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# Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A



AUTUMN 1992

# **SURICAYA ALPACAS**

**EST. 1988**

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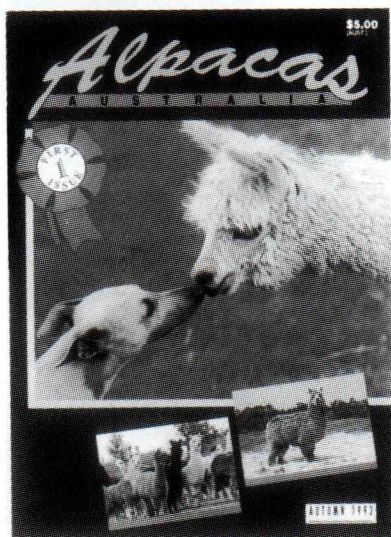
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Main cover photograph: Ken Irwin

Across the Editor's Desk .....	4
See you at Tocal! .....	5
NZ quarantine quandry .....	6
Keeping track of the family tree .....	8
But, how do you shear them? .....	13
Exports to North America thrive .....	18
Auction sets the pace .....	19
AAA notes .....	22
It's Miracle Milly .....	25
Sydney Show debut .....	26
Soils ain't soils .....	28
Coming Events .....	30

## Welcome to the world of alpacas

The alpaca industry is probably the last of the world's great animal fibre industries yet to be fully developed.

Australia is in a unique position to be at the forefront of this development as we now have the largest herd of alpacas of any country outside South America. Alpaca production in the traditional South American altiplano regions is static or in decline due to overgrazing, poor management and the lack of commitment to selective breeding.

Sheep in Australia have been developed and refined over the past 180 years and a great wool industry has emerged. I believe the Australian alpaca industry will develop in a similar way, but perhaps more rapidly because of the more advanced technology now available. Alpacas will never rival the sheep industry for sheer numbers but they will find a niche as a profitable 'boutique' industry catering to the top end of the prestige fibre market.

Alpacas allow traditional stock and crop producers to make high profits from relatively small parts of their properties. At field days and shows, one of the most frequent comments when a farmer is told that an alpaca costs between \$15,000 and \$20,000 is "I could buy 1000 sheep for that". That's exactly the point. Why would you want to buy all those sheep when you could have several beautiful alpacas instead?

If you sell half your sheep and buy a few alpacas you will have less work, lower overheads, fewer problems and a great deal of interest and enjoyment from a more profitable investment. Forget the sheep!

Small acreage farmers and hobby farmers have a unique opportunity to make even the smallest farm produce a good return on invested capital. Alpaca prices have been rising gradually over the past two years on the back of strong local and overseas demand. This trend is set to continue.

Alpacas have only single births, an 11.5 month gestation and half the female offspring born in Australia last year were exported or are ear-marked for export. Add to this the strong local demand and the fact that the AAA is developing export markets and it's easy to see why alpacas are referred to as the world's finest livestock investment.

Cherie Bridges has been appointed editor of *Alpacas Australia*. Before entering the alpaca industry, Cherie was involved in advertising and marketing and also worked for several rural publications. She has been a tireless worker for the association and one of the alpaca industry's major promoters. I'm sure her bright personality and enthusiasm for the alpaca industry will show through in *Alpacas Australia*.

Alan Hamilton  
AAA president

# Across the Editor's Desk

## A way to share in the alpaca magic

One of the questions I'm most frequently asked about alpacas is: "What's the catch?" I guess this is understandable. We are all conditioned not to expect things to go too well in life or to be too good - it makes us suspicious. And everyone knows that a farming life was not meant to be easy.

It's not surprising that you look for a catch when you hear about an animal breeding industry where the animal is quiet and intelligent, hardy and disease resistant, low maintenance and kind to the environment, charming and curious and - to top it all off - profitable.

It is the aim of the Australian Alpaca Association, as publisher of this magazine, and my aim as editor, to show that there is no catch. This wonderful and rewarding farming industry is new, it's enthusiastic and it has a long term future.

The magazine has the dual purpose of educating people who are inter-



Alpacas Australia editor Cherie Bridges ... and friends.

ested in alpacas by giving them a feel for the industry and providing a resource for alpaca breeders.

In this and future issues we'll be running articles of practical advice on husbandry and farm management. We'll look at what breeders in Australia are doing, what their plans are, what's happening in the alpaca market around the world, what the association is doing and where the future of the industry lies.

Please use this magazine as a source of information and advice. If you have a question on any aspect of alpaca farming, whether it be health, breeding, sales, exports or fibre,

please send it to us. We have access to vets, breeders, livestock agents and fibre experts, all of whom will be happy to help you.

I feel very lucky to be an alpaca farmer. I wish everybody could have the chance to try it at least once in a lifetime. I hope I can share some of the magic with you through this magazine.

Cherie Bridges  
Editor

Volume 1 No. 1

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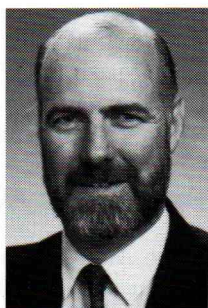
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# See you at Tocal!

By David Webb



*David Webb runs Ceyreste Alpacas in Warrandyte, Victoria. He is on the committee of the AAA.*

Alpaca enthusiasts from around Australia will gather at Tocal, near Maitland, NSW, on July 11 and 12 for the second Australian Alpaca Seminar.

The inaugural seminar in 1990 (held when the association was a mere five months old) brought together world class speakers. The high standards will continue at Tocal.

Dr George Davis, from New Zealand, will present an update on his research projects, a presentation eagerly awaited by all those who heard Dr Davis speak at Glenormiston.

American veterinarian, Dr Eric Sharpnack, will discuss a variety of reproduction and general husbandry topics. His years of experience treating camelids in Oregon has made him one of the most experienced practitioners in North America.

Dr Karen Baum, also from the US, will be talking on her special interest areas of neo-natal care, problem breeders and nutrition.

Chris Tuckwell, a livestock officer

for the SA Department of Agriculture, will cover ideal pastures, carrying capacity and feeding patterns for optimal animal production.

Not all the time will be devoted to lectures. Half of Sunday will be given over to practical demonstrations of alpaca husbandry. A more informal approach will give the 'old hands' of the industry the chance to swap information with the newcomers.

## Book early

The C.B. Alexander College at Tocal, in the heart of the Hunter Valley, is a comfortable 2.5 hour drive from Sydney and has excellent facilities. Set on 2200 hectares, the college has an historic homestead and provides meals and accommodation as well as a variety of sporting facilities.

There is a limit to the number of seminar participants who can be accommodated at the college, book early to ensure your place at the alpaca event of 1992.

**For booking details, see page 24.**

## BENLEIGH ALPACA STUD

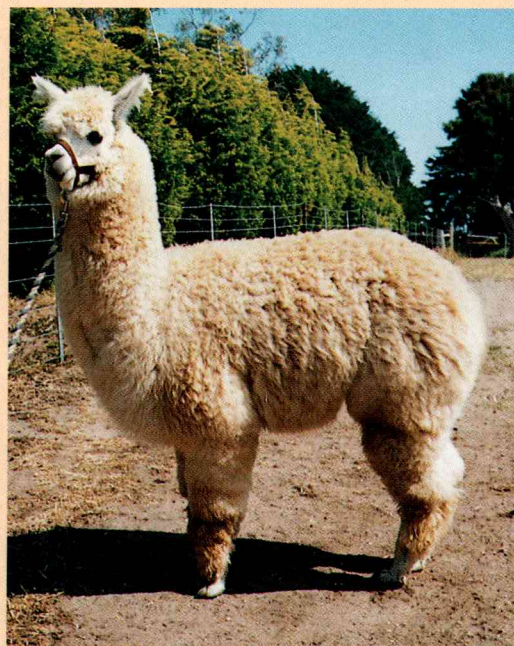
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# NZ quarantine quandry

There's a saying that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. This is certainly the case with many reports in Australia about foot and mouth disease in a shipment of alpacas imported from South America to New Zealand recently. For the industry's benefit - and your peace of mind - the association presents the facts as we understand them.

**T**he Australian Alpaca Association has called for additional quarantine measures to be applied to alpacas being imported from New Zealand and Chile.

Four alpacas in a shipment of 264 alpacas and llamas from Chile which arrived at the NZ quarantine station on Somes Island in January reacted to a foot and mouth test, indicating that the four had been exposed to the disease during their lifetimes. They were not showing any symptoms of the disease.

The four alpacas were destroyed and their carcasses incinerated. Tissue samples were sent to the world reference centre on foot and mouth disease at Pirbright, England, for further testing. The results of these tests were negative.

