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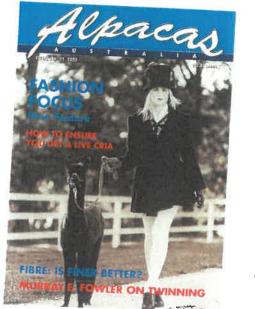


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Message from the President

Concentrating on this 'miracle fibre'

libre of the Gods is a description frequently applied to alpaca fibre. It is said to stem from the Incan legend of Inti, the Sun God, who created the alpaca as a reward for the gifts of the Inca peoples.

Maybe the description reflects the alpaca's talent for survival in the historical sense. The Andean Indians were conquered by the Incas and the Incas, in turn, were conquered by the Spanish — the alpaca surviving both conquests.

That we have both the animals and their fibre in our country today is certainly a situation to give thanks for.

This issue of the magazine deals with a number of aspects of fibre. As our industry slowly changes its base from animals to fibre, we all need to concentrate on issues affecting fibre: its growth, harvesting, storage and handling.

The Association recommends a number of courses and other activities that are designed to assist members with their fibre production and sorting.

'An introduction to alpaca fibre', is a course conducted by Cameron Holt, normally held at the Pascoe Vale campus of the Melbourne College of Textiles or held on site by a region.

The Melbourne College of Textiles conducts courses on shearing and care of shearing plant.

'Cria to Criation' is our forthcoming international industry seminar to be held in Geelong from 7 to 9 July this year.



Members will have been pleased to hear of the formation of the 'Fibre Co-operative' at our last general meeting held in April, in Sydney.

Whilst the co-operative is a separate legal entity for commercial reasons, its membership is open only to Association members.

Our Fibre Research sub-committee is working on producing a listing of facilities around Australia so that members who wish to utilise their own fibre can find out where scouring, carding, combing, dyeing, blending and spinning may be carried out.

The fashion slant to this issue of Alpacas Australia is a timely reminder of the extraordinary versatility of alpaca fibre. In creative hands, there's no end to the ways in which it can be used. And that's exactly what the Association and all its members are working towards — an industry that not only produces top quality fibre, but believes in value-adding, with the talent of Australian designers and manufacturers.

Gray Morgan

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ASHION ocus

an interview with Jonathan Ward

by Michael Stringer

The first in a series of interviews with Australian alpaca fashion designers

ucked away in the heart of the A fashion and social Mecca of Sydney is leafy Cross Street in Double Bay. From the sidewalk coffee shops one can sit and watch the beautiful people promenade in the autumn sun. Along this street is a neat, two-storey premises with a brass plaque on the front gate that announces, Jonathan Ward Couture, by appointment only.

I am here to speak with Jonathan Ward about alpaca fibre.

Jonathan Ward was born on a sheep and cattle station south of Nyngan in far western New South



Wales. He was educated in Sydney and spent six years as a wool classer. He has owned merino sheep, first cross ewes, a Poll Dorset fat lamb enterprise and a Border Leicester stud.

Interested in the clothing industry and with a talent for drawing, Jonathan undertook a design course at East Sydney Technical College and then went to New York to study at the Parson College of Art and Design. On his return to Australia he worked for Robert Burton Fashion Design, well known in women's fashion and then joined Harry Thurston, a men's fash-



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Not all Alpacas are the same.

It sounds obvious but it's sometimes forgotten. Like any breeding industry there is a large diversity between the quality of different Alpacas. So if you're buying you want to be sure your animals are going to be of the best quality.

How do you do that?

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On top of that we've set Australian record prices at auction for stud males, pregnant females and unjoined females. Evidently we're not the only ones who believe Coolaroo stock are of the highest quality.

Whether you're interested in buying or finding out more about Alpacas call us or fill out the coupon below and we'll send you a free information kit.

You'll soon see why it's true that not all Alpacas are the same.

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The Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Janie Hicks Ph: 02 398 1364 or Fax: 02 398 6888 or Philip and Judith Street Ph: 048 785 118 Fax: 048 785 233 High Range, Mittagong 2575 NSW ion house. A stint as a freelance designer for a fashion magazine completed his 'apprenticeship'.

Ten years ago, Jonathan Ward began his own house. Today his market is high fashion: evening wear, bridal gowns and a range of co-ordinates for afternoon and after-five.

He is passionate about the use of natural fibres: silk, wool, cotton, linen and alpaca.

'Man-made fibre just doesn't have the same fall, drop, lustre, feel and texture,' he comments.

'The thing with couture is that you can't do anything under \$1,500. See that coat? That's alpaca, and worth every penny.' He pointed to a photograph. The white coat the model wore looked to me more like white mink.

'The design won't date. This garment can be taken out of the wardrobe in ten years and it will still be fashionable. It's so versatile — as casual wear or evening wear or even a coat to go to the races.' The stunning coat was designed by Jonathan and made in Australia [pictured on p. 40].

Because of its lightness, and shape retaining features, Jonathan believes alpaca fibre makes 'the ideal travelling garment.'

'The quality of the fibre is second to none and it is ideal for both summer and winter wear. It won't crush and even if you are rough with it, the creases fall out after the garment is hung for a while. Being so lightweight it makes ideal luggage and it suits so many situations and climates. With the right styles, alpaca will suit most occasions, which means you need a minimum of garments. You look good and travel light.'

As a natural fibre, alpaca has definite marketing advantages. 'Organics are the go. Things that are natural are a big plus near the human body.'

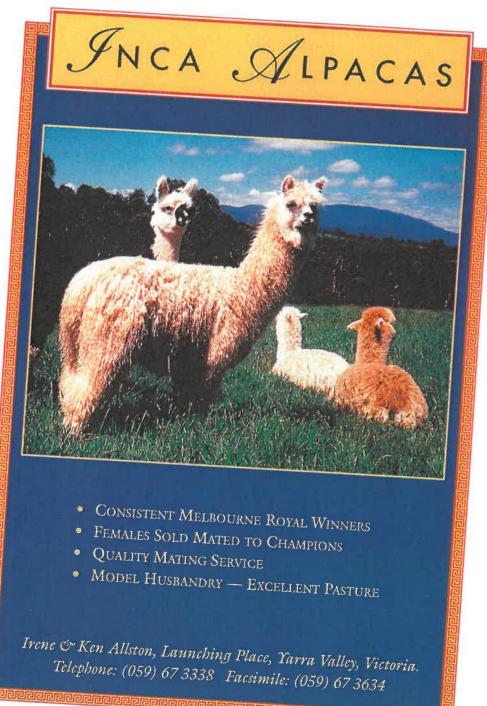
He believes alpaca has a great future in Australia and is right behind the development of a strong fibre industry. He is also a strong supporter of value adding, advocating the development of a solid manufacturing base, possibly in conjunction with the Japanese. He bemoans the fact that a mere two per cent of the Australian wool clip is utilised in Australia.

'We are exporting the raw material and all the value adding is done overseas. Then, we import the fabric and make fashion garments out of it!'

'What is needed is to develop the alpaca breeding herds to a stage where

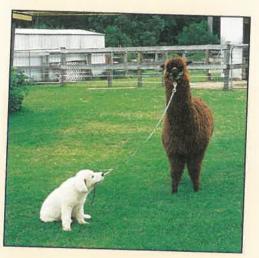
Australia has sufficient quantities of fibre to become a commercially viable fabric manufacturer. Concentrate on fine fibre rather than coarse; the women's market is much bigger than the men's and women's fashion needs finer fibre. Get sufficient animals to produce commercial quantities of fibre and look at blends with other fibres.'

'Export at first, if necessary, but then develop an Australian fine fibre milling/manufacturing industry producing really fine fabric and cloth.'

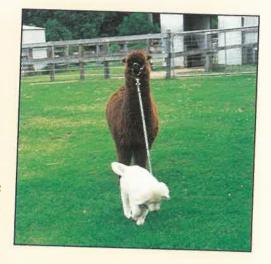


Alpaca handling and training The Maremma Approach

by Lennon Clymo



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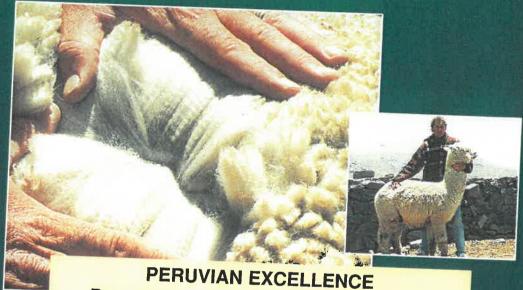


WITH THANKS TO 'COCO' FOR HER CO-OPERATION (ACACIA ALPACAS, OURIMBAH)

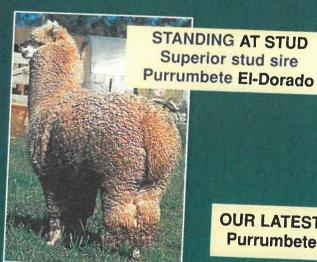


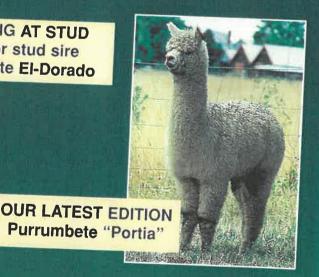
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Snap shot



Wether owners take plunge into breeding

Paul and Georgie Southam of Gnangara WA, at 23 and 25 years of age respectively, may be two of our youngest stud owners as well as some of the most enthusiastic. Paul is a horticulturist and Georgie a vet nurse.

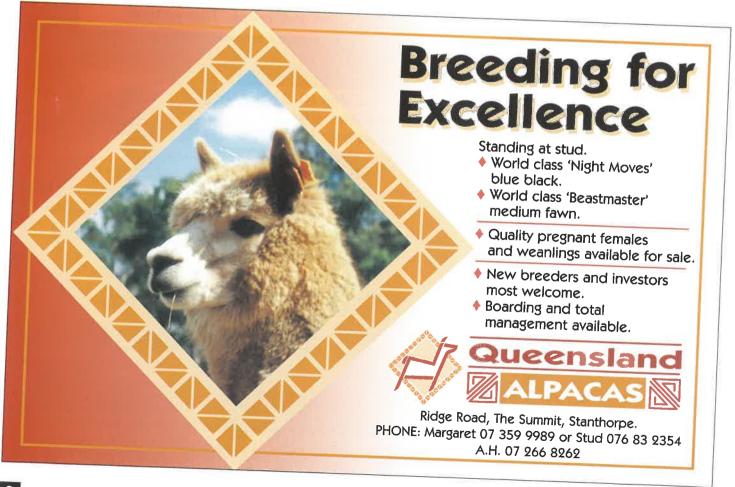
Their first 'fatal attraction' occurred whilst on their honeymoon at Denmark W.A. in November 1993 when they visited Pentland Alpaca Stud and Tourist Farm. There, they met 'Chile', a young brown alpaca wether. They cut their holiday short and, with the funds they saved, came home with 'Chile'.

For the next twelve months, they had little to do with the Alpaca Association, but entered 'Chile' in the inaugural alpaca judging at the Perth Royal Show in October 1996. 'Chile' won the wether class and was shorn as a demonstration to all show spectators and prime-time television news viewers. Spending the show week with other alpaca exhibitors further impressed them as to the benefit of breeding alpacas. The purchased a little multi male alpaca 'Inca' as company for 'Chile' during promotional

events and set about trying to raise the funds to get themselves a female. The new addition meant they had to move from their residential block in the suburbs to four acres just north of the city.

Georgie and Paul joined the Association and formed Aztec Alpacas. With much searching and saving, they finally accumulated enough funds to purchase 'Lady', a four-year-old brown female, in January 1995, from Philip and Jenny Coates of Carlton Lea in Denmark.

February 1995 saw 90-odd members of the AAA and guests meet at Philip and Jenny's for the start of the progressive Southwest Alpaca Stud Trek that ended with dinner and a bimonthly meeting at Paul and Georgie's. It was then that they discovered that 'Lady' had given birth to a healthy brown female cria! Everybody admired the new addition and congratulated the new, proud parents (Georgie and Paul, that is!).



Cathy can recommend her lifestyle to anyone

Snap shot

My first introduction to the wonderful world of alpacas was at the Sheep and Woolcraft Show in 1993. I had initially gone along to look at goats and assess their suitability for my newly acquired property at Wonga Park.

Having quickly crossed goats off my list of possibilities, I headed for the alpaca pens and consequently have not looked back.

Next, I took my two small sons to the 1993 Pakenham Field Day to gain some more knowledge of these wonderful animals. (There had to be a catch somewhere — no animal could be that good!)

Well! After rescuing my small son, Ben, from the middle of an alpaca shearing demonstration (how embarrassing — people still remember me from there) I decided that here was an animal I could care for myself. It was safe for children to be around and was a good investment as well. I owned my first two alpacas within a month.

I was so taken with them that I bought two pregnant females, two wethers and a male before Christmas 1993 and now I have three crias born in 1994 and am expecting three more this year. My first cria was born on the last day of



Feeding time! Matthew Exon with a hungry alpaca.

autumn 1994 and contrary to what I have been told about alpacas giving birth during daylight hours, he was born at 9.30 pm. What an experience for the boys! He was a beautiful medium fawn colour so we named him Autumn Glory.

I have learnt a lot about what I can do and also what my two sons are capable of doing. It is a lifestyle I really enjoy and I can recommend it to anyone. [Cathy Exon]

Snap shot



Jennifer halter training the McAuliffe's young male alpaca.

Jim and Jennifer McAuliffe of Wanneroo, WA have been teaching full time for the past 25 years. Last year, while on long service leave, they

Teaching children and raising alpacas

set about investigating various primary industries for their 10-acre property on the outskirts of Perth. Jim grew up on a farm and has always had some form of farming venture on the go. Alpacas seemed to satisfy all requirements for primary production on their property, being easy to manage and gentle to the fragile sandy soils of the area.

The McAuliffes' starting herd consisted of three pregnant female alpaca, one with a male cria at foot.

Their young male is now halter trained and suitable for promotional work at fairs and shows. The females have not been halter trained. They are primarily breeders and are not overly stressed as they are getting close to delivery. Jenny has an individual character description for each of the alpacas.

Jim and Jenny provide a good example of how alpaca breeding can offer advantages, regardless of herd size. In their case, there are two distinct advantages: for tax purposes in qualifying for primary producer status; and the suitability of alpacas for farming on a small area. They have found alpacas easy to handle, requiring minimal supervision other than during late stages of pregnancies. They can easily integrate the work on the farm with full time teaching.

The alpacas are obviously a delight to Jim and Jenny — a delight which will be further magnified by the forthcoming birth of their crias.

FIBRE: IS FINER BETTER?

