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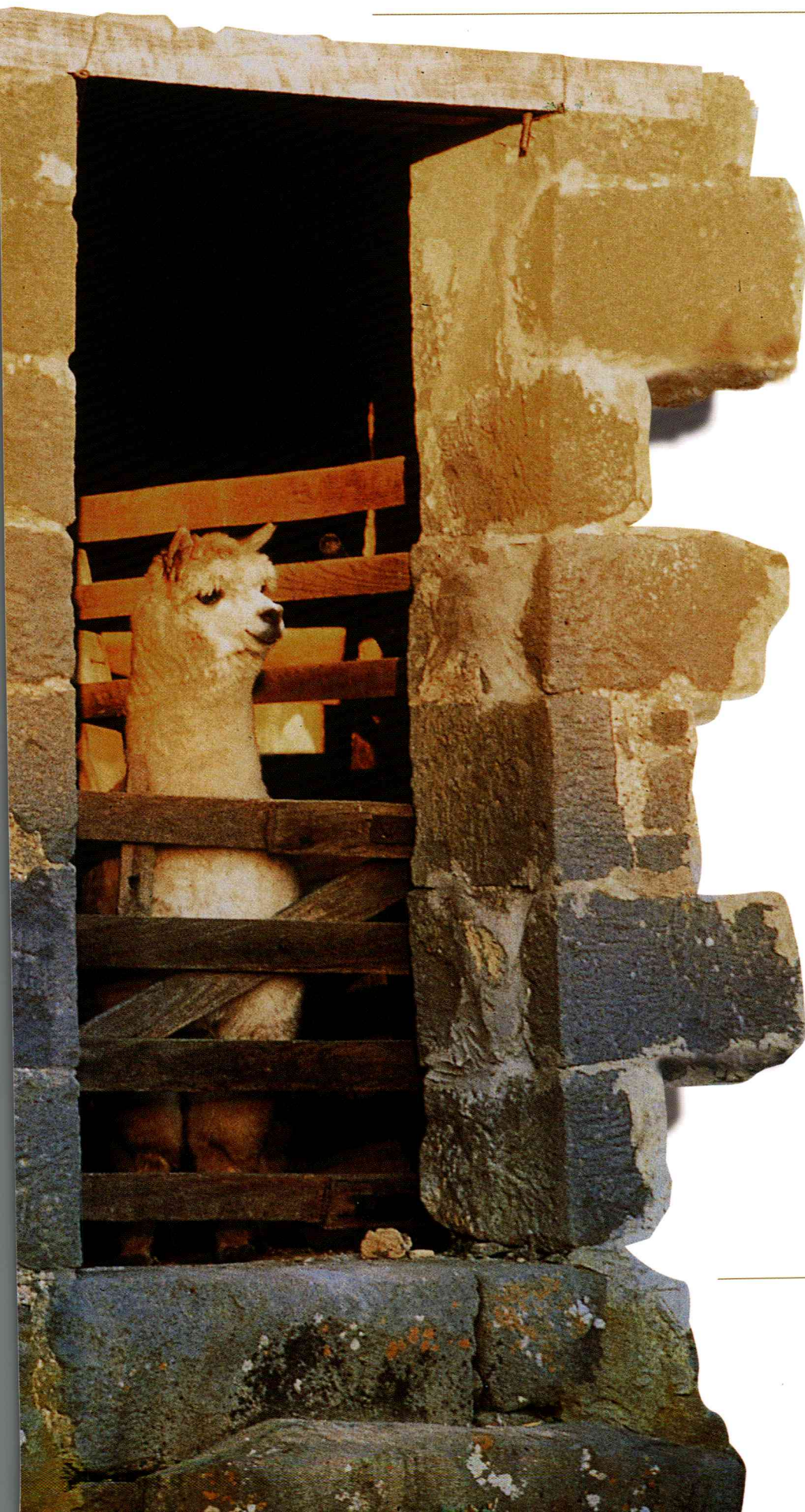
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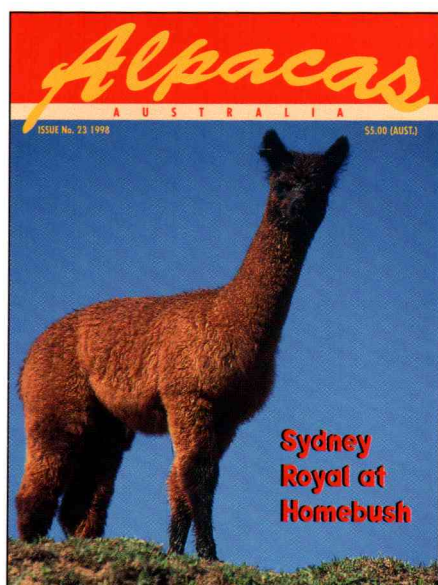
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David Johnson Reports

A decade of Alpaca breeding in modern day Australia was recently celebrated at the post Alpaca Show Dinner at the Sydney Royal Show (see report this issue). Whilst we have come a long way in 10 years with some 20,000 alpacas and 1700 members, we face the challenge of evolving from an animal-value to a fibre-production orientated industry.

June sees the much publicised Elite Fibre Australia Pty Ltd plant being fully commissioned and opened by the Victorian Premier, Jeff Kennett. We are fortunate to have an industry owned, fibre processing plant to assist us drive through to the next phase. Our future is looking very secure.

Nevertheless, now is the time for us to ensure that our dual focus is as sharp as it can be. That is, we must keep our eye on the ball, without ignoring the big picture. In this issue there is an excellent article about the concept of spinning fineness from Bruce McGregor. He suggests that the adoption of spinning fineness as a measurement will better reflect the processing performance of wools and allow fibre lots to be ranked for fabric prickliness.

For breeders, what Bruce is suggesting seems to be a very useful strategy. On the international scene, anything the Australian industry can do to improve the softness and comfort of its fibre will benefit our global competitiveness.

Sometimes, it is easy to forget that this vast land of ours holds only 17 million people. While we may enjoy one of the world's best lifestyles, it is also true that we are not economically

self sufficient. We cannot be, with such a sparse population; nor can we swim against the economic tide of increasing globalism in trade.

The plain fact is, the Australian alpaca industry must internationalise its approach and be prepared to march aggressively on to the global scene with not only the best alpacas, but also the best alpaca product in the world. A tall order? Maybe. But it is an aim we must strive for, nevertheless.

At the time of writing, the national advertising campaign is in full flight. It is an innovative professional approach to promoting the industry and one which, whilst somewhat controversial in approach, is refreshing, effective and exciting. Advertisements, carrying the slogan, 'Softer than Merino... twice as strong' have been placed in *Australian Country Style* and *Qantas In Flight* magazines.

These advertisements will run for several months during which time their effectiveness will be monitored. Response to date has been excellent.

Journalist, Duncan Brown has also been engaged to produce regular, informative articles and press releases for major rural newspapers. Duncan is former Livestock Editor of the *Weekly Times* and spent a number of years working with the Rural Press Group on a number of publications. Having returned to study, he is presently working on a freelance basis. His work for the AAA is greatly assisting our efforts to gain increased industry exposure.

David Johnson

Alpacas
AUSTRALIA

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Using Coefficient of Variation and spinning fineness to improve the comfort and processing of alpaca

B.A. McGregor

The concept of spinning fineness and its relationship to producing quality product – an explanation.

INTRODUCTION

The major quality attributes of raw alpaca fleece include: fibre diameter, freedom from medullated fibres, fibre length, fibre colour and freedom from contamination (vegetable fault, man made fibres). Each of these quality attributes affects the speed of processing, processing yield, yarn and fabric quality.

While alpaca has been promoted for many years as one of the softest textile fibres, no discussion has occurred about what softness refers to and how it might be measured or assessed.

This article discusses one aspect of softness and comfort of alpaca as perceived by the consumer: prickly discomfort, and relates it to some easily

obtained measurements of fibre diameter distribution.

But first, we must use the International Alpaca Association definitions of alpaca fibre.

The International Alpaca Association definition of alpaca

The International Alpaca Association (IAA) is an association of commercial businesses and breeders involved in the production and commercialisation of fibre from alpacas, llamas and other South American camelidae. The IAA has registered trade marks for use by licensees on products which meet certain quality standards (see Anon 1997). The IAA has decided that adherence to

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the following criteria governs the use of the Alpaca Mark.

Gold Alpaca Mark: 100 per cent alpaca or unbristled llama fibre, with fibres up to a maximum of 28 µm.

Silver Alpaca Mark: more than 50 per cent alpaca or unbristled llama fibre, with fibres up to a maximum of 28 µm.

White Alpaca Mark: at least 10 per cent alpaca or unbristled llama fibre, with fibres up to a maximum of 28 µm.

The IAA has also defined the Huarizo Mark. This certifies content of textile product from South American camelidae fibre and is reserved for the following products, subject to the quality control standards determined by the IAA.

Huarizo Mark: products that contain South American camelidae fibres with a mean fibre diameter greater than 30 µm.

If we accept these definitions, only those fleeces which can be classed into lots and which, after processing into

alpaca textiles, have a mean fibre diameter of less than or equal to 28 µm can be called alpaca fibre. Consequently, it is a nonsense to talk about fleeces with a mean fibre diameter greater than 30 µm as alpaca fibre as these are Huarizo fibre.

ALPACA FIBRE DIAMETER & DIAMETER VARIATION

Variation in fibre diameter around the mean fibre diameter is measured by the standard deviation (SD). The smaller the SD, the less the variation around the mean.

Because SD tends to increase as the mean fibre diameter increases, a better measure of fibre diameter variability is the mean fibre diameter *co-efficient of variation* (CV(D)). CV(D) measures the variation in fibre diameter relative to the mean fibre diameter.

CV(D) is calculated by the dividing the SD by the mean fibre diameter and then multiplying by 100.

If the mean fibre diameter is 16 µm and the SD is 4 µm, then:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CV(D)} &= (4/16) \times 100 \\ &= 0.25 \times 100 \\ &= 25\% \end{aligned}$$

CLOTHING EVOLUTION 1950-2000

During the 1950s, formal tailored clothing dominated. By the 1990s, casual and sports/active clothing were of similar importance to formal tailored clothes. Within 20 years, it is expected that casual clothes will dominate.

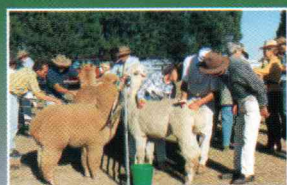
Clothing styles have changed. There is now greater emphasis on easy-care and wash-and-wear fabrics. Consumers wear less underclothing so that outer garments are worn closer to the skin. The emphasis on warmth in clothing is less, but the emphasis on comfort is greater. Some of these changes are advantageous for alpaca fibre, while others are not. Of greatest concern is the issue of comfort in alpaca textiles.

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Get 'cool' with Coolaroo. Ask Janie Hicks for more information on Coolaroo Alpacas or attend one of their popular 'Elite Alpaca Production' workshops.

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Surveys taken in the major six alpaca fibre consuming countries indicated that *the most important negative attribute of wool clothing was prickle discomfort*. New product development in the wool industry (IWS 1993) focuses on comfort, softness, lightness in weight, ease of care, retention of appearance and colour. Growth markets are in the smart casual, semi-formal, young casual and trans-seasonal markets.

Defining the prickle factor

Prickle was once regarded as an allergic reaction in the skin of people wearing wool garments. Detailed research by the CSIRO, Geelong has shown that prickle results when the skin is stimulated in a way that produces low grade activity in a group of pain nerves that are usually only stimulated by injury. It was found that the ends of coarse fibres activate these pain nerves. Continual

irritation can result in scratching and inflammation of the skin, especially in children. Prickle is also more common if the skin is wet. *No allergy to wool has been clearly demonstrated*. (See Kenins 1992 for more information.)

What causes fibres to prickle?

The way fibres bend or buckle is regarded as the cause of prickle. Bending is related to (diameter)⁴ and to (length)² of the fibre. An increase in diameter causes a large increase in the force required to bend the fibre, so that coarse fibres are more likely to prickle the skin. Increasing the length of a fibre reduces the force required to bent it and lessens the chances of prickle. This is why some fabrics with coarse fibres are finished by brushing.

What causes prickle in garments?

Fibre diameter, fabric construction and finishing have large effects on the prickle sensation. Increasing fibre diameter increases prickle. Knitwear is

less likely to prickle than woven fabric and yarn properties have limited effects on prickle.

Curiously, handling fabric is not the best way of determining whether or not it is prickly. Prickle is best detected by a forearm test. It appears that a person may buy a garment thinking that it is comfortable but later, when wearing it, may be pricked.

In tests, the CSIRO found that more females than men rated all 'coarse wool fabrics' as more prickly. The women may have been unusually thin-skinned, or the men thick-skinned – but the 'coarse wool' was only 23 µm.

Which fibres are most likely to cause prickle?

Any fibres over 30 µm can cause prickly sensations. When five per cent of fibres are more than 30 µm, most people regard the textile as being prickly. Surprisingly, about 35 per cent of wool with a mean fibre diameter of 21 µm

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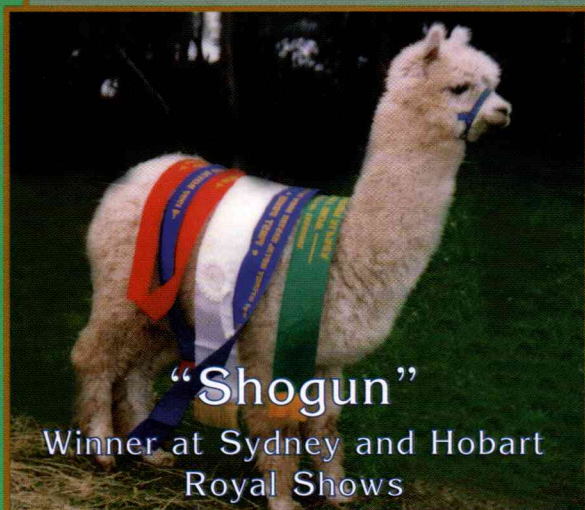
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and all wool lots with a mean fibre diameter of 24 µm and greater have over five per cent of fibres greater than 30 µm. Considerable effort is now expended to reduce the mean fibre diameter and diameter variability in wool flocks with mean fibre diameters of 21 to 23 µm (Dolling 1992).

Measurement accuracy

One of the problems with using the measure of the percentage of fibres greater than 30 µm is that this measurement is imprecise when sample sizes of 1,000 are used. These coarse edge measurements are sensitive to small changes in instrument calibration (Naylor 1992). It is preferable to either use larger sample sizes during measurement (say, 5,000 to 10,000 fibres) or to use *spinning fineness*.

SPINNING FINENESS

Scientists at the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victorian Institute of Animal Science have used theories about wool processing developed in the 1940s and recent knowledge about fibre distribution and prickles to develop the concept of 'spinning fineness' (Butler and Dolling 1995). Spinning fineness (SF) is used to indicate fibre lots which have similar spinning performance and are ranked for fabric prickliness (Dolling 1993).

