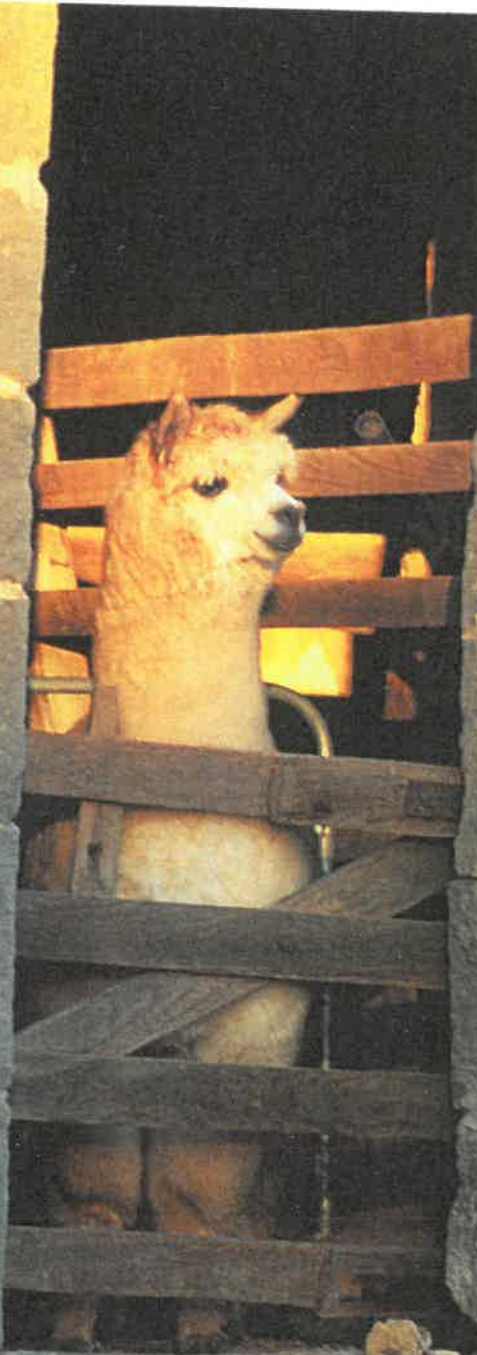


Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A

ISSUE No. 9 1994

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**CHOOSING YOUR
ALPACA INSURER**

**ALPACA RESEARCH
PROJECT FUNDED**

**US BREEDERS
FIBRE OR SHOW?**

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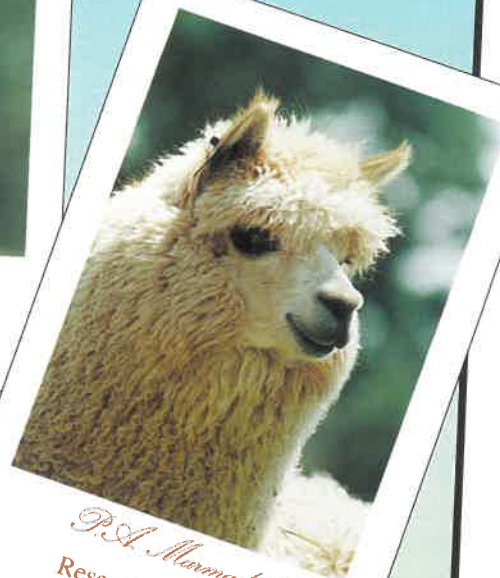


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ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

*Learning from the 80's
one of our greatest
challenges.*

This is my last issue as Editor of *Alpacas Australia*. It has been very satisfying for me to take the magazine from a concept over two years ago to this current biggest ever issue, and to see the concurrent development of the industry.

I love the receptivity to new projects and ideas that abounds in Australia. We see it in every field. The cultural cringe of my childhood has long since gone and we have the confidence to be the first and best in many endeavours. I believe that the alpaca industry is a great example of this. We have made alpacas a part of the agricultural scene that is here to stay. We have a vision for the future and we're working to produce the healthiest and best quality alpacas in the world.

Every venture where potential for profit is high does attract the darker elements of human nature and, in a burgeoning new industry, rising above this is probably the greatest challenge we face. The results of the 80's approach to business seems to have influenced the feeling of business in this country. Many lessons have been taken from that time — keeping integrity; leaving something in it for the next person; working for long-term benefits as opposed to short-term gains. So many people in the alpaca industry choose to do business in this way. My fervent hope is that



their voices will be the loudest and our grandchildren will have the opportunity, if they wish, to have a rewarding and financially stable lifestyle farming alpacas.

The Annual General Meeting was held in August and a new committee elected. Congratulations to those people; thank you in advance for the work you will put in and best wishes for meeting the challenge of shaping the industry's future.

A hearty thank you to the team at PTW for their enthusiasm, motivation, skills and hard work in producing this magazine. You have been a pleasure to work with.

Happy alpaca breeding.

Cherie Bridges

Cherie Bridges
EDITOR

Alpacas
AUSTRALIA

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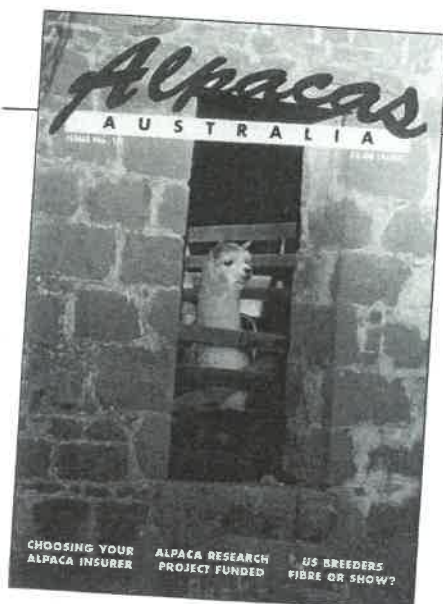
Editorial contributions on industry matters are welcome and should be addressed to the editor.

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Photograph by Steven Routledge

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CHOOSING YOUR ALPACA INSURER

by Michael d'Apice

Down-to-earth advice on what to look for when choosing an insurer for your animals.

Insuring your animals will be one of your major expenses; therefore you should be as thorough in your approach to it as you would be in buying a suitable alpaca.

Purchasing insurance, however, is considerably different to purchasing an alpaca. You can't see it or feel it. To assess its value and quality you need to consider a number of important factors. The secret is knowing what questions to ask prospective insurers and using their answers to help you determine with whom you should insure your animals.

CHECKLIST OF INSURANCE QUESTIONS

1. Am I talking to an insurance company, broker or agent?

2. What is the name of the insurance company that will insure my animals?
3. Is that company authorised to conduct insurance in Australia under the Insurance Act of 1973?
4. Can the person with whom I am dealing offer automatic cover?
5. Is that person available to me outside normal business hours?
6. Can I obtain copies of the insurance company's policy, proposal form and any other forms to study prior to signing?
7. What else is required of me to arrange alpaca insurance cover?
8. What is the cost?

Ten to fifteen minutes on the phone with each prospective insurer,

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asking your questions and noting their answers will be time well spent in the long run. Analysis of the answers you receive will form the basis of your decision to select one insurer above the others.

Am I talking to an insurance company, broker or agent?

In Australia, intermediaries (brokers and agents) generally conduct livestock insurance transactions and very rarely would you find yourself dealing directly with an insurance company.

Insurance brokers must be registered with the Insurance and Superannuation Commission and their operations are monitored by that body. Among the Commission's registration requirements is that a broker must take out and maintain Professional Indemnity insurance cover. This is not a requirement for an insurance agent.

The insurance broking industry has a national association body whose members are known as Qualified Practising Insurance Brokers (QPIBs). To maintain their industry qualifications, they must undertake ongoing education each year (a similar system to that used by accounting bodies). You should therefore, determine if the broker is a member of the National Insurance Brokers Association.

What is the name of the insurance company that will insure my animals?

This is probably the most important question. Livestock insurance is a very specialised area and you should make sure that the insurer that you are dealing with has a long record in livestock insurance and can provide you with the security you require. In recent times, a number of insurers have offered livestock insurance, but have withdrawn after a relatively short time, giving a clear indication of their

lack of understanding of this class of insurance.

Is the insurance company authorised to conduct insurance in Australia under the Insurance Act of 1973?

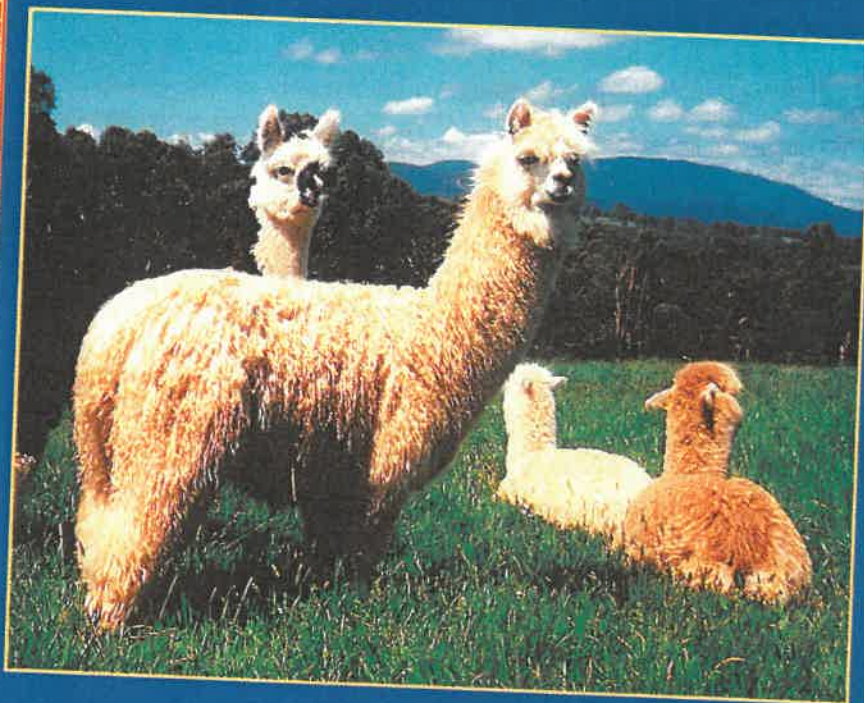
Because the number of insurers offering alpaca insurance has diminished, some agents and brokers are turning to unauthorised foreign insurers. These companies are not registered to conduct insurance in

Australia under the Insurance Act of 1973 and as such, their financial conduct is not supervised by the Insurance and Superannuation Commissioner.

Under the Insurance Contracts Act 1984, agents or brokers who effect insurance with an unauthorised foreign insurer must advise their clients of this in writing, in a form set out in the Act. Clients must also sign an

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GETTING TO KNOW GRAY MORGAN

Gray Morgan is the new president of the Australian Alpacas Association.

An interesting name, Gray Morgan, or at least I found it so. Being Welsh myself, I speculated on the possibility that he was a fellow countryman, possibly a descendant of the notorious pirate, Henry Morgan. When I met him, the accent (slight, but discernible) proved me right. And yes, he believes that Henry Morgan is one of his ancestors.

There's no swashbuckle, however, about Gray Morgan. Raised on a Welsh farm, then off to the city to begin a career in electronics, he has come 'full circle'. With his Australian born wife, Jenny, he has again adopted a rural lifestyle at Amberdale Alpacas, a lush, green property set in Victoria's picturesque Yarra Valley.

Gray Morgan has no doubt about his main task as president of the Association over the coming year. He believes that the rapid growth of the

AAA has put strain on the organisation. To ensure that it can continue to work efficiently and to pursue its aims effectively, Gray believes that the administration of the Association must be strengthened and expanded.

He admits that this may not be an easy task, especially in an organisation that has only a small paid staff and a very large number of volunteers. However, he expects that there will be no let up in the increase in numbers of animals and breeders.

To date, the Association has played a leading role in the development of the Australian alpaca industry. As the industry grows there will be increasing demands on the Association. This means the AAA must keep looking ahead and ensuring that it is adequately equipped to meet the challenges.

'What do you see as the main role of Australian Alpaca Association?', I asked.



Gray's answer was deceptively simple: 'To look after the animal.'

As you would expect, he is extremely optimistic about the future of the alpaca industry. However, he is realistic about the amount of time and effort that will be required to develop this 'fledgling' into a thriving industry, exporting its products overseas and making a significant contribution to the Australian economy.

Consequently, he is a strong supporter of active involvement by both the Association and individual breeders in research projects which will provide further information on these enigmatic animals to the Australian industry.

Education, research support, public relations, promotion — all fall within Gray's vision of the legitimate activities for the Association. The appropriateness of anything proposed, however, must always be measured by its likely contribution to the welfare of the breed.



The new president's faith in Australia's ability to develop the alpaca industry is unequivocal.

'Australians understand fibre,' he says. 'Of all countries, we are uniquely placed to develop both the animal and the fibre.'

He believes that we have the right 'mix' of talents — a proven and unbeatable combination of animal husbandry skills, an appreciation of the value of research and an understanding of what constitutes good and marketable fibre. The application of this combination will ensure success for the alpaca industry.

'Breeding for quality is central to Gray's vision for the industry. He sees the development of a strong fibre-based industry as the natural progression. For the Association, he believes this is also a legitimate goal.

As a breeder, he has personal views about the market he feels most appropriate for alpaca fibre.

'Go for the top', he answered, when I asked him what he thought the best market for alpaca fibre would be.

'I believe in niche marketing and I think that *haute couture* is one area where alpaca fibre can do very well, especially as I am also very much for value adding. Why sell raw fibre to makers for whatever the going price happens to be at the time — only to see imported garments coming back into Australia and selling at extraordinary prices? I believe we can value add if we pick our markets and draw on Australian creativity. We will have top quality fibre in commercial quantities in the not so distant future. We should be planning now what markets we want to tap — and how best to do it.'

But what about the Association's role in all this?

'I think the Association should encourage the entrepreneurial activities of breeders — but I am not sure that the Association itself should

become an entrepreneur. If the AAA concerns itself with its primary aim of looking after the animal, I really think the rest will fall into place. There are a great many legitimate tasks for the AAA through which we can encourage entrepreneurial activities. But let's concentrate on what needs to be done now, and at least for the next five to ten years — breed quality alpacas and develop fibre that's consistent in quality and commercial in quantity.'

We conclude our talk and wander down to the alpaca paddock. The alpacas see us coming and most of them crowd around pleased to see Gray and curious about me. Gray produces some lucerne hay and the animals take it from us gently, as alpacas do. This is really where it all starts, I think to myself, with Australian alpacas on Australian pastures.

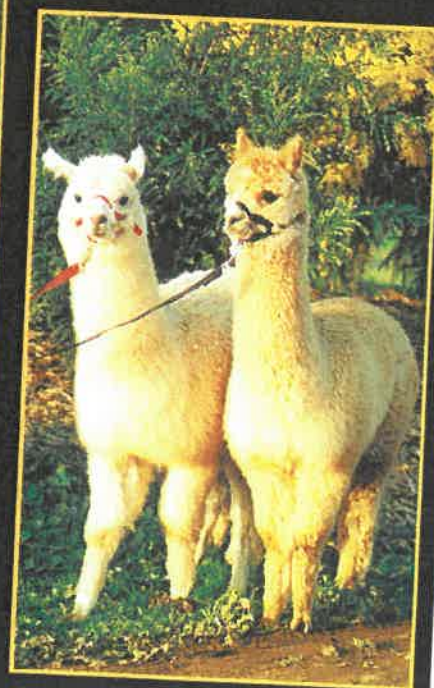
Congratulations on your election as president, Gray Morgan, and good luck.