By Peter Sporle

Should we all go 'micron mad'? Or are there other considerations?

The question on many an alpaca breeder's lips is: 'Is finer fibre better?'? The answer is an obvious 'Yes'. However, as with any obvious answer, there are many other questions raised.

What is the pre-existing level of fineness? What are the long term versus short term genetic constraints? Does excessive variation exist even within the finer end of the micron spectrum? What are the manufacturing constraints?

Yes, fineness does lead to excellence (just as 1 is closer to 2 than, say, 8, but it's pure maths). The lower the gradient, the tighter the parameters. To simply state the obvious in no way suggests a practical and achievable

path to excellence either within herd or across herd.

Micron madness

'Micron madness' overtook the merino industry in recent times. Little account was taken of environmental constraints and no account taken of the market for 'finer' wool. The outcome was an over-supply of inferior fine wool due to low tensile strength; high vegetable fault contamination; micron variability and *no* market development for superior wool in the broader micron range.

The overall result was a reduced market share for wool in a fiercely

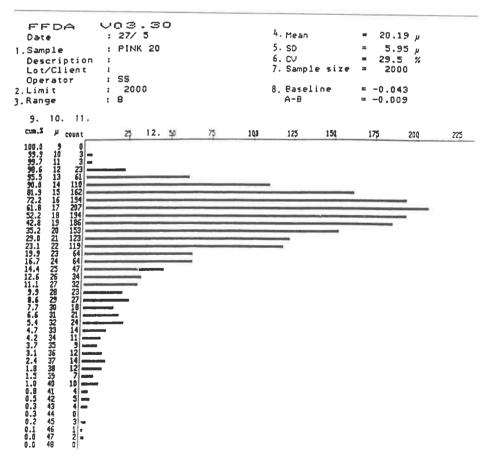


Fig. 1. OFDA description of a 'fine' fibre at 20.19 micron. Note the significant number of fibres greater than 20 micron and up to 47 micron in diameter, giving an unacceptable CV of 29.5%.

competitive international fibre market where wool constitutes only about 4 per cent of textile fibre, be it good, bad or indifferent.

It would be unwise for the alpaca industry to go down that same path.

First, and most importantly, Australian alpaca 'across the board' is *not* fine and does not even approach fine in terms of average fibre diameter. Coupled with this is a large co-efficient of variation at any given mean micron both on individual animals and between animals within herds.

Secondly, there is no scope for short term, dramatic genetic influence on reduction in micron on an industry-wide basis, due to the very small gene pool or herd size, particularly considering the constraints of single trait selection at this very early stage of the alpaca industry.

Genetics is a numbers game and alpacas don't have the numbers.

So we must ask the right questions in order to get the answer in an achievable perspective. Perhaps a better question is, 'How should the alpaca industry pursue fibre excellence?'

Achieving excellence What is an excellent fibre?

First, we need to qualify what we mean by excellence. Then we can address how we go about achieving it. And rest assured, that it has all been done before, not with alpaca perhaps, but certainly with wool — something about which we Australians know a lot!

An excellent fibre is one with uniformity, in terms of both its diameter and length, which contribute to softness or 'handle'. It will be free of vegetable fault such as clover burr and grass seed. Tensile strength will be high, due mostly to good nutrition through the growing period (usually 12 months). All these things together contribute to excellence and they do so in all micron ranges.

Management

Reduction in vegetable fault and improved tensile strength are management issues. That means you are responsible, not the alpaca. Clean pastures; proper hay racks and feed troughs; shearing before seed set in late spring/early summer; clean shearing arrangements; proper skirting of fleece; and proper storage are your responsibility and are neither expensive nor difficult to implement.

Selection and breeding

Now for the more difficult task of reducing variation in micron and length. First, this is a long term program. Using the best available science and perfect management, improvement will be slow. Nonetheless, real progress can be made as co-efficient of variation is more responsive to genetic pressure than reduction in micron alone. Getting finer is slower.

Remember, fine micron fibre can have as much variation as broader micron fibre. Look at the example in Fig. 1. The average micron is 20.19; that would suggest a very fine fibre, but look at the CV at 29.5% — i.e. about one-third of the fibres are more than 25 and up to 47 micron. Much of this fibre would be kemp or medulated, more like hair than alpaca and not soft to handle.

This is where singular selection for fineness falls down. Unless the variation is addressed at the same time and

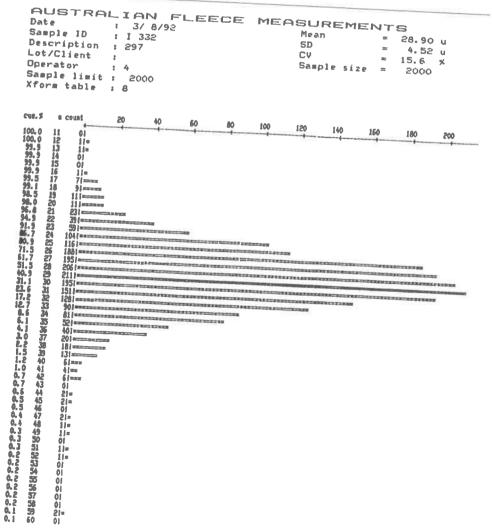


Fig. 2. OFDA description of an excellent fibre

Note the small number of fibres either side of the mean of 28.9 micron; far from 'fine'
but close to excellent with a CV of 15.6%, remarkable for such a 'broad' fibre.

given priority over mean fineness, no impact will be made on achieving fibre excellence. Real progress in the pursuit of excellence will be made using males that are not particularly fine, say 22 to 27 micron, where their CV is lower than 20%. In sheep, these are the ones that 'pay the bills'. Their fleece weights are usually higher along with body weights; longevity is better and reproductive performance superior to their small-framed, low body weight, low fleece weight 'super fine' relations.

Take, for example, the fibre in Fig. 2 at nearly 29 micron. This fleece is certainly 'broad'; in fact, a good 10 micron away from being 'fine'. But look at the CV at an amazing 15.6%. This is excellence in every sense of the word. No medulation in this sample and not a hint of 'prickle' that causes so many comfort problems in natural fibre knitwear. And, like all natural fibre with this kind of low variation, the 'handle' or softness would be magnificent — much better, in fact, than the sample in Fig. 1, fine as it is.

Perfection may well be a 20 micron

alpaca male with a CV of 12% and a clean fleece weight of 5 kg. But the reality is something like twenty generations away.

So, what do we do in the interim? How do we pay the bills and, at the same time, make real progress in achieving fibre excellence? While you contemplate that, understand that it has taken the wool industry over 100 years to achieve the high standards it has. Yet, there are still some very 'ordinary' sheep about.

Don't assume fineness measure it

The range you will experience will be from 18/000 to 35/000th of a millimeter, hardly something you can see. And don't imagine that 'it's fine if it's soft'. All alpaca is soft and silky to the touch; even the worst alpaca 'feels' great. Use the services of the Melbourne College of Textiles Fleece Testing Service and authorise the use of the results in the National Alpaca Fleece Recording Scheme. This way, the whole industry benefits.

Measurement is the first requirement on the road to excellence.

Be a competent manager

Your role as the provider to the animal will have a more profound impact on 'quality control' in the production of elite fibre than all the genetic, scientific and philosophical parameters put together. So often, in animal production, we see genetic gain masked by poor management; or we see supposed genetic gain manipulated by excessive management such as over-feeding, artificial environments and show ring trivia.

Keep it simple

- Measure your starting point and your progress.
- Manage your asset in a practical, cost effective and enjoyable way.
- Co-operate as individuals and as an industry in achieving excellence in alpaca fibre.

Sure, you can get finer — but make sure you get better as well.

New herd management program released

IpacaTech is a Windows-based Acomputer program, written and developed in Australia specifically for the alpaca industry. Its aim is to enable alpaca breeders to efficiently and easily input information and to maintain comprehensive records on each animal in their herd.

The program is simple to operate and extremely flexible, allowing the user to search, find, add, update and print any information which is in the

system at any time. It also features a number of prompts that are designed to remind operators about various tasks scheduled for completion by a given date.

The program is currently available for IBM compatible computers and will shortly be available for Apple Mac

AlpacaTech is designed principally to be an aid to management. Accurate information recording of weights,

condition scores, fibre characteristics, health and reproduction are encouraged and facilitated. Reports for each of these can be sent to screen, printer or to spreadsheet.

Features

The 'Find and Browse' feature allows the user to select an animal by tag, IAR, or by name.

'Hot Keys' allow instant viewing of any available information about the selected animal: breeding (pedigree tree), progeny, sire, dam, classing information, fleece details, shearing weights, body weights and a full health and vet history.

The Job Scheduler allows the scheduling of any job on the farm. For example, all vaccinations that are best completed by a certain age can be scheduled and, when an animal reaches that age, the program will remind the operator that the deadline for vaccinations has been reached.

The Job Scheduler can be set so that all jobs can be entered to make up a 12-month diary. Should plans change, jobs in the diary can easily be rescheduled.

The classing and entry screen allows all previous classing data to be viewed for extra analysis and as an aid to correct decision making.

All weights can be recorded in AlpacaTech and the program will not

only calculate all gains and losses, but will also alert the user where losses are detected. This is particularly useful for monitoring of pregnant females.

There's an efficient joining and pregnancies system that can record failed matings, pregnancy tests and scannings, weight gains and losses, expected birthing date and all previous joining histories.

Medical history is tied to veterinary job lists providing full medical information at a glance. This is invaluable in tracing and helping to solve recurring or related health problems. It is also possible to view dam and sire details in this section, allowing instant checks on the possibility of inherited problems.

Fleece data can also be read into the system. Alpaca Tech personnel will load this information for you if your test house is not listed within the program and add that test house to the list.

Marketing

AlpacaTech is marketed directlyby the developers and the purchase price will include a full year of backup and support. Training is also available.

The program has been jointly developed by:

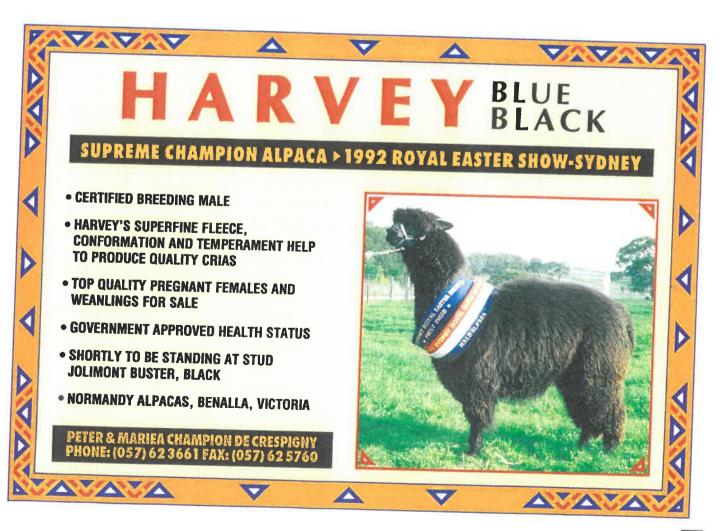
Adele Feakes BVSc, practising veterinarian and livestock adviser;

Doug Henry B.E.(Chem) a professional computer analyst and developer in Micosoft Foxpro; and

Ian Willersdorf, agricultural consultant, currently consulting to a leading Australian merino stud in the area of accounting and computer implementation.

Further information about Alpaca-Tech can be obtained during business hours from

Adele Feakes, (087) 621 955; Doug Henry (03) 9583 8374; or Ian Willersdorf, (058) 846 604.



TWINNING IN LLAMAS

by Murray E. Fowler, D.V.M.

[Our story on the twin alpacas, Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, in the last issue, aroused our curiosity. Why are lamoid twin live births so rare? How do twins occur? This material first appeared in the U.S. magazine Llamas in October 1990. We are grateful to the editor for permission to reprint it here and to the author for his efforts in responding to our request for material and providing it to us so promptly.]

The arrival of twin crias on a llama I ranch brings a special joy, but those who have experienced such an event agree that the blessing is mixed with the hard realities of extra work and expense. The author has identified 16 pairs of live birth twins in the United States and Canada (Table 1). No twins have been reported in alpacas. There are no written reports of twinning in lamoids in Peru, but colleagues have mentioned it as being extremely rare.

The birth of multiple offspring is usual in many species of animals. In those species that normally have only one offspring at a time, the birth of twins, triplets or other multiples, presents some special challenges. Humans have had a special curiosity about twins in their own species since the beginning of time. Identical twins were noted, but it was also observed that twins could be quite different.

The writings of Aristotle (350 B.C.) describe the special circumstances that may pertain if a heifer calf is born twin to a bull calf. A recent episode in which it appeared that this phenomenon had

occurred in a pair of aborted llama twins prompted a review of twinning. The author shares this information to increase understanding of some of the problems involved.

Why twins?

Singleton births are the normal in many species of higher mammals, including humans, cattle, horses, goats and all of the camelids. Twins are expected in sheep. What makes the difference? The number of young that are born primarily depends on the genetic makeup of the species and, in the case of domestic animals, on the breed. In humans there is a variable prevalence of twinning in different races and ethnic groups. In the U.S., twins occur in one of 87 births. Some environmental factors that influence the prevalence of twinning will be discussed later.

There are two types of twins: identical and fraternal. Identical twins are the product of a single ovum (egg) that is fertilized with a single sperm. As cell division begins, the cellular mass splits, resulting in two individuals with the same genetic makeup, including blood type and immune status. Organ transplants and skin grafts can be performed between identical twins with no concern for rejection, as may occur between fraternal twins.

Figures 1 through 3 illustrate division of the cellular mass at various stages. Early division (first four or five days) can result in identical twins attached to separate placentas (Figure 1). More com-



monly the division occurs during the 16 to 120 cell stage (eight to ten days) in which there is a common chorion (outer membrane) but each fetus has a separate amnion (inner membrane) (Figure 2). Division may occur after the placental membranes have begun to form, in which case the fetuses may share the same amnion (Figure 3). It is important to note that only one corpus luteum will form to replace the follicle (source of the ovum).

Identical twins are uncommon in all species. In humans, only 5% of twin births are identical. No identical twins have been reported in llamas or alpacas.

Fraternal (brotherly) twins result from fertilization of two ova (eggs) by two different sperm. The ova may come from follicles on the same ovary or one from the right and one from the left. Note that there will be two corpora lutea. In some species, the production of progesterone for maintenance of pregnancy is taken over by the placenta. Not so in llamas. The corpus luteum (corpora lutea) must remain functional throughout pregnancy.

With twins, placentation varies depending on where the individual embryos implant in the uterus and whether or not fusion of the chorions occurs. Figure 4 illustrates two follicles formed on the same ovary, with complete separation of the two placentas and fetuses. Figure 5 illustrates a situation in which a follicle forms on each ovary and Figure 6 illustrates fusion of the chorions.

