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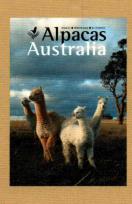
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"Storm in the air"
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Julie Mavros
Blue Grass Alpacas

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Baarrooka Alpaca Stud, Victoria

t the AAA Council meeting of May 2002 it was decided to prepare a brief to ask marketing companies to tender for our Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP).

This was completed quickly and H2o Creative Communications won the tender.

Then followed a tortuous period of evolution with tremendous input and encouragement by the Marketing Sub-Committee, until March of this year when the SMP was completed and delivered to the Association. The SMP is a great resource of information to be used to underpin

the development of marketing plans at all levels of the industry.

The next step in the process, once the plan was formulated, was to source a company with suitable expertise for implementation according to the recommendations of the SMP.

The initial tendering process for the development of the SMP had produced tenders for this second stage that were generally too expensive for an organisation of our size; which did not necessarily meet our expectations for involvement of the Regions;

or concentrated too heavily on specific forms of advertising. A particular feature of some implementation plans was the possibility of placing too much demand on our National Office resources.

Fortunately one of our National Committee (Natcom) members who had been following the process closely realised that he had worked in an organisation that had used a marketing and

communications consultant group which had impressed with its service and the reporting of its success or otherwise. That consultant is McGregors International (MGI) who recently made a presentation to the Natcom at a specially convened meeting in Sydney.

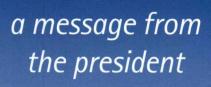
Subsequent to the Sydney meeting the Natcom agreed to appoint MGI subject to satisfactory negotiation of the contractual matters. By the time you read this some Regions will have been contacted as part of the preparation of the MGI marketing manuals.

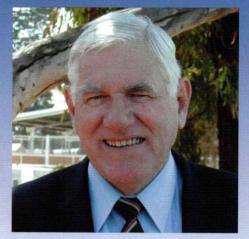
The principle adopted by Natcom as agreed at the May 2002 Council meeting is that marketing will be a grassroots activity with the umbrella concept of overall design to assist Regions in their planning. To date some Regions have made more progress than others, Eastern Victoria and Hawkesbury Blue Mountains having achieved great results for their Regions and the industry by raising awareness of alpaca with clever promotion and a great deal of personal effort.

MGI recognise that we don't all arrive in this world with marketing skills and their program is designed to assist every member to market themselves and their animals by use of targeted material and systems. It will take about six months to put the infrastructure in place and then hopefully we will all be in a position to

My best wishes for our mutual success.

attract new customers.





... assist every member to market themselves and their animals by use of targeted material and systems ...

KERRY DWYER, PRESIDENT

briefly speaking...

The 10th AAA National Show and Sale in Canberra on 31 October – 2 November

will once again showcase Australia's best alpacas and fleeces. In addition this year the inaugural Alpaca Craft competition is being conducted affording the opportunity for talented spinners, knitters, weavers and textile artists to showcase their fabulous alpaca creations.

If you're coming to Canberra in October to show your animals, your fleeces or your handcrafts, or just to relax and catch up with friends, turn to page 38 for more important information.

Have you moved, or are you moving soon?

Please remember to notify the AAA Office of address changes.

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Marketing

The AAA is pleased to announce the appointment of McGregors International as the Marketing Team to assist the Association and its members to promote the Australian alpaca industry. The Marketing Team will guide the Association's advertising and marketing campaigns on a national basis and will also assist individual regional promotions utilising the elegant, unmistakable Alpacamark in print and electronic media.

The importance of professional marketing cannot be denied in these modern times. In this issue of *Alpacas Australia* there are historical accounts of early alpaca ventures both in this country and overseas. The Australian alpaca industry is poised to fulfil the dreams of those early pioneers. Let's not miss this opportunity.

Magazine back Issues

The AAA National Office has back issues of *Alpacas Australia* available for purchase priced at \$3.30 per magazine (plus P&H). Here is your opportunity to read up on articles that you may have missed. (See Order Form on page 55 for P&H charges). As some issues are in limited supply please contact the National Office to enquire about availability.

Next Issue

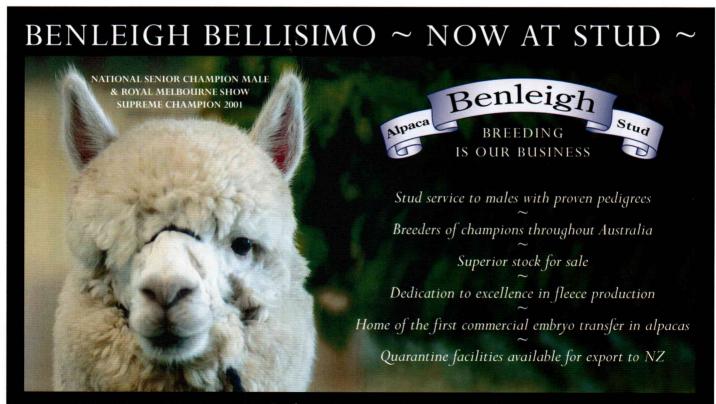
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Meeting the demand for specialist veterinary care of alpacas

by ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANDREW DART, Hospital Director, University of Sydney Veterinary Centre, Camden, NSW

The University of Sydney Veterinary
Centre at Camden was established as
the rural centre for the treatment of
large animals over 50 years ago. Until
the early 1990's the centre was seen
for its excellence in the veterinary
care of horses and cattle. However the
changing landscape as Sydney grows
and expansion of the rural industries
has seen the services provided by the
University expand.

n the early 1990's Dr Andrew Dart returned from a 5 year training program at the

University of California Veterinary Hospital in the USA where his studies had focused on surgery of large animals, particularly horses. However during his tenure there he performed surgery on alpacas and llamas for Professor Murray Fowler. After gaining specialist qualifications in large animal surgery he returned to Australia and the University of Sydney where he has maintained an interest in camelid medicine and surgery.

Andrew's wife Christina is also a veterinarian and specialist veterinary anaesthesiologist. Christina spent 10 years in North America where she developed a wealth of experience in camelid anaesthesia. There are many unique features of camelids that increase the risk of anaesthetic complications including death. Christina specialises in difficult anaesthetic cases and has advised numerous private practitioners on how to set up safe anaesthetic practises.

The University of Sydney is now a pivotal referral centre and point of contact for veterinarians in the field with difficult camelid cases. During the past 10 years the group at the University of Sydney has published extensively on new medical conditions and surgical techniques for alpacas and has participated in several studies looking at nutritional issues. Some of the surgical techniques are now routinely being used in practice and the medical development has advanced the diagnosis, treatment and survival of alpacas with different conditions.

The facility at the University is a well-equipped hospital that can provide 24 hour care. The University primarily receives referral cases only or cases from local farms that are transported into the hospital and provides advice to referring practitioners on difficult cases. The University does not provide an on farm service and does not deal with routine reproductive issues. These services are well handled by private practitioners. All procedures at the hospital are carried out by qualified professional staff, however the final year veterinary students get critical training in camelid medicine and surgery and in handling these unique animals.

The curriculum at the University of Sydney is undergoing change at present. From 2004 final year veterinary students will undertake a lecture free year where they will only undertake clinical work. This will be through the two clinics - Sydney and Camden – and through private practices that are partners with the University of Sydney and the Rural Lands Protection Board. The students will register with the Veterinary Surgeons Board as limited status interns allowing them to conduct acts of veterinary science but only under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon. This will provide an opportunity for the students to gain greater practical experience prior to graduation and within a wider variety of veterinary practices.

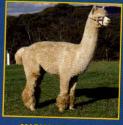
While at the Camden Clinic students will spend a 4 week rotation where they will be exposed to the camelids presenting to the clinic during that time. The equine section treats the alpacas that are generally referral cases suffering conditions of a complex nature and so the students will be exposed to all aspects of medicine, surgery, anaesthesia and pathology. While on extramural rotations students will also be exposed to the routine on farm aspects of alpaca breeding and management.

This new curriculum should not only produce a more technically competent graduate but one with a broader experience with all animal species.









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Drought proof your farm

by ANNE SMITH Hobson's Choice Alpacas, WA

At present, farmers all over Australia are suffering as a result of last year's drought. The price for hay has been incredibly high; many farmers opting to sell off or slaughter stock rather than pay such a premium.

ne answer for the future is to use the natural conformation, inclination and nutritional needs of the alpaca to advantage and plant fodder trees. Even with a long neck to reach up, alpacas will still stand on their hind legs and stretch even higher for tasty

leaves. Studies conducted on our property during the past two years show that their nutritional needs are being adequately met with a combination of fodder trees and hay. Each situation will be unique, of course, depending on the soil composition of any particular property.

To help counteract bush fire damage and to ensure that our 'pacas have summer greens available at all times, tagasaste was our first major planting. Tagasaste is a natural fire retardant. In a serious bushfire it gives off steam rather than the volatile oils of our native plants. The Western Australia Department of Agriculture has some excellent leaflets on how, when, where and why to plant tagasaste.

Acacia Saligna is a native wattle, a very large bush from which the 'pacas crop leaves all summer. Fodder testing comments that it is very difficult to digest may be the reason why the 'pacas love it even more when it has been cut for a week and is drying out. It has added bonuses as a thick windbreak and a magnificent floral display, bearing large, fat pompoms of golden blossom in September.

As 'chocoholics' yearn for chocolate, so our 'pacas LOVE mulberry leaves. Fodder testing results showing a high metabolisable sugar content may be the reason. A huge, old, "Hick's Fancy" mulberry tree was growing on our farm when we took over. This is a weeping variety that if left to its own devices grows a thick, dense canopy to the ground. It has been consistently cut for fodder for six years now and looks healthier than ever. Even at \$15 for a bare rooted tree from a nursery, once established such a tree is much more economical than hay.

However there is an option ... the Year 11 Plant Production class from our local High School was given a day on the farm - with chocolate muffins, a sausage sizzle and fruit juices - and produced the 500 cuttings that became the 180 mulberry trees now growing strongly here in their fourth summer.

Just a word of warning, though. We have only dark coloured alpacas here and are not sure whether mulberry juice would stain light fleeces.

Small groups of other fodder trees that we have planted include the Honey Locust, Flame tree and Mahgreb Poplar.

Included with this article is a Table to demonstrate the nutritional value of such feed on our property. A little time and effort planting and establishing trees will save money in the long run, supplement hay and provide valuable nutrition, including folates, when grasses are unavailable.

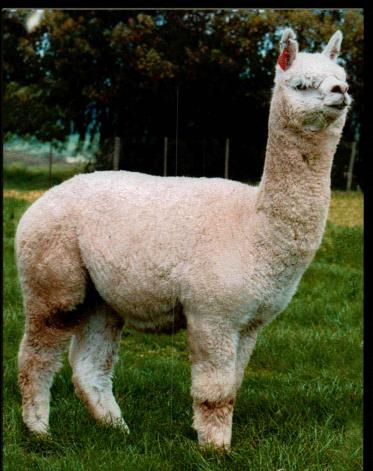
B WEST		Mulberry		Acacia Saligna		Tagasaste		Rye/Clover Hay	
		2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002
Energy MJ/kg D.M. Protein		12.2	11.0	6.5	6.5	9.7	9.4	9.5	9.0
		11.0%	15.5%	20.9%	16.6%	18.2%	18.0%	8.7%	9.7%
Dietary	Suggested				V 1.3				
Mineral	daily								
needs	allowance			1 20					
g/kg	(Geoff								
97.19	Judson*)								
Calcium Ca	2-4	25.7	24.0	10.2	17.0	3.5	3.6	11.6	1.1
Chlorine Cl	1.5	7.0	1.7	11.2	8.2	1.8	2.7	18.0	17.6
Magnesium Mg	1.2-2.0	3.7	5.6	2.8	4.3	1.2	1.8	2.6	3.1
Phosphorus P	1.5-3.0	2.2	3.1	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.5	1.9
Potassium K	6	18.5	23.0	14.4	8.4	6.7	13.0	14.0	1.5
Sodium Na	1-2	1.3	0.5	1.0	1.5	0.3	0.4	10.5	10.0
Sulphur S	2	1.1	1.8	5.5	6.7	1.7	1.3	1.3	2.0
Dietary Trace									
Element needs						1.4			
mg/kg					LUK!				
Cobalt Co	0.2								
Copper Cu	5-10	2.4	4.7	5.7	5.0	1.4	3.1	7.8	9.8
lodine	0.6								
Iron Fe	50	114.0	99.0	107.0	142.0	86.0	86.0	105.0	160.0
Molybdenum Mo	0.1				1 6				
Manganese Mr		17.0	86.0	49.0	67.0	36.0	1 2 3 3		
Zinc Zn	25-35	14.9	26.0	29.8	23.0	39.6			
Boron			63.0		87.0	The same of	28.0		24.0
Aluminium			185.0		250.0)	115.0		330.0
Selenium Se	0.1		+	16 57"					

Fodder Testing results. Location: RMB 253 Osmington Rd. Margaret River, WA.

* South Australian Research and Development Institute.

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Ron and Dianne with Don Julio Barreda

Wedding vows wearing alpaca

by KEVIN HITCHCOCK, NSW

When Kylie Hollingworth uttered her wedding vows late in March this year she had two dreams come true. She became the wife of long time fiancé, Rohan Martin, while at the same time wearing a gown made from Australian alpaca. After 12 years working in the industry and now a successful breeder and respected judge, Kylie was determined her ceremony should be not one, but two statements of faith in the future. Her wedding at the family property, "Dorroughby" near Boorowa in New South Wales, was precisely that.

he making of Kylie's dress began more than two years ago when 132 kgs of under 22 micron white Australian fleece was sent away for processing. The raw fibre was transformed into dozens of skeins of superfine 2 ply yarn.



The alpaca wedding creation

This in turn was forwarded to Peter Stapleton, a talented perfectionist in Oakbank, South Australia, known to all in the industry as "The Oakbank Weaver". Peter added a small amount of silk thread for added lustre and produced 12 metres of exquisite fabric with a subtle, patterned weave - a unique, all Australian alpaca product that most breeders

The wedding party



The challenge of creating the actual wedding gown was taken up by family friend Margaret Hitchcock, an experienced fashion designer and seamstress, and another long-term member of the alpaca industry. Margaret took advantage of the lightweight flowing nature of the fabric to produce a princess-line gown with a tight fitting sleeveless top, with button and loop back opening, merging into a flared skirt with an elegant, flowing train. The low scooped neckline was bound with pure silk to complement the silk thread in the fabric. The neckline was further enhanced by the addition of more than 200 hand sewn roses in deep red silk ribbon, the colour perfectly matching the dresses of the bridesmaids. An identically coloured thread was used in delicate chain stitch to highlight the hem and accentuate the outline of the train.

Kylie's veil was 100% suri alpaca, with the involvement of three more alpaca breeders. Julienne Gelber of Yarramalong,



Kylie's 100% suri alpaca bridal veil



Kylie with parents Keith (in 25% alpaca suit) and Jeanette Hollingworth

NSW kindly supplied one of her best suri fleeces, which was hand spun by Darrel "Beaver" Laughton from Queensland. Janice Ward of Young, NSW, then knitted the thread into an exquisite lightweight veil, which gave the entire wedding creation its unique finishing touch.

After a late final fitting all was ready for the big day. With more than 130 guests arriving at "Dorroughby" from all over the country nature suddenly saw fit to change the colour of the clear blue droughtprolonging sky. The property was buffeted by gale force winds and whipped by sheets of substance some old lags claimed to recognise as rain. A large marquee erected to accommodate the reception was being lifted from the ground and threatened to disappear skywards until the chef, who had been hired for the occasion, intervened. He

attached his substantial frame to one of the main uprights and dared the elements to ruin his gourmet event. Fortunately as the designated moment approached there was a lull in the storm and the wedding ceremony proceeded as planned in a gazebo overlooking the property's main dam. Kylie's stunning alpaca gown was finally blessed by the afternoon sunshine it deserved and the many guests were able to celebrate the occasion long and hard into the early hours of the next day - in a marquee thankfully still firmly in place.

Kylie and Rohan have now made "Dorroughby" their home. While Rohan pursues his successful building career Kylie is managing 2,000 merinos and, more importantly of course, is supervising the care and genetic improvement of their herd of more than 100 alpacas.

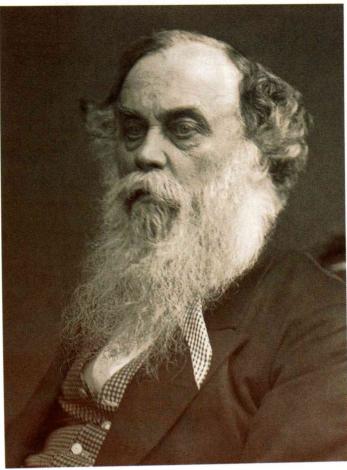


The Bradford Tinkerer

by COLIN LOCK Lindin Alpacas, NSW

If asked who they thought was the most important pioneer in the alpaca industry, I suspect many readers of this journal would nominate Charles Ledger. Whilst Ledger overcame enormous odds to get his flock to Australia only to have his hopes dashed by the governments of the time, there was another pioneer in England whose discovery was the reason behind the attempts to set up the industry in Australia. This person was Titus Salt and as the 200th anniversary of his birth will be celebrated during September 2003, it is an opportune time to learn a little more about this interesting man.

itus was born in Morley, West Yorkshire on the 20th September 1803 the eldest of Daniel and Grace Salt's eight children. Apprenticed as a woolstapler Titus learnt how to select and buy good fleeces at auction, how to sort the wool according to the length, fineness and softness of its fibre and how to wash and comb it in preparation for spinning. At the completion of his apprenticeship Titus joined his father's firm in Bradford as a wool buyer. This involved travelling and on one of Salt's trips he purchased a large quantity of unwanted Donskoi wool that had been imported from Russia. Donskoi was a breed of unimproved sheep whose fleece was generally associated with carpet wools. Unfortunately no one was willing to spin it for him so he set about discovering a way of doing it himself. He was successful and found that the wool made a very good worsted yarn. Inspired by this the textile manufacturing business of Daniel Salt and Son was formed in 1829.