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BREEDER PROFILE

CHRISTINE AND NICK VELTJENS

by Christine Veltjens

*How a 'some day' farm
became Talca Alpacas.*

Nick and I had often talked about owning some kind of farm 'some day', and it was a standing joke between us that 2 metre filled-in fences would be erected so that I didn't get to know Daisy or Tinkerbelle so well that they could never go off to market.

At that time we lived a pretty normal type of life in suburbia with two kids, Brooke and Rees, a dog, a cat and a budgie. Nick, an architect, worked from home.

The children were growing up and I could no longer justify singing to myself 'I'm a little teapot, short and stout...' It was time to return to university and do a post-graduate diploma in education.

The following year, in 1992, I was working on an average of three days a week as an emergency teacher.

Our lives changed dramatically early in 1993. We were holidaying on the coast at Mornington and, one day, Nick happened to mention that a property that he'd looked at previously was still for sale. As it seemed very important to him, I thought, 'There's only one way to get this out of his mind, and that's by me going along with him and having a look.' It also crossed my mind that architecture wasn't exactly booming and teaching in Victoria was looking decidedly unhealthy as an ongoing career.

We bought the property at Moorooduc and moved in at the end of April 1993.

HAVE FARM — NEED ANIMALS

The big question was, 'What do we do with it?' Hypocrite I may well be, because although I eat meat, there is

absolutely no way I could breed anything that would be slaughtered.

I had been introduced to alpacas some two years previously by a friend who desperately wanted them herself (and still looks at ours enviously). She thought that alpacas would be a great investment and I thought they would fit the bill for us superbly.

We visited various shows and expos to look at them and carefully considered all aspects of entering the alpaca industry. (Nick had a great time on his beloved computer devising bigger and better spreadsheets). We finally decided to take the plunge.

OUR FIRST ALPACAS ARRIVE

Our first three pregnant alpaca females were delivered on Friday 28 May, 1993. We wondered how they would react, but after they had been herded from the float into the paddock, they were grazing quietly within a very short time. These intelligent, gentle, sensitive and very shy animals were home.

We learned that day that four-strand fences were not adequate. Brooke came racing in at 5 pm to tell me that an alpaca was alone in another paddock. Nick went off to the produce store to buy wire and insulators. There wasn't enough wire, so we had to improvise that cold and windy night.

Back home in the warmth, I told my children in no uncertain manner that the alpacas were not pets but a business investment. At some stage, they would be sold. (Some fifteen months later I am still being reminded by my children of this statement as

whenever the word 'sell' is mentioned, I ignore it. Alpacas certainly become part of a family.)

The following morning, Kaila, my big, black standard poodle crawled under the wire to join Brooke in the alpaca paddock. Catching sight of these large hairy animals, Kaila wanted to play. The alpacas had other ideas and took off, with Kaila in hot pursuit. I had lost my voice, so Kaila did not hear my weak attempts at trying to call her back. Visions of having to deal with possible broken legs, necks or aborting females or even an alpaca-savaged dog raced through my frantic brain. Maybe my agitation got through to the dog, because Kaila suddenly saw me, realised she was in deep trouble and came over to me. Into a locked stable she went for two and a half hours 'time out'. I needn't have worried. The dog was unscathed and the alpacas really weren't fazed at all.



Christine Veltjens and friends

Dog and alpacas now accept each other happily and when we walk the alpacas on the halter, Kaila comes too.

EXPANDING THE HERD

In July-August we bought another two pregnant females and our herd was looking much better.

Our first birth came in November. 'BB' (short for Black Berry) was due sometime between September and December. I kept constant watch, waiting for any sign of impending birth. We had been told that an alpaca can separate from others in the herd

continued on p. 12

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THE PERUVIAN ALPACA INDUSTRY

by Chris Tuckwell

*This is the second article
on the author's recent
study tour of the
Peruvian Alpaca
Industry.*

INTRODUCTION

In this article I will attempt to summarise some physiological information about South American camelids. Some of you will know the more general information included but I am sure the recently reported data from analysis of fibre from mummified alpaca and llama will be encouraging from a perspective of commercial fibre industry development.

DESCRIPTION AND STATUS OF EXISTING CAMELIDS

Alpacas

Alpacas are the smaller of the two domestic species of camelid. They have been selected for fibre production for at least 3,000 years. During this period of selection two distinct phenotypes have evolved.

Suri Alpaca

Genetically, the Suri Alpaca type is said to be naturally dominant over the Huacaya Alpaca type. Suri Alpaca possess characteristics notably different from Huacaya Alpacas. Suri fibre is generally much finer, longer, lustrous,

softer handling and has no crimp. Their fibre is similar in appearance to that from Lincoln sheep.

Suri Alpaca are reported to have a greater follicular density than Huacaya Alpaca (Christine Wheeler 1991)

Huacaya Alpaca

Huacaya Alpaca make up more than 90% of the total Alpaca population. Their fibre is crimped and more similar in appearance to that of Corriedale sheep.

Huacaya Alpaca are bigger animals than Suris and have short curly hair that is shorter and coarser than that produced by Suris. Fleeces produced by Huacayas are generally lighter than that produced by Suris.

Huacaya fibre is said to be less elastic than Suri fibre.

Huacaya and Suri Crossbreds

Most breeders and researchers in Peru have the belief that the Suri type is dominant to the Huacaya type. Limited trial matings undertaken by Novoa and Wilson indicate that the Suri type is dominant over the Huacaya type.



Black Suri

The table below shows the number of animals and Phenotype resulting from Huacaya and Suri Crosses as described by Novoa and Wilson 1992.

Offspring Phenotype	Huacaya x Huacaya	Huacays x Suri	Suri x Suri
Suri	0	9	422
Huacaya	129	3	89
Total Crosses	129	12	511

Llamas

Llamas, the largest of the domesticated camelids, have been selectively bred for use as pack animals and meat producers and are considered by many researchers to be a descendant of the Guanaco. There are two distinct phenotypic Llama types.

Non woolly Llama (*Pelada* or *Ccara* or *Q'ara* or *Kara*).

These animals comprise an estimated 70% to 80% of the Andean Llama and have very coarse short fibre and are more typical of the beasts of burden used by the indians of pre hispanic South America. These animals have larger necks than the woolly type of Llama.

Woolly Llama (*Lanuda* or *Tapada* or *Ch'aku* or *T'awrani*)

Woolly Llamas grow fibre over the whole of their body including their extremities. Their fibre is generally uniform and soft to touch, but on average, it is coarser than Alpaca fibre.

Vicuñas

The Vicuña is the smallest of the South American Camelids and some consider it to be the foremost ancestor of the Alpaca. Vicuñas produce an under-coat of very fine fibre, 11µ to 14µ, but have never been domesticated. The animals were used by Spanish for hunting and their population reached dangerously low levels in the 1970s. They were protected in the 1970s and their population is making

a slow but steady recovery. Exportation of Vicuñas from Peru is totally banned.

Vicuña fleece is made up of an outer coat of long coarse white fibre and an inner coat of short fine cinnamon coloured fibre. Fibre from the inner coat is straight with little crimp, but only small quantities are produced, 200 to 500 gms.

Commercial use of Vicuñas is very difficult as their shy, cautious nature make them very temperamental and difficult to domesticate.

Guanacos

Guanacos are similar to Llamas, but smaller in size, and have not been domesticated. Many researchers, although not all, believe the Llama to be the domesticated form of the Guanaco

Of all the camelids, Guanaco fibre has the poorest quality in terms of suitability for textile production. Most of the fibre is very coarse and medullated.

HYBRIDS

Huarizo

The Huarizo is the most common Llama/Alpaca hybrid. It is produced by crossing a Llama male with an Alpaca female and it is probable that

its origin dates back, at least, to a time soon after Spanish invasion when camelid breeding became uncontrolled.

This hybrid is considered undesirable by people from all sections of the camelid fibre industry in Peru because of its generally coarse fleece that contains high quantities of hair fibre.

Pacovicuña

Pacovicuñas are hybrid animals that result from crossing Alpaca males with Vicuña females. Even though this hybrid has existed for many years, it is not common and is only very rarely the result of 'natural' mating.

The Pacovicuña is similar in appearance to the Vicuña although the fibre is slightly more coarse than that produced by Vicuñas. Claimed comparative advantages of Pacovicuñas to pure bred Vicuñas and Alpacas include: more easily domesticated than Vicuñas; higher reproductive rate than Alpacas; production of soft handling fleece with finer fibre diameter than Alpaca; and, significantly greater fleece production than Vicuñas.

Other hybrids

Other hybrids including the Llamovicuña and Llamovicuña-Guanaco have been produced, but there is little documentation of these crosses.

A Comparison of Camelid Biological Parameters

	Llama	Alpaca	Guanaco	Vicuña
Gestation (days)	348 (± 9)	342 to 345	345 to 360	346 to 356
Birth weight (kgs)	11.9 (± 1.6)	7 to 8	8 to 15	4 to 6
Weaning Body Weight (kgs)	45.4 (± 7.2)	25 to 35		
Adult Body Weight (kgs)	115.7 (± 22.0)	58.3 (± 9.0)	120.2 (± 12.2)	35.3 (± 1.6)
Carcass yield (%)	57 (± 9)	55.2	55	
Birth rate (%)	80	40 to 80	50	50

This table is taken from information supplied by Dr Enrique Franco.

continued on p. 14

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when about to give birth; that they often vocalise more frequently and that they strain at the dung pile. None of these symptoms became apparent.

BB actually gave birth at the end of November when we weren't watching! I discovered the wonderful event at 6.20 one morning. BB was quietly munching on grass as usual, but there by her hind legs, was a cria.

The entire household was awakened and we all stood around looking at this dear little thing (weight 10 kg with legs going all the way up to her ears!). The first of our 'Talca' crias was born, and a female at that! ('Talca' is the name of a town in Chile.)

None of our crias' births have really gone by the book. One needed to have her legs unravelled from around her neck; one mother had a pretty difficult time, and our other two crias were six and four weeks earlier than expected, but healthy nevertheless.

LOOKING AND LEARNING

Getting to know the animals well was not difficult. We took it slowly, sitting in the paddock with them, placing hay on the ground near us and then offering it by hand. Now they come to meet us.

When it's time for them to go into their night paddock they are usually ready and waiting to be moved and fed.

Dinner consists of a mixture that we make up of paca pellets, bran, oats, chaff and lucerne mix and steamed and rolled barley, (all beautifully mixed together) with supplements when necessary and some clover or lucerne hay. This dinner mix is based on a recipe given to me by Jen Smart of Kanooka Farm Alpacas and it has proved to be a winner. Our alpacas all have wonderful appetites and their condition is just right.



*Winning smiles from Brooke Veltjens and Supreme Champion Talca Arturo.
(Photograph by Ian McPherson and reproduced with the kind permission of
Mornington Leader newspaper.)*

Brooke has a great rapport with any animal and is my right-hand, (although she draws the line at cleaning up the dung piles). Rees loves them, but prefers basketball.

Watching the alpacas at dusk is a delight, especially when they play 'carousels'. We have one particularly dignified grey lady who really does prance like a carousel horse around the paddock and when the others join in, it is quite a spectacle.

Shearing was not a happy time. The alpacas found it a miserable experience and it took them three days to regain their composure. However, shearing did make them aware that shelter sheds are there to be used. A week after shearing the rain came down in buckets and the speed at which the five alpacas raced to the shelter was amazing. The sheds are now used regularly and instantly against driving rain and wind.

By April 1994 our herd had increased to ten, seven females and three males, with one particularly nice

little white male. It was quite common for people to comment, 'Oh, you must be disappointed you have a male'.

No, I can't say that we were. At that stage, we were happy that healthy crias of any sex were born.

INTO THE RING

We decided showing was an excellent way of getting to know other people and getting our name into the public arena, so we entered the Sheep and Woolcraft Show with our young white male and a young brown female. Imagine our elation when our male *Talca Arturo*, handled competently by 12-year-old Brooke, took out the Supreme Championship.

His mother, Maggie (*Purrumbete Magnolia*, but named after Maggie Thatcher because she has a will of iron and a certain look in her eye) and his father, *Purrumbete Lucky Strike*, are both solid white animals. They have produced a very good looking, superbly fleeced little man.

Our aim to become known was realised more quickly than we had thought!

ONLY THE BEST WILL DO

Our aim is to build our herd and to improve, improve and improve. This is a fleece industry and we must constantly aim for the best.

We don't believe in using a male alpaca just because we own it and can save on stud fees. We consider that to be false economy. If the male isn't good enough then a whole year has been wasted. For us, only the best will do.

From now on we hope that, at best, each generation will be an improvement on the previous one and, at worst, the same.

So, what do we want? A healthy herd of alpacas with good fleece, good conformation and who are a delight to



Rees and Brooke Veltjens with Talca Isabella and Talca Arturo at the Sheep and Woolcraft Show.

live with is definitely what we want. As to how many alpacas is enough, I really believe that once I do not know the idiosyncrasies of each of my animals, then we will have too many.

Observation is a major key to ensuring the welfare of these animals. The smallest change can be important. I believe we know our herd pretty well.

continued on p. 22

HARVEY PURE BLACK

SUPREME CHAMPION ALPACA ► 1992 ROYAL EASTER SHOW-SYDNEY

- CERTIFIED BREEDING MALE
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- NORMANDY ALPACAS, BENALLA, VICTORIA

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continued from p. 11

ALPACA FIBRE PRODUCTION

Historians estimate Alpacas have been selectively bred for fibre and meat production for at least 3,000 years.

Past and Potential Fibre Quality

Prior to Spanish conquest, knowledge of Llama and Alpaca rearing was transmitted orally. In this time camelid breeding, textile production and product redistribution was regionally controlled by the rulers of the Inca empires.

Today, it is difficult to determine the extent to which ideas of European origin have influenced traditional management practices. Details of such practices must be determined from archaeological research.

In 1992, Christine Wheeler from Camelids International and others, detailed the recent discovery of naturally well preserved 900 to 1,000 year

old Llamas and Alpacas in the Moquegua Valley of Southern Peru.

They examined fibre from six mummified Llama and five mummified Alpaca. They reported that five of the six Llamas belonged to an apparently extinct fibre breed that carried fleeces with an average fibre diameter of 22.4μ and a standard deviation of 2.3μ . This compares with reported average fibre diameters of 27.0μ ($\pm 15.6\mu$) for female and 29.1μ ($\pm 12.7\mu$) for male woolly Llamas in the Andes today.

The fleece of the sixth Llama averaged 34.8μ ($\pm 7.3\mu$) which the authors say clearly represents a second breed of Llama.

The authors note that in comparison to fleeces from pre-conquest Llamas, today's fleeces lack uniformity and fineness. The variability and coarseness of contemporary Peruvian Llamas is said to result from an increase in the hair portions or a gen-

eral coarsening of the fleece. This in turn it said to be a result of the lack of controlled breeding between the two Llama types. They also report the discovery of two probable breeds of pre-conquest Alpacas.

