

World of ALPACAS

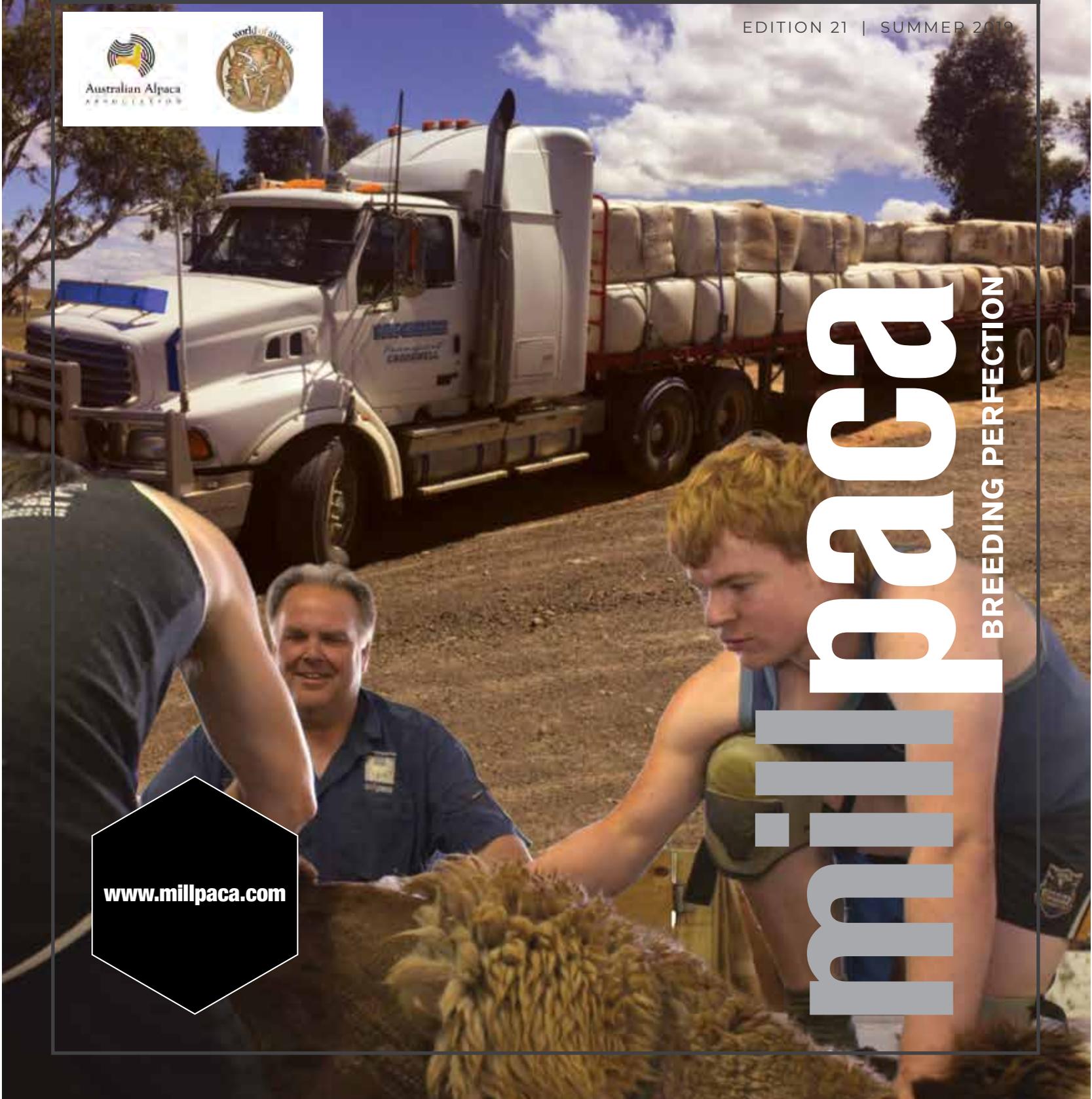
& AUSTRALIAN ALPACA ASSOCIATION

EDITION 21 | SUMMER 2019



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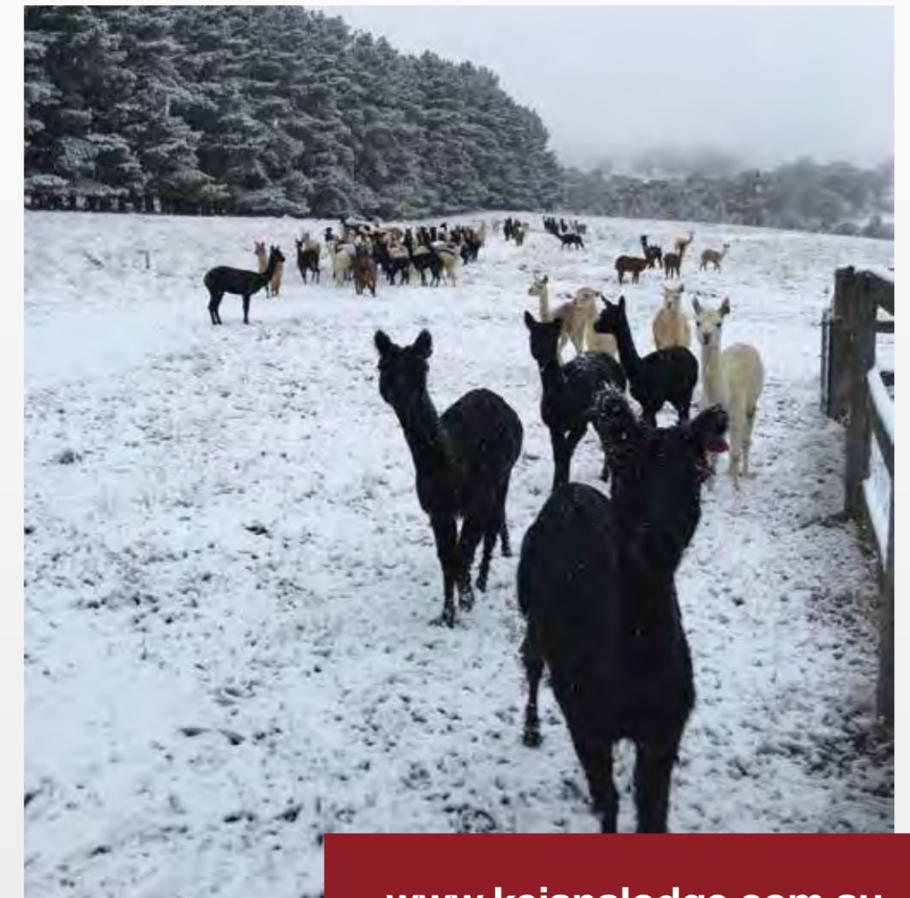
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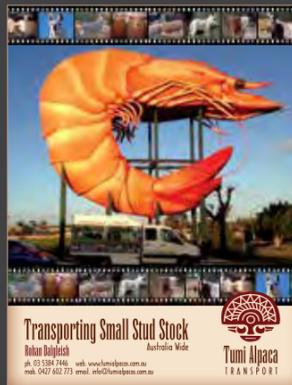
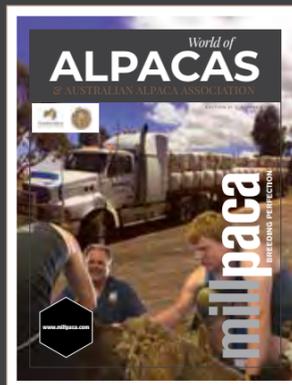
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Hi All,

Welcome to 2019, we wish you all the success and good health in this new year.

The National is back in Canberra and in my humble opinion this is a "good choice". My understanding is the public are welcome, what great news for those booking trade sites, if my memory serves me correct, some years ago we held the National in Canberra which had strong participation.

The World of Alpacas issue for the National Spectacular will for the first time have a quantity distributed in Chinese provinces that are developing an interest in Alpacas. "Where To Sell Your Fleece" the article inside is worth your time to read. The points of sale are well placed.

We look forward to catching up in Canberra.

RIP KAREN

Presidents Message.

Well the festivities have concluded for another twelve months and on behalf of the Board we wish you a very successful and prosperous 2019.

It is also the commencement of our new showing season. If you are an exhibitor, please make sure you are acquainted with the changes commencing 2019 with the Showing and Judging Rules. Also make reference to the new State Champion Animal competition, and get to as many Regional shows as you can, to build up your qualifying points. Remember that the National Show will revert back to an Age Championship Show this year to be held in Canberra in August.

Hopefully most of the shearing within Australia has been completed, as we have certainly experienced above average climatic conditions and many of us are struggling with the heat. Remember, you have numerous fleece buyers out there vying for your clip, so shop around to see what best suits you, and any conditions that may be applicable. This issue has a heavy concentration on fleece and fleece buyers, so we hope you draw benefits from their contributions.

A Committee has been formed to look into the requirements of a separate commercial herd register within eAlpaca, with a mandate to report back to the Board by 31st March, with their recommendations regarding structure and implementation. The introduction of a commercial section with eAlpaca should help a lot of breeders who do not actually show (as well as those that do) in managing their herds.

To all our friends who are alpaca breeders, may you have an enjoyable and rewarding year within the show ring and with your sales

Take care
Ian Frith / President AAA



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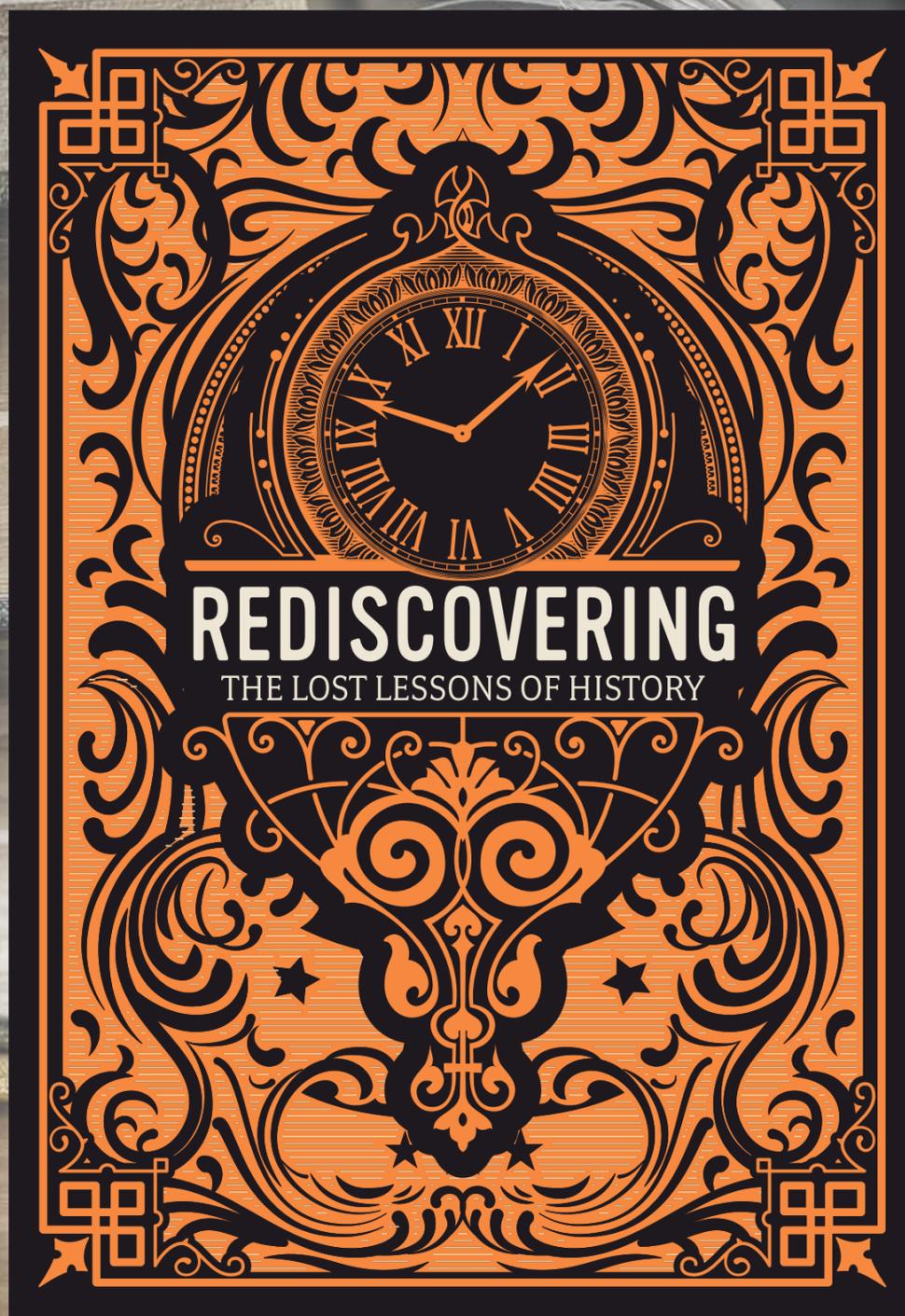


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by Dr Ian Davison, past AAA President, Illawarra and Coolaroo Alpacas

History is that process by which we record events and opinions and inscribe them on a timeline. Then, in the fullness of time, as history relentlessly unfolds, we can examine how those events and opinions may have shaped, directed and determined the history which follows.

Thirty years ago, the Australian alpaca industry had no history. In fact, it had barely been conceived, having only an uncertain future, which its pioneers promoted with enthusiasm. In fact, it was this very lack of history that drew so many early entrants to the industry: the book on Australian alpacas had yet to be written, and many aspired to be amongst its authors.

Now, thirty years on, it is still a young, but no longer a nascent, industry. And there is much history to reflect upon.

Perhaps our best early decision was the formation of the IAR, a registry managed by the Agricultural Business Research Institute, an organisation whose own history and experience had been in the management of breed registries for a wide range of breed societies, and across a range of countries. The integrity of that registry, and the near universal registration of alpacas in those early years, gave the Australian alpaca industry a genetic foundation that was to become one of its greatest assets.

Older members of the AAA may recall a schism that divided the Association in the early 2000's, when one member devised a commercial programme called Alpaca Males to document and analyse show results based on the IAR. Alpaca Males was a commercial programme, inviting owners of stud males to enrol their male on the website for an annual fee, and inviting prospective breeders seeking male stud services to download the "book" for that male, which included all the essential details of the male, including (but not limited to) its pedigree tree; its own show performance; the show performance of every one of its registered progeny; the show performance of every one of its known descendants; its progeny listed by registered colour; its fleece records; and details of its location, cost

of stud services, and contact details. All these details, downloadable from the web as a single "book", were derived solely from an analysis of show records, the IAR, and details volunteered by the person promoting the male. This was an incredible research tool, available free of charge, downloadable from the website, by any enquirer!

This became the subject of a bitter battle between the AAA and that member over ownership and copyright of the IAR, an expensive battle which the AAA ultimately lost, and one which divided the membership. History records that some members left to form another organisation, of which little is now heard, and Alpaca Males and its database was lost in the washup.

My point in recording these facts is to observe that, irrespective of the legalities and politics of the dispute, Alpaca Males was a valuable and critical record of the AAA's show history, and its loss—and the failure of the AAA or any of its members to resurrect the concept—was a sad oversight by the alpaca industry.

As any stud master, in any breed of animal, would appreciate, breeding decisions are made on the basis of a wide spectrum of information. That information typically includes observed phenotypic variation in progeny, measured performance in production traits, sale records, and estimated breeding values derived from historic data. (The demise of the AGE, or Across-Herd Genetic Evaluation programme, is also a low point in the history of the Australian alpaca industry, but that is another discussion!). But arguably, in the absence of a programme such as the AGE, show records provide one of the most comprehensive and useful records available to the studmaster, recording the performance in the showing of progeny being judged by a range of judges schooled in applying the same principles of performance.