Sir Titus Salt

1997 Saltaire Tourist Information Centre and Falcon Books.

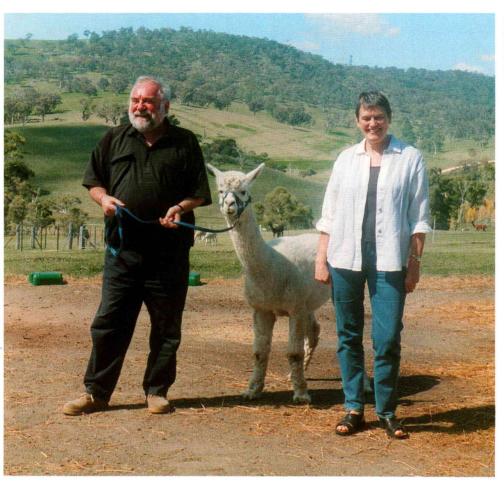
The initial exports of alpaca fibre from Peru were to Spain but most of it was then sent on to France and Germany for further basic processing. The first attempts to spin the fibre in England occurred in 1808 but technical problems caused the material to be regarded as unworkable. Similar results to attempts by Benjamin Outram in 1830 seemed to confirm this opinion. Later investigation would show that it was the style in which the manufacturers were trying to weave the yarn that was causing the problem. They were trying to produce a camlet, which was traditionally a mixture of wool and silk. In medieval Asia camel hair or angora wool was used for the same purpose.

Titus Salt's chance discovery of the wonders of alpaca fleece was described by Charles Dickens in *Household Words* in 1853. A more recent account is this quote from *Enlightened Entrepreneurs*:

"One day in 1834, while on a buying visit to Liverpool docks, he noticed a pile of

300 or so dirty-looking bales lying in the corner of a warehouse. They turned out to be fleeces of the alpaca, an animal closely related to the llama and native to Peru. Out of interest Salt pulled out a handful of the evil-smelling wool and examined it. He was impressed by the straightness and length of the fibres. Several weeks later he returned to the warehouse where the fleeces were still lying forlorn and unwanted. This time Salt took a sample back to Bradford in his handkerchief and experimented with spinning it. He found that it produced a high-quality glossy yarn. To the astonishment and delight of the brokers, who had long given up all hope of selling them, he offered to buy the alpaca fleeces at eight-pence a pound.

Salt's chance discovery on the quayside started a new industry which was to make Bradford and the surrounding district one of the most prosperous regions of Britain over the next half-century. It took considerable time and patience to spin and weave the



(I to r) Daniel Salt (Sir Titus' great-grandson), Purrumbete Sir Titus Salt (owned by Lesley Drake) and Christina Hart (Daniel Salt's daughter). Photo taken by Pam Savage at Tarana, NSW.

alpaca into cloth but once the necessary machinery and techniques had been perfected the result was a material which had the gloss and rustling 'frou-frou' effect of silk but at much less cost and with greater durability. In 1837 Salt introduced Alpaca Orleans, a fabric made of cotton and alpaca, which became a favourite dress material with Victorian ladies for the next fifty years. With its stiffness and its lustrous sheen, achieved by stretching the cotton warp and bringing the alpaca weft to the surface, it was particularly suitable for crinolines and was also in heavy demand for mourning wear. The success of the fabric was assured when Queen Victoria sent Salt the fleeces of the two alpacas she kept in Windsor Park to be made into cloth."

So although Titus Salt didn't invent Orleans, a fabric that usually had a cotton warp and a mohair weft, he refined the spinning of alpaca fleece and then found an application for the marvellous yarn in the

form of Alpaca Orleans. Accounts vary, but some quote that within five years of Salt perfecting the processing of alpaca fibre about 910 tonnes of it were being imported into England for a price of 30 pence a pound.

Apart from this tinkerer overcoming the technical difficulties of processing alpaca fibre and thus laying the foundations of a new industry there is much more to his story. By 1850 Salt was a very wealthy man who owned 5 mills that were employing over 2000 people. It was because of this and similar employment opportunities that the population of Bradford was the fastest growing in the Western world.

However the infrastructure was not able to keep pace and Bradford had become a dirty, polluted and unsanitary place. In fact a German writer living there in the 1840's wrote, "Every factory town in England is a paradise in comparison with this hole."

Compounding the problem for some textile workers was their skills attracted low rates

of pay and thus they were subjected to the worst of these terrible living conditions. Some 70% of woolcomber's children died before the age of 15. Bradford had the highest proportion of malformed, undernourished and crippled children than anywhere else in England.

Significantly though, about this time Salt had also reached a turning point in his life and was contemplating leaving the business to his sons and retiring to an estate. Perhaps influenced by similar projects he decided on a course of action that would be good for both his business and his employees. Rather than retire he would relocate his business and build a model community. It was not an entirely philanthropic gesture, for although successful he was uncomfortable out of his business element and anyway his mills needed updating.

In an effort to overcome several problems Salt decided to move his operations some 5 kilometres out of Bradford to a location beside the River Aire. Here he purchased 20 hectares of land that were well serviced by road, canal and railway. As well, the essential supply of clean water was conveniently available from the river. Salt's concept was to build a large efficient mill with nearby housing and facilities for his workers. He engaged two local architects to design the estate to be called Saltaire.

The first stage of the huge undertaking was the construction of the town focal point, the mill. He replaced his five mills with a 6-storey Italianate styled building that eventually covered over 2.6 hectares. The spinning hall on the top floor covered nearly 3,700 m² and was the largest single room in the Western world. This enormous mill was designed to allow all the processes necessary to convert a raw bale into dyed and woven cloth to be carried out entirely

in house. There were 12,000 looms capable of producing over 27 kilometres of cloth a day. The mill was opened with much fanfare on Salt's 50th birthday and was attended by some 3,500 people, including 2,300 workers from Bradford who arrived by special trains.

The next stage was to provide housing. Away from the mill on the other side of the Midland Railway line a carefully laid out residential area was planned. The streets were all straight and wide compared with the dangerous, narrow, twisting streets of Bradford. A variety of houses were built between 1854 and 1868, the layout usually dependant upon the occupant's status in the mill. Even the most basic house had a living room, two bedrooms, a scullery and a half cellar. Water and gas were available to every house that also featured an outside toilet, quite innovative at the time.

As the houses were beginning to be occupied, Titus Salt celebrated the 3rd anniversary of the opening of the mill by hosting another grand party, this time at his residence Crow Nest in nearby Lightcliffe. Over 3000 people arrived by train and were led to the house grounds by a drum and fife band. A huge feast was offered, followed by celebrations that evening back in Bradford. At Crow Nest, Salt kept angora goats, llamas and alpacas. The herd of 12 alpacas had been acquired from the Earl of Derby, but after carefully managing them for several years Salt eventually decided they weren't suited to the English climate.

Titus was not a teetotaller however he ensured there were no public houses in the village, as he believed a drinker was slack and possibly dangerous in the workplace.

He was a keen Congregationalist and the first public building constructed was a church opened in 1859. This was sited directly opposite the mill because Salt believed his talents and wealth were given to him by God and without God's help the mill and Saltaire would not exist. The Salt family motto is Quid non, deo juvante "What not with God helping". He did not insist on church attendance, but it is suggested that worker's enhanced their chances of obtaining housing in Saltaire if they did.

The workday started at 6 am with a half hour break at 8 am and one hour at

12.30 pm. Saltaire residents could simply walk home for breakfast and lunchtime meals. To cater for the commuters Saltaire had a dining room capable of seating up to 800.

It is suggested that Salt disliked seeing washing on backyard lines so he built a public baths and wash house where residents could have a tub as well as wash and dry their laundry. Of all the things he did this was the least appreciated as people preferred the privacy of their home to carry out their ablutions. It was one of the first buildings to fall into disuse once the Salt family moved on.

Once the housing phase consisting of 850 dwellings was finished other construction began. A school building was opened in 1868 offering segregated lessons for boys and girls who would work half a day in the mill and then spend the remainder of the day at school.

Although Saltaire was the most obvious example of Titus Salt's philanthropy he was a generous supporter to many causes. In 1859 he was elected to the House of Commons as the MP representing Bradford, but did not enjoy the experience. This was possibly because, although exceedingly knowledgeable in his field he was not well read and did not relish public speaking. Although at times known to procrastinate he was fundamentally a doer, he relinquished the position in 1861.

All this is not to say there weren't problems in Saltaire, some academics have opinions on the ulterior motives behind employer-designed villages. On a more practical level there were two strikes, one in 1868 lasting four days until Salt came down very firmly on the participants. There was further antagonism between the company and woolsorters handling alpaca and mohair fibre when concerns over worker's susceptibility to anthrax were made public.

Queen Victoria acknowledged Titus
Salt when she made him baronet in 1869;
he in turn acknowledged the alpaca which
features on the crest of the family coat of
arms. Titus Salt died on the 29 December
1876 and during the funeral procession
from Lightcliffe to Saltaire it is estimated
120,000 people turned out to pay their last
respects. There were 40,000 mourners in

the procession itself with 10,000 others in Saltaire to see the coffin placed into the family mausoleum. All the surrounding mills closed for the day as a mark of respect.

Titus' son Titus Junior took control of the business but he died only 11 years later. The business succumbed to bankruptcy in 1892. The operation was taken over by a group of businessmen but despite some good times, over the next 90 years for a variety of reasons the mill became less viable until it was finally closed down in 1985. Its layout unsuited to modern production methods the mill and surrounding decaying buildings faced an ominous future.

However in 1987 a lateral thinking businessman purchased the site and converted part of the mill into an art gallery. Other areas now house manufacturing and specialised retail outlets. Refurbishment work has been carried out on the other buildings giving them a new lease of life, albeit functioning in a completely different way than was envisaged 150 years ago.

The mill divested itself of the village in 1930. At the time of the sale less than a quarter of the mill employees lived in Saltaire because the houses were small and inefficient by contemporary standards and thus no longer popular with families. Over the succeeding years Saltaire gradually became a less than desirable area to live.

However with the reopening of the railway station and the redevelopment of the mill site, Saltaire has seen a part renaissance. The style of housing, suitably upgraded, has become popular with commuting working couples and singles. During 2002 UNESCO proclaimed Saltaire a World Heritage Site.

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Update on ET at Benleigh

by SANDRA WRIGHT Australian Alpaca Association

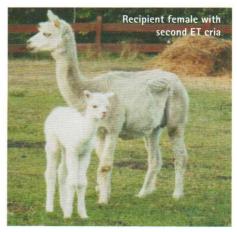
Australia's first alpaca cria to be born as a result of embryo transfer (ET) at Benleigh Alpaca Stud in Victoria early last year, were introduced to "Alpacas Australia" readers in the Winter 2002 issue heralding an exciting development for the Australian Alpaca industry.

ince then the scientific approach has continued to advance Benleigh's breeding program enjoying a success rate of 75% of implants achieving pregnancy, in line with a similar rate to that achieved in a natural mating program. Initially Allan and Carolyn Jinks were reluctant to commit their top range of breeding females to the program until they were confident that the process would not adversely affect the animals' fertility.



Now, buoyed by the success of 2002, Allan and Carolyn have committed some of their top quality breeding stock to the ET program and are being rewarded with a higher ratio of top quality cria per year.

Benleigh's highest quality females joined to top males are flushed on two separate occasions before being allowed to carry their next embryo to term naturally. The flushed embryos are then implanted into female recipients that are proven good breeders but



which carry less than desirable traits like blue eyes, poor conformation or poor quality fleece. The program has progressed to the stage where one of the original recipient females has produced a second ET cria, and female cria born as a result of ET in 2002 are now pregnant themselves.

The opportunity for giant strides in overall herd improvement and numbers is evident and the future of the Australian alpaca industry is the lucky recipient.



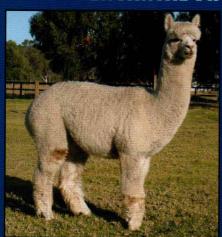
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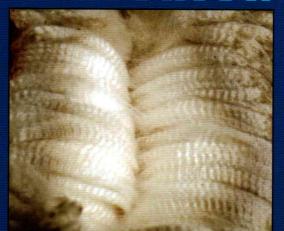
76 Arcadia Rd, GALSTON, NSW 2159 Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth Ph: 02 9653 1696 Fax: (02) 9653 1040 Email: alpacandes@ozemail.com.au "Dorroughby" Kenyu Rd, BOOROWA, NSW 2586 Kylie, Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth Ph & Fax: 02 6385 8305 Email: dorroughby@bigpond.com.au

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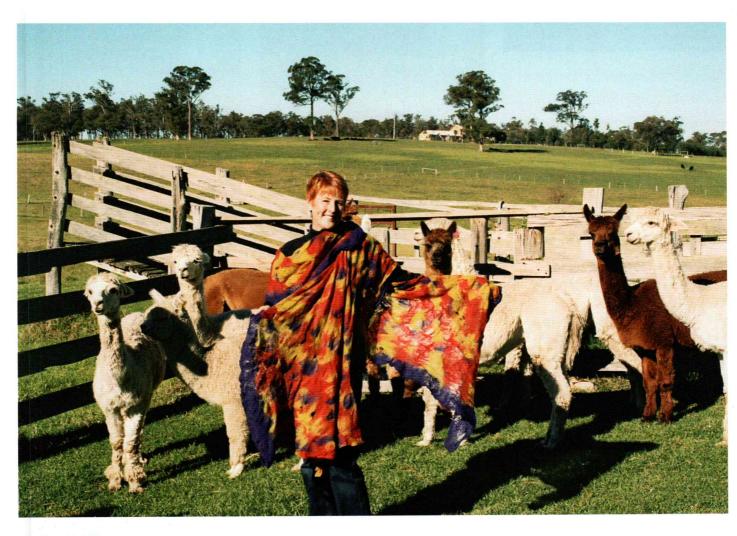






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Science behind the Art



by KAYE McNEILL Tambo Downs Alpaca Stud, VIC

ALPACA UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

There are two sayings I love which apply very strongly to our alpaca industry. The first is, "If you can't rub your face in it, it's not worth wearing." The second is by Oscar Wilde, "If everyone is wearing it, it's just not fashion." We definitely want to create an alpaca product that is beautiful and soft to wear against the skin, yet unique, stylish and fashionable. This can be achieved on a large scale by commercial processes of knitting and woven yarn. It can also be achieved by **felting**.

What is felting you may well ask? Felting is a good jumper gone wrong in the washing machine – out emerges a size 8 jumper that used to be size 14! Felting is currently seen as an art form, where natural fibre is deliberately heated, pounded, rolled and made into a beautiful one-off fashion garment. Felt making is the oldest textile art in the world. Pieces of alpaca felt garments have been found by archaeologists dating back to 4,000 BC. Items of felted clothing have been found on the fossilised body of the oldest human, found in the Alps of central Europe.

Felt makers are artists, often describing the felting process as 'shrinkage'. However fleece science can be used to explain that there's a lot more than 'shrinkage' happening.

Commercial producers of yarns and fabric spend millions of research dollars on methods to prevent shrinkage, felting, pilling and protection of natural fibre. On the opposite end of the scale, felt makers are industriously spending enormous time

and effort developing methods to cause felting to happen in a fast and controlled manner, and are very observant and excited about the process.

Any natural fibre will felt providing the outer cuticle or scale of the fibre has the opportunity to rachet onto an adjacent fibre

Some luxurious natural fibres such as suri are somewhat impossible to felt, unlike Finn sheep or fine merino, which felts before your eyes. As I am an alpaca breeder of suri and huacaya and an artist using all types of natural fibres, I am fascinated by the science of felt making and seek to answer questions about how it happens.

What are the traits of those fibres that create difficulty in felting? Or alternatively which are the traits of fibres that felt quickly and most effectively? Felting is the process whereby natural fibres are laid down on a surface, where the scales of the fibre hook onto each other through a process of heating and agitation.

Felt making is usually done on a bamboo blind where wool/alpaca tops are laid down, dampened and rolled up. The repeated rolling in the bamboo blind causes agitation and movement of the fibres, which are pushed together in the direction that one is rolling in. The blind is unrolled and the felted material checked and then re-rolled in the opposite direction to allow fibres to felt together evenly. The original layout of wool tops may reduce in length and width by 30% to 50%. The word 'shrinkage' is a very simplistic way to describe a number of physical happenings that have occurred in the felting process. Each fibre does not shrink in length or width. Instead there are two major physical occurrences happening jointly. One is bendability of each fibre and the second is the rachet effect.

