



# ALPACAS AUSTRALIA

The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd



In this issue:

- Futurity Shows
- Melbourne Royal
- Felted Clothing

# Australian ALPACA

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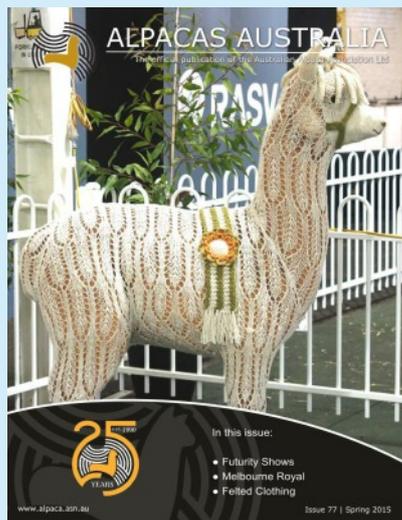
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Cover: Nini & Wink yarn bombed alpaca display.  
*Photograph courtesy of Robert Gane*

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# President's Message

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Alpacas Australia magazine.

As the weather warms up a number of major shows provide us with the opportunity to showcase the excellence and advancement in our breeding programmes, and the premier event for the AAA is our National Show and Sale. At this years event we will also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the formation of AAA, and reflect on our success over this period in developing the breed and husbandry of alpacas as an agricultural resource of Australia. I invite each of you to join with us to celebrate our achievements, and to experience the buzz of the National Show. All types of alpaca product and supporting services will be represented among our trade stand exhibitors, and I would encourage you to also support those businesses and our youth as they compete in the National Paraders and Junior Judging competition. We have a bright future ahead of us.

Shows and promotional events such as field days provide a platform for us to inform and educate the public about alpacas and the alpaca industry. Members who volunteer their time at these events benefit all of us from increased awareness of alpacas and alpaca product, creating a market for fleece and the need for a larger herd that can meet growing demand. As we approach shearing season I encourage you to research your markets and ensure you prepare your clip to meet the requirements of prospective purchasers in order to maximise your return.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Alpacas Australia magazine. The magazine is available by subscription and as a service to AAA members, with a circulation across Australia and overseas. Advertising in the magazine is a great opportunity to reach a wide customer base and to promote your business. I encourage you to provide feedback to our Editor and to submit articles for publication.

Kind regards,  
Michelle Malt  
AAA President



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# News and Views



## Tiny marsupials find a new home in Western Australia's Kojonup reserve

So you've never heard of a Phascogale? It's one of Western Australia's rarest marsupials. Once common across Western Australia this little red-tailed Phascogale is now endangered but there is renewed hope for its future survival thanks to a successful wild-to-wild translocation program in the south-west of the state.

Back in 2010 Bush Heritage Australia and the West Australian Department of Parks & Wildlife joined forces to relocate 30 of the tiny marsupials from the state's mid west region to a woodland area in the Kojonup Reserve.

They erected specially designed nesting boxes lined with alpaca fleece and they have proved a great success. Placed in trees to protect the tiny marsupials from feral predators the Phascogale have added bark, leaves, sticks and feathers making a warm, secure nesting place.



Photo by Annette Ruzicka.



Photo by Maureen Francesconi

## Opening in August: Great Ocean Road Woollen Mill



A new option for fleece processing is about to open a stone's throw from the beautiful Great Ocean Road, Victoria. Isabel and Nick Renters, along with Wendy Starling, are enthusiastic and passionate about alpacas and the alpaca industry.

With a strong focus on value adding at the farm gate this new mill is giving alpaca breeders another processing option, a first for Southwest Victoria.

With growing demand for alpaca yarn and products nationally and internationally, Great Ocean Road Woollen Mill is keen to help small to medium breeders maximise their return on their fleece and to assist the industry to further grow and develop.

A mix of adventure, enthusiasm and determination will ensure Great Ocean Road Woollen Mill will be a wonderful success, along with the support of the industry.

Please check them out at [gorwm.com.au](http://gorwm.com.au) for more information.



# Is it time for: An Australian Futurity Alpaca Show?

By Graeme Dickson - Warralinga Alpaca Stud



*USA Futurity - Judges Jill Mcleod (Canada) and Peter Kennedy (Australia)*

The Macquarie Dictionary describes futurity as "the quality of being future". We would interpret that as the "quality of the future" i.e. the next generation of alpacas; hence a Futurity Show is for the next generation of stud stock.

Futurity shows have been around in other breeds for many years with slight variations to the rules to suit the breed, but the basic principle remains the same - the animals judged are the progeny and not the sires or dams.

Alpaca Futurity Shows have been run annually in other countries - USA, Canada, & UK - for many years and several Australian senior judges have judged these shows.

The format of the show is the same as a normal halter show format by age and colour. There are two main differences:

## 1. Eligibility

In order to be entered into the show all alpacas must be the progeny of a nominated sire. The nominated sire may be owned by an exhibitor or any other breeder and registered on the AAA registry. Once the nominated sires have been accepted and nomination fee paid, any of his progeny,

irrespective who they are owned by, may be entered into the age and colour classes of the halter show. The nominated sires are not shown.

## 2. Entry Fee and Prize Money

The organizing committee will set the nomination fee for the sires, for example this could be \$500. This fee together with the show entry fee will finance the prize money after all show expenses have been met. The prize money structure varies from country to country but in principle it would be along the following lines:-

- Class prizes from 1st to 6th - say \$100 down to \$10
- Section Champion - say \$250
- Section Reserve Champion - say \$150
- Supreme Champion - say \$2500
- Nominated Sire with highest points - say \$1000
- All Nominated Sires - say 10% of the value of what his progeny win.

In Canada, the prize money is usually distributed in the show down to half the number in each class plus one, so more than 50% of all entries receive some prize money. So in a class of 14 alpacas, 8 alpacas will receive prize money, and the class will be placed down to eight places by the judge. However the prize money structure is dependent on how large the initial pool of funds is.

The show would be conducted under AAA show rules and more than likely judged by Australian judges. Some futurity shows are financed by a group of breeders or a consortium; this enables seed finance to be obtained and the facilities to be booked in advance without calling on AAA funds.

A number of us have attended and experienced these shows overseas and they create considerable interest. The exhibitors love them as, if they are successful in the show ring, even in just a small way, their weekend expenses could be totally or partially paid for!

So there's the basic framework for a Futurity.

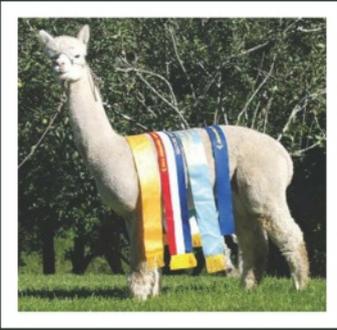
All we need now is for a team of energetic people to come on board, several studs to form a consortium and finance the event and we will have the first Australian Futurity Show.

*Photos courtesy of Robert Gane*



# MILLPACA STUD SIRES

The best of Black & White breeding standing at stud.



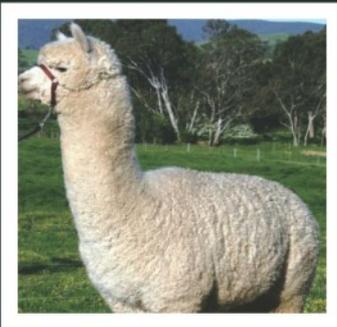
## AMBERSUN FORTUNE SEEKER

Light Fawn  
IAR 162454  
Fortune Seekers Multiple Supreme Championships speak volumes of the faultless confirmation & impeccable fleece of this true-to-type huacaya male.



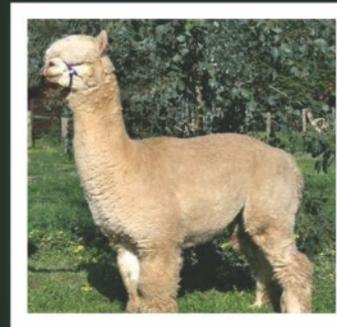
## KOORANA PARK BLACK KNIGHT

True Black  
IAR 43924  
Black Knight is a true to type blue black male with fleece demonstrating fibre diameter uniformity, good density, lustre and soft handle.



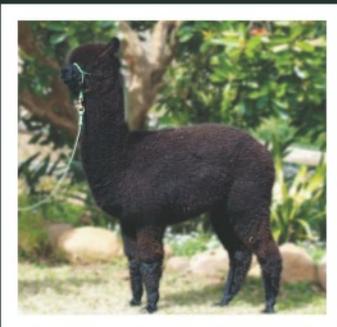
## SHANBROOKE ACCOYO INVINCIBLE

Solid White  
IAR 100321  
This is the result of two very potent Accoyo parents. His Sire Shanbrooke Accoyo Yavari and his Dam Shanbrooke Accoyo Taquille.  
Invincible carries an incredible bright lustrous fleece that handles like silk with a follicular density of 63.1.  
His fleece character is a bold bundling deep amplitude crimp that peels open into individual staples.



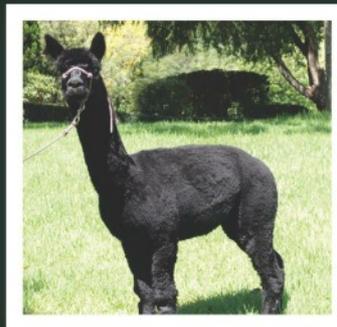
## SHANBROOKE PLANTEL HAYNACHO

Solid White  
IAR 180812  
His name Haynacho means leader of the pack, and he represents exactly that. Haynacho has one of the most even fleeces we have seen in an alpaca. He carries his crimp all over the body down to his feet and all the way under his belly. He is extremely fine, soft and lustrous with good density and outstanding presence.



## MILLPACA BRAVO

True Black  
IAR 171387  
Black breeders will recognise the qualities of this blue black male.  
He has black gentitics on both sides and also has fine crimping dense fleece.



## NOCTURNE RICOCHET

True Black  
IAR 180812  
Ricochet is a true blue black with a dense lustrous fleece that separates into matchstick bundles.

# millpaca

BREEDING PERFECTION

## VENDOR FINANCE

In a first for the industry, Millpaca Stud is now offering Vendor Finance for all purchases of stud animals and mating services. This represents a fantastic opportunity to increase the value of your herd without the usual upfront capital outlay. Repayments for genetics can be made over a 24 month period, while mating can be spread over a 12 month term, all at attractive rates.

Millpaca Stud has sourced and developed some of the industries finest genetics which includes Sire and Dam of National Supreme Champions.

Call us today to discuss the exciting opportunities this industry leading offer represents on (02) 4464 1728 or Neil Parker on 0428 771 264

Visit our website at  
[www.millpaca.com](http://www.millpaca.com)



# FARM VEHICLES, QUADS & MOTORBIKES

Do not use attachments that may interfere with operator control and stability. Maintain the tyre pressures at the level advised in the manual and do not modify quad wheels. Check with your local dealer about operator training courses for quads.

## CARS, UTES, SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLES AND TRUCKS

Many deaths and serious injuries have involved vehicles colliding with an object or rolling, with passengers not wearing a seatbelt being thrown from the vehicle or crushed. This is a common problem involving young people 15-24 years and includes passengers riding in the tray of utes, trucks and trailers during activities such as hunting, mustering or simply skylarking. Young children under five years are also at risk of runover falling from vehicles or as pedestrians.

Do not allow people to ride in the tray of utes, SSV's, trailers or trucks. Ensure seatbelts are fitted and used in all cars, SSVs, utes and trucks and that everyone is instructed to use them. Set speed limits for all vehicles on farm and for areas near the house where children may be located. A securely fenced house yard can help prevent young children wandering into vehicle areas. Keep all farm vehicles well maintained. Many incidents have been caused by non functioning brakes, suspension and worn tyres. Check the tyre pressures regularly. Do not over inflate tyres. Check the operator's manual for proper inflation. Have a "No drink and drive" policy that includes drugs.

## SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

Vehicle safety checks, skills development and use of safety equipment needs to be second nature.

Make sure all riders are trained to safely operate farm vehicles. Conduct a safety check on all farm vehicles before starting work. Always wear an approved helmet and sturdy workboots when using quads and motorbikes. A helmet will also be required for "aggressive" use of a SSV e.g. mustering. Always wear seatbelts in vehicles on the farm and follow speed restrictions.

Make sure children are trained and supervised when riding two-wheeled motorbikes; and that these are an appropriate size. Can they can lift the bike from the ground unassisted and reach the ground with their feet when astride the bike?

For farm safety checklists and other information on farm safety risks and controls, go to [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au) or contact:

The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety  
PO Box 256 Moree NSW 2400  
Ph. (02) 6752 8210 Email: [info@farmsafe.org.au](mailto:info@farmsafe.org.au)

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(revised)

Farm vehicles, including quads, cars, utilities, side-by-sides and motorbikes, accounted for around 30% of all injury deaths on farms from 2001-2013. Many more farmers and farm workers are also killed each year in vehicles on public roads.

## QUADS

Quads are the leading cause of on-farm vehicle deaths in Australia, with around 15 deaths each year. The main cause of death and severe injury are crush injury and asphyxia associated with quad rollover, plus head and neck injury. They are also the leading cause of fatal injury in children aged 5-14 years on farms. Quads are sometimes used for tasks beyond their original design limits including carrying or towing loads (e.g. spray tanks and trailers). Carrying or towing loads makes the already poor stability of quads worse and increases the risk of rollover. Passengers should never be carried and children under 16 years must not use quads of any size due to their lack of developmental capacity to use these vehicles safely. Operators should be trained and competent, with helmet use on a quad essential.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT MACHINE FOR THE JOB

The farm ute or side-by-side vehicles (SSVs) have safety features that provide protection for operators in the event of rollover or collision. These include a wider wheel-base, rollbars (ROPS), seats for passengers and seatbelts.

Check that the quad is the safest machine to do the job - in most cases it will not be. If you need to carry passengers or a load, use a SSV or ute.

If still choosing to use a quad, a suitably tested crush protection device (CPD) should be fitted. These are commercially available - contact Farmsafe or your state Work Health Authority (Workcover/Worksafe etc).

Do not carry any passengers on quads. No riders under 16 years on quads of any size, either as operator or passenger. Do not carry or tow loads.

Set speed limits and establish 'no go' areas on the farm, such as hills and slopes, dam banks or anywhere the quad is at higher risk of rollover.



Careers In Agriculture:

# Alpaca Farming

As we approach the milestone of 25 years enjoying Alpacas in Australia, it does ponder a question as to how have these unique animals changed the lifestyles of the Australians that have taken to them.

As with other livestock industries, alpaca owners and breeders know the joys and disappointments that can be associated with the breeding and care of livestock, but what of the emerging agribusiness's that are developing and the potential employment opportunities that will unfold for young Australian in the future?