Sadly—dare I say, incredibly—there is no comprehensive archive of show records across Australia, recording the cumulative history of the Australian alpaca in the showing. This is the most egregious oversight, which fails to recognise the

fundamental importance of that history to the future direction of improving the breed. Whilst I acknowledge that show records are just one of many inputs into breeding decisions, I would argue that they constitute the principal tool for many breeders, and they should be easily collected and collated by the AAA, especially given the capability of the new e-Alpaca computer platform.

My fear is that many of the original breeders of our industry are thirty years on from when they first took an interest in alpacas, and their valuable experience and memory of events is being progressively eroded with the passage of time, and the inevitable deaths and retirements. It is not too late for the AAA to make a call for all the old show records which have been filed, shelved and stored away, before they are lost forever. What is required is for these records to be collected, collated, and gradually incorporated into the archives of the Australian alpaca industry, and for all future shows to be systematically and automatically archived along with them. It is my suggestion that the Association seek an enthusiastic member to volunteer their services as an archivist, and that a call be put out to all past and existing members to forward their old show records to the AAA for that purpose.

Then, at the direction of e-Alpaca and its managers, perhaps we can see the re-emergence of a programme like Alpaca Males to record the history of showing in the Australian alpaca industry, owned and operated by the AAA as an additional source of revenue, and to assist their members in making better breeding decisions.

POSTSCRIPT NOTE - AAA is endorsing this initiative. Interested AAA Members can submit the information re their Certified males to AAA for the accumulation of data.



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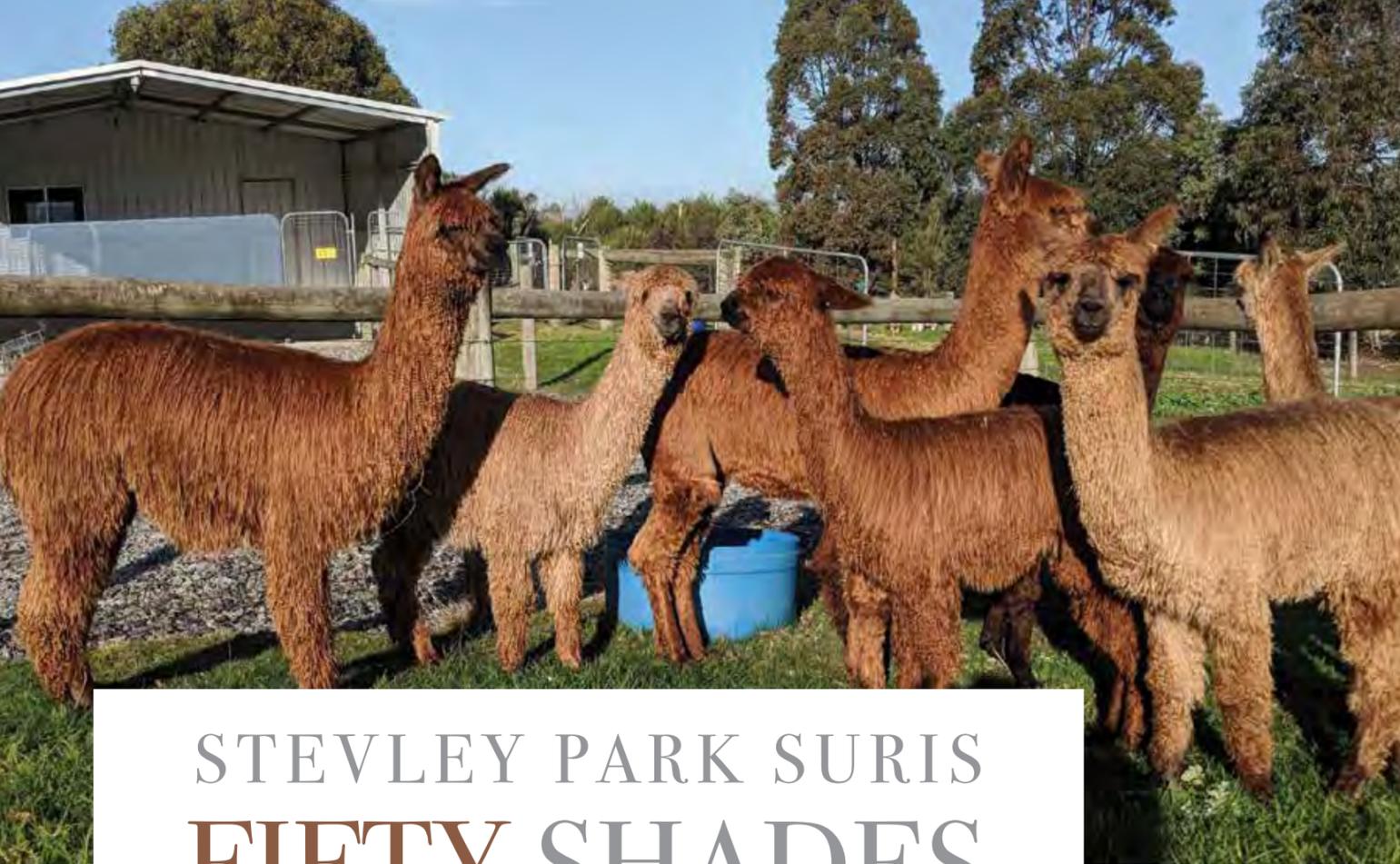
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Lezley is a fibre artist and runs felting workshops on request and her unique handcrafted items are available through our on-farm Studio/Shop, on line and takes special orders by request. Felted and Hand Knitted items include: scarfs, shawls, beanies, fingerless mittens, soft alpaca toys, baby wear, cot blankets and floor rugs. Yarn, hand dyed and many natural colours. Farm shop is open by appointment.



Working with Alpacas creates opportunities for our students

Directors of the Australian Alpaca Association, Steve O'Keefe and Ian Frith visited Vincentia High on Monday 17 December 2019 to present Mr Ken Bates with a certificate to acknowledge the valuable contribution that our school have made to the industry.

We have 15 Students in our Alpaca Show Team, they are led and guided by the wonderful Gary, Glad and Marion Worthy. Our team entered many shows throughout the year travelling great distances to compete against some of the best in NSW.

Our students are highly regarded on the show circuit and by the members of the association. They are often being asked to walk Alpacas for other teams. The students also clean out the pens and do the feeding as a paid position, this helps to support them with the costs associated with the entering and travelling to the Shows.



Agriculture has a lot of potential for employment and our students learn good husbandry skills working at the shows. There is an incredible market for Alpaca fleece in China, Georgia Matheson-Gee participated in the shipment that the association did to China earlier in the year. Year 12 graduate, Madeleine Cooper will study Animal Science at Charles Sturt University next year and her love for working with animals came from the fantastic opportunities that were offered to her during her years at VHS.

Mr Frith said, "The association have been involved with VHS for about 6 years and we look forward to working together in their future. It is good to have young BJ Hawkins and Georgina Jones as members of our youth committee".

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Prices in Au\$/Kg. (GST Excluded)*

Average Micron/Au\$/kg	White - Light Fawn	Colour
< 19 Microns	16.13	13.41
< 22 Microns	13.41	11.22
< 26 Microns	11.22	9.05

Requirements:

1. All baled fleece must be classed fibre only.
2. Each bale must be marked with grower name/ AAFL number and bale number.
3. Pressed clean woolpack bale between 100 - 170kg, weight marked.
4. Machine-sampled bale test sent to AWTA.
5. AWTA certificate showing at least:
 - f. Mean micron (MFD)
 - g. Micron Standard Deviation (SD)
 - h. Micron Coefficient of Variation (CV)
 - i. Comfort Factor (CF)
 - j. Fibre Length

Whole Alpaca Fleece

Prices in Au\$/Kg. (GST Excluded)*

Average Micron/Au\$/kg	White	Colour
X - fine <small>(75% of the fleece under 22 microns)</small>	10.98	9.48
Fine <small>(60% of the fleece under 22 microns)</small>	10.02	8.53
Medium <small>(10% of the fleece under 22 microns)</small>	7.06	5.57
Adult <small>(2% of the fleece under 22 microns)</small>	5.03	3.56

WHOLE FLEECE INCLUDING NECK AND CLEAN PIECES - placed in separated bag with the saddle fleece.

Fleece must be clean, minimum or no vegetable matter and in excellent condition of preservation.

Contaminated fleece will be downgraded or disposed without value, if necessary.

*Prices may change without notice



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The Golden Fibre





Q-Fever



Please take the time to read the following information and seek out advice on preventing this serious disease through screening and immunisation.

Q fever is an illness caused by the bacterium *Coxiella burnetii*. Q fever is spread to humans from infected animals. The bacteria survive for long periods in the environment as they are resistant to heat, drying and many disinfectants.

What are the symptoms?

Q fever is usually an acute (immediate) infection but it can sometimes lead to a chronic (longterm) illness. Symptoms begin about 2-3 weeks after exposure and typically include:

- high fevers and chills
- severe sweats
- severe headaches, often behind the eyes
- muscle and joint pains
- extreme fatigue (tiredness)

If untreated, symptoms can last from 2-6 weeks. Most people make a full recovery and become immune to repeat infections. Occasionally, people develop chronic infections which affect the heart (endocarditis) or the liver (hepatitis). Some people develop chronic fatigue (post-Q fever fatigue syndrome), which can last for many years after the initial infection. Symptoms of chronic Q fever may occur up to two years after the initial infection.

How is it spread?

People usually get infected by breathing in infected dust when working with infected animals, animal tissues, or animal products. The main carriers of the disease are farm animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and but other animals such as alpacas, kangaroos, bandicoots, domestic pets such as dogs and cats can also be infected. Q fever can be contracted by inhaling dust from wool, hides, straw or grass that contains the Q fever bacteria.

People working with these animals are at risk including farmers and shearers / shed staff and stockyard workers and animal transporters.

How is it prevented?

A vaccine (Q-Vax®) is available to protect people against Q fever. Vaccination is recommended for all people who are working in, or intend to work in, a high-risk occupation. Workplaces at risk should have a vaccination program. People must be screened and tested before they are vaccinated against Q fever. People who work with animals or materials that may carry the Q fever bacteria should use appropriate protective equipment and be aware of the steps required to stop the spread of the bacteria.

The risk of Q fever can be further reduced by:

- washing the hands and arms thoroughly in soapy water after any contact with animals
- washing animal urine, faeces, blood and other body fluids from the work site and equipment, and disinfecting equipment and surfaces where practicable
- properly disposing of animal tissues including birthing products • minimising dust in slaughter and animal housing areas
- keeping yard facilities for sheep and cattle well away from domestic living areas
- removing clothing that may carry the bacteria before returning to the home environment
- wearing a mask when mowing lawn or gardening in areas where there are livestock or native animals.

People who are not immunised should not be allowed to visit high-risk work areas such as abattoirs.

Source: NSW health Q fever Fact sheet. For more information contact the local health unit in your State, see <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/state-health-services.htm>



NEW LIFE MEMBERS

In 2018, we welcomed two new honorary life members to the Australian Alpaca Association. A Life Membership is awarded for the outstanding and highly honourable contribution that a member has made to the Association. The contribution and involvement by the member is considered exceptional and has clearly demonstrated a commitment and loyalty to the industry. It is the highest award that can be bestowed.

At the AGM in Canberra an Honorary Life Membership was awarded to **Mrs Julienne Gelber** from NSW for her tireless commitment to the industry, mentoring other breeders and working selflessly to support scientific advancement of alpaca fibre.

Julienne has been described as not only an outstanding member but a strong mentor to other members. She shows a dedication to deeper understanding of the breed and fibre and willingly shares this information. Julienne has written numerous papers and articles on processing and breeding, utilising information from research and major processing hubs around the world. She has made major contributions to the breed standards and various policies for the showing and judging standards. Julienne has sustained active participation in regional committees and events for well over 20 years

An Honorary Life Membership was awarded to **Mrs Jennifer McAuliffe** from Western Australia at the Royal Perth Show to celebrate her achievements in the industry since 1995 including commitments to regional committees, a term as AAA President and the development of fleece score sheets.

Jenny has been a very active member of the WA Region for many years and has held the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and President. Jenny has also spent time on the AAA Board as both a Director and as President from 2010 to 2012. While President, Jenny developed the Certificates of Appreciation

to recognise members. She developed the primary school resource package and the kid's colouring sheet and information workbook that are still in use today. Jenny helped to develop the Suri and Huacaya fleece score sheets.

We congratulate these two women who have made incredible contributions to the Australian alpaca industry. They join life members:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2000 Allan Jinks | 2011 Dianne Condon * |
| 2001 Ken Allston * | 2011 Kerry Dwyer |
| 2001 William (Bill) Plunkett * | 2012 Paul Haslin |
| 2002 Roger Haldane | 2012 Cameron Holt |
| 2005 Graeme Dickson | 2015 Esme Graham |
| 2006 Richard Dixon * | 2017 Lyn Dickson |
| 2009 Robert (Bob) Richardson | * Denotes deceased |



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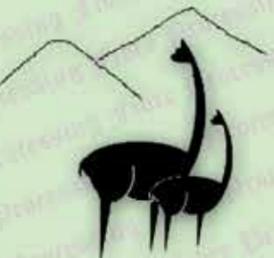
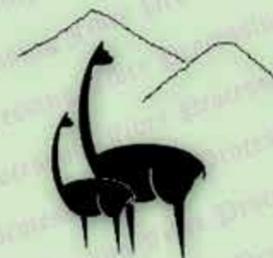


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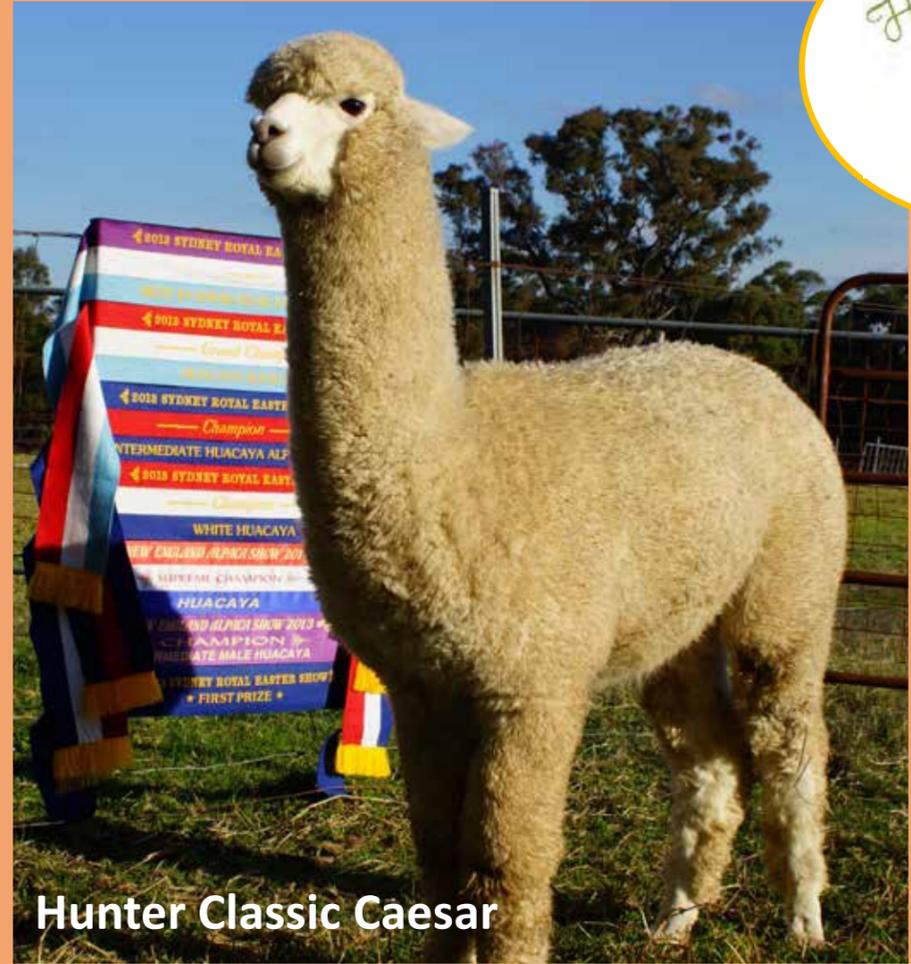
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News From The



2019 National Show

Following on from the survey which went to all exhibitors who attended the Spectacular, the Board has taken on the preference expressed in responses to the survey to revert to the original National Show format of age and best of colour. Arrangements for next year's National have been finalised to be held in Canberra, August 22 to 25 2019. Sharon Dawson has been appointed convenor for the National Show. Making the National Show strongly attractive to our broader membership and the public will be a feature of the 2019 National and of future national shows and we have lots of great ideas to implement.