Bendability is an underestimated factor in felt making. Fibre diameter affects *bendability*.

The Rachet Factor - during the felting process the scales of each fibre are pushed together and hook onto one another similar to shingles on a roof and prevent a reverse motion. The actual length of the fibre does not shrink, it is the pushing together of the fibres towards each other and the hooking of the scales on the fibres that causes the

reduction in size. Hence if a natural fibre has scales it will felt. Finer diameter wool will have more scales available per volume of fibre and will pack down or felt more quickly than broader micron wool.

Scale height varies greatly between sheep's wool, huacaya and suri. Because of this the speed of felting is different between these fibres. Huacaya has half the scale height to that of merino, that being approximately 0.4 micron for huacaya compared to 0.8 micron for merino. This can be seen under electron microscope images see: www.tambodowns.com – images are compliments of Professor Xungai Wang of Deakin University, Geelong.

Suri fibre has even flatter scales than huacaya. The profile of fibre scales of suri being flatter and longer, and fewer in number along the fibre shaft than huacaya, contributes to a smoother and more slippery feel. Suri is almost impossible to felt because of the flatter scale height, with virtually no *rachet* action happening in the felting process. The flatter scale height of suri also allows light to be reflected uniformly across the fibre, which gives a pearliness, yolkiness or lustre.

Merino fibres with more rugged or serrated scale height will not reflect light and be quite dull in appearance compared to suri and huacaya. The pearliness or lustre of suri is due to light reflection, little to do with oil or lanolin, as there is 1-3% in alpaca, compared to 17% in sheep's wool.

Guard hair, or kemp or medullated fibre

will not felt as these fibres consist of largely medullary cells, with absence of scales. The fibre diameter is usually over 30 micron, so bendability factor is low. Similarly broad micron fibres over 30 micron with some scales will rachet to each other, but due to low bendability factor will not felt in well. These broader micron fibres and guard hairs will compress down, but will often protrude like arrows in the end product and cause the prickle factor.

The speed or efficiency of creating felt is determined by the fibre source one begins with. Heating, hydration and firmness of the rolling or throwing action will all affect the speed of creating felt.

Scientifically speaking, wearing the finest of fibre with high *bendability* factor brings the greatest of pleasure, "If you can't rub your face in it, it's not worth wearing."

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- Professor Xungai Wang Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, AUST.

Footnote: The references of fine and broad, images of merino, huacaya and suri, are all available on www.tambodowns.com

About the author: Kaye McNeill is an alpaca breeder of both Suri and Huacaya, coloured and white. Kaye McNeill is also a Textile Artist holding a number of exhibitions, and recently a joint exhibition of Fabulous Feltmakers of East Gippsland at Queens Hall, Parliament House, Melbourne. Kaye regularly uses alpaca in her textile art pieces.



Fine Huacaya

Pa 1 = 27.08 µm
Pb 1 = 40.5°

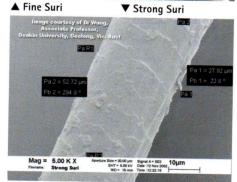
Pa 2 = 53.12 µm
Pb 2 = 311.5°

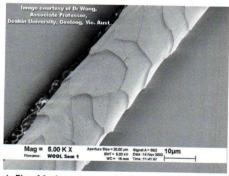
Strong Huacaya

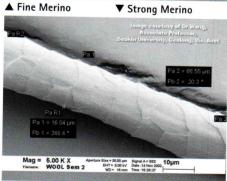
Pa 3 = 61.34 µm
Pb 3 = 312.0°

Image courtesy of Dr Wang,
Paskin University Gestone (See Sure)
Paskin University Gestone (See Sure)









Early live camelid exports from South America

~ A PRESENT DAY HISTORICAL CONNECTION ~

by FRANCIS E.B. RAINSFORD Internacional de Comercio S.A. Arequipa, Peru

The British Embassy in Lima's current
First Secretary (Commercial), Mr Martin
Lamport, has unearthed a series of
letters and writings from his family
history that sheds light on one of South
America's earliest and most famous
exports of live camelids.

r Lamport's great, great
grandfather, Mr Henry
Swinglehurst, was a mining
engineer from Kendal in Cumbria, England
who lived some thirty years in Peru, Bolivia
and Chile during the nitrate boom that
was prevalent from around the 1830's
to 1860's. During the course of his work
he encountered another Englishman, Mr
Charles Ledger, who had been contracted
by the Colony of New South Wales to
introduce alpacas into Australia.

Henry Swinglehurst, writing in later life and when he was living in retirement in Hincaster House, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, recalls Charles Ledger's endeavours with genuine admiration:

"Few travels, in any age or by any person, could be more worthy of record, or more interesting, than the account of Mr. Ledger's attempt to introduce the alpaca from Bolivia into Australia."



Referring to some lecture notes that Charles Ledger gave him for a paper that he presented in Valparaiso, Chile (when Henry Swinglehurst was Honorary Secretary of the Literary and Scientific Society), Henry Swinglehurst relates:

"In the notes given to me by Mr. Ledger, he says that Joseph Hegan, Esquire, so far back as 1828, dedicated his exertions to obtaining the wool of the alpaca. The first alpaca wool that arrived in England was an unfortunate business, and many years elapsed before more was shipped, but several lots of animals were sent to England, yet with little success. Mr Ledger began to think that the only way to success was to train the animal before removing it from its native home. With that objective he rented, with help of others, an estate in the centre of the Cordilleras, and began his hard task. In 1845 the Peruvian Government passed a law to prevent the exportation. In 1850 a vessel arrived from Sydney, the owners not being aware of the prohibition, and application was made by Messrs. Boardman and Dickson to the Peruvian Government for permission to ship 400 animals, but they were referred to the decree of 1845."

Mr Martin Lamport, First Secretary (Commercial) at the British Embassy in Lima and great, great grandson of Mr Henry Swinglehurst.

The Peruvian Government's camelid export ban forced Charles Ledger, in 1851, to assemble a herd of 800 alpacas and llamas in Bolivia. He then sailed to Australia with an Indian shepherd to check the conditions there and, having been satisfied that the environment for rearing and breeding there was suitable, they returned to Bolivia in 1852.

Thereafter followed two clandestine odysseys that were to take 5½ years in total before any animals were ready to sail to Australia.

The first journey commenced in Bolivia with some 400 alpacas and llamas and, after a long and arduous crossing of the Andes in a mainly south easterly direction crossing into Argentina and then back in a westerly direction to Chile, the party arrived at the town of Copiapo in Chile with only 50 animals (the majority having perished in a snow storm along with two Indian guides).

Charles Ledger returned to Bolivia and set out again with his remaining herd of 406 alpacas and llamas together with 9 vicuñas and eventually reached the port of Caldera (near Copiapo) in 1858 with 421 animals ready to sail to Australia.

In one of his letters, Henry
Swinglehurst credits Charles Ledger with
the successful cross-breeding of alpacas
and llamas - which today are categorised
as "Huarizo" (male llama crossed with
female alpaca) and "Misti' (male alpaca
crossed with female llama) - where he
relates:

"He has proved the possibility of crossbreeding between the llama and alpaca to advantage. In two generations it is impossible to distinguish between the wool of the cross-breed and that of pure alpaca, whilst the cross-breed, called the Huarizo, has the advantage in size, strength, robustness of constitution, and less delicacy in its choice of food - qualities derived from its mother, the llama. The alpaca, in its native state eats only marsh grass of the valleys, and the llama eats the coarse, but nourishing grasses of the mountainside. This crossbreed eats from either, but prefers the common pasture grass.

Ledger also captured, whilst young, and domesticated them, nine vicuñas, which having been sucked by llamas, will breed with them. This being done on the march was a great undertaking."

Present day alpaca fibre users' opinions may differ somewhat with Henry Swinglehurst's observations concerning the quality of fibre referred to!

The final letter that Henry Swinglehurst received from Charles Ledger was written aboard the 'Salvadora' as it prepared to sail from Caldera on 22nd September 1858:

"My Dear Sir, – on the 17th I completed the shipment of 336 animals, without a single accident. I am certainly worn out, but in excellent spirits, and as sanguine as ever, – in fact more so, as the animals appear to take readily to the change Every animal eats and drinks well. I sold twelve animals to Abbot, so as not to crowd the rest: he takes them to France ...

... P.S. – We have been detained by strong northerly winds. We have now a southerly one and are going out; my last letter. Abbot goes in the "Lima"; you will see him and his animals at Valparaiso." Many years later, Henry Swinglehurst writes, somewhat wistfully:

"All the above to me (Henry Swinglehurst) now seems like a dream; 35 years are gone since receiving the above letter ...

... What became of Mr Ledger after his visit to Australia has never come to my knowledge, but notwithstanding all his efforts, I fear that the animals, though bred and nursed for placing them in safe pastures in Australia, must have found the climate unsuitable, or more in the past thirty years would have been heard of them."

Thanks to a book published in New York in 1882 by John L. Hayes, we know that Henry Swinglehurst's fears for Charles Ledger's animals in Australia were indeed realised. In "The Angora Goat; Its Origin, Culture and Products with an appendix on The Alpaca And Its Congeners; Or, The Wool-Bearing Animals Of The Cordilleras Of The Andes", Mr Hayes records:

"Embarking for Sydney in New South Wales, he (Charles Ledger) arrived at that port with 260 head in excellent condition. The flock, immediately on its arrival, was driven to an elevated locality, the district of Maneroo – a point previously selected by Mr. Ledger. He writes to a friend soon after their arrival, "the animals are admirably recovered, in spite of the heat of the season and the privations of the voyage."

The next report we have of the alpacas is a letter from Mr. Edward Wilson, a distinguished propagator of acclimation in Australia, published in the "Times" in 1862. He says,

"The alpacas of Mr. Ledger have rapidly multiplied. They are exempt from every malady, and appear to accommodate themselves better to the indigenous plants than to the clover and lucerne and other cultivated plants first given to them ... The propagation of the alpaca in Australia is only a question of time."

It is really sad, in view of the subsequent results which I am compelled to state, to see the extravagant hopes that this intrepid enthusiast built upon his enterprise.

He declared that the descendants from his animals alone would be sufficiently numerous before 50 years to supply an exportation of wool to the value of fifteen million pounds sterling!

The final report we have of this enterprise, from which so much was hoped, is in 1878, and is as follows: -

"At first the experiment of Mr Ledger presented most encouraging prospects; the herds continued healthy, and increased in numbers; but gradually the subtle influences of the loss of their native mountain climate became apparent – the creatures drooped, their numbers dwindled, and for the present the undertaking must be regarded as a complete failure".*

Looking back today from the standpoint of Australia's flourishing alpaca breeding industry both Charles Ledger and Henry Swinglehurst would no doubt be very contented to learn how things have turned out some 150 years later.

As to why the experiment originally failed, it is possibly due to the evidence suggesting that, although the Colony of New South Wales requested alpacas, what they actually received was a mix of alpacas and llamas constantly cross-breeding and converting to huarizos (and, what happened to the 9 vicuñas, also cross-bred by all accounts?).

If nothing else, the endeavours of men such as Charles Ledger and Henry Swinglehurst are a testament to the unique blend of entrepeneurial drive and adventurousness that so defined the Victorian Age.

^{*} Encyclopedia Britannica, art. "Alpaca", ed. of 1878.

2003 Hawkesbury/Blue Mountains Region Alpaca Fiesta

by LYN DICKSON Hawkesbury / Blue Mountains NSW Region

This year, Hawkesbury / Blue Mountains Region held its 10th annual Alpaca Fiesta over two days in May, culminating in the sixth and most successful auction ever held since the introduction of the auction into the Fiesta program. Total sales reached \$97,295 for the eleven female alpacas offered, an average of \$8,845, the top price being \$17,050 for a young grey female from Forestglen Alpaca Stud. In addition to the auction sales, breeders recorded a further \$65,000 in pen sales over the course of the weekend.

Jennifer Carey holds the \$17,050 toppriced alpaca female, "Forestglen Giselle", bred by her mother, Maureen Carey, of Forestglen Alpacas, Millthorpe, and bought by Therese Badcock. Serena Lodge Alpacas, Stowport, Tasmania. Ms Carey is with Brian Cannan (left) and Paul

Carroll of Century 21,

he Hawkesbury Fiesta grew from very humble beginnings in a paddock at the back of the

Windsor Butterfly Farm in 1994, when a small, but enthusiastic group of local members mounted a display of alpacas to educate and attract new members. Since then it has become the major marketing initiative for the Region and its members to market alpacas, alpaca products, stud services and all manner of alpaca-related activities, while still mindful of the original concept of educating and attracting new members. The venue is now a fabulous undercover area at the Hawkesbury Race Course, complete with well-appointed seminar rooms, excellent catering facilities and adjoining manicured lawns.

The huge success of this year's Fiesta is the result of building on the marketing strategies developed over the past nine years, combined with many hundreds of hours of Regional members' volunteer labour; a like-minded group of people willing to pull together for the common

good; and a planning process, second only to the logistics employed for *Operation* Desert Storm.

Planning for the May Fiesta begins in the previous December each year, some six months ahead of the scheduled event date, when Regional members are invited to nominate alpacas for inclusion in the auction. The final selection of animals for the auction takes place during a weekend in January at a central inspection location. Even at this early stage, our experienced auction manager, Paul Carroll from Century 21 and Graeme Dickson, auction convenor, begin setting the scene for would-be vendors to ensure auction success.

Potential vendors arrive at designated times, alpacas are inspected by an accredited AAA judge and an experienced person from the regional committee and ranked according to a set of predetermined criteria. There are no inspection fees, and vendors may nominate more than one alpaca for inspection, but only one per stud will be eligible for inclusion in the

auction. The entry rules were established at the inception of the first auction, when a survey of regional members indicated that breeders required help to market their alpacas. All alpacas are fleece tested and photographed on the inspection day, and the rankings then submitted to an auction committee, who make the final decision on the selection of up to twelve alpacas for inclusion in the auction. This year there were thirty alpacas nominated for selection.

Planning now hits full swing for the rest of January, with order of presentation of animals decided, contracts signed to indemnify the Association, (as the Region is the facilitator of the auction only), non-refundable entry fees paid, photographs selected, information checked and re-checked and catalogue descriptions written and re-written. Then while most members enjoy a well-earned summer break, our very own desktop publisher, Alicia Anderson goes into full-scale production for the Fiesta catalogue to

Alpaca investor, Fiona Maxwell, with a female purchased at the Fiesta from Prestige Alpaca Stud, Kurmond.

ensure its readiness by the beginning of March for major marketing opportunities at Castle Hill and Sydney Royal Shows.

We print 10,000 catalogues which are distributed at all regional shows and events prior to May, mailed out to all AAA members, distributed to target researched rural regional postcode areas via Australia Post and of course supplies strategically placed on counters at many regional businesses and "watering holes". This year we had interstate telephone bidders, and a number of interstate and New Zealand visitors as a result of the catalogue mail-out.

Parallel with the efforts of the auction/ catalogue/distribution teams, various other Fiesta activity managers are also on the go. Clive Read, Fiesta Co-ordinator for the past two years, has a team of volunteers who begin progressively winding up for their slice of Fiesta action. February sees the start of co-ordination for the Fashion Parade; sourcing garments from local breeders and businesses; some severe "arm twisting" to obtain suitable models; then matching up garments/models/colour combinations; and co-ordinating the logistics of the Stud Male Parade which is run in conjunction with the Fashion Parade on the day. Sandra Vella, this year's fashion organiser, felt the highlight of the Parade was the gorgeous alpaca wedding gown and veil owned and modelled by Kylie Martin (nee Hollingworth), only six weeks after the original "release" on her wedding day!

Other activities all requiring team efforts to progress from the drawing board stages are Trade Stalls, Stud Male Silent Auction, Information and Welcome Desk, AAA Merchandise Stall, Fleece Display, Educational Mini-Seminars, Spinning and Craft Demonstrations, Husbandry and Shearing Demonstrations, Raffle Tickets, Hug-an-Alpaca Display, Banners and Signage, Dinner and Fun Auction and the very important Breeder Display Pen layout and set-up.



photo courtesy of "The Land

Financial members of the region who have a herd prefix are guaranteed one breeder display pen at a cost of \$50 for the two day Fiesta. Additional pens, space permitting, are \$100 each. These pens afford individual breeders the opportunity to sell animals and market their studs and services. From March to April, members apply for their required pens, and then the logistical headaches begin. Fiona and Andrew Maxwell provided a computerised matrix for the layout and undertook the mammoth task of organizing the set-up this time.

As the Fiesta draws closer, Paul Carroll sends a series of e-mails/faxes to the auction vendors with guidelines for presenting and marketing the alpacas at their peak for auction day. The marketing team is now fully involved, sending press releases to all major local, metropolitan and rural publications and radio stations. This year, both of Sydney's major newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* picked up the information and ran stories on the weekend of the Fiesta, with a page 3 photo and article in Saturday's Herald – high profile publicity in anyone's language.