Who knows what the future will be in the next 25 years, but assuredly alpacas will occupy a much larger slice of Australia's rural communities and employment in this industry will grow.

I thank the young members who have contributed the following brief snap shots into their lives as they and quite a few more like them around the country, are the trail blazers of employment in this industry we are all so enthusiastic about.

Jeff Willis  
*AAA Director responsible for Education & Training*



**Ben Schmaal**

Position: Farm Manager

At: Softfoot Alpacas

In 2009 Softfoot Alpacas came to the conclusion that they were in need of a farm manager for their expanding alpaca herd. Part time labour had been adequate for a number of years but the level of supervision and direction required to ensure accurate completion of tasks was becoming increasingly impractical.

Gary and Sandy Retallick began discussing what they required for their farm - somebody with managerial skills, able to identify priorities, with an interest in genetics and stud breeding, and knowledge of fibre production. Additional skills required would be a working knowledge of alpaca husbandry and an interest in conservation and environmental stewardship. Above all, honesty and integrity were paramount.

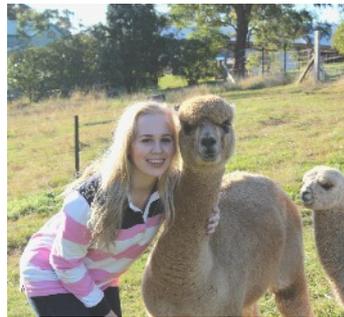
These requirements, once identified, suggested a rather small demographic of potential employees!

By coincidence, in early 2009, 21 year old Ben Schmaal was profiled in a local prestigious South Australian magazine for his work with children with disabilities. The story made mention of his managerial experience and farming background but of particular interest to Gary and Sandy were the alpacas in the background behind the image of Ben. Initial discussions with Ben confirmed his experience in managerial roles, as well as his passion for farming and particularly alpacas. Ben had recently committed a section of his father's family farm to a fifteen year conservation bond and a demonstrated keen interest in native fauna and flora, aligned well with Softfoot's conservation philosophies.

Within two months of initial discussions, Ben had brought his wife and young son to Softfoot to live on the picturesque property and commence the role of property manager. Since then, both Softfoot and Ben have grown exponentially with regard to knowledge and skills in the Alpaca industry.

Ben has recently been accredited as a AAA judge and with Softfoot excelling in the show ring, it has truly been a mutually beneficial relationship.

Softfoot has been very pleased to see the encouragement of the younger generation within the alpaca industry in recent times through Stockmanship, Paraders and Junior Judging competitions. These initiatives both enthuse and prepare our younger people for the employment opportunities that will continue to develop in Australia's alpaca industry.



## **Amber O'Neill**

Position: Veterinary Student and farm hand.

At: Cranebrook High School

I began my involvement with alpacas in 2009 where I studied Agriculture at school. At the beginning of 2011 I was invited to visit Warralinga Alpaca Stud, where I immediately knew that alpacas and the alpaca industry was something I wanted to be a part of. During 2010 I helped Lyn and Graeme Dickson wherever I could; halter training, feeding, house-sitting, husbandry and showing. I fell in love with it all and by the end of 2011 I started my own alpaca stud, Alkira, and bought my first alpaca from The Gorge Alpacas. Lyn and Graeme taught me everything I know about these animals, and Lyn's passion and expertise in judging was contagious. I competed in Junior Judging competitions across NSW and in 2013 I participated in the Australian Alpaca Judges Course where I am now an apprentice judge who cannot wait to join the group of dedicated judges that push the Australian Alpaca industry forward.

I have been a part of the Australian Alpaca Youth group since it began in 2012, a great group of passionate young individuals



who are working towards encouraging the involvement of youth in the alpaca industry. Being such a new industry, I am very passionate about the education and involvement of youth and have loved working with kids, both at work (school farm hand) and in the industry.

Working with youth has boosted my confidence in speaking and I presented a speech at the 2015 Youth Camp on alpaca fleece and production, a challenge I thoroughly enjoyed.

I have been privileged to show alpacas for many breeders across NSW and VIC, where I have learnt a lot about the animals and been able to network and get involved in every aspect of breeding and showing. Stewarding and volunteering has definitely been something I have enjoyed over the years and has provided so many opportunities to watch and learn.

I now study Animal Science and work as the farm hand at Cranebrook High School, with plans to move and study Veterinary Science at Wagga Wagga next year. My aim is to specialise in the reproduction and genetics of Camelids and work in education and medicine. I will always breed and show alpacas and cannot wait to continue my own alpaca stud and continue to learn from the experts of our industry.



## Lionel Tomich

Position: Farm Manager

At: Walkley Fields Alpaca Stud

My alpaca career all started when my sister asked "Do you know anyone who would be a good farm hand and likes animals?" It was a 'no brainer' for me to say "well how about me?", and the rest as they say, is history. It has been one of the best decisions of my life. Working for Bumble Hill Alpacas under my sister Annalisa Tomich, who manages the suri herd for Frank and Julienne Gelber, was the ideal start for my future alpaca career. To this day I still tap into Annalisa and Julienne's combined experience of 40+ years extensive alpaca knowledge. After almost six years the door to a management role opened for me at Walkley Feilds Elite Alpaca Stud owned by Richard Brennan.

Walkley Fields is just over 30 acres and located at Kurmond, which is nestled at the base of the Blue Mountains. We have recently expanded the farm with the purchase of 200 acres at Meadow Flat (approx 1 hour away). This will give us the opportunity to expand the breeding program.



Walkley Fields is run on very well maintained properties with state of the art facilities and a high emphasis on health, comfort, and care. The herd is continually monitored, and extensive electronic records are kept on each animal. Gone are the days of the diary, as we keep all our records on a network based system incorporating Alpaca Manager (herd management software), Dropbox, Evernote and remote viewing cameras. It allows me to access any information I need wherever I am, on or off the property. This includes all statistics, past and present, on every animal. Information such as genetics, weights, body scores, location, fleece statistics, health and medication history are available at the click of a button.

I am in a fortunate position here, with a great crew of employees assisting with fencing, pasture, paddock, and building maintenance. This allows me to concentrate on the herd and focus on my main areas of responsibility, including biosecurity, herd health, herd nutrition, genetics, breeding, showing and shearing.

I love stepping out the front door to get to work, the quiet time in my office on the computer or microscope, and all the traveling involved with my role, but most rewarding of all is being out on the land with the animals. It's the "piece de resistance" for me, working with the animals and being part of the development of the industry. Each alpaca has a unique personality, and getting to know them all is part of the magic. To top it all off I get to live and breathe amongst the native flora / fauna and watch and learn how the climate, environment, and the farm eco-system all come together.



## Annalisa Tomich

Position: Farm Manager

At: Bumble Hill Alpaca Stud

People often ask me "How did you get a job like that?" and I find myself amazed at what my career choice has been. An alpaca farm manager is the last thing I would have imagined myself getting into growing up on the Northern beaches of Sydney, but here I am.

I was working on a horse pre-training/spelling property when the owners approached me offering "the dream job". They informed me that they had just purchased 40 pregnant maiden alpacas from an import shipment and were looking for someone to manage their new acquisition. At the time a million questions flooded my mind like...What's an alpaca? What are they used for? What do I have to do with them? What do they eat? Do they birth easily? What, what, what?

Needless to say I accepted the job and took it on with a passion. The learning curve was steep. I joined the AAA and got involved with the local regional committee. I went to many alpaca



*"An opportunity to raise a family  
in a great environment while  
still working full time"*

Annalisa's daughter growing up on the farm

conferences, I did work experience at a large stud and just read up on as much "alpaca" as I could (this was pre Google days).

That first management position led to meeting Julianne and Frank Gelber of Bumble Hill Alpacas where I have been for the past 16 years. I now manage the Suri arm of Bumble Hill alpacas. It has been and still is a wonderful part of my life. It has afforded me the opportunity to raise a family in a great environment while still working full time. Through the job I have travelled to many different parts of the country, whether it was for showing or just transporting animals. Alpacas even inspired a trip to South America.

My work is never mundane, anything from toenail clipping to helping out the mum's with difficult births. I've learnt to be patient, as 11.5 months is such a long wait to see if you've made the right mating decisions.

Like all farms there is always fencing, pasture improvement work and I've become an expert on weed identification and spore counting. Shearing is always a busy and exciting time of the year and then there's halter training and preparing the animals for shows.

I've been fortunate enough to work for very generous people who are passionate about everything alpaca. I have a very fulfilling and rewarding job that has been the perfect career choice that chose me.



## Workshops for new breeders.

### *The Program.*

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

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

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

Learn how to establish a successful alpaca business plan.

### *The Venue.*

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

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

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

### *Bookings.*

All details and booking forms are at [www.flowerdalealpacas.net](http://www.flowerdalealpacas.net)  
Or phone Jen on 03 9728 7070.



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# THE ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW

By Convenor – Barbara Linley

The third Royal Melbourne Alpaca Show was held on the very cold and wet weekend of 11/12th July 2015 at the Melbourne Show grounds. There were more exhibitors and alpacas entered than last year and competition was keen.

Exhibitors came from NSW, SA, Tasmania and of course Victoria. The show was judged by the highly regarded Jenny Jackson from Western Australia and first time visitor to Australia, American Judge Sara Jane MacLennan from Denver, Colorado.

Kurrawa from Bellbrae had a very successful show winning both Supremes and Most successful Suri Exhibitor.

## Results

Supreme Suri was awarded to Natasha Clark, Kurrawa with a stunning adult male Kurrawa Ready Aim Fire. The judges were very complimentary with this male as he was in his second fleece. The Bill Plunkett Memorial Trophy was also presented to Kurrawa.

Supreme Huacaya was also won by Natasha Clark, Kurrawa with Kurrawa Legends Armed N Dangerous who had an amazing fleece. For this supreme Kurrawa was also presented with the G&N Halpin Perpetual Trophy.

Most successful New Suri Exhibitor was awarded to Romanie and Vivian Blacker, Arachello who were both delighted to win this award.

In the Huacaya section the Most Successful Huacaya Exhibitor was awarded to the surprised and delighted Prue Walduck, Millduck.

This year the RASV Alpaca Committee decided to encourage new breeders by awarding The Most Successful New Exhibitor. Newcomers Trevi Bird and his family of Grey Gum were thrilled to be awarded the Most Successful New Exhibitor.

All in all the third Royal Melbourne Show was a successful show and next year it will be bigger and better!



Champion Huacaya Fleece - Surtierra Rhapsaella - Surtierra Alpacas



Champion Suri Fleece - Surtierra Ferrero - Surtierra Alpacas



*Supreme Huacaya- Kurrawa Legends Armed N Dangerous- Kurrawa Alpacas*



*Supreme Suri - Kurrawa Ready Aim Fire - Kurrawa Alpacas*

THE SHOW GETS CREATIVE >>>

There's so much more to know about the Australian alpaca than meets the eye.

We have been at the heart of the Australian alpaca industry from the very beginning, providing the experience and expertise driving the science and evolution of an alpaca perfectly suited to Australian conditions.

From one life spent in the Merino industry, and another spent in science, we bring to the alpaca industry the inspiration for a fleece-perfect Australian alpaca breeding programme.

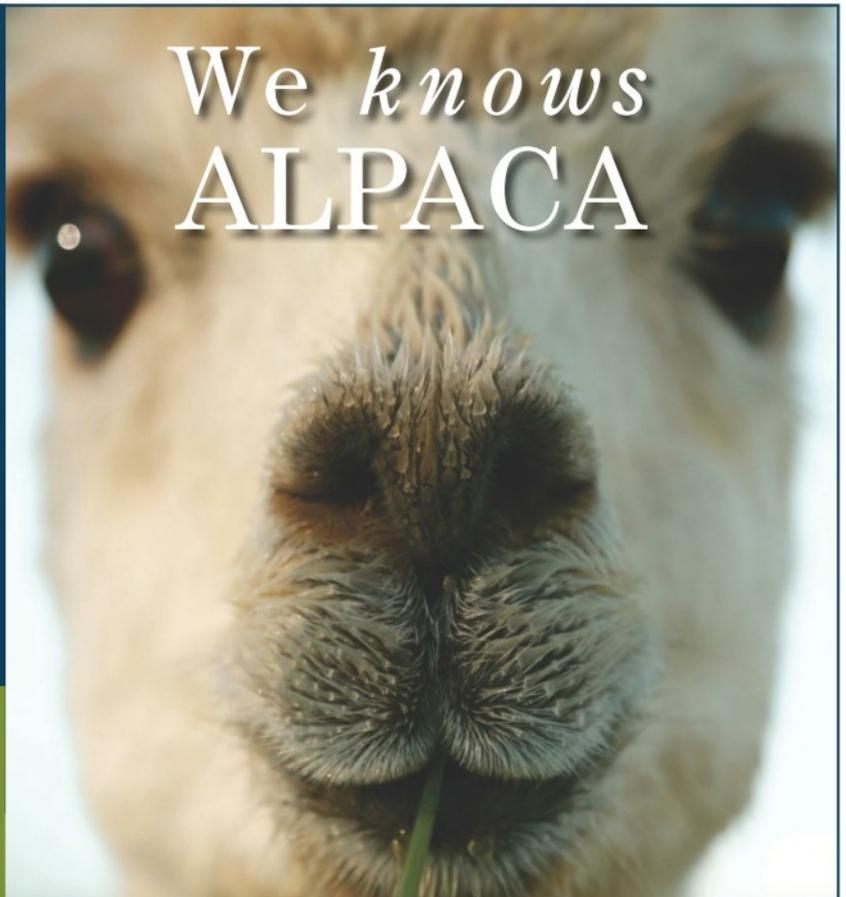
Generations of selective breeding have produced for Coolawarra the accolades of breeders, judges and fleece processors, now shared with our clients in Australia and around the globe.

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We know  
**ALPACA**



## Creative Alpacas

As the convenor of the Royal Melbourne Show, Barbara Linley was visiting the show ground offices where she saw these amazing 'dressed pigs'. On further inquiry she discovered they were "yarn bombed" by some very clever people who trade as Nini & Wink doing some very creative and fun things.

Barbara immediately wondered if something like this would encourage more people along to the show. After discussions with the show society a joint project was commenced.

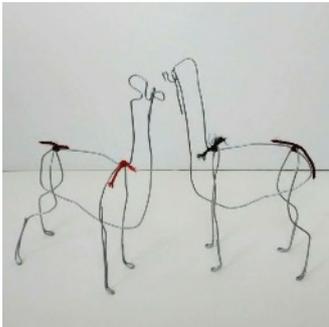
The Royal Melbourne Show Society would buy the fibreglass alpaca and Ambleside (Barbara's stud) would donate the merino/suri yarn and commission Nini & Wink to "yarn bomb" a suri alpaca for the third Melbourne Royal Alpaca Show in July.

