the art category, the introduction of a new class of artwork using alpaca fibre yielded a stunning sculpture of a butterfly by Sandy Retallick, which was awarded the Champion prize.

The Reserve Champion was awarded to Sharon Dawson for a graphite drawing of an alpaca.



Butterfly fleece sculpture by Sandy Retallick



Graphite drawing of an alpaca by Sharon Dawson

The Craft Classes entailed spinning, weaving, knitting, crocheting and felting. There was a total of 55 entries.

The judges, Antonia Pusterla and Janet Gray, both weavers from the Bendigo region, were disappointed with the low number of weaving entries, but felt the quality across the classes was excellent, especially the lacework items.

The Supreme Champion Craft Exhibit was awarded to Lucy Edwards and the Most Successful Exhibitor was Lyn Barron.

It was disappointing that there were very few junior entries in both the Art/Photography and Craft sections, especially considering the huge interest shown by the youngsters in participating in the craft workshops held during the show. It is hoped that these new skills acquired mean increased entries in next years show.

As convener, I wish to thank our judges for their time and expertise and the many helpers in setting up, stewarding, running workshops and demonstrating spinning, felting and carding.

Convener - Julie Wilkinson



Shawl by Lucy Edwards



Baby Christening Shawl by Lyn Barron

Paraders

The Inaugural Paraders competition attracted 23 entries from 4 states. Competitors from VIC, NSW, SA & QLD competed at Stockmanship and Showmanship. They drew a large crowd who watched competitors take their alpacas over Bridges, Steps, Tyres, through gates, load onto a float and many more stations. It was a great spectacle to see the competitors in the main arena to be presented their ribbons.

Paraders Results

Showmanship

7 to Under 11

1st Mikhaila Lazarus, 2nd Tahniesha Lazarus, 3rd Alexander Scarlett, 4th Luke Scarlett, 5th Hannah Fletcher

11 to Under 15

1st Rubey Williams, 2nd Rebekah Perkins, 4th Sarle Nel, 4th Dominic Lukin

15 to Under 18

1st Katy Armson-Graham, 2nd Tatiana Griffiths, 3rd Meagan Williams 4th Laura Fletcher, 5th Jonee Phillips

Highly Commended: Hannah Doyle, Wade Phillips, Samantha Leyman, Gabrielle Harman, Courtney Gardner

18 to Under 26

1st Taryan Kotsiakos, 2nd Damon Griffiths, 3rd Samantha Tanner, 4th Kate Thomas

Stockmanship

7 to Under 11

1st Tahniesha Lazarus, 2nd Mikhaila Lazarus, 3rd Hannah Fletcher, 4th Luke Scarlett, 5th Alexander Scarlett

11 to Under 15

1st Rubey Williams, 2nd Rebekah Perkins, 3rd Sarle Nel, 4th Dominic Lukin

15 to Under 18

1st Wade Phillips, 2nd Hannah Doyle, 3rd Laura Fletcher, 4th Jonee Phillips, 5th Tatiana Griffiths

Highly commended - Meagan Williams, Gabrielle Harman, Courtney Gardner, Katie Armson-Graham, Samantha Leyman

18 to Under 26

1st Taryan Kotsiakos, 2nd Damon Griffiths, 3rd Samantha Tanner, 4th Kate Thomas

Best Overall - Taryan Kotsiakos



Junior Judging

This year's Junior Judging totally vindicated our Junior Judging Program Australia-wide. With 9 (10 but we had a very late withdrawal) competitors coming from QLD, NSW & VIC it was a wonderful sight to witness their amazing growth in competence, observational skills and professionalism.

A huge CONGRATULATORY cheer from me, you all did yourselves proud. Their improvement during the year has been tremendous. I must also thank the parents/carers/mentors of these young competitors, who, without their support, our young and up and coming Alpaca Judges would not have been able to compete at their respective competitions, thereby gaining the necessary experience for this National competition.

Congratulations to the winners:

1st - Taryan Kotsiakos
2nd - Hannah Doyle
3rd - Jonee Phillips and Courtney Gardiner tied for third place.

One more big thank you goes out to all the Australian Alpaca Association Regions, that have had both the foresight and time to include a Junior Judging Competition in their Show Schedules. The JJ.Program can only continue with your involvement.

To all the JJ's, I'm so proud and humbled by your achievements, not only do you do yourselves proud, but our AAA too.

Karen Caldwell



Auction

A recent media release stated "Fortunes Flourish at Australian Alpaca Industry Weekend of the Year" - This years auction was very successful with all eleven lots sold.

The highest prices going to EP Cambridge Streetwise and Surilana Magazine Madonna both sold to Australian buyers. Several other purchases will be winging their way across the Tasman but most bidders were Australians looking to improve their genetics.