Effectively, spinning fineness uses the mean fibre diameter coefficient of variation, CV(D) to 'adjust' the mean fibre diameter to better reflect the processing performance of wools. As typical Australian wool has a CV(D) of about 24 per cent, this value is used as the benchmark in the calculation to enable the results to be more easily understood. For comparative purposes, it is best for alpaca growers to use the same benchmark.

$SF \approx 0.88MFD\sqrt{1 + 5(CV/100)^2}$
where MFD = mean fibre diameter, CV is the coefficient of variation.

Table 1. The body of the table shows spinning fineness (µm) for various combinations of mean fibre diameter (MFD) and co-efficient of variation (calculated from Butler and Dolling 1995). The calculations assume the CV(D) of typical Australian fibre is 24 per cent.

MFD (µm)	Mean fibre diameter co-efficient of variation (%)				
	16	20	24	28	32
18.0	16.8	17.4	18.0	18.7	19.5
20.0	18.7	19.3	20.0	20.8	21.7
22.0	20.6	21.2	22.0	22.9	23.8
24.0	22.5	23.2	24.0	25.0	26.0
25.0	23.4	24.1	25.0	26.0	27.1
26.0	24.3	25.1	26.0	27.0	28.2
27.0	25.3	26.1	27.0	28.1	29.3
28.0	26.2	27.0	28.0	29.1	30.3
30.0	28.1	29.0	30.0	31.2	32.5
32.0	29.9	30.9	32.0	33.3	34.7

Unshaded areas show fibre which would be acceptable under the Australian Import Standard if a spinning fineness of 26.0 µm were the objective; light shaded areas have a spinning fineness of between 26.0 and 28.0 µm and would be accepted as alpaca under the IAA definition of alpaca if a spinning fineness definition were used. Heavier shaded areas have a spinning fineness greater than 28 µm which may reflect Huarizo fibre if IAA definitions were based on spinning fineness.

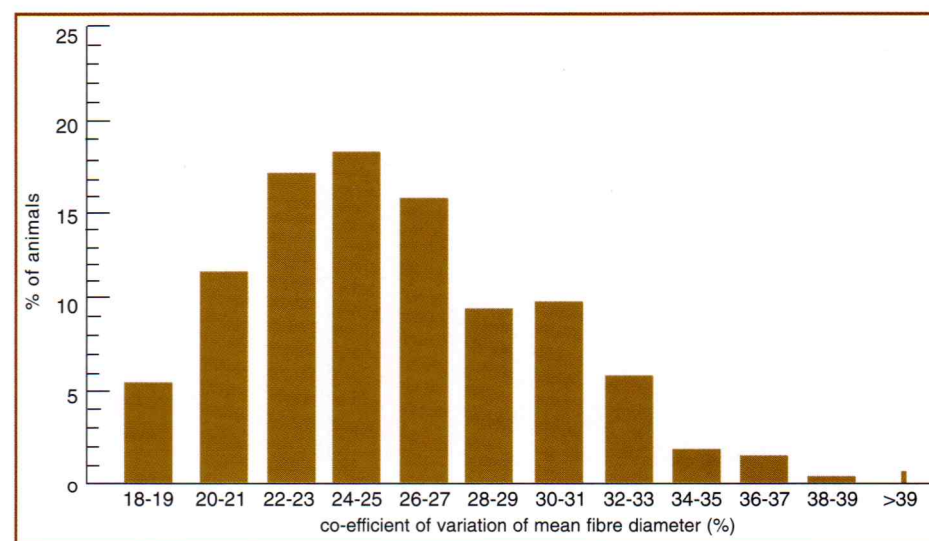
Using spinning fineness

Fibre with a CV(D) more than 24 per cent will perform as though its mean fibre diameter is greater. At 18 µm each increase in CV(D) of four per cent increases spinning fineness by 0.6 to 0.8 µm. However, at 26 µm each four

per cent increase in CV(D) increases spinning fineness by 0.8 to 1.2 µm (see Table 1).

The table shows that it is possible to have alpacas with fibre of MFD of 26 µm but with a spinning fineness equivalent to Huarizo fibre if the CV(D) of that fibre is 32 per cent or greater.

Figure 1. The percentage of huacaya alpacas, in five co-operating commercial alpaca properties with different co-efficient of variation of midside mean fibre diameter.



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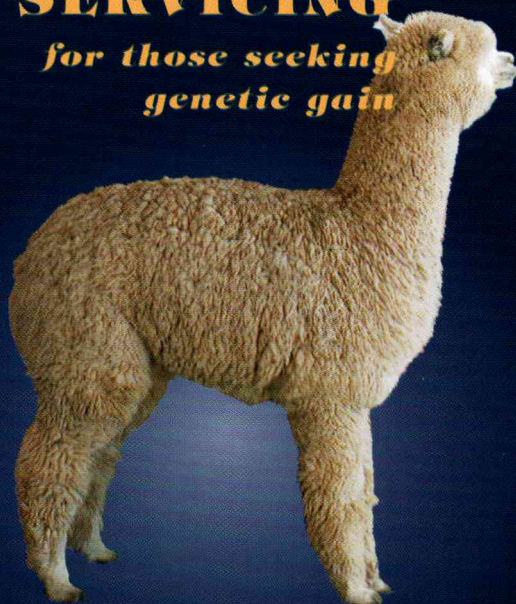
- SUPREME CHAMPION
Shanbrooke High Society
- Junior Champion Female
- Junior Champion Male
- Intermediate Champion Female
- Senior Champion Female

Melbourne Royal 1997

- SUPREME CHAMPION
Shanbrooke Society Lass
- Junior Champion Female
- Junior Champion Male
- Intermediate Champion Male
- Most successful exhibitor

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At 3 years: micron 20.28, SD 4.47, CV 22.0
(Melb. School of Textiles)

Our No. 1 choice in Peru, Signature has the presence of a champion with bundles of dense, crimped fleece from head to toe. This stunning Light Fawn male carries brilliant lustre and handle that will enhance your females.



Photo courtesy Stock and Land

Shanbrooke High Society; Shanbrooke Society Lass; Shanbrooke Enchanter

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What is current CV(D) of Australian alpacas?

Progress results from the alpaca fibre survey being undertaken in Australia (Figure 1, McGregor *et al* 1997) showed that nearly 50 per cent of all huacaya fleeces had a CV(D) less than 24 per cent and only 11 per cent had a CV(D) more than 30 per cent. There are too many alpacas with a CV(D) more than 24 per cent.

Fine wool growers are aiming for CV(D) of 16 to 18 per cent. Vicuna has a CV(D) of 12 to 13 per cent.

IMPLICATIONS

- Definitions of both fibre diameter and fibre diameter variability are essential to ensure alpaca retains its soft, luxurious handle. Relying only on mean fibre diameter to define the spread of fibre diameter will exclude some comfortable fibre and include some prickly fibre.
- The Australian alpaca industry should consider adopting spinning fineness as the basis for assessing alpacas for import.
- Spinning fineness should be used in fleece competitions and in animal selection. Using SF would simplify

the assessment procedures. SF combines the easily understood mean fibre diameter with co-efficient of variation of mean fibre diameter, a term not easily used or understood.

- Discerning buyers of alpaca fibre and alpaca animals should be able to take commercial advantage of spinning fineness measures.
- Lowering spinning fineness and CV(D) in Australian alpaca will produce finer processing fibre which will produce less prickle and softer handling textiles.
- Alpaca fibre needs to be tested in laboratories which can provide mean fibre diameter and CV(D) measurements.

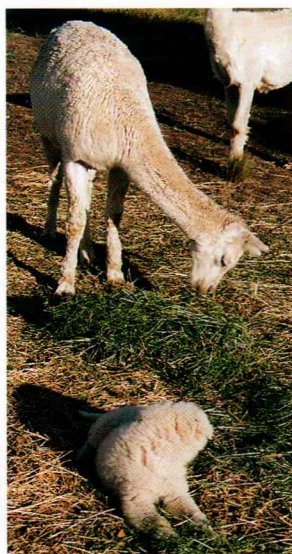
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Hey, cria, how come you've got so much fleece?



'Huh? What do you mean? I've got hair, not fleece!'



'I know fleece when I see it. You're obviously underfed.'



'Eat up now otherwise you'll never be a big, strong alpaca like me.'

With thanks to Louise Saxby, of Perugold Alpacas, Victoria, for these shots of Dusty and her Maremma puppy friend, Jasmin.

Hal the Heavenly

Hal of Heaven – Noble One!
Gleams with lustre, from the sun
Keeps a godly eye on all
Oz alpacas, big and small.

Crias love him. Hembras drool.
Even machos think he's cool.
No one knows his pedigree
How his wings grew? Mystery!

Of pacas, he's the 'pitome
With fibre of such density
That he might cut round 50 k
If we could shear that stud one day.

Where to find him? Secret's tight.
Earthly pacas saw the light
And for a fee they let us draw
The paca we're all breeding for!

Josephine Jakobi has created Hal
the Heavenly. You'll see more of him,
next issue.



Amberdale Alpacas

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Tranquillity Dream Weaver
Solid Dark Fawn (C & S Seymour)

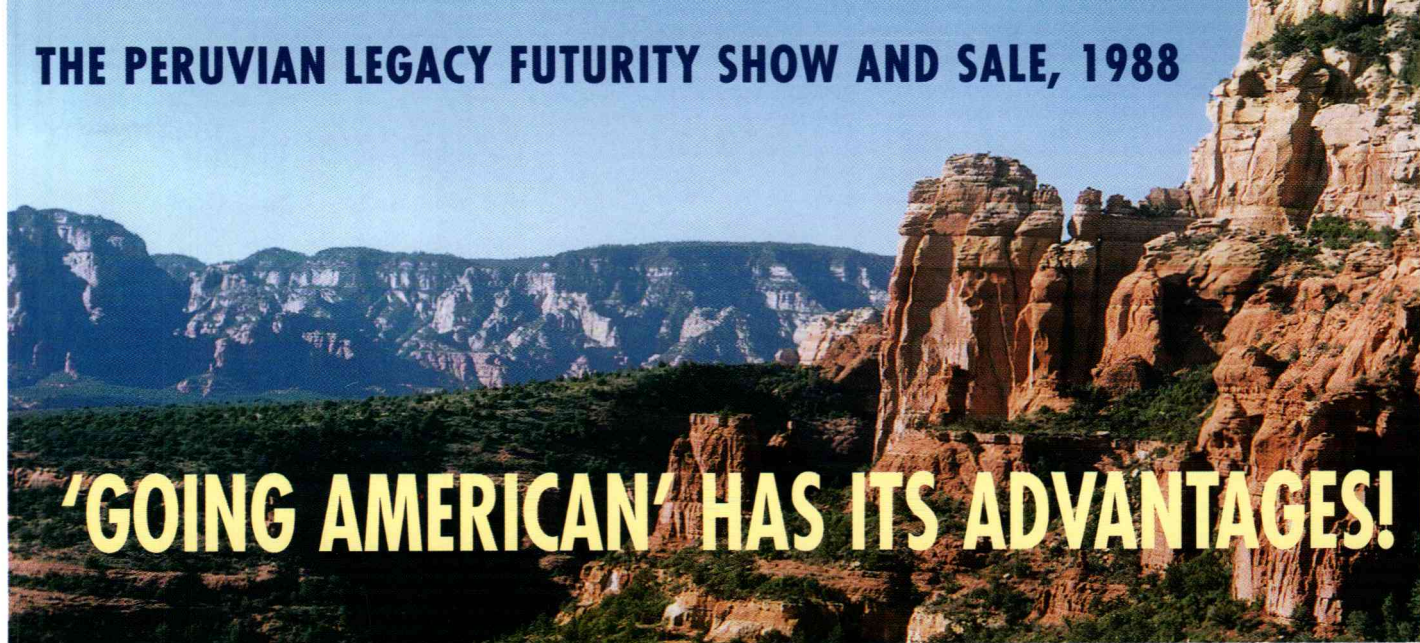


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'GOING AMERICAN' HAS ITS ADVANTAGES!

.....
by Alan Cousill

*The largest ever assembly
of Peruvian alpacas in the
United States was on
display at Scottsdale,
Arizona in March and
the Aussies were there.*

We have been buying and breeding alpacas in the United States since 1994. Consequently, it was a thrill to witness, and participate in, the first Futurity which was the brain-child of Mike Safley and administered by Tim Vincent and Tom Simmons of Celebrity Sales from Bend, Oregon. As they always do, the Americans made us feel right at home. We have so many good mates there now there is always a lot of catching up to do.

We were certainly elated with the generosity of the U.S. and Peruvian judges!

THE FUTURITY

A Futurity is a show where you can nominate your stud males and only progeny from those nominated males can be shown.

There were a number of nominated males owned by Aussie breeders. We nominated Peruvian Accoyo Legend, Peruvian Drambuie, Peruvian Don Julio and Peruvian Hemingway (with our U.S. partners). Chris Williams' South Australian 'Fine Choice' partnership nominated Peruvian Auzengate. Matthew and Cathy Exon from Eringa Park (also from S.A.) nominated their herdsire, Peruvian Ruffo.

Sandra Keane from Pinjarra Alpaca Stud had two of her suris shown by her American agistors.

It was a little disappointing to be the only Aussies in attendance, because it

was a sight that any alpaca enthusiast would have been in awe of.

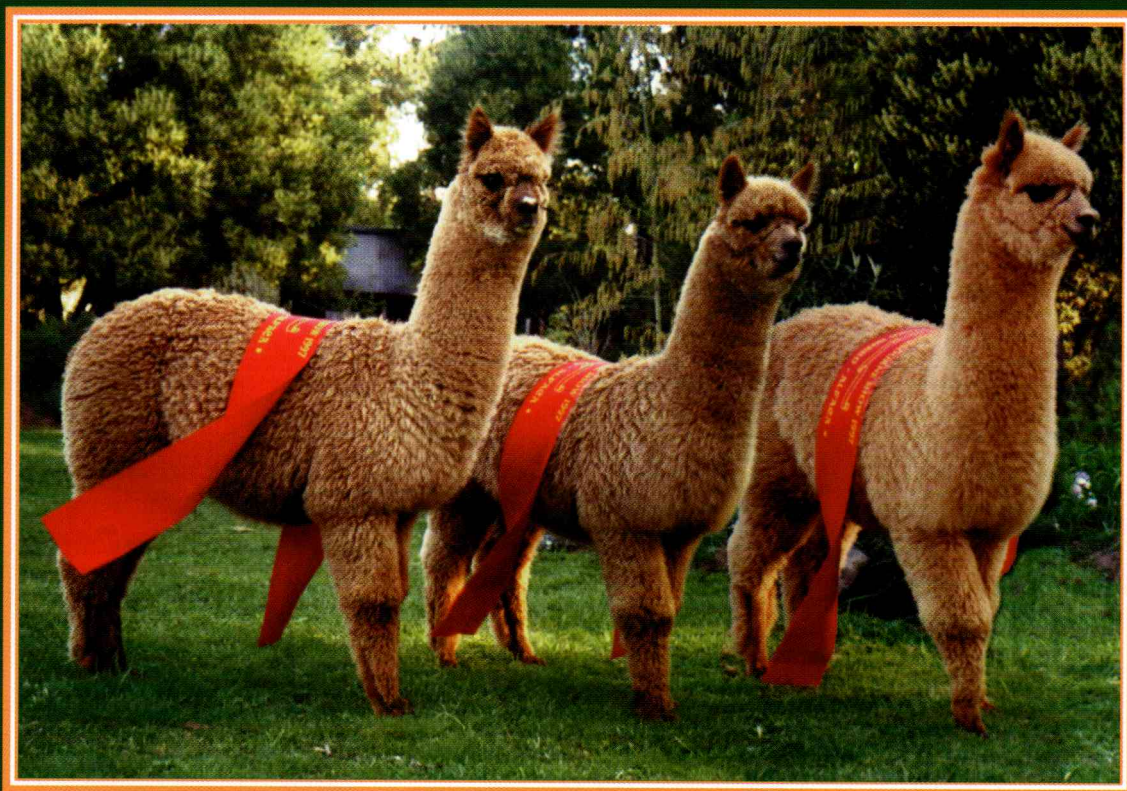
A gigantic marquee, the size and like of which I have never seen, was full of Peruvian huacaya and suri. If there was ever a chance to see the elite of the U.S. Peruvians in one spot, it was here. The marquee was draped in chiffon and hung with chandeliers. Everybody had their promotional gear out – even during the show! – and there was animal quality everywhere.