The NZ Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the NZ Federated Farmers had been quoted as saying the remaining animals would not be allowed to enter NZ, regardless of the tests' outcome.

However, the Minister for Agriculture, John Falloon, and MAF, had announced that the remaining animals had been released into NZ. The deci-

sion is thought to be based on legal advice that the Government had no legal grounds for requiring the animals to be destroyed or re-exported.

Alan Hamilton, president of the AAA, said it was irresponsible of the NZ Government to release the animals, given the enormous financial implications if livestock industries in Australia and NZ lost international confidence in their status as free of foot and mouth disease.

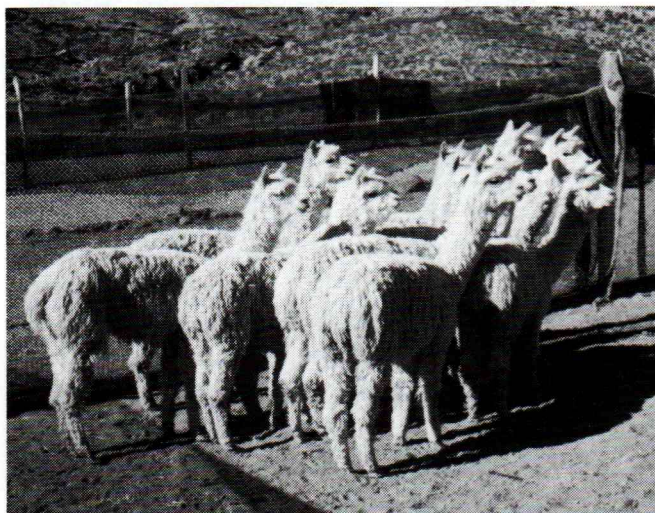
## Demand to AQIS

The AAA will be demanding that the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) ensure that these animals are not allowed into Australia.

Mr Hamilton said the AAA will also demand that AQIS impose additional quarantine on all alpacas being imported from NZ and that the animals undergo a further secondary quarantine when they arrive in Australia.

In a meeting between AQIS, the NFF's quarantine committee and the AAA, AQIS agreed that the quarantine period would be extended to a minimum of 12 months secondary quarantine in Australia.

When the initial test results were made public, Australian quarantine



Left: Suri alpacas of the type involved in the NZ shipment. Right: Huacaya alpacas. The only type of alpacas in Australia.

officials suspended the import of all sheep, cattle, goats and deer from NZ. The suspension was lifted, in the wake of widespread criticism from NZ authorities at what they termed 'Australia's knee-jerk reaction'.

NZ officials said the incident was not a 'foot and mouth scare' but rather a 'testing problem in quarantine'. They said the reaction could have been a false-positive or that the reactor animals had been in contact with foot and mouth at some time in the past or that the reaction was due to travel stress.

There have been calls from various NZ farmer and agricultural association to ban the use of NZ as a halfway house for exotic animals before re-exporting to other countries.

Alan Hamilton said the irony of the situation was that the problem could have been avoided if MAF had heeded warnings from both the Australian Alpaca Association and the Bolivian Alpaca Breeders Association that a number of alpacas in the shipment may have been smuggled

into Chile from Bolivia. Foot and mouth is prevalent in Bolivia but Chile has disease-free status.

MAF's national adviser on animal health, Stuart MacDiarmid, said it would have been impossible for Chilean authorities to be sure of the animals' origins.

Mr Hamilton said the evidence was very strong considering the shipment contained suri alpacas, a rarer alpaca

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**It is in no-one's interests  
to put our industry —  
and other livestock  
industries — at risk.**

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type found in Bolivia but not Chile. There are no suri alpacas in Australia. MAF chose to allow the shipment to proceed.

(The main difference between the suri and the huacaya now in Australia is that the suri's fleece hangs

from the body in "pencil staples" similar to the fibre on angora goats. The huacaya grows straight out from the animal's body, similar to sheep's wool.)

The animals are reported to have been imported by Alpacacorp - which includes Rob Orchard, from Glencol Llamas and Alpacas, and consulting engineer Steve Jenkins - on behalf of an American partnership. The \$1.2 million in costs so far (purchases, quarantine and transport) will be carried by the US interests.

Mr Hamilton said that before the animals arrived at Somes Island, one Australian association member was contacted about buying some of these alpacas but believed the shipment's origins to be suspect.

He said the Australian association had always been keen to work with authorities in Australia, NZ and the relevant South American countries to ensure that the highest health standards are maintained. It is in no-one's interests to put our industry — and other livestock industries — at risk.



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# Keeping track of the family tree

The new International Alpaca Register will provide a solid foundation for the alpaca industry's future. Australian Alpaca Association vice president, Ken Allston, explains how it works and what it offers breeders and their clients.



*Ken Allston is vice president of the Australian Alpaca Association. His Inca Alpaca Stud is at Launching Place, Victoria.*

**T**he Australian Alpaca Association is not yet two years old, but it is already one of only two alpaca breeding associations of any substance outside the animals' traditional home in South America.

The Australian association has recognised the value of quickly introducing a pedigree register to further promote this unique industry.

The original stock and recent imports have, to a great degree, been hand chosen in Chile or in New Zealand, which has obtained its base stock from Chile.

All imports have undergone strict quarantine. Those imported via New Zealand have been through at least four quarantine periods. Quarantine begins in Chile, which is itself relatively free of contagious diseases.

Because of its strict quarantine, comfortable climate, excellent natural pastures and high husbandry standards, Australia has proven itself to be a responsible country for breeding alpacas. A sizeable and viable export trade to America has been established already.

The association has introduced a breed register to validate the quality of animals bred here and to provide a data base to assist further genetic development.

The International Alpaca Register is held at the Australian Business Research Institute (ABRI), which is associated with the University of New England at Armidale, NSW. This is the largest specialised agricultural data processing agency in Australia. Some 20,000 breeders, from a wide variety of livestock industries, use the ABRI facilities.

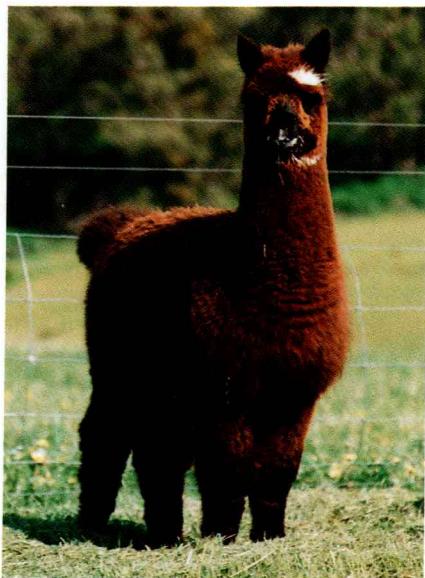
By definition, a pedigree requires the recording of (at minimum) the

sire and dam of progeny. However, most of the Australian stock has been imported from Chile, or from Chile via NZ, and the sires and dams of many animals are just not known.

Given the high quality of Australian alpacas, it seemed prudent to introduce the device of Foundation Stock (stock now in Australia and NZ which have no llama characteristics). This opportunity to register stock of unknown or partly known parentage will only last until June 1992. After



**The official fleece registration colour chart shows the diversity of natural fibre colours.**



**Fleece colour is an important factor in breeding.**

then, only the progeny of Foundation Stock will be accepted for pedigree registration.

The 'open door' facility has advantages. First, it is fair to all association members who have invested in the industry to date. Second, and most importantly, it captures a wide genetic base, a distinct advantage for future breeding.

Even where an alpaca may not be of the highest standard, its offspring may show desirable characteristics which may be of importance in further breeding.

The International Alpaca Register has introduced a system of double tagging. One is the breeder's plastic tag showing the herd code, year of birth and drop number for that year. The other stainless steel tag gives an International Alpaca Register identifier and the registered number. Further identification by tattooing is optional.

Comprehensive regulations and a Member's Guide provide for all normal requirements of transfer, leasing, joint ownership, use of outside sires and so forth.

At present, there is no satisfactory knowledge or experience on the use of artificial insemination or embryo transfer in alpacas and this issue is covered in the regulations.

Registration of future imports is clearly documented. As the sires and dams of imports from Chile will not

be known and certainly not registered in Australia, all future imports from Chile will be accepted as Foundation Stock. Special provision has been made for NZ where the industry is slightly older than in Australia.

NZ breeders are encouraged to join the Australian Alpaca Association and to register their stock as Foundation Stock or in the Alpaca Section (full pedigree). This means Australian importers can obtain stock with a full pedigree.

American stock is acceptable for full pedigree registration as there is an

established registry there.

