

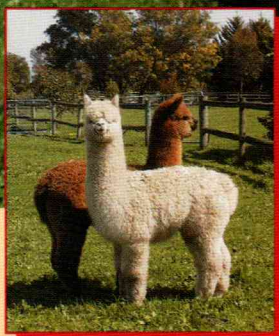


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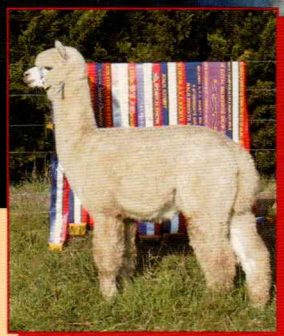


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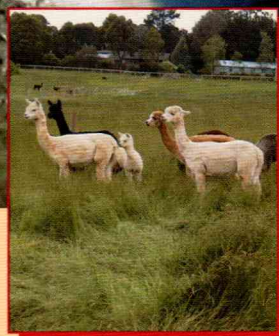
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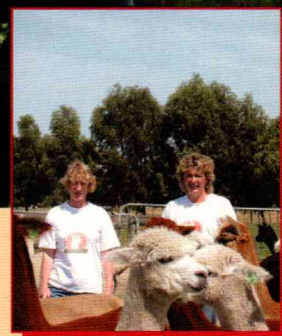
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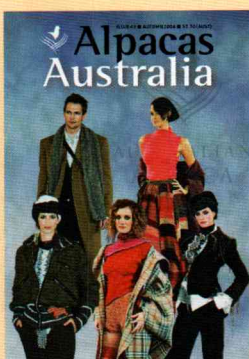
Phone: (03) 5968 5614

Mob.: 0407 729 227

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COVER

Originals in alpaca at the launch of the Australian Alpaca Designer Collections during the L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival see page 4 photographed by Maurice Grant-Drew

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EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING

Sandra Wright, Australian Alpaca Association Inc. Unit 2, 613 Whitehorse Road Mitcham, Victoria 3132 Australia (PO Box 1076, Mitcham North, Victoria 3132) Telephone +61 (0)3 9873 7700 Fax +61 (0)3 9873 7711 E-mail sandra@alpaca.asn.au Internet www.alpaca.asn.au

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by Garner Graphics
'Riverside' Lot 4, Inverary Road
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Fax +61 (0)2 4884 1233
E-mail garnering@bigpond.com.au

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Managing the AAA Inc. – Transparency of Decisions

Many of you who may read this message were involved in writing or considering the Association Rules and their subsequent evolution. As one of those charged with the responsibility of implementing the rules I am grateful for the guidance for administrations and for the checks and balances included in the Rules.

The Rules clearly require the National Committee to govern for the good of all the membership between ordinary general meetings (including the annual general meeting). The Rules also direct the National Committee to manage the AAA in specific terms as spelt out in the Schedules. The Rules are based on the requirements of the Victorian Associations Act, which mirrors in most respects the principles of the Australian Corporations law. The Corporations law spells out the principles and practice of good corporate governance.

Whenever the National Committee has to take the hard decisions there are always those of our membership who feel there should have been a referendum on the issue. Their position is that all the relevant information (on which the National Committee based its decision) should be made available to ensure transparency and enable every member to come to a decision on the merits of the issue.

The position referred above is the ideal exercise in democracy and in the wider community is often called citizen-initiated referenda. Unfortunately it can also be impractical and ignores the necessity of protecting the private information of those members whose affairs are involved in consideration of the issues and the speed required for the decision. Transparency of decision-making must be balanced with the rights of the affected people and the time available to the decision-makers.

In previous communications to you in the past few months I indicated that the Association was moving to take greater involvement in fleece collection. By the time you get to read this message, a new fleece collection agency called "Australian Alpaca Fleece Limited (AAFL)", an unlisted public company, will have commenced business on your behalf.

The matter was first raised with the Association's Council in November when it became clear that the Australian Alpaca Co-operative Limited (AACL) was suffering cash flow difficulties due to the lack of fleece supplies for their waiting customers. Lack of fleece meant lack of sales, which was then reflected in lost income. AACL was also hampered by its co-operative structure, which imposed limitations on how it could raise more capital. The Council determined that the do-nothing option was not sustainable for the industry and the National Committee obtained Council support to take the necessary steps to deal with the matter. Acting quickly was a necessity not a choice.