The fine fibre animals had an average fibre diameter of 23.6μ ($\pm 1.6\mu$) and the fleeces from the extra fine fibre animals averaged 18.0μ ($\pm 1.1\mu$). Both of these groups exhibited single uniform coats.

By comparison fibre diameter of present day Alpaca fleeces averages 31.2μ ($\pm 3.8\mu$) (Huacaya) and 26.8μ ($\pm 6.0\mu$) (Suri). The fleeces of these animals are generally coarser, have more hair, are of lower quality and probably result from hybridisation with Llama breeds following Spanish conquest.

The work demonstrates the degree to which camelid breeding programs and camelid fibre quality has been decimated since Spanish conquest.



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The magnitude of the impact of the Spanish invasion on South American Camelid populations has not been quantitatively evaluated in the past. However, work by Wheeler in 1992 leaves little doubt of the genetic deterioration of the camelid species. It is likely that the changes described by Wheeler in 1992 were made worse during the period of the land reforms in when cross breeding increased significantly.

On a more positive note the work also demonstrates the potential for, high quality, fine fibre production that exists within the South American Camelid population.

CONTEMPORARY ALPACA FIBRE PRODUCTION

Dr Maximo Gamarra has estimated that only 1% of Peru's population (no more than 250,000 people) are directly involved in Alpaca production. This small percentage of the population is

widely dispersed and so has limited political ability to encourage government support for its industry. This is despite the fact that the industry exports 90% of its production after some degree of processing compared to the 40 years to 1978, when Peru only exported raw Alpaca fibre.

In Peru approximately 3,000 tonnes of Alpaca fibre are produced annually while Bolivia produces about 250 tonnes annually. The production of Llama fibre in Peru averages between 500 and 600 tonnes annually and in Bolivia it is about 100 tonnes per year. During the 1960's coloured fibre represented approximately 70% of the total clip, while today it represents only about 10 to 15% of the clip.

Supply of fibre to processors generally decreases during the months of May to August. During this period a significant percentage of that which is supplied is 'plucked' fleece (fleece that

is pulled from the skin of dead animals). The quality of the fibre is generally poorer and in particular, coarser.

Annual alpaca production in Peru corresponds to annual shearing of 90% of the Alpaca on large company enterprises and 45% of the population in small communities where animals are generally shorn every 2 years. On average 80% of the fibre is white and 20% is coloured. Generally only 40% of the Llama population is shorn annually.

The production of Alpaca fibre has decreased significantly in Peru since the beginning of the land reforms in the 1960s (by more than 40% in the mid 1970s) and although production has increased slightly since then, there is recognition of an urgent need to increase production.

There are no price premiums paid for superior quality fibre in Peru because of current, inadequate pro-

continued on p. 32



WHERE FIBRE IS FOREMOST

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- Quality pregnant females for sale with health & pregnancy certificates. Histograms available.

Expert investment advice for new breeders

(cf. Personal Investment Monthly, June 1994, cover story)

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Ring Sandra Keane or Bill Bosley today to arrange a visit on 057 682 549 or fax 057 682 231. RMB 16244 Mansfield Road, Lima South 3673

continued from p. 5

acknowledgment that they are aware that their insurances are to be, or have been, effected with an unauthorised foreign insurer. Failure by a broker or agent to comply with this requirement is punishable by a fine and/or up to six months imprisonment. These penalties illustrate the importance that the Insurance and Superannuation

Commission attach to brokers and agents obtaining their clients' signed acknowledgments in these circumstances.

The National Insurance Brokers Association, in their August 1994 Gazette, warned brokers of their obligations to their clients following a number of reports of brokers failing to properly advise their clients that their insurances were placed with an unau-

thorised foreign insurer. In the same Gazette, the Association also warned brokers about the reappearance of facilities for insurance which is generally difficult to place (such as live-stock). Insurance is placed via a chain of intermediaries leading to the ultimate insurer who is located in a country which does not have an established insurance market. This type of facility has proven in the past to be very unreliable.

Can the person I am dealing with offer automatic cover?

A large proportion of livestock insurance is effected by brokers under what is known as a binding authority. Given to the broker by the insurer this authority enables the broker to bind cover automatically without having to refer back to the insurer, providing the insurance being requested is within the terms of his binding authority. Under a binding authority, an insurance broker is deemed to be acting as an agent for the insurer and not the insured. Using a broker with a binding authority is very convenient, especially when you require cover quickly.

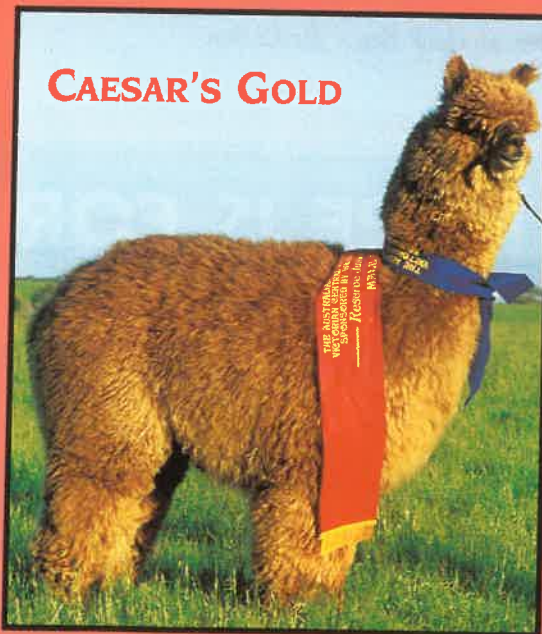
Is that person available to me outside business hours?

It is important that you have access to insurance advice outside normal business hours. Many alpaca owners, due to the rural nature of their lifestyle, often find it inconvenient to conduct their insurance business during working hours.

Insurance seems to be one of those things that many people leave until the last minute. Weekend calls from clients who have arranged to collect an animal but have forgotten to arrange insurance are very common. Other situations, such as an animal that has had a serious accident or illness, may also require you to contact your broker or agent after hours.



As one of South Australia's larger breeders we offer an extensive service and friendly advice to new owners and established breeders.



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Can I obtain copies of the insurance company's policy, proposal form and any other forms to study prior to signing?

There is nothing more exciting than sitting down to read a good livestock insurance policy. This is guaranteed to cure the worst case of insomnia. Nevertheless, it's important reading. Most all-risks livestock insurance policies cover the death of your animal as a result of an accident, sickness or disease. They should also include cover whilst in transit. Check the policy wording carefully, note policy conditions and pay special attention to policy exclusions. Make sure you seek clarification of any points on which you are unclear.

The information provided by you on the proposal form will be of paramount importance in the insurer's consideration of whether or not to insure your animal. The form must be fully completed, with all questions answered and all relevant information supplied.

What else is required of me to arrange alpaca insurance cover?

Before they provide full cover, most insurers will require written certification from a qualified veterinarian that your animal is suitable for insurance

purposes. When a cover note is issued, it is normally done on a limited basis, providing accidental death cover only, until such time as the insurer has had the opportunity to examine and accept the completed proposal form and veterinary certificate.

To insure an animal for the first time, a certificate should be no more than two weeks old. In the case of renewing insurance on an animal, the certificate must be no more than one month old.

What is the cost?

The total cost you will pay for your insurance is made up of the following:

- the insurance premium;
- state stamp duty: a percentage of the insurance premium, levied by the State in which your animal is located (this varies from State to State);
- agent's or broker's fee (if you are not dealing directly with an insurance company). Currently, the fee applicable on alpaca insurance varies from about 4% to 5%. The fee varies from time to time to reflect the costs of administration.

If you obtain a quotation in which the fee varies significantly

from the range given above, you should request an explanation.

Although insurance will, in most instances, be one of your highest recurring expenses, you should not accept the lowest quotation without satisfying yourself that the questions raised in the checklist are adequately answered.

Whilst the cost of insurance is important, if the product you have purchased does not deliver when put to the test, all the savings you may have made initially will have been wasted.

INSURING FOR AGISTMENT RISKS

Now that you are armed with some information to arrange insurance on your animals, perhaps we should spend a little time in discussing insurance to protect yourself.

If you are planning to agist other people's animals on your property, be aware of your responsibilities. The law is quite clear in relation to having other people's goods in your care and imposes upon you a duty to ensure the safekeeping of those goods.

Insurance cover is available for this risk, but most standard public liability

continued on p. 31

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MIXED MESSAGES FROM THE U.S.

by Cherie Bridges

*Some observations about
the U.S. alpaca industry
and comparisons with
our own.*

In June, I visited several alpaca breeders in the United States and attended the AOBA (Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association) conference, show and sale in Estes Park, Colorado. It was interesting to observe both the commonalities of and differences between the Australian and US industries — both in their evolutionary stages

My overall impression of the US industry is overwhelming enthusiasm and optimism, but not necessarily for the same reasons as similar optimism in Australia.

The US alpaca population is smaller than that of Australia (est. 3,500 to our 7,000) and demand for breeding stock has never been stronger.

The AOBA has orchestrated an excellent marketing campaign using colour brochures on investment and fibre, videos, alpaca-fests and a strong national public relations campaign conducted by a professional PR consultant. This campaign has led to strong

sales interest around the country, making breeders confident of the sales prospects for their future breeding.

FIBRE

What I find surprising is that the future of the industry is perceived as sale of more stock, but there is very little focus on the end product and little belief in a long-term commercial industry. I guess it makes sense that, with Australia's fibre-producing history, we would be conscious of the end product even in the embryonic stages of the industry.

However, I must say I am totally puzzled by the mixed messages emanating from the US industry on alpaca fibre.

For example, the newly released fibre brochure is a superb promotional tool. It extols the virtues of alpaca fibre and teaches about its history, uses and processing (using much information gathered from Australian sources including Melbourne College of



One of the colourful displays at the AOBA show, Estes Park, Colorado, US.

There's a difference between an Alpaca and a World Class Alpaca...



There's no doubt that all Alpacas are delightful animals. But what you are looking for is a **return on your investment**.

World Class Alpacas was the first true Alpaca Stud in Australia and our commitment is to ensuring that your Alpaca ownership is both enjoyable and profitable.

In partnership with veterinary Dr Anthony Stachowski, the leading American breeder of Alpacas, World Class Alpacas have created a **complete** program involving all aspects of animal husbandry.

This includes everything from nutrition and health to a complete breeding program designed to produce the very finest Alpacas, true to type, of excellent conformation, with dense fleece of even and consistent colour.

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Textiles). Yet I saw so many animals with three or more years of fleece, obviously uncomfortable and, in some cases, on the verge of heat stress, because the breeders did not want to shear them.

Discussions with the breeders revealed that they believed the market would not accept the look of a shorn alpaca — a 'Catch 22' because the market has been generally exposed to overfleece animals. When, for the health of the animals, breeders do shear, a popular approach is to trim the saddle fleece and leave on the head, neck, leg and tail wool. This achieves a remarkable non-farm animal appearance, which would not be out of place in a Los Angeles poodle parlour.

In preparation for shows, the animals are washed, brushed and blown extensively until all the style is taken out of the fleece. Various grooming sprays are applied to the fleece which change its handle. There are several breeders who are very conscious of the fibre, who do shear their animals and try to encourage others to do the same, but they seem to be in the minority. Hopefully, through their efforts and further education, the market will come around to seeing that alpacas are farm animals and, for their welfare, they must be shorn.

JUDGING

Breeders put a lot of effort into preparing their animals and themselves for the show ring. There were several other Australian alpaca breeders at the AOBA show and we were all quite stunned at the judging criteria.

The judge made no reference to specific fleece qualities, but constantly referred to the way animals walked or 'moved out'.

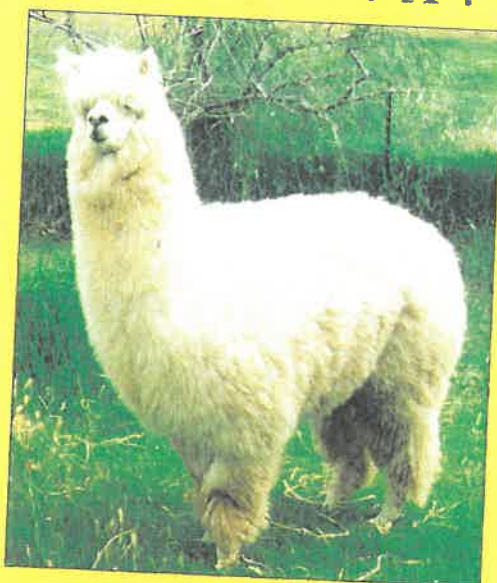
In one male class, the winner was a showy animal who carried himself

well but had a very coarse handling fleece (a couple of us guessed it at over 30 microns) and a profusion of guard hair through neck and saddle fleece.

The animal placed last in the line up was less showy but had a superb handling, dense, crimped fleece. The judge's comments on this class were that alpacas generally didn't walk out properly and the animal in first place had been put there because it moved out better than any other alpaca the judge had seen.

My comments sound critical and perhaps unfair insofar as they are based on Australian criteria for breeding and judging. The AOBA have every right to establish different criteria and focus more on the presentation of alpaca as a show animal — similarly as is done with dogs and halter classes of horses. I do feel, however, that unless the AOBA addresses long term industry goals in terms of the end use of the product, they may be heading down a dead-end street.

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The happy owners of the coarse male who moved out well have now had reaffirmed for them the object of breeding to produce a showy animal with no focus on fibre quality. They were immediately approached by other breeders with service enquiries about the male — and so the problem is perpetuated.

If the industry does want to focus in future years, as the numbers increase, on viable commercial production, they will have a long, difficult task ahead of them to breed back to quality fibre, which brings me to one of the ironies of this situation.

PERUVIANS

A protocol was developed between the US and Peru for the importation of camelids and two shipments have been imported. This represents a wonderful opportunity for US breeders to up-grade their herds and to be competitive long term on the world market.

Unfortunately, even though the best alpacas in the world are available in Peru through a few selective breeders and co-ops, many ordinary animals are also bred by the peasant farmers who do not have the same selective breeding opportunities.

It was obvious that many of these imports had been purchased from inferior breeders and they were generally disappointing to Australian breeders visiting the US. The few superior exceptions had been secured and kept by the importers and so were not on offer to other breeders.

The Peruvian stock generally had a greater density of fleece than Chilean animals, but many could be faulted. Some had conformation defects: slopey backs, poor legs or undershot jaws; others carried disappointingly high levels of guard hair and mixed coloured fibres.



Showing alpacas — US style

The few top class animals were mouth-wateringly good and could make a big difference to overall stock quality if they are offered at stud.

SHOW AND CONFERENCE

We could learn a lot from the level of presentation that the Americans achieve with their events.

The conference and related dinners, fashion parade and activities were highly professional. I was particularly envious of the calm, peaceful and positive way their AOBA Annual General Meeting proceeded.

Chairman Steve Knoblock says it has taken a few years to achieve, but I was really impressed. The meeting was non-political and supportive and took only two hours, (compare this to our day-long counterparts).

PACA-PACS KIDS CLUB

I would love to see us follow the example of the Americans in turning our seminars into events that the whole family can be part of. Julie Safley's brainchild, the Paca-Pacs Kid's club was

a superb way of involving children.