Barbara also commissioned Nini & Wink to make two miniature alpacas as unusual trophies for the two Supreme winners to celebrate this special 25 years of alpacas in Australia.

Nini & Wink's facebook page showed the development of these alpacas and created much interest here in Australia and overseas. As you can see by the photos they did a brilliant job of recreating the alpacas as the suri really looks like a suri and the huacaya is a good representation of a huacaya.

'Onesie' as he was nicknamed at the show lead to much interest by both the two footed and four footed visitors to the show. 'Onesie' will be proudly standing at the September Royal Melbourne Show in the Arts/food pavilion where there will be an alpaca display. Come and see him and take a 'selfie'.

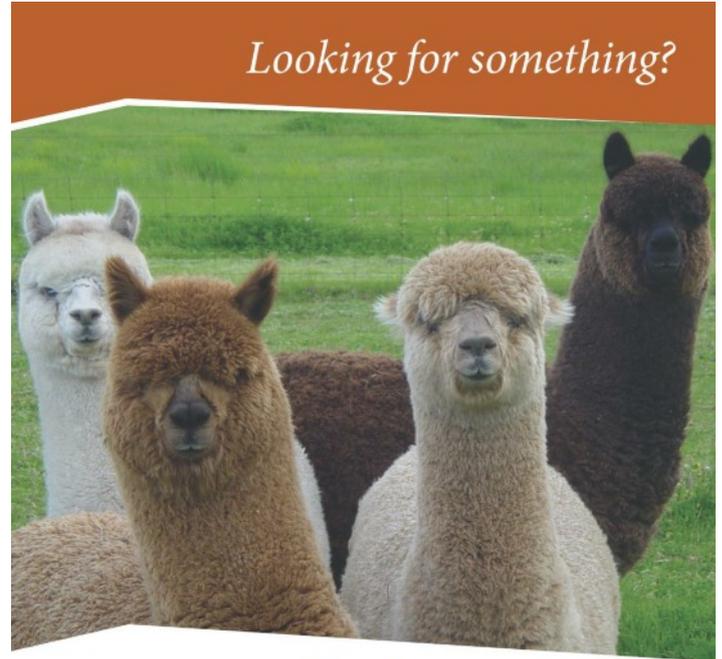




Alpaca trophies start out as wire frames.

The wire frames are then wrapped in wool yarn to fill out the alpaca shape.

This shape is then covered in the knitted yarn.



Looking for something?



Check us out!

Our small showteams are regular broad-ribbon winners at the highest level in both fleece and halter classes

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[www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au](http://www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au)

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**Web : [www.micronman.com.au](http://www.micronman.com.au) Fax : (08)94942931**

# Alpaca Fibre Network



Article on behalf of AFNA

It was a novel concept, over a decade ago, to introduce a breeding into the Yarra Valley, renowned for its high quality boutique wines.

Winemaking starts with inspecting the grapes. Make sure they are evenly ripened. They must be clean, sound and relatively free of insects and other vineyard debris. It is important to discard any grapes that look rotten or otherwise suspicious. Stems must be removed or they will make the wine bitter. Contaminants cause taints and off characters in wine. Winemaking demands a sanitary environment. Modern technology (NIR spectroscopy) offers the exciting prospect of a portable, hand-held instrument, which will enable grape growers and wine makers to assess rapidly the compositional quality of grapes at the weighbridge, or more importantly, whilst still on the vine. With further advances, this will assist the Australian Wine Industry in its quest to define, and objectively measure grape and wine quality and to assure consumers of the quality of the final product to be enjoyed. Such a meticulous approach is necessary for the quality wines of the Yarra Valley to be highly regarded in a difficult global market. The results of doing so, however, result in an elite product that commands a good price.

Alpaca Fibre Network (Australia) takes this same meticulous approach and applies it to fleece preparation, collection and sales.

In 2012, the idea was borne to establish a fleece collection point in the Yarra Valley and connect to other established collection points across Australia. Breeders in South Australia and Western Australia had already begun to adopt a successful classing and collecting regime. As a group of dedicated volunteers, AFN(Aust) felt confident that alpaca fibre, when treated with the respect it deserves, would achieve the financial return it deserves.

This decision also came about from a realization that the collection and sales of alpaca fibre was lacking in direction and seriously slowing. Breeders were either hoarding years of fibre in their sheds or achieving just a few dollars for their whole annual clip.

The most important consideration we faced as a group was how to market our clip as a small and emerging industry – bearing in mind that we are competing against *hundreds of thousands of tonnes* of Merino fibre from Australia, and on the international stage we are competing against *thousands of tonnes* of alpaca fibre from South America. When competing against such comparatively low cost options, it is madness to think that we have any chance of achieving the returns expected by Australian alpaca breeders, *unless* we could offer something significantly different from the competition.

The main issues we consider are:

## 1. Contamination

Guard hair, excessively coarse fibres and contamination including coloured fibre, toenails etc must be removed before fibre is placed in non-biodegradable bags for storage prior to delivery to collection points. It is important to note here that processors could reject a whole bale of white fibre if it was found to be contaminated with a few fibres of a different colour. Similarly our raw product can be rendered valueless if there is a significant level of coarse fibres.

## 2. Variation across the body

Fibre from different sections of the same animal can vary significantly in micron and handle. At collection points, each saddle is realistically skirted, three point tested with an OFDA machine (cost to breeder of \$1.65/saddle), and these saddles are then placed in bales of 2 micron increments. Conversations with numerous fibre buyers revealed the demand for fibre collected in this fashion with a guarantee of NO CONTAMINATION.

### 3. Commercial Quantities

The critical mass of fleece (presented in the appropriate manner) to sustain the buyers' requirements and utilize industrial machinery.

Our collection days revealed the importance of adhering to correct shearing protocols in order to avoid contamination from the beginning. Our volunteer group of contributors and supporters has worked tirelessly to re-educate growers and shearers how to correctly harvest and handle our precious alpaca fibre, at every stage, in a manner that achieves the best returns possible for all stakeholders.

We have demonstrated that there is a market for ALL alpaca fibre if presented as the buyers require – there is NO such thing as No Commercial Value.

AFN(Aust) has on a voluntary basis, sold on behalf of growers, several thousands of kilograms of white and coloured fibre of ALL micron.

Recent sales include:

1. 20-24 micron \$20 per kg
2. 18-20 micron \$25 per kg
3. 24-26 micron \$12 per kg
4. over 26 micron \$4.50 per kg (no testing fee to grower)

The above prices are net price to breeder and involve all colours. We have established buyers in Australia, China, Europe and New Zealand. Our communication chain ensures that we are constantly in tune with buyers' feedback and requirements, ensuring continual improvement to our processes and happy return customers.

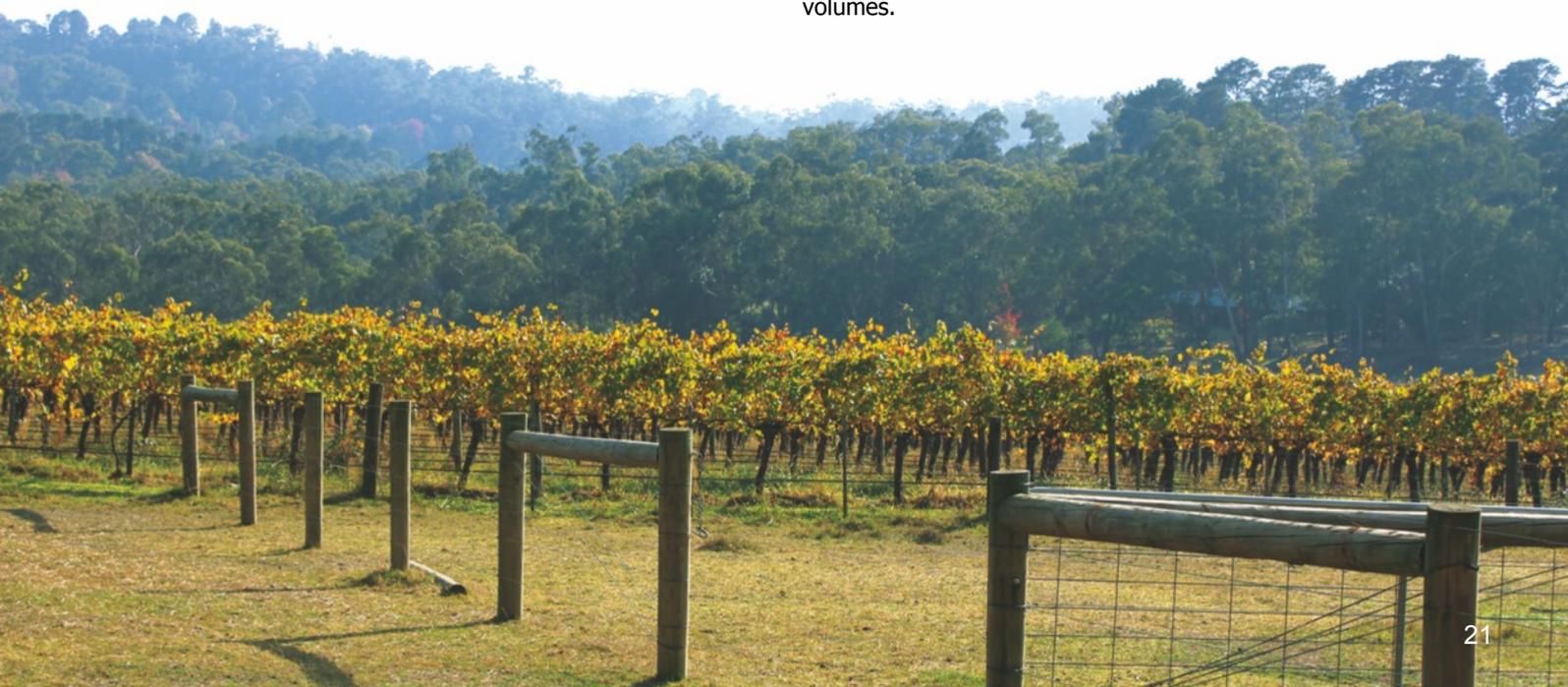
All sales of pieces and skirtings collected from our collection days are placed in a petty cash fund which is used for education sessions, advertising and all incidentals required for classing, baling, pressing, transporting and selling our fibre.



Guard hair/excessively coarse fibres

Our future is in our hands. Nothing is achieved unless we all work hard. Progress is being made with "Breeders helping Breeders". If we adopt a shearing and fleece preparation procedure that ensures our luxury fleece is uncontaminated, there is indeed a luxury alpaca fleece industry to be achieved, a valuable niche market on the world stage.

We now need breeders to co-operate, shear the high value saddle before the low value extremities, and join us with their well prepared fleeces to satisfy our buyer demands of specifications and volumes.





# Ribbons, Ribbons, Ribbons

## What do they reflect?

By Pru Walduck on behalf of Showing & Judging Panel

Whilst a blue ribbon always signifies a first placing - is a blue at show “x” of the same value as a blue at show “y”?

That is a very good question, especially when comparing the show performance of two or more alpacas.

Before attempting to answer, it is important to state that a first placing irrespective of where it was won, signifies that in the Judge’s opinion, the animal or fleece with the blue best reflects the AAA breed standards and is the best overall exhibit in the class on the day.

To try to answer the question regarding the value of a blue ribbon, or any other ribbon, at one show compared to other shows one needs a good appreciation of the different show formats and show levels.

Full details can be found in the Showing Rules Manual on the AAA Website, however a brief outline of the two show formats follows.

### Age Championship Show Format:

At an Age Championship Show eg. AAA National Show, alpacas are judged in age sections with classes based on sex and colour. Championships and Reserve Championships are awarded for the various age sections with the Champions of each age section competing for the overall Supreme Champion.

### Coloured Championship Show Format:

At a Coloured Championship Show e.g. Colourbration, alpacas are judged in colour sections with classes based on age and sex. Winners within each colour section compete for the Champion Colour Female and Champion Colour Male e.g. Champion Grey Female and Champion Grey Male with the Champion Coloured Female and Champion Coloured Male competing for the Supreme Colour e.g. Supreme Grey Huacaya and Supreme Grey Suri.

At larger Coloured Championship Shows, organisers have the option to award a Reserve Champion Colour Female and Reserve Champion Colour Male within each colour.

### Show Levels

Show levels overlay the two different show formats.

There are three show levels which signify the size of the show. Keeping things simple the levels are 1, 2 and 3.

Show level	Approximate number of Show Entries
Level 1	200 +
Level 2	120-200
Level 3	Up to 120

Whilst the number may vary slightly from year to year – there are approximately 43 AAA shows held each year throughout Australia with approximately 26% being Level 1, 28% level 2 and 46% being Level 3 shows. The smaller Level 3 shows are a very important part of the total show scene and help to ensure that showing alpacas is a choice available to members in all geographic areas of Australia.

All AAA Judges are accredited to judge shows at certain levels – refer table below.

Judge Level	Show Levels at which Judge is accredited to Judge
Level 1 – Senior Judge	Show Levels 1, 2, & 3
Level 2 Show	Levels 2 & 3
Level 3 Show	Level 3

Whilst a Judge may choose to remain at a certain Level, the normal career path is to commence at Level 3 on completion of their apprenticeship and progress through the levels to a Level 1 (Senior Judge).

Progression through the different levels is achieved by meeting set criteria such as time in current level, number of shows judged, achievement of required knowledge and skill, attending training workshops and passing accreditation. The process adopted to allocate Judges ensures Exhibitors at the smaller shows (Level 1 & 2) have opportunities to show under our most experienced Judges eg. a Level 1 Judge, judge at a Level 3 show.

With an understanding of the show levels it is easy to see that the Supreme Ribbon at a Level 1 Age Championship show would have a higher value than the same ribbon at a Level 3 Age Championship show.

For example the Supreme at Sydney Royal Easter Show (Level 1) may have had to beat over 300 alpacas to become Supreme compared to a Level 3 show (small Regional Show) where there may have been 105 alpacas.

Remaining with the Supreme Ribbon example it is also reasonable to assume that the Supreme alpaca at a level 2 show (120 - 200 exhibits) has had to beat more exhibits than the Supreme Colour at a Colourbration Show where there may have been anywhere from 40 - 80 exhibits or as little as 30 depending on the colour.



Having said this - nothing takes away the fact that the Supreme Colour or the Supreme Age Champion at a Level 3 or Level 2 show was the best exhibit at that particular show.

Once one starts to compare the value of any ribbon between a level 2 and level 3 show, or even different shows within the same level - it becomes blurry.

For example, it is possible that a Reserve Championship at a level 3 show (30 highly competitive exhibits in the age section) may be more valuable than a Championship Ribbon at a level 2 show where there were 10 average quality exhibits in the entire age section. The reverse could apply with a blue ribbon being awarded in a class of 5 exhibits of a very high standard opposed to a blue being awarded in a class of 15 average exhibits.