There were questions raised as to certain aspects of the AACL business and a working group was established with professional legal and consulting assistance to determine the answers to those questions and report back to the National Committee as soon as possible. It was also recognised that the Strategic Development Task Force report "Vision 2020" had foreseen this

eventuality and recommended the establishment of a trading arm for the AAA as the Association was unable to trade in its own right. The Executive took the initiative and established our new trading arm, "Uniquely Alpaca Pty Ltd", to be ready for any recommendations arising out of the report of the working group.

After receiving the working group report the National Committee determined to enter into a Heads of Agreement with the Board of AACL to take over the business of AACL, to concentrate on just purchasing and beneficiating fleece for the customers who have contracts to fill with alpaca retailers. The opportunity to purchase fleece from anyone willing to sell also became available.

It will readily be appreciated that undue publicity of the deliberations of the National Committee and those of the AACL Board could have had an adverse impact on the share value of over 900 of our members who are shareholders of the Co-operative, with the possibility of opportunistic predation by outsiders without any concern for the good of our industry.

Another issue has been raised concerning the possibility of conflict of interest of those members of the National Committee, including the writer, in dealing with this matter. The National Committee does have one member who is not a shareholder of

AACL. The Committee relied on legal advice obtained previously which indicated that with such wide incidence of membership between AAA Inc and AACL that any notional conflict was sufficiently diluted.

At the last meeting of the National Committee in February I chose not to put the Minutes of all the meetings between November and February for formal approval. To have done so would have meant their publication on the AAA web site as Confirmed Minutes ahead of completion of delicate negotiation. The Minutes will be published when confirmed and the members will be able to see how robustly the various positions were argued, which I hope will lead a majority of members to the same conclusion as your National Committee. If they do not then you will have the opportunity to deal with those members of the National Committee, including the writer, at the next elections.

I want to pay tribute to the members of the National Committee, the Board of AACL ("the Co-operative") and the Working Group, Alan Fraser, Colin Youren and Ian Winlaw together with their professional advisers, all of whom worked solidly from mid November through Christmas/New Year to March to achieve a continuation in the industry's ability to maintain fleece supply to our manufacturing customers. An outstanding effort that I believe is without precedent in the history of our Association. Please remember they are all volunteers!

References:

"Duties and Responsibilities of Directors and Officers". Professor Robert Baxt, 17th Edition 2002, Australian Institute of Company Directors.

"Guide for Meetings and Organisations". N. E. Renton, 7th Edition 2000, LBC Information Services.

"Rules of the Association". August 2003, Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

a message from the president



KERRY DWYER, PRESIDENT

briefly speaking...

www.alpaca.asn.au - a vital source of information on alpaca events, alpacas for sale, latest industry developments and much more!

The AAA web site is vibrant and dynamic and is an important communication link for AAA members and non-members alike. As well, over the next few months we will be posting all the up-to-date National Conference news.

Please visit our web site and take the time to browse - you will be pleased with its time efficiency and ease of navigation.

Do you have an interesting story to tell? Are there any topics that you would like to read about in "Alpacas Australia"?

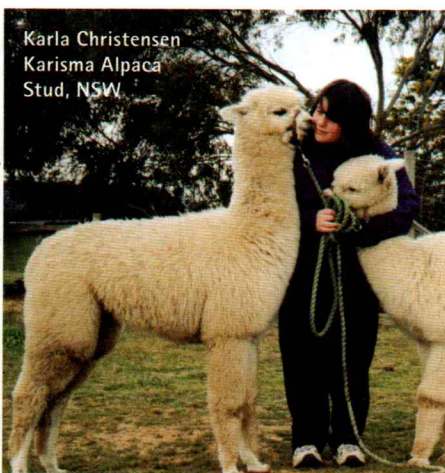
Please send your articles and ideas to the Editor. We'd love to hear from you.

The prestigious **Australian Wool Fashion Awards (TAWFA)** were held in Armidale, NSW in March. Included in a selection of 100 garments featured in the Presentation Awards Parade was an **alpaca dress created by Victorian breeder, Kaye McNeill**. The dress had previously been exhibited at last year's inaugural AAA National Show Craft Section where it was awarded the **Champion Felted Exhibit**.

Kaye's dress will continue to be shown at the TAWFA fashion parades that will also be staged at the **Sydney Royal Show and other major events around Australia** in the coming months leading up to Wool Week 2004, and the New England Wool Expo to be held in Armidale in April / May. More information about the Expo is available on page 41 of this issue.

Alpacas Australia extends congratulations to Kaye on the selection of her garment for the fashion parade and her talent in the textile field.