Top Priced Huacaya - EP Cambridge Streetwise sold to Ian Frith from Milpacca for \$120 000



Top Price Suri - Surilana Magazine Madonna sold to Steve & Susan Pate - Hidden Lake Alpacas & Julie & Tim Blake - Chakana Blue Alpacas for \$50 000

Food and Fashion Fiesta

This innovative event was held at the magnificent Bendigo Art Gallery and promoted by Bendigo Tourism on their website, various publications and posters. We advertised in The Weekly Times and Bendigo Advertiser and Green Green Grass arranged radio promotions. This did attract a small number of public to the event but more importantly exposed a broad audience to the alpaca 'industry' with fleece and fashion garments as the end product.



The evening started with delicious canapés, prepared from the best local produce, served in the main gallery with guests surrounded by magnificent artwork.

A vast selection of wines produced in the surrounding areas was available to taste and enjoy. Wine, food...and of course music!



World renowned South American band "Inka Marka" provided fabulous music and helped create a unique and exciting atmosphere.

We all then moved into the adjoining space to view the fashion.

The garments and accessories were supplied by the 'Alpaca Passion' shop in Daylesford. Liz Robinson and her staff worked with Rebecca Hard and a team of volunteers to present a professional and very well received parade. Prime Illawarra Alpaca, owned by Ian Frith, generously sponsored the event and allowed us all to enjoy a fabulous night and promote the growth of a sustainable alpaca industry. ☺



Around The Show



WILD DOGS & DINGOS

Keeping paddocks, parks and backyards safe from wild dogs

With public awareness of dingoes and other wild dogs fortified by the recent Eureka Prize for Environmental Research, the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) says its new wild dog program aims to keep those issues in the public arena.

In congratulating the University of Tasmania's Professor Chris Johnson and his team for winning the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage sponsored prize, the IA CRC remains committed to rigorous research into the behaviour and management of wild dogs in agricultural and peri-urban environments.

Chief Executive Officer for the IA CRC, Andreas Glanznig, said ongoing ecological investigations were revealing the interactions of wild dogs, other predators, prey, plants and people across the landscape.

"We have a strong focus on protecting prime sheep and beef country in temperate Australia and our field research is helping devise science-based solutions for effective wild dog and fox management," Mr Glanznig said.

"Three active projects are working to improve wild dog management across Australia - the National Wild Dog Facilitator, Peri-urban Wild Dog Management and Triple Bottom Line Co-management.

"These on-ground projects are linked with our new Community Engagement Program based at the University of New England as we work to better equip communities to deal with wild dog issues."

The IA CRC wild dog ecology and management program is supported by the Commonwealth CRC Program, NSW and Qld state and local governments, Australian Wool Innovation and Meat and Livestock Australia.

National Wild Dog Facilitator:

The project guides, mentors and supports community groups and pest managers as they develop strategic wild dog management plans. Directed by industry and the National Wild Dog Management Advisory Group the focus is on actions to reduce impacts from wild dogs and the development of self reliant, community-driven wild dog management groups.

Contact: Greg Mifsud, IA CRC,
greg.mifsud@invasiveanimals.com



Peri-urban Wild Dog Management:

This project is working with shires in southeast Queensland and northeastern NSW to investigate wild dog ecology and devise acceptable community strategies that are effective in controlling wild dog impacts on pets and small livestock holdings.

Contact: Dr Matt Gentle, Biosecurity Queensland,
Queensland Department of Agriculture,
matthew.gentle@daff.qld.gov.au

Triple Bottom Line Co-management:

A project investigating how to best fit the needs of livestock producers and public land managers with conservation responsibilities in managing wild dogs. Economic and social effects of wild dog predation on livestock producers, local communities and broader society are being taken into account.

Contact: Dr Peter Fleming, NSW DPI
peter.fleming@dpi.nsw.gov.au



Photographs courtesy of Ben Allen - Quinyambie

2013 Royal Queensland Show

Congratulations to all competitors at the successful 2013 EKKA (Queensland Exhibition).

Entries came from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria to be presented to the two international level judges for consideration in halter and fleece competitions as well as Junior Judging.

Special guest Paul Garland from New Zealand was the hard working halter judge and it was a pleasure to hear his expert, in depth analysis of the 137 alpacas presented to him for judging. Supreme Champion Suri was awarded to Cedar House Barnaby owned by Tammurah Lamson of Greyleigh Alpacas and Supreme Champion Huacaya was awarded to Sunline Lacey owned by Jeff and Jill Willis of Sunline Alpacas.

Paul also judged the Junior Judges competition and awarded 1st place to Kirra Gibson.

Karen Caldwell expertly adjudicated over the 54 fleece entries and was also kind enough to offer instruction to the fleece stewards on some of the intricacies involved in assessing the fleeces to arrive at the best.