The above examples highlight the importance of quality. The quality of the competition most definitely comes into consideration when ascertaining the value of a ribbon. Quite often the quality of the exhibits at a smaller show is very high.

If you are new to showing, the smaller Level 3 shows are a great place to dip your toe into the water; to benchmark your alpacas against others in the area. These shows make up almost 50% of the total shows around Australia. If you are lucky enough to win a ribbon, it gives great encouragement to continue on with improving the quality in your herd, or perhaps to commit to entering one of the larger shows next time.

At the end of the day we can all take heart in the knowledge that a ribbon won is a ribbon well earned – our AAA trained Judges will not award a ribbon if exhibits do not meet the required breed standard and the standard expected at the particular show level.

Assessing the value of a ribbon from a particular show for a particular alpaca is not an exact science; the number and quality of exhibits in attendance at any show is just one piece of information to fit into the jigsaw.

Competing and winning ribbons to promote your alpacas is one thing, but many would agree that showing gives us the chance to come together to share our enthusiasm for all things alpaca. It's about learning, benchmarking, catching up with friends old and new plus the great camaraderie to be found around the show ring.

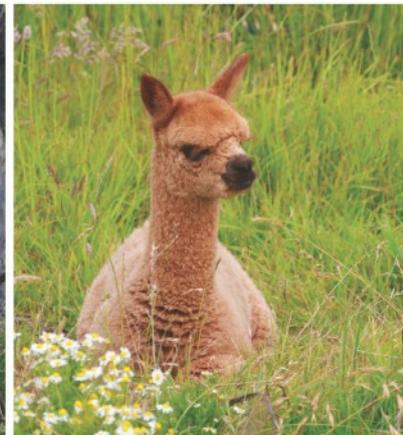
alpaca  
**2015**  
NATIONAL



**AANZ National Show**  
**September 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
Mystery Creek Events Centre  
HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

## Come and join us at our National Show

This is a great opportunity to catch up with friends and see what's happening in the New Zealand industry. Enjoy the range of events happening around the show.



### Events include:

**Breed Show; Fleece Show; Gala Dinner; Online Stud Services Auction; Trade Stands and Displays; 'Alpaca Farm' Experience for the Public**

This is the premier event in the AANZ show calendar.  
Contact the organising committee if you have any specific questions.



Alpaca Association  
NEW ZEALAND

The website [alpacaexpo.co.nz](http://alpacaexpo.co.nz) is the best place to find out all the info. **Updates will be made frequently.**

Contact: [alpaca2015@alpaca.org.nz](mailto:alpaca2015@alpaca.org.nz)

# Stud Males



## Arcady Rum Punch

DOB: 04/05/2012

IAR: 186820

**DETAILS:** Punch produces an impressive, fine fleece of exceptional length and highly-crimped style, all over.

Shown lightly for halter wins of age and Colour Championships plus Champion Intermediate and Best Brown Fleece @ 2013 AAA National Show.

Reliable, quality bloodlines with his full and 1/2 siblings also winning age and Colour Championships.

CONTACT: ARCADIAN ALPACAS - Denise Moysey

PH: 08 8391 3270 | EMAIL: [denise@arcadian-alpacas.com.au](mailto:denise@arcadian-alpacas.com.au)

WEB: [www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au](http://www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au)



## Blackgate Lodge Sunseeker

DOB: 18/11/2010

IAR: 164394

**DETAILS:** Sunseeker is an impressive macho with superior frame and fleece. Awarded 11 broad ribbons from just 5 Shows, his first 3 fleeces include : National Shows Supreme Champion 2013 and Supreme Champion 2014. Now a proven sire of both solid light and coloured progeny, Sunseeker is an excellent choice for all your girls.

Vic Enquiries: CONTACT: Rainbows End Alpacas - Joanne Ham

PH: 0428 440 604 | Email: [njham1@bigpond.com.au](mailto:njham1@bigpond.com.au)

WEB: [www.rainbowsendalpacas.com.au](http://www.rainbowsendalpacas.com.au)

SA Enquires: CONTACT: ARCADIAN ALPACAS - Denise Moysey

PH: 08 8391 3270 | EMAIL: [denise@arcadian-alpacas.com.au](mailto:denise@arcadian-alpacas.com.au)

WEB: [www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au](http://www.arcadian-alpacas.com.au)



## Goldleaf Dynamic

DOB: 21/09/2010

IAR: 160392

**DETAILS:** Colour: Rose Grey

Sire: Levanda Grove Danaus | Dam: Goldleaf Angel Face

Dynamic is a unique combination of genetics, rarely available with such beautiful evenness of grey colouring. Dynamic is very placid, but is mainly known for the deep bold crimp style and individual stapling fleece attributes in his progeny. These are now doing well in the show ring, even at National levels.

CONTACT: Goldleaf Alpacas - Brett Fallon

PH: 0408 403 910 | EMAIL: [info@goldleafalpacas.com.au](mailto:info@goldleafalpacas.com.au)

WEB: [www.goldleafalpacas.com.au/Stud\\_Sires/Dynamic.html](http://www.goldleafalpacas.com.au/Stud_Sires/Dynamic.html)

# Stud Males



## **ElySION Jupiter**

DOB: 17/03/2006

IAR: 94339

**DETAILS:** Jupiter is an 11 time Supreme Champion whose progeny have been awarded seven Supreme Championships

The Proof is in the Progeny.

Sire of 2014 National Champion Intermediate Male and Champion Senior Male. 1st and 3rd Sires Progeny 2014 National and 1st Sires Progeny 2014 Sydney Royal. Limited matings available.

CONTACT: Alpha Centauri Alpacas - Andrew and Bronwyn Munn

PH: 0408 410 280 | EMAIL: info@acalpacas.com

WEB: www.acalpacas.com



## **Benleigh Legend**

DOB: 21/06/2003

IAR: 74978

**DETAILS:** Dr Jim Watts (the SRS fibre guru) describes Legend's fleece as "close to the processing ideal" (high follicle density, low micron primaries, lustrous with uniform crimp style).

CONTACT: Bumble Hill Alpacas - Frank and Julienne Gelber

PH: 02 6365 3669 | EMAIL: gelber@bigpond.com

WEB: www.bumblehill.com.au



## **Bumble Hill Picotec ET**

DOB: 30/03/2009

IAR: 149133

**DETAILS:** The product of two National Supreme Champions (Surilana Piccolo - Ring and Bumble Hill Magnolia - Fleece), Picotec delivers a heavy cutting, fine, even and highly lustrous fleece on a compact, masculine frame.

He is siring a new breed of white and light/medium fawn fleece and ring champions.

CONTACT: Bumble Hill Alpacas - Frank and Julienne Gelber

PH: 02 6365 3669 | EMAIL: gelber@bigpond.com

WEB: www.bumblehill.com.au

# Stud Males



## **Faversham Larry**

DOB: 29/05/2011

IAR: 91974

**DETAILS:** Colour: Solid Light Fawn

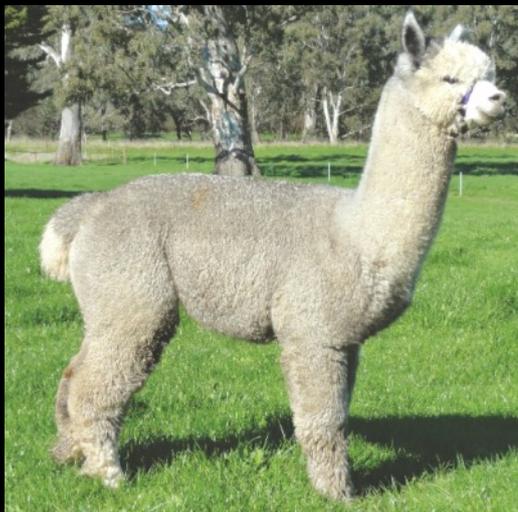
Sire: Faversham Armani (SLF) | Dam: Faversham Daisy (LF)

"Larry" has proven himself again and again. He has won Supreme awards in both fleece and lead classes. With a highly aligned fleece and deep bold crimp distributed evenly across his well proportioned frame. Now his progeny are exceeding expectations and will be available for inspection at the 2015 National Show.

CONTACT: Faversham Alpacas - Sue Wiltshire

PH: 0417 925 840 | EMAIL: favpacas@bigpond.com

WEB: [www.goldleafalpacas.com.au/Stud\\_Sires/Larry.html](http://www.goldleafalpacas.com.au/Stud_Sires/Larry.html)



## **Morning Star Rigel**

DOB: 11/03/12

IAR: 185651

**DETAILS:** Medium Grey

Shanbrooke Alpaca Stud is proud to introduce Morning Star Rigel who carries the quality attributes associated with Shanbrooke, these being:

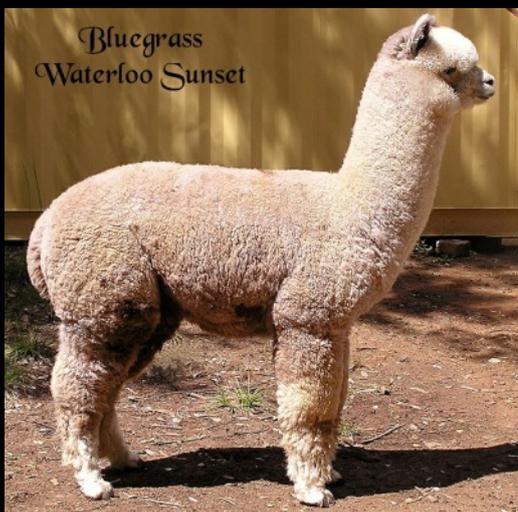
1. Density, 2. Type, 3. Crimp, 4. Handle, 5. Bone

He is a Male that stands proud and has great confirmation and will make his mark in the future.

CONTACT: Shanbrooke Alpacas - Ron Condon

PH: 0409 547 630 | EMAIL: shanbrooke1@bigpond.com

WEB: [www.shanbrooke.com.au](http://www.shanbrooke.com.au)



## **Bluegrass Waterloo Sunset**

DOB: 09/03/2002

IAR: 54142

**DETAILS:** 'Waterloo' is without a doubt Australia's most influential grey male.

His progeny continue to excel in the showing year after year.

At Melbourne Royal this year Waterloo progeny dominated winning the majority of the grey classes including Best Grey confirming he is the most prepotent grey sire in the industry.

CONTACT: Shane Carey - Malakai Alpaca Stud

PH: 0409 270 381 | EMAIL: malakai@vic.chariot.net.au

WEB: [www.malakai.com.au](http://www.malakai.com.au)



### **Bluegrass Star Warrior**

DOB: 24/2/03

IAR: 69602

**DETAILS:** Star Warrior is an outstanding male with excellent density and a high frequency crimp that has remained fine as he has aged.

His cria have been competitive at both Regional and National level. They display superfine lustrous high frequency, high amplitude fleece characteristics.

CONTACT: Shane Carey - Malakai Alpaca Stud

PH: 0409 270 381 | EMAIL: malakai@vic.chariot.net.au

WEB: www.malakai.com.au



### **Bumble Hill Shillac**

DOB: 28/8/01

IAR: 58251

**DETAILS:** Shillac is a well conformed male with superior density and a high frequency crimp, with his Peruvian bloodline he was added to our stable of sires to improve fleece yield and fineness as well as fleece structure and uniformity.

CONTACT: Shane Carey - Malakai Alpaca Stud

PH: 0409 270 381 | EMAIL: malakai@vic.chariot.net.au

WEB: www.malakai.com.au



### **Sierra Vista Santorini**

DOB: 24/1/07

IAR: 116389

**DETAILS:** Santorini is an upstanding well balanced male with excellent coverage and sound bone. He has highly aligned fine staples that carry a high frequency crimp from the root to the tip.

These qualities have been awarded by numerous judges with Santorini winning Championships consistently right through out his show career including 7 Supreme Champion titles. Santorini's cria have also excelled in the show ring with many of them achieving Champion and Supreme Champion titles.

CONTACT: Shane Carey - Malakai Alpaca Stud

PH: 0409 270 381 | EMAIL: malakai@vic.chariot.net.au

WEB: www.malakai.com.au

# New Childrens App



BAFTA winning children's interactive production company & creator of BBC's 'The Lingo Show' launch new app!



**Pacca Alpaca - Australia** is a NEW multilingual app, which encourages children to learn new languages and inspires them to become culturally aware as they embark on a bonza Australian adventure with a cheeky and fun loving Alpaca called Pacca.

Developed by the creators of the BBC's The Lingo Show, Nicole Seymour and Complete Control, a double BAFTA winning children's interactive production company, Pacca Alpaca - Australia is designed for children aged 2 to 6 years.

**Complete Control** - Complete Control is a double BAFTA winning Children's Interactive Production company, specialising in creating interactive and animated content for children's entertainment and education. Working with some of the UK's most respected and well loved children's characters, production companies and children's publishers such as CBBC, CBeebies, BBC WW, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr, Ladybird, Puffin and Penguin. Complete Control has produced interactive content for Charlie and Lola, Teletubbies, In the Night Garden, Dora the Explorer, Peter Rabbit, Spot, Dr Who, Star Wars, The Secret Show and many more.

**Animil Tech** - Pacca Alpaca is the brainchild of Anamil Tech Founder, Dr. Sarah Faisal Al Saud who holds a PhD in Human-computer Interaction. She comments: "My children were born in the UK and I wanted an app that supported language learning in my mother tongue Arabic. I launched Anamil Tech to develop such apps which provide a great resource for parents wanting to introduce their children to languages and different cultures at a young age and help them be respectful and celebratory of them."

Nicole Seymour Creative Director Animil Tech & Freelance Producer, Disney Interactive works in conjunction with Complete Control

developing the Pacca Alpaca series of language and culture based apps for pre schoolers. She conceived, pitched developed and produced The Lingo Show with the BBC. Other notable achievements include the production of the BAFTA winning 'Zing Zillas' website and game and the redesign of the CBeebies website (2009). As a freelance app producer she has created apps for well know childrens brands: Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom - Magic School - eOne, Mister Maker - Let's Make It! (first ever Mister Maker app) - Zodiac Kids, Peppa Pig and Ben & Holly. Working for Disney Interactive she is producing an HTML5 game for 'Doc McStuffins' on Disney Junior that will launching 11 countries across Europe.

**Pacca Alpaca - Australia:** Pacca's adventure unfolds from his home in the Andes Mountains when he spots a new destination from afar and flies off in his magical carousel to investigate. When he lands with a bump in Australia a local host greets him and together they explore the country. Along the way they play games and learn about shapes, colours and numbers, earn rewards and have the chance to learn new words in a chosen language from French, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic or English.