Auction day 2003 saw a 500 strong crowd gather around the auction arena - of which 55 were registered bidders. The much anticipated alpaca raffle draw was made prior to the auction and was won by Eddie and Anita Neeser, this being the first year the winner came from within the Region. Spirited bidding took place to sell all eleven lots under the guidance of our professional auctioneer, Brian Cannon. With total alpaca sales for the weekend grossing around \$163,000, not to mention the contacts made for future business opportunities, the Hawkesbury / Blue Mountains Region clearly showed the viability of the industry in this area. A subsequent spin-off, thanks to the efforts of all the hard-working members who contributed, has been to earn more marketing dollars for the Region's coffers.

So what's next? A critique at the first regional meeting after the Fiesta, to establish what can be improved for next time and followed up with a regional New Breeders' Seminar in June, an educational weekend to cater to the needs of new and potentially new alpaca owners drawn from the Fiesta weekend. Then the planning starts all over again for 2004!



WINDSONG VALLEY ALPACAS

LONG ESTABLISHED WEST AUSTRALIAN ALPACA BREEDERS





Our most valuable alpaca?

by DENISE MOYSEY Arcadian Alpacas, SA

He might not be our most valuable alpaca, but Piglet* is certainly our most invaluable. In fact, he is the 'right-handman' at Arcadian Alpacas.

Piglet the hero
- battlescarred but ready to soldier on!

or the past four years Piglet has worked tirelessly and cheerfully as our 'teaser' and spit-off male.

He has an abundance of desirable traits:

- Good temperament and handle-ability,
- real persistence without aggression,
- a truly great, non-stop orgle and
- an uncrushable ego!

Most breeders seem to have at least one stud male these days, also used for spit-offs and perhaps teasing too, but smaller breeders or those starting out might not yet have a working or spit-off male.

WHY TEASE?

'Teasing' (the controlled introduction of a mature male to the female, perhaps repeated over several days) can be an effective way to settle a nervous female and have her ready for mating to the selected sire. It is particularly useful when preparing maidens for their first mating.

In bigger herds, it is easy to have maidens in sight and sound of matings so

that they start to 'get the idea' and their interest can be noted. Some young alpacas really do seem to need to 'learn' about the birds and the bees

This can be a real problem in smaller herds where there is no resident male and matings are few or conducted at another property. The introduction of a mature male, hell-bent on one thing only, can be really frightening to inexperienced maidens in this situation! Again, especially where travel is involved, preparation of the female before mating can save time and dollars.

WHY SPIT-OFF?

To achieve good productivity in our herds, we need to be aware of the reproductive status of our breeding stock.

When an open female is mated we do not know the status of her follicle wave. She might have no follicular activity at all for several days and if mating occurs during that time, she will not ovulate. If we wait until day 14 (or longer) post-mating to test her, we will not know why she has not conceived.

By trying a female 6-9 days after her mating we will learn if she has ovulated or not. A 'positive spit-off' at this time is a very good indicator of ovulation but should be repeated at day 12-14 to test for conception. A 'negative spit-off', when the female sits again for the male, usually indicates no ovulation and the female can be re-mated then, with an increased likelihood of a good ovulation.

Remember that spit-offs are a guide only. They are usually reliable but there are occasions when a female might reject the male without ovulation or when a female will sit again, despite having already ovulated or conceived. Maidens, in particular, can be tricky, being sometimes too inexperienced or submissive to reject a male effectively.

Many breeders take advantage of 'mobile' stud services and keeping tabs on the status of our females is a professional courtesy that can save the 'mobile' service an unnecessary journey. The same logic applies before a female is travelled for a 'drive-by' mating.

SPIT-OFF FACILITIES

One could simply open the gate and let the male run through the herd, checking out the girls as he goes, or lead him through instead, but the best and most accurate spit-offs are done with an individual female in a yarded situation.

The yard needs to be large enough for her to run and the sides should be high enough and solid enough to prevent her jumping or pushing out.

An ideal spit-off yard is round, or at least without acute corners, and about 4 metres in diameter, with solid sides of 1.5 metres height. A smaller yard will cause flighty females more stress. A yard with open rails or wire mesh or less than 1.2 metre sides could lead to a flighty female being injured when trying to escape. Of course, few of us will have the 'ideal' yard but awareness of the 'ideal' should help us avoid problems with alternatives when setting-up our working areas.

TEASING AND SPITTING-OFF

At Arcadian Alpacas we conduct almost all this work with Piglet on lead. This is a practice we started years ago when we had a particularly thuggish stud male who would bolt into the yard and ram females against the fence without a note of orgle.

Perhaps because Piglet has been under lead-control during his formative years, he has developed a kind technique that doesn't knock the females about but is very persuasive. He orgles well before he is in the yard making the females quite aware of his intentions. He usually stands with his chin raised and continues to orgle for a while before even approaching the yarded female. If she moves away he simply follows her with chin up and orgles at full throttle. If they run, he runs, still orgling. If they spit, he stands his ground and keeps orgling. When a result is clear he is simply diverted away by hand direction near his face. He continues to orgle but is easily led away.

Observe your females closely. Their facial expressions and body language can tell you a great deal. Remember, they are all different! Some will stand their ground



A mature female giving Piglet the "evil eye".



This female has made no attempt to evade Piglet. She allows him to mount her but then turns and spits constantly without trying to escape his grip.

and growl or spit at the male. Others will never spit, but might run or kick if really hard-pushed. Most pregnant girls will show disgust or tension at the male's presence (watch for tension wrinkles near their eyes or mouths). What you are looking for is a change in behaviour to that when the female was receptive and mated – it might only be a subtle change in some girls.

When teasing a female in preparation for mating, Piglet is allowed to seduce her into a cush position whereupon he is soon pulled away from her. Sometimes we will allow him to get a female into cush two or three times in quick succession. This is where the male's temperament becomes

important – Piglet simply obliges each time and has never become aggressive or excessively frustrated. An experienced working male might become frustrated or aggressive and a young, less confident one might be put off if used for teasing, so most times it is preferable to use a 'teaser'.

Piglet really is a hero some days. Even when he has had a string of mature pregnant girls to spit-off and has a face covered in smelly green spit he continues to work willingly.

And as for the teasing ... well, we let him 'fiddle about' sometimes, whilst providing an appropriate 'chastity barrier' for the female! He certainly seems suspicious that there is 'more to it' than that, and must wonder why the working boys return to the paddock with contented smiles on their faces. He is, nevertheless, the 'head' macho of the group and he just gets on with his work.

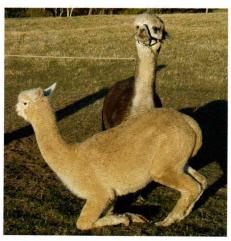
Piglet is sure to remain our most invaluable alpaca for years to come and we would strongly encourage all breeders who do not already have a good spit-off male to selectively acquire one, bearing in mind the traits we have found most desirable.

* In another life, Piglet was known as
"Arcady Gloucester", a show-winner of
several blue ribbons. The moniker has been
with him since criahood - not because of
his temperament or fatness but because
his bright pink cria-nose reminded family
friend, Ann Clark, of a piglet's!

TEASING A RECEPTIVE MAIDEN



INTERESTED – The maiden is attracted by Piglet's presence and orgling.

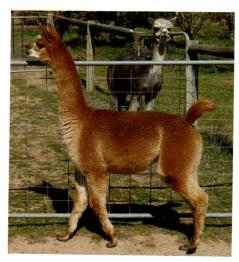


RECEPTIVE – His orgling has sent her weak at the knees...

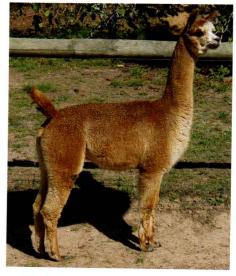


READY TO GO - She is obviously very receptive!

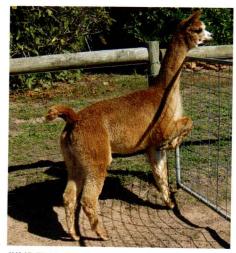
A MAIDEN WHO IS SPITTING-OFF WITHOUT SPITTING (typical of maidens, she is more panicked by the male)



AGITATION – This yarded maiden displays an erect posture of alarm at the male's proximity. She is moving about the yard in agitation. Note her raised chin, pricked ears and raised tail. Her mouth is also tense. This posture may be accompanied by nervous clucking.

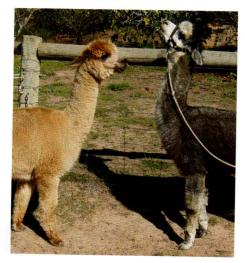


ALARM THREAT – The male has been brought into the yard and the maiden tries a stiff broadside pose, attempting to bluff the male away.



JUMP THREAT – Her bluff has faltered and panic takes over. She threatens to escape by jumping. This panic to escape is typical of many maidens.

A MATURE FEMALE WHO IS "ONE TOUGH COOKIE" AND STANDS HER GROUND



MEXICAN STAND-OFF – This mature female is standing her ground, clearly displeased and unimpressed despite Piglet's imperious orgling. Note the position of the ears, tense jaw and wrinkles under the eye.



CONFRONTATION – Piglet launches a frontal attack. The female is clearly ready to fight and vocalises her anger.



CROWDING - Piglet tries a bit of crowding to

A Miracle or Nature's Remedy?

by EVE MARSO Gentian Alpaca Stud, VIC

As a relative newcomer to the alpaca industry I have been taking in a large amount of information from other breeders, experimenting with diet and breeding formulae and using some valuable information from 35 years experience in dog breeding.

aving started in alpacas with three breeding females, I was surprised how my herd rapidly rose to 30 animals, among them 18 breeding females, the rest juveniles and studs.

Fecundity in dogs (Miniature Longhaired Dachshunds) never seemed to be a problem, only the occasional clumsy or awkward stud male requiring a helping hand (or a telephone book as a prop). My dogs' success

in the show ring and their long lifespan stems from "Natural Rearing" – nutrition based on the fact that dogs are not pure carnivores, but to an extent omnivorous like foxes and other canids. Cereals, berries, fruits and vegetables all play a large part in a balanced diet — mimicking the diet they would choose in the wild as closely as possible.

It was, therefore, with some surprise initially, then frustration, then disbelief, when 18 female alpacas would not spit off, but kept on dropping readily every time they saw a male in the distance. This went on for 6 months. I racked my brains as to the possible cause. I scoured the paddocks for errant weeds that might cause foetal abortion, tried different trace elements and minerals, used different studs (after carefully planned breeding program was shelved), rang various experienced breeders and several vets with alpaca experience across Victoria, all to no avail. However, as several breeders seemed to have a similar problem, with a high percentage of females not conceiving, I came to the conclusion that the drought has triggered the animals' breeding hormones to shut down. I even sprinkled 'rain' on the whole herd with a hose to simulate a drought breaker. Naïve me!

By sheer coincidence I discovered an old book by Dr D. C. Jarvis, M.D. entitled, "Folk Medicine". Based on the doctor's 50 years study of the tough, long-living mountain folk of Vermont, USA, it includes well tried theories on the treatment and prevention of a wide range of diseases and some that defy conventional diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Jarvis was asked to study a herd of 45 registered dairy cows. Amongst other problems there was:

- An inability to get 20 cows out of the total herd pregnant;
- Brucellosis in the herd, causing abortions in the cows that did get pregnant, and loss of the weak calves;
- Poor potency in herd bulls which made repeated mating necessary before pregnancy occurred;
- 4) Prolonged labour.

Armed with some litmus paper and a juice extracting apparatus, Dr Jarvis followed the herd



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around the pasture for the warm summer months, and juiced and tested the herbs that the animals were partial to, and he discovered that they were always acid in reaction. The grasses they rejected were always alkaline. The grasses on the verge of the manure piles were always taller and greener and juicier, but the cows, like the alpacas, refused to eat them. On testing the samples of this 'healthy-looking grass' it turned out to be highly alkaline in reaction. This selective choice of grazing indicates that herbivores (grazing animals) are by nature good chemists and are tuned into retaining a balanced body chemistry. Dr Jarvis tested several other herds in a similar fashion, with the same results. Other observations were made of cattle released into a divided field. half of which had been recently fertilised, the other not. The animals were observed ignoring the fertilised section, grazing only on the unfertilised section, which was acidic in reaction.

An aged cow was observed avidly eating elm leaves (which are acidic). She broke loose from her tether in the barn one day and made for the apple cider vinegar (ACV) vat, from which she greedily lapped up 1 pint of vinegar, suggesting that the aging body craved the acidity.

ACV was prescribed across the board. Dr Jarvis went one step further. Following the testing of the milk from the first herd and another in a different environment, Dr Jarvis discovered that when given ACV the bacteria count of the milk was down; when ACV was omitted, the bacteria count went up again. Also there was no longer a problem of getting the herd pregnant or maintaining the potency of the bulls. Abortions in the herd had stopped, newborns were no longer under-size, and no milk fever or influenza occurred.

I had been feeding my alpacas ACV and had no previous problems with conception; my cria were 8-9 kg across the board. Then someone told me that it was not advisable to feed alpacas ACV due to the fact that they are not true ruminants. However humans, dogs, pigeons, goats and horses benefit from ACV. My only cria born after the ACV withdrawal weighed in at 6 kg.

I realized that the alpacas' drastic withdrawal from ACV plus the effects of the drought created the problem I was now facing. Thinking of the logic of a balanced pH in the uterus during conception and the lack of motility and lifespan of spermatozoa in an alkaline environment, the solution was staring me in the face.

I immediately started them on ACV again. From the first dose in their feed to the first spit off was 3 weeks. Dr Jarvis opts for 4 weeks. It took 3 weeks to get all 18 alpacas pregnant! Two of them required repeat matings and took after the second time.

To back up Dr Jarvis' theory and what Pat Coleby says in her book, "Natural Goat and Alpaca Care", apart from the other minerals, vitamins and trace elements required for a healthy animal, 50 ml of ACV per day (approx. 350ml per week) is required.

ACV maintains the correct pH balance in the body, and because of the potassium content it is invaluable for all animals coming up for breeding. Pat Coleby has used ACV in goats after a season of difficult births, and was surprised at the lack of complications the following year.

I have long held a belief in the recuperative powers of ACV but now more so. My alpacas are now on a regular regiment of ACV tonic or staple in their diet. My dogs get it in their drinking water and proudly display healthy, shiny coats, healthy pregnancies and uncomplicated parturitions.

Winnie, my miniature pony, can't wait for his feed tray steeped in ACV. As for me, I drink a glass of ACV with hot water and honey daily.



New Alpaca Show for Western Australia

by DARRYL SHERMAN WA Central Region

The WA Central Region will host a new Alpaca Show and Field Day at Fairbridge Village south of Perth on October 25-26. Set in the heart of the fast developing Peel Region of WA, the historic village is located in an idyllic rural setting nestled under the base of the Darling Range just an hour south of the Perth CBD. Fairbridge has proven expertise, excellent facilities, a great reputation and has established relationships with local businesses which will benefit from supporting such an event in their region. Ninety percent of WA's population live within 90 minutes car travel of Fairbridge Village ensuring easy access for most breeders and the public.

he Peel Region Development
Commission has made a
significant financial contribution
to assist in establishing Fairbridge Village
as the home of the new Alpaca Show and
other events such as the alpaca sale day
and seminar held at Fairbridge on June 14
this year. This Commission funding is being
used by Fairbridge to purchase materials
and train unemployed youth workers to
construct 100 new pens which will be
available to the AAA and Fairbridge Village
for shows, sale days and other such events.

The show will be unique, innovative and well supported by commerce. There are already a number of companies that are very keen to showcase their goods and services by participating in the show and field day.



The show will be run over three days; fleece judging on day 1; animal judging on day 2 followed by the trophy presentation dinner dance. Day 3 will begin with an Aussie Breakfast. There will be a number of demonstrations, novelty and serious competition events which will build up to an alpaca auction where a number of pre- screened animals will be sold to the highest bidders. There will also be an opportunity for some broad ribbonwinning animals to be entered into the auction.

Exhibitors and the public will be able to stay in the Fairbridge Village close to all the action and animals. The village can accommodate hundreds of people allowing members to come and stay for the duration, relaxing and safely celebrating amongst friends.

The first alpaca event held at Fairbridge Village in June was extremely successful. The day consisted of a three hour information packed introduction to Alpacas which was attended by 65 potential new breeders, a comprehensive craft and product display and an alpaca sale which saw 85 animals offered for sale under the huge Fairbridge 'roof'. Twenty animals were sold on the day and at least another 20 were sold in the subsequent two weeks. A number of stud males (alpacas that is) were also on display providing an opportunity for breeders and the public to compare some of the genetics available side by side. A good time was had by all and members are now looking forward to a successful inaugural Fairbridge Village Alpaca Show and Field Day in October.

Victorian Eastern Region visits Co-op

by RUDY BALDE Jannarie Alpacas, VIC

One of the Victorian Eastern Region's recent initiatives was to introduce breeders to the realms of large scale processing, manufacturing and marketing by way of a bus tour of the Australian Alpaca Co-Operative Fibre Handling Centre, the Clyde Scour Plant, CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology facility and the newly located Co-Op showroom in East Hawthorn.