It was wonderful, the morning after we arrived, to have a look at this facility. The marquee was placed in the middle of the polo fields at West World, which is an enormous showground-type set up that caters for horse events. The grounds were on 50 acres.

A beautiful adobe Santa Fe-style building housed the restaurant where the Futurity Sale was to take place. It was engulfed in vines and had expansive outside terraces that so well suited the gorgeous, dry and warm climate of Scottsdale.

At the time, the American roping championships were on, so there were cowboys and cowgirls everywhere. I thought Mike's rig was impressive – you should see how comfortably the cowboys travel! But the alpacas managed to outdo them. At ten that morning, a semi-trailer arrived which, we thought, was used by a hire company. A great big tent, perhaps? Nope, it was choc-a-block full of alpacas for the Show and Sale from the East Coast.

The Proof is in the Progeny



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Bookings are now being taken for this stunning young male

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Each alpaca had its individual pen within the trailer. You have to hand it to the U.S. breeders. Most of these guys had driven for a minimum of two days with their animals.

So why Scottsdale? Weather, facility and demographics, demographics, demographics! Scottsdale is like the Toorak of America. It's rich and spans of it. What better place to hold an elite alpaca event!

GETTING READY

We got on with preparing for the events. Contrary, however, to some Aussie perceptions of U.S. breeders' showing habits, animals were not tizzed up, shampooed and pampered. A few poopy legs were washed and some top-knots trimmed. That was it. The huacayas were dense and the suris were superb as the breeders had picked the fleeces of debris, jacketing a number of animals during transportation to prevent contamination. There was magnificent representation of both breeds.

Most of our time was spent networking and showing off young Greenvale Alta, a Peruvian Don Julio girl that we had entered in the Auction and Sale for Graeme Jenkin and Melanie Tardivel of Greenvale Alpacas

in Australia. We had chosen some animals for them in the U.S. and managed their high quality small herd where our animals were agisted. Alta was one of their first cria.

We spent no time at all preparing our show animals, one of which had mud caked all over his belly and legs. He was past it. It was too late for a major clean up.

There were some informal lectures held by Julio Sumar and Jodie Robinson's alpaca working dog display. Jodie is an alpaca judge who, with her husband, trains Border collies to work alpacas. This was amazing – it really works.

Another part of our time was spent setting up the promotion displays. Most breeders present a very professional facade to the public. We could learn so much from them. It has nothing to do with their wealth, but all to do with their energy to promote. They know that without it, there are no sales. There's so much co-operative advertising and marketing going on over there right now. They are getting thousands of leads and many of these leads are attending specialty events. Sales are very strong as a result. Many of these potential alpaca owners attended the Auction dinner on the Saturday night.



Dr Mario Pedroza, of Oregon, Futurity Show organiser.

During the meal, we were treated to a fashion parade run by Julie Safley. It was sensational – the best line of alpaca garments I have seen in a parade: colourful, imaginative and very elegant.

Perhaps the highlight was the range of stark white suri shawls made from Don Julio Barreda's own Accoyo suri herd. The shawls are like silk to the touch. They were made from suri of all micron which was all the more amazing because they handled like super fine cashmere.

THE SALE

Next was the Sale. It was a little nerve-racking, because Jude was the first lot, with Alta.

However, it didn't take long for the audience to warm to the occasion, however, and Alta made \$US26,500, despite some pretty poor auctioneering. Good money for an eight-month-old girl (about \$40,000 Australian)!

The new owners had chosen well. Greenvale Alta went on the next day to get the breed championship and colour championship. Melanie and Graham did pretty well too. They had started in the industry with some bad luck. This was a nice reward.



The scene at the giant marque at the Peruvian Legacy Futurity Show and Sale.

All in all, the auction brought mixed results. Mike Safley managed to sell two very good females for \$US48,000 each to Mike and Robin Tierney of Maple Brook Farm, MA. One of these females, the previous year, was micron tested at 14.5µ. But there was also a disappointing number of lesser quality animals, especially males, that dulled the lustre of the night's sales. Thirty-seven animals were sold, with quality always attracting a premium. However, it was a strong auction and there was a fair number of animals purchased by newcomers. The venue emptied quickly after the sale as many of the 350+ audience were showing animals from 8 am the following day.

THE SHOW

I have never before participated in a show that had such good vibes. It was a huge affair. The consummate nice guy, Dr Mario Pedroza had organised the event. He had spent weeks making sure

it came off. He had to, of course, there was a lot of money involved. Tom Hunt, of Camelids of Delaware and Phil Mizrahic, of Pet Centre, LA had donated \$US100,000 to sponsor the event. They are importers of Peruvians to the US – so a very apt sponsorship for them. It also cost \$US1,000 to nominate a herdsire and \$US250 to enter a show animal.

But the prizes were significant:

Champion, \$2,500;

Reserve, \$1,500;

First, \$500;

Second, \$450;

Third, \$400;

Fourth, \$350;

Fifth, \$300;

Sixth, \$250.

Herdsire nominators received 20% of the winnings of their progeny.

A lot you might say – but it gave exhibitors a chance to recoup some costs. For many, it paid for the trip and gave the importers a good chance to promote their Peruvian imports. It is ironical that, only a month later, Mike Safley was fighting a major war – and winning – to close the US registry.

It was an exhaustive day's showing. There was a very large turn-up of animals, over 200. We were all very nervous because these are the best of five years of Peruvian imports to the U.S. There are over 6,000 Peruvian imports and their progeny in America. A win at this show was a good indication you had the best.

The judging was really interesting – a panel of three judges who individually assessed the animals. The judges were Maggie Krieger of Canada, who is well-known to Aussies; Jodie Robinson (U.S.) who has judged at all the major American shows; and Dr Julio Sumar – probably one of Peru's leading judges.

The only thing I think was missing was a Supreme Champion award. This was the first time championship classes had been held in the U.S.

At the risk of being controversial, I must comment that most of the class



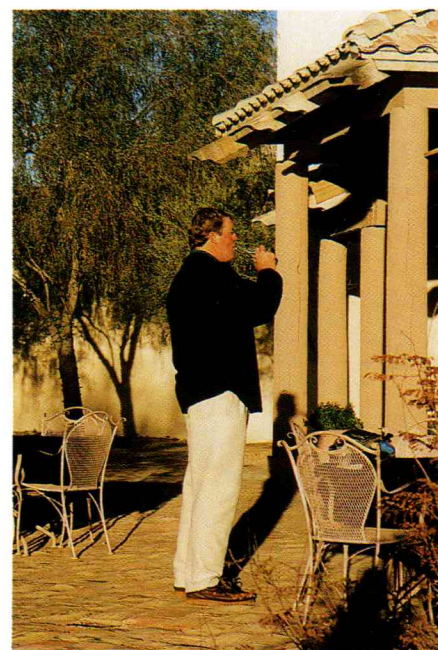
A view of the pens under the marquee from Mike Safley's Northwest Alpacas enclosure.



Dr Julio Summer, one of the judges.



The marquee was draped with chiffon and hung with chandeliers.



Just before the sale. Jude was the first lot with Greenvale Alta. Alan steadied his nerves!

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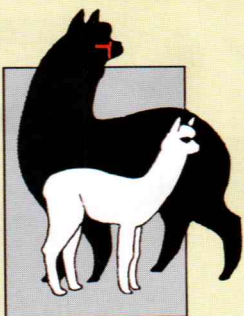
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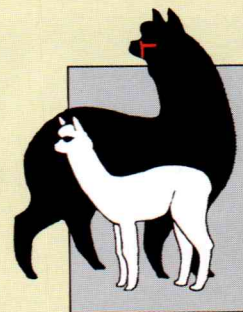

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Ellenvale Peruvian Valley Prince

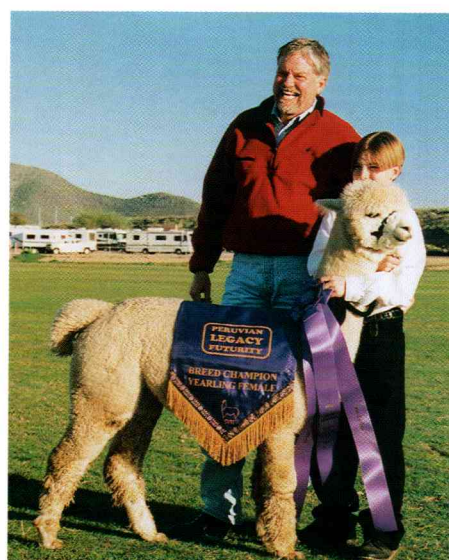
- Recently imported, outstanding light fawn 3½ year old Huacaya.
- Valley Prince is an extremely fine light fawn stud male (18.6 micron at 2½ years old).
- As well as fineness he has extreme density and coverage. His conformation is superb



The Tenhulzens, purchasers of Greenvale Alta.



Peruvian Don Julio progeny – both first place getters.



Mike Safley, son Charlie with Champion Female, Michelle out of Hemingway.

line-ups at this show were similar to those of our championship classes – deep and very high quality, especially the whites.

Great Show Results for the Aussies

The Aussies did pretty well. Alta dominated. She got breed and colour championship.

We ended up showing three animals for three championships. El Bell, an 18-month Hemingway boy won his class of 21 yearling white males and went on to win the yearling breed championship.

Our herdsires had also done very well. Peruvian Drambuie had class win-

ners; Legend had places; Hemingway progeny won four of the fourteen championships and Peruvian Don Julio, co-owned with Sherryl Riley of Shelbory Park Alpacas in NSW, won five championships with only 12 animals entered. None of his progeny placed less than fourth!

We were ecstatic. All the anguish, money and time involved with our U.S. commitment had paid off.

Other Aussie animals did well also with Peruvian Auzengate picking up some places as did Peruvian Ruffo. Sandra Keane's suris picked up a second and third.

It was a big day. We finished the judging at 7 pm. We spent time that night at a local restaurant with the

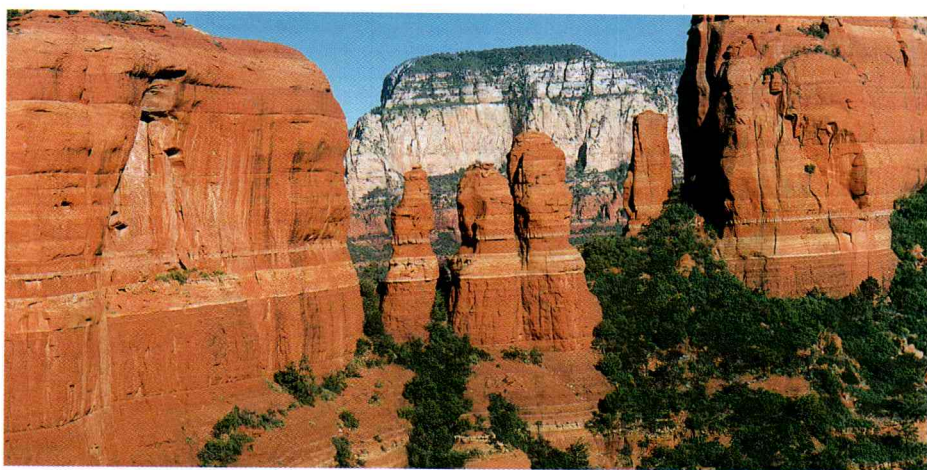
judges and some U.S. breeders. But we didn't talk alpacas. We talked about Peru, about Jodie's alpaca working dogs, even about Australian footy!

There were some pretty unfortunate Clinton jokes circulating, as well.

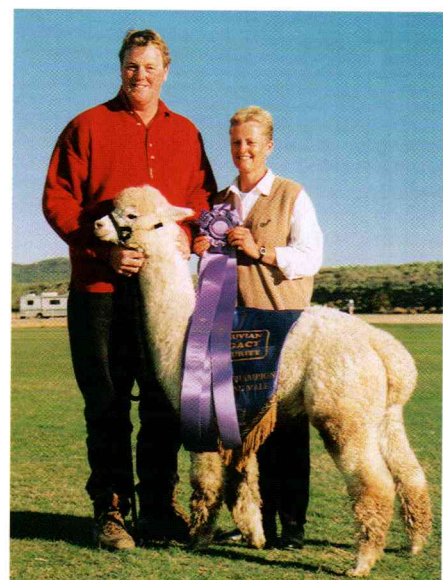
Jude and I spent the next day with Alta's purchasers, the Tierneys looking at Sedona, just north of Scottsdale.

The country reminded me of the Kimberleys: huge mesas the colour of purple and rust. Huge canyons, rivers and ruins of little cliff dwellings of the Indians. There was Navajo jewellery (the real stuff), rugs and art.

America and alpacas have been so kind to us.



Sedona, just north of Scottsdale, with its huge mesas the colour of purple and rust...canyons, rivers and ruins of cliff dwellings of the Indians.



Alan Cousill, Jude Anderson and El Bell

New Tax Legislation

THE VALUE OF LIVESTOCK

New legislation has widened the options available to taxpayers in valuing livestock for taxation purposes. These were explained by the Australian Taxation Office in a letter to the Association on 7 May this year, as follows.

'Following the enactment of the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1997 with effect from 1 July 1997, each item of trading stock, including livestock, may be valued at the end of each income year, at the option of the taxpayer, at its cost, its market selling value or its replacement value (see section 70-45). This contrasts with the requirements of the previous Act where all livestock of a particular class had to be valued by only one of first two of those methods and the method of valuation, once chosen, could not be varied from year to year, except with the approval of the Commissioner.

'In consequence, alpaca owners will be able to value each animal using any one of the above methods each year, commencing in the year ending 30 June 1998. Accordingly, where an animal was formerly valued at cost in the owner's accounts and the animal's market value has fallen, the owner may choose to write it down in the accounts by valuing it at market selling value as at 30 June. (It should be noted that this is not depreciation, which only applies to plant or articles.) We recognise that it will not always be possible to determine the precise value of a particular animal but we will accept any reasonable attempt to arrive at a market value, provided it is properly documented.