Pacca Alpaca - Australia is the first in a series of Pacca Alpaca adventure apps from Anamil Tech Studio. Each app will introduce children to a new country and cultural setting while they play games and learn new words from five different languages, with more to come. Pacca is present in all the adventures and his natural sense of curiosity, fun and wonder mirrors the spirit of youngsters aged 2 to 6 year old.

## Key Features of Pacca Alpaca - Australia:

- Globe trot with Pacca Alpaca and embark on an Australian adventure
- Learn and revise new words in a chosen language
- Play educational games and learn about shapes, colours and numbers
- Explore wonderful places including - The Bush, City and Beach
- Play however you want! No time limits or strict rules
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# 1990 - 2015 The Australian Alpaca

## 25 Years of Changing Our Rural Landscape

By Tracy Bell - Green, green grass communications on behalf of the Australian Alpaca Association



Media Day - June 8, 1988 (Image courtesy Nancy & Geoff Halpin)

The development of the Australian Alpaca industry, in many ways, captures what it means to be Australian. The pioneers, the innovators, the risk takers and the farmers who, when they give something a go, work damn hard to be the best.

Twenty-five years ago, the farmers who first brought alpaca into the country were rural pioneers with an appetite for risk. Today, Australian alpaca breeders are world leaders in breeding quality with innovation and luxurious Australian developed alpaca bloodlines which now run deeply through the international alpaca industry.

### The Beginning

In the mid-1980s, with Australia already revered for its fleece production skills, the South American alpaca caught the eye of some of the country's most experienced fibre producers.

These farmers, like Geoff Halpin, were looking well beyond the seduction of big eyes and beautiful eyelashes. "We were establishing a new fibre industry and, even before we could import the alpacas, we always talked of it as an industry – we never talked about a hobby."

The first to seek alpaca knew the livestock's reputation for luxury and quality that stretched back to the ancient Inca. So, with a shared admiration for the rare fleece, and great determination, there was change coming to rural Australia.

### Journey to a Smart Future

#### 1985

The founding farmers say it was gruelling work just to get the luxurious and barely understood camel cousin to the country, and they entered the challenging world of international animal export, scientific protocols and quarantine negotiations.

The little known alpaca was a prohibited species with the archaic classification of 'zoo animal'. It was up to visionary farmers to prove the alpaca was well-suited to the Australian landscape and not a pest that would threaten existing livestock with disease.

- Geoff Halpin in conversation

"If we had not persevered in our quest, the alpaca may have remained an obscure animal that Australians would only experience in some travel documentary of the Andes," is the thinking of one of the instigating breeders - Roger Haldane.

It took several years, and a huge financial investment, before protocols were finally written with Chile and the US. Agreements with Peru, the most traditional home of the alpaca, were to come later.



1991 Tullamarine - Chilean alpaca land from NZ. An import by Carolyn and Alan Jinks

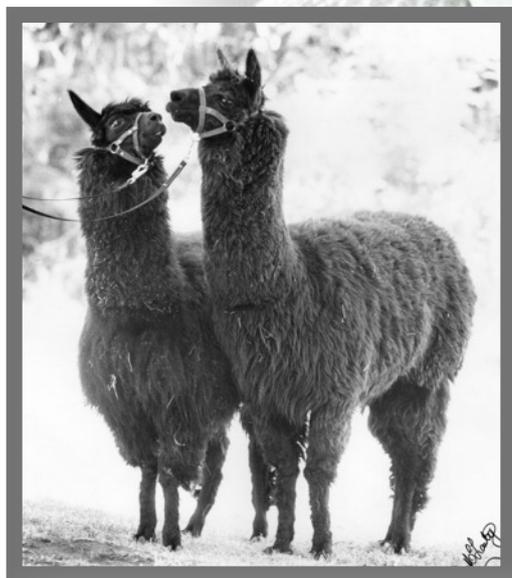


## Alpaca Imports - A Timeline

### 1988 - Victoria

The first alpaca were delivered on farm in Australia.

Nancy and Geoff Halpin from Seymour in Victoria imported two Chilean stud males and one female from Alaska which was the only route they could secure. There was much newsprint as the beguiling, rarely seen alpaca touched down to the fascination of a nation.



Nancy remembers the excitement. "We had a media day a few days after Romeo, Stonewall and Majorett arrived and reporters from radio, papers and TV all came up. We even did a live cross with George Negus into the Today Show."

Early in the following year, the Halpins brought in the country's second alpaca shipment, with another 19 animals.

- *Correspondence with Nancy Halpin 2015*

As one magazine headlined, "The Halpins are importing alpacas for farming, not for their marvellous looks!"

- *Town and Country Farmer, Summer 1998.*

*Geoff Halpin and Romeo*

*Inset - early imports (image courtesy of Wyona Alpacas)*

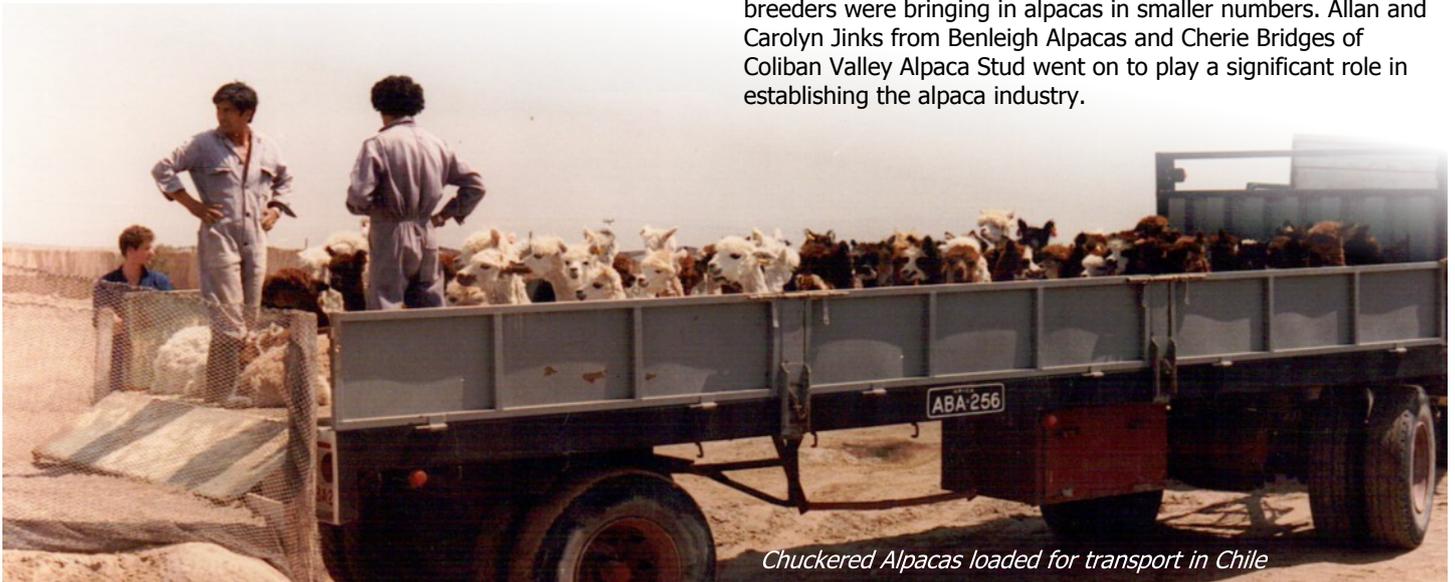


### 1989 - NSW

Alpaca began their move further into rural Australian when three animals from the Halpin's first imports were sold into NSW to fifth generation sheep farmers Andrew and Karen Caldwell on 6,000 acres in Young. They were coming out of a fierce drought and Karen's parents Margaret and Frans de Zwart read how well suited alpaca would be to Australian conditions.

"We thought an alternative fibre stock might be able to relieve some of the problem at Wyona," Margaret recalls. "We saw the Halpin's alpaca at the Adelaide Show and fell in love with both animal and fleece - we chose to breed blacks, browns and greys because the whites were not going to fare well in the red dirt of the Central West!"

- *Conversation with Margaret de Zwart 25/03/15*



### 1990 - NSW

The first direct import of alpaca into NSW was another show of confidence in the rare fleece of the alpaca. Judith Pearce who had farmed sheep on almost a million acres in the Pilbara of Western Australia imported six Chilean alpaca to start a breeding program at her Southern Highlands property Coolaroo. The Halpin's Capalba Park alpaca were part of this story too.

"We already had bought animals in the US but before we could fly them here they had to go to Canada for a 12 month quarantine," Judith recalls. "While we waited for them to land we went down to see Geoff and Nancy and together we had such enthusiasm for what was ahead. It was a huge expense, a huge commitment but we wanted to get the whole industry, the fibre industry going." "And, just six months after our first alpaca arrived, we thought in for a penny, in for a pound and went to Chile to pick up another precious load."

- *Conversation with Judy Street*

### 1990 - Victoria

The Australian herd grew boldly when a chartered 747 aircraft carrying a herd of 480 alpaca flew into Melbourne. It had been a longtime coming for Port Lincoln farmers and fishermen, Roger and Clyde Haldane. Their precious cargo left Chile by sea in 1988 but its first stop had to be New Zealand. Roger moved his family there to care for the animals for 18 months before the Australian government finally cleared the alpaca for import.

- *Correspondence with Roger Haldane on 02/04/15*

"My late brother Clyde, my wife Suzanne and our five children were all key players in what was an adventure of a lifetime," praises Roger.

"Clyde put a lot of time into selecting animals in the South American Altiplano - it would take him months to put together a herd of 300 to 400 quality animals."

"It was his experience from farming sheep and angora goats that put him ahead of most people in the world."

A few months prior to the Haldane import a number of other breeders were bringing in alpacas in smaller numbers. Allan and Carolyn Jinks from Benleigh Alpacas and Cherie Bridges of Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud went on to play a significant role in establishing the alpaca industry.

*Chucked Alpacas loaded for transport in Chile*

## 1991 - Victoria

Following their first shipment, the Haldane brothers joined with sheep and goat farmer Alan Hamilton and the Pet Centre to further grow the national herd. The first of their joint shipments arrived in 1991 with around 300 alpaca onboard and it brought the first Suri alpaca to Australia. Very few countries had yet imported alpaca and the Haldanes soon had the largest herd outside of the animal's native South America.

- *After NZ's Agricola herd broke up (correspondence with Roger Haldane 29/03/15)*

At the time, and even more so in retrospect, the Australian industry praised the Haldane contribution. "We thank Roger and Clyde Haldane for that early start and for knowing what Australia wanted," said breeder and importer Allan Jinks as a shared reflection.

It's a thought that travels around the world with Clyde and Roger Haldane seen as visionaries who made an impact on three continents. As written by alpaca chronicler Eric Hoffman, "Clyde thrived on the puzzle presented by introducing unique animal species to new settings."

The earliest South American alpaca in Australia had sold for up to \$40,000. But as imports of this size continued and breeding herds were set up around the country prices settled between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

- *Margaret de Zwart, Roger Haldane and The Land, May 31 1990.*



Amberdale Alpacas Victoria 1992

## Learning to be the Best



### The 1990's

A lot of learning about this ruminant camelid was to come. Husbandry, breeding, birthing, veterinary care, shearing, fibre handling, fibre processing, judging, industry promotion - everything was new. There was literally no manual - one of the first available references was translated from a found Peruvian text.

The first seminars, first auctions and first shows all followed quickly to the new arena. Educating other farmers and other interested Australians was a task taken up by many of the new breeders.

"We promoted the industry, went into NSW, went all over. We were away almost every weekend for years travelling to all the major agricultural shows," Nancy Halpin said explaining the task that was ahead.

## An Industry is Born - Timeline

### 1990

Eleven breeders gathered on the Halpin's a property in Central Victoria to gauge interest in creating an alpaca industry body. A few months later, the Australian Alpaca Association (AAA) was formed on July 1 at a meeting of nearly sixty breeders in Albury.

- *Nancy Halpin and minutes of inaugural meeting*

Allan Jinks was one of the founding members. "All farmers were excited and we were dedicated to improving the quality of the stock, it was a great feeling to be a part of it."

Some at the meeting had bought alpacas from photographs and were still awaiting delivery.

Wendy Billington of Cedar House Alpacas was one of them. "Everyone was inspired by the fact that it was a rare fibre animal into Australia and, with a background in sheep, I took the plunge."

By the end of 1990 there were 700 alpacas in Australia

- *Weekly Times article 14/11/90*



Pick of the Chilean Males

## The Australian Alpaca is Born

### 1992

The Australian Alpaca Association established a sophisticated animal registry to record herd details and provided advanced breeding predictors. The Australian International Alpaca Register (IAR) was an early strength for the industry that today continues to enhance the quality and value of the Australian Alpaca on the international market.

One breeder, Jenny Morgan of Amberdale Alpacas, summarises how welcomed it was. "It was the day the Australian Alpaca industry came of age."

## Out of Peru

### 1993-1994

The most purely bred alpaca were known to be in the high altitudes of Peru and the country was just opening its borders after 150 years to share their most revered livestock and prized genetics - the superb result of breeding for thousands of years.

The first Peruvian alpaca came into Australia in 1994 in a shipment arranged by a small group of individual breeders. Among them, Wendy Billington of Cedar House Alpacas, importer Laurie Harrison, Dianne and Ron Condon of Shanbrooke Alpaca stud, Jenny and Gray Morgan and the Haldanes for Purrumbete. The shipment was only small and comprised mainly suris.

The animals were purchased at a major auction in the US which was the only country then importing directly from Peru after it lifted a 150 year export ban. Australia was still negotiating its own protocols.

Jenny Morgan recalls the moment. "There was a huge crowd and hundreds of animals being herded around for inspection, it was quite stressful really, but we were delighted to obtain two males of our choice."

So valued were these Peruvian alpaca for the genetic gold they would bring to the Australian herd that one of the finest animals in this shipment was purchased for around \$80,000.

*-(Amount of \$US105,000 cited online by Maggie DiUllio, Casa de Arboles Fine Fiber Farm) & Jenny Morgan notes from auction day*

## Sharing the Love

Stud males at the time were still in short supply in Australia and many breeders had taken on 'a life of mobile matings' to help herds without superior males accelerate their growth. Jenny and Gray Morgan added their Peruvian purchases to their mating van that travelled around Victoria.

"Heading out and returning to do spit-offs, the boys became seasoned travellers, and the sight of the van each morning brought a spring to their step," Jenny said with a laugh.