Photograph courtesy Orrapooro Alpacas



Karla Christensen
Karisma Alpaca
Stud, NSW

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# L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival

THE MELBOURNE FASHION WORLD WAS ABUZZ IN MARCH DURING THE L'ORÉAL MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL, AND THE SOFTEL HOTEL, SITUATED AT THE PARIS END OF COLLINS STREET, WAS THE PLACE TO BE FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPACA DESIGNER COLLECTIONS.

by SANDRA WRIGHT  
Australian Alpaca Association

*The Collections featured stunning creations from eight of Australia's leading fashion designers, who were given the opportunity to work with the world's most luxurious fibre in the form of both yarn and fabric. Their fabulous garments made from alpaca were featured in an exclusive parade before an audience comprising politicians, textile industry representatives and strategic partners of the Australian Alpaca Co-op Ltd. (AACL), as well as some very excited alpaca breeders.*



he fashion parade was the culmination of many weeks of planning by the AACL. Through the efforts and unwavering enthusiasm of General Manager, Michael Talbot and fashion marketing consultant, Pamela Darragh, the talents of celebrated designers, namely Dom Bagnato, Perri Cutten, Ess.Hoshika, Flair Menswear, Jenny Hoo, Melissa Jackson, Lorena Laing and Carla Zampatti were secured. The strategic partners of the AACL were delighted to support this wonderful opportunity to showcase their exquisite fabrics and yarns and the scene was set.



Photography Maurice Grant-Drew



**Melissa Jackson's** own style was reflected in colourful designs with a theatrical edge. Her unique bridal party (pictured left) was outfitted in garments utilising the fabulous yarns and fabrics, blankets and throws and created an extremely imaginative concept for that special day, be it your wedding day or simply the launch of the Australian Alpaca Designer Collections.

Menswear from **Dom Bagnato** featured superb knitwear made from Tasman Designer Yarns and the amazing transformation of blankets and throws from Creswick Woollen Mills into overcoats and suits. Dom Bagnato was thrilled to work with alpaca and is planning to have a separate line for alpaca in winter 2005. "The beauty I find with alpaca is the lightness of a garment as soon as you put it on," summed up his thoughts.

**Perri Cutten** used the same yarns to create stunning ladies knitwear and her range of ladies coats, made from Creswick blankets and throws, was elegant and sophisticated. Perri teamed her knitwear with tailored pants and skirts made from fabric woven at Macquarie Textiles Group. So delighted with the materials was Perri that she has already announced her intention to use alpaca again and is very keen to work with the AACL.

The works of **Ess.Hoshika** also utilised Macquarie's woven alpaca fabric, Tasman Designer Yarns and blankets and throws from Creswick. The versatility of alpaca was highlighted in their innovative designs in casual wear.

Stylish suits and coats by **Flair Menswear**, once again in fabric from Macquarie Textile Group, were impressive on the catwalk. 'Classy' and 'sexy' were comments bandied around and the garments were made no less appealing by two of the models on the day. AFL footballers, Nick Riewoldt and Austinn Jones from the St Kilda Football Club looked a little less at ease on the catwalk than the professionals but were very popular with the crowd.

Paul Kanat of Flair Menswear, appearing relaxed and happy after the parade said, "We will show our garments in May this year, and deliver in March 2005". He believes that the material could be made still lighter, in which case he would also like to use it for his summer range. Now, there's a challenge for the processors!

**Carla Zampatti**, renowned locally and internationally for her stylish, classic designs with an emphasis on the use of quality fabrics and finishings, presented her beautiful suits and coats in Macquarie woven alpaca fabric. Timeless and elegant styles enhanced by the sheen and lustre of alpaca were the order of the day.



Dom Bagnato



Perri Cutten



Ess.Hoshika



Perri Cutten



Perri Cutten



Carla Zampatti



Ess.Hoshika



Carla Zampatti



Ess.Hoshika



Flair Menswear





Lorena Laing



Jenny Hoo



Lorena Laing



Jenny Hoo



Dom Bagnato and Lorena Laing



Lorena Laing



Jenny Hoo



Lorena Laing



Jenny Hoo

**Jenny Hoo** presented superbly tailored jackets and coats made from Creswick blankets and a Macquarie fabric ladies trouser suit with an eye-catching red trim was striking.