Supreme Champion Suri Fleece was awarded to Sunhaze William entered by Ken Felsman of Ubonne Pty Ltd, with Reserve Champion Suri Fleece being awarded to Sunhaze Limelight, also entered by Ken Felsman. Supreme Champion Huacaya Fleece was awarded to Sunline Lacey, entered by Jeff and Jill Willis of Sunline Alpacas with Reserve Champion Huacaya Fleece going to Sunline Jorja ET also entered by Jeff and Jill Willis of Sunline Alpacas.

It was a delight to see so many beautiful fleeces on display for the duration of the show.

Many thanks must go to all of the people who volunteered to assist throughout the show. Whether convening, setting up, stewarding or assisting in any way on the day. No show would be successful without the generous donation of time and effort given by these volunteers. It is their efforts that encourage exhibitors to come back each year to showcase their best, along with the best of all of the rural industries in Queensland, at the states premium show, which attracts international interest.

See you all next year!

Supreme Champion Huacaya Sunline Lacey owned by Jeff & Jill Willis - Sunline Alpacas, Judge Paul Garland NZ, Supreme Champion Suri Cedar House Barnaby owned by Tammurah Lamson - GrayLeigh Alpacas





Two Interesting Cases

Two Different Outcomes

Liz Coles - Longueville Park Alpacas

Every evening as the herd is brought in to their night paddock, time is spent with the cria to get them used to being handled and preparing them for halter training. It was during this time that we found Case One.

Case One.

Presentation:

"C", a three month old cria presented with a large soft lump under the jawbone. The general condition was fine with the cria eating and drinking well, gaining weight and playing contently with the other cria. Tasvax 7:1 vaccination had been given.

When felt it was reasonably mobile but obviously painful for the cria; there was no discharge at this stage. The following morning Debrisol was sprayed around the base of the lump and the next morning the lump had burst. A significant amount of cheesy substance was expelled and a sinus was tracking backwards.

Diagnosis:

Off to the Vet and immediately a swab was taken and sent off for full analysis with the first impression that it could be "lumpy jaw". This condition is caused by a fungus called *Actinomyces* and the microbe can live without oxygen. The fungus enters the lining of the mouth while the animal feeds or a stick or sharp object punctures the lining of the mouth allowing bacteria to penetrate the deeper tissues. The organism can then travel in to the jaw bone where an infection can be set up and lead to swelling of the jaw bone.

Management:

Whilst awaiting the results of the pathology report daily intramuscular Penicillin was given and the wound cleaned with diluted bleach and the sinus (the depth of cotton bud) was sprayed with Debrisol. The general well being of the cria did not change.

After four days the initial pathology report came back with no growth but the culture to determine lumpy jaw would take several more days. So, fearing lumpy jaw was going to be the outcome, the cria was taken to a specialist camelid veterinarian for further advice. If treatment was to be successful for this condition it had to be undertaken urgently, alternatively, the

condition may not be lumpy jaw but something more easily cured.

With this in mind an X-ray of the jaw was taken and no abnormality was discovered; for age, the jaw development and teeth eruption was as per age. Next a light anaesthetic was given, the wound cleaned and the sinus was carefully explored. Much to everyone's delight a 1cm grass seed was extracted and this was the cause of the problem not lumpy jaw!!!!

As a precaution a single intravenous injection of Sodium Iodine was given and intramuscular Penicillin was given for a further two days.

Ongoing management:

For one week the cria continued to have twice daily cleaning and removal of the cheesy matter and as this reduced in quantity so did the frequency of treatment. This was gradually reduced to every second day and by day 21 the wound had practically healed with no further discharge.

After one month the wound had healed completely with no ongoing problems but the area will be monitored on a regular basis.

Case Two

As with Case One, the herd was coming home to their night paddock but "J" was in the crush and would not move. "J" is a 10 year old hembra used in our earlier ET program and has given us some very nice progeny. Usually she is first through the gate but not on this day – she would/could not move.

Down with the tractor and "J" was gently rolled on to the carry-all, secured and taken to the van and loaded.

Examination:

Off to the Vet (yes Sunday evening = \$\$\$\$) who carefully examined her and because of the apparent rapid deterioration in her condition, suspected snake bite. A full blood profile was run but showed nothing of significance. By this time "J" was in a mild degree of stress so was given IM Flumav with minimal effect.

On examination her temperature was normal, respirations and heart rate elevated. Her abdomen was slightly distended with minimal bowel sounds and an ultrasound scan was done and revealed a reduction in peristalsis but no sign of obstruction. She had not passed urine or faeces for 12 hours.

Management:

A nasogastric tube was passed and she was given Tympanyl 350mls for management of colic. Simultaneously, Zantac syrup 300ml and crushed Carafate and Losec – all “ulcer” bases were covered! She was also given paraffin per rectum in the hope of stimulating her bowel. It was then decided that it would be in her best interests to be taken home and be watched overnight.

On arrival at home her pain was increasing so another injection of Flumav was given and she was kept in the shed with a companion animal and hopefully would get some well earned rest.