Alpaca of the State

We are proud to announce the introduction of new state awards aimed at enticing members to enter as many Regional shows as possible.

Ribbon winning alpacas at each regional show on the AAA show calendar will be allocated points as shown below. The competition will commence on 1 January 2019 and will conclude just before the National Show. In future years the competition will commence immediately after the National Show to include results from regional shows held after the National Show.

The state to which an alpaca belongs will be determined by the state in which its owner has their alpaca stud. The alpaca with the highest points accumulated for shows in its state will win Alpaca of the State in its state, free entry into the National for that animal plus a bonus animal entry, PLUS \$250 towards expenses for attending the

National. Second place in each State, will win a free entry for that animal plus a bonus free entry for another animal. Third place will win a free entry into the National for that animal.

Points will be allocated as follows

-  **Supreme** 9 points
-  **Champion and best of colour** 7 points
-  **Reserve Champion** 6 points
-  **1st** 5 points
-  **2nd** 4 points
-  **3rd** 3 points
-  **4th** 2 points
-  **5th or highly commended** 1 point

If by chance there is a draw, the winner will be decided by the S&J Committee, who will look at number of shows, placings received, and number of entries into shows, with a final decision being decided on higher placings.

Get excited and get involved!!

Best New Breeder in the State

We are delighted to announce a new award for Best Animal in the State bred by a New Breeder. This award aims to promote and reward new breeders who in the six years since starting are doing well in the show ring, indicating a positive breeding program.

Animals must be registered with the herd prefix of the new breeder. Entrants for 2019 need to be new members who joined the AAA in or after the year 2014. The same points scoring system for Alpaca of the State will apply to the New Breeder award in each state, but all new breeders under six (6) years will go up against each other separate from the main competition. The prize for the new breeder of the winning animal will be a perpetual trophy recognising that achievement.

2020 International Alpaca Conference

The AAA will be hosting an International Alpaca Conference in Canberra – 1-3 May 2020. This will be a fabulous opportunity to showcase the Australian industry. The conference is being hosted by the NSW Region of the AAA.

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Showing & JUDGING



The new Showing and Judging Committee (S&J) has been busy since being appointed last January 2018 by the AAA Board. This update hopes to accomplish a couple of main objectives. First, it will give members an idea of what in changing or evolving in the world of showing, and secondly, because the S&J committee aims for transparency, this update will give the membership a peek behind the curtain as to WHY and HOW we are doing things.

To begin, let us acknowledge the last S&J committee, several of whom served selflessly for many years. When we took the post early in 2018, we knew we had very big shoes to fill. The previous committee kicked so many goals, and also put in place some key operating procedures that this committee was very grateful to have. But even more than that, the previous group gave their time, sweat, tears to a degree that most of the industry cannot imagine. S&J is a challenging portfolio, and it also garners a great deal of scrutiny. Although only twenty-or-so percent of the membership shows, it is that group who generally are the most involved in the policy framework of the AAA and that contains the loudest voices. As in most industries, it is very difficult to find any topic on which there is universal agreement. Recognising that, we offer a hearty thank you all those who previously tackled this job.

We gathered for the first time last February at a particularly challenging time for the showing aspect of the alpaca industry. It is well-documented that show numbers are generally down, and even at the shows that have maintained numbers, fewer exhibitors were turning up while the bigger studs were bringing larger numbers. In addition to the general decline in exhibitors, we have also come to an odd crossroads of the commercialization of the industry and its impact within the showing. As we all know, historically the show ring and the commercial aspect of alpacas were not on the same course, and this has been a sore spot with many breeders and exhibitors. While those challenges existed at the time of the handover, we were keenly alert to the new rule changes that had caused so much angst in the months previous and we were conscious of the task we had collectively undertaken. And so it began last February....

For those who don't know, S&J is charged with making the showing experience the most enjoyable, fair, and accessible it can be. This involves but is not limited to, rule changes, judge allocation, judge training and intake, showing manuals, procedures, and ethos. As the industry changes, so must the show ring to reflect the progression. The most immediate and pressing concern for us was Judge Training. .

JUDGES – Training, Intake and Allocation

The previous S&J committee began holding mandatory judge training weekends in 2016 to make sure the AAA judges were the best they could be, and once given a badge, they could continue to develop professionally. That committee, recognised that there was vast inconsistency from one judge to another, both in the ring and when judging fleeces. Judges needed to be individuals and not robots, but there was a distinct demand for more consistent outcomes. In order to achieve these outcomes, there needed to be more opportunities for judges to get together to hone their collective skills. However, there were very few (if any) opportunities to for judges to get together, compare notes, share techniques, discuss issues, practice objective skills, or do much of anything. In addition, because the dynamic of the judging ranks was changing so quickly, a new method of distinguishing judges and their skill levels needed to be put in place. The first two judge training workshops were the beginning of that process.

For the 2018 workshop, our S&J committee made a couple of basic changes based on feedback from the judges at the 2016 and 2017 workshops. At the end of June, the judges all met at Wyona Alpacas with the intention of working on their skills, but with a special focus on suris. This was part of a larger goal of seeing suri numbers at shows rebound. Feedback from some exhibitors made it clear that suri numbers were down at some shows because there was a lack of confidence in certain judges being able to navigate the sections with assurance and accuracy. They simply were not going to show up if they thought the judges could not judge suris. The catch-22 for judges was that if they did not own suris, and there were very few at any given show they were assigned, then maintaining and improving their skills was difficult. Judges simply didn't see enough suris to get more comfortable adjudicating them.

As a result, judges attended and participated in several workshops to give them a better understanding of both first and regrowth suri fleeces. The principle difference from previous workshops was that the 2018 version did not have an assessment component. Rather it made a concerted effort to create a relaxed atmosphere where judges worked together instead of in competition. The first workshops featured that competitive aspect, and the feedback to the newest S&J rejected that philosophy. Early reviews were all very positive, and as such, we hope that exhibitors in 2019 see a more confident and capable group when dealing with suris. As always, we welcome feedback.

One of the primary aims of any S&J committee is to create a world-class judge corps. At the beginning of the alpaca industry in Australia, many judges were self-appointed, and were under no obligation to continue upgrading their skills. In recent times, S&J have sought to make our judges accountable, and they have worked hard to provide judges with professional development opportunities in hopes of having the best trained team of judges anywhere in the world. Exhibitors have for years spoken about the consistency of judges – from one show to the next – not just within the show ring, but with fleeces as well. This has been a focus in the last three to four years, the goal has been to reduce variation by working hard to give judges more objective criteria. It is a long process, and S&J hopes to continue working on the established strong foundations.

As we have embarked on these changes, the industry has lost several judges for a variety of reasons. We would like to acknowledge those individuals who have for many years, offered their time and expertise to the membership. Lost to retirement from the ring or no longer judging are Rick Hodgson, Kylie Martin, Nerida Aldred, Jenny Jackson, Ben Schmaal and Joanne Ham. Sadly, we lost an icon in Karen Caldwell late last year, and like the rest of the alpaca world, our committee was

hit hard with this news. These wonderful judges will be missed greatly. And our committee isn't alone in thanking them for their service.

Due to these losses, and because we endeavour to provide exhibitors with a wide variety of judges (instead of always getting same ones!), AAA will do a judge intake in 2019 and we will welcome a number of new apprentices this year.

One of the tougher jobs for S&J is the allocation of judges. We are keenly aware that many exhibitors do not know how or why judges are assigned to shows. Those who have done allocations in the past few years can attest to the complexity of the task. The process over the years has varied slightly, but it has essentially remained the same. First, a convenor requests a judge from the AAA. This used to be done in the office, but is now the responsibility of S&J. After the request is completed on eAlpaca, the person in charge of allocation sends an email to all the judges asking for expressions of interest. From that list of keen judges, S&J will reduce the number of eligible candidates by criteria like the size of the show, the number of shows a particular judge has already been assigned, number of shows that judge has done within the region, or whether or not a co-judge or an apprentice needs to complete a show. From there, the convenor chooses one of the names on the list and the invitation is officially extended. It is important that exhibitors know that this is the process. Sometimes, a region may see a judge several times over a two or three-year period, however, there are a great number of moving parts that make these things happen. We try our best to ensure that each region gets a good variety of judges to work their shows.

The process does differ, however, for the assignments to the bigger, more competitive shows. For years, judges were grouped in to levels, either one, two or three, depending on their experience, etc. That too is no longer the case, and currently, we are working on a way to assess and rank our judges for the purpose of determining which shows an individual judge may be eligible to work.

If you have questions about judges, judge training, or judge allocation, please let us know. We value the feedback we get from exhibitors about our judges, and going into 2019, we feel very good about the corps of judges we will be offering in the coming year.

RULES – Evolution and Change

Every so often it becomes obvious that some rules need changing or updating, and it is the job of S&J to identify and make corrections. The rule book is in a constant state of change from year to year – even if it is only a small or procedural alteration. When a troublesome, quirky or obsolete rule presents itself, S&J will sort through the rule, the alternatives, and the potential remedial measures. Any recommendations then go to the AAA Board for consideration. We understand that not all recommendations will be enacted. In fact, there are times when the Board disagrees with our assessment and/or solution and either reject, modify, or review the items we present.

In the last few years, there have been some more substantive rule changes. Not every change is popular and pleasing everyone is impossible. It would be disingenuous to say that the recent suri fleece length rule has not been a big issue for the new committee. It

has clearly been a source of great angst amongst a small portion of members since the topic was first considered in 2012 and then again in 2017. We are watching the numbers closely in 2019 and 2020 while the 18-14 trial is in effect. Both the Board and S&J recognise that the two goals of the rule change were to more closely align the suri portion of the shows with both the huacaya part and with the commercial realities facing alpacas in 2018/2019, and to create a more balanced, competitive arena in which suris can be shown. Both the Board and S&J are aware of the unrest, but it isn't the bluster from a few that will win the day – instead, the entries in the next couple of years will tell the story. ***Once the trial is over, the rule will be reviewed.*** That sentence was highlighted and italicized for good reason. One of the key messages and points of emphasis for S&J and the Board is to make certain people know it is only a trial.

In 2019, the 18-14 rule is in place for the first time, and convenors are reminded that the age brackets for the suris shows need to be changed to align with the huacayas – Juniors 6-12, Intermediates 12-18, Adults 18-30, Seniors 30-48, and Mature is over 48. Suris in their first fleeces may have up to 18 months fleece, and any subsequent fleece is capped at 14 months growth. That means in the Adult, Senior, and Mature classes, the entered suris will be in 14 months fleece or less.

There are a few other rule changes worth noting. S&J understands the demands put on convenors and show organisers on show day and has worked through some measures that will allow some lightening of the load. In 2019, pre-show inspections will change to only incorporate IAR, gender, fleece length and colour. This will make it possible to do pre-show inspections from outside the pen as a biosecurity measure. It will also take away some of the judgement calls that are tricky for show volunteers to make on things like teeth and testicles. Though we hope that people doing the inspections have been through a AAA steward course, we also understand that this is not always the case, and there are volunteers thrust into these awkward situations where a volunteer would not or could not challenge a more seasoned, experienced breeder. (To that end, S&J are looking to offer an online stewards' course soon.) More than once, a new breeder, who was roped into helping with pre-show inspections, was placed in a situation. *S&J also believes that the onus will fall back to the breeders to make certain their animals are eligible to show and in the right classes.* eAlpaca now has an exhibitor checklist to help people sort out some of these issues before the stewards are involved.

The last round of changes that came through in 2017 saw alterations to animals being shown in the Mature classes. Rules 59 and 60 required females to have had a registered cria and males to be certified to be eligible to enter the show. This caused some consternation, and there were very good arguments presented by people who agreed and those who did not. At our last meeting, S&J discussed these two rules at length in relation to their value on the show ring. The Board agreed that Rule 60, requiring males to be certified to show in the mature classes, did not add value to the ring, and in fact, would be a deterrent for showing animals in this class. As such, the rule was repealed – males in the mature class will ***not*** need to be certified before the show.

In 2018, the AAA also introduced a new showing uniform as it began

phasing-out the old, tired white coats. This was generally received with great enthusiasm from the membership, though there have been pockets of resistance. Much of that resistance centered around the vagueness of the roll-out. S&J looked closely at the questions posed on Facebook and gathered other feedback from breeders, and recommended some tweaks to the new uniform rule. Within two years, exhibitors will need to phase-out their white dust coats in favour of black shirts and vests, all of which are available through the AAA head office in Canberra. What was unclear to many was what was required under the vest or coat. S&J suggested, and the Board agreed, that any clean black shirts, be they short or long-sleeved, can be worn under the AAA vest. We also decided to investigate short-sleeve versions of the black shirt. The consensus was that the black looked far more professional than the white coats, and that it will be as accommodating to hot and cold as the white coats. We hope that once exhibitors have a chance to wear the black, they will see the value and convenience as many breeders already have.

The awarding of ribbons under Rule 26 has been discussed amongst judges for years now, and the real-time consequences of the rule's wording, has potentially left many alpacas without blue ribbons in their original class. As it is, Rule 26 deems that a judge shall award a champion ribbon once he or she has awarded a blue within a class. As a result, judges would be reluctant to give first place ribbons in a class knowing that such a placing would require them to award a champion (potentially a supreme champion) to that animal. This was particularly challenging at smaller shows where a judge may have felt a particular exhibit was worthy of a first-place ribbon but not the subsequent broad ribbon. The impending change for this rule will offer the judge some discretion to NOT award a champion to an alpaca that has earned a blue ribbon. This will be a change that requires some getting-used-to from exhibitors. From now, a first place does not guarantee a subsequent champion, even if there are no other first place ribbons awarded in a class. Expect to hear more about this before the shows truly kick off in 2019.

The COLOURBRATION and the NATIONAL SHOW

The overwhelming feedback from the exhibitors was that the "Spectacular" concept was less popular than a show calendar that included a major colour show AND a National show. Survey results confirmed that people much preferred having both the Victorian Colourbration and the National Show as an age championship show. As a result, starting in 2019, the AAA will return to the two-show format.

It has also been communicated to S&J and the board that the show calendar needs more predictability – that shows need to be on the calendar far in advance. And both committees agree completely. As a result, Canberra has been booked for the next three National Shows, each to be in the third or fourth week of August. There are several benefits to this decision above and beyond the predictability. First, there are a myriad of very good sponsorship opportunities in the nation's capital, and the three-year commitment gives the AAA increased options for long-term sponsorship deals. Second, the location will give us the opportunity to attract a greater number of public and visitors. S&J recognise that Canberra is a greater traveling distance for

many exhibitors, but we are hoping that many of the benefits outweigh the extra kilometers. S&J and the Board will be looking at whether the show returns to a rotating format between other cities.