Registry fees are in line with other livestock registries and a good percentage of this money will flow back to the association for future market development. After a once-only joining fee to the registry, fees are basically \$15 per initial registration.

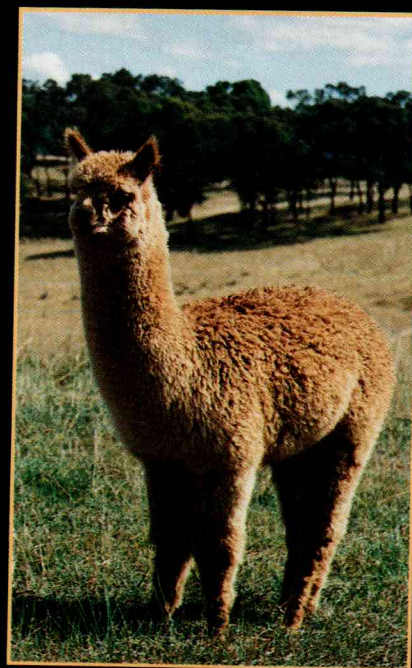
Herd registration began in January, with individual animal registration to follow. As colour breeding is so important to the alpaca industry, colour swatches will be issued for positive colour recognition and data base recording.

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The pedigree data will also form a starting point to which performance data can be added in future. Once sufficient genetic data has been recorded, computer evaluation can provide Breeding Value Expectations (in, for example, fleece colour and wool quality) to improve progeny.

Considerable advantages are expected from the registry's establishment:

- Stud stock numbers are still being built up and an export market has been developed. Information from this pedigree data base will assist the best genetic development. Australian breeders are expected to concentrate on stud stock breeding for some time.
- The regulations provide that animals must be registered to participate in Alpaca Association judging, auctions and field days. This will ensure that the quality, as shown to the public, will be maintained.
- Other industries have shown that pedigree registered animals command a substantially higher price than commercial animals.

## Herd registrations

**Herd Prefix:** The Herd Prefix is used as a prefix and part of the name of the animals which a breeder registers (e.g. Alpaca Park Jason). Many

## Concise guide to alpaca registration

The Member's Guide and Regulations of the International Alpaca Registry are comprehensive manuals designed to explain all normal requirements of registration.

Remember: a guide in a simple form cannot completely take the place of the manuals and members should become familiar with the finer details.

There is a disclaimer on the pedigree form which confirms that certificates are issued on the information provided by the breeder and the certificate is not a guarantee by the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.



The beginning of an Australian dynasty?

breeders use their property name as the prefix. The prefix will be unique within the AAA and an AAA sub-committee will arbitrate if two names are considered similar.

**Herd Code:** Up to three alphanumeric characters are used to identify the breeder's herd. The code is the first part of the identification number of animals born in the breeder's herd (e.g. ALP may be assigned as the Herd Code for the Alpaca Park herd and the first born in 1992 would be ALP M 1 - see Birth Year Code, page 8, IAR Member's Guide).

Imported animals' identification number begins with 'I', so a breeder's Herd Code cannot commence with 'I' (e.g. the Herd Prefix Inca cannot have a Herd Code INC).

To complete initial registration, fill in Form H, indicating the number of AAA tags required and include a cheque payable to the AAA.

At this stage, the cost will be: \$100 for once-only registration of new members, \$1 per tag and \$35 for a tag clincher. The IAR will return tags and forms for the registration of individual animals.

## Animal registrations

The objective is to issue pedigree certificates showing the ancestry of each alpaca, details of which are

maintained on the IAR computer data base.

Where an alpaca's parentage is not known or the sire and dam have not been registered, the Foundation Stock system will be used. Foundation Stock have the same status as any registered stock.

Any alpaca in Australia or NZ may be registered as Foundation Stock up to June 1, 1992. After that, only the progeny of Foundation Stock and full pedigree stock (Alpaca Section) can be registered. For future imports, only animals with appropriate pedigree details from the US and NZ can be entered in the Alpaca Section.

Other imports, including those from Chile, can only be entered as Foundation Stock as neither the sire nor dam will be registered.

## Foundation Stock

When the IAR sends breeders their forms, the breeder must complete Form F for the registration of Foundation Stock. They require:

- Breeder's Herd Prefix and Herd Code
- Animal Identification: Herd Code, year letter (see Member's Guide page 8) and plastic tag drop number.
- AAA tag registration number (from the AAA tag to be attached to the animal)
- Year of birth (or the approximate year if the details are unknown)
- Sex of animal
- Name of animal and breeder's herd prefix (e.g. ALP Jason)
- Wool colour from the colour chart
- Other information required on the form if appropriate.

Take careful note of the instructions relating to the animal being born in another herd or being imported.

Progeny of the Foundation Stock are registered in the Alpaca Section (Form A1) unless one parent is not known or not registered, in which case the animal is Foundation Stock.

Return Form F to the IAR with a cheque payable to the AAA for \$15 for each alpaca to be registered.

## Alpaca Section

The Alpaca Section applies to crias born from Foundation Stock or Al-

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paca Section parents or a mixture of the two.

Particular points to note:

- Identification numbers are made up of Herd Code, year code and drop number.

- Registered Tag Number is the number of the tag supplied by the IAR.

- Instructions regarding service. Obtain the sire owner's authority as appropriate.

Return the completed A1 form to the IAR with a cheque for \$15 for each registration.

### Don't forget

- Page 13 of the Member's Guide gives information on: sale, exchange, gift or lease; sale of cria; transfer of pregnant females; transferee and transferor responsibilities; multi-owner animals.

- Information on imported animals is on Form A5.

- Page 15 of the Member's Guide gives information on: late fees; trans-

## How to join the AAA and the ABRI register

The AAA register is run by the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) at the University of New England.

The ABRI is the foremost animal register in Australia, recording data for some 20,000 breeders.

Inquiries relating to registration and AAA subscriptions should be addressed to the registrar at ABRI. Contact: Carol Watson, ABRI, University of New England, Armidale, 2351 NSW. Telephone: (067) 73 3357, fax (067) 72 5376.

Breed inquiries and problems relating to documentation should be referred to the AAA. Contact: Ken Allston, vice president, AAA, Chanctonbury, Launching Place, 3139 Victoria. Telephone: (059) 67 3338, fax (059) 67 3634.

The ABRI is now processing the AAA annual subscriptions. The subscription is \$100 a year, with a once-only fee to join the registry of \$100. Members who paid an AAA joining fee in 1990 or 1991 will not be charged the registration joining fee.

fer fees; importing fees.

- Transfer of registered alpacas:

1. All cria must be registered in the breeder's herds before they can be sold as registered stock.

2. Transfer fees are payable by the vendor.

3. Transfer details are to be completed on the back of the pedigree certificate and sent, with the payable fees, to the IAR registrar. The computer records will be updated with the new owner's name and a new certificate sent to the new owner.

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#### Suricaya "Inca Snow"

A mature white working male, an absolute rarity! His fleece is dense, fine and consistent throughout. Coverage extends to his fully plumed tail, long curls on his lower legs and an abundant topknot: an outstanding breeding option.



**SERVICE FEE \$1500**  
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#### JUST ARRIVED "Suricaya Roberto"

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# But, how do you shear them?

When you're involved in the world of alpacas, one of the first questions you'll face from friends, neighbours and even perfect strangers is sure to be "but, how do you shear them?" Kelvin Maude provides the answer.

**I**n Australia, sheep shearing is as much a part of the national image as Vegemite and Holdens but alpacas ... well, the prospect of guiding a handpiece around those long legs and neck can be a little daunting.

Alpacas can be shorn standing or lying down. If the animal is well halter trained and quiet, you may attempt to shear it in the standing position. As a commercial shearer, not knowing how individual animals will react, safety is my first priority. As a result, I opt to have the alpaca restrained and lying down.

First up: sheds and shearing gear.

The facilities required can range from a conventional shearing shed, to a tarpaulin on the ground. I've even shorn alpacas under a gum tree on a sheet of plastic.

Ideally the basic requirements are a clean environment, draught free, with two anchoring points at least four metres apart. A garage or machinery shed is sufficient, a shearing shed is ideal.

There are a number of alternatives as far as shearing plant is concerned: conventional shearing plant, pneumatic equipment or an electric handpiece. If you're an old shearer from way back you could even brighten up the old blade shears!