'Alternatively, in situations where no reasonable basis exists for arriving at the market value or where the owner wishes to avoid the necessity of maintaining the requisite records, we will accept a reduction in the animal's value over a period of not less than five years as a reasonable approximation of the fall in the market value. This reduction would be subject, of course, to there being no evidence that the animal's value has been maintained or has risen during the year, in which case there should be no reduction in value for that year. For example, such evidence would be the maintenance or increase in the total service fees charged for a male alpaca in a given year.

'For a female, the reduction may only commence when she first becomes pregnant or reaches 18 months of age, whichever occurs first. For a male, it may only commence when he [is] first put out to stud. The minimum value at

which the animal is held in the accounts after five years should not be less than that of other non-breeding animals in the herd. At this stage, we would accept \$200 as being reasonable for such a minimum value.

'Where owners have elected to value their animals at cost in the years before 1 July 1997, but have, nevertheless, been writing down the value of some or all of their animals year by year, we will not take any action to amend the returns of those earlier years. However, we recommend that they take the opportunity presented by the change to the legislation to make any appropriate adjustments in the year ending 30 June 1998. Normally, this would entail valuing those animals at market selling value at year-end along the lines set out above and may require an upward or downward adjustment from the opening value for the year. In succeeding years, they may, of course, choose any one of the three permitted methods.'

ARE YOU STILL A PRIMARY PRODUCER?

It seems timely to revisit this topic. In its 7 May communication to the Association, the ATO offered this advice.

'Taxpayers are only required to maintain a livestock trading account and may only claim taxation deductions where they are in the business of primary production. Taxation Ruling TR97/11 expresses the Commissioner's views on whether a taxpayer is carrying on a business of primary production. In particular paragraph 13 of the Ruling sets out the indicators that the courts have taken into account in determining this issue...

'The Ruling points out that no one indicator is decisive and the determination of the issue is a matter of weighing all the relevant indicators.

'There may be a number of alpaca owners, who commenced farming their animals with the intention of carrying on a business and making a profit, but whose activity, for whatever reason, has remained very small and with little prospect of making a profit within a reasonable time. We suggest that it is appropriate for them, when lodging their next taxation returns, to examine critically their activities to determine whether they consider they are still carrying on a business. Where an owner decides that he or she is no longer in business and claims no deductions in the year ended 30 June 1998 or later years, we will not amend the returns for earlier years to disallow any deductions claimed in those years.'



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(Below)
Australian Centeno
Sunrise
Reserve Junior
Champion Female,
1997 Royal
Melbourne Show
Second in Class,
National Classic
Show

Sire: Peruvian
Centeno
Dam: World Class
Dawn (Chilean)



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A TOUCH OF ALPACA

Launching a New Label

by Molly Duffield

A commitment to value-adding and quality produces a new Australian alpaca fashion range.



As any true-blue alpaca breeder will tell you, this fibre industry needs to produce products made from alpaca fibre. No end products means we are all breeding animals for the fun of it: just cute, fluffy pets.

Sheila and Graeme Hansen and Bodil and Kurt Nielsen were canny enough to realise that fact when they first decided to invest in alpacas. Sheila is a Scotswoman. She and Graeme have bred prize-winning animals, Corgis and South Devon cattle for approximately 30 years and they were not interested in breeding prize-winning alpacas for pets.

The Nielsens (Dannaroo Alpaca Stud) and the Hansens (The Birks Alpaca Stud) joined forces in the Gippsland region with two other alpaca breeders as The Consortium. This teamwork produced popular on-farm days and the local people began to hear about alpacas on a regular basis.

The vision to value add belonged to The Birks and Dannaroo studs. Sheila and Bodil were particularly interested in seeing their alpaca fleece transformed into soft, richly elegant garments.

Two years ago, the pair teamed up officially as *A Touch of Alpaca*. Then the work began. To find dependable home-machine knitters was not easy, nor was the search for skilled and dependable knitters who had the same streak of perfectionism that drove Sheila and Bodil.

At the same time, the two women, with the help and encouragement of their husbands, were seeking a mill that would do the wonderful work of turning fibre into knitting yarn.

Yarns ain't yarns. Homespun yarn is charming, but a garment industry needs mills that can produce the fineness and

consistency in yarn that produces lightweight and graceful cardigans, skirts, jumpers, jackets and scarves – whether hand-knitted or individually knitted by machine.

Finally, the two women were satisfied that they had the resources – knitters and mill – to begin.

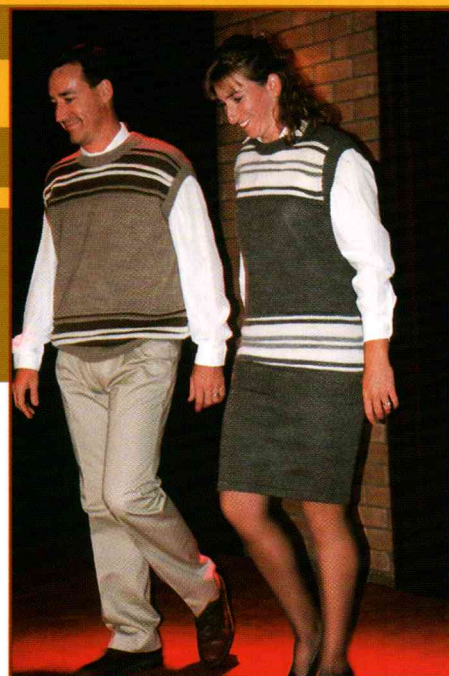
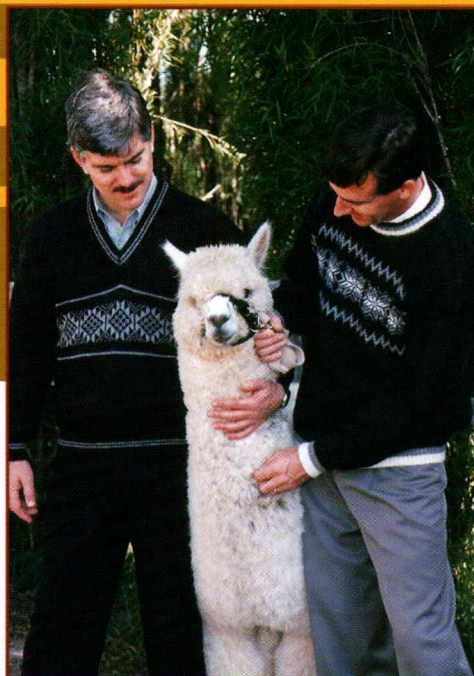
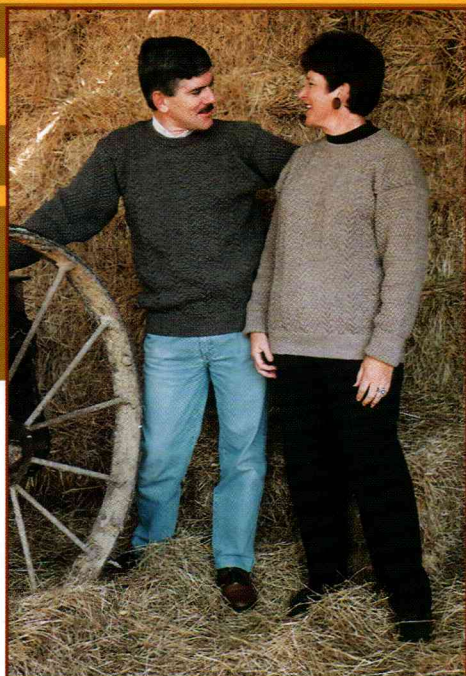
Alpaca deserves marketing of the highest standard. This fibre is called elite and any representation of the alpaca industry or alpaca end products that is not of an elite standard undermines the hard work of every breeder.

A Touch of Alpaca has that touch of class, with labels, brochures – every aspect of promotion – carefully worked over until the representation of the business reflected the elegance of the garments being created.

The culmination of two years' research and development occurred on the evening of Friday 20 March, with the official launch of the newest label to hit the Melbourne fashion scene. The venue was the Princeton Lodge in Sale, Victoria.

The fashion parade that proudly showed off knitwear of 100 per cent alpaca – actually 100 per cent Victorian alpaca – was the focus of the evening. Over 50 individual garments were shown by a team of local models who obviously enjoy wearing the garments.

The launch was held in conjunction with the Gippsland RSPCA, an organisation with which Sheila has been long been associated. She ran a large kennel for cats and dogs for many years and provided shelter for unwanted and stray animals. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to help the RSPCA celebrate its twentieth anniversary. The RSPCA received the door money; A Touch of Alpaca staged its launch; and the fashion parade scored a very enthusiastic



(and talented) model in the form of RSPCA Gippsland president, Tony Smith.

Peter McGauran, MHR, member for Gippsland, had scarcely finished officially launching the label, before two alpacas took the stage. Leading Misty, the young white female, was Kurt Nielsen, wearing a black English rib jumper. With the black alpaca was Graeme Hansen, looking very smart in a black satin shirt and cream textured pattern cardigan.

The first half of the evening passed far too quickly as an impressive collection of polo jumpers, sports gear ('warmth without bulk'), vests and cardigans produced nods and murmurs

of delight. All were in natural colours. Dyes (made from natural substances) were used only for accent touches.

The choice of models was excellent. Just about everyone in the audience of 120 could relate to at least one or two of the body shapes that strutted or strolled down the catwalk.

There were svelte, young sized 8s and 10s showed off cute little cream vests that teamed effectively with blue denim shirts and jeans.

Middle-aged size 14s and 16s looked lovely in smart, casual cardigans.

And the guys loved the attention they received in their trendy polo sweaters, vests and cardigans (one in homespun grey would make any guy

look great).

Supper brought another surprise: platters of finger sandwiches and steaming hot savouries that increased our appreciation of the thought and preparation that the Nielsens and Hansens had put in to make the evening a success.

It was fun to catch up with a few other alpaca breeders, the Worcesters, McDavitts and the Duncans. But it was satisfying to note that Sheila and Bodil had made sure they would not be 'preaching to the converted'. Only a small number of alpaca breeders had been invited. The aim was to introduce local business people and notables to a new enterprise in their midst.



A TOUCH OF ALPACA

The final half of the fashion show brought even more applause than the first. There were casual jumpers for men and women (some male and female look-alikes that Country Road should have in their catalogue), versatile vests and a sensational collection of Fair Isle pullovers and cardigans.

But, for me, the coup de grâce was the Simply Elegant section that ended the evening on a soaring note: ladies' suits of knitted jackets and skirts that hung perfectly and flattered every figure. My favourite was a chic charcoal grey with a box hacked, trimmed with natural yarn embroidery to enhance the buttons. But I would also find it hard to pass by a cream tunic and skirt with a pattern of Scottish thistles and poppies in beige. Both jacket and skirt were hemmed with a two or three inch band of horizontally raised ribbing in the same colours. The effect was stunning.

The telephones at The Birks and Dannaroo rang throughout the next day with people offering their congratulations and orders. They liked what they had seen.

There is a lot more work ahead for A Touch of Alpaca. According to Bodil and Sheila, the search is on for additional talented home-machine knitters to maintain supply for the sudden burst of orders.

There's also a need for more fibre. Because only natural colours are used, there's a lot of collecting and sorting before there is sufficient to go to the mill for processing. Any one who has fibre of any colour that has good handle and is 75-150 mm in length may wish to sell it to A Touch of Alpaca.



Bodil Nielsen and Sheila Hansen (centre) flanked by the modelling team who helped launch A Touch of Alpaca so successfully.

Because each garment is individually manufactured, each is unique. As Sheila says, 'Even two jumpers in the same style and same colour don't actually look the same. It's because we don't use dyes to make colours uniform. I think that's one of the good things about natural alpaca. It's capable of infinite colour variation. And I think our customers like that, too, because they end up with a garment that has its own natural look that really can't be duplicated.'

Bodil and Sheila already have A Touch of Alpaca in a small number of boutiques – and a waiting list of those keen to take their garments. But they are in no hurry, being content to develop their collection carefully, mindful of the constraints that presently exist on production and concerned more about quality than quantity. For the time being, their main focus is on direct marketing. They have produced a very smart catalogue which is available on request.

Such enterprising work is essential to the success of the alpaca industry. It is the Nielsen and Hansen's hope that other breeders will follow their own vision and bring it to successful reality.

We must not depend on a central

body to make this industry a success. The visions and the dreams belong to individuals and partnerships motivated by personal satisfaction and success.

I say, congratulations to the pioneers in this industry who, like the Hansens and Nielsens, are doing the research and development that will benefit us all.



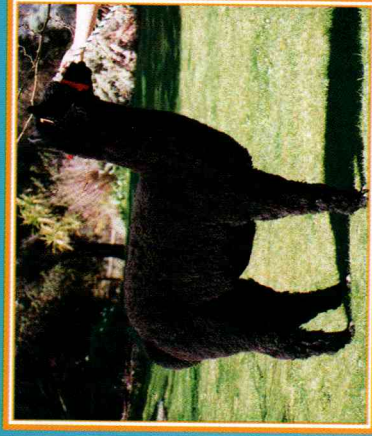
If you would like to sell fibre to A Touch of Alpaca, or obtain a catalogue, ring Sheila Hansen on 03 5149 2428 or Bodil Nielsen on 03 5199 2599.

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OUR FUTURE JUDGES

~ A TRAINING DAY ~

Report from Bill Plunkett

Eastern, Western and Central regions of Victoria combined to run a training day at Royal Melbourne Showgrounds. Part of the day, on 19 April, was devoted to junior judging training. Open to young people between the ages of 15 and 25 years, the aim of junior judging training is to encourage an interest in judging among young people and to teach them the fundamentals of judging alpacas.

Eight young people, aged between 15 and 23 years, represented their region as competitors. Their parents were there to encourage and support them.

Mike and Sue Snow, Ann Sales and Marie Buck kindly provided the animals.

I acted as overjudge, making my own assessment of the animals to be judged by the youngsters and evaluating the efforts of the competitors.

There are two parts to the competition: visual analysis and an oral presentation on reasons for animal placings.



Visual analysis

In this session, each competitor judges one class of alpacas. She/he is allowed five minutes to examine and then, to assess the animals. Having decided upon placings, the competitor marks them on his/her placing card.

Points are allotted for animal handling, general competence, ringcraft, presentation and dress.

It is expected that female competitors will wear black slacks or skirt, with a white blouse and black bow tie. For the males: moleskins or similar, white shirt, tie and jacket.

PERUVIAN EL JÉFE

EL JÉFE at 6 years still exhibits supreme softness and lustre. Skin & micron tested by Dr Jim Watts at Coolaroo, El Jéfe measures an exceptionally high follicle density, microning at 22, cv of 20.

PROGENY PROOF

- National Show '97 1st in Sire's progeny
- Many Championships & Supremes awarded 97-98 show season

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Oral presentation

Out of sight and earshot of other competitors, each competitor is given three minutes to line up animals in the placings he/she has given and to explain reasons for placings.

The assessment criteria for this section has two major aspects: 'accuracy of observation' and 'comparative rather than descriptive statements'.