The Colourbration has been placed back in the hands of the Victoria Central region. . Though we do not expect consensus, we are very pleased to put two shows back on the table and do so with some predictability.

ALPACA OF THE STATE COMPETITIONS

Starting in 2019, the AAA will be awarding both a suri and a huacaya with prestigious Alpaca of the State awards – one of each in every state. Show results will be recorded and tabulated by S&J. The results will be determined by an alpaca's best three results. Points will be recorded for ALL shows starting after Nationals and up to the final shows before the cut-off date for entries to the subsequent National Show. Points have already been accumulated in the last few months of 2018 and will continue in 2019. There will also be prizes given to the breeders of the winners. Winners will be given free entry into the National Show and some extra money to go toward accommodation or travel. Such an award will be a good marketing tool for breeders as well as a way to get more alpacas into regional shows. Anecdotally, winners do not always come from big studs, and as such, this is an opportunity for smaller breeders to show off their exceptional breeding decisions.

Stay tuned for more details about the Alpaca of the State competitions, the Judge Intake, uniforms, and the other changes being implemented this coming year.. Please, do not hesitate to contact Board and S&J with your ideas, questions or comments. Happy New Year from all of us at Showing and Judging.



From Paddock to Product

Alpaca Fibre Barn

The *Alpaca Fibre Barn* is a boutique fibre processing mill with a focus on the environment.

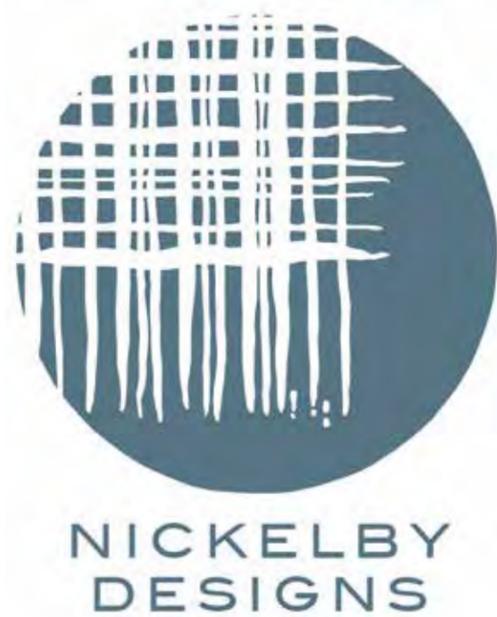
This solar-powered mill, set in the hills north east of Melbourne, specialises in processing alpaca into many end products, including batts, corespun yarn, rovings, and yarn in a range of weights.

Mix your similar colours together into one big batch to reduce waste, or process individual fleeces. Choose from a variety of finishes from skeins to balls or cones; in quantities that suit you.

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Nickelby Designs is taking on the world of sustainable fashion one SAORI woven garment at a time.



Eco Fashion Week Australia Port Douglas Nov 2018

Angela Betheras, the owner and designer of Nickelby Designs has been weaving for nearly ten years and moved to using the freeform SAORI principles in early 2016 after a trip to Japan to Saorinomori where she met the SAORI founder Misao Jo. At the time Misao Jo was 103 years old.

Angela was totally taken with the creativity that SAORI requires and has basically been weaving every day since on her loom in her farm gate shop, Nickelby At Darnum, which has been operating in Darnum West Gippsland for 11 years.

Using her own fleece she dyes, weaves and sews garments which are becoming extremely popular and which she ships all over the world to grateful customers. Each weave is unique offering a one off piece of wearable art.

Just recently she has joined forces with three other artists and opened a shop in nearby Yarragon to compliment Nickelby At Darnum where she also sells her designs which include scarves, hats, skirts, tops, dresses, pants, coats and anything else she feels like creating!



Eco Fashion Week Australia Port Douglas Nov 2018



Weaving the SAORI way

SAORI weaving allows the weaver to express themselves as an artist expresses themselves on a canvas. Repetition is frowned upon and individuality is celebrated. Weaving the way no machine can.





Eco Fashion Week Australia Port Douglas Nov 2018



Eco Fashion Week Australia
Freemantle Nov 2018

Nickelby Designs was recently invited to be part of the world's largest Eco Fashion Week; Eco Fashion Week Australia by the CEO Zuhail Kuvan-Mills as the label fitted the very strict criteria of being a sustainable eco friendly, entirely Australian made label.

After accepting and agreeing to participate in Freemantle which was in its second year but also agreeing to join the show in Port Douglas for the first time in an attempt to highlight the plight of the Great Barrier Reef and the rainforests, Angela agreed to produce 12 complete outfits and pay all the associated costs as you can't walk the runway for free. This was mid year and Angela had no designs, no yarn processed let alone dyed and basically no idea of what she was going to do considering she also had to keep producing for her customers in her shop. Also there was the added pressure in that each designer had the opportunity to stock their own designer showroom so that was more garments, scarves and hats!

For some strange reason throughout the five or six months Angela remained excited rather than stressed and as she worked and wove the ideas came, the colours started to come

together and she found herself weaving approximately 20 hours a week just on the garments for the shows. In past lives Angela has been involved in many fashion shows however this was obviously different as this time she was the designer. Not only did she have to create the outfits, she had to decide what the hair and make up was to look like and deliver 12 minutes of runway music, which flowed. On top of all this was obviously flights, accommodation and ensuring the farm and shop were fine at home whilst she was away.

The shows were extraordinary. Angela says the designers, the models, the volunteers, everyone was just a delight to be around. As the largest fashion week of its kind it closed with having been a wonderful collaboration over two weeks which saw 55 fashion designers, 72 models, 125 hair and make up artists, 150 volunteers and 500 meals served. It certainly wasn't small.

Now back home and it is time, after having a little rest, for Angela to start not only making more stock for her two shops but to start putting together the ideas for 2019. We hear the design scribbling did start on the plane home!

Nickelby Designs believes we should do everything possible to protect our environment and that as consumers we should purchase our clothing with a conscience and always with consideration for our world.

Nickelby Designs; weaving sustainable fashion one piece of cloth at a time

Follow us on social media:

www.facebook.com/nickelbydesigns or www.facebook.com/nickelbyatdarnum
www.instagram.com/nickelbydesigns

Visit our website and on line shop:

www.nickelbyatdarnum.com.au

or the old fashion way and visit in person!

Nickelby At Darnum - 308 Darnum Shady Creek Road Darnum 3822 (Wed, Thurs & Sat)
see website for more events and activities &
Campbell St Emporium - 9 Campbell St Yarragon 3823 Mon,Wed-Sun (closed Tues)

Wholesale enquiries welcome from both Australia and Overseas

Ph: Angela 61 419 550 301

[instagram.com/nickelbydesigns](https://www.instagram.com/nickelbydesigns)



grAce

GRACE suri KNITWEAR

The genuine Aussie

WORDS: Robyn Betts

Robyn Betts is the designer and creator of Grace Suri Knitwear- an exclusive range of quality suri alpaca and fine merino fashion .

This knitwear and homeware range is manufactured and knitted from Australian suri alpaca fleece and fine merino so has the cool light drape and next to skin smoothness of suri alpaca and the warmth of fine merino. The products are totally made in Australia – right in Victoria.

The fineness of the thread and the blend of these two amazing natural fibres is an innovative technique developed by Robyn and her team of manufacturers.

The classic European styling and patterns of the men's and women's clothing range includes sweaters, ponchos and leggings, fine jersey jumpers and designer tops and this is the result of a partnership with Geccu Pty Ltd, Victoria. The homeware range includes designer throw rugs and there is a cute range of baby blankets. Natural colours of silver grey, chocolate brown, ivory, rose grey and ash grey are part of a new blending with coloured fine merino.

'Grace' is Robyn's journey to have suri alpaca developed into high quality fashion clothing and homewares. Robyn has been a quiet achiever in the Australian Alpaca industry – having bred and farmed suri alpacas, qualified as a wool classer and developed knitting yarn known as SuperSuri.

Her alter ego is The Alpaca Yarn Lady – a name which has endeared her to fibre artists, knitters and weavers across Australia for some years.

Grace Knitwear is the first and currently the only all Australian grown and made suri alpaca clothing range.

Grace knitwear is currently retailing through AnnKea Alpacas – www.annkeaalpacas.com.au



Retail enquiries can also be made directly to Robyn Betts via email – trobynbetts@gmail.com or phone 0427879998



Alpacas

FOR LOVE OR MONEY... ??

By Lee Sadler | **Fleur de Lys Alpacas**

The allure of alpacas has for so many of us, not been about the potential business success, rather the chance to own and work with these enchanting animals from South America. Their big brown eyes, quiet demeanour and intelligence has us entranced – until the bills start to roll in... !



I've been asked to write about the "Business of Alpaca" – but where to start, and am I appropriately qualified to speak about this topic? As many alpaca owners bring the diverse experience and expertise of their "off farm" life and work to their alpaca enterprise, there would be many among you who are business savvy, who can navigate the essentials of spreadsheets, profit and loss statements and the ever changing tax implications of your decisions. More importantly, you are experienced in the "Business of Life" and know where to find the advice and information that you do not have in your quiver. As a pharmacist, my expertise runs to medicines, education, governance and leadership, among others.

For me the business mantra that would have us assess our success through the single measure of "Return on Investment" is too narrow. For most alpaca breeders, their involvement in alpaca is through choice; they did not inherit the family alpaca farm and were not conscripted to this lifestyle. By choice, we have elected to put considerable resources into our alpaca business. Our "inputs" are not just financial and so the measure of our success should be more than the counting of dollars and cents.

Even so, there are bills to pay and an expectation that our investment will provide

a suitable return. The question for each of us to consider is how we assess if the "return" is adequate. When alpacas were introduced into Australia more than 20 years ago, the investment required to become involved in the industry was high, the future unknown and the risks considerable. As the national herd has grown in number, new markets identified and established and the farming of alpaca is more widely accepted, the risk / benefit ratio has become less pronounced. It now requires a smaller investment to "buy your first alpacas" and so you would reasonably expect a smaller return on this investment in due course.

For me, it was the dream of farming alpaca that was my first "measure of success". Of course our accountant had a different perspective, so in the early days, it was about "building an asset" rather than having a significant return on investment. As time has passed, our herd has grown in size, we have continued to strive for the highest quality and our sales reflect this. It has been a long term project and the notion of the "long game" is difficult to factor into the "Return on Investment" arithmetic.

There are a number of very successful full time alpaca enterprises who garner esteem and perhaps a little envy from time to time. Like all success, it is dependent on enormous



effort invested at the right time and with the right balance of resources, strategic direction and opportunity. For most of us, our alpaca enterprise is a part time passion with business aspirations. In reality, we will not make the “big bucks” while our attention is divided by our spread of responsibilities and interests. Despite this, we can reasonably expect to be able to enjoy financial return, among other dividends.

Running a successful alpaca enterprise calls for considerable effort, so one of the more important measures of our success should include an assessment of our “Return on Effort”. For many, “living the dream” of an alpaca farm IS THE measure of success they have in fact attained. The joy of working with alpaca and the miracle of new life bring smiles and sighs to many.

We all have friends who live in neat suburban houses with manicured lawns, regular trips to the cinema and annual holidays. Those of us who have chosen to live on farms with our alpacas, often struggle to tend the rambling garden, we catch the latest movies when they are released onto the small screen and have a never ending “to do list”, that seldom allows for holidays. Despite this, we find the joy and contentment of working with our alpacas to be the remuneration we need. It’s hard to quantify, but the “Return on Effort” when working with these delightful creatures, the rhythm of the seasons and the challenges of farming can be reward enough. Depending on the balance of our lives, we can go for days without the hustle and bustle of “modern

living”. For me, the school car park is the only “zoo” I encounter for days at a time ... !! While I enjoy the challenge of my professional roles (pharmacy, lecturing and consulting), I savour the work with my alpacas. Perhaps it is the balance of the two that is the key for me, the “Return on Effort” that pays dividends to my health and well being.

Our effort is often not just for our own alpaca farm, but is also for the “greater good”; the many who volunteer and advocate for our industry and our members also measure their success on the “Return on Effort” scale. As our industry grows and matures it now includes a viable fleece component, as well as meat and hides, in addition to the initial focus of breeding stud stock. Those who have facilitated this transition can be proud of the Return on Effort this has brought to the industry.

Farming alpaca also has many “green credentials”. When we pause to consider a “Green Dividend”, our alpaca enterprise has much to contribute to the “plus” column. Alpacas are gentle on the fragile ancient soils of Australia. Their padded feet tread lightly on the ground, not disrupting the strata of the soil (except in the roll holes of course ... !!). The shearing action of their grazing means that they do not disturb the root mass when they crop the grass. In contrast to the grazing livestock on neighboring farms, who pull at each mouthful of grass, challenging the hold the root mass has on the soil, the hard top palate and split lip of our alpacas allows them to effectively shear the grass with minimal

disruption to the root mass. This explains why our paddocks often have a “bowling green” finish to them and why they respond so quickly to a rest and some rain, bouncing back with new growth faster than the paddocks where sheep and cows are grazing. The use of a common latrine that is gradually rotated around the paddock is a clever way our alpacas manage the threat of internal parasites while fertilizing the soil. Of course, we need to augment their efforts, but it means that with astute management, we can minimize the use of drenches and chemical fertilizers. This has a positive impact on both the “Return on Investment” and “Return on Effort” measures.

One of the greatest joys of breeding alpaca is the delight of the arrival of new life. Normally, the cria arrive in the respectable hours between dawn and lunchtime, with fewer problems than their other farming counterparts. When chatting to friends who breed cattle, they bemoan the cold winter nights, traipsing across the paddocks in the rain to a cow with a difficult birth and the consequent costs involved. They marvel at the “civilized” and relatively fewer birthing issues faced by alpaca breeders. (Of course, as our herds are increasing in size, we are encountering more challenges during birthing, but these are still proportionally fewer when compared to other livestock and we are becoming more adept at recognizing and dealing with the challenges when presented.)

Mandala: the never ending circle of life

Mandala Alpacas is situated 5km from historic Rylstone, which sits at the northern end of the beautiful World Heritage listed Capertee Valley. The Capertee is the world’s widest enclosed canyon with all its rugged beauty and is a whole kilometre wider than the Grand Canyon, but not as deep. The towering cliffs of the Capertee led to the property name of “Kandara” which means “Great Cliffs” in Hindi.

Since entering the industry in 2008, we have learnt from the very best the industry has to offer, now calling them friends. This knowledge we share freely with anyone interested in knowing and learning about these wonderful stoic animals.

Keryn is the past president of the Hawkesbury Blue-Mountain region of the AAA, now amalgamated into the single New South Wales region where she now holds the position of Australian Alpaca Association NSW Event Coordinator and herself Coordinates the prestigious Sydney Royal Show annually.

HUACAYA BLOODLINES INCLUDE:

- El Dorado
- Flaming Gold
- Hillside Gardens Napoleon
- ILR PPPeruvian Auzengate
- Inti
- Jolimont Warrior
- Ledgers Dream
- Sir Titus Salt
- Shanbrook Accoyo Tulaco
- Snowman
- Snowmaster
- True Perfection
- Valentino
- Windsong Valley Royal Inca
- Yavari

SURI BLOODLINES INCLUDE:

- Cedar House Platino
- Cedar House Thor
- ILR Alejandro
- LCA Tejas ILR
- Pacofino Black Sabbath
- Peruvian Senator
- Somerset Peruvian Black Impact
- Surilana Omar



Our aim is to breed the **best quality huacaya and suri alpacas**, across the whole range of colours, concentrating on temperament, fleece fineness and density.

We often have show quality males and females, also wethers for herd guards available for sale and visitors are always welcome by appointment.

We also have agistment available if required.