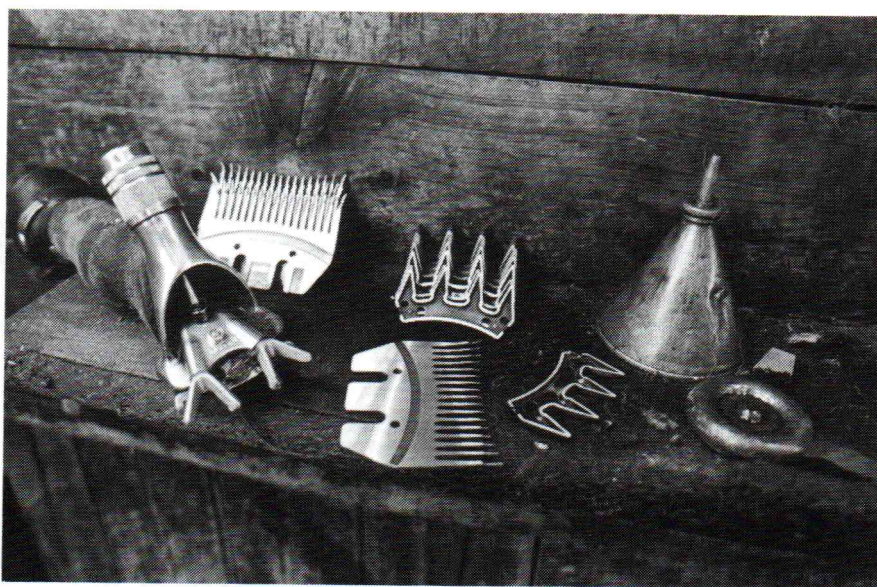
The electric handpiece is very convenient, being easy to store, quick to set up and relatively inexpensive. If you have a conventional plant, this can be adapted for alpaca shearing. The main requirement is a flexible drive down tube for improved manoeuvrability.

The pneumatic handpiece is small and light weight. it runs at a cool temperature and at a minimal noise level. If you own a compressor, the handpiece is reasonably priced.

The most essential factor in successful shearing is sharp cutting gear. There is an art to grinding (sharpening) your combs and cutters evenly and precisely. If you're not experienced, your local shearer can be invaluable help in preparing your gear.



**Kelvin Maude runs Alpaca-Link, an alpaca breeding and consulting service and Clippy's, an alpaca shearing service.**



**The gear you'll need to shear your alpacas.**



The shearer sets to work, cleanly 'peeling' off the animal's fleece with the minimum of fuss.

Ideally, a mohair comb and conventional cutters should be used. The mohair comb has more teeth which are closer together than a sheep comb, which minimises the risk of lifting the skin and injuring the alpaca. An oil can should be on hand to

regularly lubricate the cutter and comb.

To immobilise an alpaca which is lying on its side, we use a harness for the front legs and another for the rear legs. The front harness is attached to an anchorage point about four metres

from where the rear harness is anchored. A noose is used for each leg, with a 40 centimetre spreader bar used to keep each pair of legs apart. This allows thorough shearing.

Spring is generally accepted as the ideal time to shear alpacas. It allows

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(formerly Benleigh Silver Power)

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Steady as she goes ...

enough regrowth to protect the animal from sunburn in the summer, and almost a full fleece for the winter months. If you have to shear in the summer, I usually leave the wool longer along the backbone (3-4cm) to minimise the risk of sunburn.

The technique I use to shear an alpaca has been developed from watching other shearers and sheep shearing. I am not suggesting this is the one and only procedure, but it's the method that I have adapted and found to be most suitable.

You'll need a handler to help lie the



Hey, stop tickling!

Alpacas Australia



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**RIGHT: Only a mother (or an alpaca owner) could love it!**

animal down and restrain it. He or she is responsible for immobilising the head and calming the animal.

For a right handed shearer, you should restrain the alpaca lying with its near side (left) upward. Put light downward pressure on the neck and rear quarters while placing the loops over each foot and beyond the first joint (i.e. onto the shank or cannon).

By taking up the slack, the legs are in an outstretched position, unable to kick or move suddenly which minimises the risk of injury to the animal, the handler and (importantly from my point of view) the shearer.

Now for the big moment.

To begin, take off the belly with three or four blows. The near side rear leg is then shorn from the feet to the hip. If the animal is well covered it may require one or two blows along the inside of the lower near leg.

Clean up the tail by lifting it and shearing towards the spine. Particular care should be taken to avoid injuring the anus or the genitals.

Shear the flank and side to the shoulder, then the spine. It's these three blows along the spine that should be done freehand with the comb well off the skin if sunburn is likely to be a problem. Tidy up the front leg, taking care not to nick the folded skin around the armpit.

The next blow is from the chest, up the front of the neck to the jaw. With the animal's head still on the floor, shear half the neck (the near side) from the shoulder to the head. Clean up the head with blows to the cheek, the topknot and between the ears.

At this point, the shearer should have control of the head with the handler standing by in case the animal struggles. The head and neck should be lifted to a vertical position placing the alpaca virtually on all fours. Now, working on the off side, complete the neck from the jaw to the shoulder.

Again the handler takes control of

**RIGHT: The ideal restraint to ensure the animal is safe and secure during shearing**



the head and lowers it to the left, onto the alpaca's near side. Shear from the tail to the shoulder including its flank and side. Moving to the rear, shear the off side rear leg.

To finish, shear the off side front leg and carefully shear the brisket, between the front legs. Your alpaca should now be cleanly shorn, but check for and tidy any unsightly tufts.

Easy, wasn't it?

Using this technique, the alpaca will roll out of its fleece, helping to keep it entire.

You should discard the belly, the lower legs and the top knot.

The fleece should then be weighed and individually packed into a bag that can breathe. A woven polypropylene bag, normally used for grain and stockfeed, is ideal.

That's it in a nutshell. The important things to remember are to have sharp gear, to firmly restrain and calm the alpaca at all times, and take the necessary precautions against sunburn. If the shearing is done



If the animal is halter-trained, it can be shorn standing.

briskly with a minimum of fuss, there is little chance of the alpaca becoming stressed or agitated.

Since I nervously began, I have thoroughly enjoyed shearing alpacas. They are generally (but not always!)

quiet, submissive and a pleasure to handle. The hardest thing about shearing alpacas is not the wool up your nose or the aching back, it's getting used to looking at them in their underwear!!

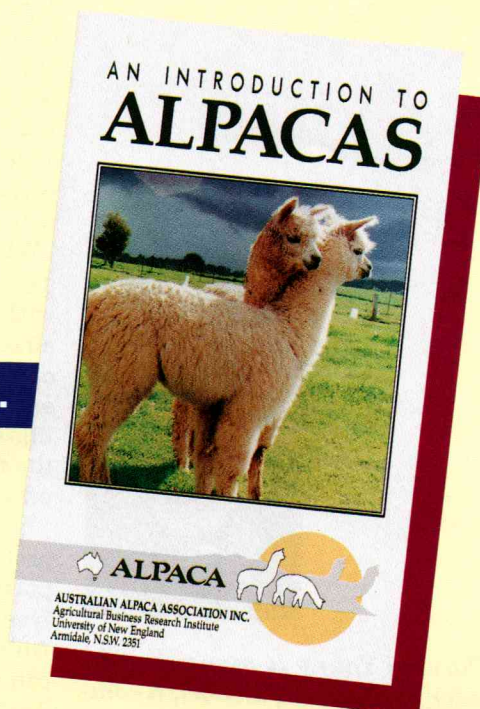
## ALPACAS IN YOUR LIVINGROOM

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**It's a video you'll play again and again.**

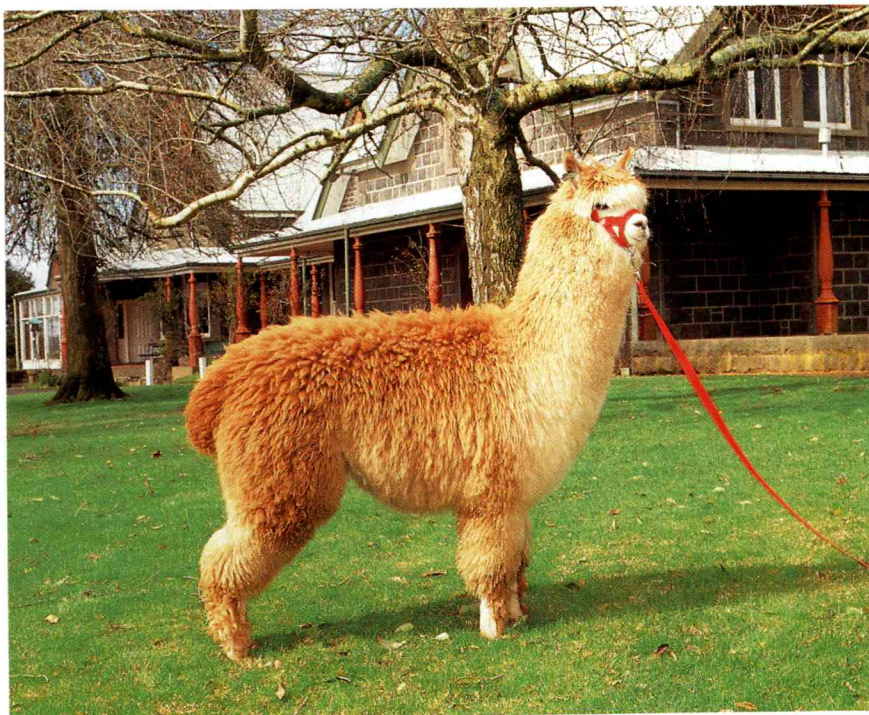
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Armidale, NSW 2351**



# Exports to North America thrive

The export of alpacas to the United States offers a major market for the Australian industry. Carolyn Young reports.