The development of twins

The following letter designations apply to all illustrations:

A. Fertilization of the ovum in the oviduct; B. Follicle; C. Corpus luteum; D. Cervix; E. Chorion (outer fetal membrane); F. Amnion (inner fetal membrane not to be confused with the membrane that surrounds the cria at the time of birth); G. Umbilical cord.

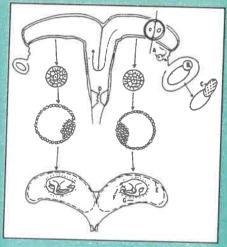


Figure 1.
The development of identical twins with division taking place at the twocelled stage.

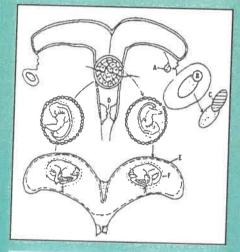


Figure 2.

Development of identical twins when division occurs at a more advanced cell division stage (morula).

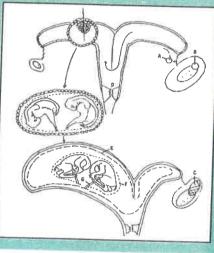


Figure 3.

Development of identical twins after the embryo and fetal membranes begin to form.

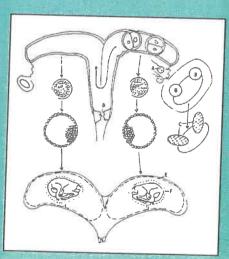


Figure 4.
Development of fraternal twins from
two follicles forming on the same
ovary. There are fwo separate
placentas.

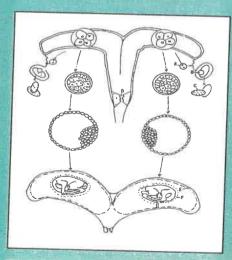


Figure 5.

Development of fraternal twins from follicles formed on both ovaries.

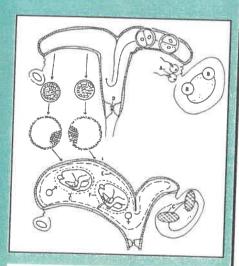


Figure 6.

Development of fraternal twins where the chorions have fused resulting in a common blood supply between the two feti.

Fraternal twins are genetically no more related than are successive single-birth individuals. The ova may be fertilized by sperm from different sires if multiple breeding is practised. One ovum may be fertilized after a period of days or even weeks. Fraternal twins may be the same or the opposite sex. As we shall see, if they are male and female twins, special conditions may prevail.

The predisposition to fraternal twinning is hereditary in all species studied to date. In humans, the tendency for fraternal twinning to run in families is well known. There is, however, a question as to whether or not the father has genetic input into twinning. There is ethnic variation, with a higher prevalence in African, lower in Caucasian and lowest in Asian ethnic groups. The prevalence of fraternal twins in the United States is less than 2%.

Fraternal twinning in cattle shows a definite breed predisposition with dairy breeds producing twins more often than beef breeds. Other factors that show a genetic basis for twinning include:

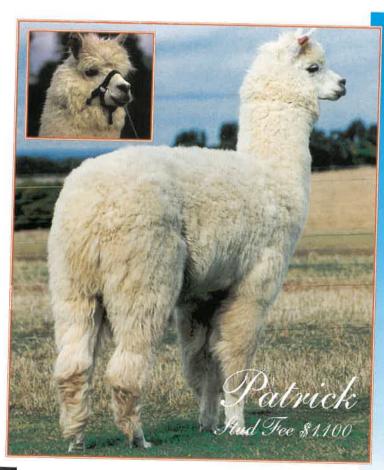
- cows born as a twin are more likely to produce twins;
- certain family lines produce more twins; and
- selection can be made for twinning. Fraternal twins and multiple births may be fostered by such environmental factors as the administration of hormones that stimulate follicle production (Gonadotrophin) stimulation hormone (GnRH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH). These hormones may produce what is known as superovulation (the development of multiple follicles). Superovulation is desired in embryo transfer projects. In one female llama that was treated with FSH over a period of five days, an ultrasound eval-

uation of one ovary showed development of ten mature follicles.

Superovulation doesn't necessarily result in multiple births because other factors operate, such as quality of the sperm, receptive state of the uterine mucosa, health of the uterus and the nutritional status of the dam

Freemartins

The term 'freemartin' is derived from French words and was first used to describe a female bovine calf born twin to a bull calf. In over 95% of such twins in cattle, the female shows varying degrees of arrested development of the genital organs. In addition to cattle, freemartinism is known to occur in sheep, swine, goats, poultry and, rarely, in horses. A freemartin has also been identified in a male and female pair of llama fetuses aborted at 230 days.



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In order for freemartinism to occur, the two fetuses must share a common blood supply, which can occur only if the placentas have fused (Figure 6). When this happens, the male twin dominates over the female twin, causing failure of development of the vagina, uterus, oviducts and even the ovaries. In some cases, there is true hermaphroditism (both male and female sexual organs in the same animal). More commonly, the ovary becomes part ovary and part testicle, and the clitoris is enlarged. Affected females are permanently infertile.

There is still debate as to what has actually occurred, but because of the common placental bloody supply, there is an exchange of red blood cells, bone marrow blood-forming cells and possibly even an exchange of sex cells. Testosterone may also affect the developing female.

There is extreme variation in the degree to which the female twin is affected. The female may have all the correct anatomy, be fertile and produce normal offspring, or the tubular genital tract may be inhibited, resulting in what is called an infantile uterus. The tubular genital tract may be absent, as was the case in the llama freemartin. This female fetus had an enlarged clitoris and a normal vulva, but the vagina ended in a blind pouch. The cervix, uterus, oviducts and ovaries were absent. There may be testicular development in the female, or there may be a complete intersex (hermaphrodite). All but the first scenario result in permanent sterility.

Infantile genital tracts are not rare in llamas, and complete lack of ovaries or infantile ovaries has also occurred. All of these have been seen in single birth female llamas. Could it be that some of these females were conceived as a twin to a male? The male influence could have occurred early, after which the male fetus died and was absorbed, resulting in what appeared to be a single birth. Such a scenario is

suspected in horses. Ultrasound evaluation of early pregnancies in the mare have indicated that while there is a 20% conception rate of twins, only 1%–3% result in twin births. There is a high incidence of early embryonic death of one of the twins, with a percentage of the remaining fetuses surviving to term as apparent single births.

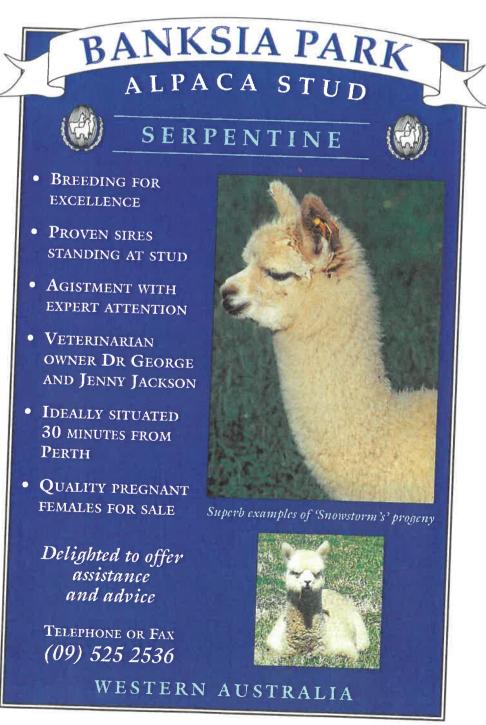
Concerns about twinning

At one time a concerted effort was made in the dairy industry to promote

twinning as a method of increasing production.

In sheep, it is expected and desired that the ewe produce twins. However, the birth of triplets in sheep and twins in dairy cattle has resulted in more problems than it has in increased production.

The following factors should be considered by the llama breeder in regard to twinning. The list is a composite of concerns about twinning noted in livestock and humans.



- 1. There is a physical strain on the dam. She may not be able to produce sufficient milk to nourish both twins.
- 2. The female may not mother both offspring equally. This has been demonstrated in llamas.
- 3. Difficult birth (dystocia) is more common with twins.
- 4. Premature birth is more common.
- 5. Stillbirth rate is higher.
- Spontaneous abortion is the rule rather than the exception, especially with mares and llamas. One female llama has aborted twins five times.
- 7. There is a greater risk of retention of the fetal membranes.
- 8. The risk of infertility in the dam as a sequel to a twin birth is greater.
- The mortality rate of twins is much higher. The birth weight of one or both of the twins is usually lower than desired. Twins are usually weaker and more prone to

- infectious diseases than singletons. Frequently, one of the twins is smaller and weaker than the other, and requires special care (may require orphaning).
- 10. A female born twin to a male may be a freemartin.
- 11. The prevalence of birth defects is higher in twins.
- 12. Twinning commonly re-occurs in the same dam. Three of the females listed in Table 1 (opposite) have given birth to second or third pairs of twins and others were known to have aborted twins.

Management of twinning

Although twinning is a familial trait, it is not like a congenital defect. As expressed previously, economic and risk factors are involved in twinning. A breeder may choose to accept twinning as a natural phenomenon, which it is, or actively try to avoid the production of, or the tendency to, twin by purchasing breeding stock from lines free

of twins. This is, however, no guarantee that twins will not occur.

If a breeder owns a female that is a twin or has produced twins or was pronounced pregnant with twins and aborted, there are alternatives.

- 1. Let the female attempt to carry the twins to term.
- 2. Use supplemental progesterone to help support the twin pregnancy.
- 3. Let the female abort naturally.
- 4. Abort the twins with hormones and start over.
- 5. Examine at 15 days post breeding with ultrasound. If twins are present, the embryo in the right horn may be manually aborted, but there is a risk that both may be aborted in the process. This is a technique used in mares, but has not been employed with llamas, to the author's knowledge.

The alternatives should be discussed with your veterinarian and a decision made on the basis of what is best for the dam and what is logical or possible.

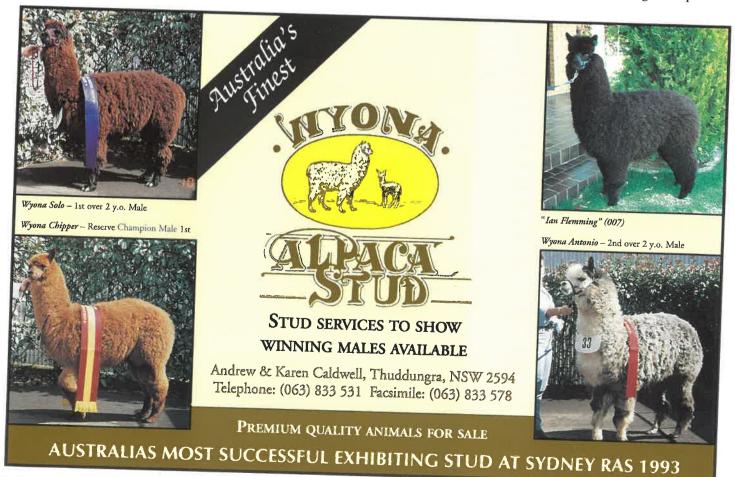
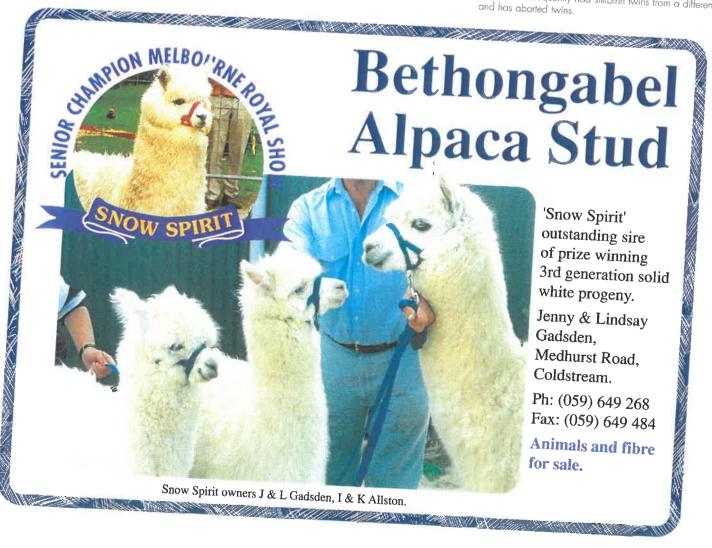
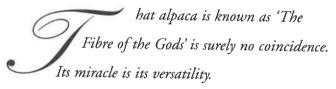


Table 1 Live Birth Twin Ilamas											
Date	Owner		ex of wins		Weight Twin	(lbs) Combined	Placenta(s				
September, 1981 September, 1983	A B-1	^ F	√ F	27 15	1 <i>7</i> 20	44 35	2 2	Reported to be OK at 2 years of age.			
October 1984	B-2	\wedge	1 F	20	20	40		female has had 3 offsering 11 died at 6 months. The			
August, 1988	B-3	N	l F	20-25	20-25	40-45	2 ?	spring, both strong. Dam, same as B-1, different sire, F sold, has had 2 spring, both strong. Dam, same as B-1, third different sire, F is bred and e ed pregnant. First cria died 24 hrs. with no bladder and kidney hypersis; second died 6 weeks later after heart murmur and monia.			
wgust, 1985	С	F	F	14	14	28	Ś				
ne, 1986	D	Μ	Μ	13	15	28	2				
ay, 1990	D-2	Μ	F	20	17.5	37.5		1 white and 1 three-quarter white and black, 1 sold, a gelded and guarding sheep.			
ctober, 1986	Ε	Μ	Μ	13	13	20	2	of twins 1 year ago. Dam raised crias on her own. 1 white, 1 tan; 36 in. bosmall, interest in F. Dam has not conceived since birth of the twins.			
e, 1989	F	F	F	8.5	9	17.5	2				
, 1989	G	Μ	F	18	16	34	Ş	Small for age, 85% expected weight. Had to be tube fed 3 weeks as they were premature. One chocolate and other fawn colored.			
iary, 1990 1988	H-1 H-2		F	26	26	52	2	Both doing well, mom raised both. Second twin was born in the corner of the pasture and left there. Had difficulty boing. M died at 2 weeks of age from trauma. F still alive.			
989 ember, 1989 988	H-3	M		- 14.5	_ 13	-	ŝ	ferent M. Sim drive. Dam is same as H-1, bred to a			
988	K		F	<10	20 18	27.5 30 43	2	Full sister to H-1. M dead at birth and F still alive. Both still alive Full term. M died at birth. Dam has subsequently had stillbirth twins from a different sii and has aborted twins			



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The Thibne



The Stony









Allaca!