Julie has published an alpaca-related children's book full of games and activities and a part of the conference centre was set aside during the conference for children.

Volunteers were rostered on to look after them and keep them busy. Sandi Keane and I were roped in to tell 'Tall Tales and True' (and some not so true) from downunder and we had a marvellous time.

We told them of outback stations so big, it took a week to drive to the front door; of flocks of cockatoos that fly over whose conversations you can listen to if you are very quiet.

Of course, the children were way too smart for us, and wise to our outback exaggerations but they laughed anyway and kept us in stitches with their kangaroo hops and emu walks around the room.

I think we should follow Julie's idea down here. Many of the children were interested in having an Australian pen-pal and there's an invitation to Australian youngsters to link

up with a US pen-pal on page 40 of this issue

THE SAFLEYS

I want to record my appreciation of the great generosity and hospitality of the Safley family. All are wonderful ambassadors for alpacas and the industry.

Their beautiful show farm also has an alpaca country store full of top quality imported and locally produced alpaca products and features displays of spinning, weaving and felting techniques.

The Safleys work tirelessly for the industry and are keen to see more interchange between Australian and US breeders. Mike Safley has contributed a number of excellent articles to this publication.

TO THE FUTURE

If enthusiasm makes an industry, then the US has a bright future in alpacas.



Some happy US Paca-Pacs kids

The breeders I have met on this and previous trips are hospitable and enthusiastic. I hope there will be more interaction between the two countries and that our vision for the future of

alpacas and the fibre industry will positively influence theirs. I also hope that there will be increased trading between us and that we can share the benefits of a wider genetic pool. ▲

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CALL TODAY!
FREE REPORT

continued from p. 13

A POSITIVE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

I have a very positive outlook on this industry. I believe, however that many people should cast aside the 'tall poppy syndrome' and use the expertise of other successful breeders, irrespective of whether they are large or small.

We must work together as an Association in a positive way. There is no room for negativity.

Constructive ideas are crucial to our future, trivia and small-mindedness could so easily erode it.

I believe that, before too long, we will need new genetic material which, of course, will need to be imported. This should be the best available.

In the medium-term Australian breeders, too, could become exporters of breeding stock to European countries, where the alpaca herd is still

minute. This could establish a timely extension of our buoyant livestock market.

While the craft world has provided a good way of introducing alpaca fibre to the general public, in the long run the Fibre Co-operative will be a better medium to provide marketing in the commercial world.

The public can see what a beautiful animal the alpaca is. We must, however, show the public what superb end products can be manufactured from the fleece.

A GREAT LIFE AND NO REGRETS

Fifteen months on, we believe our decision to change our lifestyle has proved to have been correct and is something we will never regret.

We love the space and certainly love these inquisitive, beautiful and dignified animals.

Nick is still involved with architect-

ture and is the farmer's assistant. He says he only married me because I could pick up a full cement bag. He's now saying that this 'talent' qualifies me to do all the outside work — in return for which I am permitted to hold the title of 'farmer'. 🐼



Talca Alpacas

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The show will be held on Saturday, followed by a dinner dance set in the grounds of the magnificent Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens. The Lakeside Restaurant is adjacent to a beautiful lake which is home to many varieties of water birds and floodlit to spectacular effect in the evenings.

The dinner begins at 8pm with canapes and cocktails on the terrace and you'll have time to wander through the beautiful Japanese Garden before the three-course dinner followed by coffee and hand-made chocolates.

Dance to the great songs of the 1920s, 30s and 40s with a touch of comedy from well-known Melbourne trio, *Uncle Fatso's Dinner for Three*.

Cost per person is \$69.00 and includes champagne, spirits, wine and soft drinks.

Tickets are limited so book now by sending your cheque with a reply paid money order to

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RIRDC FUNDS ALPACA RESEARCH PROJECT

by Chris Tuckwell

The first scientific evaluation of alpaca ever to take place in Australia is about to begin.

During 1993, as project leader, I made an application to the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation requesting funding for a three year alpaca research project. I am pleased to report that recently I was advised that the corporation has agreed to fund the project.

The research team will provide progress reports on the work to the AAA membership as release of information is agreed by the RIRDC. I am sure the information generated by the project will be of great interest to all Australian alpaca breeders.

The title of the project is: 'Productivity and marketing improvement of the Alpaca fibre industry in Australia'.

CONCEPT

Large scale alpaca breeding research using institutional experimental herds is unlikely in Australia in the near future, however the industry is in the process of establishing a fibre marketing organisation. Hence, the conduct of field research projects involving a number of co-operating herds is proposed.

Data collected from collaborating herds will enable the estimation of:

- (i) initial phenotypic and genetic parameters;
- (ii) base blood trace element and vitamin levels;
- (iii) incidence of internal parasitism; and
- (iv) fully describe the range in quality and quantity of fibre to enable appropriate fibre marketing.

The estimates from the proposed research will enable the formulation of soundly based programs of

- (i) fibre marketing;
- (ii) genetic improvement;
- (iii) nutrition and health; and
- (iv) control of internal parasites.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To improve the fibre production, fibre quality and fibre characteristics of alpacas (*Lama pacos*) in the Southern Australian environment by establishing current levels and identifying areas where major gains could be made.
- To improve the nutrition and health status of alpacas in Southern Australia by determining base blood trace element and vitamin profiles that will enable the identification of deficiency situations.
- To reduce production losses due to internal parasitism by establishing the incidence of internal parasites in Southern Australia and formulating appropriate control programs.

DEVELOPMENT/EXTENSION OBJECTIVES

- To provide information on alpaca fibre quality for the establishment of an objectively based alpaca fibre marketing system.
- To assemble lots of alpaca fibre for processing and product development experiments using fibre of known and defined attributes.
- To develop a genetic improvement program for alpaca in Southern Australia based on estimates of phenotypic and genetic parameters determined by field research.

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FIRST UK LLAMA FLOCK

*From The Illustrated
London News,
Saturday, July 10, 1858*

On the preceding page we have given an Engraving of the Flock of Llamas imported by Mr Benjamin Whitehead Gee direct from Peru. Although there have been several introduced at various times into England, this is the first flock that has arrived in this country by the overland route. They are all in excellent health and condition and of ages from three weeks to three years. There are twenty-three females.

The introduction of this flock has been attended with some risk and misfortune. They started from Peru overland to Guayaquil, thence to Panama across the Isthmus to Aspinwall, and travelled on foot nearly 4000 miles. The principal mortality occurred on the Isthmus, where, from want of food, hot weather, snakes, scorpions, etc., some twenty of them died. From Aspinwall to Baltimore they were shipped in a small vessel, and from exposure two of the lambs died, but since their arrival in New York they have thrived, and are now all in good condition. On the passage to Glasgow there was one added to the flock. The whole are daily improving. The llamas stand the change of weather much better than was anticipated, and appear to be easily wintered. They prefer the coarsest herbage, either green or dry.

In Peru they are fed upon alfalfa, a very coarse kind of clover, and they might, if domesticated here, be fed upon the same, or pea haulms, bean stalks, straws, or coarse grass, such as sheep would reject.

The whole of this flock, even to a lamb five months old, are broken to halter, and are very docile and tractable; their countenances exhibit marked expressions of intelligence, the eyes are large and bright, and their

sight is keen; the colour of the fleece is generally brown and some black, there are a few of these nearly jet black. Some of the males are grey or nearly white, with white faces. The shape of the head, face, ears, and neck, is like that of a sheep, except that the neck is longer. The cloven hoofs are longer and more like claws, and the legs longer than those of the tallest sheep. The bodies, though longer, do not appear much larger than those of some of the large varieties of sheep. The anatomy is curious in this — that the thigh seems to proceed from the hip joint, with but little connection with the body.

The fleece is found from four to six inches long, fine and soft within, the coarse hairs scattered through it, and, projecting beyond the mass, it very much resembles the fleece of a black sheep; the average weight of fleeces is about ten pounds, the bellies being generally bare; and its value is greater than that of sheep wool. The excellence and durability of alpaca cloth are well known, forming material for a garment which, for hot climates, is more suitable than silk.

Before closing our remarks we cannot but express our opinion that great credit is due to the importer of these animals for the trouble and risk he has taken in introducing so valuable a flock of the llama. They have cost nearly £3000, and we hope that his exertions will not go unrewarded.

Ten of the llamas have been sold for shipment to Sydney, New South Wales, the purchasers being Messrs. Lloyd, Beilby, and Co., Royal Exchange buildings. The remainder are now at grass, and can be seen on application to Mr. B. W. Gee, at Steyne Mills, Acton. ▲

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- To develop a blood trace element and an internal parasite population profile for 'normal', healthy alpaca, to enable owners and veterinarians to accurately monitor health status.

BACKGROUND TO RIRDC PROPOSAL

Four species constitute the group of South American Camelidae. They are the Llama (*Lama glama*); the Alpaca (*Lama pacos* or *Vicugna pacos*); the Vicuna (*Vicugna vicugna*) and the Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*). Following the Spanish invasion of South America, the population of the llama and the alpaca was decimated as other forms of animal primary production expanded.

Presently, camelids in South America are restricted to the region known as the 'Altiplano' which is the

high Andean plain area extending through the countries of Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. It is generally accepted that Peru has the largest number of alpaca and produces and exports the most alpaca wool. A recent estimate of the alpaca population in South America as summarised by Nova and Wilson (1992) is: Peru 2,600,000; Bolivia 300,000; Argentina 2,000; Chile 5,000 and Equador few.

The llama and the alpaca are domesticated, while the vicuna and guanaco are wild. Traditionally, the llama is a beast of burden while the alpaca is kept for fibre and meat production. The majority of alpaca in South America are farmed in marginal areas of the Altiplano by small peasant farming community groups who own 80 per cent of the total population of domestic camelids. Within these small groups, alpaca are often

inbred and fibre production is low (1.8 kg per year). There are two types of alpaca: the suri, characterised by long, straight hair and the huacaya, which has shorter curly hair.

Alpaca fibre is regarded as a specialty fibre in the textile industry. It is sought for its softness, warmth without weight, range of natural colours and strength. It is typically blended with merino wool or other fibres for use in overcoats and high fashion knitwear (ACIL 1991). Peru produces an average of about 3.5 million kg of alpaca fibre annually, which represents 90 per cent of the total world production.

Australians first imported alpaca in 1858 but the project failed and none of the alpaca are known to have survived. More alpaca arrived in Australia in 1982 from Alaska and regular imports followed from Chile via New

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Words to live by?

Occasionally one has the pleasure of reading a paragraph in which the words, carefully chosen, flow into a rare pearl of wisdom.

Such were the words used by Eric Kawabe, of Eric Kawabe & Associates Pty Ltd. Mr Kawabe, an agricultural consultant, gave a paper on nutrition relationships at the Canberra International Alpaca Conference. Although his words relate to animals, it occurred to us that the sentiment expressed was just as appropriate to the human species.

No element essential for life processes can be considered any more important than the other essential elements. All are necessary for growth, production and reproduction of animals, and because of the complex interrelationships of all essential elements and their effect on one another, they must be maintained in relative amounts in proportion to each other — the balance.



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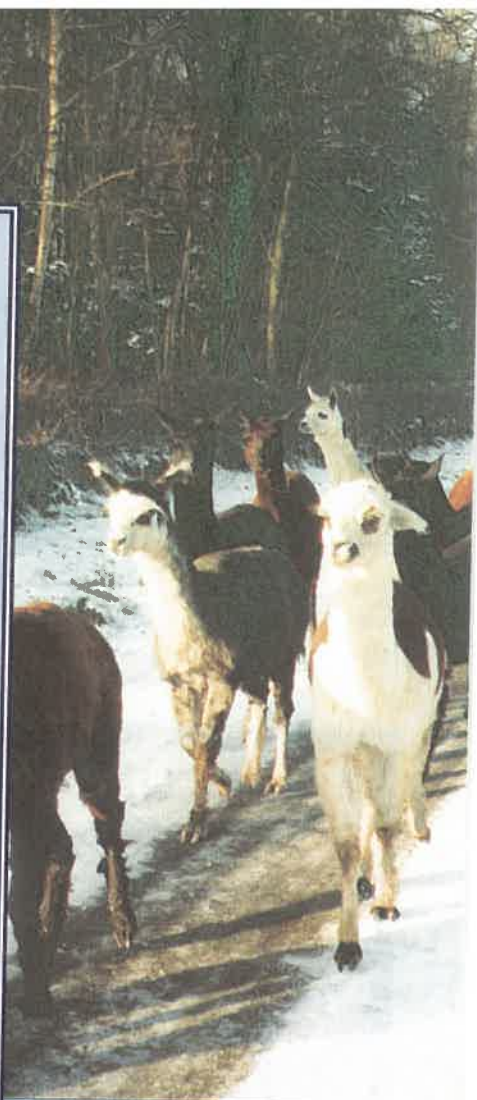
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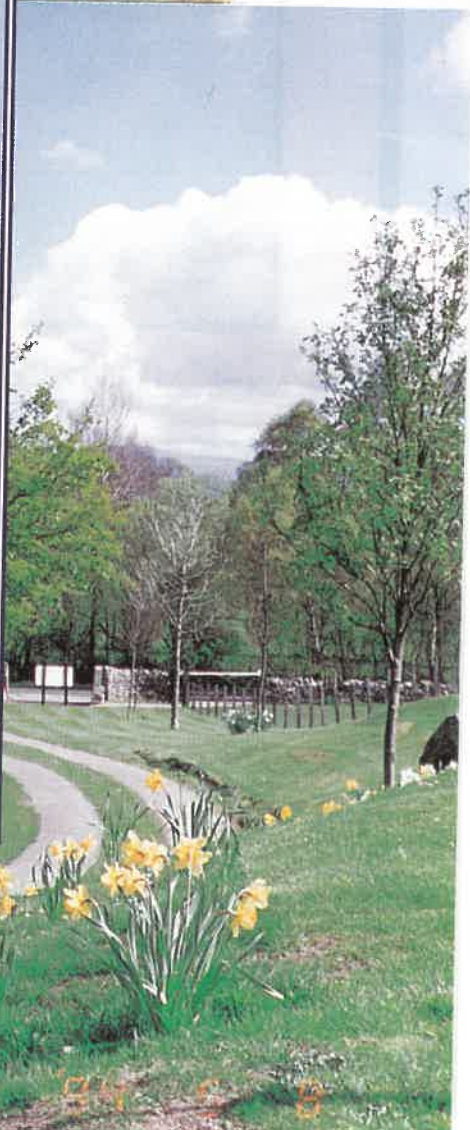
Pat Bentley, of Syke House Alpacas, UK, was a keynote speaker at the International Alpaca Industry Seminar.

Syke House is a beautiful old Cumbrian farm house set in picturesque grounds.

'Syke' is an ancient Cumbrian word for a 'ditch which dries up in the summer', named probably because of the substrata of limestone caves and channels which run through the property.

There's nothing ditchlike, you'll agree, about the Bentley property which is set high at 800 feet above sea level.

Pat has provided these photographs which capture the beauty of the countryside. The eye-catching snow scene (top right) shows her alpacas being taken to their winter feeding area.