The overjudge needs to be given insight to the competitor's powers of observation. A competitor needs to be able to 'see what is there'. Having observed, he/she then must assess the relative importance of good and undesirable features and use these analyses to arrive at an overall assessment.



Encouraging competitors to think comparatively as they decide on placings is also important. Why is one animal better or worse than another? This is a very important consideration in deciding on the order of placings and should always form part of the judge's comments to exhibitors.

The competitor's oral presentation should show conviction, be concise, give important reasons first and use comparative terms.

Even though it was the first time some of our competitors had been in the show ring, every one of the eight young people handled themselves very well.

Philip Street and I have been working hard on designing a format for Junior Judging competitions. As far as we are con-



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Progeny of the legendary Talisman

Black out of Black.

A dense and beautifully covered animal with a super crimp, lustrous pencil stapled fleece, which cut 4kg at first shearing.

Show Results:

- ★ **1st Senior Black - Sydney Royal Show 1998.**
- ★ 1st Senior Black, Best Black, Reserve Senior Champion Male - Berwick Show 1998.
- ★ 1st Senior Black - Senior Champion Male, Best Black - Korumburra Show 1998.
- ★ **Supreme Champion** - Korumburra Show 1998.
- ★ 1st Senior Black, Senior Champion Male - Shepparton Show 1997.
- ★ 1st Senior Black - Sheep & Wool Show 1997

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Holly Ridge Alpacas

Phone Stan & Betty Davies
Tel: (03) 5776 9530
Tabletop Road, Bridge Creek

cerned, there are many benefits from early training, not the least of which is young peoples' lack of inhibitions and open mindedness.

Plans to develop junior judging

We have made a number of recommendations to the Association in relation to junior judging competitions. Among them are that junior judging clinics and competitions take place throughout Australia; and that a training method be established to ensure uniformity of standards.

One of our aims, of which the Melbourne day is a part, is to establish a National Championship for junior judging. This involves establishing junior judging competitions at designated regional shows, with finalists competing for State Championships. State winners and runners up would go on to represent their states at a National Championship.

New South Wales and Victoria have taken up this challenge and we are quite confident that junior judging competitions will soon become an accepted part of industry activity Australia wide.

There's no doubt that junior judging clinics and competitions are increasing in popularity. Young people from most states have attended clinics and competitions and our feedback is that they have enjoyed the experience.



We believe that the alpaca industry will benefit from providing training for young people interested in becoming alpaca judges. Apart from offering young people further involvement in the industry; an efficient training system will also produce sufficient numbers of competent judges to cope with a rising demand as more animals are exhibited at more shows, large and small, throughout Australia.

If we're truly looking to the future, we must utilise the talents of our young people.

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*The 1998 International
Alpaca Industry
Conference looks set to
be the best yet
with important and
stimulating topics and
workshops with top
international and
national presenters.*

THE PROGRAM

BREEDING FOR FIBRE PRODUCTION

Dr Julie Koenig (U.S.)

It is possible for an alpaca breeder to learn how to estimate the genetic value of an animal for fibre production. Breeding for fibre is a complex question – more than seven individual genetic traits influence fibre quality. Julie Koenig presents key issues in manageable, 'bite sized' pieces in this important session.

INHERITANCE OF FLEECE COLOUR IN CAMELIDS

Dr Julie Koenig (U.S.)

There's a genetic mechanism that controls the inheritance of fleece colour in camelids. Dr Koenig presents information that should allow breeders to accurately classify colours by their genetic description, determine a camelid's genetic make-up for the colour genes; and use the parent's known genotypes to predict cria colour.

ALPACA CLIP PREPARATION

Ian Knox

Discussion and workshop on current Australian clip preparation procedures. Workshop: preparation for shearing, facilities, classing, documentation and fibre packaging. There will also be a brief session on fleece judging.

AN INTRODUCTION TO REPRODUCTIVE PHYSIOLOGY IN CAMELIDS *Dr Deirdre Bourke (Scotland)*

Reproductive anatomy; key reproductive events and controlling mechanisms; patterns of follicle growth and their importance are discussed. The foetus, from conception to birth, rebreeding the female and infertility are also covered.

ADVANCED BREEDING TECHNOLOGIES IN SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELIDS

Dr Deirdre Bourke (Scotland)

Results of research on control and manipulation of South American camelids: development of methods to control ovulation and luteal function; development of superovulation and synchronisation protocols together with non-surgical embryo recovery and transfer techniques. Also: gamete cryopreservation, oocyte harvest and in vitro maturation and fertilisation that could potentially be applied in alpacas.

NEO-NATAL WORKSHOP

Dr George Jackson (vet team leader)

Care of heavy pregnant females; stages of labour; when help is required; initial cria checklist; colostrum, plasma and supplementary feeding; practical session: the normal birth and some common problems.

ADAPT OR DIE

John Cosic

Survival skills for small businesses; the 'adapt or die' model; why people buy; and profiling the market.

TAXATION AND FINANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW AND ESTABLISHED ALPACA BREEDERS

Guy Pounder

A comprehensive session covering: major considerations in becoming a primary producer and requirements for sales tax exemption; finance and 'negative gearing'; business structures; record keeping and tax returns; livestock valuation; and superannuation.

JOHNE'S DISEASE: THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH

Dr David Kennedy

History of JD and its control in Australia. Includes information on the Australian John's Disease Market Assurance Program for Alpaca, to be launched this year.

THE LAND IS OUR FUTURE AND ITS FUTURE IS LANDCARE

Chris Ferreira

History of land degradation from the Pharaohs to the present; present problems and systems that cause them; basics of landcare and sustainable farming; how to create an ecologically sound and productive farm.

NUTRITION OF THE ALPACA

Drs Jane Vaughan and Nick Costa

First hour devoted to basic nutritional requirements of alpacas and general principles of feeding management for maintenance and growth. Second hour:

solving common problems and hands-on tutorial on critical appraisal of forages and concentrates fed to Australian alpacas.

THE ALPACA TRADERS

Derek Michell (Peru)

A summary of the alpaca trade since the early 1900s; preparation of fibre for the industrial process, meeting industry requirements and main fibre markets

MINERAL AND VITAMIN DISORDERS

Dr Geoff Judson

Usefulness of blood tests for detection of mineral, trace element and vitamin disorders in alpacas. Recent findings on effectiveness of vitamin D doses in preventing deficiency in young and mature alpacas.

PARASITISM STUDIES IN ALPACAS IN SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA

Dr Ian Carmichael

Importance of parasites found in alpacas in southern Australia; management and host factors; and on-farm monitoring. Summaries of field study results from RIRDC project (five farms over two years) will be presented and implications of a trial in which sheep and alpacas shared common grazing will be discussed.

HOW TO USE THE WORLD WIDE WEB TO PROMOTE YOUR STUD

Grame Barty

To take full advantage of the Internet, you must first understand its tools and how they work. The Internet itself, not the powerful desktop computer, holds the key to universal access and true global knowledge sharing that will mark the coming of the Information Age.

HUSBANDRY WORKSHOP

Jenny Jackson/Lance Cumming

A half-day, hands-on session for the new breeder on handling alpacas and routine daily care.

SELECTION AND SMALL POPULATIONS

Dr Don Robertson

Session will include information on methods of achieving genetic improvement by selecting for desirable traits; calculating likely rates of genetic improvement; and ways of avoiding or minimising problems related to inbreeding.

YOU CAN ATTEND EACH SESSION

The program has been arranged to allow all participants the opportunity to attend each of the sessions. There will be time for valuable networking – catching up with interstate colleagues and friends – sharing experiences and information. And, of course, what Conference would be complete without trade displays, the Saturday night dinner and fashion parade finale.

C'MON OVER! CROSS THE BOUNDARY INTO WA!

Combine the Conference with a short break; see the country, visit some superb WA alpaca farms; make a whole host of new friends. If you've been planning to 'go West', you'll never have a better reason than to do it in July.

If, for any reason, you've mislaid your registration form, ring the Association's National Office to obtain one. For non-members, a phone call to Jenny Jones, National office on +61 (0)3 9899 1099 will provide you with any information you require.

This is going to be one heck of a Conference! Be there!

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Photograph courtesy of The Advertiser

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ALPACAS FOR THE DISCERNING

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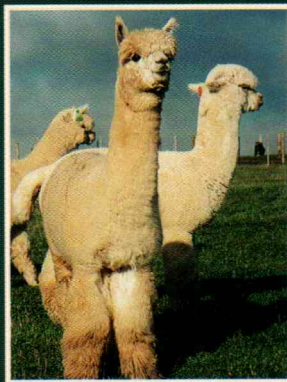
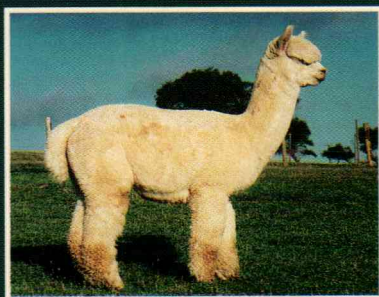
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See our stunning new arrivals, PERUVIAN MALES:

Accoyo Legend, Allianza Don Julio (whites) and Allianza Drambuie (fawn).
Chosen not because they are Peruvian, but because of their outstanding
progeny!

Also at stud:

Pacific Beethoven, Coonawarra Julius and Samarkand Blackadder (blacks),
Purrumbete Snowman (white) and Purrumbete Hot Shot (fawn).

Congratulations to the Bonavias and the Baglieris on the purchase of the
magnificent Peruvian macho, Chubasco.

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Alan Cousill
Pt. Addis, Vic

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Many thanks to Margaret & Jim Brewster, Calgary Canada for our recent export!

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Don Julio Bareeda amongst his suris



Females at Pucara

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Witness the beautiful suri hembras and machos for sale, some are the progeny or are selected from the royal suri herd of Don Julio Bareeda's Accoyo. Some coloureds are available. See the progeny of the famous coloured Peruvian herdsires, Accoyo Durazno from Castle Hill Farm and Peruvian Elar, Fuego and Americo from Alpacas of America. See white Accoyo herdsires Amador, Borrajo and Cadete.

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Congratulations Jen & Pete McDavitt for your purchase, sharing the vision.



Alpacas at Farmworld

Farm World is a major field day event at the end of March each year at Lardner Park near Warragul in Victoria.

The presence of alpacas at Farm World dates back seven years when Nancy and Geoff Halpin took some Capalba Park alpacas to the event. They have attended every year since.

Next were Jenny and Peter McDavitt, who always organise a shared marquee with an impressive display.

This year, the Victorian Eastern Region of the Association decided to participate. The decision was a direct consequence of the adoption of the Region's marketing plan. First drafted in 1995, it has been developed and gradually implemented.

One of the most important decisions taken by the regional committee was that shows and main events should be located where the majority of people are. The Eastern Region has a high number of judging shows as part of its 'Alpaca of the Year' circuit. The decision to concentrate its efforts on larger shows, such as Dandenong, one of the largest in Victoria is aimed at generating maximum exposure for the industry.

Farm World, which attracts over 65,000 visitors, was an obvious choice for the next expansion of that circuit. Apart from the numbers, we also felt the event had the potential for the alpaca industry to establish contacts with members of the

farming community who may be under pressure to innovate because of debilitating drought conditions in Gippsland.

The Regional Committee started planning in the middle of last year. After consulting with breeders, it was decided to develop Eastern Region's Farm World Show over a period of two to three years, rather than trying to do everything at once.

Consequently, on Friday 22 February this year, sixteen breeders, some from outside the region, met at the Paradise Hotel in Emerald and formed the 'Alpaca Promotion Group'. Because I had all the event details on computer, I became the coordinator of the group (virtually by default). Brian Worcestor was 'mentor'.

As time was short, we moved quickly. A bank account was established, the site booking was confirmed and a marquee ordered. We organised advertising and editorials in *Farm World News* and ordered two large 'alpaca' banners. We negotiated a subsidy from the Eastern Region and were very pleased to obtain Parke-Rota Shears Ltd and David Rountree Livestock Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd as sponsors.

The organisers of Farm World, Gippsland Field Days Pty Ltd were keen to have another alpaca site and very helpful in finding us a suitable area – flat and close to allied interests.



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- Top Peruvian Genetics have arrived at Merungle
- Males at Stud include:

Peruvian Accoyo Legend – White – co-owned Pucara Alpaca Stud
@ 6 y.o. 23.3 micron 4.3 s.d. 18.5 c.v.

Chubasco Amazon – Fawn
@ 4 y.o. 23.6 micron 4.9 s.d. 20.8 c.v.

FIBRE

- Fleece results showing great gains

PROGENY

- Stunning crop of '97/98 Crias



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We ended up with 40 x 20 metres adjacent to the craft marquee, opposite a lake and very close to the car park.

Our marquee was lofty and the exhibits varied. Not only alpacas, but spinning demonstrations, alpaca products, internet services were part of the busy scene. Some displays were quite hi-tech with continuous computer and video presentations.

In the centre was the Action Ring where special activities were held.

A representative from Stephen Pasture Seeds talked to breeders about their new alpaca-specific pasture mix and there were three shearing demonstrations daily using the new Parke-Rota shears.

The Farm World public address system gave excellent publicity ahead of the shearing times and, without fail, quite a number of interested people turned up to watch.

When it came to talking about the handpieces, Terry Parke, their inventor passed the buck – in the form of a microphone – to me. I also took the opportunity to tell the audience about the breeding of alpacas as part of the fibre industry; breeding and the broad acre farmer; and a vision of the future for the alpaca industry.

It was clear that many Gippsland farms were looking at alpacas as a possible alternative to, or expansion of, their present activities. There was interest in comparing alpacas with cattle farming whose profit margin has been considerably eroded by the drought.



Nick Veltjens at Farm World, commenting on the alpaca shearing – and making sure his audience learned a lot about alpacas!

This year's 3-fold alpaca visibility – the region, Capalba Park and the McDavitts – was important to show the inherent strength and obvious growth of the industry. As Jenny McDavitt commented, 'We've got it covered!'

Members of the Alpaca Promotion Group found that their participation was socially and commercially beneficial, so much so that we have already re-booked this year's site at Lardner Park for Farm World '99.

Nick Veltjens



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1998 Royal Easter Show

by Michael Stringer

"THERE'S NOTHING IN THE WORLD LIKE IT"

That's what the PR machine tells us and, my goodness, they're right!

Totally enveloped in the Olympic 2000 construction site, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW achieved a changeover of the oldest agricultural show from its traditional location at Moore Park in Sydney to its new site at Homebush Bay. It is, in part, built on the old stock yards and abattoirs at Homebush.

The Paddington Pavilion in which the alpacas were housed is literally in the shadow of the main Olympic Stadium over the road on Olympic Boulevard.

A few little ups and downs

The first full inspection of the site for Show officials occurred during mid February. At that time, the rules were laid down: what could be done and what couldn't be done (The Olympic Co-ordination authority had a lot of input into these.).

One rule was particularly interesting. Animal floats were to be totally washed before they were parked in the long term park (at a price) so that no effluent was washed by rain into a brick pit which has a rare and endangered frog in residence.

It became evident that parking was going to be a major problem, as little or none was to be provided. Public transport, it was emphasised, was the way to go.