So to address the initial query: Alpacas – for love or money ... ?? The answer must be a resounding “yes” – to both. No matter how you measure success, alpaca provides:

- ✓ **return on investment** – keeping the long game in mind
- ✓ **return on effort** – allowing us to “live the dream”
- ✓ **green credentials** – optimizing sustainable farming practices



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www.mandalaalpacas.com.au



Dunbar's Run Alpacas are based in the beautiful Hawkesbury region in NSW.



on our genetics. Our focus is on producing a consistent line of animals that show great conformation, good temperament, density, low micron & SD.

We regularly attend shows and this year the Sydney Royal Easter Show was a highlight in our show program winning the 2018 Sydney Royal Easter Show Most Successful Small Exhibitor In Show. We also were awarded Supreme black in both Fleece and Halter at the 2018 Hawkesbury Colour show, as well as competing at The Australian Alpaca Spectacular for the first time.

Dunbar's Run is a passion project run by husband & wife team, Emma & Sean Timmony. Our Alpaca journey started back in 2013 when we fell in love with two wethers named Raf & Leo. We were hooked and within two years had our first breeding females.

In the beginning we were focused on white and light fawn huacaya. The 2017 National Auction saw us take a new direction for our stud as we decided to add beautiful blacks to our white and light fawn breeding program.

We have handpicked our genetic lines from some of the best bloodlines in Australia and we are dedicated to breeding exceptional stud stock. We are constantly striving to improve



Services

Shearing

Stud services - with live cria guarantee

Quality Stud stock and breeding packages available

Wethers for sale

Skirting tables made to order

Farm visits by appointment

Emma & Sean Timmony

0412 177 577 0417 272 937

DunbarsRunAlpacas@gmail.com

www.dunbarsrunalpacas.com.au



Vale Karen Caldwell



Everyone involved in the Australian Alpaca Association was very saddened by the recent passing of foundation member Karen Caldwell. Karen and her husband Andrew were part of the original 16 foundation members of the Australian Alpaca Association. Until February 2017 Karen and Andrew lived on an old established farming property of 2000 acres 40kms North West of Young in New South Wales. They farmed cereal crops and bred 13,000 merino sheep and established Wyona Alpaca Stud focusing exclusively on breeding coloured huacaya since 1989.

Wyona Alpaca Stud was the 1st established stud in New South Wales in 1989 and 2nd in Australia. Wyona competed successfully at Australia's largest alpaca shows since 1992. Brisbane RAS, Sydney RAS, Canberra RAS, Melbourne RAS, Adelaide RAS and Perth RAS as well as many large Agricultural shows, many on an annual basis.

Karen was passionate in assisting the ongoing growth and expansion of the various levels of alpaca product (fibre, stud stock, meat and export) being promoted by the AAA Ltd. In the 1990s she completed a 5-year term as a National Committee Member on the AAA.

Karen was heavily involved in judging and co-authored the 1st AAA Judging and Stewarding Handbook with Mr Bill Plunkett and wrote the first AAA Judges examination paper for the first Judges

intake. Karen passed the AAA Judges training in 2000 and attained Level 1 AAA Judging Status in 2010. In 2003 she obtained an IAJC Certificate accreditation as an International Alpaca Judge in Peru, with the Principle Over Judges, Instructors and Examiners being Dr Julio Sumar and Mrs Maggie Krieger. These additional studies were completed entirely up in the altiplano region in Peru.

Karen judged overseas including the British Alpaca Society National Show 2018, Germany, New Zealand North and South Island Colourbration Shows and our own AAA National show. She also worked as an AAA Ltd Judge trainer.

Karen was Chair of the Australian Alpaca Youth Education Committee (AYE), as well as a workshop presenter and coordinator throughout Australia in the areas of alpaca husbandry, breeding and management and show-ring etiquette in Australia and overseas.

She had been actively involved with the development and ongoing AAA Junior Judging Programme and its associated workshops across all Australian states.

This remarkable woman who was a strong advocate for the Australian alpaca industry will be missed by those who knew and loved her.

In Memory

Vale Richard Bowden

The Association was very saddened by the recent passing of Mr Richard Bowden in Ballarat, following a battle with myeloma.

Richard Bowden had a long association with the Australian Alpaca Association in his previous roles as President of the Victorian Eastern Region and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. Richard was also a member of several other committees and his financial expertise was valued by other committee members. He became the AAA's representative on the Board of the Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd its inception and later became an AAFL Board member. At the time of his passing Richard was Chairman of the AAFL Board and his steady presence will be missed.

WEBSITES // FLYERS // LOGOS // BUSINESS STATIONERY // PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

PROUD

TO BE AFFILIATED WITH THE WORLD OF ALPACAS



Where can I sell my alpaca fleece?

Shearing is over and my fleeces are better than ever this year – what do I do with them now?

Getting alpaca fleece from the shearing shed to the market is the greatest challenge facing the alpaca industry in Australia. Building the demand for Australian alpaca fleece is dependent on as much of our fleece as possible reaching the market and reaching it in a condition which satisfies the market's expectations and gets the buyers clamouring for more.

As a breeder and particularly as a small breeder, it can be a daunting task to

find a buyer, deliver the fleece to the buyer and agree on acceptable payment arrangements. Although there is a listing of alpaca fleece buyers on the website of Australian Alpaca Association Ltd (AAA), it provides little information beyond contact details and some of that information is out of date. The AAA felt it would be useful to breeders to provide some information in a single article about as many fleece buyers as possible.

To gather information about alpaca fleece buyers we wrote to as many of them as we could identify, inviting them to contribute to this article. To each of them we put the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of fleece collection – is it for manufacture within your own enterprise or for on-sale to the wider commercial market?
2. What type of fleece is collected – do you accept huacaya or suri or both?
3. Fleece colour – Do you accept only or predominantly white and light fawn fleece or are other colours also sought?
4. What are your fleece preparation requirements – do you have specific standards for shearing and skirting of fleeces, maximum limits for VM (vegetable matter), and minimum and maximum length requirements?
5. Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements?
6. How do you accept delivery of fleece – Where are your collection points for growers to deliver fleece to you, are fleeces accepted in bales or must they be delivered each in a separate bag for classing at your premises?
7. Do you have standard prices for fleece supplied in colour and micron ranges and how is this price determined?
8. How and when is payment made to growers who supply fleece to you?

We received responses from nine fleece buyers, some of whom addressed the questions while others preferred to provide more general information about their enterprise. The buyers operate in various locations across South Australia, Victoria, NSW and Queensland. They have been listed in this article in alphabetical order by name.

AlpacaFibre.com.au

Mission – The mission of fleece baled under the alpaca fibre.com.au brand is to provide quality, consistent product to market while aiding alpaca farmers in generating a sustainable and profitable industry.

Purpose of fleece collection – The operation is set up as a depot shed for the purpose of lot building targeting the wider commercial market with sales to date primarily direct to processors, both large and small.

Fleece type collected – To date we have concentrated on huacaya fleece which represents the vast majority of fleece sold, however, we are currently experiencing some interest in suri fleece

and have quantities stockpiled and expect to be doing more with it soon.

Fleece colour – We currently accept all colours, however, we experience very low demand for roans, rose greys and appaloosas. To date for mainline fleece we do not disadvantage coloured fleece in regards to prices paid.

What are your fleece preparation requirements? – Fleece is prepared for market as per Alpaca Fleece Classing Code of Practice Industry Standard for the Preparation of Australian Alpaca Edition Two. Noting that we will prepare lots to mill specifications that may not fit within lines defined in the Code of Practice.

When receiving mainline fleece we expect that it will be well sheared and

skirted with minimum VM contamination unless otherwise noted by the supplier. The supplied fleece is then matched to the appropriate line to try and achieve the best return for the grower.

Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements? – To date we have provided training on whole of shed preparation from stock preparation through to packing of fleece and understanding fleece results. At this point in time we have not charged for this training.

How do you accept delivery of fleece? – Unless by prior arrangement all fleece is to be delivered to depot by the grower. The fleece does not have to be micron tested, however, if the fleece has been tested by a recognised lab, we

do request this information is provided to us. We expect mainline fibre to be supplied individually bagged. We will now only accept fleece bulk classed by prior agreement.

When fleece is delivered arrangements are made with the grower and typically it is catalogued upon receipt. This particularly for first time suppliers, for the identification of mistakes and allows for education to prevent these mistakes in the future.

Do you have standard prices for fleece supplied specified in colour and micron ranges and how is this price determined?

All mainline fleece is supplied to us on a consignment basis. Unless otherwise instructed we will sell on a first available sale basis. We provide estimated returns to the grower at time of consignment.

Wages are paid to all staff involved in processing of fleece. Where fleece is found not to have met expectations upon delivery we are currently investigating adding a per kilo surcharge to correct the problems or let the grower take the fleece back and deal with it themselves.

How and when is payment made to growers who supply fleece to you? – Payment for mainline fleece is made to the grower following the sale of their fleece. For non-mainline fleece payment may be made prior to sale dependent on volume. The ultimate aim is to be in the position to pay cash on delivery.

To contact: www.alpacafibre.com.au

Alpaca Fibre Network Australia AFN (Aust)

Mission – AFN(Aust) was set up in 2013 by a group of Alpaca breeders from around Australia spear-headed by Annette and Keate Woodgate in Victoria and Kerry and Jolyon Porter in South Australia. The group operate on a not for profit basis so that as

much of the return from fleece sales as possible is paid to the grower. The goals of the group are:

1. Collect, objectively class, and sell alpaca fleece to buyers who appreciate the superior qualities of this wonderful fibre
2. Collect and market all colours and grades of Huacaya fleece.
3. Obtain the best price possible for growers
4. Ensure growers are fully aware of the requirements for achieving the best price possible through education workshops, electronic communication and attending on the day their fleeces are processed.
5. Minimise costs involved in operating the collection and sale system – all assistants are volunteers.

As the name implies, this is a network of alpaca breeders who are working as a team to supply a raw product in a consistent and sustainable way. To help with these goals it is imperative that all breeders abide by the motto of “Breeders helping breeders” to ensure the workload of collecting and classing is not left to a few.

Fleece type collected – Huacaya fleece – all microns, all colours.

Fleece colour – We have buyers interested in all colours.

What are your fleece preparation requirements? – Please have your shearer remove the saddle first. This is the preferred method of shearing and helps to reduce contamination by stronger fibre from the bellies and legs. Vegetation MUST BE MINIMAL. Please skirt realistically and place the saddle in a separate, non-biodegradable bag.

Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements? – AFN(Aust) has held Fleece Harvesting Workshops and Shearing workshops from time to time including workshops conducted at regional meetings. In addition, breeders receive training on fleece preparation every time they deliver fleeces to AFN(Aust). This is

because AFN(Aust) is not a drop and run set up – contributors of fleece are expected to help skirt, class and sort their own fleeces (under supervision) and donate some extra time to help the organisation run smoothly. This way, growers learn more about their own fleeces and see how others are working to improve the quality of their fleeces. Camaraderie on these days is invaluable.

How do you accept delivery of fleece? – AFN(Aust) has collection points established in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. See the website for contact details.

Do you have standard prices for fleece supplied specified in colour and micron ranges? We have a classing protocol under which we market fleece in bands of two micron widths. Fleece is OFDA 2000 tested using three point samples to determine the micron band. We have established repeat customers and are therefore able to give indicative prices expected for fleece in particular lines. We are able to achieve similar prices for all colours in the same micron band.

How and when is payment made to growers who supply fleece to you? – As AFN(Aust) is a volunteer organisation, fleece is placed with AFN(Aust) on consignment and growers are paid when AFN(Aust) receives payment from its buyers.

To contact: www.afna.com.au

Annette and Keate Woodgate mobile 0419550826

Kerry and Jolyon Porter mobile 0407 602 039

Alpaca Gear

Is a Fleece Collection and Classing Service - “promoting best practice in the journey from paddock to product”

Mission Statement - Our mission is to build on the advances in Australian alpaca genetics by promoting best practice in the journey from paddock

to product, and by supporting the endeavours of local mills and manufacturers in their quest to produce truly Australian alpaca products.

What we do – Our focus is to promote best practice in the fleece harvesting process, by providing training in shearing and fleece collection techniques, and by offering classing and marketing options for growers to sell their clip.

How does it work? – We encourage growers to attend AAA accredited workshops, which provide invaluable guidance on shed preparation, fleece sorting, skirting and packaging. Training dates for the Qld/NSW border regions are published on the Alpaca Gear website and in the SQNNSW Regional website. Growers in other areas should refer to their AAA Regional websites for training opportunities.

Individual fleeces are accepted for classing on a consignment basis. All fleeces are micron tested and classed by a registered AWEX Wool and Alpaca Classer. When a classed line of fleece is sufficient to fill a pressed bale, that bale is then offered to market.

Fleeces may be delivered to our collection depots at Kin Kin (near Gympie), Lismore and at our classing facility at Dalveen (near Stanthorpe).

Where does the fleece go? – Most of our classed fleece is offered to the open market. However, some is processed into yarn for our own range of knitwear, and for boutique knitwear designers.

More Information Please go to www.alpacagear.com.au



Fleece Workshop - by Nelly Le-compte



Classed and ready for market

Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. (AAFL)

AAFL is the first and largest Australian Alpaca fibre trader and Alpaca clothing wholesaler in Australia. In the 23 years since its origin as the Australian Alpaca Cooperative in 1995, and then re-born in 2004 supported by funding from the Australian Alpaca Association, AAFL has evolved from trading only raw alpaca fibre to a fully integrated solution for the Australian alpaca industry, from fibre trading to retailing the finest alpaca garments and homewares.

From the early days of the Alpaca Cooperative, we understood that selling raw alpaca fibre domestically and overseas was not enough to sustainably grow and promote an Australian alpaca industry; it was essential to add value to our fleece; hence the Australian Alpaca Connection brand was born. Australian Alpaca Connection is an innovative brand that supports and promotes the Australian Alpaca Industry by manufacturing premium quality garments using Australian Alpaca fibre where it is available.

AAFL has always purchased ALL alpaca fleece, necks and clean pieces, classed or unclassed, in small or large quantities. This includes suri and huacaya, in ALL grades from the finest to the broadest, and ALL colours including mixed colours.

Selling Fleece to AAFL

Unclassed Fibre

(See www.aaf.com.au/fleece/ for more information.)

- AAFL BUYS WHOLE FLEECE INCLUDING THE NECK AND CLEAN PIECES - place these in separate bags with the main saddle fleece to maximise the value of your fleece – because the offered price is based on valuation of the presented saddle, it includes the weight of the whole fleece.
- All delivered fleece must be dry and clean with minimal vegetable matter and no other contaminants.
- Where fleece is dispatched in pressed bales, each individual grower consignment must be clearly separated by newspaper marked with “(grower no. & name)”, and each bale must be marked on top with all respective grower numbers and names.
- Contaminated fleece will be downgraded or disposed of without value, if necessary. For example, if you see that some of your fleece is contaminated with excessive vegetable matter, or is obviously damp, or if any plastic bags have disintegrated into pieces, please do not ship to AAF to avoid other fleece in the shipment being badly affected.

Classed Fibre

- Classed fibre must be press-baled.
- Each bale must be marked with grower name/AAFL number and bale number.
- Bales must be clean woolpack(s) between 100-170kg, with the bale weight marked.
- Each bale must have a bale sampled test from AWTA. The AWTA certificate must include at least:
 - Mean micron (MFD)
 - Micron Standard Deviation (SD)
 - Micron Coefficient of Variation (CV)
 - Comfort Factor (CF)
 - Fibre Length

AAFL Free Freight Program

- AAFL will pay the freight to AAFL's Sunshine West VIC warehouse from the closest freight depot to the point of collection.
- Contact AAFL for advice before making new freight arrangements.
- To access the free freight program, fleece (classed or unclassed) must be pressed and baled in wool packs of between 100-170kg.
- Each bale must be clearly identified to show the source and AAFL grower numbers and name(s). Grower numbers are issued on emailed request with contact details,

Payment

- AAFL makes fleece payments in the first fortnight of each month.
- Fleece Suppliers will be paid in the following month after valuation at Sunshine, Vic. For example, if your clip is valued in January 2019 you would be paid in February 2019.
- All Clips are valued on a first in – first out basis.
- Payments are normally made via EFT to a nominated bank account.