Snap shot

An oasis of alpacas



Jessica, daughter of Tony and Jenny Statton, with a young grey female at Burracas Park Alpacas.

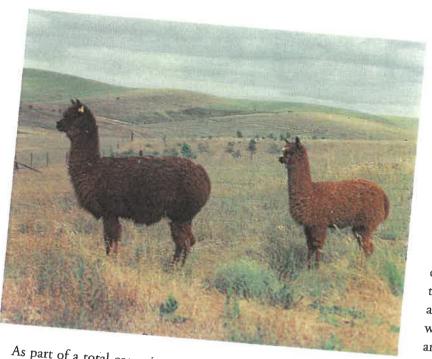
tonemason, Tony Statton, wife, Jenny and children, Kyron (16) and Jessica (12) have introduced alpacas into the heartland of South Australia's merino country with a mixture of optimism, faith and undaunted spirit.

Their farmlet of 60 acres in the marginal farming country on the edge of Goyders Line at Burra is not only the site of a fine handbuilt stone home, but is also the home of Burracas Park Alpacas — a stud of three foundation breeding stock and a resident sire.

In 1992, the Stattons, infected by the enthusiasm, optimism and potential of alpacas made their decision to enter this fledgling industry by committing themselves to a five-year plan. The plan involved two basic components: first was to settle on brown animals as their preferred colour. The second, to breed and not sell for five years by which time, they firmly believed, they would have a self-supporting and profitable business able to support them into the future.

Jenny has become so involved in the Industry that she stood for the SA Regional Committee and has produced the first Newsletter as a result of her election.





As part of a total commitment to their enterprise, Jenny has vertically integrated her activities: processing the fibre, as well as producing knitwear of high quality; thus capitalising, not only on the opportunities these remarkable alpacas offer, but also utilising several of her lifestyle talents.

The Stattons' long-term plans are bearing fruit, as they now manage a herd of 13 animals, much to the delight of

the local community who are much more attuned to the shorter legged, short necked merino sheep.

'The locals have been very wary of these animals', Jenny comments. 'But they are typical farmers — conservative, sit back and watch, but all the time keeping a weather eye on the animals.'

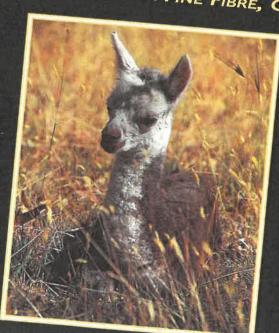
Their first open day in 1993 was held in particularly foul weather. The road from Adelaide was flooded; the Burra Creek ran a torrent and huge winds made a mockery of wet weather gear. But the locals appeared in their droves.

With bald hills and a farm situated on high country overlooking the valley that nestles the town within its folds, the locals can always see alpacas on the horizon. Here, the animals cope with searing temperatures of 44°C+ in summer and black frosts in winter.

Tony and Jenny agree that the move into alpacas has introduced them to a lifestile they find very much to their liking and given their farmlet an income producing potential otherwise not attainable. It has also given them an ability to control their future through their own endeavours, something that, otherwise, would have been a dream in this oasis on the edge of South Australia's vast and uncompromising saltbush country.

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LEO'S LEGACY

by Glen Riley

Microns', 'CVs' and 'histograms' demystified.

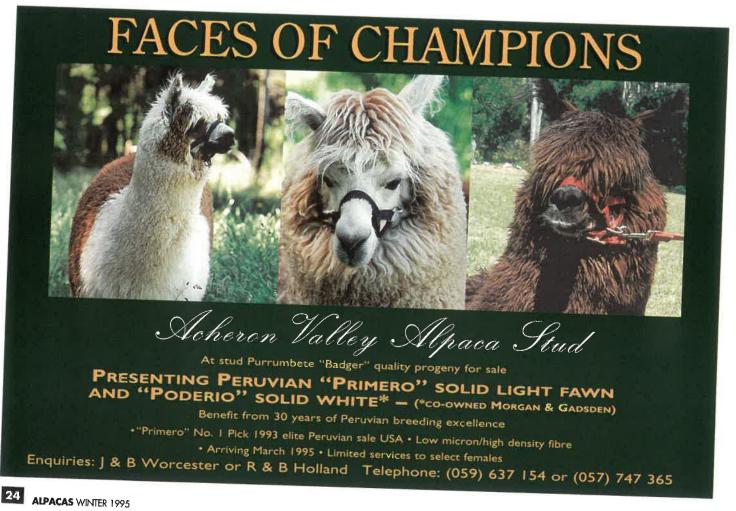
hen I joined CSIRO in 1972, I was to be part of a new research division in Sydney. So new, in fact, it didn't have an operational base. While our laboratory was being built, the new scientists were allocated temporary lab space with the Division of Wool Technology in the grounds of 'The Hermitage', a charming old farmhouse built at Ryde by John Blaxland in 1841.

Morning tea under the giant liquidambar in the courtyard provided the perfect setting to get to know the incumbents of this scientific retreat.

A young fellow called Leo told me he was working on the 'Objective Measurements Program' funded by the Wool Board. He took me up to his laboratory and showed me the pre-

prototype bench mock-up of a new instrument for measuring the diameter of wool fibres. It consisted of a small cell in which short fibre fragments were circulated in a liquid through which a laser light beam shone. As each fibre particle intersected the light beam, it was counted and its diameter measured by the laser.

These were the days before desktop computers were common. The information was stored in a counter which sorted the diameter measurements into size categories and displayed the data on an oscilloscope screen. I watched as a swatch of wool was sampled with a pair of scissors and the fibre particles put into the test cell. In a very short time, a familiar curve began to grow on the screen.



This bench mock-up eventually grew to be the CSIRO's SIROLAN-LASERSCAN, an authentic competitor for the established OFDA (Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser), the accepted industry standard technique for fibre analysis. The LASERSCAN is marketed by CSIRO within Australia. It is also sold and used in 11 other countries around the world.

When I chatted with Leo those many years ago, little did I know that I'd be using his invention and talking to other alpaca people about 'microns', 'CVs' and 'histograms'.

Not everyone has a Leo to talk to. There may be some members who are not entirely comfortable with the significance of all the information that comes back from your friendly local fibre scan.

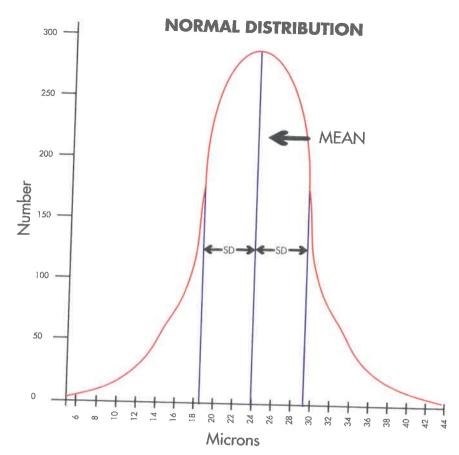
We all know what a micron (abbreviated µ) is, don't we? No? Then, visualise your favourite adult alpaca. She (and favourites are always female) is about a metre high at the shoulder. A

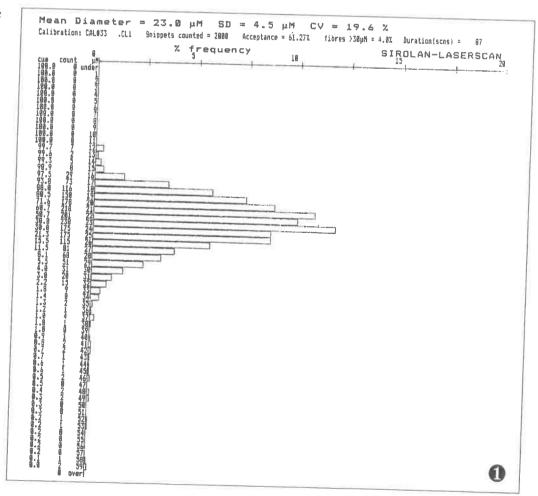
micron is one millionth the height of your favourite alpaca. The page you are reading now is about 100µ thick. Your typical alpaca has fibre that is about 20 – 30µ in diameter.

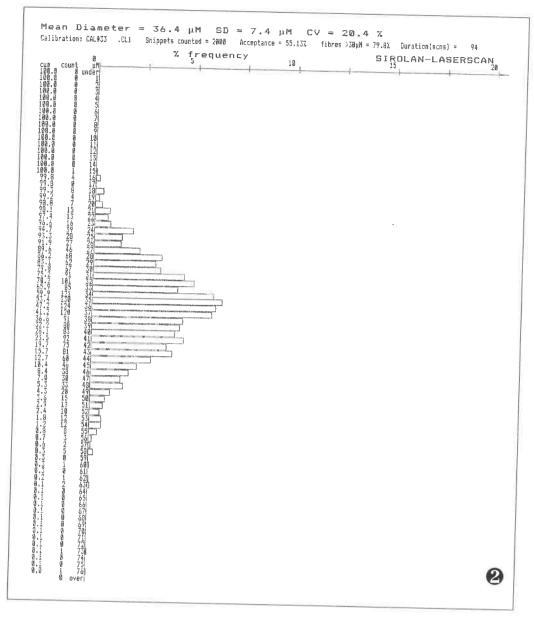
When we say our favourite alpaca has a fibre diameter of 25µ, we don't really mean that. She has many, many fibres and, of course, will have many, many fibre diameters. She has an average (or mean) fibre diameter that is shown on your fibre analysis report.

While it is important to know the mean fibre diameter, the diameter of all the other fibres is also significant. The SIROLAN-LASERSCAN measures the diameter of each and every fibre presented to the light beam but their individual diameters are not reported to you because there are some

Figure 1.







2,000 fibre observations in a typical analysis. Instead, the information is given to you in the form of a histogram.

What on earth is a histogram? A histogram is merely a mathematical device to enable large amounts of simple data to be consolidated into categories, the number in each category being reported.

The fibre histogram has a vertical scale showing the number (expressed as a percentage of the total) of fibres measured in each of the diameter (micron) categories shown on the horizontal scale. Some wool testers also record the number of fibres counted in each category.

The summarised information accompanying your histogram includes the mean fibre diameter, the 'SC' (meaning standard deviation) and the 'CV' (meaning coefficient of variation). The SD and CV provide a numerical way of recording the uniformity of the fibre diameter in the tested sample. The calculation of SD and CV is based on the information contained in the histogram.

When CSIRO marketed the SIROLAN-LASERSCAN it decided, for simplicity, that since histograms of fibre diameter would be approximately symmetrical, the mathematics loaded into the computer (the algorithm) to calculate the SD and CV

would be based on a 'normal' distribution. This assumption introduces a small but insignificant error for most fleeces.

A normal distribution is symmetrical (see Figure 1: Normal Distribution), the mean value being at the axis of symmetry. The spread of the distribution can be broad or narrow; the SD is a measure of the spread. For a normal distribution, the mathematics are such that 68% of the measurements lie within on SD of the mean value. Thus, the SD is that value either side of the mean that encompasses 68 per cent of the measurements.

In our histograms, the SD is expressed in microns. The CV is merely the ratio of the SD to the mean, expressed as a percentage.

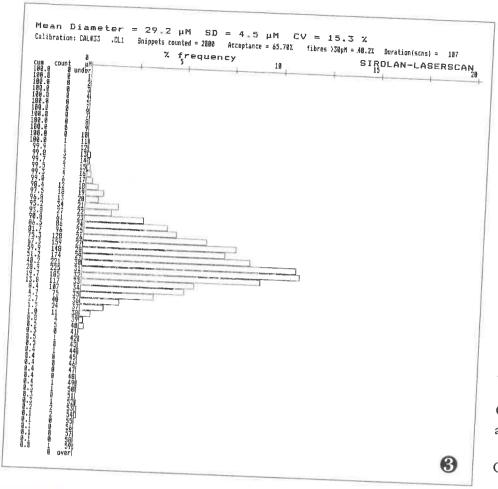
In real life, a fibre diameter histogram is rarely, if ever, perfectly symmetrical. There is usually an excess of measurements higher than the mean. It would be nice to think these reflect vegetable matter or dirt or even two fibres being measured at once. However, CSIRO have built a 'discriminator' into the measuring system to avoid such

measuring system to avoid such problems.

The excess fibre measurements above the mean are coarse fibres. While a high SD or a high CV would indicate this coarser trend, a better indicator of this 'carpet wool' is the fraction of fibres greater than some limit. Some fibre analysts include a statement of the percentage of fibres > (greater than) 30µ.

Have a look at the three histograms. The first represents a fine fleece with a mean fibre diameter of 23μ , an SD of 4.5M, a CV of 19.6% and fibres > 30μ of 4%.

The second histogram is clearly much coarser with fibres > 30μ being 79.8%.



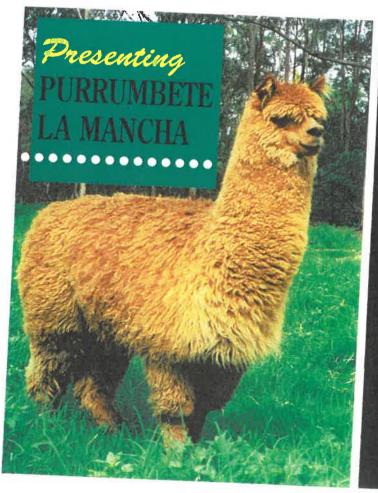
The third histogram is particularly interesting because its mean fibre diameter (29.2µ) is much coarser than the first but, since its SD is identical (4.5 μ), the CV is lower (15.3% compared with 19.6%). However, the nature of this fleece is easily seen by noting that it has more than 40 % of fibres > 30μ .

My friend Leo gave me a few other interesting snippets of information. For example: apparently human hair is straight if it has a circular cross-section and curly (or wavy) if it is elliptical. I'm told this is not the case with crimp in sheep where high cylindricity is sought.

I wonder what the crimp factor is for alpacas?

No good asking Leo; he has left CSIRO. The rest of Wool Technology are leaving 'The Hermitage' this year.

They've all been transferred to Geelong.



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(In some cases letters may be edited.)

More on colour

With respect to your first Letter to the Editor I must strongly disagree with John Sturzaker's view that we should be breeding to a single (white) colour national herd. White is fine for artificial dyeing and will be the preferred colour for many larger herds, but the rich range of colours evident in our animals is a natural attribute we should value and use to our advantage.

As the world turns away from artificial products we should not enforce colour requirements on breeders of alpaca. It is interesting to note a growth in coloured sheep and the production (growing) of coloured cotton. Let's encourage the diversity of herds to retain the natural beauty of the alpaca fleece and market our product/s as natural, high quality, elite and environmentally sound.