Above: One of our leading exports. After attracting \$26,000 at last November's Alpaca Classic, Welcome Stranger is now at his new home in America.

**T**he first Australian-born alpacas were exported to the United States in May, 1991, as part of a shipment of 18 animals.

Since then about 240 alpacas have moved from Australia to new homes in the United States, including Alaska.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) drafted the protocol for importing camelids to the US. All animals had to have been born, and lived their entire lives, in Australia. They could not be the first generation progeny of animals imported into Australia from countries with foot and mouth disease.

When the first shipment left, 60 days on-farm isolation was required with the animals being tested for aino, akabane, bluetongue, *Brucella abortus* and tuberculosis. They then entered an AQIS-approved quarantine station where they went through the tests again during their 30-day pre-embarkation quarantine.

In July 1991, the USDA changed its protocol, allowing animals to be exported into the US from countries free from foot-and-mouth and rinderpest. Animals born in Chile can now be exported to the US from Australia. They must have been part of the national herd for at least 60 days before export.

If the animals do not originate from below the Culicoides Brevitarsis line, they must be quarantined in a facility established by AQIS to be tick-free and vector-free.

With the changed protocol came the testing of all ruminants and swine on the property of origin for tuberculosis within 12 months before the camelids' export. It also extended the pre-embarkation time from 30 to 60 days and eliminated the 60-day, on-farm isolation period. The test requirements remained the same. They undergo the same tests again during their 30-day quarantine before being flown on to their final destination.

We are trying to establish a protocol for the export of alpacas to European countries. This will take time, but I do believe it will be established.

The alpaca is a wonderful animal to work with, although, as with all animals, we have our moments of personality clashes when a good spit expresses their displeasure at seeing yet another veterinary surgeon armed with the dreaded needle to extract more blood from a body already feeling like a pin cushion.



*Carolyn Young is managing director of Stock Air Export, a company specialising in interstate and overseas quarantine and transport of livestock.*

# Auction success sets a classic standard

The Alpaca Classic was not only the first alpaca auction in Australia, it is believed to be the first to be held outside South America. Alan Hamilton reports.

**M**ore than 700 people packed Dalgety's magnificent bloodstock selling complex at Oaklands Junction on November 3 for the first Alpaca Classic auction.

The vendors were Allan and

Caroline Jinks' Benleigh Stud, Geelong; Cherie Bridges' Coliban Valley Stud, Trentham; and the Haldanes' Purumbete Stud, Camperdown, all in Victoria, and the Hamiltons' Suricaya Stud, in Tocumwal, NSW.

The Oaklands Junction complex is



*Alan Hamilton is president of the Australian Alpaca Association and a director of Suricaya Alpaca Stud, Tocumwal, NSW.*



**The \$30,000 top-priced animal, Coliban Valley Tabatha, and female cria, with their vendor, Cherie Bridges, Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud.**

an excellent location just north of Melbourne and close to Tullamarine airport. Eight months of planning went into the event, including assembling a line of top quality alpacas and production of a magnificent full colour catalogue.

Ken Irwin, an experienced livestock photographer who travelled to each stud to take the photographs for the catalogue, said he was impressed with the patience and docility of the alpacas compared to other stock.

The auction was restricted to ensure that only top quality alpacas were entered, a prerequisite for attracting a wide range of potential bidders. Breeders from all states of Australia, Canada, Britain, New Zealand and the United States were among the crowd.

The number of cars in the car park before the auction had one journalist thinking he had come to the wrong place. He thought there must be a sporting event on to attract such a crowd on a Sunday.

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### **The upbeat South American music accompanying the fashion parade created the atmosphere for an exciting auction.**

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A fashion parade preceded the auction and included garments from Jan Maude's 'Darfield Alpaca' and Geoff and Nancy Halpin's 'The Heavenly Design' labels.

The upbeat South American music accompanying the fashion parade created the atmosphere for an exciting auction. All alpacas were halter trained specially for the event and paraded through the ring.

The only lot not put through the ring was Coliban Valley Tabatha who had a young female cria at foot. It was thought the situation could become stressful for her and the cria so she was left in the pen. Much to everyone's surprise she topped the sale at



**The \$26,000 top-priced male, Purumbrete Welcome Stranger, with his new owners, Bruce and Barry Barr, San Juan, Washington, US, and the vendors, Roger and Clyde Haldane, Camperdown.**

\$30,000. She was bought by a syndicate comprising Wilson and Bronwyn Beer and Lindsay and Marce Maddison from Echuca. Tabatha had been rejoined to Coliban Valley's white stud male, Umberto.

Other leading prices included \$28,000 for the pair Benleigh Mitchell (a caramel male) and Calama (a brown female) bought by Judy and Peter Grant, from Bombala, NSW. Both animals were 16 months old and bred in New Zealand.

South Australian breeder, Jodie Christian, Mount Compass, paid \$26,000 for Suricaya Inca Treasure, a

pregnant fawn coloured female, five years old and rejoined, and \$21,000 for Suricaya Brown Velvet, a 21-month-old New Zealand bred female which had been joined to a fine-fibred, light fawn male.

Top selling male was Purumbete Welcome Stranger, offered by Haldane Alpacas, Camperdown, which sold for \$26,000 to the BBBS Syndicate from the United States. Syndicate partner, Bruce Barr, remarked that Welcome Stranger was exactly the type of male that US buyers were looking for. With his fine fleece and highly desirable colour he

would have sold for double this figure in the US.

Mr Barr said the auction had set the value for future private sales as the auction prices tended to be higher than the \$15,000 to \$18,000 being asked previously.

Other outstanding prices included \$24,000 for the unmated dark brown female Inca King Miss Esmeralda which sold to Ken and Irene Allston, from Launching Place in Victoria. Caithness Rebecca from Murray Bruce's New Zealand stud sold for \$21,000 to Melbourne business woman, Sandra Keane.

Mildura vet, Neville Japp, paid \$21,000 for Coliban Valley Jezebel with male cria at foot, and the same amount was paid for the mature white stud male Suricaya Inca Snow by Kelvin and Jill Maude's Alpaca Link Breeding Services at Shepparton, Victoria.

Outstanding 14-month-old white male, Purrumbete Snow Spirit, sold to Ken Allston and Lindsay Gadsden for \$18,000. They also bought Dusty Princess, an unjoined silver female for \$24,000.

### It's on again in '92

The auction was a resounding success and will be held again on the Melbourne Cup weekend in 1992 with an expanded catalogue. Dalgety's will be inviting entries from anyone wishing to sell high quality registered alpacas.

The success of the first Alpaca Classic auction was summed up succinctly by leading New Zealand breeder Murray Bruce. He was seen leaving the sale complex, unable to wipe the smile from his face or to control his excitement and repeating "Bloody marvellous, it's just bloody marvellous".

### SALE SUMMARY

14 females to \$30,000,  
av. \$23,500  
5 males to \$26,000,  
av. \$17,600  
1 pair at \$28,000  
Gross: \$445,000



The penned alpacas attracted plenty of interest.

## Capalba Park

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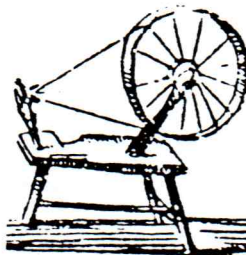
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## AAA notes

### From Dianne Condon

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*Dianne Condon is secretary of the Australian Alpaca Association and runs Shanbrooke Alpaca Stud at Yarra Glen, Victoria.*

## Promotional video

'An Introduction to Alpacas', the association's newly released video, has been greeted enthusiastically by both breeders and potential alpaca buyers.

The 20-minute video was filmed in Australia and New Zealand and covers the history of the animals, their fibre, basic husbandry, shearing, mating, and current and future market prospects.