Delivering your Fleece

AAFL receives alpaca fleece at the warehouse in Sunshine West Vic all year-round during business hours.

What does AAFL do with your Fleece?

Selected fleece lots are sold to processors in New Zealand, and especially to Incalpaca Peru. Other fleece lots are sold to customers in Australia and overseas.

AAFL commissions throw rugs to be made in New Zealand for sale in Australia, and a wide range of scarves and shawls to be made from Australian fleece held specifically for this purpose in Arequipa.

From raw fibre to premium clothing: the journey of Australian alpaca fibre at AAFL

Each Spring and early Summer alpacas are shorn, and this noble fibre begins its 12 to 18-month journey to become

a garment or homeware product, traveling thousands of kilometres to find specialized hands to become a textile wonder.

Alpaca fleeces are collected and sent to AAFL, where the fibre is valued for payment to growers. It is then normally pressed into bales to be sent to manufacturers.

At the new showpiece environmental Incalpaca mill at Arequipa, alpaca fibre goes through a classing process where expert hands separate the raw fibre into several different categories according to micron ranges, colour variation, handle and softness, etc. After classing, the transformation process starts: alpaca fibre will be washed and later carded and spun into yarn to be either woven or knitted to become a garment or homeware product – and then returned to AAFL with an Australian Alpaca Connection label.



Australian Alpacas are shorn every year.



At AAFL, fleeces are valued or classed according to industry standards, and then sent for processing and manufacturing to our specifications, or sold to customers.



Fleeces are classed, spun and woven or knitted into Australian Alpaca Connection garments.



Australian Alpaca Connection garments return to AAFL for distribution.



Australian Alpaca Connection garments are sold in Australian Alpaca Connection Shops and other retailers throughout Australia.

For further information please contact us:

Email: fleece@aafl.com.au

Tel: 03 9311 0933

<https://aafl.com.au/fleece/>

Australian Alpaca Yarn

Purpose for fleece collection -

Australian Alpaca Yarn / Alpaca Ultimate purchases fleece from growers to make into alpaca yarn that is sold under its own branding Australian Alpaca Yarn / Alpaca Ultimate. We do not on sell raw fleece.

Fleece types collected - At the moment only Huacaya fleece is collected however it is envisaged that in the future the purchase of suri fleece will be part of the business.

Fleece Colour - We purchase all colours of fleece.

What are your fleece preparation requirements - Australian Alpaca Yarn / Alpaca Ultimate has certain criteria that need to be met to purchase fleece from growers. All specifications on what we accept are on the website www.australialpacayarn.com.au under the 'Fleece' page.

Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements - While no set times or dates are allocated for the training of fleece preparation we are always willing to train small groups or individuals on how to prepare their fleeces and the most effective way to set up and skirt at shearing time to obtain the best price for their fibre. We offer this training at no charge to the grower/s.

How do you accept delivery of fleece - Given the nature of the alpaca fleece we require that all fleeces be presented in individual bags. We undertake grid sampling on all fleeces that we receive to ensure that all fleece is classed into its specific lines and payment is made based on the results of the grid test. All details are

available on our website. We do not accept bales of combined fleeces from growers.

Do you have standard prices for fleece supplied specified in colour and micron ranges and how is the price determined - The prices that we pay based on micron and colour are always available on our website www.australialpacayarn.com.au under the 'Fleece' page:

Current buying specifications and prices for white or light fawn fleeces.

Micron	Comfort Factor	Price - If registered for GST	Price - If not registered for GST
Under 20	97+%	\$22.00	\$20.00
20 - 21.99	95+%	\$22.00	\$20.00
22 -23.99	90+%	\$17.60	\$16.00
24 - 25.99	85+%	\$13.20	\$12.00
26 - 28	75+%	\$8.80	\$8.00

Current buying specifications and prices for coloured fleeces.

Micron	Comfort Factor	Price - If registered for GST	Price - If not registered for GST
Under 20	97+%	\$11.00	\$10.00
20 - 21.99	95+%	\$11.00	\$10.00
22 -23.99	90+%	\$8.80	\$8.00
24 - 25.99	85+%	\$6.60	\$6.00
26 - 28	75+%	\$4.40	\$4.00

Fleeces are weighed when received and then processed with all the fibre not meeting specifications for our main lines placed in skirtings where growers are paid the current skirtings price. There is a charge to the grower of \$1.20 per fleece test. All results of the grid tested fleeces are supplied to the grower at the time of payment.

How and when is payment made to growers who supply fleece to you - We endeavour to process fleeces and make payment within 120 days after grid testing. However, at certain times of the year when workloads are busy this may not be possible. We will always endeavour to complete your

fleeces and make payment as soon as possible. A fleece consignment form needs to be completed and supplied at time of fleece delivery so that payment can be made.

If you'd like to find out more about Australian Alpaca Yarn:

Website:

www.australialpacayarn.com.au

Email:

sales@australialpacayarn.com.au

Phone:

Tim 0429 783 575 or

Graham 0427 455 633

Boston Fine Fibres is also a collection point for Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-Op.



Cashmere Connections Pty Ltd.

Trisha and Charles Esson first entered the fibre industry in 1987 when they brought a cashmere goat flock to run on their 500 acre farm near Rokewood, in Victoria. In 2002 it became apparent that the smaller fibre industries in Australia, needed processing facilities in Australia, to develop markets with the relatively small amounts of specialty fibres produced locally and to eliminate some of the price fluctuations associated with international commodity markets. In the early years of our business, we worked with the then grower owned co-operative, AFFL, to develop the duvet alpaca product. Later we worked with Creswick Woollen Mills to provide suitable semi processed alpaca which helped them develop their Alpaca yarns. It was Creswick Woollen Mills who encouraged us to start buying alpaca fleece in order to provide them with enough suitable product to manufacture their Australian Alpaca products.

We at Cashmere Connections, are and always have been, enthusiastic supporters of local fibre industries and try as much as possible to on sell our products to Australian manufacturers so that the end product is 100% Australian Grown and manufactured. We are constantly working with other Australian manufactures to develop new products and open new markets. Most recently we have developed

Boston Fine Fibres

Boston Fine Fibres is a specialty fibre mill located in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales. We specialise in processing small quantities of natural coloured alpaca fleece, occasionally blending it with other natural fibres.

In true 'paddock to product' style, we aim to create elite yarns from the finest 2 ply to bulky 12 ply. For those who love the chunky styles, we also create Icelandic- style lopi yarns and super bold rug yarns.

These elite yarns are processed in our eco-friendly mini-mill. All of the mill's water and solar energy requirements are harvested from its rooftop and its grey water irrigates our orchard. No harsh detergents, bleaches or dyeing agents are used throughout the process.

From time to time, we purchase small quantities of well skirted alpaca fleece of all colours, which is relatively free of vegetable matter. Evidence of fibre testing may be required and should fall within the range of 18-25 micron, staple length of 80-150 mm and comfort factor above 90%. Pricing is dependent on colour, quality and local market prices and will be paid on receipt of fleeces.

For further information - please contact Tanya or Jim on 0417 497 940 or visit us at www.bostonfinefibres.com.au

a good working relationship with Bendigo Woollen Mills who use our Australian Huacaya / Suri blend Alpaca top in their yarns. Wangaratta Woollen Mills have also recently started processing our combed tops into commercial lots of beautiful yarn both for us and also for many of our clients. All of the Alpaca we buy, is sold in Australia to other Australian manufacturers, on sellers or final users. Once people see the products that can be made in Australia, with Australian fibre, they are converts.

Our factory, located in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, houses two dehairing machines as well as an extensive range of top making equipment. Using this equipment, our skilled staff are able to prepare a range of natural fibres for worsted, semi worsted & woollen spinning. We are also able to dehair scoured alpaca pieces (both white and coloured), providing a quality product for the local alpaca duvet makers. Over many years, we have always bought **all types and colours** of alpaca fibre and with time have established Australian markets for all types of semi processed Alpaca fibre, giving value to **all of the fleece shorn** from an Alpaca.

If interested in selling their fibre to Cashmere Connections Pty Ltd., Alpaca producers should consult our website for our current price list, how to prepare fibre for consignment to us, and all other details relevant to our fibre buying operation. There are no extra costs to the grower when consigning their fibre to Cashmere Connections for sale. However if well presented, there may be a small classing bonus paid to the grower. Cashmere Connections Pty Ltd will pay for transport to us from designated transport depots. Please contact us to organise this. Drop off of fleece at the factory is welcome also. Growers are welcome to see the factory in operation and collect some replacement wool packs when they deliver their fleeces to us. It is a good idea to phone before coming to make sure that it is not an RDO, even so, if

convenient, someone can be at the factory to open up and accept your clip.

Payment is made after the clip has been assessed and classed out. The preferred method of payment is by direct bank deposit, with a statement of payment and clip feedback emailed to the grower.

Coming from a fibre producer background, we find that we are able to successfully help fibre producers who are trying to navigate their way through the often confusing paths to value added product. Those thinking of value adding to their own clips are welcome to phone us and have a chat. If we can't help you, we are happy to refer you to someone who can.

To contact - Web:
www.cashmereconnections.com.au.

Cashmere Connections Pty. Ltd.
4 Osborne Street,
Bacchus Marsh, Victoria,
Australia. 3340

ABN: 93 088 001 807
Phone: (03) 5367 4222
Email: trish.esson@mail.com
Mobile: 0432 964 665

Great Ocean Road Woollen Mill (GORM)

Mission – We process some of Australia's finest fibres into luxurious yarns and showcase them to the world.

Purpose of fleece collection – Manufacturing in and for our own enterprise..

Fleece type collected – Huacaya and Suri.

Fleece colour – All colours.

What are your fleece preparation requirements?

Specific standards for shearing:

- Faeces in fleeces is unacceptable (which can occur if animals are kept in a tight space for any length of time).

- Minimal amount of second cuts (as these contribute to the overall amount of less during processing and therefore devalues a fleece. They also shorten some of the staples which can therefore result in parts of a fleece measuring below the required length.)

Specific standards for skirting (apart from the standard):

- Consistency of length & colour
- No tender fleeces

Maximum limits for VM and other contaminants:

- Minimum amount of vm – straw/ hay, grass seeds.
- Minimum amount of dust/top soil (**Real problem with show fleeces and therefore prefer not to purchase them unless they've been cleaned properly.**)
- No thistles, burrs, faces, and other foreign objects (nail clippings, gum nuts, etc) & No red soil stain.

Minimum /maximum length:
70 mm to 140 mm (ie 7cm to 14 cm)

Micron range:
18-26 micron

Fleece age:
Preferably not stored for more than 18 months.

As we do not advertise that we purchase fleeces we do not have any of these requirements on our website. However, for commission work we will provide all potential customers with a fleece preparation guide.

Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements? – We open our mill to the public from 2.00pm every Saturday & Sunday between September and May and offer group tours at these times. We have run workshops in the past and are happy to do so again if the interest is there.

For more information - please check out our website: www.gorwm.com.au or social media accounts:

Instagram: [great_ocean_road_mill](https://www.instagram.com/great_ocean_road_mill)

Facebook:

Great Ocean Road Woollen Mill

Scotch Group Pty Ltd

The Scotch Group is a collection Company committed to collecting all alpaca fleece, both Huacaya and Suri of all microns and colours with the purpose selling fleece and developing end product to benefit ALL Australian alpaca breeders. Andrew Munn, (accredited AWEX fleece classer) and Ian Preuss are proud to be agents for the Scotch Group.

The Scotch Group firmly believes that there is no such thing as fleece with "No Commercial Value - NCV". Scotch Group has sourced commercial end uses for ALL lengths, ALL microns and ALL colours in both huacaya and suri. Too much valuable fleece is being thrown out or left to rot for years in shearing sheds, where a good return could be made from this fleece.

The endless uses for alpaca fleece for an ever-increasing range of end products is amazing. The unique properties of alpaca fleece are only limited by the imagination and talents of manufacturers worldwide. The pre conceived vision that only fleece between 80mm to 140mm is "commercial" is far too narrow and limiting. If alpaca end products are only represented by yarn and what can be produced from it, then Australian breeders are being pigeon holed into a narrow segment of an ever-diversifying market. This is potentially robbing them of significant dollar returns for their entire annual clip.

As a result of this commitment, the Scotch Group has developed markets with a range of buyers and end product producers. Manufacturers are particularly interested in alpaca fleece as its unique attributes can produce end products of superior quality, not able to be achieved with the use of other natural or synthetic fibre.

The Scotch Group recently held a shearing/ fleece preparation workshop at Alpha Centauri Alpacas. The workshop was a great success and

the Scotch Group plan to hold many more. The workshop covered such topics as:

Alpaca Fibre in General
Shearing shed set-up
How to prepare fleece
What do buyers want
Micron / Colour / Length / Strength
SD vs CV (what's the difference and why is it important)
Contamination (colour, primary fibre, varying lengths, VM)
Current Markets and demand
How can you get the best return on your fibre

There were also a lot of hands on opportunities for the participants to get involved with shearing, skirting and preparing fleeces. Particular emphasis was placed on being able to identify and sort fleece from both the shearing table/mat and the classing table.

With the normal fast pace at shearing time, it is often difficult for breeders to take the time to get their "eye in" on what attributes determine how a fleece is sorted. At the workshop, we were able to move at a pace, where all participants had the opportunity to identify what areas of a fleece should be removed from the saddle and which lines they should be sorted into for maximum return.

After shearing and sorting a few fleeces, the participants became more proficient at identifying what part of the alpaca the fleece came from, removing areas that were different from the saddle and placing the fleece in their correct lines. This is a very important skill to learn. If the skirtings/neck are not removed from the saddle before storing it, then there is a risk that the entire saddle maybe downgraded to a lesser classing line. This could see the grower receiving a less than optimal return on their beautiful fibre

Scotch Group is very excited to be at the forefront of the collection and supply of Australian alpaca fleece for the use in end products from high end fashion, furnishing, duvets, carpets and

much more.

So, now is the time to sort your fleece from this year's and previous years' shearings. Remember that "No Commercial Value" does NOT exist.

For a pricing list, consignment form and further details, please contact either Andrew Munn 0408 410 281, info@acalpacas.com or Ian Preuss 0407 931 789 ianpreuss1@bigpond.com.



Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-operative

Mission – Waratah Alpaca Fibre is a member owned co-operative of Australian alpaca farmers established in June 2018 and supplying some of the world's finest alpaca fibre to both Australian domestic and international export markets. Through collaborative farming Waratah Alpaca Fibre can provide alpaca fleece producers with reliable markets for their fibre and maximise producer returns from the sale of this luxurious fleece.

As at November 2018, Waratah has 27 members in 3 states with members having the benefit of being able to share in the Co-op's surpluses as well as higher prices for the supply of their fleece. Members can also purchase bale bags from the Co-op at discounted prices to non-members and the board is currently seeking expressions of interest from members in regards to the supply of feed for 2019.

Fleece type collected – Whilst the Co-op is not yet collecting Suri fleece the board is pleased to report that a small sample of Suri fleece has been

forwarded to China and that it remains confident that it will be able to secure markets for Suri early in the New Year. Due to supply shortages it is thought that this fibre will attract a premium price compared to the current Huacaya prices.

Fleece colour – Waratah has found markets for all micron ranges and for all colours.