The luxurious drape of the soft alpaca material inspired Chilean born **Lorena Laing's** wide leg trousers and flowing skirts, beautifully accessorised with headwear knitted in Tasman Designer Yarns. Influenced by the rich culture of her birth country, Lorena envisaged garments that "would flow as the model walks along the catwalk". Her ideas certainly came to life in all the natural shades of alpaca and, with just a touch of raw alpaca fleece here and there, her range of garments was quite unique.

The parade concluded with the appearance of three alpacas led down the catwalk by three of our proud designers - a stunning black suri led by Dom Bagnato; a beautifully fleeced white huacaya in the care of Melissa Jackson; and a slightly hesitant white cria that was finally swept up confidently in the arms of young Lorena Laing.

Using their individual interpretations of style and design each of the designers made alpaca 'their own'. To some of them alpaca was a familiar medium but for others it was an exciting new adventure to work with such a unique fibre. All designers were united in their praise for the alpaca qualities of lightness, softness and luxurious drape and some of them will be knocking on Michael Talbot's door sooner than later. Messages of congratulations and support for Australian Alpaca have been flooding in and the huge success of the Australian Alpaca Designers Collection will be a springboard for the Australian alpaca fashion industry into the international world of haute couture.

Look out for these garments on the international catwalks in New York, Europe and Asia later this year and of course, closer to home, as the designers release their new ranges into the Australian market.

If the atmosphere before the fashion parade could be described as exciting then I am lost for words to describe the aftermath. Industry participants from all levels were caught between the desire to simply stand there and beam or 'choose to schmooze' with the designers and other key industry representatives who mingled with those members of the Australian Alpaca Association who were lucky enough to be there. Sponsors of the L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival provided the sparkling wines and connoisseur ice creams sampled by the elated throng and, as guests for the next fashion event of the day arrived, the alpaca people reluctantly departed. ■



# Role of Alpacas in the Future of Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture in Australia

by JOHN LAWRIE  
Senior Natural Resource Officer  
Dept of Infrastructure Planning and  
Natural Resources

*Sustainability is no longer a good enough objective for Australian agriculture. We now need to improve the health of our degraded environment not just sustain it or conserve it as we have strived to do in the past. Now with the help of new no-tillage sowing technology, new time control grazing systems and alpacas, we can start to improve our degraded environment. As well of course we need our agricultural enterprises to be economically sustainable.*

**a** new term to describe this lofty objective is "regenerative agriculture" but the word "sustainable" is still very much in vogue. When agriculture is regenerative, soils, water, vegetation and productivity continually improve rather than staying the same or slowly getting worse. As well as being productive and profitable regenerative agriculture instils a deep sense of personal satisfaction in farmers, rural communities and observers alike. Revitalising the natural resource base rekindles our sense of self and our sense of place in the environment [Jones, 2002].

Australian agriculture operates in one of the oldest and more fragile landscapes on the earth. Cattle and sheep are the dominant livestock species used, across

some two-thirds of the landscape, but they both have limitations and adverse impacts on agricultural ecosystems, often as a result of the declining terms-of-trade. Alpacas, a new livestock industry, are offering the potential of a higher level of profitability and the opportunity to use better management of ecosystems in a regenerative and sustainable manner because alpacas are ecosystem friendly [Charry, Kemp and Lawrie 2003].

As a practising land management specialist I spend a lot of time looking at land degradation issues. These are mainly related to the physical, chemical and biological degradation of the soil resource, especially soil erosion, soil structure decline, fertility decline including acidity, soil biological decline, tree decline and salinity problems.

The alpaca industry has much to offer in helping to solve these problems when these issues are looked at from a holistic perspective. Their grazing behaviour, disease-free status, low animal hoof pressure, efficiency in conversion of low quality forage, excretion habits and amicable temperament are some of the attributes that make alpacas desirable for Australian ecosystems, particularly for small-intensive farming and part-time farming, as well as for extensive, multi-enterprise farming operations.

This article will explore this vital role for alpacas in improving our degraded environment as well as look at some ways that alpacas will become a viable addition to our other agricultural enterprises over the next decade or two. Some of what I say is speculative and perhaps a bit controversial but I hope that this may stimulate ideas and further debate.

## UTILISING OUR NATIVE PASTURES

Alpaca wethers can survive on a low protein diet (7.5% crude protein) while sheep and cattle require at least 12% protein [Vaughan and Costa, 1998]. Additional protein is provided by micro-flora activity in their rumen. Alpacas are very good at maintaining a nitrogen balance because they can recycle urea in their saliva, they extract more urea from their stomachs than other ruminants and they excrete less nitrogen in their urine. This means that wethers will eventually play an important role in grazing, especially in our poorer quality natural pastures.