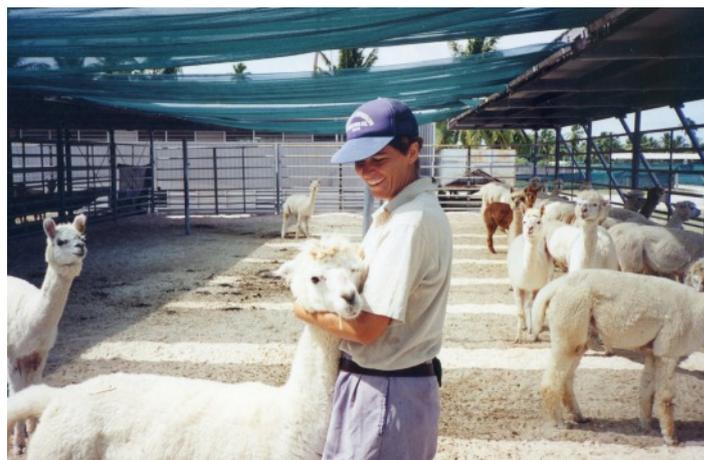
### 1996 -1997

The first alpaca import to come directly from Peru to Australia was a huge shipment of 900 animals put together by Victorian breeders Pat & Rosa Viceconte of Jolimont Alpacas.

The highly sought alpaca were quarantined in the tropical Cocos Islands for 12 months. The shipment finally arrived in Melbourne on two cargo stretched DC 8s in January, 1997 to bring an inestimable influence to the Australian herd.

"The shipment took time in every way; it wasn't a simple exercise, I can't tell you how many properties we went to, how many tens of thousands of alpaca we saw – a half a million at least," explained Pat who had spent many months in Peru selecting these animals including a rare parcel from the prized Accoyo herd of Don Julio Barreda.

"They were the best animals to leave Peru at the time and they helped create the foundation herd for the high quality animals we have in the country now."



*Image courtesy Jane Vaughn*

Australian vet Jane Vaughn was one of a team who travelled to the Indian Ocean to manage the animals in quarantine. It had started out as a herd of 600.

"There were hundreds of cria being born and after that year of looking after the herd's health and reproduction I was completely addicted to alpaca," said Jane elaborating on how she came to specialise in alpaca reproduction.

There were more influential shipments to follow from Peru including another of significant size from Alan Hamilton of Suricaya which quarantined for 12 months on the Pacific Island of Nui.

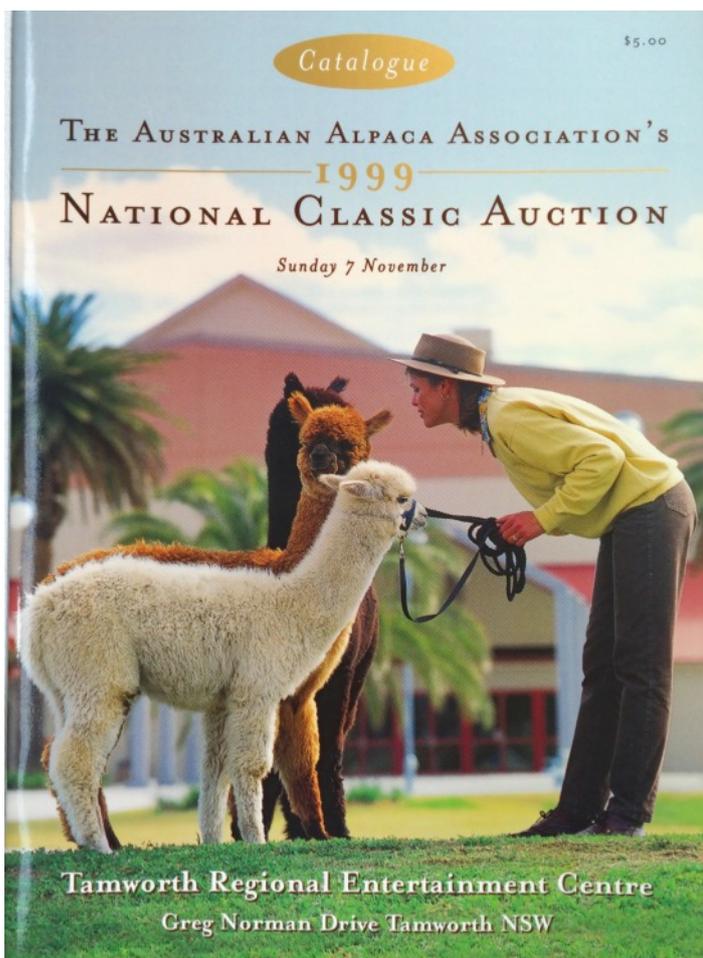
*- Pat Visconte and Jane Vaughn in conversations and correspondence.*

## Now we are Ten

### 2000

When the Australian Alpaca industry turned 10 years old there were 35,500 head of alpaca in the country.

*- Jane Vaughn paper delivered to RIRDC in 2002*



## Growing the Next 25 Years

The alpaca has proven to be very well-suited, indeed, to the Australian rural landscape.

Of course, the industry pioneers always knew that and they are now rewarded to see today's breeders continue to develop the commercial future of the Australian alpaca.

*"It was always going to be a fibre industry, it had to be, and to see that it has grown enormously is very satisfying"*

Says Geoff Halpin who reminds us that the industry is still young and forever exciting.

Roger Haldane, too, always believed in the alpaca's place in Australian agriculture and also gives a nod to their beauty.

*"They can be seen now from the car window in almost every part of the country...and it brings a tear to Suzanne's eye to see them there and remember the journey."*

## 25 Years

### 2015

After 25 years of creating a new rural industry, there now are more than 160,000 registered alpaca in Australia and over 2,000 breeders.  
- AAA - 24/06/15



(Image courtesy of Oak Grove Alpacas NSW)

*We would like to thank the following breeders for delving into their memories and files to help compile this story of the early days of the Australian Alpaca industry. They include: Nancy and Geoff Halpin, Sue and Roger Haldane, Carolyn and Allan Jinks, Rosa and Pat Viceconte, Judith Street, Jenny and Gray Morgan, Jane Vaughn, Margaret and Frans de Zwart, Karen and Andrew Caldwell, Alan Hamilton, Wendy Billington and Ron Condon. There are many current breeders who have also been sharing their stories, particularly on the first Australian alpaca exports which is the next chapter in the birth of a rural industry that has changed the Australian landscape.*



# Overview of Alpacas: The UK/EU

By Michelle Malt President Australian Alpaca Association Ltd

In March this year I had the opportunity to visit the United Kingdom on a self funded trip which enabled me to attend alpaca industry events and engage with industry bodies in the UK and Europe and to also gain an insight into the judging of the BAS National Show by accompanying Natasha Clark who had been invited to judge at this prestigious event. As with the Australian industry, much of the organisation of the show is undertaken by volunteers, and with the fleece judging to be done on a weekday, the number of volunteers able to assist as stewards was at a minimum.

Arriving in London from Australia on Monday afternoon and heading towards Oxford, Tuesday morning saw Natasha and I navigating ourselves through the English country side to locate the members farm where the fleece judging would be held. As Natasha was judging fleeces in conjunction with Matthew Lloyd, a BAS Judge, the shed was set up for both judges to work independently, with a small team of stewards assisting. I had offered to assist, and was assigned the task of scribing for Natasha, giving me an opportunity to see and feel the fleeces entered in the BAS National Show. Each judge had two fleece tables to work at, and the stewards laid out a fleece at each table so the judge could move seamlessly from one fleece to another. The fleeces had been pre-weighed and were individually set out on the floor of the shed in their class groups. The preparation was evident and the setup had been well planned to allow for things to flow smoothly.

Acknowledging Natasha's experience with suri fleece, she had been assigned all of the suri fleece classes to judge, in addition to several of the coloured huacaya fleece classes. Matthew had the larger huacaya fleece classes. In total there were around 120 fleeces entered. The BAS National Show classes are arranged much like our Colour Championship Show format – with each colour section awarded Champion and Reserve Champion, and in

addition to the Supreme Fleece (suri and huacaya) there is also a Best of British award, given to the best fleece exhibited from a British-bred alpaca, and a Judges Choice award. Matthew and Natasha worked well together, at times assessing the others fleeces to confirm their evaluation and it was pleasing to note that they were 'on the same page' when it came to their assessments of micron and handle, and their allocation of points. When determining their Champion fleeces, Supreme, Best of British and Judges Choice awards, their decisions were made jointly, and both Natasha and Matthew were happy that the winning fleeces carried the best attributes of their breed type. The Supreme Suri fleece was a Light (fawn) fleece from Houghton Royal Duchess (ET) exhibited by Mick & Liz George of Houghton Hall Alpacas, and the Supreme Huacaya fleece was a White fleece from Ashwood Hope, exhibited by Steve and Chris Powell of Ashwood Alpacas.



After the fleece judging Natasha and I again navigated the English country side to Shifnal, near Telford where the halter judging was to be held on Saturday and Sunday. This was a somewhat greater challenge than our morning navigation as by the time fleece judging had concluded it was late afternoon, so much of our driving was in the dark, on English motorways, and involved navigating our way around the city of Birmingham. We eventually located our hotel after driving down a narrow country road seemingly in the middle of nowhere, bringing a very long tiring day to a conclusion.

With Natasha judging the halter show on the weekend a visit to any alpaca studs was off limits, however Krufts Dog Show – the largest in the world – was being held at the National Events Centre in Birmingham around an hour away. We visited the show on Thursday and it was an amazing experience. The show was held across five enormous exhibition halls with over 20 show rings, plus larger exhibition rings for Obedience Trials, agility and other events, were packed with exhibitors, dogs and visitors. There were commercial stalls selling every conceivable product for dogs – food, leads, bedding and more – in addition to homewares, footwear, clothing and other services.

The BAS National Halter Show at The International Centre in Telford was not on the same scale as Krufts, but with over 400 animal entries the shed was filled to capacity. Natasha co-judged the halter classes with Cathy Lloyd, a BAS Judge, commencing with the female alpaca classes on Saturday and the male alpacas on Sunday, leading to the award of Supreme Champion and Best British Bred at the conclusion of the show. As with the fleece classes, the halter classes were arranged by colour, beginning with the greys, then blacks, gradually lightening to the white class; with suri classes preceding the huacaya. Natasha and Cathy alternated with providing the oral reasonings on each class, receiving excellent feedback from exhibitors who valued the informative comments regarding their animals and the justification of the placings. It was obvious that Natasha and Cathy were in sync with their judging, with some very competitive classes in some sections requiring animals to be reinspected and compared to determine final placings. The exhibitors appreciated the time taken to assess the animals in order to ensure Natasha and Cathy were in agreement with their decisions. The Suri Supreme Champion was awarded to Houghton Mystical Magic, exhibited by Mick and Liz George of Houghton Hall Alpacas, who also received the Best British Bred

Suri award; and the Huacaya Supreme Champion was also the Best British Bred Huacaya, awarded to Popham Havengore exhibited by Gary and Felicia Sanders of Popham Alpacas.

The exhibition area was divided into the animal penning and show ring areas, with some exceptional promotional displays by a number of studs. The fleece and craft entries were displayed in the Trade Stall area, adjacent to the café, and this area was very popular with visitors to the show.



A gala dinner was held on Saturday night, and I was given the opportunity to speak to the attendees about where the Australian Alpaca industry is positioned and the direction the Association is taking and our initiatives and progress towards a fully commercial and viable industry. This presentation was very well received, as was Natasha's insights into her experience in the alpaca industry throughout the past twenty years and her advice on making the right breeding and herd choices to maximise returns into the future. With Matthew and Cathy Lloyd as members of both BAS and AAA it was pleasing to hear from both of them that they felt the Australian industry was well portrayed and was clearly making significant progress as a viable commercial industry. This is a great picture to present to our counterparts overseas.





It is my view that the Australian industry is slightly ahead of our UK counterparts in terms of the depth of the industry - certainly the quality of animals in the UK herd has an Australian influence and their top animals would likely feature in the line up of ribbon winners at an Australian show, however in overall terms their industry is less mature but making rapid progress. An increasing number of breeders in the UK are value-adding to produce their own fleece product and the UK is in a slightly enviable position in that they have some manufacturing and processing capabilities still in the UK. Adding to their opportunity is the growing demand for alpacas from Ireland and a number of European countries, and their close proximity and membership of the European Union is certainly an advantage in terms of sales for quality animals in a market with keen interest.

Following the BAS National Show, Natasha and I spent the next few days visiting different studs in the UK, catching up with Matthew and Cathy Lloyd at their UK base, travelling to Dorchester to visit Tim and Tracey Hey's purpose built alpaca property and then spending time at Houghton Hall Alpacas where Natasha conducted a suri training day for the BAS Judges. This training day gave the judges the opportunity to assess both animals and fleeces, and Natasha had taken some fleece samples from Australian animals for the BAS Judges to compare against the suri fleece style in the UK. Mick and Liz George were extremely generous in making their property available for the training day and providing access to their suri herd and their show fleeces.

From Houghton Hall Natasha and I travelled to London, Paris and Bruges, before I again immersed myself into the alpaca scene and visiting breeders in Belgium and the Netherlands, and attending the Hapert Show near Eindhoven, one of the largest shows in Europe organised by the Benelux Alpaca Association (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). Held on Saturday and Sunday just under 300 alpacas were exhibited at Hapert Show which followed a similar colour format to the BAS National, however both male and female animals in each colour section were judged on the same day. The venue was an equestrian centre at Hapert, situated near Eindhoven and it was extremely cold on both days of the show. There were only a very small number of suri alpacas at the show, however there are some passionate suri breeders in Benelux. There were breeders from the UK and New Zealand at Hapert Show, and a dinner was held at a nearby hotel on the Saturday night, which was a lively and entertaining affair.

Given the smaller class numbers in the majority of instances all of the animals in each section would usually enter the ring together, with the judge making his assessment of the animals and then bringing the ribbon winners forward and presenting the ribbons and delivering his oral reasoning. As with the BAS National there was perhaps not the same depth of quality as we are fortunate to have here in Australia, but there are a number of studs that have clearly made wise purchasing and breeding decisions and the future of the industry in this part of Europe shows great promise with some very enthusiastic and active breeders who have quality animals in their herds and are keen to expand the industry and demonstrate the potential for commercial scale.



One aspect of the alpaca industry and its participants that has struck me wherever I have travelled is the generosity, enthusiasm and sincerity of those who breed alpaca. Despite having either never, or only briefly met people they were happy to open their homes to us, show their facilities and animals to us and they fed us exceptionally well! They are genuinely interested in what is happening in the Australian industry and what AAA and our members are doing.

I was certainly proud to represent the Australian industry and it was a privilege to spend time with Natasha Clark, Matthew and Cathy Lloyd, Tim Hey and numerous alpaca breeders talking about alpacas, fleece and the strong future of the global alpaca industry and the role each of us can play in achieving that eventuality.