Do you offer training on your fleece preparation requirements? – To date the quality of fleece preparation by producers has indeed been varied with the better prepared fleeces attracting top dollar. Lesser prepared fleeces were charged a skirting charge to prepare the fleece for supply to the buyer.

To assist with the quality of fleece preparation by producers and to maximise to both the producer and the Co-op Waratah is also conducting fleece preparation workshops throughout NSW. Details of these workshops can be found on the Waratah Facebook page

How do you accept delivery of fleece? – To assist with collection several members have volunteered to act as collection points all over NSW with advertised collection days. These include

Mudgee Region -

Ravenswood Alpacas – 2272 Queens Pinch Road, Meroo, NSW, 2850

Queanbeyan, ACT Region –

Boston Fine Fibres , Burra Creek, NSW , 2722

New England Region –

Green Gully Alpacas, 89 Bretchs Lane , Kentucky South, NSW, 2354

Southern Highlands Region –

Coolaroo Alpacas, 471 Woodlands Road, Mittagong , NSW, 2577

Interested fleece producers should contact Mick at Waratah to discuss drop off times at any of these collection points.

Payment for fleece supplied –

Having shipped its first 10 tonne container of raw alpaca fibre to China

in early October the member owned Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-operative is now looking with great excitement at supplying another 10-tonne container prior to Christmas.

The 1st 10 tonne container was indeed a huge success with 21 participating Huacaya fleece producers paid up to \$28 per kilo for their supply with the Chinese buyer paying for all micron ranges and for all colours. Fleece cheques ranged from \$46 to one producer who supplied 2 saddles to \$52,000 for one supplier.

All freight and scouring costs were attended to and paid for by the buyer and Waratah was able to pay the participating fleece producers within 7 days of shipment and receipt of producer account details. A separate 2 tonne shipment of pieces was supplied to a local buyer to support the domestic market.

Waratah is pleased to have contracted an AWEX stencilled alpaca classer for the shipment and are hoping to employ more AWEX stencilled classers for upcoming shipments. In addition Waratah employed a total of 7 casual wool handlers who assisted the contracted classer with the classing and preparation of bales for the shipment. All of this was managed and coordinated by Waratah's managing director, Mick Williams. For current fleece purchase prices producers should email mick@waratahalpacafibre.com.au.

To contact - Interested parties can download the Co-op's membership form from its website at www.waratahalpacafibre.com.au.

The current price list can also be found on the website or by emailing Mick Williams at wartahalpacafibre@gmail.com

Golden Charm ALPACAS



breeders of coloured and white suri alpacas



Darryl & Jessie Raines – PO Box 8228, Bargara, Qld 4670

p: 07 4159 4624 **m:** 0407 155 403 **f:** 07 4159 4754

e: gcalpaca@bigpond.net.au

KIWICK ALPACA™ SHEARING TABLE



Alpaca handling made easy!

Kiwick Alpaca Shearing Table provides a simple & quick means to restrain, treat, & shear Alpaca. Developed by an alpaca shearer to be easy on his back, mobile, and to hold the animal safely and securely.

It features a molded belly girth, neck strap, (not pictured) and adjustable quick fastening leg restraints, holding the animal securely whilst allowing the operator complete access.

Best of all it is gentle lifting the alpaca onto the table top and back onto their feet again with minimum stress. Each side can be shorn without reloading, allowing the blanket/saddle fleece to come away in one piece.

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Keep fleece clean
One person job.
- Portable, Fold-up legs,
Store hanging on the wall
- Constructed of high grade
steel, galvanised for long life
- Durable varnished ply surface
offers tough and easy-clean
work surface.
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stanchions & ropes.
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teeth and toe trimming,
castrations, & cesareans.
- Secure adjustable restraint
means safer less stressful
experience for alpacas
and operators alike

Contact Us:

☎ 04 7575 7720

🌐 KiwickAlpaca.com



The Kiwick Alpaca can be used for all your year-round animal health requirements - castration, shearing, toe trimming, vaccinations, etc.

A key feature of the Kiwick Alpaca is its simplicity of design. With the alpaca standing against the shearing surface the belly strap is placed under the animal to hold it securely in place. The table is then tilted, lifting the Alpaca and laying it flat on the table top and strap placed over alpaca's head. Ropes placed around the legs are attached to the table arms then tensioned. The belly strap is removed from the animal to allow full access for shearing.



With its legs folded, the Kiwick table can be hung flat against the wall when not in use.

* Please note Kiwick differs slightly from photos. Now includes alpaca head strap. Frame is now galvanised not painted.



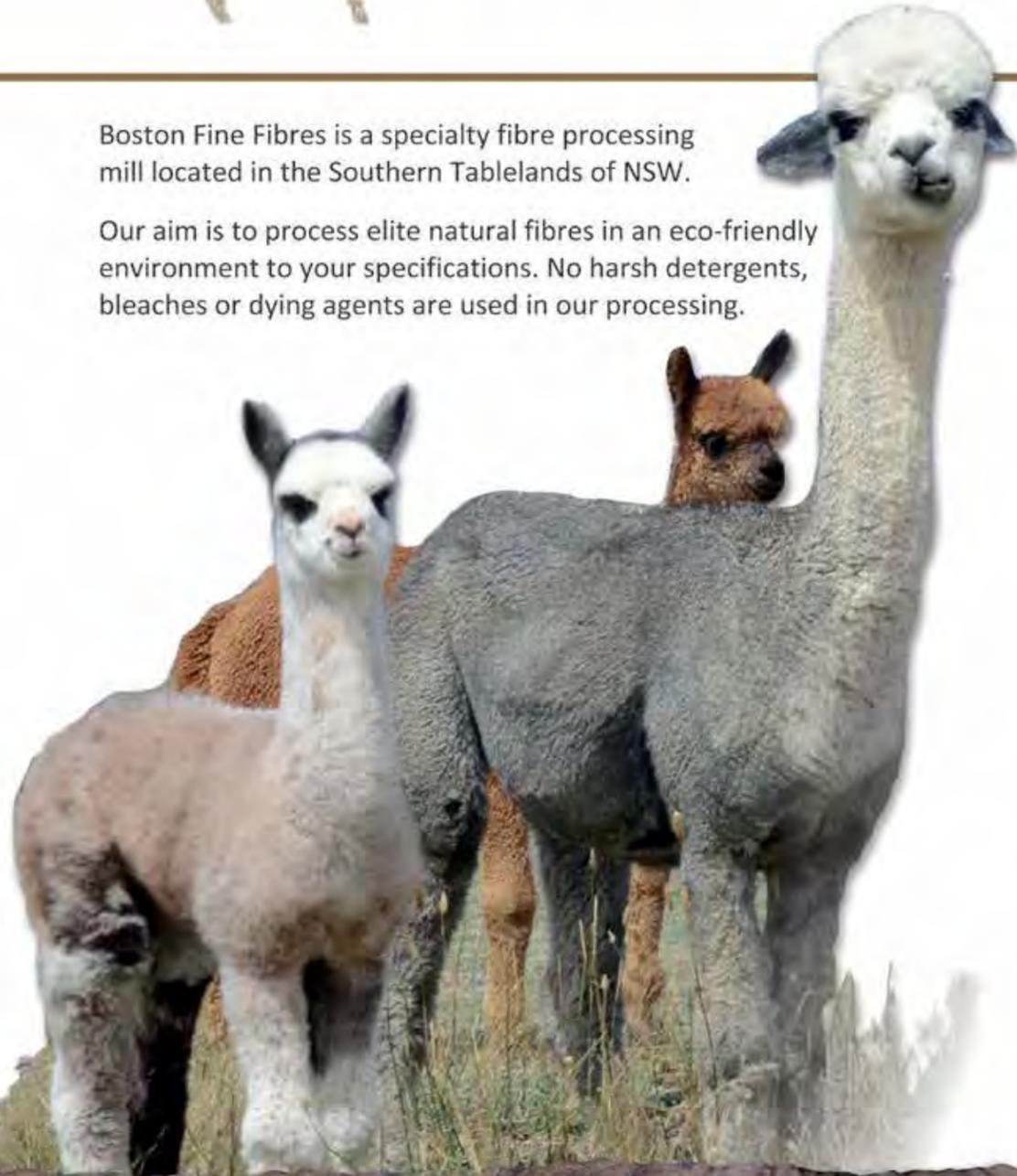
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The advantage of the mini mill is that clients can have their own fibre, including single fleeces, returned to them as high quality products. Clients can choose from a wide range of products to suit their needs and the qualities of the particular fleece. Larger orders of blended or batched fleeces can also be processed upon request.

We can turn your fibre into:

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- Lopi Yarn
- Rug Yarn
- Rovings/Bumps
- Felted pieces



www.bostonfinefibres.com.au

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The history of the Suri and Suri cross-breeding programs in Australia

BY Fiona Vanderbeek

This article was originally compiled at the request of the Suri Network in the US, for publication in their magazine Purely Suri. It is reproduced here, with minor updates and amendments, with their permission.

Surilana Icalon – one of the most influential suri sires in Australia (Courtesy Ian and Angela Preuss, Surilana)



Cedar House Desert Prince – a coloured son of the great Peruvian Senator (Courtesy Sandi Keane, Pinjarra)

When I was asked to write an article on the history of the suri in Australia, together with the background to suri cross-breeding in this country, it provided a stimulus to dig into our International Alpaca Register (IAR - now accessed via eAlpaca) and speak to many suri breeders, present and past, about their memories of the early days.

As at December 2018, eAlpaca records 21,000 living suri alpacas, of a total of 141,000 alpacas – with suris thus representing 15% of the current registered national herd. In reality, the total number of alpacas – suri and huacaya – is far greater due to the large number that sadly remain unregistered.

Looking at the quality and quantity of suris in Australia today, it is extraordinary to realise that it was only thirty-one years ago, in 1987, that the first eighteen suri alpacas were imported from Chile.

What has happened over this period in the development of the Australian suri herd leading to our bloodlines now being considered as some of the best in the world?

The Early Pioneers – 1987-1993

The first suri alpacas to arrive in Australia came with mixed shipments (huacaya and suri) from Chile between 1987 and 1990, and were primarily registered in the Australian herds of Suricaya (Peter Hamilton), World Class (Laurie Harrison) and Adsail (Paul Carney). The registry indicates that all of the early suri sires imported during this period proved to be heterozygous, producing both suri and huacaya progeny once in Australia;



A first-cross (F1) suri cria with its huacaya dam (Courtesy Fiona Vanderbeek)

many of these animals were likely to have been cross-bred and had huacaya in their Chilean ancestry.

These were followed, between 1991-93 by further Chilean imports which were imported via New Zealand, and probably included stock directly imported to New Zealand from Chile.

In the same period we saw the first Bolivian suri imports to Australia, under the auspices of Billy Bohrt of Bohrt Royal-Line; these shipments, although with pedigrees recorded as Bolivian, were imported via the USA.

The First Peruvian Imports – 1995-1998

The first suri alpacas to be imported from Peru came via the USA (and retained ILR in their Australian registered names), and this next few years saw the first wave of significantly influential suri sires arrive in Australia. There are many famous alpaca breeders in this group of importers including Alan Cousill & Jude Anderson (Pucara), Roger & Clyde Haldane (Purrumbete), Sandi Keane & Bill Barnett (Pinjarra), Pat Viceconte (Jolimont), Jill Short (AS Traders), Tammy & Colin Campbell (Bonamanda), Julienne & Frank Gelber (Bumble Hill), Peter Sultan & Wendy Billington (Cedar House)... to name but a few.

Within these shipments appear the names of some important suri sires, who have gone on to have a significant impact on the Australian herd to this day. Included were: ILR Helado (167 registered progeny), Somerset Peru Ivory Adsail (150 registered progeny – including the influential female Surilana Milady Joanna who produced an astonishing 30 progeny during her time as an ET donor for Kurrawa), ILR Pperuvian Cadete (94

registered progeny, including Pucara Allegro), ILR Donaire (72 registered progeny) and ILR Top Hat (64 registered progeny). Also worthy of mention are Peruvian Rutilio (although heterozygous, Rutilio is the first confirmed import from Don Julio Barreda's Accoyo herd – identified by a distinctive ear notch), Peruvian Matiz & Peruvian Pride of Alianca (also both heterozygous), Peruvian Magician and GCSA Trademark. Some important suri females also came in these shipments, including Peruvian Summer Haze and ILR Halona-Happy Fortune Accoyo, to name but two.

However, amongst these shipments came two suri sires who really shaped the development of the Australian herd and are worthy of special mention:

- ILR Pperuvian Amador with 122 registered progeny, including Cedar House Sensational (73 progeny) and Pucara Kahuna (53 progeny)
- Peruvian Senator with 199 registered progeny, including Peruvian Conquistador (110 progeny) and Elysion Oliver Twist (70 progeny) together with two males who helped form the foundation of the coloured suri herd in Australia - Cedar House Desert Prince (a dark fawn male with 224 progeny) and Peruvian Boyne Lad (a medium fawn with 120 progeny).

It is interesting to note that Senator was included in the shipment out of Peru as the Peruvians considered his fleece to be too fine (their focus being on the production of heavy weight suiting fabric). Although not a densely fleeced male, his impact on the fineness and production qualities of the Australian suri herd continues to this day. It is not even known which herd in

Peru he came from – Allianza, Solocotta or even Accoyo (although he did not have the distinctive ear notch of Barreda's herd).

During these years, shipments also entered Australia from Bolivia and Chile, including a Chilean group imported by Haldane/Hamilton. These animals are of interest as they formed the beginning of one of the first cross-breeding programs in Australia, under the prefix of Two Ways. The other early program of cross-breeding was within the Purrumbete herd under the ownership of Roger Haldane. The cross-breeding of suri and huacaya in Australia is discussed in more detail later in this article.

The next wave – 1999-2005

During this next phase, we see a few more animals imported from Bolivia (Jolimont, Hunter and Tambo Downs) but most importantly a critical visit to Peru by a group of Australian breeders, which resulted in a shipment which brought new genetics to the herds of Surilana, Jolimont, Somerset, Wesuri, Starline, Serena Lodge, Canchones and others.

Some of the most influential white suri alpacas in Australian history came ashore during this period, most particularly under the auspices of Jill Short of Surilana. Key males included the famous quartet, all direct from Don Julio Barreda's Accoyo farm (and all now deceased) of:

- **Surilana Bosisto** with 140 progeny, including 21 certified suri sires
- **Surilana T-Pito** with 99 progeny, including 17 certified suri sires
- **Surilana Zosimo** with 91 progeny, including 15 certified suri sires

And arguably the greatest of them all:

- **Surilana Icalon** with 77 progeny, including 27 certified suri sires. Despite a sadly short life, with all his progeny born between 2003-2005, Icalon has lived on through many of his famous sons including Pinjarra El Nino (197 registered progeny) and Surilana Piccolo (114 progeny) who between them produced a further 51 certified breeding males, along with many high-quality females; it is easy to see why this male has made such an impact on modern Australian suri genetics.

The contribution of some outstanding imported Accoyo suri females, including the Surilana Macusani females – most especially Ma Belle (29 progeny), and Miss (13 progeny), must also be remembered – particularly thanks to their highly successful careers as Embryo Transfer donors.

A second Surilana shipment in 2005 brought more suri males and females and was followed by a large shipment by Jolimont in 2006, which included Carlos 2, Kentor, Accoyo Miquel and a large number of high quality suri females.