I support research in genetic colour characteristics to enable the breeding of single colour herds.

Richard Burrells Highland Alpacas, NSW

Alpacas in coastal Queensland

A significant number of alpacas have been introduced into this area for more than a year (South East Queensland). These animals have been doing well with good fertility, good growth rates and have adapted well to the climate. Pasture is mostly kikiyu with lucerne supplement in winter when the grass does not grow. Sporidesmin (Pithomyces) does not seem to be a problem in this area; I have seen one suspected case in a dairy cow over many years of practice, but this is something to be aware of.

Cold stress was a problem in recently shorn alpacas in continual wet, windy weather when some animals did not avail themselves of shelter provided. Greater care has been taken to enclose animals in shelter in adverse weather (which is unusual). Shelter has to be provided so animals can move out of direct sunlight when necessary and fibre should be left a couple of centimetres long on the back at shearing to prevent sunburn.

External parasites require careful control. Bush (Haemaphysalis) ticks can be a problem in spring if introducing alpacas to heavily infested areas previously grazed by ungulates. Some alpacas can be allergic to the bites. Spraying the face and legs with a tickicide may be necessary until the infestation dies out.

Paralysis (Ixodes) ticks are a problem for all animals and humans in this area. Cydectin injection has been used with success at 6 week intervals at the problem time. Hopefully immunity has been achieved in a lot of animals from the infestation. Two cria were poisoned with ticks out of season when the cydectin injection program had been reduced and these had not been done. They were treated in the normal manner with tick antivenom and they soon recovered.

This year biting flies have caused an allergy on a few animals with flies unseasonably bad this summer. Spraying animals and houses soon controlled this.

So, although there are a few different management procedures, overall the alpacas have been doing very well.

I hope this will be of help to people considering having alpacas in South East Queensland.

Don Lyons B.V.Sc Maleny Qld

♥ ALP-AGONY ♥

[It is not the policy of this magazine to offer personal advice to the lovelorn. However, given the tragic circumstances surrounding this case, we have decided to make an exception.

I am a middle-aged gentleman in love with a beautiful lady from Chile. We were introduced about nine months ago whilst she was staying at a quarantine farm.

She was wearing an exquisite fawn overcoat at the time, had a pretty face, dark eyes and lovely long eyelashes. Her body was lissom, and limbs the envy of any chorus girl. It was love at first sight and she came to live with me about three months later.

Since then we have led an idyllic existence. She stripped down to her underwear for the summer and, two weeks ago, presented me with a beautiful baby girl. With this addition to the family, we became even closer. That was until a few days ago, when she was introduced to this handsome Spanish gentleman called Manuel.

I was quite dismayed by the way she hummed and cooed and showered him with kisses, whilst he pressed his amorous attentions upon her for some considerable time. He has many advantages over me: they both speak the same language; he is young and virile and, I am told, had an affair with her about a year ago which resulted in their first child.

What can I do to become the only man in her life again? Should I take Spanish lessons? I have adopted her baby and am the sole provider for her welfare, but have heard on the grapevine she will be seeing this amorous rogue again shortly. Please help as I am beside myself with jealousy.

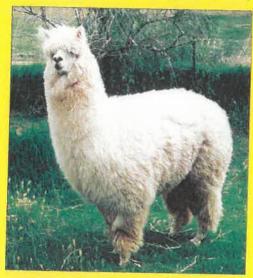
> 'Resentful' Buninyong

Dear Resentful.

Take comfort from the old adage: 'A female cria in the herd is worth two Spanish gentlemen in the bush'. In fact, if you let nature take its course, you may end up with TWO female cria. As it stands, you probably are the only MAN in her life. However, you must accept that

even men have their limitations, especially those who are middle-aged and trying to keep up with the younger hembras. Actually, it sounds to me as if you may be undergoing a mid-life crisis. For this. unfortunately, patience on your behalf and understanding on hers are probably the only remedies.

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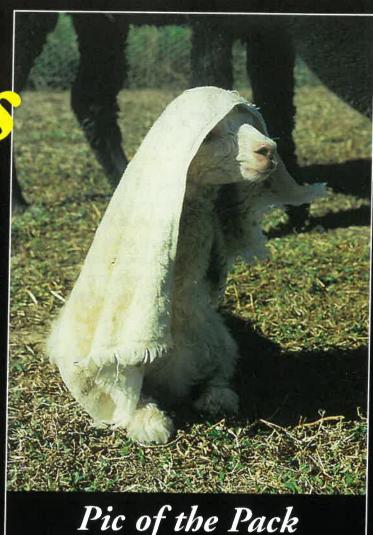
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Pic of the Pack

"WHERE AM I? CHILE? AUSTRALIA? ARABIA?"

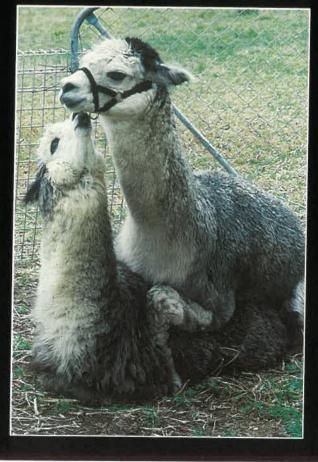
Alpacandes Alpacas, Kylie Hollingworth



"HMM! LOVELY Serendip Alpacas, I



"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL MY LIFE, IG BOY?" Galston Park Alpacas, David McCredie and Veronique Beagi

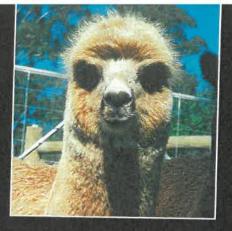




"HEY MUM, STOP HOGGING THE Darren & Annemarie O'Conr



RIMP" len Danks



"DO YOU THINK I OVER-DID THE MASCARA?" Pinjarra Alpacas, Wendy Beer



"GOTCHA!" Royal Canadian Alpaca Ranch, Peter Williams



"OOPS!" Barachel Alpacas, Neil Daniell

"HEY MUM, I'M UP. BUT HOW DO I **GET MY LEGS TO** WORK?" Crown & Sceptre Alpacas,

Gordon &

Noel Jones





RINKLER!"



"I THINK THIS ONE PASSES HIS **INSURANCE EXAMS, DAD"** Michael d'Apice taken at Glenwood

Pacal S Alpaca Stud

BREEDER PROFILE Mike Salter

Alpacas in the town that's almost at the centre of the world

Jan and I met at a party at Barellan, she believing that I was the relieving policeman and I believing that she was an American school teacher (neither belief being true). We started our twenty-six years of marriage on a double lie.

We have three children. Scott, having quickly tired of corporate life, has now embarked on an acting career. Megan is a teacher in western Sydney. Kim, after completing a work exchange in England, intends studying music and anthropology.

I was born of a wine-making family. However, it was noticed by the patriarch, during Sunday family gatherings, that I had a greater penchant for tasting wine, rather than making it.

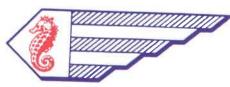
In due course I ended up at Roseworthy Agricultural College doing the general agricultural course — nothing to do with wine-making at all.

Many years on, while working on a cattle station at Emerald in central

Queensland, I was told of a new irrigation scheme opening up at Coleambally in southern New South Wales. The blocks in the scheme were to be issued on the ballot system. Thinking that I knew all the rules of balloting, I set off for Leeton in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area, only to find that the 'unwritten rules' of balloting in NSW were different and I had just dipped out.

I liked this area and, while looking in the window of a local real estate agent, I found a property 'away out there at Ardlethan' that was on the market. Most people not from Ardlethan referred to the town in this manner. Even the miners working at the rejuvenated tin mines wanted isolation payment. Actually, the town is almost at the centre of the world, being midway between Wagga Wagga and Griffith on one axis and Narrandera and West Wyalong on the other.

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The name 'Ardlethan' originated from a town in the Grampian Mountains in Scotland. It is a Gaelic name meaning 'high and hilly' and possibly also 'wooded hill'. The first white people arrived in the 1850s, but is was not until the coming of the railway in 1908 and, four years after that, the discovery of cassiterite (tine ore) and some gold, that the area became populated. Ardlethan, previously known as Warri, was gazetted in 1908. One of its main areas of employment was timber milling and there were a dozen mills operating within a twenty-mile radius. Another feature of note for the 'town way out there' is that the kelpie sheep dog was first bred here. The population swells in mid-March with the staging of the picnic races and other events over the 'Festival of the Kelpie Dog' weekend.

In 1963, my first visit to 'Wildwood' and subsequent purchase on a third deposit (which I didn't have) was



Jan and Mike Salter with 'Poblano' and 'Don Juan'.

the start to a new life. It was apparent that many other prospective buyers had missed the obvious and seen only the termite-ridden house sitting stark on an almost treeless hill, few dams (and those mostly with broken banks and

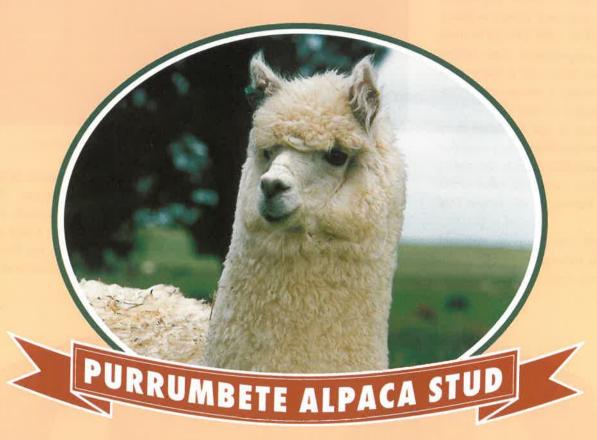
silted up), deep erosion in many areas and dilapidated fences. 'Wildwood' had been waiting patiently to be loved!

'Wildwood' is a 1,400 acre wheat and sheep farm in the Riverina. It is one of the most westerly of the NSW



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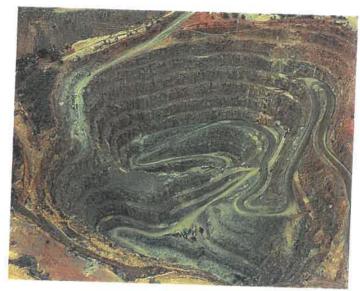
alpaca properties and normally has an 18-inch annual rainfall. The soil is predominantly a red-brown earth which grows short, sweet grass on which stock thrive.

We didn't get into alpacas as the result of deep thought and consultation with accountants. It was almost completely spontaneous and happened in August 1992. However, over several years, there had been pointers.

Four years ago, we saw our first alpacas at the Henty Field Days and asked what these beautiful creatures were. Then we learned the price of one was \$11,000. Great disappointment! Too much! So we just had to forget about these creatures.

As our farm had been making a negligible income for some years, we were certainly seeking an alternative means of making a living. Hands-on experience was obtained at a deer farm near Wagga Wagga. All my experiences with deer were 'exciting', not the least of which was my failure to soft talk effectively through a small hatch in a door leading to the deer. On entering, I was out on my feet from a 'Liverpool kiss' (a head-to-head butt). My wife and daughters decided that I was too old for deer. This, of course, I never admitted.

About this time, late in 1990, the Ardlethan community became aware that persons unknown were looking at the 'great hole in the ground', a relic of an open cut tin mine that had been closed some years previously. The unknown persons were doing a feasibility study on the possibility of



Open cut at Ardlethan tin mine during its working life.

establishing a toxic waste incinerator at the mine site, without any consultation with any of the local populace.

The majority of the population was incensed and soon formed an anti-incinerator committee. Some, impatient with the ways of committees, sought out the retired powder monkeys (explosive experts) should the scheme eventuate.

During the next several months, the town fought the proposal and sought to educate both people and politicians about the dangers involved with toxic waste incinerators.

River Ridge Alpace

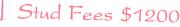
ust over an hour from Sydney, close to historic Windsor, we have more than three years experience offering stud services, agistment and friendly advice to alpaca breeders and investors. This follows a lifetime in animal husbandry.

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Greenpeace and the people of Corowa (where the first incinerator site had been chosen) were of great assistance. Uncle Toby's, situated across the Murray River from Corowa, had declared they would re-locate if the incinerator was built in the area. Much of it was to do with the perception that people might have about foodstuffs and fibre being contaminated by exposure to the incinerator fumes and the heavy metals left after incineration. The same fears were shared by the horticultural industries of the nearby Murrumbidgee irrigation area who were alarmed that any run-off from the Ardlethan site would flow into the Mirrool Creek which eventually flows through Griffith.

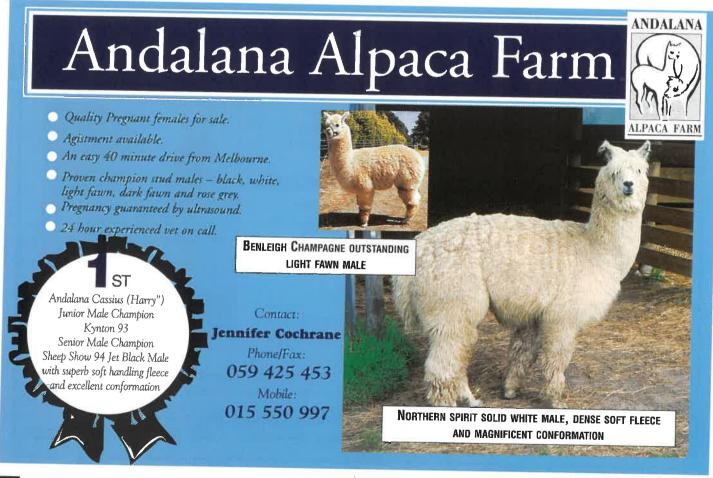
In time, the State Government dropped the incinerator proposal and our thoughts returned to deer farming and the production of non-contaminated venison. However, at this time, a German cattle breeder made a statement to us to the effect that 'Australia

has too much meat'. This was the final telling point that led us away from deer. We remembered the soft-eyed animals we had seen at Henty.

At this time, 'Coolaroo' was having its first release of alpacas. Jan and I left for Berrima the next day and spent all the money put away for the kids' education. After two and a half years, we have no regrets. My wife, who was never confident with animals, has gained confidence with these gentle and intelligent creatures and is able to yard and halter train them with ease.

At 'Wildwood', the present ongoing drought has had little effect on the alpacas because there is plenty of country for them and their area is grassed predominantly with native herbage. Many of these species are deep-rooted which enables them to resist droughts and to obtain greater access to minerals in the soil. In their early growth stage, they are high in protein. As no trees were planted for forty years prior to our occupancy of 'Wildwood', tree planting became of paramount importance when we took over and still is a priority. Alpacas will have an occasional nibble of young eucalypts but will not touch eucalyptus astringens which is relatively quick growing, drought resistant and frost hardy, and which develops a shady canopy. A species the alpacas love is melaleuca lanceolata or moonah, which is low with a dense canopy and a delightful fragrance. The foliage of this tree is sometimes crushed for its oil. Unfortunately, it is not quick growing.