# NEVER KNEW ALPACA 'FELT' THIS WAY...

By Francis E.B. Rainsford

Whilst working on an alpaca garment finishing project in the Centro de Innovacion Tecnologica Textil (CITE Textil) of the Instituto Peruano de la Alpaca y Camelidos (IPAC) in Arequipa some years ago, Erika Muñoz was curious to see if it was possible to felt alpaca fibre and produce different and interesting qualities of finished cloths and garments.

Her colleagues advised her that it was not practical due to the small scale count (when compared to wool) on alpaca fibres but, nevertheless, it was a thought that would nag her until 2009 when she formed her own company, Brisan E.I.R.L. ([www.brisantextiles.com](http://www.brisantextiles.com)), and commenced to produce a range of knitted garments and accessories in alpaca.

Once her knitwear range was established, she turned her attention to woven fabrics and, in particular, the finishing techniques that could enhance them.

## **Development of felting techniques for alpaca**

Being only a small sized business, the company has a staff of eight employees. The challenge to mount a research and development programme to investigate how best alpaca could be felted, was a daunting one, and Muñoz decided to consult local alpaca finishing expert Andres Manrique.

Manrique, with almost thirty years experience of applying various finishing applications to alpaca garments, was keen to get involved.

He explained, "Our approach was to focus on techniques that could be applied on a small scale allowing Brisan to offer bespoke and unique products rather than anything on a larger basis and without losing the characteristics that define and identify alpaca to the final consumer."

In 2012, they applied to the Peruvian government's Innovate Peru scheme for small business development and were awarded funds by its Fondo de Investigacion y Desarrollo para la Competitividad (FIDECOM) based on their proposal to felt alpaca fabrics and garments in regular cylindrical drum washing machines (in Brisan's case a machine made in Spain). Muñoz and Manrique contacted the main suppliers of textile finishing chemicals and enzymes in Peru and laid out a programme of experimental conditions to encourage alpaca to felt using their specialised products.

The parameters that they defined as a priority were to control the variables associated with the water used in the machine, namely temperature, pH and the relationship between immersion in an aqueous solution and the application of steam.

Then, the mechanics of the machine process were governed with regard to the process's time-cycle and drum speed (rpm). Here the amount of time the garment is in the machine and the speed with which the agitation process is carried out at are seen as critical in achieving the balance sought between felting and retaining fibre properties.

The measurement of the success of their experiments was determined by the retention of alpaca's smooth handle, overall appearance, drape, elasticity, dimensional stability and comfort factor.

Muñoz recalled, "Once we received the funding our work commenced in earnest and, two years down the track, we now have a range of felted products such as coats, jackets and tops for both ladies and children in a range of different weights which we sell in our domestic market and following contacts made during the Alpaca Fiesta (10th to 15th November 2014) in Arequipa, we have commenced to trial and sample abroad." Brisan's full felted range is comprised of 100% Baby Alpaca, 70% Baby Alpaca/30% Wool and 60% Superfine Alpaca/40% Wool. It has also successfully felted a blend of 70% Baby Alpaca/30% Silk which has a surprisingly agreeable handle though, as Muñoz points out, its commercial viability and value is yet to be established.

### **Expansion of company's products and services**

The successful commercialisation of a range of felted alpaca garments has helped Muñoz define a new strategy for the business and open up new avenues of opportunity.

She explained, "Whilst the knitted garments that we have produced since 2009 are a key aspect of our place in the world of fashion, it has to be said that the market for small alpaca knitwear manufacturers in Peru is increasingly more competitive. Our development of felted woven garments has taken us into a new market niche but, equally important has been our focus and specialising on felting as just one of various textile finishing processes now available to us."



“Alpaca is renowned for it’s softness of handle and excellent drape in tailoring. Garments that have been felted are very much in fashion and command higher price levels, especially in export markets”



The company has been able to branch out and offer commission services for other small manufacturers who require their knitted panels and fabrics to be washed prior to final packaging.

Brisan is currently contracting its services to local manufacturers of garments and fabrics in cotton, wool, alpaca and blends. This service has recently stepped-up to include laundering and care services for hotels and corporations where bedding materials, towels, furnishings, tableware and uniforms are laundered with Brisan's trademark of retaining the items original tactile characteristics.

The range of processing includes laundering (both wet and dry), stain removal, steaming, ironing, making buttonholes, sewing-on buttons and labels.

A nagging curiosity and the will to conduct an investigation of the prospect of felting alpaca has resulted in a success story for Erika Muñoz and Brisan E.I.R.L.

The business model that she has created enables small orders for felted alpaca products to be realised using standard, affordable machinery in Arequipa's small business textile sector which increasingly operates on a Prato-like basis where individual companies offer their services to both allies and competitors alike.

It is a good example where, instead of pursuing a large scale production path, an entrepreneur has shown that the added value of a final product can offset its lack of production volume.

From the alpaca industry's viewpoint the fact that alpaca and blends can be felted successfully helps keep it in contention with other natural fibres in a fashion world that is ever more competitive.

Looking to the future, Muñoz said, "Felted alpaca gives the fibre a new texture and different properties and is one way of overcoming some of the limitations that have excluded it from certain fashion applications. Brisan has had a useful learning experience in the possibilities offered by finishing techniques in general. I believe that we can build on this and explore new techniques to improve and enhance the fibre's natural characteristics for the benefit and pleasure of the final consumer."

*Reprinted courtesy of Alpaca World Magazine*



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- WFI supports the Australian Alpaca Association events throughout the year



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# AUSTRALIAN ALPACA GOES URBAN

## Alpaca Week Goes All Out to Celebrate 25th

By Green, green grass communications on behalf of the Australian Alpaca Association

This Autumn the Australian Alpaca industry swung into action to pre-promote Australian Alpaca Week with fresh, urban pizzazz.

City shoppers & commuters were stunned when they encountered charming pop-up herds & displays. They just couldn't get enough of our superfine friends - bedecked as they were in their fun and informative 25th anniversary 'swingtag' labels and surrounded by luxurious end products & informative stud owners.

"AAA member teams herded their alpaca into specially negotiated CBD spaces around Australia, where they surprised and charmed everyone who passed by. It's a very big undertaking. They all did such amazing work, and we owe them our deepest appreciation", said AAA Director for Marketing Dinah Fisher.

The AAA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 'Urban Alpaca' event series was designed to reach large crowds, to intrigue, fascinate and educate. It created plenty of new dialogue and excitement around Australian Alpaca, driving visitation to Open Farms around the nation during May's Australian Alpaca Week.

The events connected the innate visual appeal of live alpaca with current public interest in products and industries that are natural, local, luxurious and have eco-credentials. This produced a wave of public event, print/broadcast, and social media fun that reverberated around the world.

"There are people in business suits, cuddling alpacas, it's just the strangest sight, with these adorable animals!" enthused one radio presenter at the scene, as another alpaca honed his ice cream stealing skills nearby, so fun was had by all.

In addition to the high levels of local attention in Australia, media as far away as China, the US, and the UK also reported on the events. The total audience for the event, onsite and on air or online, numbers in the millions.

Participating members used a range of display materials provided by AAA to educate and engage the crowds. Lighthearted oversize 'Swingtags' delivered simple key messages about Australian Alpaca to pique interest and inspire curiosity.

Each city interpreted the Australian Alpaca into their unique urban space in their unique way, and the interest generated bold outcomes & opportunities for studs opening for AAW.

"We made a very strong statement for our industry this year" said Ms Fisher. "Members all around Australia reported record outcomes at their Open Farms. We're now deep in planning for AAW 2016, and are feeling very excited about what's in store."

*Alpacas charmed tourists & public servants alike on the lawns of Australia's national parliament house*



*25 cute Swingtags were created, each containing fun facts to help the crowds get in step with the exotic alpaca*

Jenny Jackson of Banksia Park Alpacas in WA, helps spread the word about Australian Alpaca (image courtesy of Treechange Alpacas)



On behalf of all members of the Australian Alpaca Association, we thank everyone involved in making this rewarding event possible. A special thank you also to those members who responded to the call, but were prevented from joining the fun this year. Your team spirit is treasured.



Crowds flocked to Brisbane's city centre to meet alpacas and shop alpaca product. (Photo courtesy Glen Terah Alpacas)

# A TALE OF 5 CITIES

## BRISBANE

Paltarra Park mustered a team to present animals and alpaca retail product in Queen Street Mall. Crowds were constant and sales were strong.

## CANBERRA

Jimburra Alpacas and team herded alpacas onto the lawns of Parliament for a busy day of media & selfies moments & plenty of public education opportunities.

## GEELONG

Sensuri Alpacas merged their alpaca team effort with the Geelong After Dark event for even more value, and enjoyed the promotional support of the Mayor.

## MELBOURNE

Pitchingga Ridge Alpacas put together a big team for a big day out in City Square with big crowds loving the animals, alpaca knitwear label Amano by Lorena Laing and other display products.

## PERTH

Toffeewood Alpacas led their team into the Murray Street Mall, where "everybody stopped" to look, touch and talk 25 years of Australian Alpaca.

# Sneak Peeks At Alpaca Week



By Green, green grass communications on behalf of the Australian Alpaca Association

*Wahgunurry Alpaca stud and Nattameri Alpacas in northern NSW celebrated AAW on Mothers' Day, with over 300 visitors for Devonshire tea and "Pat a Paca" (Images courtesy Wahgunurry Alpacas)*

Australian Alpaca Week 2015 was a busy one this year for many members. New marketing materials were distributed electronically, and were well interpreted to individual stud & region needs to present Australian Alpaca to new audiences.

An alpaca product catalogue was distributed, along with new children's activity sheets, stickers, posters, brochures, and more.

Media interest was high, with total audiences for AAW messaging reaching into the millions. Social media was highly fertile ground, revealing great potential for further campaigns.

Whilst some studs were not smiled upon by weather gods, numerous members have reported increased crowd numbers as well as significant livestock sales occurring directly through AAW events.

The AAA marketing team is now focusing on gathering and analyzing AAW 2015 outcomes for future reference. Member suggestions have been gathered to hone all marketing materials and strategies for all future promotional campaigns and events.

AAA President Michelle Malt acknowledged the hard work that goes into staging an AAW event, and thanked all members who

participated in all aspects of Australian Alpaca Week this year. "Because of Australia's diverse local seasons & event calendars, it's a challenge to create singular national campaigns in this country. Whenever we can, it's really important for us to unite to present one clear, positive voice about our industry, and I can't thank the membership enough for engaging so effectively with Alpaca Week this year", she said. "We can't wait for the next occasion when we have all have a chance to again pull together to bring the smart future of Australian Alpaca to new audiences".

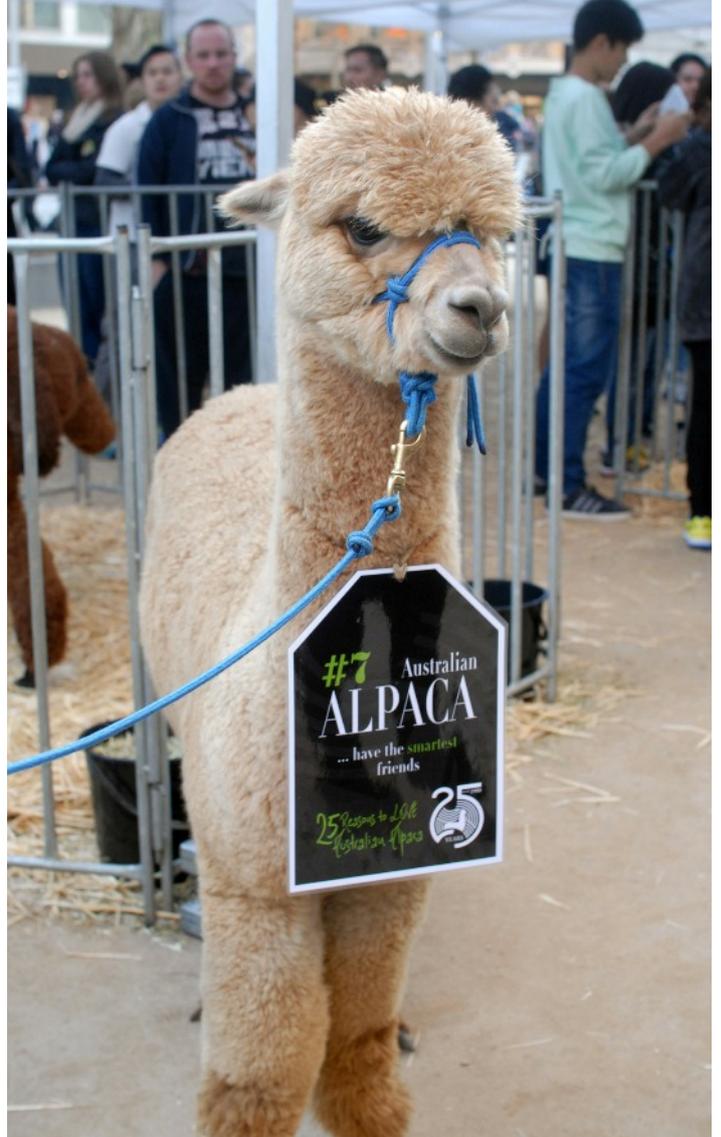


*Ocean View Winery in SE QLD had a busy mothers day with four local alpaca studs joining in the fun day to promote alpaca week (Photo courtesy Glen Terah Alpacas)*

## WHAT WORKED FOR YOU ABOUT AAW THIS YEAR?

- "100 people each day, I have a hoarse throat. Great weather, people stayed and eat, drank tea/coffee. (We) cooked alpaca to try, a few possible sales in the future I think."
- "Fabulous, we held a joint alpaca open day with six breeders in attendance and had nearly 500 people visit... which resulted in the sale of 8 alpacas!"
- "AAW is a worthwhile exercise and (binds) members together in a common goal."
- "Thank you to the AAA for providing electronic versions of materials for members use. I thought I would share with you one of the ways as a member have been able to benefit by having access to electronic copy. I found it very easy to create an image for use with social media and plan to use them further over the next two weeks. I can see other advantages too i.e. use in regular media."
- We had 43 people come thorough on the day. Several people were really interested in purchasing alpacas. Visitors were very interested in the craft displays and at least two that I know have joined the local craft club and are learning to spin, with fleeces bought from me on the day. My sales of alpacas products were very pleasing. Overall I would say my day was very successful.
- "In general, I would like to thank the AAA for the effort in advertising Nationally, that gives us the opportunity to tag along with this event, and to progress not only the alpaca industry in general, but our own stud specifically, and to continue to raise awareness for what is available in the area, as well as the industry."