Much has been written on these aspects of our developing industry, but as usual "there ain't nothing like standing knee deep in it".

a

s our industry evolves from touristy/craft/novelty status we must all acquaint ourselves

with how tomorrow will be. That tomorrow will be one of farming alpacas on a serious note as do the sheep farmers of today. Where flocks, counted in their thousands, will be producing truckloads of fleece consistent in fineness, character and length because the giant fibre-processing machines demand to be fed that way.

Too short and it drops to the floor. Too coarse and the machine stops. Not crimpy enough and the yarn separates and so on. All sorts of problems we aren't aware of, but very real and of course costly. And guess who's got to fix those problems by providing more suitable fleece!

At present our total national clip would keep the machines going for one day only. The processors, however, are persisting because they have been persuaded by facts and figures (as you need to do with practical manufacturing people) that alpaca is here for the long haul. After *handling* and *feeling* the product, they agree that it has a definite and significant place in tomorrow's market place.

Sounds easy so far but here's the challenge. The Merinos took two hundred years to reach the stage they are at now. We have the benefit of much of their technology, knowledge and wrong turns to fine-tune our breeding programs so that we can immediately prioritise to those requirements that the end user of the product demands, and facilitate the transition to industry status that has already commenced.

Having a look through all the fleeces at the Fibre Handling Centre will, more than likely, change your perspective on what it's all about. So it was that one breeder on our tour now understands why her 19 micron fleece wasn't worth squillions. That was because we have become so focussed on fineness being the Holy Grail that most other characteristics are slipping into second place.

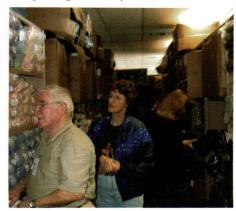
At the Fibre Handling Centre you will be encouraged to stick your fingers in amongst the fleeces and compare the *handle* of the many different classes. The end user who needs a particular garment will decide on *feel*. So it is with the classing of our fleeces. Sure thing, there will always be elite fleece but, by its very nature, the determining factors mean there won't be much of it. So, continue to strive for finer fleece but certainly not at the expense of the other qualities.

Why not organise a visit to the Fibre Handling Centre and see for yourselves what qualities to breed for? We were so impressed with the end product displayed at the showroom we had to queue at the cash register. And why did we buy it... because it looked fabulous in the packet and more importantly, it *felt* great.

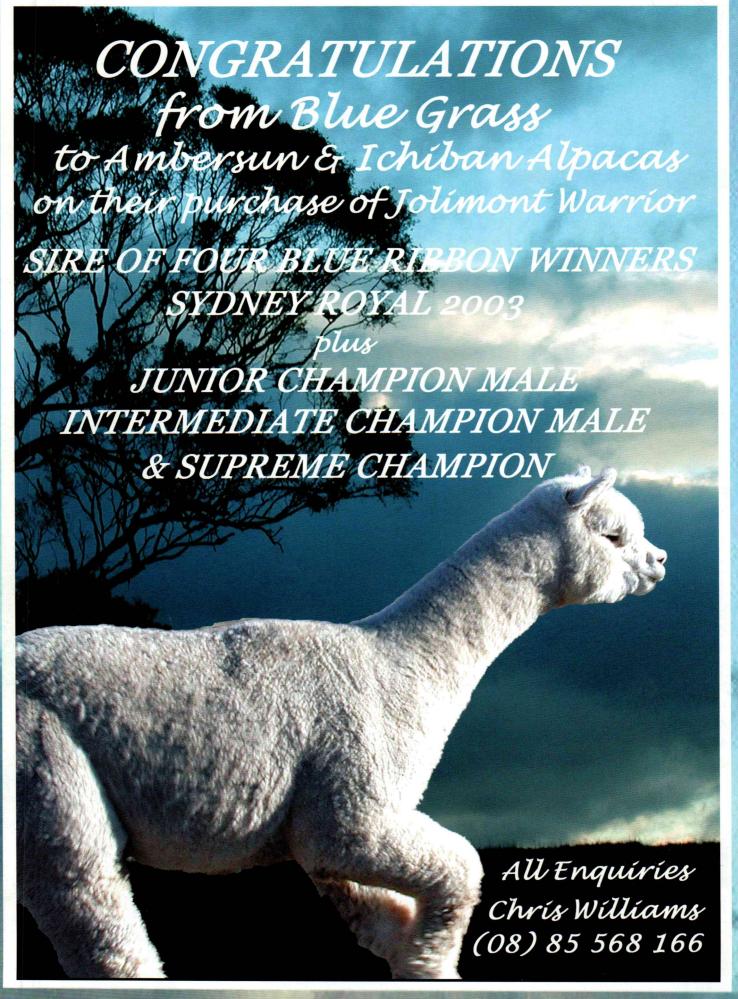
In closing I urge you to organise a bus trip and journey the reality of tomorrow. It will be a real eye-opener to most of you who haven't trodden the paths of manufacturing or consumerism in your past lives. I gave it 10/10.

Victorian Eastern Region members inspecting (I-r) scouring, storage and new product.







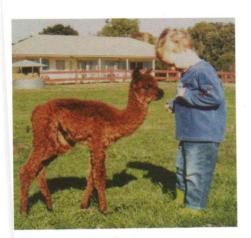


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~ Honey ~ a sweet success!



'Honey' makes a friend

by CAROLYN JINKS Benleigh Alpaca Stud, Vic

First thing on a cold Saturday morning, a small bundle sat alone. Three females were in the maternity paddock, showing no interest at all. I checked the cria who was suprisingly warm and had clearly been born during the night. Someone had to own it!

stablishing which female had delivered was easy, but convincing her that Motherhood was her duty was another story – she showed no interest at all. Both mother and cria were moved to a pen and a companion animal brought into an adjoining pen. The mother was distraught at being cooped up with this 'unknown' baby. She kicked at it and moved as far away as possible at every attempt the cria made to come close.

It was clear this was going to be quite a challenge. The aim was to get the cria strong, get the mother quiet and then get them to bond. It would have been so easy to make a total pet out of the cria, who already was convinced I was her mother, as at least I would feed her.

After weighing and checking the temperature the feeding regime was planned. Daily weighing is vital to establish

the quantity of feed required. Daily taking of temperature in the first week for a 'special care' cria is also important, as, if infection should develop, it will be detected quickly. (Normal temperature is 36.8c-38.6c).

Honey weighed in at 6 kg, so she would require 600 mls per day (ie. 10% of her body weight). Ideally, this can be divided into 6 feeds per day of 100 mls per feed. However if the entire 100 mls is not consumed at any one feed, the full amount will still need to be given in a day to ensure adequate growth.

Firstly, Honey was given 120 mls of plasma by stomach tube. The next feed was 2.5 teaspoons of glucose in 80 mls of warm water, and during the rest of the day she was fed 400 mls of single strength (1 scoop to 60 mls water) of Divetalact. A total fluid intake for the day of 600 mls.

For two days mother and daughter were together, with the cria being fed single strength Divetalact. No bonding occurred but I spent a lot of time holding and stroking the agitated dam. She was given Finadyne for pain for three days and we did not attempt to milk her.

(From our experience, when owners milk dams, they often make the udder so tender that she is even less inclined to allow the cria to suck, and the minimal amount acquired is virtually useless).

NB: Do check that the dam is not inflamed in the udder area, as mastitis can occur, and veterinary care will be needed.

As Honey's weight dropped on day 2 and 3 she was fed 10% of this amount, and on day 4, her weight was back to 6 kg. At this time her formula was increased to 1.5 strength Divetalact and on day 5 and 6 it was again a gradual increase to double strength.

NB: Double strength is ideal for the appropriate weight gain of <u>at least</u> 1 kg per week.

By day 5 the mother had decided that life in a small area with this little cria was her lot. However she still had no intention of feeding *Honey* and sat down if she even looked under her! *Honey* was determined, and would kiss her mother while she sat, but by day 8 it was time to get really serious as *Honey* was strong and weighed 7.3 kg. The friendship was there, but now it was time for reality.

Honey was given less formula per feed and, with the large hole in the teat, she got no sucking satisfaction, so after each feed, which lasted only 30 seconds, I stroked the mother and Honey attempted to reach the udder. Each time the mother allowed longer periods of this and at last on day 10 she actually allowed her to suck!

Within two days, we were only giving 'top up' bottles morning and night and two weeks after the birth, both mother and cria were moved back into the herd. Honey's weight was a healthy 8.7 kg and although she always ran to say hello to me, she would just as quickly run back to mum and the herd.

Success!!!!

The important points to be gained from this experience are:

- The dam can still supply milk even after a number of days when no sucking or milking occurred.
- With effort, the bond was finally made between mother and cria.
- A feeding regime including plasma was instigated until strength of cria was a certainty.
- The cria was monitored with weight and temperature charts to ensure healthy progress.
- A firm plan to lessen feeding when cria was strong was implemented.
- As little as possible bonding with humans was permitted (hard to do, but essential!).

SOME FIRST AID TIPS WHEN PROBLEMS OCCUR

The value of knowing what is 'normal' will give parameters to determine when there is a problem. Occasionally due to the death of a dam, we have needed to bottle-rear cria and have also needed to supplementary feed premature cria, dysmature cria and also 'top up' cria when they have not been gaining sufficient weight, so experience has created a practical regime to deal with these occasions.

Following the birth, the cria should be actively wriggling. The 'glad wrap' type membrane is nature's thermal insulator. Do not rub it off. It will disintegrate as wriggling occurs. Shivering is quite normal. Unless it is really wet and windy (causing chill factor) allow nature to take its course. If towel trying is done, be sure to leave the head and tail area untouched, as this is the mother's scent identifying area.

If the cria has been birthed from a sitting position, it is often slower to become active or may have breathing difficulties. This may be due to the fact that it has not had the chance to drain fluids or been given the impact of dropping to the ground as occurs in a normal delivery. These cria may need to be drained manually.

Method: (shown below)

- Holding the cria with head toward the ground and legs under your arms (like the bagpipes), firmly slap the ribcage for 20 seconds.
- Put cria back on ground and watch for improved breathing. MOVE AWAY.
- Leave 2 minutes and repeat if necessary.





Glucose and a marsupial teat on a pet nurser bottle

Cria coat away from tail area

Cria that do not make an effort to stand after 1 hour can be given 1 teaspoon of glucose in 30 mls of boiled water that is cooled to slightly warmer than tepid.

Method:

- A marsupial teat on a pet nurser bottle (used for kittens) is ideal as the cria will not suck and this soft bottle is easy to gently squeeze fluid from. This 'sugar fix' works wonders!
- To encourage activity, these cria may also be given <u>massage</u> firmly down the spine at 15 minute intervals. Avoid the head and tail areas.

HYPOTHERMIC CRIA

Occasionally, an early morning birth results in finding a cold cria, also premature cria may be colder than normal.

It is vital that normal temperature is reached. Do not put near a heater.

- Temperature should be 36.8c 38.6c.
- Feel pads of feet to see if they are very cold. If concerned, check temperature with digital thermometer that will beep when temperature is recorded.
- Do not give milk to any cria that has an abnormally low temperature - give glucose mix only.

Draining a cria manually



NURSING A PREMATURE OR DYSMATURE CRIA

Goals:

- To retain bond with mother.
- Stabilise temperature.
- Provide nourishment until cria can suckle effectively and gain weight (this may take days).

Success: is when you are no longer needed.

Care plan:

- Keep records of all actions and make contact with Veterinarian.
- Keep mother with cria AT ALL TIMES.
- Once normal temperature is reached, continue taking 3 times daily for a week, so any onset of infection will be noticed guickly.
- Weigh cria to establish amount of fluid required.
- If hypothermic, put cria in a box heated with covered hot water bottle (some people use an electric pad). Put cria coat on and tuck bubble wrap around the cria – it is an excellent thermal

blanket. Pack with pillows so cria is in the 'cush' position. DO NOT LET IT LIE ON ITS SIDE.

NB: If it is frail, it may not be able to hold its head up, so cut the box to allow the neck to stretch forward. Once the head is erect that is a good sign.

- Feed only with glucose until normal temperature is reached and locate plasma, which should be given in the first 24 hours. Milk replacement can be given once normal temperature is reached.
- RECORD amount of fluid given including plasma.

Note: At Benleigh we do not use rectal saline and find the above method satisfactory.

Note: On two occasions cria have been found at Benleigh that have been born before daylight, and both times cria were so cold that no temperature registered on the thermometer. The gentle method described above, as well as ½ hourly massage along spine and all legs, resulted in both cria surviving and becoming healthy adults.

FEEDING A CRIA THAT IS UNABLE TO SUCKLE

- If or when temperature is OK, but cria is too frail to suckle, plan a feeding regime.
- Note: The amount that the cria will drink per feed will determine how many feeds are required per day. Ideally, 6 feeds x 100 mls per feed, however it may be more like 60 mls per feed for 10 feeds per day.
- There is no need to feed at night. Begin daily feeding at 6am and try to end feeds at 8pm. This gives the cria's gut time to rest.

- Day 1 Count any glucose and plasma given as part of fluid intake and give the balance required as single strength Divetalact (1 scoop to 60 mls water) eg. a 6kg cria needs 600 mls per day. (However, it is unlikely that the cria will drink that much on the first day). A marsupial teat is recommended for Day 1.

 From Day 2 introduce a flutter teat with the tip cut off.
- Day 2 Mix Divetalact 1 scoop to 60 mls boiled water (warmer than tepid).
- Day 3 Mix Divetalact to 1.5 strength (1.5 scoops to 60 mls water) if birth weight has been regained.
- Day 5 Mix Divetalact to double strength (2 scoops to 60 mls water).

BE SURE TO DOCUMENT AMOUNT OF FLUIDS GIVEN AT EVERY FEED. BE SURE QUANTITY AND STRENGTH IS ACHIEVED EACH DAY.

Goals for full feeding of cria – quantities and number of feeds

- To reach 6 feeds per day until cria weighs 10 kgs.
- To feed 4 feeds per day when cria is 10 kg – no more than 250 mls per feed.
- To gradually increase quantity to 320 mls per feed and 3 feeds per day and then move to 2 feeds daily by 6 weeks. Double strength mix from day 4.
- Never feed more than 1 litre per day.

The above information is for orphaned cria, but may be used for whatever number of days necessary in the case of premature or dysmature cria or supplementary feeding of cria that are not gaining weight at an acceptable level.

Notes on feeding:

- KEEP MOTHER NEAR AT ALL TIMES.
- Stand cria to drink support if necessary.
- Let it try to go to mother after each feed.
- Use a marsupial teat for the first day and then progress to a teat with a very large hole they must not get sucking satisfaction from the bottle (a flutter teat with the top cut off is excellent).
- Feeding should not take longer than a couple of minutes as cria average a suckling time of 2 minutes per feed.
- Encourage cria to walk soon after feeding to aid digestion.
- If cria is sleepy, constantly stimulate by rubbing down spine.
- If unable to stand, massage legs and feet at each feed.

What about the Mothers milk? Should she be milked?

At Benleigh we no longer milk mothers. We believe that the trauma to the udder in the process of milking (and only a tiny amount of colostrum is gained by milking), may well mean that she is then reluctant to let the cria feed when it is well enough to do so.

Note: 12 days is the longest we have fed a cria before it was able to stand and suckle. It gradually got stronger and we lessened feeds and finally the cria was fully cared for by the mother. We have had no incidences of mastitis with this practice.

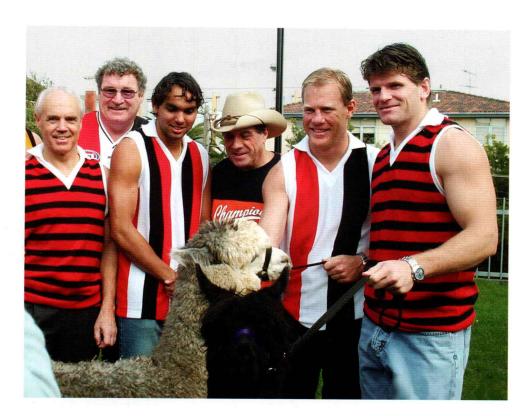
The above information is given as a result of practical experience and may give the reader a management strategy that has been proven successful.

Remember always -

- RECORD EVERYTHING (TEMPERATURE AND FEEDING QUANTITIES).
- BE SURE PLASMA OR COLOSTRUM SUPPLEMENT IS GIVEN.
- CONSULT WITH AN EXPERIENCED ALPACA VET.

Editor's Note: "The Alpaca
Breeders Birthing Handbook"
written by McMillan E and Jinks C
is a recommended reference book
providing valuable information
on birthing and neonatal care.
Inexpensive and written in
simple text the title is available
for purchase through the AAA
National Office. Please refer to
the order form on page 55.

Alpacas make it to the Hall of Fame



St Kilda stars, past and present, flank stalwart Saints supporter lan "Molly" Meldrum. L - R: Ross Smith, Kevin "Cowboy" Neale, Xavier Clarke, Nathan **Burke and Robert** Harvey.

by SUE NORTHFIELD Victorian Eastern Region

n June 2003 a few members of the Victorian Eastern Region, together with a pair of alpacas, were invited to attend when Victorian AFL team, the St Kilda Football Club, launched its inaugural Hall of Fame function at the site in St Kilda where the team played its first ever match.