We have found that some weeds such as marshmallow and hog or wire weed, will be consumed with relish long after the sheep have given it away. Caltrop and patterson's curse in the rosette stage are also favourites, but it must be emphasised that the two just mentioned, if eaten alone, could cause trouble. Alpacas, however, are selective feeders and, given a choice of herbage, will balance their diet. Boxthorn





Alpacas at 'Wildwood' with a number of their favourite trees, moonahs, in the background.

leaves and dry eucalyptus leaves are also useful tucker. All of these are deep-rooted and supply the minerals that some improved pastures lack. Especially noticeable during the drought is the lack of disturbance of the bone dry soil by the alpacas with their padded feet.

During the spring of 1993, a combination of circumstances prevented us from shearing our alpacas. A large harvest loomed and we decided to let the animals go through the summer in full fleece to see how they would cope with the heat. They did this with ease and were not shorn until the following September (1994) when they had two years' fleece. This is an experiment we will not repeat as grass seeds became a real problem in the fleece. In future,



The first cria to be born at 'Wildwood': white 'Brigida' (at one week old) and 'Yinti' (at 3 weeks).

shearing will take place in early Spring before the seeds appear.

The infra-structure available on the average wheat/sheep farm is quite adequate for alpacas who go neither over nor under sheep fences, but will go through an open gate like a bat out of hell whenever permitted.

As I sit here, pondering what to write next, a small group of alpacas has just trotted past, so pleased with themselves at escaping. Their Chileanborn leader's nose is pointing almost due east towards her Antiplano homeland.

With the imminent arrival of Peruvian animals, the looming problem of inbreeding should eventually dissipate if common sense prevails, giving us faith in the future of the industry.

Looking at partial retirement in a few years' time, Jan and I need an activity rather less labour intensive than grain and sheep farming. Consequently, we are now seeking to get as many alpacas as we can so that the grain and sheep part of our farm can be downgraded and replaced with work both easier and more enjoyable — and, in time, more lucrative.

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ROUND-UP

Everywhere you look these days... alpacas!

carce? A rare breed? That's not the impression you'll receive these days, if You're a visitor to the many shows and expos that are staged around the country. Gone are the days when a person might look around hopefully, wondering if some enterprising owner or breeder had managed to obtain enough space for a couple of animals.

Today, you're directed to alpacas over the loudspeakers; or you follow the signs pointing towards the highlights (and alpacas are very much a highlight).

What's more, you don't just find a judging ring and pens around alpacas. There's all the fun of the fair — stalls with clothing and yarns and cute alpaca novelties; bags of fleece that you can touch and marvel at (not only the feel but the colours); and, if you feel like asking a question or two and finding out more about these amazing animals, there's always a stand or a desk with someone who can help not far away. Generally, you'll be able to watch a shearing demonstration and, if there's a catwalk around, you're sure to see alpaca garments in a fashion parade. Add to this a fair sprinkling of Maremma dogs and puppies; an alpaca video show; and the frequent traffic of alpacas coming and going: to the ring, to shearing demonstrations or just for a walk and — you have an exciting mini-fair that has something for everyone.

To give you an idea of where alpacas have been lately, let's jump into our seven league boots and revisit some of our alpacas' more momentous venues this year.

'The Fibre of the Gods' at Royal Easter Show

In true Sydney style, the RAS Parade sang and danced its way through the streets and past the Town Hall. (The alpacas enjoyed it this pre Show activity immensely).

A week or so later the Show was in full swing. The alpaca pavilion was festooned in blue, with lilac and gold sashes promoting the alpaca as 'The Fibre of the Gods', making a very impressive display.

There were 52 exhibitors and 135 alpaca entries this year. Judging was performed by Allan Jinks and the champions were duly sashed by Peter Weiss of Weiss Pringle. Does competition between breeders pay off? The high standard of animals this year proves it certainly does.

For the first time fleeces were judged, and 19 fleeces were entered. Winning fleeces were later displayed alongside alpaca garments in the pavilion.

RAS Winners

Supreme Champion: Cedar House Iceman (Cedar House Alpacas)

Senior Champion Male: Wyona Chipper (S.J. Harris)

Snr Reserve Champion Male: Purrumbete La Mancha (The Gorge Alpacas)

Senior Champion Female: Coolaroo Calamity Jane (The Dell Alpacas)

Snr Reserve Champion Female: Suricaya Snow Drift (J. & C. Usher)

Junior Champion Male: Cedar House Iceman (Cedar House Alpacas)

Junior Reserve Champion Male: Suricaya BJ Bear Hi He Va Suri Stud

Junior Champion Female: Coolaroo Flower Girl (Coolaroo Alpaca Stud)

Junior Reserve Champion Female: Cedar House Terabithia (Cedar House Alpacas)

Champion Fleece: River Ridge Alpaca Stud



Wendy Billington and Peter Sultan (Cedar House Alpacas) with Supreme Champion and Junior Champion male, 'Cedar House Iceman'.



Senior Reserve Champion Male, 'Purrumbete La Mancha', owner, Michael Fritsh and Peter Weiss.

A night to remember

The dinner dance on judging night will long be remembered. Organised by Sherryl Riley (coordinator of the RAS sub-committee), good food was complemented by top entertainment from Sydney's 'Dream Machine', a group of talented young TV and radio people who danced and sang their way through a great repertoire.



(Top) From left: Leisa Pickup (Hidden Valley Alpacas) with Junior Reserve Champion 'Suricaya BJ Bear'; Judith Street (presenter of awards for Junior Male class on behalf of event sponsor, Coolaroo Alpaca Stud); Allan Jinks (judge); and Peter Sultan (Cedar House Alpacas) with Junior Champion Male, 'Cedar House Iceman' (later Supreme Champion).



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This was followed by a parade of fashion wear by top models in stunning alpaca hats by Karen Pirie and clothing from Longreach Wools, Caroline Church and The Australian Alpaca Centre.

Was this the highlight, dear reader? Or will 'Real Men Wear Alpaca' go down in the annals of alpaca history as 'unforgettable'? Resplendent in alpaca knitwear and representing various sporting endeavours, this upright collection of industry stalwarts displayed a number of talents: how to fall of a stage at the sight of a seductive female being one of them. And what about that fine figure of a man deprived of his outerwear and resplendent in alpaca-motif boxer shorts and white bow-tie? Was it his naked chest that elicited the whispered question: 'Is that alpaca hair?'!



Real men wear alpaca!

Coolaroo Classic Easter Alpaca Auction

The on-farm private auction attracted over 800 people on April 23. Conducted under the Helmsman system, the sale produced excellent results for the Coolaroo Stud. While an excellent average of \$23,857 was paid for the females on offer, a price of \$30,500 was paid for weanling female and Sydney Royal Show Champion 'Coolaroo Flower Girl' — a Coolaroo sale record.

The sale was preceded by an address (described as 'inspirational' by a member of the audience) delivered by Dr Jim Watts, controversial consultant to the wool industry.



'Fashions in the Fields' presented by The Alpaca Centre Australia following the Coolaroo Classic Auction, Featured here, Jonathan Ward designs.



Over 800 attended the Coolaroo Classic Auction.

Also prior to the sale, it was the pleasant task of fashion designer, Jonathan Ward, to introduce 'Fashions in the Fields', presented by The Alpaca Centre Australia, Berrima, to launch their catalogue 'The Timeless Fibre'.

This elegant fashion parade featured an exquisite collection of men's and women's wear from leading Australian designers including Dominex, Longreach Wools and Studio Italia.

A superb day.

Alpaca Fest packs 'em in

Barely a week after the Coolaroo auction, Victoria's Western Region staged a two-day Alpaca Fest at the Alternative Farm Vision Show in the Geelong Showgrounds.

The region's major alpaca show attracted a large crowd who were treated to a feast of alpaca hospitality, information and entertainment.

A raffle, competitions, shearing demonstrations and Marty McGee's alpaca handling and training displays were all part of the excitement. Added to this were a variety of stalls featuring alpaca garments, novelties, fleece storage systems, vets and the people from AlpacaTech with their computer. No wonder the alpaca area was always packed.

The serious business of judging was ably carried out by Kevin Rubie (alpacas) and Dianne Condon (fleeces). There were 86 animals and 36 fleeces entered — an excellent showing.

Congratulations to K. and P. Hull who carried off the prize for the Supreme Champion, 'Dreamtime Golden Opportunity' and to the Airds who produced the Champion Fleece.

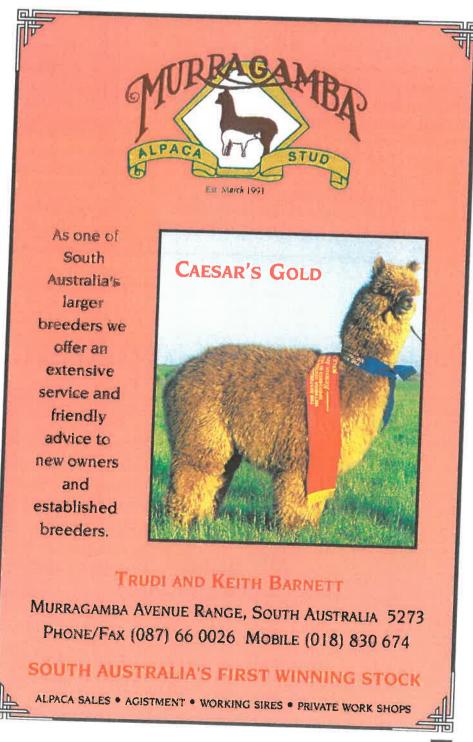
Congratulations also to Western Region for the professional organisation of the Alpaca Fest. Not only did they manage to create an exciting exhibition — they also made a 'very comfortable profit'.

U.S. alpaca/llama handling expert, Marty McGee, took part in the annual 'Shear to Scarf' competition.





Geelong Alpaca Fest Supreme Champion, 'Supreme Golden Opportunity', with handler, Matthew Hull and judge, Kevin Rubie.



High spirits on a damp day

The Hawkesbury/Blue Mountains Region's Annual Alpaca Fest was held at Butterfly Farm, Wilberforce (near Windsor) in New South Wales, on May 7.

Despite miserable weather, several hundred visitors arrived. Those who turned up early were immediately roped into their first 'hands on' experience with alpacas. They were given animals to lead or look after while the whole shebang (including animal pens) was moved indoors.

Consequently, a certain amount of unexpected intimacy attended this second annual Alpaca Fest. Not a bad thing, according to the Region's president, Ron Hales, who described the atmosphere as 'even more informally friendly than last year'.

The bandstand made an ideal spot for the spinning display. The dance floor became the shearing area (with 20 alpacas scheduled to be shorn that day). It was also used for other demonstrations: halter training, animal preparation, nail paring and teeth trimming.

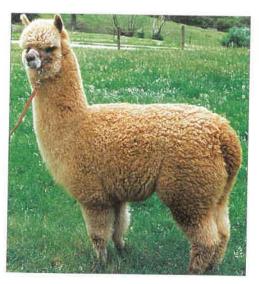
There were talks on various topics including pasture and fencing; and a local vet, John Parbery spoke on the veterinary aspects of alpaca and demonstrated ultrasounding. Just about everything that could be demonstrated about alpacas was demonstrated.

Yes, even a mating was managed — outside, during one short spell of sunshine!



The spinning display set up on the bandstand.

A touch of heaven in the Yarra Valley



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The object of the day was to provide information to those people who had progressed further than the general interest stage and were seeking more detailed knowledge. There was no shortage of questions. They covered everything from investment planning and cashflow and short and long term industry plans to widening the gene pool and general husbandry.

Busy Victoria reports alpacas more popular than ever

Over 50,000 visitors attended the Seymour Alternative Expo in February this year. Six breeders brought alpacas to the expo and there were stalls promoting alpaca products. As in 1994, the alpaca marquee was packed with visitors throughout the three days of the Expo.

In March, Farmworld-Warragul Field Days had over 80,000 visitors. There were two alpaca marquees with over a dozen breeders and various stalls. A breeder who had also attended in 1994, reported a far more educated audience and highly increased acceptance of alpacas (also reflected in the number of sales during the past year in Gippsland).

Regional shows have attracted good numbers of alpacas: 80 at Berwick; 90 at Lilydale; 81 at Pakenham; and 59 at Red Hill. Red Hill was a 'first appearance' venue for alpacas, as were Kingston, Ballarat and Portland.

Over exposure? Not likely! People are fascinated by alpacas. The thing is: alpacas appeal, both physically and financially — an irresistible combination that's rapidly expanding the industry.



Shearing demonstrations at Hawkesbury/Blue Mountains Annual Alpaca Fest.

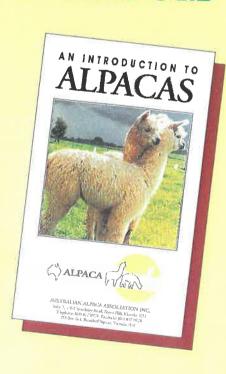
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Review! The second Town and Country Farmer Premier Alpaca Auction

For the second year, the Town and Country Farmer Premier Alpaca Auction was held at the Country Comfort Inn at Mudgee the weekend of May 13 and 14. And it was a great success, attracting visitors as far away as South Australia and Queensland.

Saturday featured a series of informal lectures on a wide range of topics including alpaca husbandry and management; wethering, fibre testing and fleece skirting. Lecturers who generously contributed were John Lawrie, Dr Andrew and Dr Christine Dart, Dr Peter Howe and Kevin Rubie.

A dinner dance was held at the Inn during the evening. The dancing was in full swing when the thunder and lightning show began and Mudgee received its first decent rain in a long time.

Vendors were real troopers, taking soggy conditions in their stride — but at least the sun came through for the preauction parade and the auction itself.

The introduction of fibre testing of males by Dr Peter Howe created much interest and enthusiasm for more fibre knowledge. Dr Andrew Dart, in ultrasounding pregnant females for vendors, contributed much to the efforts of the NSW Central/Northern Region's efforts to engender confidence in the sale.

It is gratifying to note that the second Town and Country Farmer Premier Alpaca Auction showed no indication of 'boom and bust'; rather, a gradual settling down of the alpaca industry. Mudgee showed signs of future market stratification based mainly on age, pedigree, quality and colour.

Again this year there was a strong demand for black. A top price of \$17,500 was paid for a 15-month-old male from Aymara Alpacas in Victoria and \$28,00 was paid for a 15-month-old female from East Station Alpacas in New South Wales.