*Image at right courtesy GeelongAdvertiser.com.au*



*This helpful Huacaya assisted Melbourne crowds in discovering all 25 reasons to love Australian alpaca.*



# Birthing - When to MYOB

## A guide for new breeders

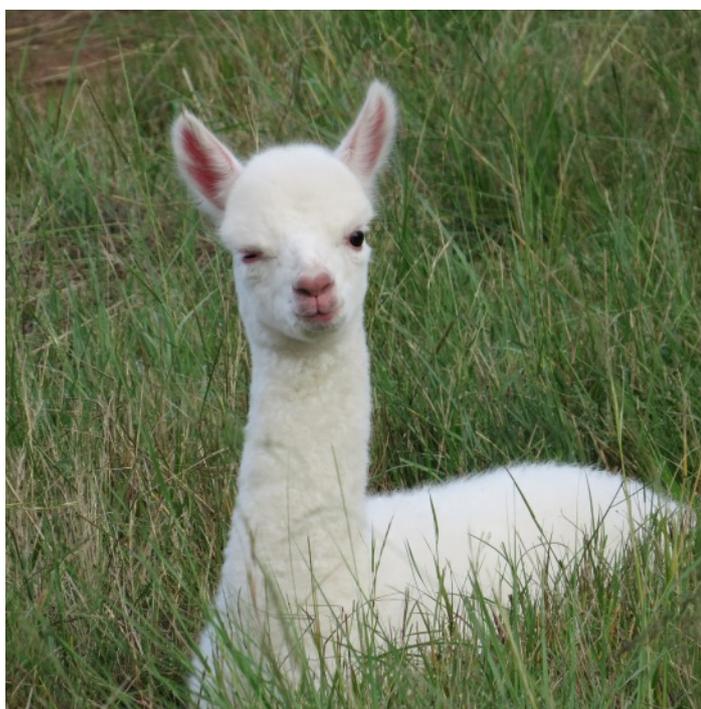
By Peter Woodyer

I sold a herd nucleus last year to a client who assured me that she 'knew animals' and was perfectly capable of looking after her new alpaca herd. After all she did have a mare which had foaled two years ago without any problems!

So when the time came last week for the first of her cria to be born, my routine telephone call to check on the state of the herd found the poor lady in a terrible state. She had read that between one and ten per cent of all alpaca deliveries had to have assistance and she had no idea what sort of problems might occur or what to do about them.

My first thought was 'One to ten percent?' Good heavens, in all the 500 or so births that I have attended I have interfered with only three, and admit to two of them being little more than a gentle downwards tug and totally unnecessary. The third however was a different kettle of fish as the cria was in a position where intervention by an experienced veterinarian was essential. So being a vet with over forty years in practise behind me I was able to save the dam though the cria was already dead and drastic measures were required to remove her.

So one in five hundred represents only 0.2%. Was the writer of the article way off base or have I just been lucky. The answer is probably "Yes". So what can go wrong? Problems associated with birthing fall into one or more of three categories - Pre-partum, that is before the birth, the birth itself, and post partum, after the birth.



Prior to birth, problems start with the selection of a sire, genetic problems. There are several well known hereditary problems that occur in the camelids and any hint of these is to be avoided at all costs. They vary from Choanal Atresia where the back of the mouth and pharynx are not properly formed to patellar luxation, a crippling defect in the stifle joint with many more defects between. It is essential that new owners ascertain before buying any animals for the purposes of breeding, that no defects are present in the herds from which their animals come. Fortunately lists of defects are available on line with their descriptions and in the case of many of these defects, how to recognize them. Defects are not common and most reputable breeders, whilst maybe not broadcasting the fact that they exist in their herd, do ensure that any that do occur are not repeated by eliminating the sire and dam of affected cria from any breeding programme.

The other main pre-natal cause of birthing problems is associated with nutrition. Too little feed for the dam will starve the unborn and can result in small, weak cria. But the more frequently seen problem with feeding is when the dams are overweight and lack exercise. Birthing then becomes a problem because of weakness and lack of stamina. Occasionally seen are problems caused by the feeding of diets lacking certain minerals or vitamins - but these are seen more frequently after the birth.

Problems at birthing itself are frequently imaginary for those who have not previously witnessed a birth. The constant rising and kushing of the expectant dam, the sight of the highly swollen perineum just before the cria pokes his or her nose out of the vulva and the obvious pain and discomfort involved scare these owners almost out of their wits on occasion. The most difficult thing for the owner to do is "Nothing." As long as the birth is progressing, that is. Only when the natural birthing process stops or if the wrong part of the cria starts coming is there cause for worry.

The birth itself, to the observer, seems to be a function of only the dam but unseen, in the depths of the womb, the cria has a job to do positioning itself ready for a quick and relatively painless exit. This involves moving around to an ideal position pointing the nose and fore feet to the rear of the dam, right side up with the hind feet folded nicely so that they will extend at the right time and slide out easily after the rest of the main mass.

The first part of the cria to be seen in a normal, uncomplicated birth are the two front feet, soles facing downward. Should no progress be made at this point, it should be checked that these are indeed the front feet and not the rear ones. After a good cleansing of first the rear end of the animal, then of the operator's hands and arms, a well lubricated hand may be gently inserted through the vulva to feel for the elbow, all the while visualizing the anatomy of the cria and hoping not to feel a hock joint. However, if the hock is felt, veterinary assistance is required, quickly.



In a normal birth the head is followed by the front feet, either above or below, the nose often being seen first. At this stage progress often slows down until head and shoulders are exposed after which, in a normal birth, the rest of the cria is delivered in a rush of fluid. Problems most frequently seen are associated with malpositioning of the cria, in other words failure of the cria to do its job. Either one or both front legs back, head bent back or hind legs extended forward are the more frequently seen with a reverse presentation or belly up position being recognized on occasion. On the one time that I had to legitimately help in an alpaca birthing the cria had died and was curled up with its front legs and head between its hind legs with the hind feet just visible at the vulvar opening, the so called frog position, a rare occurrence.



Following the birth of a cria the afterbirth or placenta is delivered, often within an hour or so. Failure of placental delivery during the twelve hours or so following delivery of a cria can lead to real problems as the placental tissue remaining inside can decompose and interfere with future fertility.

Of more importance however is the possibility of infection of the tissue in which case an infection of the lining of the uterus can impair totally any chance of future fertility. Whenever a cria is born the messy job of spreading the delivered placenta out is important to ensure that it is all there.

If it is not, veterinary advice should be sought.

*Birth Sequence photos supplied courtesy of Paltara Park Alpacas*





Post partum, many and varied problems can be encountered. The milk supply may be absent either temporarily or more rarely, permanently. It is imperative that the cria get the first milk or colostrum from its mother within the first few hours of birth to get a passive immunity to infection found in the dams' environment. So the gentle expression of a few drops of milk from each teat will ensure that not only the presence of milk but also the patency of the openings in the teat ends. Haemorrhage will sometimes be seen and if persistent or occurring profusely should be attended to. In the case of a haemorrhage associated with a ruptured uterus, open abdominal surgery will probably be necessary. Also seen though rarely, is a uterine prolapse. This requires a rapid professional treatment.

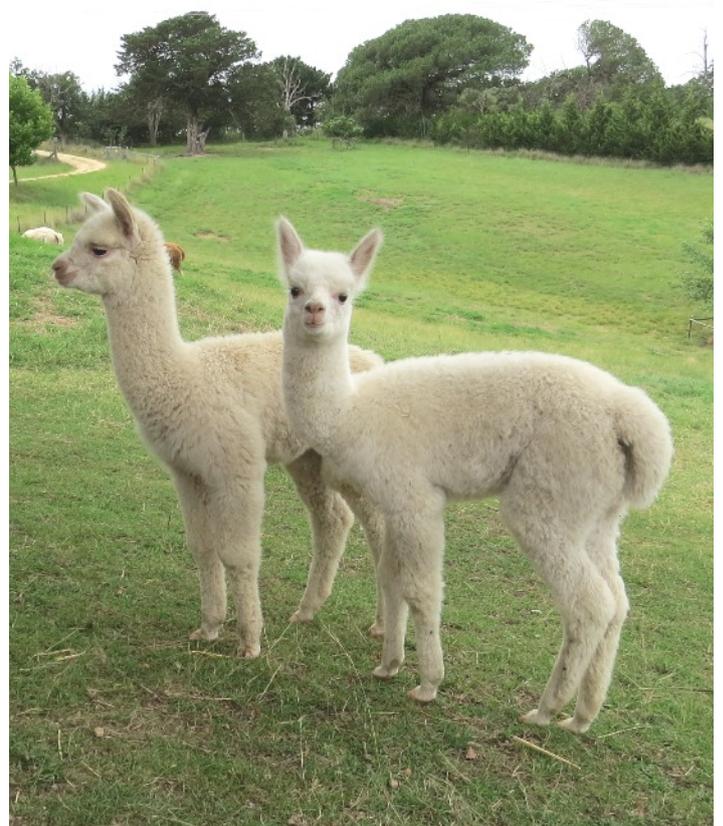
The more common problems associated with the dam at this stage are infections. Uterine, as mentioned above as well as milk gland infections, ie. mastitis. Both of these conditions require the intervention of a person with a good knowledge of what sort of infections can occur and how to accurately diagnose and treat each. Virtually never seen is the rejection of a cria by its dam. More common is the situation where a cria will suckle from not only its own dam but also from other lactating females. To prevent this, the dam and her cria have to be separated from other lactating females to force the cria to bond only with its mother.

Finally the dam may possibly suffer from mineral deficiencies though if the diet has been well formulated this condition will be rare. Calcium, Phosphorus and Magnesium are three of the major minerals that are necessary and have to be present in the correct ratios to each other as well as a horde of trace minerals like iodine, copper, iron, selenium, zinc and many others. Deficiency or over abundance (poisoning) by any of these can interfere with the health of the dam and/or cria but are things that most owners will never see because camelids nowadays are fed rations that are more than adequate.

So when the dear lady that 'knew all about animals' panicked at reading that 1 - 10% of all births needed intervention, she asked if she could attend a talk that I offered but she refused when she

bought the animals. A few days later I gave her the introductory seminar that I offer to new owners and managed to allay most of her fears.

But the fact remains, one in-a-hundred to one-in-ten not only is a wide range but in my experience is too high. But I know nothing of the science of statistics and realize that my experience is limited and that five hundred or so births is hardly enough to be a significant number. Perhaps ten thousand occurrences might be acceptable, and I do not have time for those to occur in my lifetime. So I am selling my herd now, show winners and all before getting the true answer, but in the meantime enquiring minds will be at work and may get some accurate answers.



*Article courtesy of CQ magazine*

*About the Author*

*Peter grew up in South West England and graduated from the University of London, Royal Veterinary College in 1964. In 1965 he immigrated to Canada and a large animal practice, devolving to small animal practice, with a special interest in orthopaedic surgery.*

*He retired from veterinary practice in 1995 but in 1998 he and his wife Anne developed an interest in alpacas. After researching them and the industry for two and a half years, they purchased their first animals in 2000. They run their small herd of fifty-or-so animals, including boarders, at their farm in the famous Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia - approximately an hour from Halifax and the international airport.*



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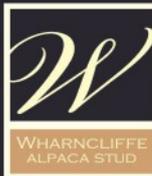
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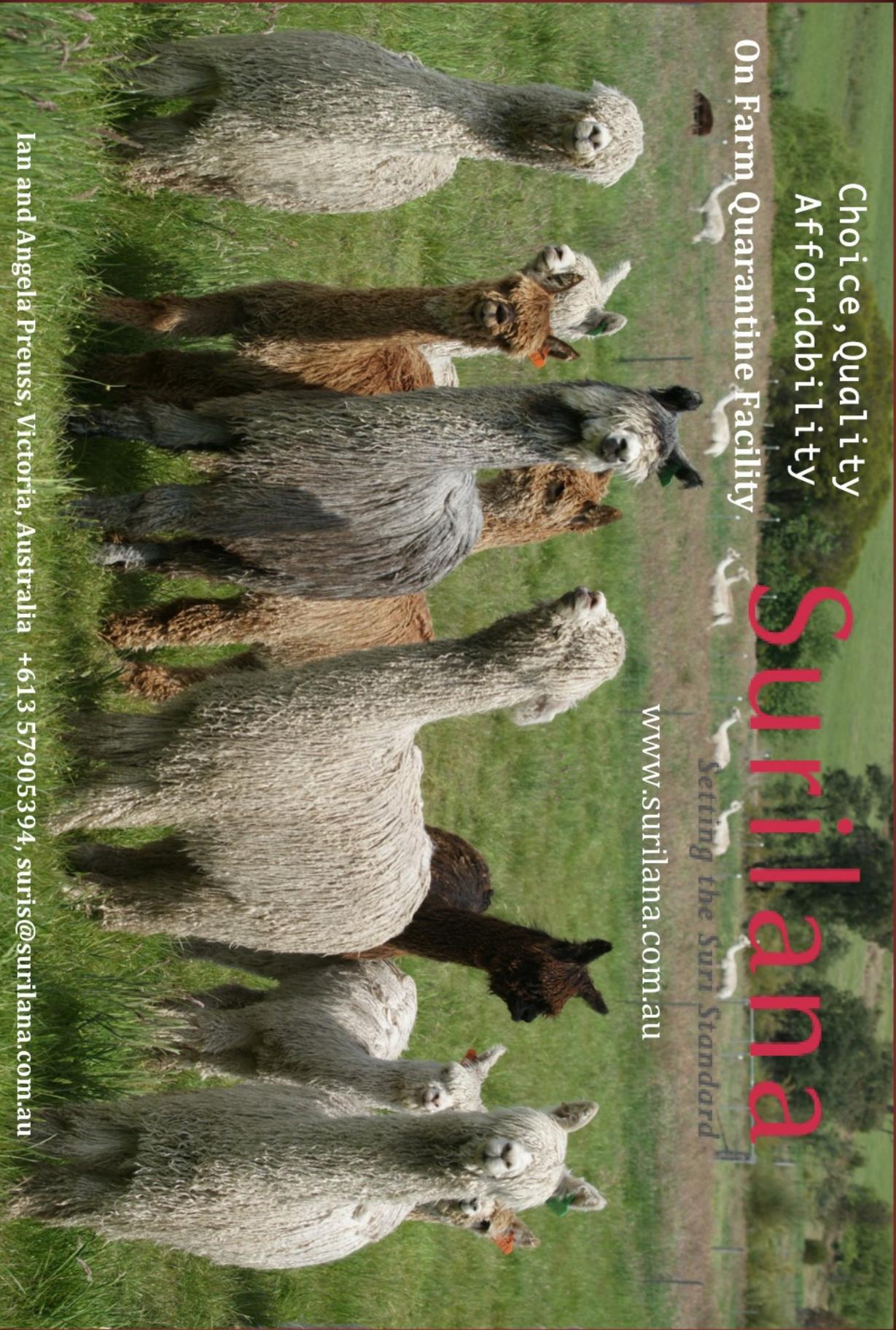
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