St Kilda Football Club's connection to alpacas goes back to the club's origins in 1873. When the newly formed club applied to the council for a ground they were allowed to play on the "Alpaca Paddock" which was a patch of land next to the St Kilda Railway Station where the St Kilda Park State School now stands.

The site was so-called as several years earlier a Bolivian gentleman named de Flores had sent half a dozen alpacas to Melbourne and the St Kilda Council had kept the animals in a fenced-in enclosure with the idea of breeding them commercially. Unfortunately the animals did not thrive and the project failed.

To mark the occasion Regional President, Alan Fraser presented a red Australian Alpaca Co-op throw rug to Club President, Rod Butterss.



Upper Riccarton, Christchurch, New Zealand.

www.alpaca.org.nz

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Fibre Production What Counts for the Farmer?

by NICK VELTJENS Talca Alpacas, VIC

This is another subject where not all alpaca breeders agree, and where parts of the industry tend to go in different directions. We really need to start to be businesslike with what we are breeding for. Nobody will deny that the ultimate aim is to breed animals that will give our major purchasers, broad acre fibre producers, a viable and profitable business. And they will in turn only achieve viability if they can profitably sell their product: Top quality fibre.

e should not forget that our largest market for alpacas will not be in the suburbs of the metropolitan areas of state or even regional capitals, but the farmers on the land. They will mostly buy top quality wethers, and wethers represent about half of the entire (no pun intended) Australian herd.

WHAT IS TOP QUALITY IN THE BROAD ACRE FARMER'S VIEW?

I am not a broad acre farmer, but I can see the bottom line. To earn their keep in the farmer's herd, alpacas must produce fibre that reliably brings the largest possible return per animal year after year.

WEIGHT VERSUS FINENESS

There has until recently been huge pressure by some breeders and opinion in the judging ring to prefer "density" over fineness. This will tend to favour alpacas with stronger fibre, as it will weigh more if all other parameters such as follicle density and fibre length are the same (see Figure 1), and appear denser to the feel. The result is

that fineness has in the past got little more than lip service. It is only now that there seems to be recognition to the importance of lower fibre diameter.

Now - the following is by no means a business plan for a farmer, nor is it intended to encourage anyone to act on the ideas presented; it is simply an opinion based on my study of possibilities in the future that should perhaps be discussed now.

It must also be emphasised here, that fine micron is not the only determining factor for the quality of a fleece, as suitability for processing by the yarn and fabric manufacturers will ultimately play a vital part in determining the price the farmer will get for their raw product. There is also productivity of the animal per hectare, ultimately expressed in terms of W/D³ (weight in grams over fibre diameter in micron) which effectively is a measure of number of fibres per fleece, i.e. follicle density and growth rate. That side of the coin is another study very clearly presented by Dr Jim Watts with his SRS® Merinos¹, and which deals with the breeding aspect of achieving advanced quality alpacas.

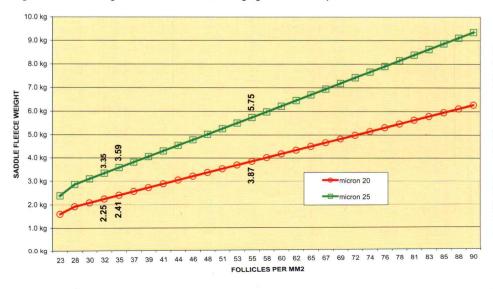
This article however looks only at commercial aspects of fibre diameter in a futuristic climate.

Commercial prices per kg for alpaca fibre can be seen to be determined by the Australian Alpaca Cooperative Ltd (AACL), I will use them here to show the effect on farm income:

SF	"super fine"	(20µ and less)	\$60
F	"fine"	(20.1µ to 23µ)	\$25
M	"medium"	(23.1µ to 26µ)	\$18
S	"strong"	(26.1μ to 30μ)	\$7
XS	"extra strong"	(>30µ)	\$2

These are prices for members of the Cooperative, and are for A and B length and well-skirted fleeces. By comparison therefore, a consistently superfine alpaca with 2 kg of skirted fleece will earn the farmer \$120 gross. If it had a still respectable fleece with say 24µ it would have to grow 6.6 kg of skirted fleece to get the same amount. With 3 kg of SF earning \$180 gross, the 24µ alpaca would have to produce a theoretical 10 kg to earn the same money. That sort of weight will probably never be achieved with an alpaca having a micron much greater than 20µ or 21µ, and would most likely require two shearings per year.

Figure 1 - Fleece weight at constant micron, changing follicle density.



On the other hand it is possible with alpacas to achieve 3 kg of superfine now, albeit in isolated cases, and if one can expect to achieve genetic improvement as in advanced Merino, especially with embryo transplant (ET) and artificial insemination (AI) now becoming available, then such animals will be bred in sufficient numbers earlier rather than later.

The point is: A broad acre fibre producing farmer making a living out of the fleece of alpaca wethers wants the finest possible alpacas he can get, and would be willing to pay extra if he or she can see in the history of the supplier's breeding that those animals will hold their fineness for at least double the time of when the price has been amortised. This will make a profit for the farmer and provide the replacement capital when needed. In other words, a superfine alpaca is of much less value to this farmer if after 2 or 3 years it is more than 23µ as the annual revenue per kg will have dropped by 70%.

SO - HOW MUCH WILL A FARMER PAY FOR WETHERS TO MAKE A LIVING IN THE MARKET PLACE?

This is a rather theoretical analysis at this early stage, because there are not enough alpacas of the required quality in existence in Australia yet. Let us however assume the following:

One needs to take annual expenditure into account, which may be different for the superfine alpacas in a smaller herd. than the strong wethers in a larger herd. Let us assume \$40 per annum per alpaca for SF, and \$10 for strong, with fine and medium on a pro rata basis. It is actually impossible to get a positive return from a strong fleeced alpaca if the annual operating cost were to be approaching the \$40 a farmer may want to spend on the superfine animals. Overheads, such as the amortisation of fences, sheds, equipment, etc. and the initial capital of the land have been ignored in this study.

A herd of wethers that stay the same micron for a number of years, bought for

\$300 each, and cutting a net 3 kg a year, could provide an annual net return (before tax) on the capital invested for superfine (SF) alpacas of around 47% p.a., for fine (F) the alpacas would yield 15% net, and for medium (M) would return 11%. If they were to cut a (by today's standards) huge net of 4 kg, the returns would be 67%, 23% and 17% p.a. respectively.

The end result is that with the medium wethers the farmer would have to pray that they can hold their micron for 7 years if they cut 3 kg, or 5 years if they cut 4 kg each year, just to get the initial capital back for the alpacas, while the superfine fleeces will pay for the animals in almost 2 years or 1.5 years respectively.

On the other hand, if those fine wethers with 21μ fleece are \$105 instead of \$300, then the return on such lower outlay would also be 43% for 3 kg and around 67% for 4 kg p.a. That means that it is the breeder who would not be getting the desired return. By corollary it also means that the farmer could have paid over \$450 each for the superfine wethers cutting 3 kg and still get 31% net p.a. and, when cutting 4 kg, get 44% p.a. on the investment.

FARM INCOME

Let us look at it another way. How will a farmer of the future make a good living out of alpacas?

Apart from fleece quality and weight sustained over a number of years, it also depends on the minimum size of the herd, not to mention the availability of a market for the fleece. The latter, I expect, will remain the Australian Alpaca Cooperative Ltd, and for this study I leave the AACL's fleece prices and its policy to buy all the fleece of its members as they are at present. It is also believed by the AACL itself that prices for fleece will remain fairly steady in the longer term.

This exercise is based on the alpaca's performance in terms of fleece, and ignores the fact that at the end of the useful life of the animal on a broad acre farm it will still have a 'whole of animal' value that the farmer will not ignore.

Obviously a herd of superfine alpaca wethers does not need to be as large as one with stronger fleece to produce the same income. The smaller herd also requires considerably less labour. On the other hand, the purchase price of a superfine alpaca can be higher than the others to obtain the same percentage return on the initial purchase capital. So, to make a reasonable comparison, those factors need to be included into the equations.

Another important aspect is the timing for the first adventurous 'cockies' to get into this new industry full time. This may actually occur when the alpacas available at that time may really not be quite up to the standard described above, which means that there will have to be ongoing improvement from a modest start.

Let us make some comparisons for herds obtaining similar cashflow and annual return on capital with different micron classes and fleece weight.

WHAT FLEECE WEIGHT?

Starting with 3 kg p.a. skirted fleece (saddle and neck only). If a farmer wants to get an annual net income after operating costs of around \$120,000 before tax, it requires a herd of at least 900 superfine alpacas, or 2,700 fine, or 3,800 medium alpacas (see Figure 2). To get a net return on capital with those herds of about 32% p.a., the price of the wethers would calculate at \$450, \$135, and \$105 each respectively. For a similar exercise with alpacas with strong fleece, the herd would in theory have to be more than 11,000 and the price per wether \$30.

If we succeeded in breeding our alpacas up to achieve a cut of 4 kg skirted fleece, then with the same herd sizes the net income would rise from that \$120,000 base to nearly \$200,000 p.a. The higher fleece yield relative to purchase price would also result in a higher net return on capital of between 45% and 50% p.a. with the above purchase prices for wethers. In fact for the "strong" fleeced wethers the price could go up to \$40 each and still get this return (see Figure 3).

That means that the herds are paid for in about two years, and would have to perform for another two years to earn the farmer an average of \$60,000 to \$90,000 p.a. over the whole period of 4 years. If the performance of the alpacas can last longer than 4 years, then that will result in considerably greater profits for the farmer, and the potential for higher prices for wethers.

All this only supports the general trend that alpaca breeders are following: Lower micron and higher fleece weight. What is still not a strong enough focus is the need for fleece fibre diameter to remain low over the lifespan of the animals. It seems to be a trait that can be inherited, but in selecting a male for stud purposes this will not easily become evident immediately. For this a breeder should therefore wait for the second or third fleece or even later before deciding to certify a male in order to make sure this trait has been verified. Once a breeding family line has been established over a number of generations, this period could be reduced. Such a line would also become visible to the discerning broad acre farmer looking for some security in his or her investment.

We can achieve this and better. There are some advanced Merinos that cut 8 kg p.a. at 19µ now (see Figure 4). It will take alpaca breeders quite a few years to breed the 4kg alpacas in this article in the numbers that are needed to attract the broad acre farmer into this industry. If we stay focused, we will eventually even get to 5 kg, 6 kg, and 7 kg that will have 19µ for more than 5 or 6 years. ■

Footnote

1 The Response to Selection in the Merino - by Ken Ferguson and Jim Watts, available on the AAA website at: www.alpaca.asn.au

Figure 2 - Herd size required for comparable income.

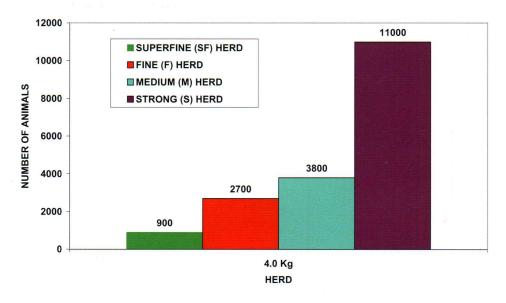
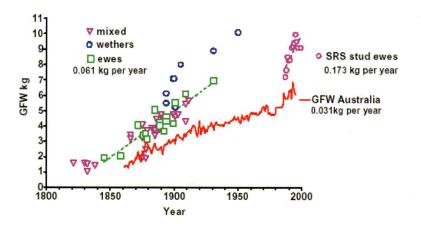
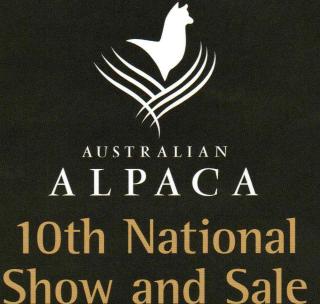


Figure 3 - Comparison of herd with similar return and cashflow. SF M S Micron 20.1-23 <=20 23.1-26 26.1-30 Price of Wether \$40 \$450 \$135 \$105 Herd Size 900 2,700 11,000 3,800 **Initial Capital** 3 kg \$405,000 \$364,500 \$399,000 \$440,000 4 kg \$405,000 \$364,500 \$399,000 \$440,000 **Net Annual Return** 3 kg 33.3% 31.1% 32.4% 27.5% 4 kg 44.4% 51.9% 49.5% 45.0% **Net Cashflow** 3 kg \$126,000 \$121,500 \$129,200 \$121,000 4 kg \$180,000 \$189,000 \$197,600 \$198,000 Cost per Animal p.a. \$40 \$30 \$10 \$20

Figure 4 – Whole flock greasy fleece weights (Massy 1990) compared with the Australian average and a stud using SRS® selection. Source: The Response to Selection in the Merino by Ken Ferguson and Jim Watts.







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Donations fund alpaca shelters in Peru

by SANDRA WRIGHT Australian Alpaca Association

The extreme cold weather experienced in Peru in July 2002 caused the loss of thousands of alpacas and resulted in the Peruvian government declaring a State of Emergency for the southern part of the country.

he International Alpaca Association and the Peruvian Alpaca and Camelids Institute issued a plea for assistance in the emergency which resulted in cash donations from Australia, the USA and China totalling \$US17,639.33.

The money was used for the purchase of building materials for the construction of 56 covered shelters. The cost of materials for each shelter was \$US314.29 and the manpower was provided by those people directly affected by the emergency. Each shelter can hold 80 newborns together with their mothers and also comprises a living area for the farmer and a silo to store feed. The shelters are a valuable preventative investment against high mortality rates of alpacas in the event of future adverse winter conditions.



Covered shelter - frontal view



Covered shelter - frontal view with beneficiaries of 18 of the farming communities

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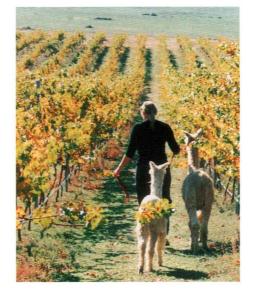
by JULIE WILKINSON Baarrooka Alpaca Stud, Victoria

In the first year they bought the farm and put up a shed and revelled in their ownership of this piece of paradise; in the second year they built a dam and planted grapes, and no rains came and the vines withered and died; in the third year they replanted the grapes and built another shed, they spread water on the land, the grapes grew, but the sheep and grasshoppers came and partook of the vines; in the fourth year they planted more grapes, fixed the fences, built another shed and built a house and the vines grew bountifully; in the fifth year, they harvested their grapes (and built another shed); in the sixth year they bought alpacas and they grew into a herd of wonderful character and much enjoyment; and they saw that it was good. In the seventh year they released their own wine. And they saw everything they had made, and they saw that it was good.

rom a chance discussion in a busy city coffee shop, came a realisation that we shared the same unspoken dream to live on the land (mine to breed alpacas, my husband Russell's to plant a vineyard and make wine) and our destiny was set. From that day we started the search to find the ideal property for ultrapremium viticulture. We analysed climatic and topographical data to identify potential locations and then went looking - our search took us to the Atherton Tablelands, the Sunshine Coast hinterland, South Gippsland, Margaret River and then finally, to the Strathbogie Ranges. In fact, when we began looking at properties in that area, we were unaware that substantial viticultural development in the Strathbogie Ranges already existed - rather, we had decided that climatically, it was the place to be.

The Strathbogie Ranges are in North Central Victoria, to the east of the Hume Highway about halfway between Melbourne and Albury, and run from Seymour in the south to Benalla in the north. Not only is it becoming renown as a cool climate wine growing region, but it is the area where many of Ned Kelly and his gang's escapades took place.

We were shown a number of properties by agents before being brought onto a property which was not for sale but, according to the agent, "sounded a bit like what we were looking for". He wanted to confirm that he was on the right track.

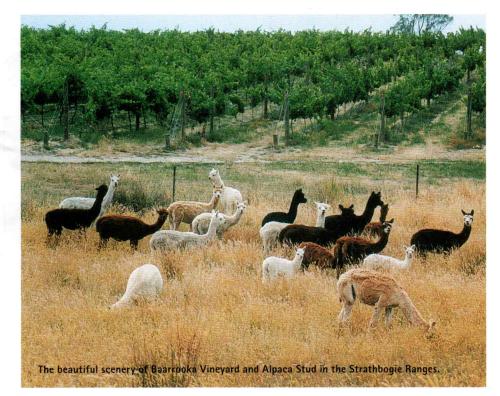


Within moments of walking onto the property, we knew he was. I will never forget the shiver of excitement as Russell and I looked at each other with wide eyes and mouthed "this is it!" We convinced the agent to approach the owner and offered to pay for the property over three years while allowing him to continue to use it for his sheep, except for the area where we wanted to plant grapes. This was accepted and the deal was done.

For a time, the commitment to setting up a vineyard and the fact we only spent weekends at the farm forced the buying of alpacas on the backburner. However, I continued to read and dream about them.



Julie Wilkinson, Russell Synnot and Pinjarra Firebird taste test a Baarrooka red.