The photogenic alpacas co-operated wonderfully with the cameraman and the result is charming as well as informative.

Jim Mitchell of Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud wrote, produced, directed and edited the video for the association.

His background in film and television, combined with his industry knowledge, made him the ideal person for the job. The association thanks Jim for the time and enthusiasm that went into the project.

## Seymour Expo success

About 40,000 people packed the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo in February.

With people from all over Victoria making their way to Seymour to find out more about alternative farming ventures, the two excellent displays of alpacas naturally attracted a huge crowd.

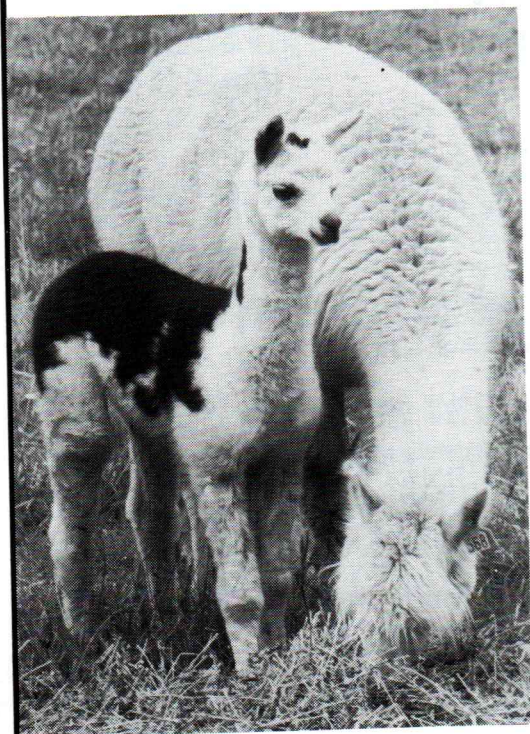
Geoff and Nancy Halpin, from Capalba Park Alpacas, had their new knitting machine in action in their tent.

Visitors to the tent were enchanted by the alpaca jumpers being knitted up in minutes.

Cherie Bridges, from Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud, shared a display tent with Jan and Jill Maude and their range of 'Darfield Alpaca' knitwear.

The day was hot and dusty, but that did not stop the enthusiastic crowd cramming in to see the alpacas and buy the association's new promotional video.

*A touch of heaven in the Yarra Valley*



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**Jenny and Gray Morgan (059) 62 5352. Fax (03) 720 7110.**

## Annual meeting

The annual general meeting will be held in August, because of the Tocal seminar in July. Members will have the chance to voice their opinions, make suggestions and vote for the office-bearers and committee members. Please start thinking now about what you can offer to the association in the way of skills, time and ideas.

## Promotional packages

If you would like to take your alpacas to a local show or field day, don't forget the association is there to support you.

You can borrow a banner (1.8 metres long with the Alpaca Association logo), take Alpaca Association brochures to give away, borrow a video to have running during the show and offer videos and magazines for sale. Every promotion you do as a member helps expand the alpaca market and benefits you financially.

To arrange for promotional material, contact any of the following people. Alan Jinks on (052) 50 2737; Dianne Condon on (03) 730 1399; Wendy Billington on (02) 656 1551; Trudi Barnett on (087) 66 0026; Laurie Binks on (098) 40 9262.

## Wear your heart out

After the sellout of Alpaca Association windcheaters at the Orange Field Day last year, we're expanding our wardrobe! This year the association is producing T-shirts and windcheaters carrying the distinctive association logo. If you would like to buy some contact Karen Caldwell on (063) 83 3531.

## Sydney Royal Show

The AAA's next major event will be the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The association will have a stand displaying garments and promotional material. Breeders will be present to answer questions from show-goers.

The Royal Show calendar of events:  
Friday, April 10 - Street parade through city centre featuring a South American style float and parading a team of alpacas;

Tuesday, April 14 - Entry of alpacas for showing from 6pm onwards;

Wednesday, April 15 - Inspection of show animals at 9am;

Thursday, April 16 - Judging at 9.30am. The judge is Margaret Picolli;

Tuesday, April 21 - Exit of animals from showgrounds after 4pm.

## Fibre market

Alpaca fibre is already being sold to both the commercial and home crafts

markets. However, with a rapid increase of animal numbers a more coordinated and disciplined approach to fibre marketing is becoming necessary.

The executive committee has appointed a fibre sub committee with wide terms of reference, under the chairmanship of the vice president. This position is currently held by Ken Allston.

In the last newsletter, a request was made for wool samples from breeders' herds. Some have been re-



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# ALPACA SEMINAR

**Saturday & Sunday, July 11 & 12**

The 1992 Alpaca Seminar will be held at Tocal, in the heart of the beautiful Hunter Valley wine country.

In two informative and stimulating days, speakers from Australia, New Zealand and the US will present the latest information on the animal and the industry. You'll meet alpaca owners from all over Australia and there will be alpacas present for practical demonstrations of husbandry and fibre classing.

Meet your fellow delegates on Friday evening, with drinks and hot snacks provided. Breakfast, lunch and morning and afternoon teas are supplied on Saturday and Sunday with a dinner dance on Saturday night.

**The 1992 Tocal Alpaca Seminar is sure to be the highlight of the year for the Australian alpaca industry.**

Registration: 6-8pm, Friday, July 10, 8-9am, Saturday, July 11.  
Cost per person: \$250 seminar only (incl meals); \$290 seminar, meals and accommodation Friday and Saturday nights at the college. \$40 discount for current AAA members.

**Book early as numbers are limited.**

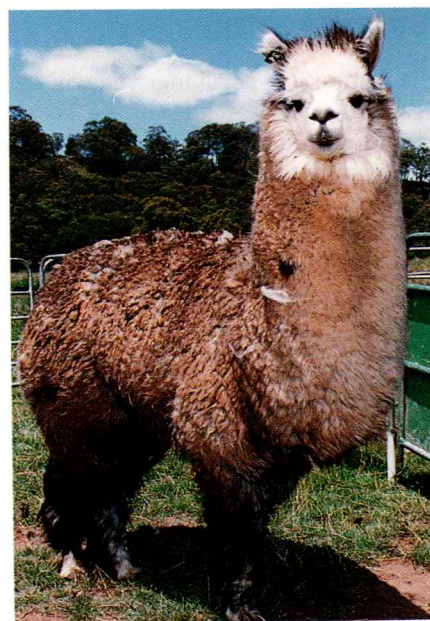
To book, send full payment to:  
Dianne Condon,  
Secretary, Australian Alpaca Association,  
GPO Box 2020  
Melbourne 3001

**For further information, contact Janet Sutherland on (043) 99 1574 or Dianne Condon on (03) 730 1399.**

A limited number of rooms are available on the campus (single student accommodation with shared facilities) or there are many hotels and motels in the district.



**ALPACA**



**Alpaca fibre samples are needed for analysis at the Melbourne College of Textiles. Can you help?**

ceived but not enough for a scientific analysis to be undertaken by the Melbourne College of Textiles.

Preferably, the wool sample needs to be taken from a particular part of the animal. As shearing had already started when the original request was made this was not possible. At present a handful of wool from a fleece is quite sufficient but it would be a great help if it was from a better part of the fleece.

If you can help, please send your samples to Ken Allston, Inca Alpaca Stud, Launching Place, Victoria, 3139. The sample must include the following information: the stud name, animal tag number, sex, whether it is an initial or subsequent shearing and the approximate age of the animal.

As our fibre marketing studies proceed members will be kept fully informed.

Looking to the future, workshops will be considered to help our members understand more about the make up of fibre and its inherent advantages.

It should be remembered that the data base on the registry at the New England University will be an excellent vehicle to improve breeding and wool quality.

# It's Miracle Milly...



Carolyn Jinks, Dr Ewen McMillan and nurse Bronwyn Anderson with the star patient Milly.  
Photograph courtesy Geelong Advertiser

Milly didn't make the best of entrances when she arrived at Benleigh Alpaca Stud at Moolap, near Geelong, Victoria. As she was being born, an audible crack signalled to Carolyn and Allan Jinks that all wasn't well.

Dr Ewen McMillan, from the Bellarine Veterinary Practice, says the cria's left femur had somehow been caught behind her mother's pelvis and the pressure during delivery caused it to fracture.

A day later, in what is believed to be the world's first operation on so young a cria, a 6mm stainless steel pin was inserted in the 8kg cria's leg.

The 24-hour delay before attempting any repair work gave the Jinks a chance to milk the female and feed this colostrum to the cria by bottle as she couldn't stand to nurse.