The Next day:

At 6.00am she appeared a little more alert but was intermittently rolling and getting up to walk a few paces then lying down again. By 10.00am her pain was increasing in severity, her abdomen severely distended and the fluid could be heard in her belly. Regrettably the decision was made to end her suffering and euthanasing was the only option.

At 11.30am the Vet arrived, carefully assessed her and agreed she could not be saved. A lethal injection of IV Lethobarb was given and her suffering was over in three minutes.

The Post Mortem:

Our policy is to conduct a post mortem on any animal that dies regardless of age and irrespective of the fact that we are in both the Q-Alpaca and JD MAP programs. This is the way we can learn of anything untoward and hopefully minimize the chances of a recurrence.

The abdomen was opened and immediately 6 litres of fluid spilled out. The bowel was exposed and the cause of death was immediately obvious – a severely twisted bowel that had cut off the blood supply causing a large piece of bowel approximately 2 metres long to lose its blood supply (ischaemia) and was pre-gangrenous - see Photo 1.

On further examination the bowel had also penetrated the omentum further comprising the blood supply – see Photo 2.



Our thanks to Dr Lauren Porter, Murwillumbah Veterinary Clinic for her care of these two alpacas and for allowing us to reproduce the photos of the post mortem.

Pfeiffer Park

Breeding White & Coloured Suri & Huacaya Alpacas

stud services
pet/guard and breeding stock sales
new breeder support services
product sales and training

Kelli Pfeiffer – PFEIFFER PARK ALPACAS
295 Artillery Road, North Rockhampton, Qld 4702
p: 07 4936 1835 f: 07 4936 3445 m: 0409 129 953 e: pfeiffer01@bigpond.com

www.ppalpacas.com.au

Pick up any
Implement
in 60 seconds

DIY KIT
easy
install

See Video & Buy Online
Farmbitz.com
We ship Australia wide daily

The 2013 International Photography Awards

The 2013 International Photography Awards results have been published and we are very happy to announce that Sydney Australian photographer, Penelope Beveridge has received 22 honorable mentions awards in the Professional Photography Categories:- Advertising, Digitally Enhanced, Night Photography, Landscape, Travel/Tourism, Architecture – Historic, Fine Art Portraiture, People, Pets, Nature – Seasons, Nature - Trees, Children and Portrait.

Penelope was commissioned by the Australian Alpaca Association to take a series of photographs for

promotional use by the Association who would like to congratulate Penelope on her achievement. The 2013 International Photography Awards received nearly 18,000 submissions from 104 countries across the globe so it is no mean feat to receive "honourable mentions" in a professional competition of this size.

"Alpaca Herds" 2 Awards received from International Photography Awards in New York 2013 Professional Categories Pets and Nature – Other. Photography by © Penelope Beveridge. These are part of a series of 5 images.



Breed To Your Environment

By Kelli Pfeiffer - Pfeiffer Park Alpacas QLD

Research, be prepared & don't keep doing the same thing with an expectation of getting different results!

When I started breeding alpacas in Rockhampton, located near the Central Queensland Coast of Australia, there was one other breeder in the area; a couple more breeders based eight hours drive north and a few 3.5 hours drive south. The local livestock vet had a few years experience working with alpacas, mostly performing ultra-sounds and stud certifications. The Department of Primary Industries also had some experience with alpacas, but not a lot.

Rockhampton City is located 640km north of Queensland's capital city of Brisbane. The City is known as the Beef Capital of Australia, is less than an hour's travel by plane or about seven hours by road from Brisbane. The Region has a relaxed outdoor lifestyle, sub-tropical rainforests, beaches and islands and is prominent in the livestock; mining; education and tourism industries. Weather patterns vary between the coast and inland, though generally the climate across the Rockhampton Region is tropical and experiences mild winters. On average, the Region has 292 sunny days per year.

The average temperatures are:

Maximums in Celsius:
Summer 32, Autumn 28, Winter 23, Spring 29

Minimums in Celsius:
Summer 22, Autumn 18, Winter 11, Spring 17

However, the lows can and do get down to 0-6 degrees Celsius in winter for a short period (usually a couple of weeks in July) and can also rise above 40 degrees in summer on occasions for perhaps one or two days. Generally we experience a wet summer, with monsoonal rains daily for around three months, which can draw out to five months.

Alpacas can of course live in extremes of temperature, freezing to extreme heat, so fitting into a new climate is something they can do. However, I have found that humidity is something they are not used to and they need to acclimatise. Those born here know nothing different and generally thrive well.

Having said that, my success at breeding alpacas in this hot, wet environment came down to learning....