Zealand after 1986. It is estimated there are about 6,000 alpaca (3,000 breeding females) in Australia today in 400 registered herds which produced about 10,000 kg of fibre in 1993.

Underlying most of the interest in alpaca production in Australia is the

The average fibre production of Australian animals (which originated from Chile) is approximately double that reported from Chile. The industry aims to establish a fibre marketing organisation which requires objective information on the types and qualities

The alpaca has soft, padded feet, similar to those of a camel, which are likely to have significantly less effect on soil structure and, subsequently, the environment, than do traditional domestic livestock such as sheep and cattle. When grazing harsh pastures, alpaca digestion is reported to be 30 per cent more efficient than that of sheep and alpaca water requirement is comparatively less (British Camelid Owners and Breeding Association Conference 1990). These traits appear to make alpaca more able than sheep to survive in harsh conditions and so they appear more suited for fibre production in harsh and environmentally sensitive areas of Australia.

Opportunities exist to further investigate the use of alpaca fibre for blending with other natural and synthetic fibres in the production of yarn and in the area of high fashion. There is a strong opportunity for co-ordination with Professor Leader of Geelong College of Textiles or other alpaca fibre researchers.


- performance levels of alpaca herds under Southern Australian environmental conditions;
- a knowledge of the range and qualities of alpaca fibre produced in Australia;
- phenotypic and genetic parameters for production characters of alpacas;
- effects on production levels of environmental factors such as

continued on p. 33

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continued from p. 17

insurance policies will not automatically cover you. You will need a specific policy extension known as 'goods in care, custody and control,' noting that the goods to be insured are livestock..

Many insurers will not extend a liability policy to incorporate care, custody and control of livestock. Consequently you may have to seek out a specialist insurer that will.

A public liability insurance policy offering high general cover will not cover you to the same limits on care, custody and control of livestock. Alpacas in care, custody and control cover may be restricted to a lower limit of say, \$25,000, \$50,000, or \$100,000.

If you are agisting other people's animals on your property, it is certainly an added protection if those ani-

mals have been insured by their owners. If an animal on agistment were to die, the owner's insurers would probably settle the owner's claim.

A problem would arise, however, if there was even a hint of possible negligence on your behalf. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the owner's insurers would seek to recover the amount paid out from you. This is known as the insurer's rights of subrogation.

A liability policy that has been extended to include care, custody and control of livestock, would protect you in this circumstance, providing that the total amount, claimed against you does not exceed the sub-limit set in relation to the care, custody and control cover.

Insurance is not difficult to organise. In most instances, you will be dealing through a broker or agent.

If you have done your homework properly, you will be comfortable in the knowledge that the person you have chosen is knowledgeable about the alpaca industry and has placed your business with an insurer that has a proven track record with livestock insurance.

Michael d'Apice has been involved in livestock insurance for twelve years. He is a qualified Practising Insurance Broker and Livestock Manager for Wilburtins Insurance Brokers. ▲

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Peruvian Heritage

Peruvian Chis



continued from p. 15

duction, harvesting and handling systems. Prices paid tend to be 'across the board' with premium prices for high quality fibre limited to a few very good producers. Consequently quality control at shearing is almost non-existent.

During the land reform period, fibre was sold to three main companies, including Inca Tops and Michells, which themselves had a difficult situation. Generally, there was limited demand for, and a significant stock pile of, fibre. Prices paid for fibre were low, ranging from US \$1.55 to US \$1.75 per kilogram.

In the years since the land reforms Peruvian processors and larger producers have come to realise that Alpaca fibre prices are more influenced by changes in the price of Australian wool than by changes in price of any other world fibre (Gamarra 1993). For example the Australian Wool Corporation (AWC) wool indicator price for Australian wool was 700¢/kg clean. Deregulation of the wool market, in February 1991, saw the AWC market indicator fall to 454¢/kg clean and the price of Alpaca fibre fall from about 350¢(A)/kg clean to 114 ¢(A)/kg clean.

However, despite current low prices of Australian wool, there is a growing confidence in the 'new' Peruvian Alpaca industry and in late 1993 Alpaca fibre prices showed considerable improvement which has generated some cautious optimism in the Peruvian industry. For example, in September 1993, the average price for Alpaca fibre in Peru was approximately \$US3.00/kg. In November 1993, the average price was approximately \$US7.00/kg and in December 1993 averages price were from \$US9.00 to \$US10.00 per kg and 'Baby Alpaca' was returning about \$US13.00/kg,



Peruvian Suri

(when discussing Alpaca fibre, the term 'baby Alpaca' is an indication of the fineness of the fleece).

In 1985/86 a boom in the trade of Llamas to the USA provided some breeders with a welcome new source of income. More recently, exports of Alpaca to the USA (via Bolivia) or reportedly to Australia and New Zealand (via Chile) have contributed significantly to breeder incomes.

Input into Alpaca production research has been gradually increasing in recent years, particularly with the assistance of overseas researchers. Many Alpaca producers, researchers and fibre processors in Peru are keen to ensure their industry develops. One of the major difficulties in improving the quality of camelid fibre produced facing the Peruvian Industry is that the basis of production in Peru is a large number of small and community producers that produce small quantities of fibre of variable quality and

colour. At least 70% of production is controlled by the peasant (*campesinos*) population in a myriad of small and community herds.

An estimation of property sizes made by Dr Gamarra in 1991 is tabled below.

Alpaca fibre producers are spread through inhospitable areas of the high Andes without modern methods of communication and without organisations that are able to assist producers overcome difficulties of production and commercialisation.

In this situation developing of systems of commercialisation generally benefit producers or cooperatives with large animal populations, but not the majority of producers. As a result the largest volume of fibre produced receives little benefit from the application of modern production technologies.

Mr Luis Corzo described the make-up of the Peruvian Average

Camelid producers in Peru — estimation of property sizes

Ownership type	Number of animals	Alpacas	Llamas
Large companies	5,000 to 8,000	10.8%	7.0%
Medium producers	3,000 to 4,000	8.2%	13.0%
Small and community	less than 2,000 (generally 50 to 100)	81.0%	80.0%

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management, liveweight, age and sex of animal; and

- veterinary health profiles of 'normal', healthy animals.

No scientific evaluation of alpaca has been undertaken in Australia.

METHODOLOGY

The study will be conducted on five properties in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, in co-operation and collaboration with the Victorian Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and with the support of the Australian Alpaca Association. Information relating to individual properties will be treated confidentially.

The first component of the study will involve the collection of pedigree, reproductive and production records of alpaca on the properties. Fleece characters studied will be the major determinants of fleece value, including fibre diameter, yield, strength, medullation and fleece colour. Duplicate fleece samples will be collected and stored for future research.

The second component of the study will be regular blood sampling of animals for trace element assays to establish normal ranges for healthy animals in Southern Australia.

The final component of the project will be a study of internal parasite populations and their control, in alpaca in Southern Australia.

COMPONENT 1: COLLECTION OF FLEECE QUALITY, PRODUCTION AND PEDIGREE RECORDS

Alpaca breeding research, using experimental herds, is unlikely at present due to the high price of stock. However, alpaca field data can be a potential vehicle for obtaining research results with a minimum of

expenditure and effort (Bertrand 1991). Field data collection and estimation of parameters from such data is an on-going process in established livestock industries (Bertrand 1991). This will constitute an even more important source of information in a new industry where there is no other accessible data. Some field records will be collected by the property owner with supervision from project staff. Information will be collected in a

standard format agreed to in consultation with the people involved.

With a knowledge of each animal's pedigree and given that all animals of a particular drop will be run together, appropriate statistical analysis (analysis of variance and co-variance) of the data will provide first estimates for these animals for:

- mean production levels of alpaca in Southern Australia;

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continued from p. 32

National Camelid Clip and his description is summarised in the table opposite.

ALPACA FIBRE PROCESSING

Fibre Classification and Sorting

Sorting and classification of camelid fibre has remained unchanged since processing began.

The majority of fibre purchased on farm has not been classed prior to its arrival at factories although some larger co-operatives and companies undertake some post shearing colour sorting of fleeces and, traditionally, producers have been paid a standard price on the basis of fleece weight irrespective of quality. This means that there has been no incentive for producers to increase quality of fibre production by selective breeding and to skirt and class fleeces prior to offering them for sale.

The situation is made more difficult because fibre classification is not standardised between the main processing companies. This makes the establishment of a clear relationship between price and fibre quality difficult and limits the producer's ability to obtain a price premium for high quality fibre.

Before the fibre reaches the factory it has already passed through four to five sets of hands, with each transaction adding their own percentage.

Fibre is trucked down from the Sierra in jute sacks. After arrival at the factory, fibre is weighed and sacks are emptied.

Women sorters manually separate the fleeces into colour lots, (Suri and Huacaya fleeces are sorted separately and the fibre passes through from two to four manual sortings to ensure that colours and types are correct). It is subsequently sorted into main factory

Percentage of National Clip	Description	Fibre diameter
0.01%	Baby Suri	(less than 18.0µ)
4% to 5%	Baby Alpaca	(17.0µ to 21.0µ)
3% to 4%	Suri	(18.0µ to 26.0µ)
50% to 55%	Super fine	(21.0µ to 24.0µ)
10% to 15%	Course Alpaca	(24.0µ to 32.0µ)
10% to 15%	Huarizo	(24.0µ to 28.0µ)
10%	Llama	(30.0µ to 36.0µ)
10%	Mixed Pieces	(more than 30.0µ)

qualities by length and by fineness, including Fine, Course, Llama and Huarizo, often being rebaled between sortings.

Hair from Llamas is sometimes finer than Alpaca fibre but this fine Llama fibre is almost always brittle.

Although Alpaca and Llama fibre are classified according to fibre diameter and length within colour descriptions according to fineness, Vicuña fibre is sorted according to fineness only as it has a uniform cinnamon colour.

Fineness descriptions are unique to each processing company. The absence of a standard objective method of classification of the fibre can result in errors of classification and subsequent price obtained from commercial processors of tops. It can also result in an inappropriate use of poorly classified fibre for fabric and textile production. Of all the fibre produced, fibre from multi-coloured animals (pintos and piebalds) is the least valuable.

Alpaca fibre cannot be pressed into large bales as it is not able to be compressed to the same extent as sheep wool. Normal bale weights are 100 to 120 kgs compared with about 200 kgs average for Australian wool.

Fibre Processing

The production of slivers, tops, yarns and fabrics from camelid fibres is undertaken in technologically up-to-date factories in Peru and other countries around the world.

The actual process is very similar to sheep wool processing.

Minimum volume required for industrial processing is 500 kgs and more than 70% of production is sourced from small and community producers.

It may take three or four small community producers to supply this total volume and the variability in fibre quality and colour between small producers can be significant.

Average yield of Alpaca fibre is 72%. Average losses are 7% during sorting, 7% as noils and 10% to 15% during scouring. By comparison the average yield of sheep wool in Peru is 45%.

Producers add dust and oil to fibre to increase weight (they are paid on weight only).

The variety of types and colours is so large that producers end up with a large number of small unsaleable lots that are stored until a large enough quantity is available for processing, or until it can be used for blending to produce a particular order. Blending of lots to suit buyer requirements is done in sorting sheds prior to its entry to factories.

Alpaca fibre does not regain normal moisture content after drying, therefore processed fibre can have a drier, less silky feel if some moisture is not added. The average Relative Humidity in Peru is low (13%) and in processing factories it is maintained at a predetermined higher level.

EXPORT OF ALPACA FROM PERU

Many of the contacts made in Peru including breeders, researchers, processors and government officials indicated that there is no doubt that Peruvian animals have been moved into Chile or Bolivia prior to their subsequent export to Australia and the USA as Chilean or Bolivian animals. Estimates of the percentage of Alpaca in Australia that originated in Peru range from about 30% to 90%.

A new Peruvian law (yet to be proclaimed) provides that only white Alpaca can be exported from Peru. It is widely reported that a recent shipment of coloured Suri and Huacaya from Peru to the USA was illegal.

Protocols have been developed that allow Peruvian Alpaca to enter the USA. An importing company from the USA has a monopoly control of

the Arequipa quarantine station until June 1995. The station is currently closed so importers are using the quarantine station located in the Department of Tacna.

There are opportunities to develop other quarantine stations at other locations in Peru, provided approval is given by the Ministry of Agriculture. A project would need to be financed by commercial interests as Government finance is not available.

Alpaca which were, and are, shipped to the USA originate from the area around the township of Macusani. The USA will allow these animals to be imported through the Tacna quarantine station where they will be required to stay for 60 to 90 days with a subsequent 90 day quarantine in Key West in the USA. The British sponsored veterinary laboratory in Peru (LABVETSUR) is current-



Arequipa quarantine station.

ly involved in monitoring the next shipment of Alpaca to the USA, while they are in quarantine at Tacna, testing them for diseases as required by the USA authorities. Diseases of concern to authorities in the USA are:

- tuberculosis (comparative cervical);
- brucellosis;
- blue tongue;
- FMD;
- trichonomiasis

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JUDGING ALPACAS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

by Kelvin Maude

*An Australian Alpaca
Association accredited
A-grade judge
gives the inside story
on judging alpacas.*

The task sounds simple enough, pick the best alpaca in the line-up. And, for the armchair judge, it is that simple.

However, a show ribbon won gives credibility to that animal and a marketing advantage to its stud. A show ribbon incorrectly awarded is unjust to the rightful winner and damaging to the career of the judge. These issues weigh heavily, so that all care needs to be taken and all issues addressed before a decision is made.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

As in the sale ring and in the paddock, first indications of animal quality are visual. It's surprising how often initial visual assessments correlate directly to eventual class placing.

Overall presence and carriage

This is an assessment of the way the animal moves, its style and how proud it looks. This is difficult to quantify: an animal that walks tall and looks alert will catch the eye of the judge.

Leg structure and movement

Each exhibit should be scrutinised for possible leg faults. These are the most common leg faults.

Cow Hocked. From the rear, the hocks of the animal are too close together and may actually rub as a result. The correct animal will have straight and parallel legs when viewed from behind.

Sickle Hocked. From the side, there is a near vertical line from the hock down to the foot. The foot should rest (when the animal is standing) in a vertical line below the hip. A sickle hocked animal puts additional strain on the back.

Knock Knees. This is a difficult area to assess as only a few animals are absolutely correct. It is accepted that a degree of knock knees is natural in the alpaca. Therefore, if an animal moves comfortably and soundly when walking toward the judge, despite any slight deviation from straight front legs, this should be acceptable.

Back structure

The back line of the alpaca should be slightly convex. One of the distinguishing features of the alpaca from the llama is the absence of a dead flat backline. The tail set of the animal should be slightly lower than that of other livestock, as the back falls to the rump.

The backline should be symmetrical. A falling-away backline from the shoulders or an over-height rump are considered faults. Obviously a sway back animal (concave) would be penalised.

Barrel length

The alpaca is a nicely proportioned animal. Any obvious over-length of the barrel should be criticised. Again, this is difficult to quantify and falls under the dubious area of 'correct alpaca type'. Regardless of age or size, any suspicion of over-length in relation to other exhibits should be downgraded.

Neck set and neck length

Neck set is a description of how the base of the neck is attached to the body. Taking into consideration the line of the back, the neck should appear to rise directly from the wither. Any dipping down from the wither, or

low neck set should be downgraded.