Within two days, Milly was walking on three legs, putting some weight on the pinned leg. She was put on formula feeds after her mother - reacting apparently to being milked for the continuing bottle feeds - rejected her.

Unfortunately, the pin worked its way out, but Carolyn rigged a makeshift sling/hammock from a tree and Milly spent a couple of hours each day gently suspended, giving her muscles much needed exercise.

At the time of writing, Milly was back walking on her own four feet and being bottle fed five times a day.

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Wyona Alpaca Stud, Thuddungra, NSW 2594. Ph/fax (063) 83 3531

# Sydney Show debut

Breeders will be vying for show ring honours at the Royal Easter Show — and taking the opportunity to introduce Sydney-siders to alpacas. Philip Street gives us a preview.

**A**lpacas will make their debut in Royal Easter Show competitions this year. As well as being on display at the showgrounds, the alpacas will take part in the parade through the streets of Sydney on the first day of the show (April 10). It will be the first opportunity many Sydney-siders will have had to see alpacas 'in the flesh'.

The inaugural Sydney Showtime Easter Parade, highlighting the city's major Easter attraction, will include more than 400 animals, 800 people and 60 floats.

The alpacas will be represented by a decorated float and animals from the Coolaroo Alpaca Stud at Mittagong led

by handlers in typical South American dress. They will be accompanied by a Brazilian band.

The parade and show classes are sure to add to the alpaca industry's rapidly expanding fan club. Wherever they are displayed, these animals are winning hearts and minds.

In Peru and Chile, and more recently the United States, alpaca farming is well established with relatively mature markets. Strong long term growth in prices for higher quality alpacas in the US gives substance to the confidence shown by Australian alpaca breeders.

Like the Merino, alpacas are incredibly adaptable and flourish in diverse climate conditions and terrains.

The Australian industry is expected to expand rapidly. Last year alpacas competed at the Royal Melbourne Show for the first time. More than 30 animals were shown in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd.

## Show circuit grows

The judge, Dr Walter Bravo from Peru, was impressed with the quality of the animals and was particularly taken with the high quality of the fibre in the top animals.

Local agricultural show societies throughout Australia are now beginning to recognise the alpacas' importance and are adding alpacas to their show schedules.

There is no shortage of breeders ready, willing and able to take up the challenge and seize every opportunity to demonstrate the alpaca's attributes.

Each year, the RAS brings together at the Sydney Showgrounds the largest, most valuable collection of bloodstock to be seen in the Southern Hemisphere. This year the stock will include 2000 horses, nearly 3000 beef and dairy cattle from 30 breeds, more than 1000 Merino and British breed sheep and hundreds of pig, goat, cat, dog and poultry exhibits.

The RAS is proud of its reputation in helping to maintain these standards of excellence in our major rural enterprises by holding the 'greatest show in the country', combining traditional rural aspects with new concepts, attractions and entertainment.

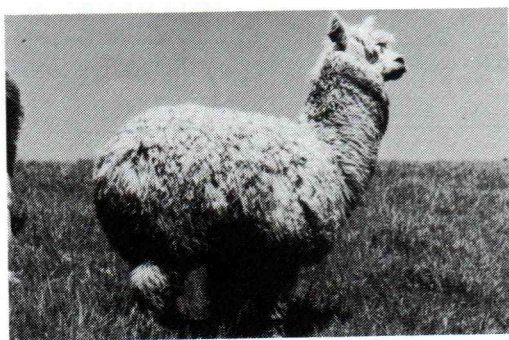
This Easter will be no exception.

*Philip Street is a councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW and a past president of the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW. He owns and runs Coolaroo Alpaca Stud in Mittagong.*



## Stud Services - Exceptional White Sire

### Coliban Valley Umberto

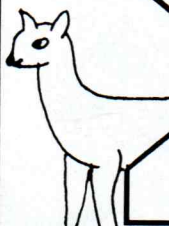


**U**mberto has a rare and much sought after combination of white fleece with dark eyes. He is exceptional as a dark-eyed white in that he has a complete absence of dark hairs. His coverage is uniformly dense and his fleece superbly fine and soft handling. His conformation is true and compact. His nature is quiet and gentle. He is not alone: also standing at stud are five other superb males - light fawn, black, brown, silver grey and rose grey.

Service fee \$1000 with live birth guarantee

Contact: Cherie Bridges,  
Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud  
Phone: (054) 241 209 Fax (054) 241 608

# Alpaca Business Directory



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# Soils ain't soils

*Pat Coleby, from Thoona in northern Victoria, has spent many years consulting on natural animal care and organic farming methods across Australia and overseas. She has written a number of books on these topics.*

**W**hen the exotic and wholly delightful looking alpacas came to Australia, I hoped they would not fall prey to inherent soil deficiencies as other species have done.

From my reading I had imagined them to be grass eaters, similar in habit to cattle and sheep. I now find that they are eaters of what used to be called marsh or sedge grass in the UK. This grew on land that was apparently poor but stock of all kinds did wonderfully well on it. It is very high in minerals and has excellent food value, far in excess of ordinary grass, perhaps because of its deep root system.

This puts alpacas in a category with deer and goats (who are browsers) that also have a high mineral requirement. Deer and goat farmers have learnt to their cost that if their stock do not get the required minerals in some form or other trouble can strike.

Few people realise the difference between soils in Australia and those of other countries. Due to the continent's great age, our soil has continued to leach out the valuable lime minerals over the millenia. Modern conventional farming methods have, ironically, continued the work - chemical fertilisers like superphosphate cause a reduction in calcium and magnesium. As a result, the picture on most farms today is one of a totally depleted soil with a low calcium/magnesium levels and a pH to

**Above: Alpacas thrive on good pasture. Soil analysis will help ensure that your animals are not being held back by a mineral deficiency.**

match. This means the trace minerals will also be in short supply as, where the pH is low enough, they are inhibited by the acidity or sulphated and washed out.

The remedy is not as difficult as one might imagine - supplementary minerals can be fed in either licks or concentrate and, over time, the land can be much improved. Even so, it appears that grass alone can never satisfy the high mineral requirement of goats and deer. Unless they have a very wide and varying range of fodder available, they will need on-going supplementation in some form.

## Mineral requirements

Dairy goats have a mineral requirement reckoned by the old books to be six times higher than sheep and cattle. I estimate that fleece goats and deer need about four times as much as sheep and cattle. Judging by phone calls from alpaca owners in widely differing areas, I would think their needs come somewhere in between the two.

There are a number of strategies to deal with the situation.

A comprehensive analysis of the farm soil to pinpoint the minerals

# GLENWOOD.

## ALPACA STUD



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which are missing or in excess helps considerably. The animals' diets can be adjusted to cover the shortfalls.

If the land is to be regenerated, such an analysis is a must as the lime minerals will need to be applied and the pH brought to something approaching the correct levels.

Calcium and magnesium - usually in the form of dolomite - are the base necessities to supply the animals, as well as the trace minerals.

The soil analysis helps here. A lack of copper is serious, but if allied to a lack of cobalt it can be lethal and even more difficult to deal with. Fortunately, seaweed products are readily assimilated by all animals, ruminants or monogastrics, and as they are in an organic form the risk of overdose is negligible. A certain amount of copper, zinc, cobalt, selenium, iodine and other minerals are included in kelp products. Natrakelp or Nutrimol both make excellent drenches for pregnancy toxemia.

There are several vitamin injections which are invaluable for tiding afflicted animals over the worst. RWR

VAM, a vitamin amino acid mineral injection, is the best in my experience. On body weight, an alpaca would need 2cc, but it takes about 36 hours to start really working so 3cc of vitamin B12 and 2cc of B1 should be included in the same dose to provide an instant pick-me-up.