- What was the right time of the year to bring alpacas into Central Queensland to allow them to adjust to this environment?
- What was the right time of year to have cria drops resulting in healthy, happy dams birthing and feeding crias, who are then undergoing weaning at non-stressful weather periods?
- What was the right time of year to shear ensuring enough fleece regrowth during the wet season for comfort and to avoid health issues?
- What did I need to do to manage health that may be different to other areas where alpacas exist?
- What did I need to feed them beside pasture to ensure they lived long and healthy lives?
- What infrastructure did I need to put in place to make their breeding lives more comfortable and as stress free as possible?
- How to establish local contacts to assist me with all these things such as vets, scientists within Government Departments, livestock and feed suppliers?
- Most importantly establish contacts within the Australian Alpaca Industry to assist me with learning the intricacies of this breed, experts in genetics, coloured breeding, reproduction, parasite control, vitamins, minerals, vaccines necessary to maintain health. Which resulted in me becoming an informed Alpaca Breeder!

In The Beginning

I started my breeding venture with five females purchased from a breeder in south west Queensland, an eight hour drive from my farm. The alpacas I had purchased had either been born or had resided in Queensland for a number of years, so they were acclimatised, but they did come from an area that was cold and wet and my farm was in a humid, hot, high rainfall area, where the wet season came during summer. However, by and large the first arrivals to my farm coped reasonably well with their new environment.

Six months later I hadn't killed the first lot, so I decided to purchase some more! This time I purchased from a breeder 1900 km from me, where the animals were used to freezing cold wet winters, where the temperature dropped below zero and then rose to extremely hot dry summers where it can get up into the low forties. These animals also coped well, as I brought them onto my property during the Queensland winter, but by the time the first wet season came around these creatures were having to learn to live in a very different environment than they were used to. And so began my journey of learning to breed to my environment!



Do Your Research

Consult With Experts

Alpacas

Firstly do your research to ensure that alpacas are what you want to breed on your property. There are lots of books and information on the internet that can help you with all you need to know about these unique animals. Find a member body in your country to begin with, this will be your launching point to finding what you need to know about breeding alpacas.

Alpaca Breeders

Talk to local breeders to find out what issues alpacas face in your area. What measures do you need to put in place to prevent or treat these issues. Meet as many local breeders as you can, ask them if they started all over again, what would they do differently in selecting animals, setting up their farm, etc.

Local Livestock Producers

Visit these places and see if you can get all the products you need to care for your alpacas, feed, supplements, injectables, equipment. You may find that you need to source specialty supplies from online Camelid product stockists.

Local Department of Primary Industries

Visit your local Government Office that oversees the health of livestock in your area. Find out what the local laws are and if permits are required to keep alpacas on your property. Ask them what issues have they come across in the area with regard to this breed.

Local Vet

Find one that has experience with alpacas, so that you are not paying them to learn. If that is not possible then find one outside of your area that is willing to consult with your local livestock vet over the phone. Make sure your vet has a copy of "Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids, by Murray E Fowler" and you need a copy too. This book is essential for breeders and their medical practitioners.

Now if after all this research you still want to breed alpacas, then DO MORE RESEARCH!

Things to consider for breeding to your environment

Huacaya Vs Suri. What breed type will cope best in your environment? When I started, I was advised by breeders who did not live in Central Queensland that they felt Huacayas would not do well in my environment due to the humidity and extreme heat, and that perhaps Suris with their open fleece would do better. Although I wanted to breed Huacayas, I started out with Suris only. After six months, I still wanted to breed Huacayas, so I purchased two pregnant females, a black and dark brown. I found these animals both did extremely well in my climate, had no health issues at all and in fact their progeny went on to compete in the showing as youngster to adults, and did very well up against alpacas in climates that were far different to mine. So therefore, my climate had clearly no negative effect on the animals growth or fleece production.

Parasites - All living things carry parasites, both internal and external at all times, in fact without them our bodies would not function correctly. It is when our immune systems are lowered due to ill health, inadequate nutrition or in stressful times like late term pregnancy, weaning, negative changes to environment that our bodies can become over burdened by them. However, your environment plays a role in how your alpacas will cope with parasites too – in hot conditions all parasites will thrive.

Parasites such as Coccidiosis, Barbers Pole, Tapeworm are just a few that can cause problems for alpacas and are all quite easily treated with an appropriate drench. However, it is then down to you as the breeder to determine why it is that your alpacas are burdened by parasites. Is it because they have just moved to your area and they are not used to this particular parasite? Is your pasture or feed adequate so that they are maintaining healthy body condition, and not falling victim to ill health and thereafter parasites? If you are not farming in a broad acre environment, then you need to be removing dung regularly to keep the worm burden down in your paddocks, every five days is what I recommend.

There are no drenches specifically designed for alpacas, so it is necessary to discuss your parasite control or prevention measures with your vet to get a correct dosage rate. You will need your vet to diagnose parasite burden and/or the type for appropriate drenching or another professional that is qualified to do the same by faecal egg counting.