Arrival of the colours – 2005 onwards

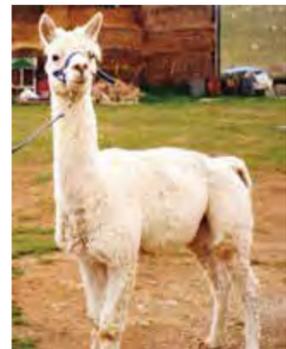
Until this time the majority of imports had white or light fawn genetics. However, the 2005 shipment mentioned above included three medium/dark fawn suri males imported by Pinjarra (at this

Shorn fleece from a fifth generation (BC4) suri, showing that with time all huacaya characteristics can be bred out (Courtesy Fiona Vanderbeek)

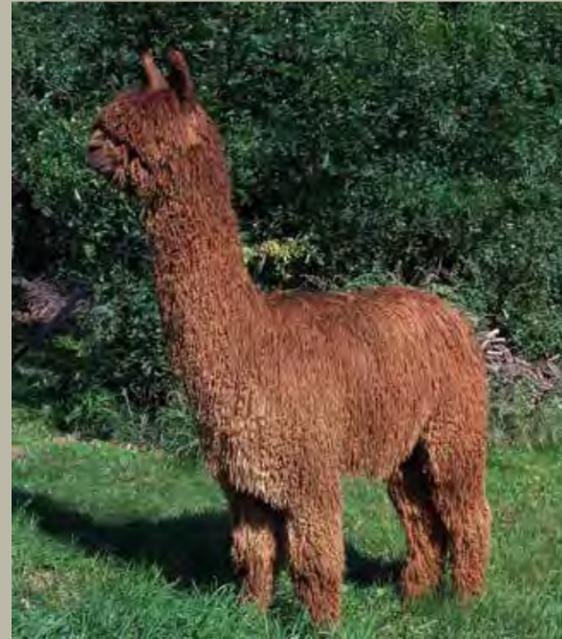




A second generation (BC1) suri, seen here on his regrowth fleece
(Courtesy Fiona Vanderbeek)



Peruvian Senator – one of the few remaining images of Senator, as all early photos were lost in a fire
(Courtesy Dianne Marshall)



ILR Moon River's Peruvian Durango
(Courtesy Julie Wilkinson, Baarrooka)

females, in an effort to increase the number of coloured suri in the national herd.

Commercial fleece attributes

A key limiting factor in the quality of cross-bred suri progeny produced by many experimenters was the tendency to use poor quality huacaya females (reserving the better animals for huacaya breeding programs). However, there were pioneers in the production of commercial suri fibre who deliberately cross-bred huacaya/suri to improve certain attributes of the fleece. These included none less than the great Don Julio Barreda of Accoyo – who around the mid-90s considered/commenced a program of crossing to achieve higher density in his suri herd, using prime huacaya herd sires over his suri females. He was encouraged to do so by fibre processors in Peru who were looking for more processable suri fibre – a more open lock style in a lower micron range - after decades of producing higher micron for the coating market. By utilising heavy-cutting huacaya males, Barreda was obviously trying to achieve bigger fleeces for commercial gain.

Here in Australia, a pioneer of the suri fibre industry, Julienne Gelber of Bumble Hill Alpacas, commenced her own cross-breeding programs in 1996 (when pure bred suri females cost \$40,000) using only high quality huacaya females and homozygous suri sires. In 1999, Julienne was experimenting with putting high quality, dense huacaya sires over suri females, in an attempt to not only lower the micron of the resulting offspring and increase the density, but also to produce a fleece that did not have the predominant style of that time – lots of tightly twisting shoe-lace locks, declared “unprocessable” in the scouring/combing stage by processors. The key successes achieved in these experiments were not only the desired increase in density and reduction in micron, but also a more open style of lock suited to processing, coupled with a reduction in the longer primary fibres seen in many of the first cross suri alpacas of the time (undoubtedly due to the poor quality of huacaya females typically used).

With the influx of Peruvian genetics in the early 2000s, and the influence of males such as Surilana Piccolo, with their flat, wavy “fettuccine” lock style, Julienne wound down her cross-breeding program, to pursue this highly processable, dense and lustrous pure bred suri style.

Today

Whilst some deliberate cross-breeding undoubtedly still occurs (and I retain a few in my own herd for their desirable fleece characteristics – style, lustre, low micron and low SD) the practice is now less widespread as the number of suri has increased and the price of pure suri genetics decreased to an affordable level for new entrants. That said, some of these cross-bred suri can still produce highly desirable fleece for commercial processors and for those not focussed on the show ring, can be a viable option within a fleece production herd.

time owned by Ian and Angela Preuss) - Machu Mayu, Huayta and Peruvian Icon. Around the same time, three influential suri males arrived in Australia: Somerset Arequipa King (dark fawn), Somerset Stirling Moss (grey) and Somerset Black Impact (black). In 2006 and 2008 Pat Viceconte imported further coloured males from Peru for the herds of Jolimont and Surilana (now owned by Ian and Angela Preuss). With increasing interest in the breeding of high quality coloured suri alpacas, we saw further shipments from Peru, including by Peter and Robert Kennedy-Gane (Canchones) who focussed on black suri – amongst the many males and females imported by Canchones was Canchones Impresario (65 progeny, including 16 certified males). There was also an increase in the number of coloured suri bloodlines imported from the USA, including by breeders such as Baarrooka (Julie Wilkinson), Azzura (Patricia Robb) and Pacofino (Paul Cramley & Linda Davies). These males, including names such as ILR ABF Riptide's Ultimate Black (239 progeny), ILR Moon River's Peruvian Durango (142 progeny), ILR ABF Eminance's Gray Knight (77 progeny), ILR Sierra Bonita's The Bachelor (97) and ILR Snowmass Illumination (104) have had a major impact on coloured breeding programs in Australia.

In Summary....

This has been a fascinating journey back through time for me as a suri breeder, and an opportunity to reflect on how our suri herd in Australia has been shaped over the past 31 years. If I had to make a personal choice as to the two most influential suri males in the Australian gene pool (and admittedly I am a suri breeder focused on white commercial fleece production) I'd have to say Peruvian Senator, for his early impact in improving the fineness, lustre and structure of our fleeces, and Surilana lcalon for the extraordinary impact he and his many descendants, male and female, had and continue to have on our herd, bringing density, lustre and the flat lock style so much preferred by today's commercial processors of suri fibre.

Suri cross-breeding in Australia

The other topic I was asked to address in this article was the cross-breeding of suri/huacaya that has occurred in Australia – why was this done?

Building numbers

As mentioned earlier, the first to experiment with deliberate

cross breeding of suri/huacaya were the herds of Two Ways and Purrumbete in the mid-1990s. From my own personal perspective, when we decided to set up a white suri herd with a focus on fleece for commercial processing, in 2002, we simply could not afford or justify the cost of buying pure bred suris, at upwards of \$10,000 each. For this reason we began our herd with a few carefully selected first-cross (F1) suris (the offspring of a huacaya and a suri – most generally the huacaya being the dam and the suri the sire); but even these proved hard to find when we wanted only white genetics in the ancestry of our animals. And so we purchased five white huacaya females and commenced our own cross-breeding program, purchasing matings to suri sires. By culling all the male offspring from such a breeding program, and mating female progeny to other pure-bred suri sires, over five generations the huacaya can eventually be bred out of these lines. It is a slow process and, with the increased availability of pure bred suri at reduced price entry points, is not so widely practised these days, though can still produce suri alpacas with highly processable fibre.

Before the more recent import of high quality coloured breeding stock, from Peru and the USA, what coloured suri sires there were in Australia were commonly crossed with coloured huacaya



Golden CHARM

We are Darryl and Jessie Raines and we live on a 30 acre property on the coast on the outskirts of Bundaberg in Qld. We have owned suri alpacas since 2002.

Our herd started with three females and now consists of 50 alpacas.

We achieved Qld Suri of the Year for 2016 with Golden Charm Moscato and then again in 2017 with Golden Charm Emily.

In the early days of owning alpacas we started buying our matings as there wasn't enough work to keep a male. This also had the advantage of diversifying our genetics. We made a good start, but as we were very busy we ended up just using males from the local area because it was easy as we didn't have time to travel to the Brisbane area where most of the good males were.

This allowed us to keep breeding and we won some ribbons at shows but we were limiting ourselves by not having a breeding plan in place to guide us to where we wanted to go.

We eventually bought a male in partnership with another stud. This male gave some beautiful cria but he also gave some huacaya. Although we had done our homework and checked his genetics there were no huacaya in his sire or dams pedigree. We apparently didn't check far enough as his uncle had produced a couple of huacayas.

This was not what we were breeding for so had to stop using him. Back to buying our matings, but we then bought a share in another male. This time we paid even more attention to his genetics but there were no problems with him.

Trickster really improved density lustre and length of fleece in our herd so we now had a good start, but we also bought some outside matings at the same time.

Next on the shopping list was a coloured male who has proven himself with quite a few broad ribbon crias. Over the years we have also purchased more girls, increasing the genetics in our herd.

Until 2015 we didn't certify any of the males we bred as we don't believe this should be done unless the boy is of a very high standard.

We have now bred four males worthy of certification. This, coupled with our two suri of the year wins confirms we are finally on our way to where we want to head with our breeding.

The males we now own and use include Pinjarra Trickster, Didohama Demon, Surilana Belle Boy, Golden Charm Hot Stuff, Golden Charm Moscato, Golden Charm Lucifer and Golden Charm Merlin.

If you have alpacas and need to mate them but don't know where to start or what males to use, here are a few ideas.

There is no one right answer as to which males to use but there is lots to think about and decide where you want your herd to advance to.

A good starting point is to decide what your breeding objectives are.

Do you want huacaya or suri, white or black, grey, brown or maybe fawn. Are you in the business of breeding pets for sale, or guards to sell to breeders of other livestock. Do you want to breed for the fleece, for the show ring, or even for meat production. You will probably have one main objective with one or two sidelines. If you breed for fleece or showing you will probably also sell for pets or guards.

Now you know what you would like your cria to look like it is time to start planning your breeding programme.

Assess your girls to see what qualities you already have and what you need to build on.

You may be better to buy matings until you have enough girls to make it worth while to have your own male. This gives you the opportunity to diversify the genetics in your herd.

Whether buying a male or some services always use a male that will improve your herd as it is a waste of good money if you are not moving forward and this also includes pet breeders. If the male you are looking at is only average then average is probably all he will produce. So why produce an average cria when you can produce a beautiful one for much the same price.

If the male is young and has no cria to show what he can produce don't make the mistake of putting him over your entire herd until you can see what he is producing as he may not give the results you are looking for.

Now we have the do nots out of the way lets see the best way to choose the male we want.

A good starting point if you are looking to buy your own male or buy some matings is to attend some alpaca shows or visit farms who are using good males. This is a good place to see some quality animals so you have a good idea of what you are looking for. Ask the owners of any animals you like the look of if you can check out their animal. Most people are willing to show you and you will probably learn something from talking to the owners and inspecting the alpacas.

Check the results of the shows and see who is consistently winning. This is a good indication of how good he is. Listen to the comments of the judges as this will tell you the qualities of the male as well as any shortcomings he may have. While at the show ask to see and feel any animals that you are interested in as this will show you what you can achieve.

Now that you know what animals you like go one step further. Instead of just looking at the male you like the look of, check out the genetics of all the winners. You may find the same genetics in some of the animals you liked the look of. If you are a suri breeder check the IAR database to make sure there is no huacaya anywhere in his family.

Now you are ready to approach the owners of the animals you like and might be able to do a deal to use your chosen male.

You may have bought a male but don't wish to use him exclusively. Why not take your three best girls and use an outside mating to a good male for them. This will then give you good odds of getting at least one good cria.

It is a long waiting time to see what cria we have produced so it is worth doing a little bit of homework first to give us the best chance of achieving what we want.

Put the effort into your matings and even if you don't end up with the expected colour or something else isn't exactly as you planned, at least you have produced the best outcome possible.

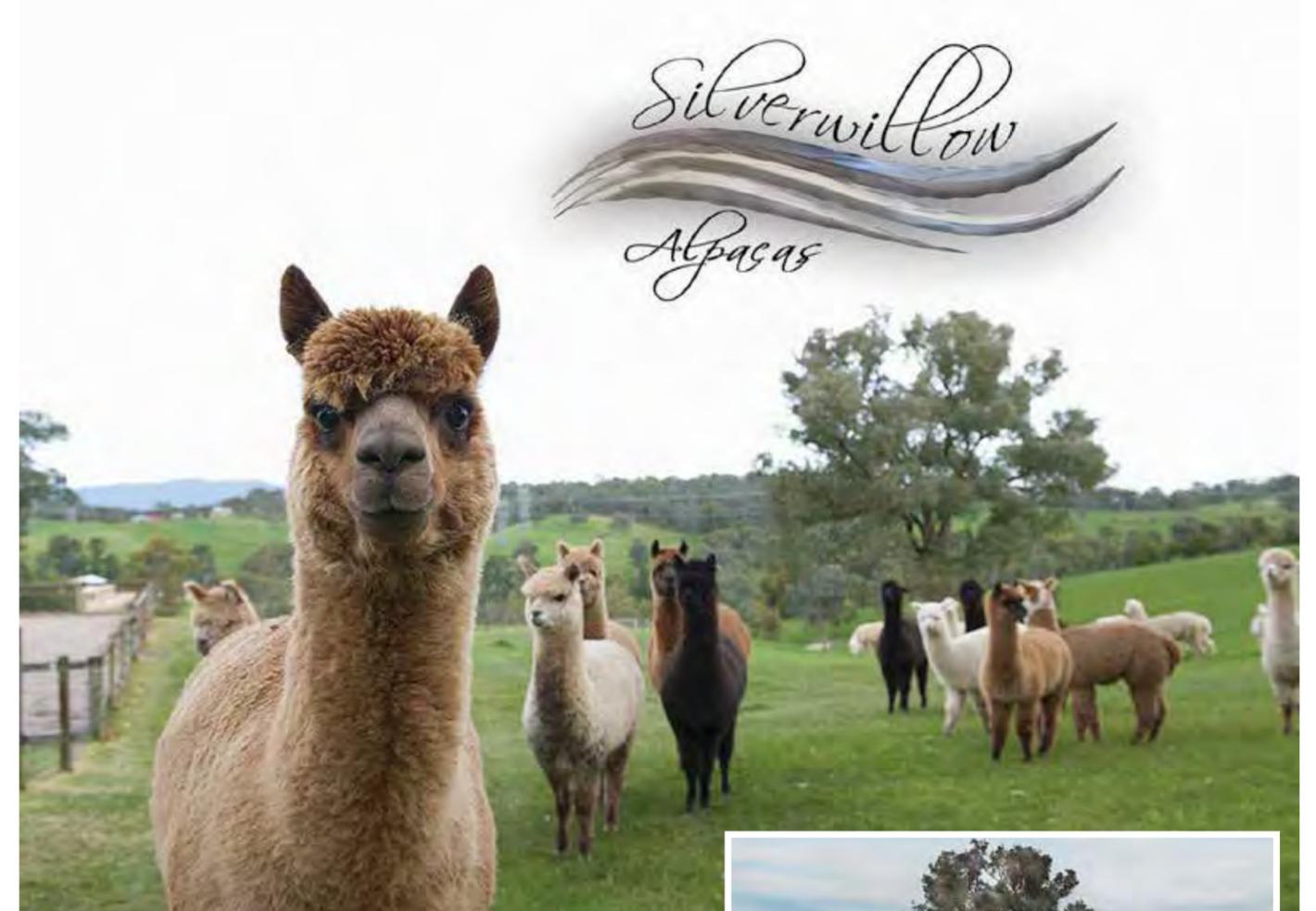


Golden Charm ALPACAS

Breeders of coloured and white suri alpacas

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Silverwillow Alpacas is situated near the Yarra Valley in the beautiful undulating countryside of Kangaroo Ground.

The girls enjoy a happy, stress free life while growing their beautiful fleeces which are then crafted into soft, warm scarves, throws, cot blankets and balls of wool ready for your creation and enjoyment.



- Silverwillow Alpacas -

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