On moving to the farm full time in 2001, I decided that as a compromise, I should buy the children two wethers as pets (sure, who was I trying to kid!). Of course, before the wethers had even arrived, I was off looking at suri females and was beginning to put together a breeding herd. I had realised the money I was saving for a cute little sports car, which would be ruined on our gravel roads, would be better spent on alpacas. I also decided I would aim for the ultra-premium product (we perfectionists don't have much choice!) so went about buying the best suris I could find. In four months I had purchased seven females - coloured animals through Pinjarra and white from Pucara - and I didn't stop there. I now have 30 animals (including my original wethers) and I am focusing on building up a more substantial herd.

The property of 320 acres now has 80 acres under vine, with the remainder agisted to a neighbour for sheep grazing, or used to run the alpacas and hand-rearing beef/dairy calves. We then purchased a further 320 acre property across the road. This has some great remnant vegetation which we would like to rehabilitate and expand (and a great house site!) while the remainder currently supports 100 Angus and beef/dairy cross breeders. While we have been significantly affected by the drought, the presence of numerous seeps and springs in the Strathbogie Tablelands meant that we continued to have water and some green pick for much of the summer.

From the outset, we agreed that we would aim to produce THE BEST in wines and alpacas. To even have a remote chance of achieving this, one must make all the right choices - from selection of land (cool climate wine/ultra-fine merino country), the right rootstocks/breed-stock, the right aspect and vine management (or pasture and animal management), the right time

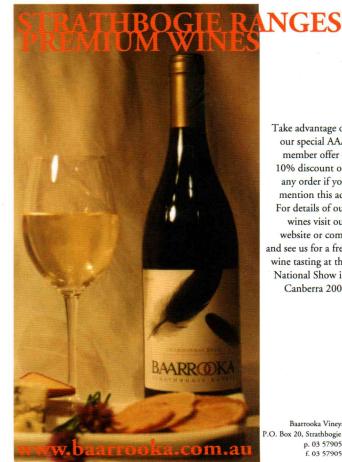
to pick the grapes (which sire to use), the multitude of decisions in making and maturing a wine through to how to promote and market the product (wine, alpaca, fibre or alpaca product) and at what pricepoint. We are not saying that we are the best, that we are making the right decisions, or that we will achieve our goals, but we are using all our skills and knowledge (as well as that of others) to take us closer to those goals. Although we both have scientific backgrounds (we worked together as

environmental scientists for over 15 years) and I grew up on a dairy farm, we continue to seek out as much information as possible about viticulture, winemaking and alpaca breeding through publications, seminars and conferences, the internet and, most importantly, others within the industry. The learning is ongoing and striving for continuous improvement is the challenge that keeps us inspired.

The early results of my breeding program, although just as likely to be the result of beginner's luck, are very exciting. I like to think that my careful selection of foundation females (even though based on relatively limited knowledge) will prove that luck has less to do with it than we sometimes think.

Our plans for the future include a new house, a winery and cellar door, a Regional Wine Centre, on-site accommodation and winery tours. Of course all of these will be accentuated by beautiful suri alpacas and their products being showcased wherever possible. So, as our life of rural repose unfolds before us, we know we will never be tempted back to the bright lights of the city.

We now sell our wines by mail order Australia-wide and to a limited number of retail outlets in Victoria. For more information, visit www.baarrooka.com.au



Take advantage of our special AAA member offer -10% discount on any order if you mention this ad. For details of our wines visit our website or come and see us for a free wine tasting at the National Show in Canberra 2003

Baarrooka Vineyards P.O. Box 20, Strathbogie Vic

Alpaca Husbandry: A Trainer's Perspective

by MARTY McGEE BENNETT TTEAM

If you love alpacas, there is nothing better than watching a new baby struggle to her feet and take the first steps. It is heaps of fun, but with the pleasure comes responsibility.

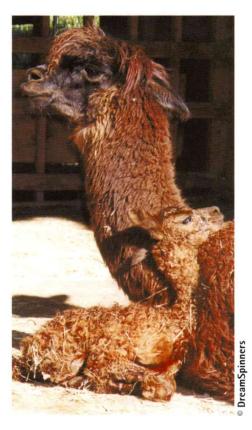
professional alpaca breeder must deal with many issues that a strictly owner/investor does not: intact male(s), prenatal nutrition, birthing, and – perhaps most importantly – bringing up a new baby. This new baby will eventually go to a new home and should know how to act when he or she arrives.

Your animal handling and training philosophy is very important when it comes to raising animals. There are many ways to approach husbandry issues. You will be faced with conflicting opinions on everything from medical choices to nutrition and, in particular, how to bring up the baby.

Deciding what is reasonable and respectful is your job as the professional breeder. I offer my perspectives on husbandry issues as a former breeder of camelids and as a professional handler-trainer.

BREEDING MALES AND PREGNANT FEMALES

In my opinion, breeding males should be handled the same way that gelded males and females are handled: respectfully. Intact males are the most likely to fight back when handled physically and the least likely to give up when wrestled. It is therefore even more important NOT to be overly forceful (in a physical sense) with intact males. Treat them with respect and expect the same in return.



When it comes to breeding, allowing males and females to get acquainted and breed with some semblance of privacy is important. Don't take the fact that you are an "alpaca breeder" literally! Some owners involve themselves so completely in the breeding act that I fear we will some day hybridize and a part alpaca / part human creature will emerge!

TO STUD OR NOT TO STUD

Think seriously about NOT keeping an intact male if you only intend to have one or maybe two babies a year. Housing a male next to open females, then allowing him to breed only once or twice a year is almost guaranteed to create an overly aggressive breeding male. This can also give rise to other potential behavioural problems. If you only have one or two females, it may be best to pay for stud service rather than keeping an intact male on site.

EXPECTING FEMALES

Pregnant females are often put into a special category when it comes to training and handling. I am often asked whether or not a pregnant alpaca should be brought to a clinic or if pregnant females who live at the clinic site should be used as part of the clinic. It is ironic that we think nothing of giving a rectal exam to determine pregnancy but are reluctant to halter these same animals and take them for a walk. Personally, I make no distinction regarding handling or training when it comes to a female's state of pregnancy other than the very first and very last few weeks of gestation.

In the first few weeks of gestation, even a moderate amount of stress could interfere with conception. It is easy to give this amount of time off from training or handling, so it is best to wait. When it comes to late gestation, I would suggest leaving females to their own devices in the last weeks of pregnancy when they are highly hormonal and very uncomfortable. Injections, toenails, and shearing can be done before the last trimester.

Many people make a practice of separating females into a special paddock when they become due. While this may be convenient for the herd manager, I think this is very stressful for the pregnant female. Alpacas become very bonded to other SPECIFIC alpacas. Separating a female from her cohorts and forcing her to forge a place in a new group is far more stressful than we think. If you must move your pregnant females to a new paddock, it would be best to do it sooner rather than later. If possible, determine with which animals she spends time, then move those animals together. Moving the animals two to three months prior to the due date instead of the last weeks will create much less stress.

BIRTHING

I am a minimalist when it comes to herd management, preferring to do as little as possible to disrupt natural behavior. When it comes to birthing, I believe that even with the best of intentions, we humans cause more difficulties than we prevent. Birthing is the business of the mother. Human caretakers, no matter how well intentioned, are not really welcome and cause additional stress. I wrote an article years ago suggesting that the two most important items in your birthing kit are a pair of binoculars and a piece of rope. The binoculars are used to observe respectfully from a distance and the rope to tie your hands together!

Certainly, when a mother is in trouble, it is our duty to help. This is BY FAR the exception, rather than the rule. By involving yourself in the birthing process in an effort to make things easier for the mother, you will never know what is normal. The moment you "help," you have interfered and changed the dynamics completely.

You must learn to wait. If you are new at raising camelids, do your homework and research what is normal. Call your veterinarian or an experienced breeder to observe with you if you have any doubts. Always call the veterinarian if you think you have a birthing emergency.

While we humans may not be welcome at the birth, the rest of the herd most definitely is. It is highly stressful for camelids to be separated from their herd mates at the time of birthing. In my experience, the herd is interested, yet respectful of the birth process. Once the baby is born, the herd welcomes the newborn and after a good look, wanders off, leaving mother and baby to bond. If you have young females in the herd, I think it is invaluable for them to observe the birthing process.

Once the baby is on the ground, leaving mother and baby alone for at least 24 hours is the safest and most respectful policy. Mother and baby have lots of instinctive activities to perform that are critical to their health and well being. This process is like a ballet for two. We humans come crashing on to the stage, mess up the timing, and create havoc.

BRINGING UP BABY

The easiest, most effective way of influencing a baby's behavior is to work with his or her mother. Mom is the LAW as well as the major influence in a baby's life. Invest some time creating a trusting relationship with your adult female, and you will profoundly affect the attitude of every baby she bears.

Whether you begin at the beginning with a baby born on your farm or you buy a young alpaca and continue his or her education, raising a camelid is a delight. With this joy comes a huge amount of responsibility. You are shaping the life of an animal that will be relating to humans for 20–25 years. Camelids that don't get along well in our world are often doomed to a lifetime of misunderstanding with humans and in some extreme cases must be euthanized.

Babies of any kind are impressionable and have a short attention span. I think it is a great idea to take advantage of early training opportunities to teach young alpacas. Most camelids will accept human leadership early on without question. As the leader, it is incumbent upon you to behave respectfully and with integrity. It is important to set limits that will be consistent and appropriate as your baby grows from 30 to 150 pounds or more.

You must remain vigilant when you are with your babies, even when you are not training them. Animals make no distinction between training sessions and the rest of the day. If you insist that your baby be respectful and observe your personal space in the training pen and then encourage disrespectful behavior in the field when company wants to pet the baby, you could be headed for trouble.

If you are going to spend time teaching, it only makes sense to make sure that your student is able to listen. A baby alpaca must be present for learning and be able to focus. Overly long lessons mean you are preaching to a choir that isn't there. In order to concentrate on a lesson, the baby must feel safe enough to let go of instinctive behavior and pay attention to the handler. At first, it is best to structure lessons with mama-alpaca in attendance, followed by lessons with a peer group, if available. Lessons occur in a catch pen that is safe and secure, pleasant and convenient to the living quarters. An ideal arrangement is to set up your facility

so that your baby creep doubles as the classroom.

While I don't agree with the imprinting (intense, repetitive, conditioning of newborn alpacas) approach, I also disagree with the practice of waiting to do any handling until babies are ready to be weaned. You certainly don't want to make a sudden appearance as the "Grand Poohbah" at six months of age. This is long after your babies have already decided that you are just an interesting barn "thingamajig."

Once the baby and mother have bonded and you are sure that the baby is healthy (in most cases at two to three days old) it is appropriate for you to become an important part of the cria's life. Lessons should be short, easy, non-stressful, and be designed to introduce you as a gentle, firm, leadership presence.

BABY STEPS

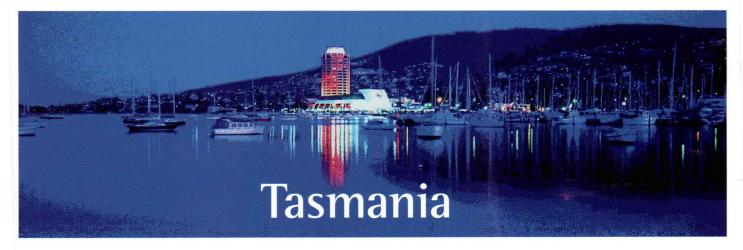
It is a good idea to work a bit with the mother first. She will have a better sense of what you intend to do with her baby and will be more relaxed. Your first goal is to teach the baby to override his flight response and accept your touch all over his body, while standing in balance and without restraint. Work with a new baby in a catch pen or mini-catch pen with his mother present. A bag of juicy hay, warm water, with a bit of molasses mixed in, or other special postnatal treats can be offered to your new mom at this time.

In a future issue, I'll discuss specific lessons to get the relationship you have with your new cria off to a respectful and pleasant beginning.

This article is reproduced with the kind permission of Marty McGee Bennett and "Alpacas Magazine", the official journal of the Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA), USA. Visit the AOBA website at www.aoba.org

About the Author: Marty McGee Bennett has been a fixture in the alpaca business almost since there was an alpaca business. After meeting Linda Tellington–Jones in 1987, Marty dedicated herself to bringing Linda's work, known as TTEAM, to the alpaca community. An accomplished author and teacher, Marty travels the world over to present hands–on training workshops to humans on how to handle their alpacas. When not on the road teaching, Marty lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her husband Brad. To find out more about Marty visit her website at www.camelidynamics.com







venue for 2004 AAA **National Conference**

by RAYMOND HAYNES 2004 Conference Convenor



The Tasmanian Region of the AAA is looking forward to hosting the next AAA National Conference between 20-22 August 2004 in a superb location on the banks of the Derwent River.



e hope many of you will take this opportunity to attend the Conference as well as explore Tasmania - a unique wilderness and historic area of Australia.

Did you know that nearly 40% of Tasmania is set aside as national parks and world heritage areas, and that Tasmania has approximately 90% of all the historic buildings in Australia?

Why not make Tasmania the destination for your 2004 holiday? Visit www.discovertasmania.com

Wrest Point Hotel and Conference Centre is an ideal location right on the foreshore of the Derwent River. Visit www.wrestpoint.com.au

The venue could not be better. It has multiple meeting and conference rooms; an exhibition centre able to hold up to 80 exhibitors; and a promenade walk straight from the exhibition hall to beautiful lawns surrounding the convention centre.

Both the exhibition space and the animal displays will be open to the public throughout the weekend.

Travel to Tasmania is frequent and cheap. Sail on the Spirit of Tasmania I or II in smooth comfort overnight taking your car for free. Visit www.spiritoftasmania.com.au

Or if you would rather fly, there are 14 flights each day into and out of Tasmania.

There will be a range of accommodation options and prices so that a lot more AAA members can afford to come to this conference. You will be able to stay at the Wrest Point complex or at one of many other facilities within easy walking distance of the Conference venue.

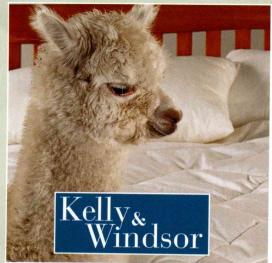
The Steering Committee for the Conference is hard at work planning aspects of the Conference and it is our intention to highlight the Australian Alpaca Industry to the Tasmanian public as part of the event.

In the Conference we are planning parallel sessions addressing the varied interests of participants. We invite suggestions as to what you would like to experience at the conference by email to: rhaynes@bigpond.net.au

If you have never attended a National AAA Conference in the past maybe you could tell us why and help us create a conference that you really want to come to.



ALPACA winter's warmest touch

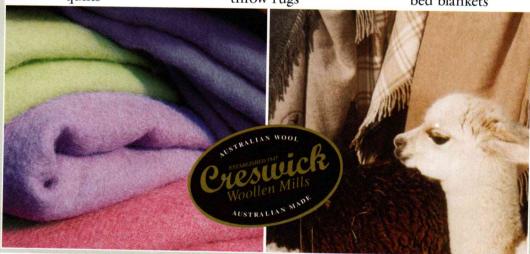




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Australian Alpaca in bedding products

Two strategic partners of the Australian Alpaca Co-operative Ltd expound the virtues of Australian alpaca in the manufacture of beautifully warm, lightweight bedding products.

From TREVOR BEUTH Managing Director, Kelly & Windsor (a division of FibreLoft Australia Pty Ltd) Campbellfield, VIC

he Australian Alpaca Co-operative Ltd (AACL) has been active in supporting the development of a new range of bedding products with its licensee, FibreLoft Australia Pty Ltd who, in January 2003, released its range of premium quality products under the brand name of Kelly & Windsor. After extensive design, development and testing of the alpaca bedding product range in the last 18 months, specialty retailers, including selected David Jones stores throughout Australia, have been enthusiastic about the launch of the Australian alpaca quilt. The quilt is the first in the line up of the Kelly & Windsor bedding range. The new multi layer alpaca underblanket has also received considerable interest and will be released next month with a complementary alpaca pillow range to follow.

The use of alpaca in bedding products is of interest to alpaca growers and the retailers/consumers for very different reasons.

From the viewpoint of alpaca growers and the AACL, the bedding market provides an excellent opportunity to find a market for the higher micron alpaca fleece that would otherwise be unacceptable for spinning into yarns for woven or knitted garments, which has been the traditional outlet for alpaca fibre. There has not until

recently been any commercial use of such fibres which are typically higher than 30μ , i.e. extra strongs, but this is changing with such qualities being ideal for both bedding and carpet applications.

In bedding applications such as quilts, pillows and underblankets, the higher micron alpaca fibres are especially sought after as they have a higher loft and resiliency thereby trapping more air to improve the fibre's already outstanding thermal properties. These fibres are also stronger than finer micron alpaca fibre, which is also a positive feature in providing higher durability and longer life.

Another benefit of this development for the alpaca growers is that bedding products generally require larger quantities of fleece to manufacture the end products. It is expected that in the future, approximately 15% to 20% of the total alpaca annual clip will be used in bedding products. This is expected to provide a strong base for the expansion of fleece production in Australia.

In designing and developing the new quilt range it was decided to use a majority blend of 60% alpaca with 40% downs wool in the filling. This was to create the optimal blend of fibres, with the alpaca fibre providing the luxurious softness and warmth and the downs wool enhancing the quilt's loft and resilience.