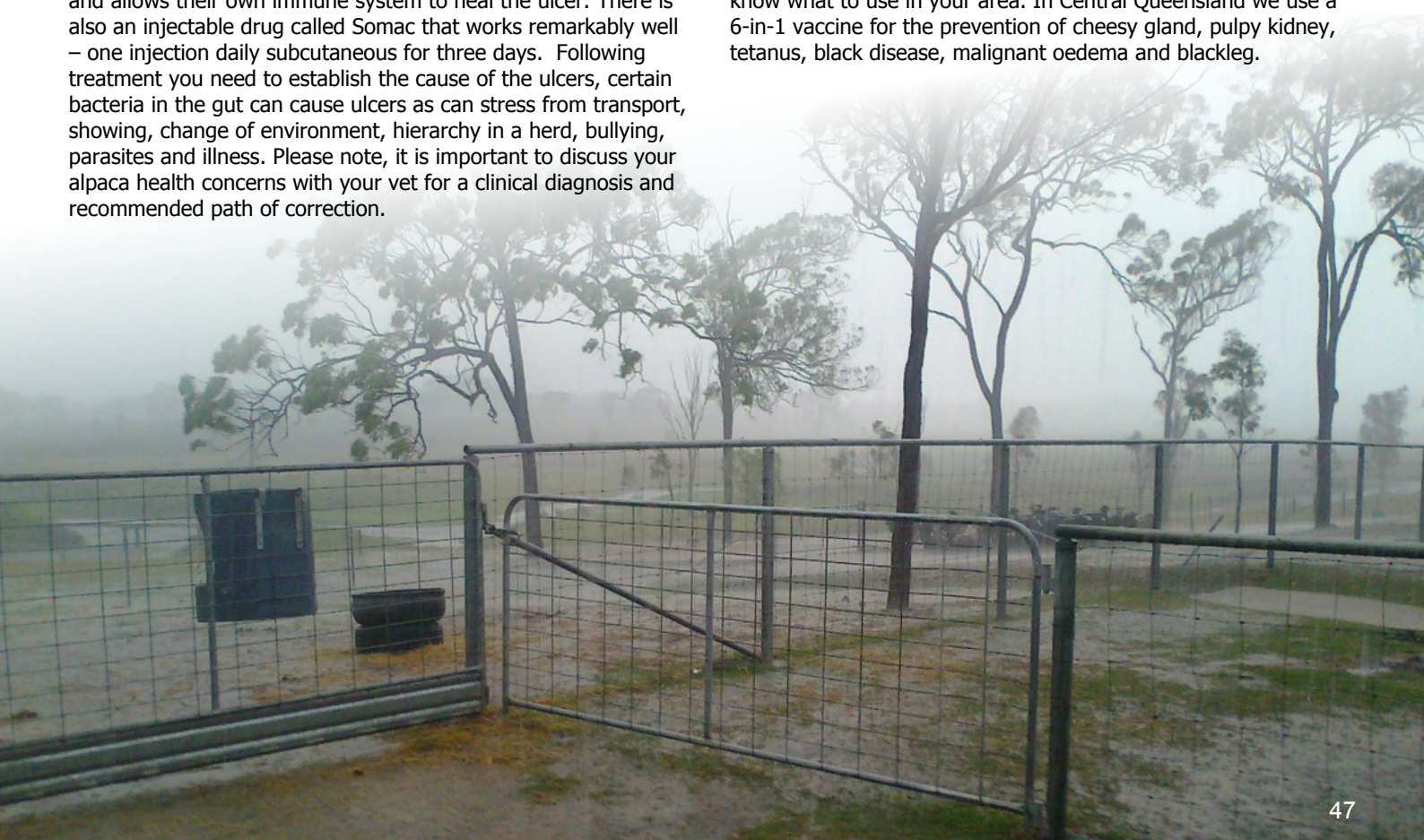
Ulcers - Alpacas can be prone to ulcers, but I have found it relatively easy to diagnose and treat. Symptoms can include: foaming at the mouth; loss of body condition; recumbency; loss of appetite. Carafate is an over the counter Chemist medication which is administered orally that lines the stomach and helps to take the pain of ulcers away so that your alpaca will eat again, and allows their own immune system to heal the ulcer. There is also an injectable drug called Somac that works remarkably well – one injection daily subcutaneous for three days. Following treatment you need to establish the cause of the ulcers, certain bacteria in the gut can cause ulcers as can stress from transport, showing, change of environment, hierarchy in a herd, bullying, parasites and illness. Please note, it is important to discuss your alpaca health concerns with your vet for a clinical diagnosis and recommended path of correction.

Weeds - Alpacas will generally not eat weeds if there is adequate pasture/feed in their environment. However, weeds can and will take control of your property if left unchecked and can leave you with little to no pasture. To prepare your property ahead of receiving your alpacas, walk your paddocks and remove weeds by pulling them out at the root, put into a dark coloured plastic bag and dispose of correctly. Slash your pasture high and leave leaf litter in place, this will create a layer of mulch keeping your ground moist and will drown out weeds.