Neck length is another grey area of the alpaca conformation. Again, it is a matter of proportion and should not look too long or too short.

Head shape

The shape of the alpaca head viewed from the side should be basically triangular. The line of the jaw and the line of the nose should form a neat triangle and not be nearing parallel. Alpacas with near-parallel jaw and nose lines tend to be too long in the nose. A roman nose should also be downgraded.

Ear length and shape

Long ears or short ears should be downgraded. Any deviation from what is generally accepted as normal should be considered negatively by the judge.

The shape of the ear has been described as spear-like and, when alerted, each should stand parallel and vertical.

Fleece coverage and density

The extent of head cover and leg cover will catch the eye of the judge. That elusive animal called the 'ideal alpaca' carries head cover including a full bonnet and cheek wool (mutton chops). Similarly, the existence of wool on the lower legs of the animal is desirable.

Apparent density and weight of the fleece, obvious as the animal moves, will form part of the judge's initial opinion of the exhibit's fleece characteristics.

INSPECTION FOR DEFECTS

Communication between the judges and the chief steward prior to judging can take a lot of pressure off the judge in the ring. The preliminary inspection of all exhibits by the stewards should uncover any defects and a defective animal should be disquali-

fied. Therefore, in the show ring, the judge need only 'double check' rather than perform a thorough examination.

Teeth and jaw set

The judge will check every exhibit's mouth for correct growth of teeth and to ascertain the approximate age of the

animal. Overshot and undershot jaws should be noted and the animal graded accordingly.

Ears fused

Fused ears, whether the tip or more, is a disqualifiable defect and considered to be a genetic fault with alpacas. Fused ears can be as subtle as the

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apparent double tip of the ear. The judge should check in case the stewards missed it prior to judging.

Tail defects

The absence of a tail or a twisted tail is regarded as a disqualifiable defect. The judge will discover any variation from normal when inspecting the genitals of the exhibit.

Female genitals

Any abnormality in the shape of the vagina will be penalised. This refers generally to a non-vertical and non-symmetrical structure.

Male genitals

A male possessing only one testicle will be disqualified. Testicles of dissimilar size or which are small in size in relation to the age of the male will be downgraded.

Fused toes

Where the two toenails growing from the front of the pad are connected (appearing to be one nail) the exhibit will be disqualified. Again, the presence of fused toenails should be identified in the preliminary scrutineering by stewards.

DISQUALIFICATION IN THE RING

The discovery of a disqualifiable defect in the show ring will result in the judging placing the animal down from the line-up. The animal and handler will not be banished from the ring or humiliated and an attempt should be made to discuss the issue with the owner once judging is complete.

FLEECE INSPECTION

Guard hair

The visual presence of guard hair (a stronger hair-like fibre) will be scrutinised and assessed relative to other exhibits. A minimal presence of guard hair gives an exhibit an advantage in



final placings. The judge has to take into account the extent of this fibre through the fleece of the animal.

Fleece sampling

The judge will make both a visual and handle assessment of the exhibit's fleece over three or four sites. The factors to be judged are:

1. Character and style

Basically, this refers to the existence and extent of crimp (defined wave) and crinkle in any site inspected.

The better alpacas will carry a defined crimp from the skin to the tip, similar to a merino sheep. A good animal will carry a crinkle, which is some waviness in most individual fibres.

2. Handle

The judge will rub the sample between the fingers and thumb to assess the softness and moisture content of the fibre. A healthy exhibit carries a visual lustre which can be supported by a slightly greasy feel. This indicates suppleness and, usually, softness.

3. Density

Scrunching the fibre in the fist will give the judge an assessment of density. This translates into potential production rates for the exhibit.

An alpaca that will obviously produce a high fleece weight per year is desirable and noted favourably.

4. Colour consistency

A solid colour alpaca should not carry foreign coloured fibres within the fleece. For example, a black animal with some white fibre within the fleece is downgraded. Grey animals are the exception. However, the grey should also be a consistent shade throughout the fleece.

Overall consistency

The above four criteria should have minimal variation over the three or four sites. If an exhibit has an excellent mid-side sample, but handles poorly on the shoulder and rump, it will be downgraded.

The importance of fleece

The Australian alpaca industry is primarily a fibre-producing industry. Relentless focus should be kept on favourable fleece characteristics to elevate the Australian industry to premium production status world wide.

WEIGHTING THE CHARACTERISTICS

In February 1992, the Australian Alpaca Association held a judging

school. This was to discuss and establishing consistency when judging alpacas in Australia.

Three areas were addressed and the following weightings agreed to:

<i>Conformation</i>	
structure, type, size	30%
<i>Fleece</i>	
coverage, density, style, etc	65%
<i>Presentation</i>	
exhibit and handler	5%

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR SHOWING

The judge has only a few moments to assess any one exhibit. The owner (prior to the show) and the handler (in the show ring) should give the judge every opportunity to look favourably on their exhibit. The following should be considered for showing alpacas.

Halter training

Alpaca showing has evolved into led classes. There is a difference between an animal wearing a halter and a properly halter-trained alpaca. It is difficult for a judge to assess conformation and gait if the exhibit is being dragged or pushed around the ring. Poorly trained animals also detract from the public spectacle of the event.

Grooming

At the judging school it was agreed that excessive preparation (washing and brushing) would be discouraged. It is difficult for a judge to assess adequately whether an animal is under-fleeced or over-fleeced if all its fleece character has been removed by excessive washing and brushing.

Therefore, clean the legs and face and remove by hand or blower most vegetable and dirt matter from the

exterior of the fleece. The judge wants to see the animal in clean, near paddock condition.

Handler presentation

The judge is normally formally dressed and there is usually a large public gallery. The handler should, as a courtesy to both the public image of the industry and to the judge, dress accordingly.

The white dust coats now being worn go a long way to achieving this. Most other livestock industries appear to have an acceptable minimum dress code. A similar policy adopted by the alpaca industry would be a welcome addition.

Ringcraft

This is a commonsense attitude by the handler to promoting his or her exhibit

continued on p. 47

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INTERNATIONAL ALPACA SEMINAR SUCCESS

by Dougal Macdonald

The seminar attracted an enthusiastic audience for its broad range of stimulating sessions. Dougal Macdonald records some of the highlights.

EXCLUSIVE — BUT NOT YET ELITE

Of all the advice given to the 300 participants at the 1994 International Alpaca Seminar (Australian National University, July 9/10) probably the most important in terms of the future of the industry came from Peter Sporle, a principal of Meskills Woolstore of Kyneton, Victoria.

Peter's paper was delivered with comic skill and timing that would almost get him a gig in a comedy show (if he ever decided to give up the fibre industry).

It began with a well-reasoned repudiation of the conventional wisdom that alpaca fibre is an elite natural fibre of itself. Peter told participants that, from a processor's perspective, alpaca may well be an exclusive fibre on availability (around 4,000 tonnes annual production compared to, say, wool at 1.9 million tonnes). However, an elite natural fibre is that which has the least amount of variation within the parameters considered essential for a particular market. If alpaca can satisfy that criterion, it is elite. But elitiness is not automatic and achieving it will take a lot of careful breeding.

Peter told his listeners that a processor will consider a fibre to be elite (whatever its intrinsic properties: colour, handle, thermal qualities, resistance to abrasion and to pilling) if it has a low co-efficient of variation of micron (CV). Once the measurement data are available from Optical Fibre Diameter Analysis (OFDA), calculating the CV involves some relatively simple maths. Reports provided by the

Melbourne College of Textiles include the CV for a given sample along with the histogram of micron frequencies.

Peter's message for alpaca growers is that micron alone is less important than the variation of micron within the fleece. Other factors that processors take into account are fibre length (important in premium worsted yarns which need minimum variation of length and diameter) and tensile strength. Broad fibre does not necessarily have greater tensile strength than fine fibre.

FIBRE — THE WAY TO GO

Peter's paper offered three suggestions that alpaca breeders, in the process of creating a new Australian fibre industry, should take very closely to heart. They point the way for our industry.

- 1 Pool all lower grade fibre, regardless of colour, and donate it to a research and development program in Australia aimed at commercialisation of an alpaca knitting yarn.
- 2 Make it mandatory to submit fleece samples from all males used for breeding to OFDA and store the results in the National Alpaca Recording Scheme.
- 3 Make the Melbourne College of Textiles Wool and Fibre Testing Laboratory the recommended testing house of AAA.

Peter's paper is printed in the 1994 Proceedings of the Seminar, a compilation of the papers presented and a very sound investment for any alpaca fancier who hasn't already got a copy (\$20 from AAA Head Office).

Although, reading Peter from the pages is not half as entertaining as was hearing him speak.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Seminar covered a wide range of alpaca topics.

Dr Brad Smith spoke about interaction of Vitamin D, calcium and phosphorus in the development of rickets and Cherie Bridges summarised basic husbandry practices.

Neale Towers spoke on the microbiology of facial eczema and Eric Kawabe dealt with the relationship between soil, pasture and animal nutrition.

George Davis reviewed four years of research on alpacas at Tara Hill High Country Research Station in New Zealand.

Chris Tuckwell talked about his RIRDEC-sponsored visit to study the alpaca industry in Peru. (See story page 10.)

Ewen McMillan gave a 'how-to-do-it' on neonatal care and George Davis spoke on alpaca reproductive performance in the NZ South Island High Country.

Gray Morgan, in his session on classifying fibre, pointed out that the critical determining time for fibre production is the four months before birth.

At this stage, pregnant females should get extra nutrition to stimulate follicle development and a high secondary to primary follicle ratio in the foetus for fleece density in the adult.

On the practical side, Kelvin Maude showed a gathering of new owners and some who had been in the alpaca game for a while (in our industry, this means more than a year) what judges look for at shows (or what they should be looking for). (*This excellent paper is also reproduced in this issue, see page 36.*)

HARD WORK AND GOOD ENTERTAINMENT

It wasn't all hard slog, absorbing information in the lecture theatres. On Registration Night, there were opportunities for networking and doing deals.

The Saturday night dinner dance at the High Court Cafe on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin was a gala affair, much enlivened by a marvellous keynote address by visiting millionaire American grain dealer and alpaca owner, Buck W. MacMillan.

He proved to be very well informed, not only about alpacas and the alpaca industry generally, but also about what was happening here in Australia and in the Association.

Displaying a superb raconteurial talent as well as depth of knowledge, Buck sent the gathering into gales of laughter and received a standing ovation.

Andalana Alpaca Farm

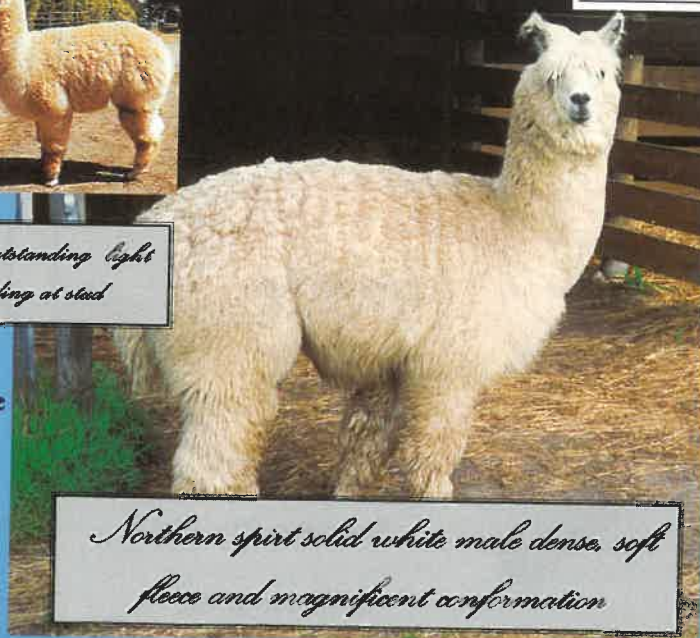
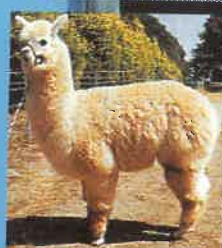
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His subsequent metamorphosis into well-known actor and TV Great Debate moderator, Campbell McComas, was nothing short of extraordinary. We hope he will come again or, if he can't, send another friend to the next Seminar.

VETERINARY SEMINAR

The Veterinary Seminar on 10/11 July drew about 140 participants to hear a range of lectures and demonstrations.

Ewen McMillan spoke about laparoscopy as a tool in investigating infertility.

Brad Smith expanded on his session at the Industry Seminar about Vitamin A, calcium and phosphorus in the development of rickets. Brad, who is from the University of Oregon, described winter conditions in his area where, although not excessively cold, it is almost constantly overcast causing animals to receive insufficient sunlight

to protect them against Vitamin A deficiency. Similar problems have been observed during sea transport of alpacas below deck.

Brad also gave sessions on internal medicine and haematology, ranging over topics as diverse as failure of passive transfer of immunity, parasite control, viral diseases, megaesophagus, failure to thrive and management of reproductive problems.

Nigel Perkins' session on ultrasonography used a projector supplied by the ANU's Information Resources Unit to display scans on a large screen visible to all participants.

Neal Towers, who early in the seminar admitted he had never seen an alpaca, talked on the blood enzymes and histology of facial eczema, about which he knows a great deal. After Kelvin Maude's judging session, Neale overcame his lack of contact with alpacas and even got to hug one.

Proceedings of the Veterinary Seminar contains the complete set of papers and is available from AAA Head Office for \$20.

WELL DONE!

The management of the Seminar did great credit to AAA Head Office staff, Jenny Jones and Jo Rothke and to Jenny's husband who regularly appears to give a hand at major AAA events, usually wearing a badge that proclaims him *IAN JONES (Slave)*. All worked like galley slaves making sure everything went smoothly and resolving those minor crises of which no event as big as the Seminar is ever free.

Members of Southern NSW Region living in and near Canberra helped to 'mind' the presenters. This did not necessarily extend to accompanying them to the Casino, where one well-known AAA member reportedly had a few decent wins.

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And who was the woman who forgot to recover the keys to her car from friends to whom she had lent it to run some errands? By the time her keys arrived back, the University had resurfaced the car park — all but for the spot under her car!

And what, may the reader ask, about the weather? It took guts to conduct a Seminar in Canberra in July, but the weather was sunny, even mild, for most of the time, making a mockery of Canberrans' advice to people coming by car to be sure to winterise their radiators.

Mind you, three days after the Seminar ended, frost was being scraped from car windscreens and, a few days later, snow.

Dougal Macdonald is president of Southern NSW Region, a member of AAA National Committee and writes for various journals. ▲

Formation of Australian Camelid Veterinary Network announced

The formation of the Australian Camelid Veterinary Network (ACVN) was announced by Adele Feakes at the International Alpaca Seminar.

This is welcome news for all breeders.