## Vitamin C

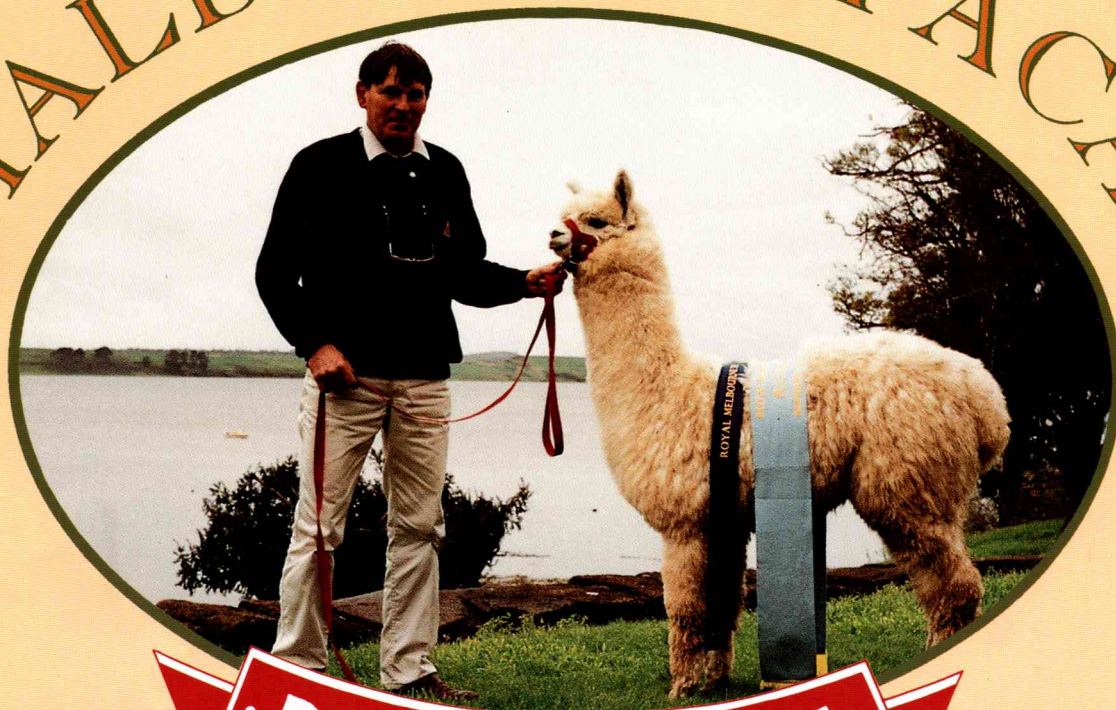
Vitamin C, both oral and injectable, has saved the lives of countless animals by boosting their immune systems and enabling them to fight back. Doses of 5-10cc (a size 18 needle will be needed for this) in the muscle, or teaspoons down the throat of sodium ascorbate or ascorbic acid will all help.

My book, *Farming Organically and Natural Animal Care*, provides further information on analytical procedures, land health and becoming accustomed to thinking in terms of vitamins and minerals instead of drugs. It is available from Night Owl Publishers, PO Box 242, Euroa, 3666 Victoria, for \$14.95 plus \$2 postage.

## Coming Events

- April 5:** Open day to promote alpacas at Trudi and Keith Barnett's Avenue Range Stud, SA. Contact: (087) 66 0026.
- April 16:** Sydney Royal Show judging day, 9.30am. A promotion stand will have alpacas on display throughout the show. Contact: Wendy Billington (02) 656 1551.
- May 1-2:** Alpacas will be the prime exhibit at Mil-lal field day, SA. Contact: Trudi Barnett (087) 66 0026.
- July 11-12:** Total seminar. Don't miss this opportunity to hear international speakers. Friday night registration Saturday lectures followed on Sunday by practical demonstrations. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399.
- July 17-18:** Mudgee Small Farm Field Days. Several breeders will have displays, there will be an alpaca fashion parade and the NSW Department of Agriculture will run demonstrations on basic management. Contact: Aloha Barnes (063) 58 8212.
- July 18-22:** Melbourne Sheep Show. Alpaca judging will be on Sunday, July 19. The association will be operating a stand. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399.
- August 9:** Australian Alpaca Association annual general meeting at Albury. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399.
- Sept 18-25:** Royal Melbourne Show. Alpacas will be judged under lights on the Saturday evening. Fleeces and promotional material on display. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399.

# HALDANE ALPACAS



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ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW 1991

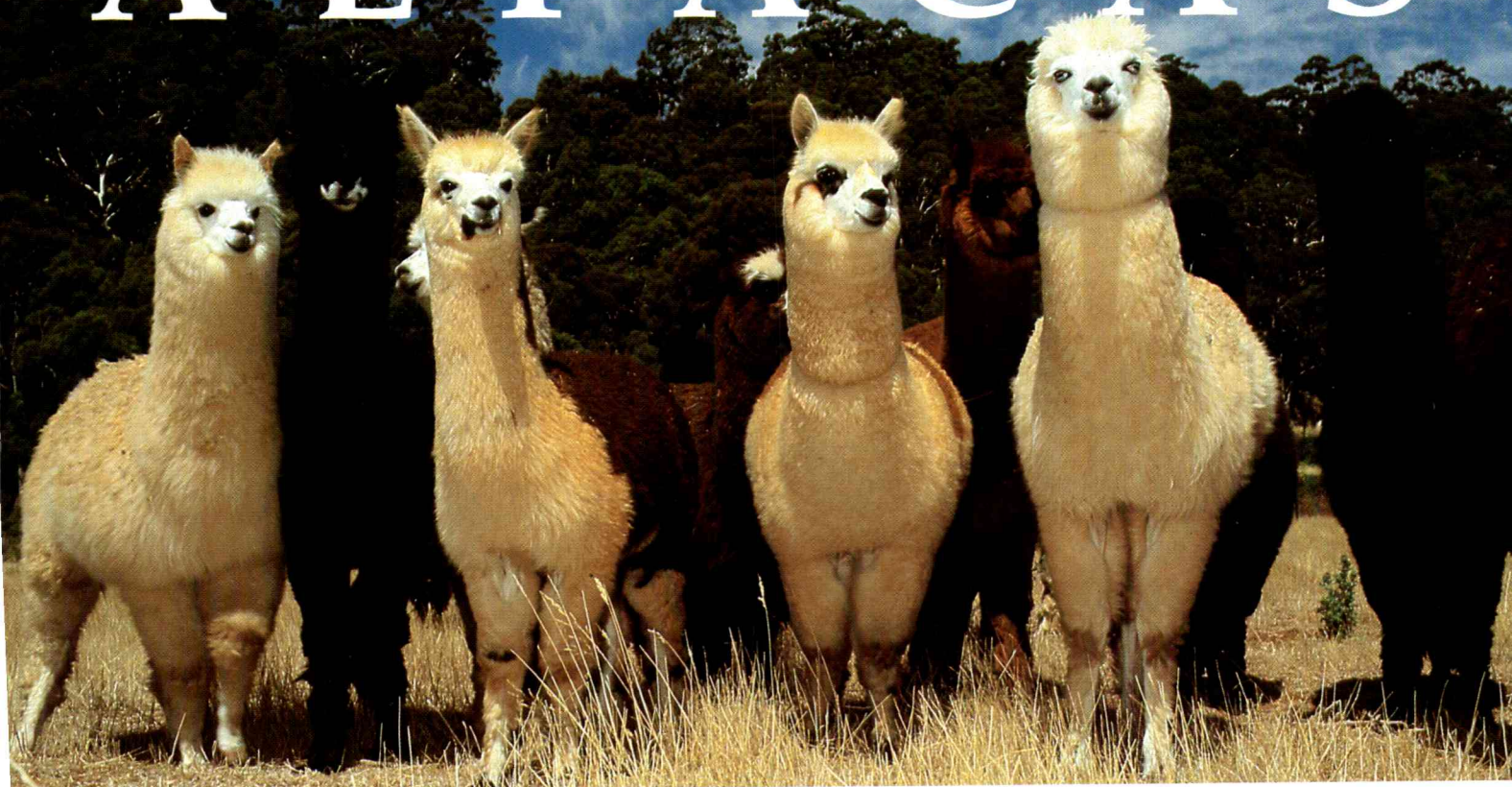


SUPREME CHAMPION ALPACA

CHAMPION ALPACA  
JUNIOR MALE  
ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW 1991



# ALPACAS

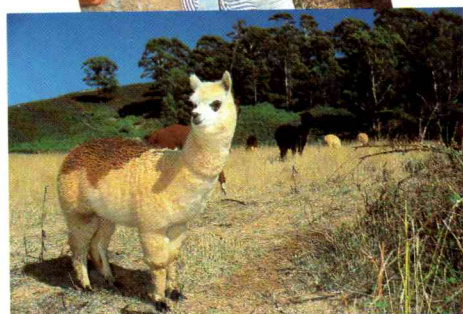


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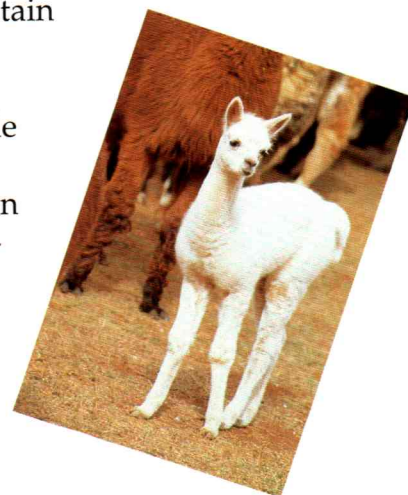


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