Buyers again showed a preference for young, unjoined, Australian females from 10 to 18 months old and for young in 3-in-1 packages (i.e. pregnant female with female cria). Colour was again very much individual preference and no premium paid for white.

It appeared that buyers had fairly firm upper limits on their outlay for older female breeding stock or female breeding stock of unknown parentage. While this is a clear indication of a maturing market placing more emphasis on breeding lines, prices offered at Mudgee in both '94 and '95 indicate that early imports have held their prices in relation to 1990. Despite the present pressure to move towards Peruvian stock, these animals should still be regarded as a vital and valuable resource for the Australian gene pool.

The trends identified at Mudgee in 1994 and repeated in 1995 are establishing the sale as an annual benchmark for the industry. And it seems that the traditional open sale system is as valid for alpacas as it is for traditional livestock.

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by Leigh Coghlan, Kyneton Veterinary Hospital

How to ensure you get a live cria

One of the most rewarding aspects of veterinary practice is assisting at the birth of a live animal. Most of the births that we are called to assist at are obviously the difficult ones.

The following information details what is actually happening during the birth process and gives an indication of when things are going wrong, so that you know when to call for help. It also describes some of the veterinary procedures used to assist in the birth process.

If a cria dies at birth or soon after it means, among other things, that a whole twelve months of production has been lost. Therefore it is important to monitor your females closely when they are approaching full term. Be well acquainted with your females and their habits, so that you know when there is a change in behaviour.

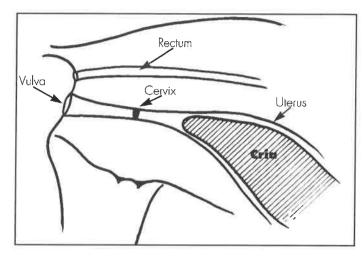
Keep a record of the breeding and spit-off dates and back this up with thirty day and sixty day ultrasounds so that you will know when to start watching for that imminent birth with reasonable accuracy. But remember, the pregnancy may last from 335 to 360 days, so if the female is acting normally you must continue to monitor her.

One convenience factor that comes with alpacas is that they invariably give birth during the middle of the day, which means that a birth at any other time is probably abnormal and needs investigating.

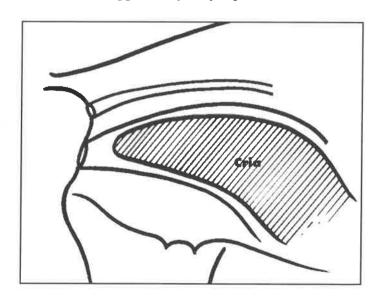
As the end of pregnancy approaches, the female will often be more subdued and stay away by herself. She may lie down stretched out and hum a lot, but she will still be eating a normal amount. The mammary glands will begin to enlarge, indicating that milk production is starting and, in some females, the area around the external opening of the birth canal (the vulva) begins to relax.

The actual process of giving birth is divided into three stages.

The first stage involves the opening of the cervix and the cria is moved up to the birth canal. The female is restless, often hums, passes urine and faeces and may segregate from the others in her group. This stage may last from two to six hours and is generally around six hours in maiden females.



Showing position of cria just prior to birth.



Second stage of labour: the cria moves into the birth canal.

The second stage of labour begins with the cria entering the birth canal, which initiates active labour contractions. The female may lie down and stand up several times. She is obviously feeling uncomfortable.

The membranes should rupture and fluid will be seen dripping from the vulva. Further straining moves the cria along the birth canal. A foot or both feet, and then a nose, will

appear. The straining continues and more of the cria appears. Eventually, the birth of the cria is completed and, at this time, the umbilical cord breaks. The female may be lying down or standing up at the actual time of delivery.

When the cria is born, a thin, clear membrane will be seen attached to the body. This is quite normal. Just make sure it does not cover the nose.

This second stage of labour may last for up to ninety minutes and, if this stage is prolonged with continual straining and no obvious progress, it indicates that something is wrong. It is time to investigate and take corrective action.

The third stage of labour involves the expulsion of the placental membranes. This generally takes place within two hours of the

takes place within two hours of the birth. If this stage takes any longer, some assistance is necessary.

All of the above describes the normal delivery. But, how do you know if you are observing an abnormal birth (dystocia)?

First, though, a comforting thought is that it is estimated that less than five per cent of alpaca births are dystocias.

Do not panic, but do be aware of the signs so that you can take appropriate action early enough and still end up with a good result: a live cria.

How do you recognise a dystocia?

The most important thing to observe is how long the stages of labour are taking. A dystocia is occurring if there are one or more of the following signs:

- the first stage of labour lasts for more than six hours and does not progress into the second stage;
- the second stage last for two or more hours, but no progress is occurring;
- the female is getting tired from continually straining.

Always, if you are unsure, get some assistance.

Maiden females

In maiden females, the soft tissues surrounding the birth canal have never been stretched, so the whole birth process may take longer. The birth canal may only just be big enough to allow the passage of the cria.

If assistance is required, plenty of lubrication is necessary and then careful manipulation. I have found a lambing snare around the head, behind the ears, is invaluable in this situation.

Sometimes the skin and muscle surrounding the vulva are very tight and interfere with the passage of the cria and this tissue needs to be cut (an episiotomy). This incision is sutured after the birth and heals well. If an episiotomy is not performed, the skin may split into the rectum and create ongoing problems for future breeding of the female.



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Malpresentations

Other birthing problems that may occur in all females and not necessarily just maidens, involve malpresentations of the cria. For example, a leg or both legs folded back; the head twisted back; or the head upside down. There may be extra legs presented as with twins; or the shoulder area may be too large to come through the birth canal without easing one shoulder through before the other. Most of these conditions need to be corrected and then careful manipulation allows the birth to proceed.

Another type of dystocia occurs when the cria is coming backwards. There are two forms. One is the posterior presentation, which is when the feet are present in the birth canal but the legs may be flexed. This flexion has to be corrected before the cria can be delivered.

The other form is where only the tail and the bottom of the cria are presented and the back legs of the cria run forwards under its body. This is the true breech presentation. It is a much more serious dystocia and may require an epidural anaesthetic to allow sufficient relaxation to get the legs up into the birth canal without damaging the legs or the female's uterus.

Both of these presentations are serious because of the pressure that is applied to the umbilical cord during the birth. This can interfere with blood flow and result in the birth of a weak cria. Inexperienced operators should seek veterinary assistance in both cases.

Uterine torsion

Another form of dystocia is caused by uterine torsion, where the uterus twists on its long axis, effectively closing the cervix and stopping the cria from being born. In some cases a caesarian needs to be performed. In other cases the torsion can be corrected by rolling the female or by other manipulations, allowing the cria to be born in the normal way. If any of the above dystocias cannot be corrected, a caesarian may be necessary.

What do you do after the birth?

The first thing to observe after the birth is the breathing of the cria. If there is any difficulty with the breathing, make sure that the nostrils are clear. If the blockage is lower down, you may need to elevate the cria, holding it up by the back legs while carefully supporting the rest of the body, to allow the airway to drain clear.

At the same time, make sure that there is not too much blood loss from the umbilicus. Sometimes a few moments of digital pressure is all that is needed but, if necessary, the cord stump can be tied off with sterile catgut or nylon. The cord should be routinely disinfected with povidine iodine or something similar.

If the weather is cold, make sure the cria is kept warm with some form of shelter or a bale of hay.

Apart from the above, try not to interfere too much. If all seems to be going well, observe from a distance.

Make sure that the cria is drinking properly. The first drink is generally taken within the first hour of life and there are frequent drinks taken during the next few hours. It is important that the cria consumes an adequate amount of colostrum within the first twenty-four hours of life, to provide it with essential disease protection. After twenty-four hours, the cria's ability to absorb colostrum declines dramatically.

In a few cases an enema may be required, if there is excessive straining by the cria, to enable it to pass the first faeces.

In summary, dystocias occur in only a very small percentage of alpaca births. If you are aware of the signs, you can take early corrective action and still have a successful outcome

[There will be another informative article in 'Veterinary Corner' in the next issue.]

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This issue's great line up appears on pages 30-31

Snap shot



Bodil Nielsen and cria.

To be or not to be (retired)... that is the question

hen husband Kurt was offered retirement in the middle of 1993, he jumped at the chance, thinking that finally he would have time to build all those model aeroplanes he never had time to build; clean up in the shed; renovate the bathroom; and, maybe, even help me in the garden.

That worked well for a little while — only the bathroom never got renovated; and the novelty of not having anything specific to do every day soon wore off.

We then realised that we had to do something with our lives, or we would go mad and grow old before our time.

After all, we are only in our fifties, pretty fit and energetic. So, we looked around to maybe buy a shop. But nothing very exciting was on the market.

Then, one day, we saw an article about alpacas in the 'Good Weekend' magazine from *The Age* on Saturday and realised that here was something we both could get involved in.

Kurt was an aircraft engineer before retiring and also a 'Mr. Fix-it-all' and still is! I worked as a secretary for many year, so between us we should have what it takes to run a small farm.

Kurt was born and bred on a small farm in our native Denmark and, although alpaca farming in Australia has little to do with running a small mixed farm in Denmark, there are lots of skills and experiences that can be transferred.

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Riki & Rainer Marten: Robinswood, RSD 626, Staverton, Tasmania, 7306 Telephone: (004) 91 1156 Facsimile: (004) 91 1136 We contacted AAA and had brochures and magazines sent to us. We visited quite a few breeders and, all of a sudden, we were hooked. There was no longer talk about buying a business, or anything else. This was what we were going to do. We were very impressed by the hospitality offered to us by the many breeders we visited and how willingly they all shared their experiences with us. We had never come across anything like it.

We put our suburban house on the market and started to look for a small property. That took us almost 3 months and a lot of driving around the countryside. But then, one day,



we found it. It is near Rosedale in Gippsland, is on 10.6 hec (26 acres) and has been used for running horses, so the setup is ideal. There are a lot of beautiful old gum trees on the property and we have a lovely view over the mountains.

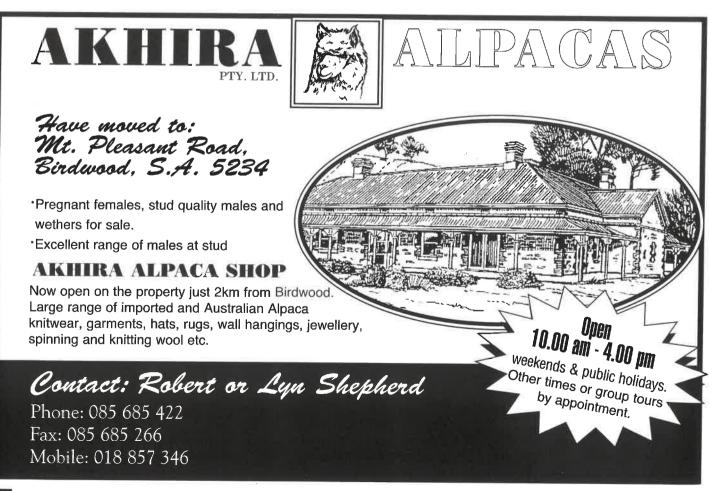
We moved in just before Christmas. When we had signed on the dotted line, selling our house in Sale and buying the property, Kurt was offered full time work at the RAAF base at East Sale. He accepted, so the daily running of the farm is left to me.

Our two sons, both living in Melbourne, thought we had gone completely mad, when we told them what we intend-

ed to do. But then, after coming with us to the Alpaca Field Day at Pakenham, last year, they realised how lovely the animals are and how interesting they would be for us. They love coming home to the farm for the weekend and get an 'overdose' of fresh country air.

We recently bought our first alpacas: two pregnant females and a young male. They have settled in really well.

Both Kurt and I have taken to country life, loving every minute of being on our property and caring for alpacas. Our new lifestyle has given us a new lease of life and we are very grateful to be part of the 'alpaca experience'.





The Willabaa

🕻 ix years ago, Boyd Williams, a young Victorian farmer, set a Slong term aim of handling his own merino wool from raw fleece to finished product. That dream is now a reality. Boyd has created a small and very unique yarn spinning mill. This mill is capable of processing short runs of a variety of fibres. It can create yarns from almost any fibre, or combination of fibres, and can produce unusual finishes with the use of a special twisting machine.

The Willabaa woollen mill is located in Ballarat. The project began with an attempt to source suitable machinery to start a small woollen mill. This was a difficult task, as the mills in Australia had the attitude they would prefer to smash their machines than sell them.

Having located the equipment, Boyd's next problem was to reassemble and recondition the machines. Considering that the spinning machine alone has thousands of pieces, this was a huge task.

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'I had to take photos and number all the parts to help me put them back together. It was like a huge jigsaw puzzle.'

Now Boyd has a complete set of machinery. It includes carding and spinning, twisting, weaving and knitting equipment. He has become skilled at producing high quality yarns of a consistent standard.

Over the last few years, the factory has been transformed from a bare shell to a unique complex that contains a shop, museum and viewing area over the machinery used to make the yarn.

Spinning yarn from a variety of fibres of combinations is usually done on a commission basis. 'This has been an interesting part of the business as we have had the opportunity to work with a variety of fibres such as mohair, angora rabbit and alpaca,' Boyd comments.

'There is a huge potential for the use of other fibres apart from wool and, by creating various combina-

tions, some stunning effects can be achieved. We are enthusiastic about the future for these alternative fibres and yarns and are keen to be involved in developing successful methods of processing alpaca in particular, as it is a new industry in Australia.'

Contrary to earlier beliefs, alpaca fibre does need to be scoured before carding can begin.

'Our first attempt at carding alpaca was a disaster,' says Boyd. 'It was unscoured, and very quckly gummed up the machines.'

Now the fibre is scoured prior to commencing the yarn manufacturing process and much better results are achieved.

The shop at Willabaa sells a small quantity of alpaca hand knits. They are manufactured from yarn spun at Willabaa, then hand knitted into superb jumpers. Being so unusual, they always sell quickly and attract a lot of attention.



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Marty McGee articles — from next issue

rom time to time, we have published information about TTEAM clinics for llamas and alpacas conducted in Australia by Marty McGee

Marty has just concluded a series of clinics and various public demonstrations and has returned home to New Mexico.

There has been considerable interest among alpaca and llama owners in Marty's clinics and in the TTEAM training system. Consequently, we have arranged to have Marty contribute to Alpacas Australia. Her articles will contain training tips, case histories and other interesting aspects of her work.

TTEAM, the 'Tellington Touch Every Animal Method' is a training system developed by internationally known horse trainer Linda Tellington-

Jones. It is based on the premise that when an animal resists it is because the animal is afraid, in pain, or doesn't understand what is required. TTEAM seeks to re-educate the animal with understanding, and without using force and fear. It is an interesting and time-saving method of dealing with all animals.