Pasture - Native pastures are fine. Soil testing by a local expert will assist you in diagnosing what your pasture/soils are deficient in and you can reseed or fertilise to improve it using those results.

Feed - It is best to supplementary feed your alpacas using the same hays or mix that the breeder you purchased them from uses, as not to upset the rumen gut of these animals when they arrive on your farm. If you wish to make changes to their feed thereafter, do so slowly and keep their diet as natural as possible.

Routine Shots – Selenium, Vitamin D, Vaccine. Look to your environment for indicators here. Alpacas do require a highly mineralised diet which is best derived from the pasture that they consume. If you live in a flood affected area, then your ground minerals may be washed away each year in the rains. In this case you may need to have your vet take and assess bloods to see if your alpacas require more supplementation of minerals such as Selenium, Phosphorous, Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc either orally or by injection. Alpacas are native to South America – where they live 15,000 feet closer to the sun than in Australia, which means that in wet seasons, you may need to supplement them with Vitamin D. Vaccines are essential to maintaining the health of your alpacas, discuss this with your vet so that you know what to use in your area. In Central Queensland we use a 6-in-1 vaccine for the prevention of cheesy gland, pulpy kidney, tetanus, black disease, malignant oedema and blackleg.



Shearing - Time of year that you shear is pivotal to the health of your alpacas. We shear every year, no matter how much fleece is on the animals (including new arrivals to farm and crias) so that they all have the same amount of fleece on them no matter what time of year it is.

We have learnt to shear in early spring (late August, early September), leaving one centimetre of fleece on their backs to prevent sunburn and help to repel external parasites and insects.

This time of year also allows enough regrow when our wet season starts in October to March to prevent issues with rain scald, scorch, hypothermia/hyperthermia in sudden hot or cold spikes. It also means that by the commencement of winter (May) they have enough fleece on their backs to keep them warm as the temperatures start to drop, don't forget, we do live in a warmer climate, but as the animals acclimatise they still feel the heat and cold just as the locals do, and not as they did from their past environment.

Make A Plan

To cope with what your environment might bring

Hot/Wet Conditions or Cold/Dry Conditions - Shearing at the right time of year so your animals cope well with this. Make sure your husbandry is in line with your environment – drenches, vaccines, vitamin/mineral supplementation. Have an adequate clean water supply. Shelter from heat/rain, trees are adequate for this.

Breeding to your environment - Alpacas are induced ovulators – so they can breed at anytime of the year. We have learnt that the best time for our cria drops is between autumn and spring (May – November), but not summer (December – March). The weather is kinder at this time, not so hot, definitely not wet, little to no parasite activity and so our dams seem to have easier births with larger, stronger, healthier crias.

Equipment - Ensure that you have all you need as a breeder to cope with the health management of your breeding stock, ie coats, halter/leads, float for transport, health care kits such as:

- General Care
- General Care Products
- Cria Care
- Grooming
- Showing

Vet - Establish a relationship with your vet. Make a regular appointment for them to visit – monthly, quarterly, annually to do ultrasounds, health checks on stud males, etc.

This way they are at your disposal in good times and bad. Their advice and support will become invaluable.

Your First Livestock Purchases

When is the right time to bring them onto your property?

Purchasing Local - If you purchase from a local breeder, you will probably have less problems, as the animals you are receiving will be acclimatised to your environment.

Purchasing Outside of Local Area - Discuss with your vet. On my farm we bring animals in during autumn, winter and spring, so that they have time to acclimatise to our environment before the hot and wet months when parasites and bacteria can become a problem.

Transport - Make sure that you only engage an experienced transporter of livestock, who knows how to care for your animals in transit, ensuring that they adhere to all Local, State and National regulations for transport including permits, waybills, and animal welfare. Ask around, better to use someone recommended to you from other breeders.

Now You Have Them

Health Check, Bring Husbandry up to date, Monitor

Quarantine - Make sure that you know where your animals husbandry is up to before they arrive on your farm, ie vaccines, routine shots, drenching. Put new arrivals into a designated quarantine area for a period of two-six weeks – whilst you health check and bring their husbandry up to date and monitor them. Health Check your animals within the first twelve hours of arrival, check conjunctiva, capillary return, hydration level (moisture in mouth), bodyscore, temperature, gait, general appearance and feeding regime are all within normal ranges and anal area is free of evidence of loose movements. Bring their husbandry up to date. Clean up dung regularly and remove from site so that any internal parasites/weeds they have brought in their dung does not cause an ongoing problem on your farm.

Monitor - Learn behaviour, who is dominant or not, if any changes occur since arrival, ie loss of appetite, foaming at mouth, scalding around the lips, excessive itching, diarrhoea, or recumbency, act quickly. Advise your vet of symptoms and establish a path of treatment. Move animals out of quarantine and into permanent paddocks when you are satisfied that they will not pose a health risk to the rest of your herd.