We could not build anything on the site; everything had to be demountable. Consequently, the alpaca shop was a moveable merchandising container and the demountable pens for

the display alpacas were also suitable for the pigs. (The Paddington Pavilion had several livestock and pen changes as each class progressed through the program of the Show.

Two days before the opening, the roads that we were to use had not been finished. However, as many of the buildings are to be used during the Olympic Games, the effort put into providing facilities for exhibitors was enormous. The liason and information stream on how to get, do and see everything was overwhelming. There was a piece of paper on everything.

RAS takes control of site

On Thursday 2 April, there was a ceremony in the main arena to mark the handing over of the new showground by the State Government of New South Wales to the Royal Agricultural Society. There were representatives of each type of livestock ready to parade during the ceremony and, of course, alpacas were there.

We had chosen two delightful young cria to symbolise the birth of this new stage of agricultural history. When the time came to lead the parade, it was evident that the chosen duo had other ideas. They didn't want to walk around the arena, so they sat. Then they got up, walked a few steps – and sat again. Their antics held up the parade and the reluctant cria received a great cheer from the delighted crowd. Finally, these two beautiful little crowd-pleasers were scooped up by their handlers and carried. This delighted the spectators even more and they gave the animals an extended ovation – and national TV picked up on the story.

AT THE SHOW

The Alpaca Association display was set up so that the shop, display and exhibition animals were close together. The rest of the alpaca area of the pavilion was being used by steers and set up for cattle. Then it was the turn of the pigs who needed different pens, so all the cattle stalls came down, the area was cleaned and pig pens erected. Then it was our turn.

The show alpacas came in on Good Friday evening, in teaming rain. The overhangings of the new pavilion provided shelter for unloading them as well as for loading the display alpacas who had been at the Show for several days.

The animals settled in very well and the humans moved into their allocated accommodation. On Easter Saturday, the



The site a few weeks before the show.

...settling in at Homebush

fleece judging took place in the arena with Alan Jinks having the honour to be the first fleece judge at Homebush.

There were a few problems. Because the show ring was also being used by the goat and pig sections, a number of pens were placed at one side of the indoor judging arena to help control the pigs and some of the goats. They were inconveniently placed and restricted public access to view judging. Animal judge, Roger Haldane remarked that had animal numbers been higher, he would have found it difficult to work.

Other problems arose for those involved in preparing animals for judging on Easter Sunday: a lack of power points for blowers and insufficient areas for exercise.



Before the Show in the Paddington Pavilion, where the alpacas were to be housed.

The animal judging

Animal numbers were a little down on previous years. This was because a number of exhibitors had pulled out of the Show due to the drought and extreme heat conditions in New South Wales over a few months prior to the show.

Roger Haldane commented that the RAS was held at a difficult time because animals being prepared as exhibits had to carry heavy fleece through the hot Australian summer. He expressed the view that the trend towards high density fleeces may not be appropriate for animals in hotter regions of the country and suggested that a more open, longer fleece would be better suited. What he was very firm about was the need for uniformity of fleece cover over the whole animal. This, he said, should be the aim of all breeders.

SHOW RESULTS

Championship Awards

Note that the full listing of RAS results is published on the Australian Alpaca Association's web site – www.alpaca.asn.au.

Junior Champion Male: Loose
Beare Chateau Gold, J Street

Reserve Champion Junior Male:
Blue Grass Snow Cloud, J &
A Mavros

Intermediate Champion Male:
Wyona Gangster,
K Nemec

*Reserve Champion Intermediate
Male:* Almaray Andre, M &
L Agnew

Senior Champion Male:
Jolimont Conquistador, R
& P Viceconte

Reserve Champion Senior Male: ILR NWA Ltd El Sol, Fine
Choice Alpacas

Champion Junior Female: Blue Grass Sensation, J & A Mavros

Reserve Champion Junior Female: Cedar House Rose Linda,
W Billington & P Sultan

Champion Intermediate Female: Blue Grass Star of Tulangi,
J & A Mavros

Reserve Champion Intermediate Female: Truleen Downs
Senorita, C Long

Champion Senior Female: Benleigh Highland Lass,
W Billington & P Sultan

Reserve Champion Senior Female: No award

Grand Champion Male: Jolimont Conquistador,
R & P Viceconte

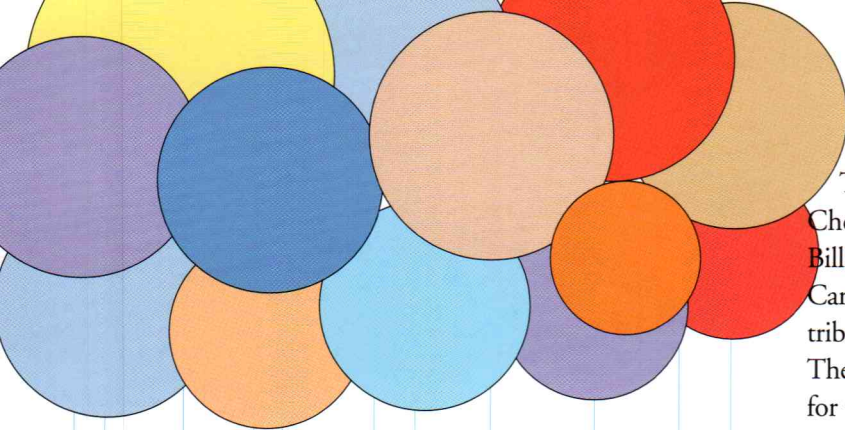
Grand Champion Female: Benleigh Highland Lass,
W Billington & P Sultan

Champion Suri: Cedar House Silken Queen, W Billington
& P Sultan

Supreme Champion Alpaca: Jolimont Conquistador,
R & P Viceconte



RAS alpaca judge, Roger Haldane.



Fleece Awards

Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 9-18 months

Blue Grass Star of Tulangi, J & A Mavros

Reserve Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 9-18 months

Benleigh Highland Lass, W Billington & P Sultan

Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 18-30 months

ILR Peruvian Cuzco, Fine Choice Alpacas

Reserve Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 18-30 months

ILR NWA Ltd El Sol, Fine Choice Alpacas

Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 30 months and over

ILR Peruvian Auzengate, Fine Choice Alpacas

Reserve Champion Saddle of skirted fleece, 30 months and over

Cedar House Lucifer, K & J Hollingworth

Champion Suri fleece

Bumble Hill Toff, J & F Gelber

Reserve Champion Suri fleece

Hiheva Suri Prince Castain, A & L Pickup & K Kime

Supreme Champion Fleece

Blue Grass Star of Tulangi, J & A Mavros

Those recognised as founders are: Geoff and Nancy Halpin, Cherie Bridges, Karen and Andrew Caldwell, Wendy Billington, Judith and Phillip Street, Dianne and Ron Condon, Carolyn and Allan Jinks. Specific mention was made of the contributions of Town & Country Farmer (industry promotion); The Alpaca Centre, Berrima and Capalba Park (fashion); and, for their outstanding individual contributions to the Australian alpaca industry, Alan Hamilton and Roger and Sue Haldane.



The Founders

Standing (from left): Ron and Dianne Condon, Philip Street, Karen Caldwell, Geoff Halpin, Roger Haldane, Jolimont Conquistador and friend, Nicola and Andrew Forrest, Alan Jinks, Judith Street.

Kneeling (from left): Wendy Billington, Janie Hicks, Carolyn Jinks.



HISTORY RECORDED

To celebrate the tenth birthday of the alpaca industry, the Association's RAS Show Committee decided that a number of people who had been instrumental in establishing the alpaca industry in Australia should be honoured. Most of these people were present at the show and the Committee organised a photograph to be a record of 'The Founders of the Industry'. The Founders were recognised publicly at a dinner held in the Suttor Room overlooking the main arena.

AN EVEN BETTER RAS NEXT YEAR

All exhibitors were asked to let Show Committee members have any suggestions for organisational improvements – bearing in mind that everyone, including the organising committee, was in a big learning curve.

There's no doubt, though, that the show site is outstanding and the new facilities are really top class. RAS members' facilities are excellent, food was fabulous and everyone made a great effort to make the Show a success.

While parking was a problem, trains were good and so were the buses (except some set down points were a little too far away from entrances to suit the elderly and young children).

We're told that the drainage problem in the pavilions will be addressed, something to do with floor levels. The drains all produced a top crop of wheat after moisture was trapped in the wheaten hay used for bedding!

The University of Sydney conducted a number of surveys to target areas needing attention.

This year at Homebush was good – 1999 will, without doubt, be even better!

The RAS fashion parade

The RAS kindly provided several professional models, our contribution being some of the more fleecy variety!

'A winter park' was the theme and the audience was treated to a very glamorous array of high quality garments. It was great to see some stunning Australian made and designed garments. Represented were Alpaca Classica, Alpaca Design, Tapitalee, Mi Inca and House of Seval.

We talked to audience members of the first parades and adjusted subsequent show to reflect their responses.

Sales reflected the popularity alpaca is gaining with the fashion conscious. We're finding, every year, a growth in public response to – and recognition of – alpacas and their end products. And this is only to be expected, I guess, as the presence of alpacas increases in the professional Australian enterprise farming sector.



FIBRE AND PROCESSING

Cameron Holt interviews Derek Michell,
Operations Manager, Michell and Cia

Cameron Holt is a Senior Consultant in Alpaca and Specialty Fibres, with Melbourne Institute of Textiles

In this article, the second in a two part series, Cameron puts the same set of questions to Derek Michell as those asked of Charles Pattheys of Inca Tops Grupo Inca (see last issue). At the conclusion of this article, Cameron analyses the answers of these two processing experts and discusses their implications for the Australian alpaca fibre industry.

Q. What do you consider to be the main characteristics in huacaya fleece that you require for processing this fibre?

A. Micron: determines the quality of the products.

Length: determines the system on which it is to be processed (woollen or worsted).

Colour: uncontaminated by other colours.

Q. What characteristics do you consider to be of less importance than above?

A. Strength: fibre needs to have a certain strength otherwise there is breakage during processing.

Sheen (brightness): determines the look of the finished garment. The fibres need to have life, not be dead looking (chalky) as they do not dye the same.

Crimp (crinkle): aids in holding the fibres together during processing. Much Peruvian fibre does not show good crimp in the staple but does have some crinkle.

Q. What do you consider to be the main characteristics in suri fleece that you require for processing this fibre?

A. Lustre; silkiness and suppleness; fineness (micron); colour; length.

Q. What characteristics do you consider to be of less importance than above?

A. No crimp in the staple – we want a light wave in preference to straight fibre. We need to artificially crimp the fibre as it comes out of the combing process.

Q. What importance, if any, is crimp (staple crimp/crinkle) in the processing of the huacaya fibre?

A. Crimp is important to the huacaya fleece and I would like the staples to have a good crimped formation.



Cameron Holt.

Q. Would you purchase huacaya fleece without crinkle (crimp in individual fibres)?

A. We would prefer the fibre with crimp but we have to take all the fibre. Those inbetween fibres are split according to their best match to either huacaya or suri.

Q. Does a well defined crimp (in the staple) mean anything to you in huacaya fleece?

A. As I mentioned earlier, I would like crimp in the fleece but there are not enough crimped fleeces to sort for at the moment.

Q. If there were enough fibre available would you prefer to process good well defined crimped fibres to those fibres that were plain (no crimp)?

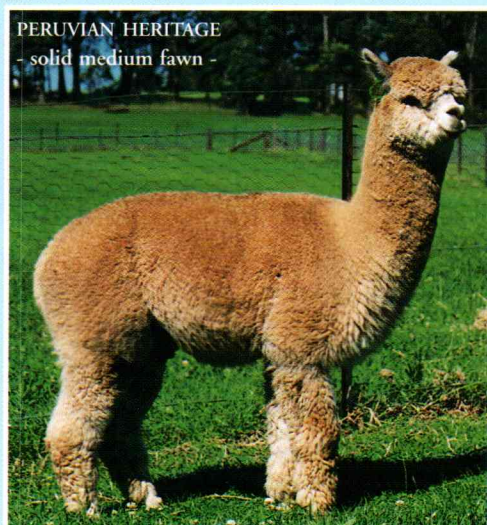
A. Yes, we would sort for a well defined crimp if the quantity was available.



ALPACANDES ALPACAS

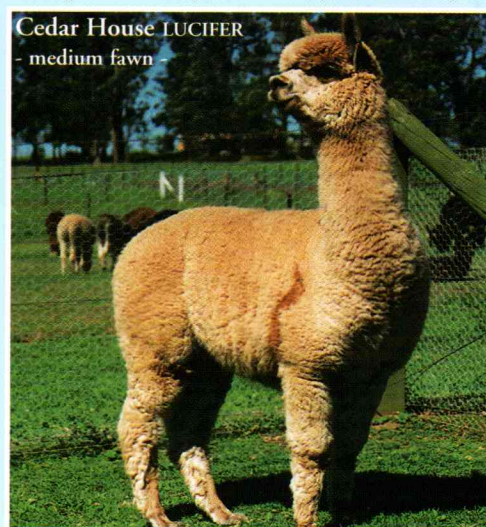
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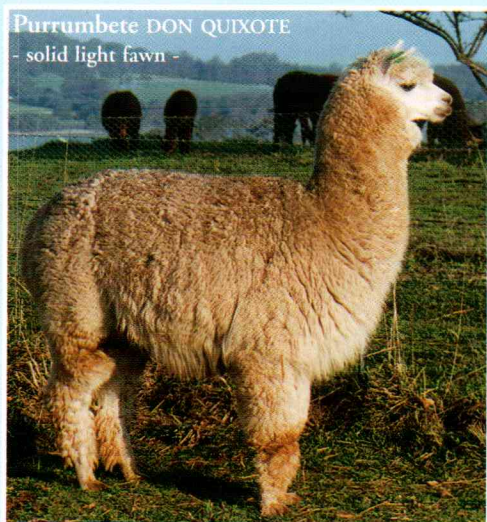
PERUVIAN HERITAGE
- solid medium fawn -

With outstanding coverage & density, HERITAGE is one of the few pure Peruvians to have progeny already making their mark in the show ring, including Champion Female Picton '97, Reserve Champion Junior Male Sydney Royal '97, 1st Progeny Class Sydney Royal '97.



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- medium fawn

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Purumbete DON QUIXOTE
- solid light fawn -

The legendary DON QUIXOTE needs little introduction. His outstanding fleece qualities can still be seen in his offspring, proving that at a regal 14 years of age he continues to impress.



RAVEN
- solid black

Now 3 years old, RAVEN still retains the beautiful soft, lustrous, crimp & dense fleece which has brought him numerous blue and Championship ribbons at shows up to National levels in '96 & '97. Watch for his first cria in the '98 show scene. You won't be disappointed.

Q. In suri fleece do you prefer the individual fibres to be straight or would you prefer a fibre with some wave (not crimp)?

A. As mentioned earlier, we would prefer a light wave in preference to a straight fibre.

Q. What colour do you prefer to purchase?

A. White. This colour can be dyed any colour you wish which makes it more easily sold to our clients. Coloured fibres can be affected by fashion trends.