The alpaca quilts are warm while being lightweight as alpaca fibre is unique being semi hollow, which means that they are warm and comfortable without the weight. The alpaca quilts are also moisture absorbent which keeps the user dry and cooler in summer, dry and warmer in winter. As alpaca fibre is also very soft, Kelly & Windsor have chosen to finish off the quilt with a premium quality cotton casing to enhance its soft handle and drape.

The unique features of the alpaca quilt have been appreciated by the selected retailers who have chosen to stock the new alpaca quilts for their quality and performance in the coming winter season. In conjunction with the strategic home ware Co-op partners, the Kelly & Windsor alpaca quilt was shown off at the recent Home and Lifestyle Show in Melbourne in April 2003. The show was a great success in promoting the Australian alpaca industry, which was focused on demonstrating the attractiveness of commercially manufactured alpaca products especially with the quilts, blankets and rugs.

The use of alpaca fleece in bedding products creates exciting opportunity to value add an Australian natural product into a new and innovative commercial product range. The higher micron alpaca fibre that is required in the manufacture of alpaca bedding products has created a market for Australian grown coarse count alpaca fibre. Their use in a locally made, premium quality range of bedding products in the form of quilts, pillows and underblankets is expected to have significant growth potential both in Australia and overseas.



From Creswick Woollen Mills
- the last of the coloured woollen mills
- a perfect fit with alpaca

reswick Woollen Mills has been

manufacturing fabric and consumer products in Australia since 1947.

That's 56 years of local production in an industry that has mostly moved offshore.

The success of Creswick has been based on the resilience and dedication of Paul Ryzowy, Managing Director, who founded the business in Creswick, Country Victoria in 1947. The company is the largest local employer in the area, directly and indirectly (via contractors) employing over 120 people.

At the core of the business is the world class Australian alpaca fibre. A range of scarves, blankets and throws in both natural colours and fashionable dyed colours, capturing the luxurious qualities of softness, comfort and warmth, is sold throughout Australia. Touching these products is truly a sensual experience. The black, grey and brown hues utilise the alpaca's natural fibre colours to offer the customer a dye free product and our exclusive range of undyed alpaca blankets and throws is sold exclusively by David Jones.

The classification of Creswick Woollen Mills as a coloured spinning mill is a perfect fit with the alpaca fibre. The spinning mill is able to utilise the exquisite alpaca natural colours, and spin them in 200 kg to 600 kg lots from blacks to whites to light fawns. In the recent past we have then been able to blend alpaca colours to maximise the satisfaction of customers such as David Jones and Country Road. This is impossible to do in the white only spinning mills that exist around the world.

One unique aspect of this product is its 100% Alpaca labelling. After years of development Creswick Woollen Mills is extremely proud to spin a yarn from Australian Alpaca on a woollen spinning system, which the experts stated, could never be done. Due to the improvement of the classing system and significant modifications to our machinery, a quality yarn is produced efficiently, enabling our weaving department to manufacture world class blankets and throws to our customer specifications.

This translates into soft scarves, which are merchandised throughout Australia mainly in Duty Free stores allowing visitors to Australia an opportunity to experience a small part of Australian Alpaca. Our exclusive throw rugs have a generous size of 152 cm x 152 cm. They are available on a stock service basis in 12 colours.

The literature accompanying these products promotes to all consumers the benefits of the fleece used in the textile product. The latest addition to the range has been luxury blankets. The David Jones range is finished with an exclusive trim imported from Europe that lifts the fabric to an even higher level.

The Creswick range is sold through David Jones, Myer, The Bedspread Shop and Minimax. Visit the factory outlet at 7-9 Claremont Street, South Yarra, Victoria or call (03) 9824 1899 for information on our range and national stockists. ■



Hillianian (A)

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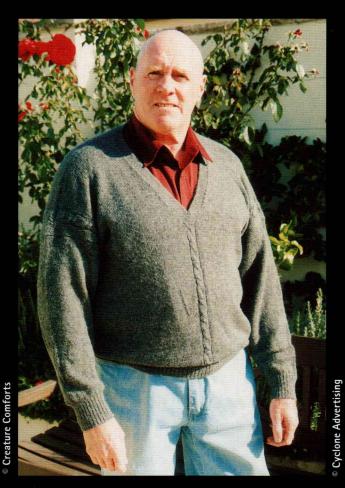
'Susie' 70/30 alpaca/acrylic patterned button-through cardigan \$145.00 Inca Stitches 03 9525 5768 www.alpacaknits.com



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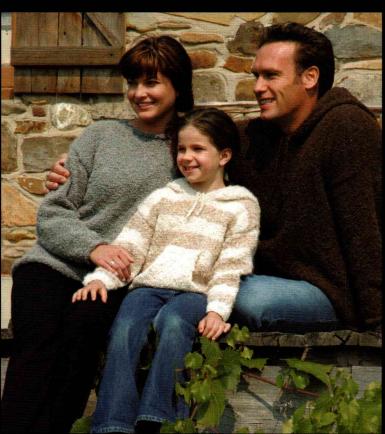


'Camana' Mens V neck jumper featuring a cable down centre front and around top of sleeve [s to xl] natural colours available \$360.00 Creature Comforts 02 6355 2477



'Tumi' Gillet style sleeveless jacket with zip front. 100% alpaca in a brushed reverse knit \$310.00 Men's sizes [m to xxl] in charcoal (pictured) is reversible (small size sold out) Ladies' sizes [s to xl] in black is not reversible The Braidwood Alpaca Shop 02 4842 1324 www.braidwoodalpacashop.com

ENTRIES IN MARKETPLACE ARE FREE TO ALPACA RETAILERS.
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Place your business card advertisement in the BUSINESS CARD DIRECTORY FOR ONLY \$110 PER ISSUE or \$88 PER ISSUE FOR 3-ISSUE BOOKINGS

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pacapics



EVERY PICTURE does TELL A STORY!

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Send your photos to The Editor, *Alpacas Australia*, PO Box 1076, Mitcham North, VIC 3132.



< You don't have to be big to know what to do >



< But it sure is tiring, think I'll just take a little rest >



< Ain't nothing that gets between me and my "paca tucca" >

Irene Garner Alpacapeña, NSW



< Just Looking >

Julie Mavros Blue Grass Alpaca Stud, NSW



< Tickle my tummy pleeeeese >

Sue Maynard Gunnamatta Stud, NSW



< I don't mind the new dressing... it's the spin cycle I'm worried about!>

Glenn Sutherland Surtierra Alpaca Stud, VIC



< OK..which way did he go? >

Denise Moysey Arcadian Alpacas, SA



< So I'm due in the show ring this afternoon, what's your problem?>

Mike Nichols Dynasty Alpacas, VIC



< An udderly good shot >

Darrel Laughton Beavona Lodge, QLD



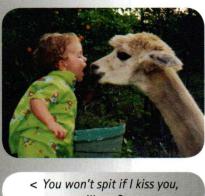
< I'm king of the castle >

Odette Mayne Currumbong Alpacas, ACT



< Madhouse >

Sue Northfield Northfield Gully Alpacas, VIC



will you?>

Ken Parsons Kashelda Alpacas, NSW



< Now, let's talk about this >

Joy Allenby-Acuna La Granja Alpacas, NSW



< You are only allowed one handful each >

Carolyn Jinks Benleigh Alpaca Stud, VIC



< I've got a secret >

Merlyn Brown Ronlyn Park Alpacas, VIC

Calendar

OPCOM

Alpacas on show at the following venues - All welcome -

2003

A			

17 HAWKESBURY SPRING SHOW, NSW Venue: Hawkesbury Showgrounds, Clarendon

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657

28 - 30 GOLD COAST SHOW, QLD

Venue: Parkland Showgrounds, Gold Coast

Highlights: Promotional display (28-29 Aug) Alpaca judging (30 Aug)

Contact: Bob Chessor (07) 5527 3948

29 - SEPT 6 ROYAL ADELAIDE SHOW, SA

Venue: Adelaide Showgrounds
Highlights: Alpaca judging (29 Aug); Fleece judging (30 Aug)
Contact: Lea Richens (08) 8842 2344

30 - 31 GOULBURN SHOW and TOTALLY ALPACA FIELD DAY, NSW

Venue: Peden Pavilion, Goulburn Showgrounds Highlights: Alpaca judging (30 Aug) Field Day (31 Aug)

Contact: Tony Cooke (02) 6227 0180

September

2 - 4 AGSHOW, QLD

Venue: Toowoomba Showgrounds

Highlights: Promotional display

Contact: Ann Henderson (07) 4630 9418

5 - 6 BEAUDESERT AGRICULTURAL SHOW, QLD

Venue: Beaudesert Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpacas in AgEd for school children (5 Sept) Promo (6 Sept)

Contact: Shayne Barnett (07) 3200 0585

11 - 14 SPRINGTIME FLORA FESTIVAL, NSW

Venue: Mt Penang, Kariong Highlights: Alpaca show (13-14 Sept)

Contact: Evelyn Thrift (02) 4938 1513

14 ALPACA SALE DAY and CRAFT FAIR, WA

Venue: Gidgegannup Showgrounds Highlights: Alpaca auction; craft display

Contact: Corinne Gurry (08) 9572 1205

18 - 28 ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW, VIC Venue: Meaklim Pavilion, RAS Showgrounds, Ascot Vale Highlights: Alpacas at Show 26-28 Sept; Fleece judging (26 Sept) Alpaca judging - Huacaya (26-27 Sept); Suri (28 Sept)

Contact: Geoff Hargreaves (03) 5773 2494

20 - 21 CHARLES LEDGER SHOW, NSW

Venue: "Collingwood House", Liverpool Regional Museum Highlights: Alpaca show: grey only (20 Sept) all colours (21 Sept)

Contact: David Izard (02) 4841 0026

26 - OCT 4 ROYAL PERTH SHOW, WA

Venue: RAS Showgrounds, Claremont

Highlights: Alpaca judging (28 Sept); Fleece judging (29 Sept) Contact: Ron Reid (08) 9296 4888

October

4 SEYMOUR SHOW, VIC Venue: Seymour Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging

Contact: Geoff Brennan (03) 5782 1800; Ann Harris (03) 5780 2419

6 STRATHALBYN SHOW, SA

Venue: Strathalbyn Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Ann Ruckert (08) 8388 0888

7 - 9 ELMORE FIELD DAYS, VIC

Venue: Elmore Field Days Site

Highlights: Promotional display

Contact: Sue Simpson (03) 5825 2895

11 ROYAL LAUNCESTON SHOW, TAS

Venue: Launceston Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging Contact: Glen Boyd (03) 6397 3007

11 - 12 MURRUMBATEMAN FIELD DAYS, NSW

Murrumbateman Showgrounds Promotional display Highlights:

Contact: Tony Cooke (02) 6227 0180

11 - 12 "ALPACAS IN FOCUS", VIC

Venue: Chesterfield Farm, Scoresby ghlights: Promotional display (11 Oct); Alpaca judging (12 Oct) Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140 Highlights:

SUNBURY SHOW, VIC

Venue: Sunbury Showgrounds

Highlights: Promotional display

Contact: Meddwyn Coleman (03) 5448 8032

CLARE SHOW, SA

Venue: Clare Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Ann Ruckert (08) 8388 0888

19 GEELONG SHOW, VIC

Venue: Geelong Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Chris Day (03) 5368 7094

21 - 23 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FIELD DAYS, NSW Venue: ANFD Site, Borenore via Orange

Highlights: Alpaca display and expo Kate Bailey (02) 6887 1233 Contact:

22 - 25 ROYAL HOBART SHOW, TAS

Venue: Hobart Showgrounds Highlights: Alpaca judging (23 Oct)

Contact: Alan Froome (03) 6266 6092

24 - 26 FAIRBRIDGE VILLAGE and PEEL DISTRICTS SHOW, WA

Venue: Fairbridge Village, Pinjarra Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging

Contact: Greg Smith (08) 9525 2084

25 BENDIGO SHOW, VIC

Venue: Bendigo Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging

Contact: Geoff Cook (03) 5439 2588

26 WARRNAMBOOL SHOW, VIC

Venue: Warrnambool Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Chris Day (03) 5368 7094

31 - NOV 2 NATIONAL SHOW and SALE

Venue: E.P.I.C Centre, Canberra

ighlights: Fleece judging (31 Oct); Alpaca judging: Suri (3pm, 31 Oct) Alpaca judging: Huacaya (8.30am, 1 Nov) Alpaca auction (1pm, 2 Nov); Alpaca craft competition Contact: Paul Haslin (02) 4878 9429 Highlights:

November

1 WHITTLESEA SHOW, VIC

Whittlesea Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging

Contact: Geoff Brennan (03) 5782 1800; Ann Harris (03) 5780 2419

COLAC SHOW, VIC

Venue: Colac Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca judging

Contact: Chris Day (03) 5368 7094

7 - 8 ALBANY SHOW, WA

Venue: Albany Showgrounds

Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging

Contact: Diny Monaghan (08) 9764 1061

10 - 16 ALPACA FIESTA, AREQUIPA, PERU

Contact: International Alpaca Association: alpacafiesta2003@star.com.pe

Website: www.aia.org.pe/alpaca/alpacafiesta.htm

URL: www.tiendadeviajes.com

TRARALGON SHOW, VIC

Venue: Traralgon Showgrounds Highlights: Alpaca and fleece judging Contact: Sue Northfield (03) 9754 5152

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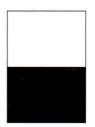
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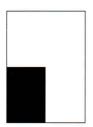


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Material

Editorial Material: If possible, all editorial contributions should be typed and preferably submitted electronically or by floppy disc in Word format. Visual material preferably supplied as colour photographs or transparencies. If supplying digital photography ensure that it is in high resolution of at least 250 dpi. We will endeavour to return all photos and slides.

Advertising Material: Please supply electronic artwork on disc to correct size. Preferred Macintosh programs InDesign, Quark Xpress, Illustrator or Photoshop. Alternatively save your adverts in high resolution pdf, jpg, tif or eps. Include all screen and printer typefaces, high resolution pictures, logos etc associated with the adverts. For full page adverts please allow 5 mm for bleed.

Colour adverts to be supplied in CMYK (not PMS or RGB). Please supply hard copy proof in colour or mono (as applicable) for printing reference. We cannot guarantee inclusion of late adverts.

Further advertising material enquiries can be directed to:

Irene Garner, Garner Graphics

Phone +61 (0)2 4884 1222 Fax +61 (0)2 4884 1233 Email garnering@bigpond.com.au

Deadlines

Issue 42: Summer

Due: December 2003 Deadline: Friday 10 October Issue 43: Autumn

Due: April 2004 Deadline: Friday 13 February Issue 44: Winter

Due: August 2004 Deadline: Friday 4 June

Please book and send all editorial and advertising material to Sandra Wright
Australian Alpaca Association Inc, PO Box 1076, Mitcham North, Victoria 3132 Australia
PHONE +61 (0)3 9873 7700 FAX +61 (0)3 9873 7711 EMAIL sandra@alpaca.asn.au

TERRA-VAC SUCTION CLEANERS



THE ANSWER TO MANURE COLLECTION IN THE ALPACA INDUSTRY

Designed and manufactured by Vulcan Engineers Ltd in Suffolk, England since 1982, the Terra-Vac range of suction machines were originally designed for use in the equine industry. Since that date, the Terra-Vac range has been successfully applied to the poultry, timber and council clean-up industries. After successful testing, the Terra-Vac has proved to be the answer to effortless and hygenic collection of manure in the Alpaca industry.

Available in a range of capacities, the size of the machine required is dependant upon the number of animals owned. With capacities ranging from 1m³ to 10m³, there is a machine to suit most applications.

The 1m³ and 2m³ models are available in either PTO or independent engine drive, and can therefore be towed by mower, quad bike, 4WD etc. The larger machines, 3m³ to 10m³, are PTO driven only, and require a 20hp to 60hp tractor.

FEATURING:

- Simple Suction Mulching System Steel mulching fan powered by PTO or Briggs and Stratton 9hp (1m³) or 13hp (2m³) petrol engine.
- Twin Modes: The hover plate allows the operator to clean large areas without leaving the towing vehicle, while the wander-hose is employed in hard to reach areas.
- Simple to Use: Just hook the machine to the towing vehicle, start the engine, select pick-up mode with the flick of a lever and you're away.
- Easy to Empty and Clean After collection, the Terra-Vac is emptied using the hydraulic tipping system, then hosed out, while the mulch produced is perfect for the garden.
- Drastically Reduces Glear up Time. The 200mm diameter hose collects manure in a fraction of the time compared to shovel and wheelbarrow.
- Tough and Reliable. The steel fan is able to pick up general rubbish, small sticks and stones, straw, leaves and bark (ask us for specific applications), making it perfect for general clean-up, and comes with a 12 month warranty and further one year extension on the engine.



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For Further information, please contact Australian and New Zealand Distributers:



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Which ever way, we're worth getting to know.



PUCARA ALPACA STUD Jude Anderson & Alan Cousill

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Fax: (03) 5263 3364 Phone: (03) 5263 3436 E-Mail: pucara@bigpond.com

400 Alpacas on farm 80 on sale list

- Honesty
- ServiceEnergy
- Integrity