The First 12 Months - Bringing new stock onto your farm, a new environment, the first twelve months will be the hardest on them – they need to adjust to your pastures, parasites, weather conditions, bacteria in soil, other members of the herd, perceived threats such as farm dogs, etc. Generally once they are through their first four seasons on your farm, they settle in and all is well, as long as you keep them fed well and husbandry is up to date for your environment.

Ask For Help

Sellers - They will have the most in depth knowledge of the animals you have purchased. Call them in the first instance for advice on specific animal changes.

Breeders - Find someone local that you can work with, even if you didn't purchase from them, so that you can learn and call on them if you need help.

Vets - Make them your friend. Include them in your decision making – it will cost you less having an ongoing relationship than it will if you only call them in when there is a problem.

It's Not All Hard Work

Have some fun with it!

Where am I now? - I started with five breeding females. I now own 100 animals and manage over another 100 on behalf of agistees on my farm. I have moved over 500 animals through my farm including purchases and sales of my own stock, that of agistees and as an agent for other breeders.

Showing - Get involved. Travel with other breeders to learn the ropes. Take your own progeny to get a judges opinion on how your breeding plan is going. Competition is fun – don't get too bogged down in your losses, but turn it into knowledge on how to make better breeding decisions.

Mistakes - We all make them. We all still make them. Don't give up, don't give in – learn from them and do better. But whatever you do, don't keep doing the same thing and expect different results! Change is a good and a necessary part of growing and developing your breeding plans and you will attain better outcomes if you learn to accept and move with change.

Editors Note: The views expressed in this article are those of the author & may not be applicable to all localities.





Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas
Galston NSW

Home of:
Gunnamatta Marconi (MG)
Gunnamatta Catalyst (SMF)
and Elyson Mercury (LG)

02 9653 2277
alpacas@tpg.com.au
www.gunnamattastud.com.au



Wendy Voon *knits for* MeriSuri

www.wendyvoon.com

For Sale:

Alpaca showing pen/tent for all weather conditions.
Easy to erect & dismantle & made from steel tube & mesh.

White PVC roofing with detachable sides.
Four panels 2.250 x 1.100 mts **plus** PVC covering \$ 950.
For more details contact: Peter Cook.
Victoria. Eastern region.

pjcook@gotalk.net.au 03 51222465 or 0411808080.



TOP OF THE RANGE

Currabungla Alpacas

Breeding Fine Quality Alpacas since 1995



Over 400 alpacas for sale, all colours, Huacaya and Suri - excellent genetics
www.currabungla.com
Ph: 02 4837 3394
E: currabungla@activ8.net.au



DIDOHAMA
SURI STUD

07-5423-0799
www.didohama.com



Chiverton
Alpacas

K & D Gregory
Phillip Island
Ph: 03 5956 8611
chivalpacas@gmail.com



Stayfine Whites & Greys **www.chivertonalpacas.com.au**



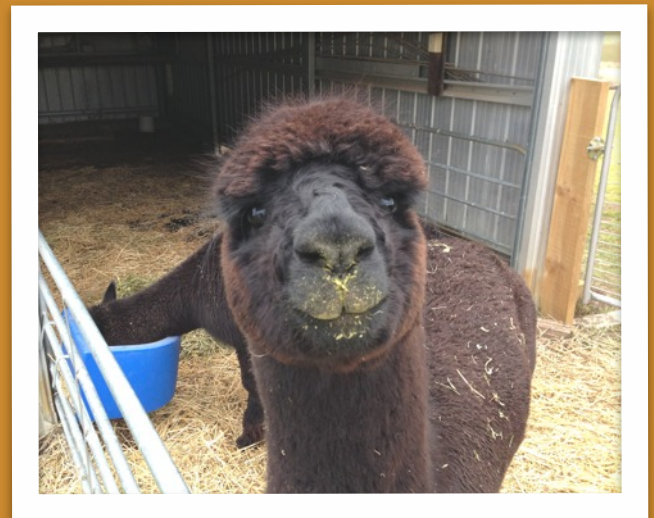
This Issue's Winner



"Boing...!"
Melleah Mewett - The Lost Plot Alpacas



'Stop hogging the mirror'
Michelle Hamilton - Rosegum Alpacas



'Kiss me?"
Prue Sommer - Stonefield Park Alpacas



'I can do it in any position!!'
Hans Poppel - Joma Alpacas



Send us your Paca Pics. Please send your paca pics as high resolution .jpg images to the AAA office via email, as an email attachment. Email: info@alpaca.asn.au

Not all photos submitted will be used for the current issue, however they may be used in a later edition of Alpacas Australia Magazine. By submitting a photo you are giving the AAA permission to reproduce this image in any of its publications and you confirm you have permission to use the image which is free of any copyright.



Choice, Quality
Affordability

On Farm Quarantine Facility.

Surilana

Setting the Suri Standard

www.surilana.com.au

Ian and Angela Preuss, Victoria, Australia +613 57905394, suris@surilana.com.au