Marty believes that TTEAM offers practical and efficient solutions for problems that owners and breeders often experience. The methods apply equally to individual animals and to large herds.

Marty is the only officially recognised TTEAM instructor for llamas and alpacas who is able to certify TTEAM practitioners.

A graduate with a degree in animal behaviour from the University of Georgia, Marty has raised llamas since 1981.

She has been teaching handling and holding training clinics since 1989 and has worked in the United States, Canada, England, France, New Zealand and Australia.

Author of many articles on a variety of llama and alpaca topics, Marty contributes regularly to Llamas Magazine, Alpacas and TTEAM News International. She has also been invited to speak at many veterinary schools in the USA and was the only trainer asked to contribute to The Veterinary Clinics of North America Series on Llamas

We believe you'll find much of interest in the Marty McGee articles. The first will appear in the next issue of Alpacas Australia.

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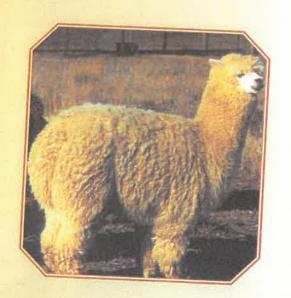
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(cf. Personal Investment Monthly, June 1994, cover story)

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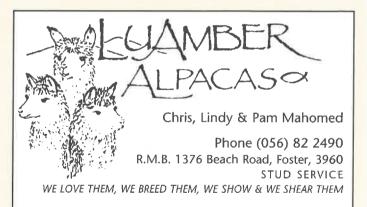
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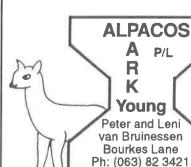
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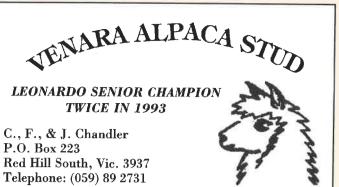
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EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING DEADLINES

and acknowledgements

The following are deadlines for the submission of editorial material and advertising for the remaining two issues of Alpacas Australia, for 1995.

Issue 12 — Spring Due: September 1995 Deadline: Friday 21 July

Issue 13 — Summer Due: December 1995 Deadline: Friday 20 October

Editorial

(including 'Letters to the Editor')

Please mark all editorial contributions to the attention of Carol Hosking.

If possible, all editorial contributions should be typed. Visual material can be colour photographs or transparencies. We will endeavour to return all photos and slides.

Advertising

Please mark all advertising material to the attention of Joy Vellios.

Rates and specifications are available on request. We can accept camera ready material or will produce advertising material to specification.

Please address all editorial and advertising to:

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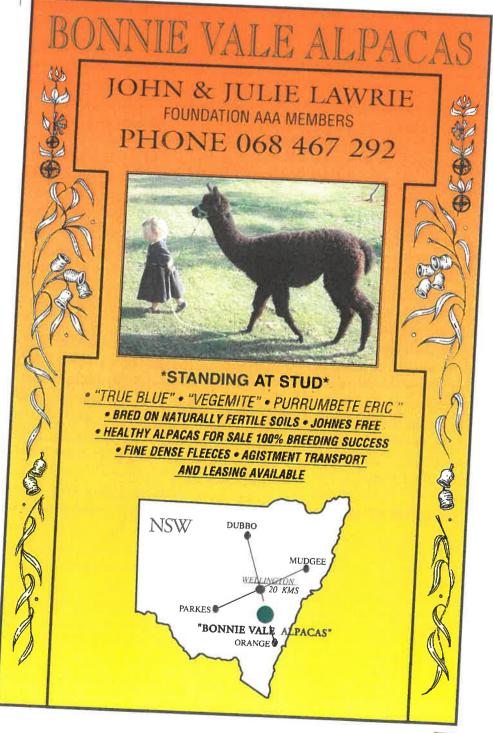
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during business hours.

Acknowledgements

This is a particularly colourful issue and we are very grateful to those who have contributed photographs and assistance. To Rhonda and Capalba Park Alpacas, many thanks for allowing us to model and photograph alpaca garments for our fashion page. Thank you to The Alpaca Centre Australia for our cover, fashion page and other contributions; and to Greg West of *Australia's Exotic News*, whose photos also appear in this issue.



AAA NOTES

by Janie Hicks, AAA Committee member

DISPELLING ALPACA MYTHS

A recent article in The Land newspaper reported on the Town and Country Farmer Alpaca Auction held in Mudgee (NSW) in May, noting that, 'The result [of the sale] indicates a level of maturity has entered the industry, with many buyers not prepared to pay the high prices of the past for animals which, in their eyes, were "not up to scratch" in age or quality.'

This view shows that the Alpaca industry's aims to dispel the earlier myths about alpacas and focus on the sensible promotion of the industry, backed up by increasingly rigorous and detailed research, are showing dividends. It is an approach which has the effect of confounding the critics and underlining the true qualities of alpacas and their remarkable fleece.

This increased professionalism encourages long-term investment and allows for the easier integration of sophisticated breeding techniques and quality fleece production with the textile manufacturing industry. Moreover, it enables the latter to strive for cost-effective, user-friendly, quality fabric production.

The spirit of our industry

Referring to the recent Hawkesbury Show, Ron Hales, president of the region, commented that, 'Owners and breeders have shown great dedication to the animals and to the improvement of the industry.'

Nor is this spirit of enthusiasm limited to any particular region or group. Rather, it is characteristic of the whole industry throughout the nation as an increased emphasis on education takes effect.

All states now have comprehensive and thought-provoking newsletters. There are weekend shows, field days, woollaramas, expos and alpacafests.

In March, Tasmania hosted the Bothwell International Spin In, where the AAA took part in demonstrations of spinning, felting, rug production and fine garment manufacture.

Despite the massive distance between studs in Western Australia, February saw 90 alpaca breeders taking part in what was tagged 'The Great Southern Alpaca Trek', in the South West of the state, near Denmark, where there were three educational displays hosted by three host studs. Soon, at Muresk Agricultural College, the seat of agricultural study in WA, the region will hold an Alpaca Farming Seminar.

Victorians have not drawn breath, either. In the last six months there have been wonderful displays of promotional and educational energy. From the Geelong Alpacafest to the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo, people are soaking up alpaca knowledge.

In NSW, the Sydney Royal Easter Show and two major auctions, accompanied by presentations from Dr Jim Watts and Peter Howe (advisers to CSIRO and the wool industry), have inspired breeders from across the state. Courses on pastures, genetics and nutrition are run regularly from the Sheep and Wool section of the Sydney TAFE.

On a national level, well known

lecturer from The Melbourne College of Textiles, Cameron Holt, has run courses throughout the country, entitled 'An Introduction to Alpaca Fibre'.

Alpaca handling and training demonstrations by visiting US TTEAM expert, Marty McGee attracted scores of breeders, Australia wide.

In April, Australia saw superb displays of alpaca fashion by award winning local designers, which enhanced understanding of the fibre's true potential. Australia's first alpaca fashion catalogue was launched, advancing the textile use of alpaca another step.

International alpaca seminar 'Cria to Criation'

All these activities culminate next month in the international Alpaca Seminar 'Cria to Criation' to be held from 7 to 9 July.

Dr Walter Bravo, famed for his expertise in camelid medicine, travels all over the world lecturing on topics from reproduction to fibre production and will be among many exciting guest speakers.

Also appearing will be Mr Robert Weatherall. A specialist in the manufacturing of elite fibres from camel to cashmere, Mr Weatherall hails from Bradford, England. He understands alpaca fleece characteristics intimately as well as how to process and market it to the great fashion houses of Europe.

The seminars should be fascinating, entertaining and well worth the trip to Deakin University in Victoria's large regional city of Geelong.

Information about the seminar is available from Jenny Jones at the AAA office. (03) 9877 0778.

Inaugural events

Hard on the heels of the seminar will be the mighty Nambour Show. This highlights the development of the industry, when Queensland breeders take their alpacas to competition classes for the first time in the state's history of agriculture.

South Australians, in August, will see an exciting new event at the Adelaide Royal. Alpacas will grace the ring under scrutiny of the judge for the first time at this prestigious show.

Then, in an all-out brilliant combination of energy and goodwill, all the regions of New South Wales will host the 'State Fair' in October.

A World Alpaca Highlight — the National Show and International Alpaca Classic Auction in Sydney, Australia, 1995

Scheduled for 11–12 November in Sydney, the promotion by the AAA has already sparked enthusiasm from the USA and we are expecting to see buyers clambering up the walls to bid for Australian pedigree stock.

When considering your lovely line up of elite quality alpacas for this very high profile event, it is important to observe, amongst other things, fleece length and pregnancy status at time of auction and to set aside your stock now.

When you receive your nomination forms in August, fill them out, remembering that your stud will be written into what will be the early history books of a great Australian industry.

For further information, do not hesitate to call any one of the team of very helpful organisers. They are:

Graeme Dickson (Chairperson): 045 765 048; Pauline Nugent (heading up the Show arrangements): 044 651 400/ 044 651 489 or; or Alan Maxwell (for all general enquiries): 045 761 206.

Thank you

There have been excellent contributions to this issue of *Alpacas Australia* from breeders, professionals and academics both from within and outside Australia, for which we extend a huge thank you. (See also page 59.)

If you wish to contribute from your own experience or knowledge, or wish to respond to an article, please contact our editor, Carol Hosking.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Alpacas Australia, and very much look forward to meeting you at the International Industry Seminar in July.



COMING EVENTS

JULY 16

National Committee Meeting — Sydney

JULY 30-23

Melbourne Sheep Show

Alpaca classes and promotional stand. Judging may be on Friday 21 July (to be confirmed). Contact: Colleen Egan (03)9376 3733 or Dianne Condon (03) 9730 1399.

JULY 29

Annual General Meeting — Central Region

The AGM will be held at the Newham Hall commencing at 2 pm. Contact: Jane Szigethy (054) 270 375.

AUGUST 27

Annual General Meeting Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. will be held at the Mooney Valley Racecourse, Melbourne at a time to be confirmed. Notice of Meeting will be circulated to all members at the appropriate time.

SEPTEMBER 21-OCTOBER 1

Royal Melbourne Show

Alpacas will be on display during the first weekend of the Melbourne Show. Judging will take place in the Federation Ring on Saturday 23 September (time to be confirmed). For further information, contact: Colleen Egan (03) 9376 3733 or Dianne Condon (03) 9730 1399.

OCTOBER 13-15

Gosford Show - NSW

Alpaca judging classes. Contact: Wayne Clymo, phone/fax (043) 621 804. (No phone calls bus. hrs.)

Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

PRESENTS

CRIA TO CRIATION

International Industry Seminar

Friday 7 to Sunday 9 July, 1995

This exciting and stimulating industry seminar will be held at Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria. Speakers include:

- Dr Walter Bravo (USA)
- Robert Weatherall (Alpha Tops, UK)

Bookings now open

Jenny Jones: (03) 9877 0778

OCTOBER 13-15

Shepparton Show — Vic

Alpaca classes will be judged on Sunday 15 October. Please apply to H. Morgan (058) 214 677 for the schedule.

OCTOBER 22 (TENTATIVE)

Kyneton Expo — Central Region

Central Region is in the throes of planning their annual Kyneton Expo. (It is tentatively scheduled for 22 October).

Watch next issue for further details. For further information, contact: Jane Szigethy (054) 270 375.

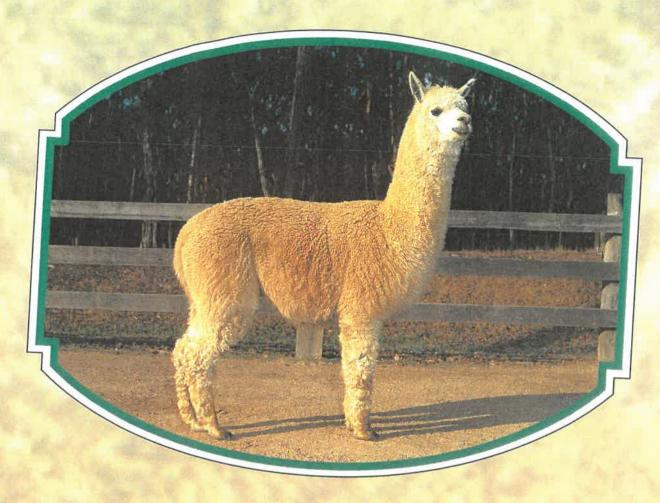
OCTOBER 29

Alpaca Extravaganza 1995 — Vic Eastern Region

The event will take place at KCC Park, Dandenong-Hastings Road, Lyndhurst. Will include alpaca show, auction, displays and trade stands. For further information contact: Lyla Fisher (059) 985 245.

SORRY!

Our pic of the pack winner from Arcadian Alpacas was Denise (not Denis!) Moysey and 'Pac-in-the-Box' was submitted by Susan Eastmure (not Eastman). Gremlins again!



Born Into a Class, Not a Herd.

The difference between an alpaca and a World Class Alpaca begins before birth. As the first true alpaca stud in Australia, World Class Alpacas are committed to producing the very finest stock.

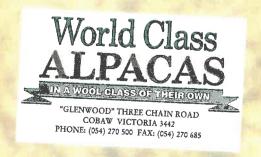
Every World Class investment is of excellent conformation, true to type, with dense fleece of even consistent colour.

Working in partnership with Veterinarian Dr Anthony Stachowski, the leading American breeder of alpacas, our World Class approach involves all aspects of animal husbandry.

Nutrition and health are covered extensively in a complete breeding program designed to produce the very finest Alpacas in Australia.

And to ensure the quality of your investment, every World Class Alpaca comes with a comprehensive Health Certificate to ensure that your ownership is both profitable and enjoyable.

Phone now for a no obligation appointment to view the World Class Alpaca stud. Sandra and Laurie Harrison will be delighted to show you the fine selection of World Class investments.





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Solid mid-fawn — very dense fleece well covered, good conformation currently working.

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Superb mid fawn Peruvian male.

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ENQUIRIES TO:

Kelvin & Jill Maude - Maleny Park Alpaca Stud (Qld)	074 943 883
Ron & Dianne Condon - Shanbrooke Alpaca Stud (Vic)	03 730 1399
Trudi & Keith Barnett - Murragamba Alpaca Stud (SA)	08 766 0026
Jenny & George Jackson - Banksia Park Alpaca Stud (VVA)	09 525 2536
Jennifer Cochrane - Andalana Alpaca Farm (Vic)	059 425 453
Sandi Keane - Pinjarra Alpacas (Vic)	057 682 549