Q. What are your maximum and minimum lengths for processing worsted huacaya fibre?

A. We have our machines set for 25/6 micron: minimum 68 mm, maximum 74 average

Q. What are your maximum and minimum lengths for processing worsted suri fibre?

A. 25-26 microns: minimum 70 mm-maximum 74 average (the very short and very long are removed)

Q. What are your maximum and minimum lengths for processing woollen huacaya fibre?

A. Minimum: 45 mm, maximum: 55 mm

Q. What are your maximum and minimum lengths for processing woollen suri fibre?

A. There is no woollen line.

Q. What is the maximum variation for micron you allow in your huacaya and suri lines, e.g. 2 or 3 microns etc.?

A. 3/4 microns e.g. 24 – 28

Q. What lines do you make for micron?

A. For huacaya:

Baby: 21.5-22.5; Fine: 25.5-26.5

Huarizo: 30-32; Coarse: 32-34

For suri:

Baby: 23; FS: 26-27; Coarse: 32>

Q. Is variance (co-efficient of variation) important in your classing of length?

A. We do not want the lengths to vary too much in the line.

Q. Is variance (co efficient of variation) important to you when you class for micron?

A. We remove those parts on the fleece that are too strong to be classed together

Q. How important is sheen to you when classing a huacaya fleece? Do you separate those flat, chalky fleeces?

A. Important, but we do not make a special line for these fleeces. They are placed in a lower line.

Q. How important is lustre to you when classing a suri fleece? Do you separate those flat, chalky fleeces?

A. The same applies as for the huacaya. The suri is easier to sort for lustre.

Q. Medullation (guard hair): do you separate those parts of the fleeces that contain large quantities of guard hair?

A. We remove as much of the medullation from the main fleece as possible.

Q. Do you consider guard hair a problem to you in processing and in the finished garment

A. Yes. It coarsens the yarn and makes it harder to spin. Fibres stick out affecting the handle of the garment and it takes away the lustre also.

Q. The in-between fibre (Huasu – Chili): where would you class it?

A. The in-between fibre is classed to where it matches best.

Q. What approximately are the current buying prices in \$US for: white fibre; baby; fine; medium; coarse?

A. White baby greasy: \$US8.50;
FS: 5.00; MS: 4.40; H: 2.50;
AG: 2.00

Q. What is the most sought after colour?

A. Light fawn, black, dark maroon

Q. What are the main uses for micron groups?

A. Baby: knitwear and weaving, suitings and brushed cloth
FS: knitwear and weaving, suitings and brushed cloth

AG: knitting yarn, blankets and blends

Q. If you could change one or two things in the huacaya and suri fleece what would they be?

A. The fibre is heavy so we would like it lighter if possible with less medullation, good sheen/lustre (no chalky fleeces) and improved crimp in huacaya.

Q. Density or type of lock structure: is there any importance to you in the fleece formation in huacaya and suri?

A. Yes, we would prefer the lock or staple to be dense in both the huacaya and suri.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN FIBRE GROWERS

Having now read both Derek and Charles answers to my questions, we should analyse what they mean to the Australian alpaca industry.

Most importantly, both processors place importance on soft handling yarns, that are as free as possible from medullation.

Softness comes from not only the fineness of the fibre, its scale structure, but also from freedom from medullation and coarse fibres. The coarse fibres are clearly shown in histograms and the uniformity of evenness shown with the C of V. Both processors remove the heavy medullated fibre and place this in the coarse lines.

During the judging at Arequipa last year, the importance Dr Julio Sumar placed on freedom from medullation was very noticeable.

Medullation clearly adds to the prickly factor, not only by micron but during spinning, where the medullated and coarse fibres are thrown to the outside of the yarn, thus compounding the prickly factor.

Dr Sumar stated in a discussion with the writer that he found suri fleece to have less medullation than that of the

huacaya. Recent research by the writer has confirmed this.

Colour contamination is also of great importance. Odd colours, different to the bulk, caused problems particularly in the white line. The message is clear that we need to breed for fleeces which are solid (except for greys/roans etc) and that our fleece preparation standards are high. The breeding may take some time to achieve, but the cleanliness in the shearing shed can be done now.

Length of fibre is important. As with all animal fibres, length is what determines the method of processing. The Peruvian mills' lengths are shorter than ours, which is understandable considering the levels of nutrition on which the animals graze. They set their machines for the length of fibre received. The machines could be altered if they were receiving longer fibre. You may notice that the settings between mills vary slightly.

Areas of lesser importance were crimp and lustre. In the huacaya both processors said they needed crimp in the individual fibres (crinkle). This helps hold the fibres together during processing. As mentioned by Derek, not all Peruvian fibre has good crimp in the staple. Both processors mentioned to me that they would prefer a well defined crimp. Definition of crimp is highly heritable and those already selecting for this trait will notice how repeatable it is.

If, as some scientists suggest, this makes a more uniform staple for micron (which in turn gives you a lower spinning fineness/softer yarn) crimp should be considered amongst the main priorities you have selected in your breeding program.

In suri fleece, the processors wanted a straighter fibre than that of the huacaya, one showing a slight wave rather than the straight fibre often found in plain fleeced suris.

With the suri industry now growing it is important to identify the preferred type required by these processors. Dr Sumar preferred the ringlet type of lock followed by a staple formation showing twist and wave.

It is important to note that all suri fleece types are used during processing. A false crimping is applied to the top to aid its adhesion during its various processes post combing.

Lustre to the suri was considered most important, as was a good bloom or sheen in the huacaya fleece. (The huacaya was not to be as lustrous as the suri).

Chalky fleeces are not desirable and are placed in lower lines.

These chalky types are easily identified. It has also been noticed by the writer that when white chalky fleeces are tested for medullation, they have a higher content than those with a good sheen (or lustre for the suri). This chalky type does not take dye well and

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does not display that vibrant look that a fibre with bloom would have.

The lines to which the processors class differ only slightly. The important thing for us is that they class fibre coarser than 30 micron as huarizo or coarse. The message is clear: mate those animals with fibre coarser than 30 microns to finer males.

I am aware that some of these coarse fibres with C of Vs below 20 may handle well, but to the Peruvian processors this is not in the range for the fibre they market as alpaca.

It was interesting to discover what processors would change if they could. Both mentioned less medullation,

improved crimp, elimination of colour contamination and reduction of chalky fleeces.

Derek's comment: 'the fibre is heavy so would like it lighter if possible' was particularly interesting as many people say Alpaca fibre is lighter than wool due to its medullation.

Writing recently on the characteristics of alpaca, I demonstrated how huacaya fibre with crimp makes a bulkier yarn than does straighter fibre. If both types are spun into similar thickness, the crimped type (less fibres in cross-section) is lighter (due to its bulk) than the straight fibre type. If Derek's wish for better crimped fibres and less

medullation is granted, we may have a softer, lighter huacaya yarn. This of course does apply to suri fibre, whose structure is not unlike that of mohair which is considered a heavy fibre in its raw state.

I hope that these leading personnel from two established alpaca processing mills in Peru put paid to some of the contentious myths.

We must remember that to have a marketable product we must supply what our client wants. We need to be aware of the fibre specifications required not only by the processors, but also by the people constructing the final product.

Letters **TO THE EDITOR**

Letters are welcome!

**Please address them to Carol Hosking, Editor, *Alpacas Australia*
c/- PTW Desktop & Design, Unit 9, 663 Victoria Street, Abbotsford.**

SETTING ONE STANDARD FOR SHOW JUDGING

As a non-participant in the Show arena I would like to comment on this side of the industry with no bias. (My 15 wethers are much happier in their paddocks!)

I have visited shows during the past few years, observed the judging and listened to the comments. These shows include the Sydney Royal, Melbourne Sheep and Wool Show, National, Hawkesbury and Maitland.

In any competition involving animals, fleeces, craft, etc there is naturally an element of personal opinion.

There appears to be a lack of criteria for those entering alpacas for judging.

At one show it appears 'clean paddock condition' is correct. At another show, this is not good enough and the

animals are required to look 'picture perfect', fluffed, puffed, clipped and carded!

The problem appears to be that no everyone is 'in the know' about what is expected at which show and by which judge.

Apparently there are guidelines for show preparation but these do not seem to be adequate enough.

Might it not be a good thing if *one* standard is set to apply country wide so that participants know what is expected and what is *not* allowed, thereby giving everyone, large or small, a fair go?

*Penny Pearce
Dungog, NSW*



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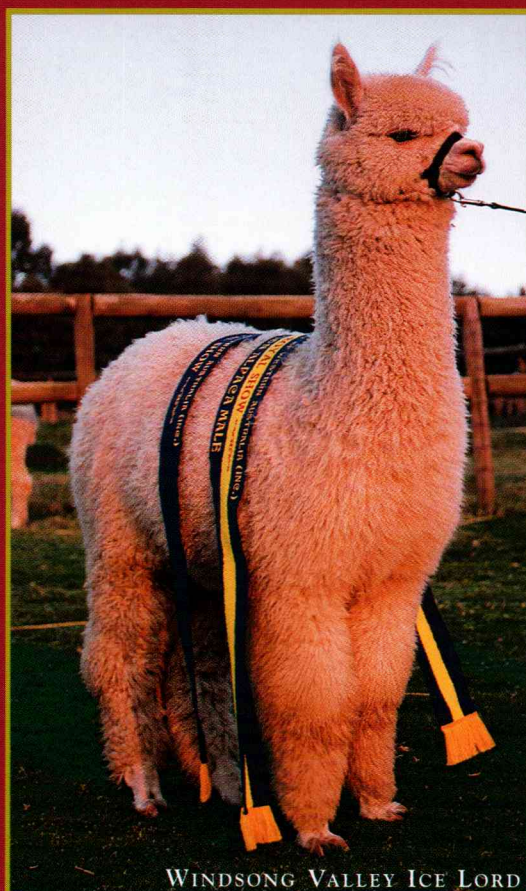
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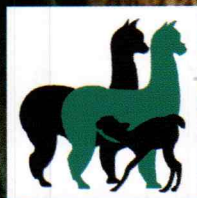
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Wrong turn



...right direction!

.....
by Lorraine James

*Look where you're going!
Or you could end up in
the alpaca industry!*

Whoever would have thought that a simple mistake like taking the wrong entrance into the Perth Show in 1994 would lead us to the Andes, 10,000 feet up, amongst a vicuna roundup. Our fate was sealed that day. Almost before we knew it, we had been snared by the unique beauty, dignity and promise of alpacas at the breeders pavilion. So much so, that we wanted one. No, several!

Over the next couple of months our phone bill shot up as we made dozens of interstate calls. Spare moments were spent devouring back issues of *Alpacas Australia* and we weren't just looking at the pictures. We wanted to be sure that our investment in these captivating creatures would be a hard-headed 'business decision', so we opted, in the end, to concentrate our efforts on finding some coloured suris, deciding that the quality end of a quality market was the way to go.

Having settled on this approach, we were lucky enough to speak to Alan Hamilton who had decided to concentrate his efforts on whites and fawns. Soon, we were travelling from Western Australia to Victoria to see some animals and listen to the wisdom of some experienced alpaca breeders. We arranged to meet Alan's brother, Peter at their lovely property in Creswick. As soon as we laid eyes on their magnificent brown suri male, we were gone! Peter is probably still chuckling at how easily these novices from the West became alpaca breeders. We came away

proud owners of two lovely females and the aptly named Royal Russet, a regal brown stud male. Wow! That's how it started and we're still buying.

On this foray east, we also met Ron and Dianne Condon. This proved to be a tremendous boost to us, as they taught us a lot and were extremely generous with their advice, despite the fact we bought elsewhere. But, what goes around comes around and we did eventually buy from Ron and Dianne. This was a superior female suri, which went on to win a blue ribbon at the 1996 National Alpaca Show – a first for a Western Australian owned suri.

Our enthusiasm for alpacas was only enhanced by these experiences with other breeders, so it seemed entirely natural to be amongst the Australian contingent that attended the International Festival of Camelids in Arequipa, Peru late last year.

The flights took over 50 hours but this had no discernible effect on certain members of our party who, immediately we were in Cusco, took to bartering with the friendly local traders as if they'd been there for years. Who said females were the weaker sex? Another highlight of this acclimatisation stop was the astonishing switch-back rail trip to Arequipa. On arrival, we were greeted by the great guardians Arequipa Chachani, Misti and Pichu Pichu. What an unbelievable sight these snow-capped volcanic masses were, with Chachani some 6087 metres above sea level, overseeing the terracing



and agriculture which is an essential way of life for most Peruvians.

The festival itself gave a degree of meaning to the ownership of our suris we would not have otherwise found.



The Wasi.

What was very apparent and, perhaps, novel in the Australian context was the affection and reverence the Peruvians reserve for their livestock.

We invariably found the locals to be down-to-earth and warm, always ready to share their knowledge. Suris, we dis-

covered, are highly treasured, especially the unshorn wasis which act as a sort of talisman for the whole herd.

Interestingly, we discovered that of the three classes being judged at the show, namely huacayas, suris and llamas, it was the suris that commanded the richest purse.

An intense and pleasurable learning experience was boosted by the suri judging in which we both assisted the world-renowned Dr Julio Sumar. One of the exhibitors we met kindly invited us to his farm, high in the altiplano. It was a real privilege to be able to share even a fraction of his lifetime's experience and we came away buzzing with ideas. One of these was inspired by his contention that some of the best blacks (both suris and huacayas) are bred by covering a rose grey female with a brown male. With Royal Russet in mind, we are now looking to purchase some rose greys and test his theory.

The visit to the Michell and Inca factories gave us a good insight into the possibilities and potential of the Australian premium fibre industry. Some of our American colleagues showed great enthusiasm after touring these establishments but, as they were

quick to point out, it was their Aussie neighbours who were again leading the way: with fibre processing facilities in Melbourne and with the enormous potential of the beautiful garments being styled under the Alpaca Classica label.



Prize-winning suris.

One of the abiding images we brought home with us was that of the chaccu. Besides its cultural significance, the roundup protects the gene pool of the vicuna from the greed of poachers who think nothing of eliminating an animal for one season's fibre.

This is also what our wrong turn in Perth over three years ago led us to: helping to preserve and strengthen the alpaca gene pool, not only for our own profit, but for that of future generations.



A hormone problem?

.....
by Bob and Judy Richardson

We had our alpacas agisted at a friend's property while we were building our own farm at Bowning. Our first two Peruvian import females were both due to cria within a few days in March, and Don Ameche, a beautiful fawn male duly arrived on 8 March.

We had been somewhat amused to note that the sire, also a Peruvian import from the same shipment and who happened to arrive on loan to the same stud only a couple of weeks earlier, quickly took special note of Frida and the two frequently 'necked' across the fence.

After Frida gave birth uneventfully – not her first cria by the way – she proved to be an outstanding mother for its first three days, feeding the cria frequently and constantly fussing over it. The cria was clearly thriving normally.

Then Dolores, our second Peruvian and a maiden, gave birth, equally uneventfully on 11 March. All of a sudden, Frida seemed to become confused. She ran toward another young cria in the same paddock where about eight late pregnant and recently birthed females were present, and then ran back to her own cria. We did not pay much attention to this at the time, being preoccupied with watching the new cria, an even more splendid fawn male now called Don Giovanni. He too was quickly active, and began feeding within the hour.