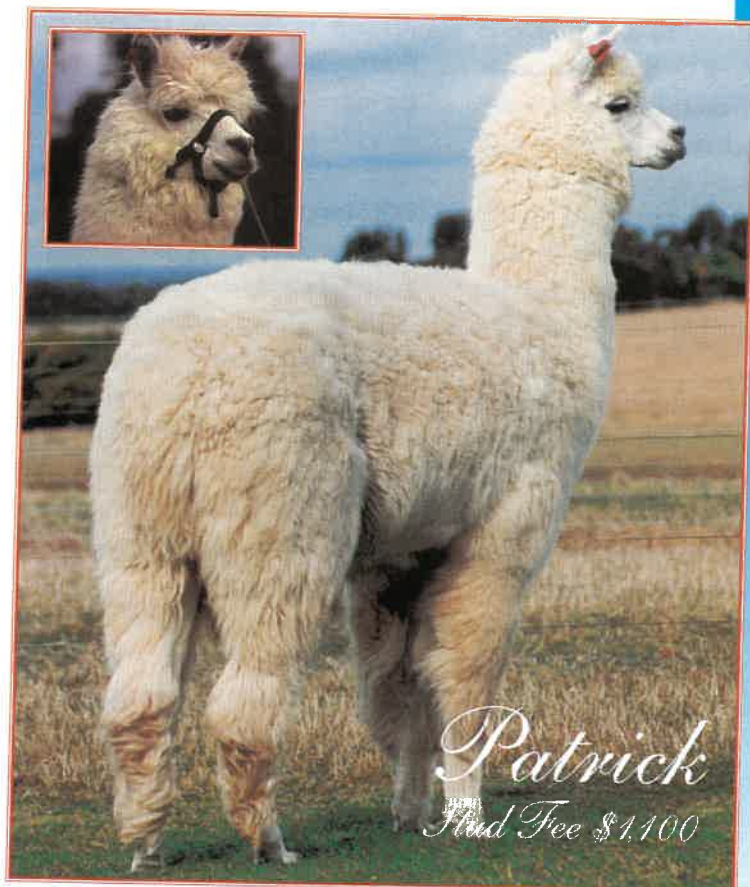
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A NEOPHYTE AT THE MUDGEES SALE

*Remember your first time?
A 'new chum' tells
about his introduction
to alpaca people*

'What say we go to Mudgee next weekend,' said She With Awesome Power. When SWAP asks a seemingly innocuous question with a clever little smile you know it's time to listen carefully.

'What for?' I fended cleverly, seeing all those boutique vineyards in my mind's eye.

'The alpaca sale,' she replied, seeing all those exciting antique shops in her mind's eye.

'Do we need alpacas?' I asked with too much innocence.

'You've been poring over back issues of *Alpacas Australia* for weeks and running up untold phone bills,' she chided. 'Why don't we just go and see what it's all about?'

The rutted road to our front gate looked even worse by headlight at five o'clock in the morning and I wondered how much it would take to turn our well-worn 34 acres into a show-piece alpaca stud. I couldn't decide whether the tunnel of light in the high beam promised the gate to glory or the road to ruin, but I had my cheque book anyway.

We were negotiating the 'clock tower' circle at Mudgee at a sniff past 10am and rolling into the Country Comfort grounds a few minutes later. A dynamo with the unlikely name of Aloha organised us into a workshop group. SWAP drifted off to finger the swatches of fibre and feel the hand-made knitwear that was laid out for inspection.

I've got to say that alpaca people are the friendliest you could ever find. As soon as they realise you don't know too much about the business, they

make it their business to fill you up with facts, fables, myths and maybes. You can go into information overload quicker than you can spell *hembra*.

Turning complete strangers into folksy confidantes was not difficult, especially among the latecomers who shuffled guiltily into the back row of the workshop groups and fought a determined rearguard action with the difficult acoustics. 'What did he say? Twenty micron?' whispered to your neighbour.

Dr Peter Howe told us about fibre evaluation and objective measurement of fibre characteristics. He made the point that a low variability of fibre diameter (CV or coefficient of variation) was equally as important as its measure of fineness. He also warned that while selective breeding and better nutrition might yield higher fleece weights, it could also result in coarser fibre. Fleece samples, histograms and microscopes were on display.

After lunch, we sat outside in a mild gale and heard Dr Nigel Perkins address alpaca breeding and husbandry (spousery?) almost non-stop for two hours. SWAP and I listened, astonished at the peculiarities of this strange animal and the clever approaches that had been developed to take advantage of its unusual reproductive biology.

The final session was a special for the spinner/weaver set. Ms Eve Rashleigh, our workshop leader, had spent yonks teaching in TAFE and what she didn't know about fibre wasn't worth knowing. She also knew her history. Did you know that a herd of 256 alpaca/llamas was unloaded at

Sydney in 1858 and run at Centennial Park?

Doug Winter of Coonabarabran told us about a brilliant new machine that he had built to remove guard hair and coarse fibre from fleeces. He showed several treated alpaca fleeces and the material that had been removed. Blueprints were available for \$2,500 and he said it might cost a further \$6,000 (\$3,000 if you're handy in the workshop) to build the machine. I thought it might be an ideal venture for a co-op of small-scale farmers.

SWAP and I decided to paint Mudgee-town red rather than attend the formal dinner. We window-shopped antiques before going off to dinner at a delightful restaurant under the vines. With half a dozen other alpaca people we wined and dined like royalty and exchanged price 'guesstimates' for the next day's auction.

There was, of course, long and earnest discussion of how to evaluate the *machos* and what one should pay for an older pregnant Chilean girl. Let me tell you, the waitress' eyes were out on stalks.

Auction day delivered bright and sunny weather — just sufficient encouragement to explore one or two or three vineyards before Inspection Time at 11.30. The 42 lots were in pens inside a big marquee and aspiring buyers moved through in an orderly crush. Owners were on standby to field the inevitable queries. Two vendors even gave me their reserve.

There was a broad line of offerings on display, presumably to suit any buyer. The three-in-one deals, I was told, would fetch in the mid-30s, the cutesy crias would go for high teens and fleece-factory wethers could be had for 'a grand or so'. Nobody was

too keen on predicting the males.

A neophyte is tempted to do more than look at the animals in a tent full of alpacas, vendors and ambitious owners. Eavesdropping is good fun too!

"Oh, isn't she just beautiful!"

"I've just got to have that one."

"What a cute little face."

"Just look at that lovely colour!"

Alas, only one pen showed a fibre-test histogram à la Dr Howe.

The saddest story of the day belonged to the lady vendor whose five-day-old cria had died the day before the auction from pneumonia following an impacted bowel problem. Its dam, a fine old dignified Chilean, looked sad, too; she stood quietly, ignoring the milling crowd.

Not so Peppimenarti Sam, a big black male, who was bent on showing

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continued from p. 33

the effects of environmental factors (e.g. animal age) on production characteristics; phenotypic and production parameters for production characteristics of alpaca; and genetic parameters for alpaca (e.g. heritabilities and correlations).

Fleeces collected on farm will be weighed and sampled; individual animal body weights will be recorded. All samples will be tested for major determinants of fleece value and a random sample of fleeces will be tested for strength and medullation.

Information on fibre quality will help describe quality attributes of Australian alpaca fibre and, in association with the industry, a proposed market/grading system will be developed.

Fleece lot building will be co-ordinated to assist Professor Leader or other alpaca fibre processing researchers. Lot characteristics will represent fleece types typical of Australian alpaca as well as types with known desirable and undesirable characteristics, this work is a necessary precursor to any processing.

COMPONENT 2: BLOOD TRACE ELEMENT ESSAY

Normal blood trace element and vitamin ranges for alpacas in Southern Australia are not known. These data are available for other commercial species of livestock. They are invaluable in determining the need for mineral supplementation of animals to maintain health and productivity, and to assist in the determination of other causes of ill health.

Research in the USA indicates that llamas have a 'super sensitivity' to some trace elements so requirements and supplementation must be considered very carefully (Sharpnack 1992). It is reasonable to assume, especially with anecdotal evidence in Australia, that a similar situation exists with alpaca.

Other unique problems are also appearing, particularly the Vitamin D deficiency syndrome that occurs during extended periods of overcast weather in some area. This is said to be due to a combination of an inefficient ability to synthesise Vitamin D from the sun and phosphorus deficiency.

Blood samples will be taken from randomly selected cria, pregnant females and dry adults (30 animals each year) four times in each of three



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years. The blood samples will be submitted to a veterinary laboratory for mineral, trace element and Vitamins E, B12 and D assays.

COMPONENT 3: THE INTERNAL PARASITE STUDY

Data from Peru indicate that South American Camelids are affected by species specific parasites, and that they

can maintain debilitating populations of internal parasites more commonly associated with sheep and cattle. Preliminary evidence in Australia also suggests that alpaca are susceptible to some horse parasites (particularly *strongyloides* sp). Little is known of the degree of parasitic infection in alpaca in Australia, or of ideal treatment regimes.

Faecal samples collected from animals within defined age groups and from selected management regimes, will be submitted to a veterinary laboratory for identification and subsequent quantification of parasite burdens.

Chris Tuckwell is Livestock Officer, Developing Industries, with the South Australian Department of Agriculture.

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to its best advantage when in the show ring. A competent handler will walk the animal confidently, holding its head appropriately, giving the judge the best possible chance of assessing it fairly.

When in the line-up during fleece inspection, the handler should continue to hold the alpaca steady, knowing that the judge may visually refer back to that exhibit at any stage of the judging.

Ringcraft and handler presentation can make the difference in placings between two very similar exhibits, simply because the judge gets a more complete look at the properly handled alpaca.

THE JUDGE'S DILEMMA — THERE IS NO PERFECT ALPACA

The dilemma for the judge in the show ring is very similar to that of the purchaser in the sale ring. There is no perfect alpaca and each animal varies from the ideal.

Using the individual criteria outlined above, there are numerous factors to be taken into account when awarding placings in any class.

When in doubt, always go back to the basics. The industry is a fibre-producing one and when a dilemma presents itself, it is the consistently fleeced and heavily fleeced animal that must take the honours.



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'Persie'



'Pretty Boy' — Co-owned by N. & M. Giles



continued from p. 45

onlookers both his state of maturity and his inclination. Sam was squirming low to the ground, ogling his neighbour in the next pen and crooning a peculiar bubbling tune from the back of his throat. He grew ever more desperate as the object of his desire paid no attention.

The auction itself called for the relocation of everyone from marquee to ballroom. About 500 people or so watched and/or took part in the proceedings. Each lot was led in by *East Station Jackie Kain*, a pretty little dark brown cria who halter-led like a dream. The Elders livestock auctioneer had never handled alpacas before but, nevertheless, kept proceedings moving along with smart one-liners.

There seemed to be a smidgen of buyer reluctance at first, two of the

first four lots being passed in for referral. Then the tempo became more fluid and the hammer fell regularly to occasional squeals of delight. SWAP jostled and jabbed me with her elbow from time to time and I finished up with a score of two second bids and one passed in by the end of the sale. But no alpacas.

However, I did finish up with a good record of the outcomes. The sale

made \$445,450 in all. Most people I eavesdropped afterwards thought prices were somewhat lower than expected except for those cute little female crias.

The table summarises the results of the proceedings as they happened on the auction floor. There could well have been successful negotiations behind the scenes after the auction that are not covered in the table. ▲

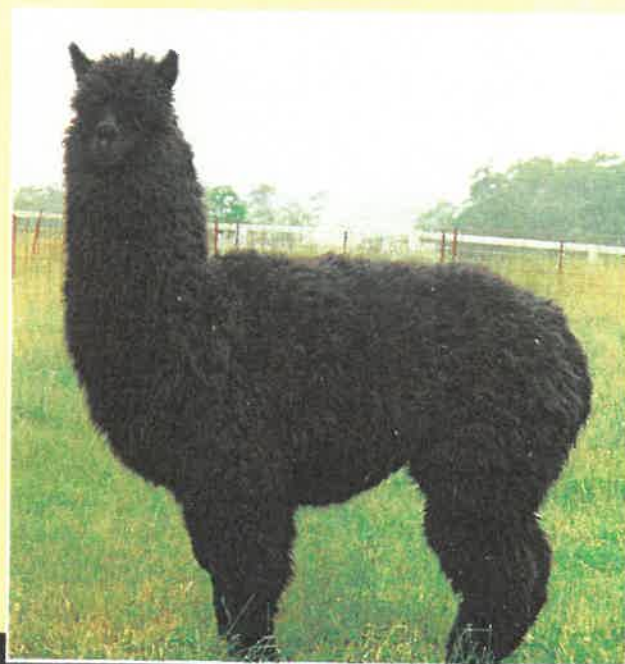
Category	No.	Sold \$'000	Range \$'000	Ave	Passed \$'000	Range \$'000	Ave
Preg F, F cria	4	3	31 - 24	26	1	-	27
Preg F, M cria	4	3	23 - 19	21.5	1	-	20
Preg F, Aust	9	8	30 - 14	21.9	1	-	16
Preg F, Chile	2	2	15.5 - 15	15.25	-	-	-
Cria F	4	4	20 - 15.5	17.5	-	-	-
Male, mature	5	3	4.5 - 3.75	4.08	2	17 - 2	9.5
Male, immature	7	1	-	10	6	11 - 1	8.7
Wether	7	4	1.4 - 0.7	1.05	3	1.4 - 0.9	1.2

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Hey Kids!

Would you like to have a pen-pal in America?

A young alpaca lover sent this letter to Philip and Judith Street, following an article written about their animals in Good Weekend on August 20. We thought you'd enjoy reading it, too.

Grenfell NSW 2810
20.8.94

Dear Mr and Mrs Street,

I read the article in today's *Good Weekend* about your alpacas.

I have always loved alpacas ever since I saw them in *Talk To The Animals*.

I have saved up \$186.65 and I was wondering if it would be possible to buy from you a second hand alpaca, please. As I want it for loving and not for its fur, one with bad fur would be fine. It could be old and even a bit sick, I would look after it. It wouldn't matter if it was a boy or a girl and what colour doesn't matter either.

I live in the country, so we have plenty of space for one to run around and we have dogs and cats for it to play with.

I have told my Mother that I was writting (sic) this letter. I am eleven years old.

Yours sincerely
Anneke W

P.S. Would the postage for an alpaca be very much?

There are lots of kids in the 'Paca-Pacs Kids Club' in America who are looking for pen-pals in Australia.

If you are interested, write to me and tell me your name, age, address and some of the things you are interested in.

I will pass them on to Julie Safley in America who runs the Paca Pacs

Kids Club and she will match you up with someone who would like to write to you.

Who knows? You might get to visit your pen-pal in America some day.

Write to

Cherie Bridges
RMB 4820
Glenlyon Vic 3461

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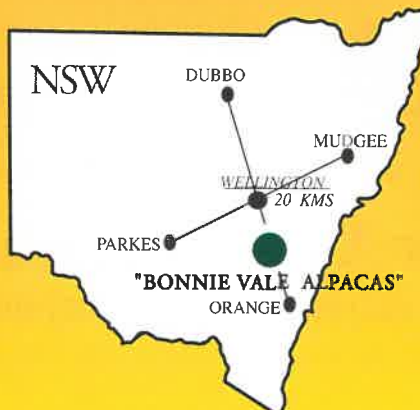
FOUNDATION AAA MEMBERS

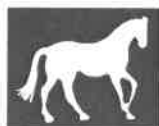
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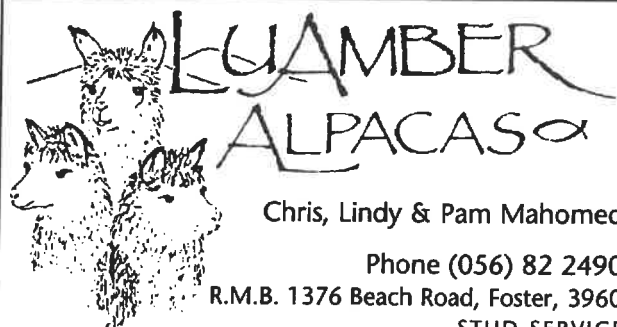
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ADVERTISING
DEADLINE

Advertisers please note that the deadline for submission of advertising material for the Eleventh edition of *Alpacas Australia* is 15 January 1995.