After another hour, we noticed that Frida's cria was repeatedly trying to feed, but was being continually rebuffed by his mother, who kept walking away each time the infant approached her udder.

We became increasingly concerned over the next three hours, as this behaviour continued.

Frida even stamped her back foot a number of times to discourage the cria as it persisted trying to drink. She allowed the cria to stay close to her head, but would not let it drink from her.

Two hours after its last feed, we put mother and baby in a small yard and examined her carefully. Her udder was distended with milk as expected, but was not overly hot, nor was there any sign of tenderness or infection.

A gentle squeeze readily expressed milk from her teats, so we tried to get the cria to feed by holding mother and baby. The cria firmly refused to be coerced to suck; even when milk was squirted directly on to its mouth and face.

We continued to spray its face with its mother's milk in the hope that she would lick the cria and perhaps re-bond – all to no avail.

Because the day was hot, we kept mother and baby in a shady enclosure, and three hours after its last feed we gave it a bottle of about 300 ml of glucose solution, which it accepted greedily.

Our vet arrived and checked the animals. He could find nothing apparently amiss with either mother or cria, and said that he had seen this problem before, but only with human mothers!

He gave an injection of Nabudone as a relaxant and suggested that a progesterone injection might help, but he had none with him.

Noting that the mother had been very interested in the male only a few days earlier, and that the birth had been straightforward with no apparent injury, our friend suggested an immediate mating to see if this 'natural' progesterone trigger would help the mothering problem. The vet agreed, so the male was brought into the pen. Frida was at first a little reluctant, but with some assistance the male prevailed and a 25 minute mating was completed.

After the mating, Frida stood up and immediately allowed the cria to begin feeding! We held our collective breathes while he quickly guzzled for about three minutes, with Frida standing stock still and looking straight ahead.

We then carefully and quietly loaded mother and son into a trailer, together with one companion female and transported all three to a separate enclosure completely out of sight of other mothers with cria. Frida soon allowed the cria to feed again, and this has since continued normally.

We have assumed from this experience that for some reason a hormonal imbalance had occurred, and this led the mother to reject her offspring. We feel that the cria could easily have become badly dehydrated had we not noticed the problem early and taken corrective action. We were reluctant to begin feeding milk, except as an absolute last resort, while it was clear that the mother had plenty of milk of her own.

The last word goes to a human female present who was predictably disenchanted with the suggestion that a mating could provide the solution to anything!

A BREEDER'S VIEW OF WARWICK SHOW

.....
By Gayle Dillon

The first show of what promises to be a busy season for Queensland exhibitors.

It was dark as we loaded the two boys and one girl into our modified horse trailer, ticking feed, buckets, leads and various other items off the list. We were off to the Warwick Show in beef and sheep country, right on the Queensland border with New South Wales.

Show days for me are half dream and half nightmare, until we're safely home again. But, I wouldn't miss them because we get to see what's happening in our industry: what the new males are like; how other alpaca people are progressing with their breeding programs and comparing their progress against ours.

We arrived in one piece and found our pens were next to the shearing, which was before our classes. You could almost hear the sigh of relief from our alpacas.

The show reinforced my observation that our industry is improving so quickly. And it's lovely to see some of the bigger studs bringing their males up here at last. Their influence was evident when Wyona Fudge took out

Supreme Champion. What a 'chip off the old block' (Wyona Chipper) he is.

There were thirty fleeces entered – an excellent showing. As a breeder of black alpacas, I drooled over the Wyona Massai's fleece, which won Reserve Champion. I don't know anything about the animal, but I sure would like to. Champion Fleece was taken out by Starwood Dream Weaver – the colour reminded me of a fine champagne.

At the Warwick Show, we did things a little differently and had more fun in the process, I think. We had a competition for best public relations pen and display, and classes for sires progeny and best frame, conformation and gait.

Our judge was Cherie Bridges. From cooler Victorian climes, I suspect she was not prepared for the 28° sunny day Queensland put on for the occasion – someone had to lend her a hat!

As the show progressed, it became obvious that one breeder had really done her homework. She won class after class, both animal and fleece. I'm referring to Wendy Summerell



Warwick Show judge, Cherie Bridges, with Michael McNamara and Supreme Champion, Wyona Fudge.



Wendy Summer receives her Breeders Cup.

(Starwood), who won the Westfarmers Dalgety Breeders Cup. She really earned it, having put in years of hard work and dedication to her animals. They were all very well presented and well behaved, including the little cria, fully halter trained, who trotted happily around the ring with her mum.

As for us, we came third with Hinterland Sasha (female 6-12 months) and our agisted black stud male, Darling Downs Casanova won a third placing. He did well, being up against

Peruvian white animals, and his owners, Gemma and Darren Pilcher were happy.

This was our first show for the season. Next we go to Nambour on the Sunshine Coast with the Brisbane Royal and Gold Coast Shows in August. With a number of activities also planned for this year, we're all going to be kept very busy this winter in Queensland.

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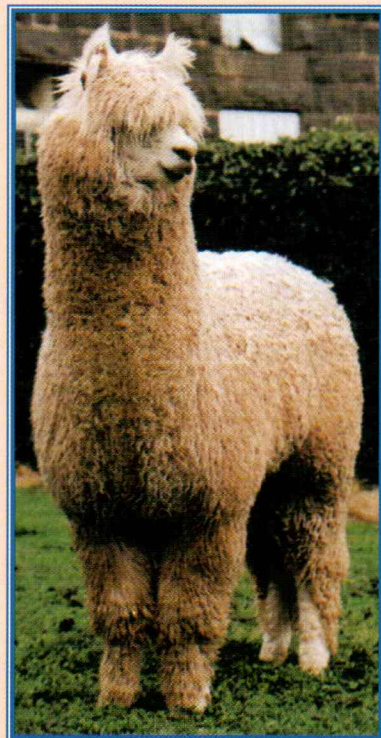
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Due: December 1998

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- Before purchase, check the alpaca's ear (left ear for a male; right for a female) for the IAR brass tag. If the animal does not have one in place, you should ask the seller why. If the animal is under 12 months of age, it may not yet have been tagged. However, it is the breeder's responsibility to register the animal before transferring it over to you.
- Ask to see the animal's Registration Certificate. Check that the name, IAR tag, number, age and other details you have been given match the information on the Certificate. Be very wary of buying any animal for which the seller cannot produce the Registration Certificate.
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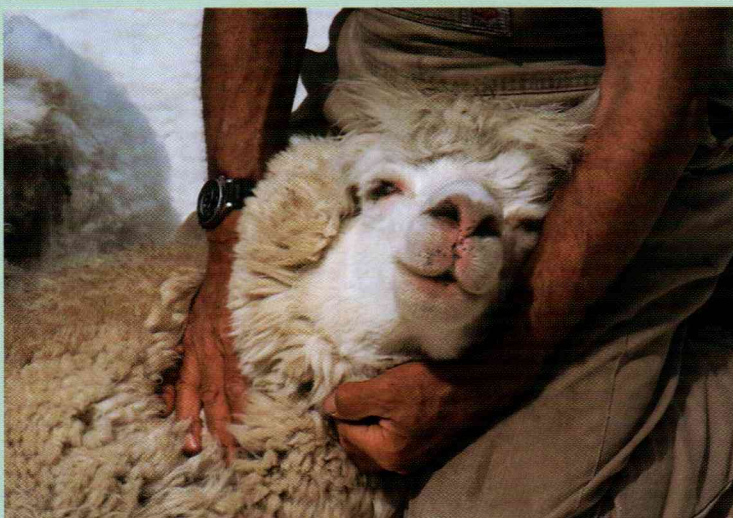
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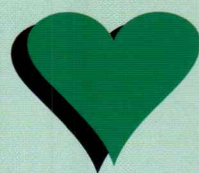


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AN INVITATION FOR BREEDERS TO JOIN THE AAA ELITE PERFORMANCE RECORDING PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE AAA-EPRP?

The AAA Elite Performance Recording Program (AAA-EPRP) is a service offered to all Association members as part of a research project jointly funded by the Australian Alpaca Association and the University of Sydney, Orange Agricultural College.

The AAA-EPRP aims to implement the monitoring and evaluation of alpaca females and sires for the characteristics of economic importance defined by Charry, Lawrie and Johnson (1997) in their Technical Report to the Association (see last issue). These characteristics are broadly described as: body weight (kg), fibre production (kg), fleece quality (micron) and fertility.

The AAA-EPRP is an opportunity for breeders to organise records of their elite stud animals by objective measurement of performance. This project supports the hypothesis that genetic gain of the Australian herd can only be achieved when farms compare their animals' performance against those considered to be an industry target. The identification of the real genetic value of individual animals will enable breeders to establish a genetic inventory of elite stud animals and identify herd strengths and weaknesses.

The project will be managed by Dr A.A. (Al) Charry from the University of Sydney, Orange Agricultural campus.

ENROLMENT

Breeders may make full or partial enrolment of their herds. It is recommended that breeders with less than 20 females enrol their whole herd; breeders with less than 100 females – 50 per cent of their top females; and breeders with more than 100 females – at least 20% of their top breeding herd. It is hoped that all Australian stud sires will be enrolled.

Participating breeders will be required to send specified information periodically to Dr Charry for input into a computer data bank.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESULTS

Quantitative analysis of individual farm results will be performed with Standard Deviation Ranking (SDR) values and On-farm Estimated Breeding Values (EBV) generated per animal. Individual farmers will receive a summary analysis of their herd's results annually. The analysis will be strictly confidential to the individual breeder and free of

charge for at least two years. Information in the data bank will be identified only by code number.

Results for all animals enrolled in the project will be combined to produce an Annual Report for the Association. This will enable participating farmers to compare their herd results against national results giving them an indication of the genetic value of their herd against national averages.

If you are interested in participating in the AAA-EPRP and would like further information, please contact any of the project team members:

THE PROJECT TEAM

Dr A.A. Charry

PO Box 883 US-OAC,
Orange NSW 2800;
phone (02) 6360 5506;
fax (02) 6360 5823;
email alcharry@oac.usyd.edu.au

J.W. Lawrie

Phone (02) 6846 7292;
fax (02) 6846 7282

D. Johnson

Phone (03) 9899 1099;
fax: (02) 9899 1055;
email david@alpaca.asn.au

Who's Who?

These are the 'portfolios' and the people working within them. Each portfolio encompasses important aspects of the Association's activity...

HERD DEVELOPMENT

Animal Health
Herd, Fleece Quality Improv't
Genetic Improvement
Vet. Association Interface

Showing & Judging
Screening Standards
Quality Assurance
Education Programs

PROMOTION & MARKETING

Media (Press) Mgt
Publications (Int./Ext.)
Strategy Development
Merchandise
Public Relations

MAJOR EVENTS

Planning/Organisation
Sponsorship
Auction Management

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Sales Management
Fibre Industry
Research (Marketing)
International Relations
Industry Alliances

ADMINISTRATION & MEMBERSHIP

Registration
Legal & Ethics
Membership Services

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Alan Jinks,
Lynn Dickson,
Dianne Condon,
David Johnson

Jill Short, Alan Cousill
Wendy Billington
Cherie Bridges,
David Johnson

Rhonda Perpoli,
Sandi Keane,
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Alan Hamilton,
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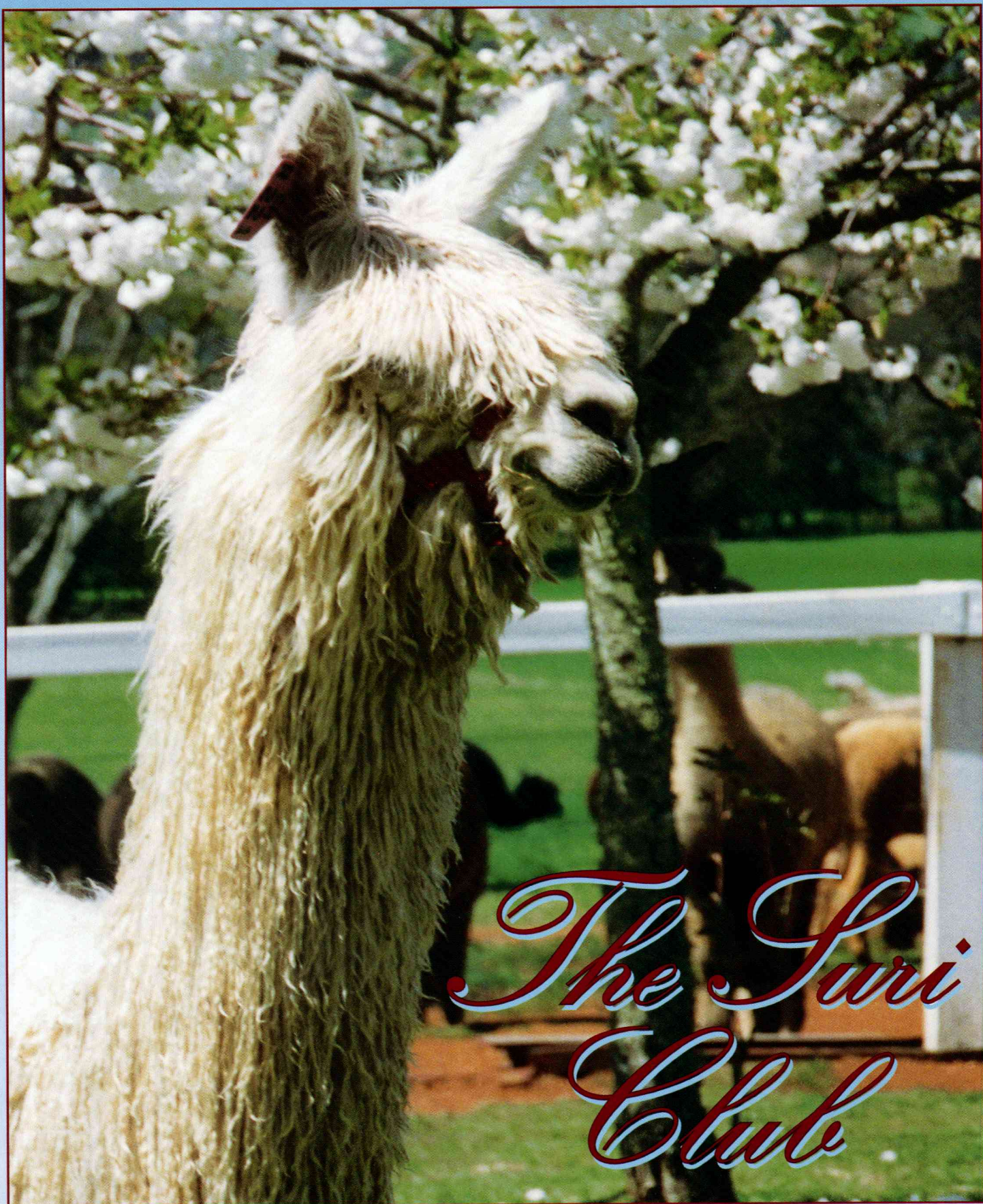
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