For bookings and information on advertising rates, please contact Joy Vellios during business hours, at PTW Desktop & Design*

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Fax (03) 428 2728.

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Gremlins!

We got attacked by gremlins — twice — in the last issue.

First, they substituted the photo-taker in a Paca Pic 'Ssh! maybe they won't notice us'. This was actually taken by Wendy Beer, an alpaca admirer and not Mike Dingdale. Nor were they Jude Anderson's alpacas!

The cartoon on page 43 was drawn by Cliff Rodda but nobody would have known that because no acknowledgement was given.

To all and sundry, our abject apologies. We hope we've got the gremlins onder contrull thiss timme!

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Paca Pics . . . Paca Pics



On your marks, get set, go!

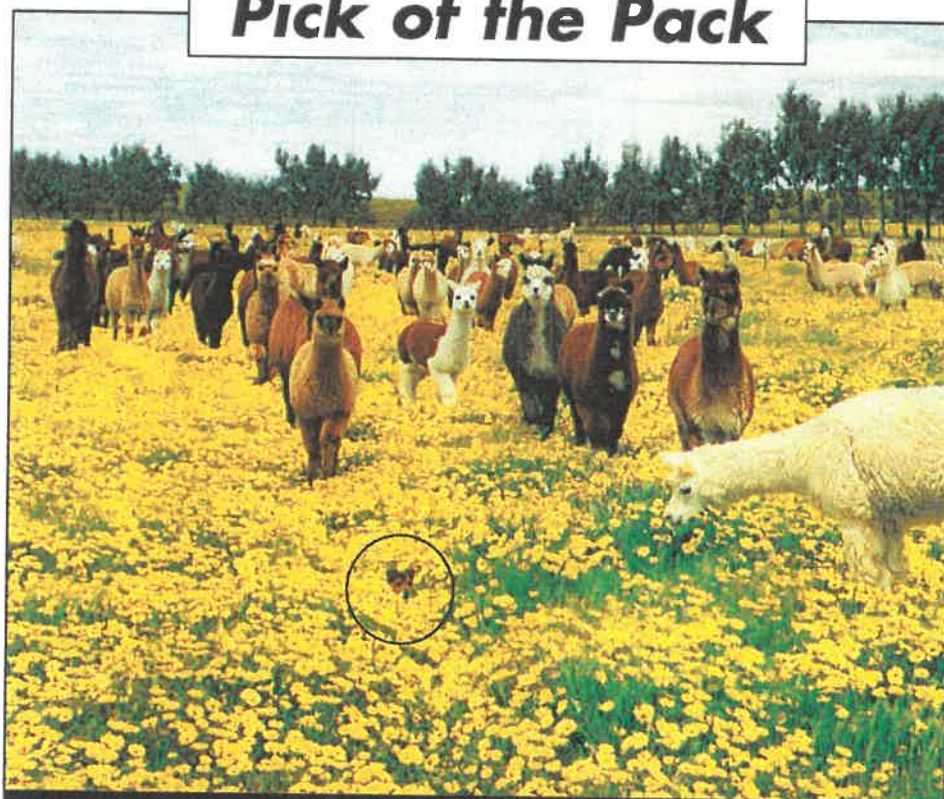
Pic. by Jenny Jackson, Banksia Park Alpaca Stud



Hey girls – seen the new stud
he's put in with us?

Pic. by Cherie Bridges

Pick of the Pack



"Spot the Dog"

Pic. by Mark Jefferis, 4 Mile Alpaca Stud

cs . . . Paca Pics . . .

"Bet you can't tell us apart"

Pic. by Alan Hamilton, Suricaya Alpacas



The new U2 album cover?

Pic. by Mark Jefferis, 4 Mile Alpaca Stud



"Do you think this goes with my earring?"

Pic. by Jude Anderson, Pucara Alpaca Stud

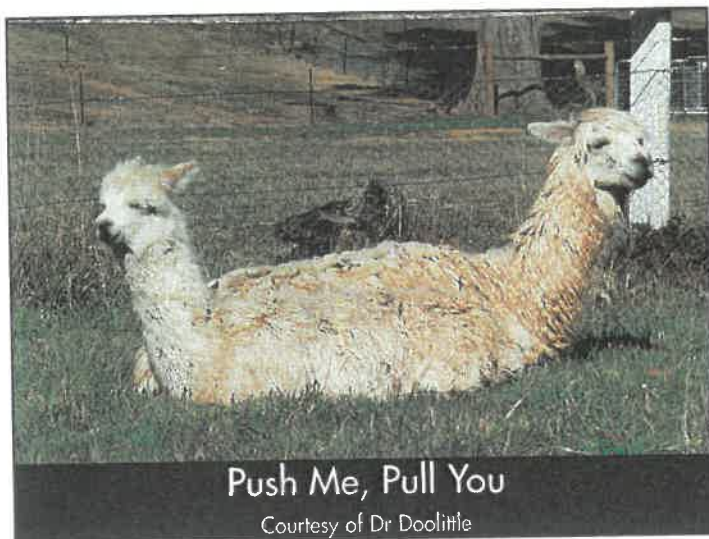


One step closer and I'll let you have it!

Pic. by Liesa Pickup, Hidden Valley Alpacas



Paca Pics



Push Me, Pull You

Courtesy of Dr Doolittle



"Slip, Slop, Slap"

Pic. by Ray and Ros Evans, Ravensholme Alpacas, Qld.

PACAPICS COMPETITION – WIN \$50

Send us your Paca Pic with an appropriate caption. We will feature the best pics received, with a stud name credit. Our judges will award **\$50.00** to the sender of the winning entry in each issue. If your photo is featured on the front cover of an issue of *Alpacas Australia* you'll receive \$150.00.

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Sandi Keane re-elected as AAA Secretary

Sandi Keane, hard working Secretary of the Australian Alpaca Association, was re-elected to that position at the Annual General Meeting in August.

Sandi, together with her American partner, environmental/wildlife biologist Bill Burley, runs a herd of about 35 alpacas at *Pinjarra* in the Mansfield (Vic) area.

She is a graduate of the University of Melbourne and holds a post-graduate Diploma in Arts Management and Policy from City University, London.

Among her many achievements is her role as Administration Director for the Tall Ships — the largest event ever staged in Victoria. She has also

been Orchestra Manager for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Manager for the Australian Opera.

Now a freelance consultant she is currently working on the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

Sandi has been a member of the Association for four years and served for two years as secretary of the Fibre Sub-Committee before being elected to the National Committee.

Sandi lists her special skills as marketing, promotion, event management (including logistics), protocol, public relations and speech writing. ▲



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AAA NOTES

From the secretary *Sandi Keane*

THE YEAR PAST...

All in all, it has been a gratifying year for me as Secretary and an opportunity to meet many more breeders. The past twelve months have been very exciting for the industry and alpaca farming has never been more rewarding than it is at the moment.

We are fortunate that most of our members are dedicated to working together in a positive, constructive way to help make Charles Ledger's dream a reality. I never fail to be impressed by the willingness and enthusiasm of people whenever I've asked for help on various projects from time to time.

Thanks to all of you for your support, help and advice over the past year. I look forward to meeting many more of you during the coming year.

Membership

The good news about the 'World's Finest Livestock Investment' is spreading at a rapid rate with an increase in membership in the past year of over 60 per cent. We now have around 1,000 members!

The number of information kits sent out from the National office, including our new full colour brochure and Breeders' Directory is getting close to 20 a week.

No wonder breeders are reporting a shortage of stock for sale!

Sales/Stud Service Guidelines

Apart from the new colour brochure and Breeders' Directory, guidelines for sale contracts have now been complet-

ed and will be available in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The National Committee is also developing guidelines for stud services which will be out to members soon.

Certified Breeding Males

This new registration has now been introduced. The initial phase focussed on obvious genetic faults but there is a strong push from members to continue upgrading and tightening up criteria, including DNA testing.

The Fibre Marketing Co-operative

The Fibre Marketing Co-op was the brainchild of our outgoing President, Alan Hamilton. Following the enthusiastic response he received for the idea at Roesworthy last year, a resolution to set up a working party was then passed at the 1993 AGM. The team consists of Alan Hamilton, Paul White, Alex Stevenson and David Webb.

We are fortunate to have the expertise of Paul White who has put in a great deal of time on this project. Paul presented a progress report at the recent AGM in August.

Briefly, the aim of the co-op is to pay above world market price for fibre by value adding. Extensive research with several manufacturers has produced exciting prospects for a range of products which utilise the entire fleece as well as wool and alpaca blends. So, don't throw out those sweepings on the shearing shed floor!

As Paul reported at the AGM, we have gone back to the original idea of

a co-operative following new legislation which has made this structure, rather than a private company, the most suitable for our needs.

A letter to all members will be going out shortly from Paul, calling for members to share their views and participate in the initial stages of setting up the co-op. Please give him your support.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Investment Brochure/Seminars

More and more investment advisers are encouraging their clients to include alpacas in their investment portfolios. Therefore, we will be developing an investment brochure along the lines of the very successful AOBA brochure.

We are also looking at running AAA-sponsored investment seminars.

Association-sponsored Import from Peru

Good news for those people who missed out at the Peruvian sale in the US. The idea of an Association-sponsored import of top quality breeding stock from Peru was tabled by Alan Hamilton at National Committee some two years ago.

We were originally advised by AQIS that prospects for a protocol for imports of camelids between the two countries were remote.

Fortunately, AQIS appears to be coming around and we have formally made application for our first Association-sponsored import.

Our aim will be to buy only supe-

From the secretary

Sandi Keane

rior quality breeding stock. Whether we decide to sell the stock through a lottery system or keep the herd intact with stud sires available to members will be determined by the new National Committee. We will keep you posted.

DIARY DATES

Our First National Show, Dance and Auction

Make sure you book for the first AAA National Show, Dinner Dance and National Auction.

They will be held at Dalgety's Oaklands Junction Stud Stock Sale Complex and Melbourne Zoological Gardens on 12 and 13 November.

You'll need to book early. See full details are on page 23.

National Seminar – July 1995

This will be held at Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions for next year's seminar — be they topics, length of sessions, speakers, etc.

I have attended a couple of Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association Conferences at Estes Park in Colorado, US, and was interested to see that they always offer an intensive, hands-on session which lasts a full day.

The first year, it was emergency medicine and cria health.

This year it was alpaca neonatal care with participants practising actual deliveries from normal to dystocias using phantoms and dead crias.

We are open to your ideas. 🐾

ALPACAMAGAZINE BACKISSUES

ARE NOW AVAILABLE

If you are reading Alpacas Australia for the first time and enjoying it so much you would like to read previous issues — or if you would like to buy some back issues for a friend — we'd be happy to supply them. Just send your order, with your cheque to:

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COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 1-8

Perth Royal Show — WA

Alpacas arrive Tuesday 4 October. Judging 10 am Wednesday 5 October. Activities will also include shearing and spinning demonstrations. Alpaca Association stand will be staffed throughout the Show.

Inaugural Annual Alpaca Dinner Thursday 7 October at the Parmelia Hilton, Perth. For further information contact Jenny Jackson (095) 252 536.

OCTOBER 3

Strathalbyn Show — SA

Judging classes for alpacas to be held for the first time. Sure to be good following interest generated from Mt. Pleasant Show. Contact Adrienne Clarke (08) 383 6022.

OCTOBER 23

Central Région — Vic

Kyneton Alpaca Expo at 'Sunbury Lodge' Kyneton. Judging, parade of past Champion males, auction of top young females, fashion, trade stalls and more. A must for breeders and interested parties alike. For further information, contact Jane Szigethy (054) 270 375.

NOVEMBER 12-13

National Classic Show and Sale

This promises to be a huge show and sale. Showing on Saturday, to be followed by a dinner dance at Melbourne Zoo. Over 40 of Australia's finest animals to be auctioned Sunday 13 November.

Watch your mail for further details and see page 23 this issue.

NOVEMBER 19-20

Lilydale Show — Vic

Alpaca judging at Lilydale Show ground on, Saturday 19 Nov. at 9 am. Contact Bill Plunkett (03) 437 1534.

DECEMBER 4

Kingston Agricultural Show

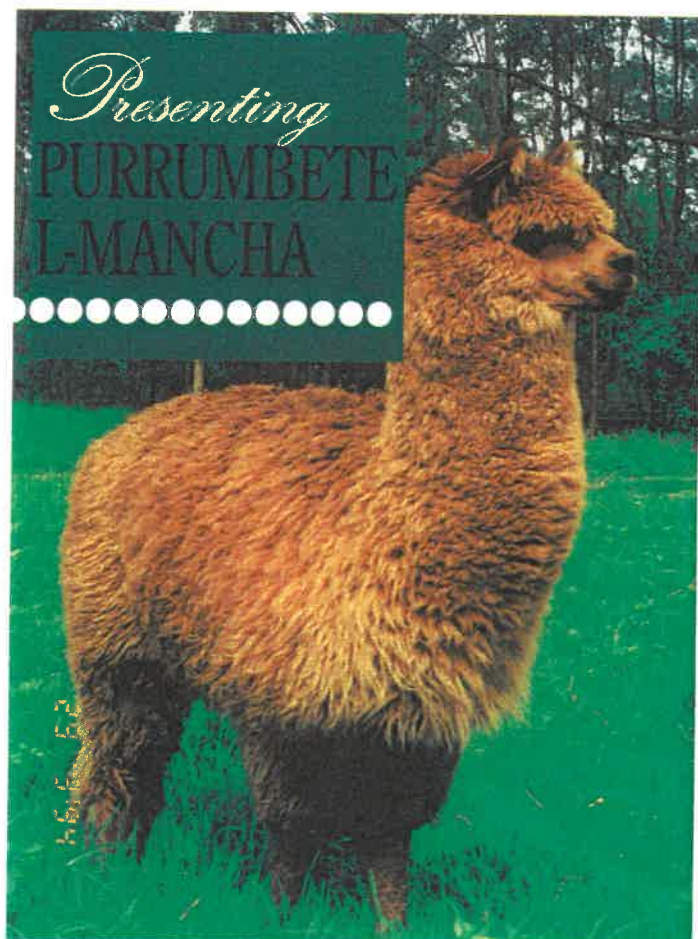
30 kms north of Ballarat — Vic

Alpaca Classes all sections incl. wethers. Entries: Neville Giles, phone (053) 452 759

DECEMBER 17

Eastern Region — Vic

Christmas Social — dinner dance at Villa Borghese, Kilsyth. Contact Richard Holland (057) 747 365. ▲



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