Alpacas are also ideally suited to these rangeland conditions because they are easy to manage with minimal fencing requirements and yards. In our rangelands, alpacas will graze with other livestock in time control grazing systems. Larger numbers will be needed in rangelands for stock protection not only from foxes, dingoes and wild dogs but also from some avian predators (see later section). Alpaca wethers, when not needed for stock protection, may follow in the grazing rotation after the other livestock have been moved to fresh pastures. This will ensure that the wether fleeces remain fine and retain their value. Fibre fineness of alpaca fleeces can blow out much more than merino fleeces, increasing by up to 5-10 microns on nutritious pastures. They will also be used to control some woody weeds like sweet briars and blackberries.

Alpacas have split lips similar to kangaroos and they are also very selective grazers with low nutrient requirements. Alpacas may even eventually be used for land management and fire control in our national parks. That is if the "greenies" decide that they would still prefer national parks without bushfires and they continue to want the parks to go back to pre-aboriginal condition (circa 50,000 years ago) when





there were abundant mammals (now extinct) grazing the landscape.

The amount of food an alpaca needs is similar to a sheep i.e. one dry sheep equivalent (1dse). Female alpacas average about 60-70 kg body weight compared with a merino ewe at 45-50kg but alpacas are 37% more efficient at extracting energy and protein from low quality feed. This is because the digestion process takes longer in an alpaca. It takes 63 hours for food to pass through the alimentary canal compared with 41 hours for sheep (50% longer than sheep and twice as long as cattle). A dry female or wether weighing 65kg needs about 7 MJ (megajoules) of ME (metabolic energy) per/day. This could be fed entirely with about 1.3kg of hay/day, that is, one small square bale every 2 weeks. Research from Murdoch University indicates that better quality WA straws would meet this criterion for energy [Vaughan and Costa, 1998].

However pregnant females and growing cria need a much higher plan of nutrition. Hembras in late pregnancy need one and a half amount times the energy (dse = 1.5) and lactating hembras twice (dse = 2) with 12-14% protein, while weaned crias also need twice as much energy and up to 16% protein.

IMPROVED PASTURES

In more intensive grazing situations alpacas will be used to increase perennially by helping re-establish native perennial grasses

and spread introduced perennial grasses. The dung piles provide an ideal seedbed for establishing both native and introduced perennial grasses, especially when no other livestock are grazing. To assist the establishment of perennial grasses any broad-leafed weeds can be sprayed out with cheap broad leaf herbicides.

Also alpacas prefer eating grasses and forbs rather than legumes so they are ideal grazing tools to help maintain legumes in the pastures. It is essential to maintain about 30% legume mix to provide adequate nitrogen for a healthy pasture.

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR SOILS

Alpaca over time spread nutrients evenly around the entire paddock as they move their dung piles around. In small paddocks with time-controlled grazing and high stocking density it is believed that after ten rotations the alpacas have covered the full area of the paddock with their dung piles with a dramatic improvement in fertility and native and perennial pasture establishment [Charry, Kemp and Lawrie, 2003].

The loss of soil nutrients contributing to our acid soil problem is not only an issue of nutrients leaving the farm in product, but even to a larger degree the concentration of nutrients in dung on stock camps by traditional livestock. For instance sheep camp normally on the north eastern side of hills so that they receive the first sun at

daybreak and cattle poop in streams and under trees where enriched nutrients in the soil cause the death of Eucalyptus spp. and other native trees. Also alpacas normally don't ringbark trees as do goats and horses.

Alpacas help improve soil structure (see Table 1). They apply low pressures on the soil, even less than kangaroos when both species are stationary and kangaroos are resting on their tails. The only domesticated grazing animal that is kinder to the soil is the camel. You all know that sheep foot rollers are used to prepare and compact road surfaces. Sheep are even worse as they drag their hooves along the ground and pulverise the soil surface when it is bare.

| Table 1 – Static Loads exerted by stationary animals. |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Horses (shod)                                         | 295 kPa |
| Cattle                                                | 185 kPa |
| Humans (shod)                                         | 95 kPa  |
| Sheep                                                 | 82 kPa  |
| Kangaroos*                                            | 46 kPa  |
| Alpacas                                               | 39 kPa  |
| Camels                                                | 33 kPa  |

Source: J Lawrie, 1995

\* Values for kangaroo were calculated including the surface area of the tail of the kangaroo.

These pressures have been calculated as the weight per projected unit of contact. Considering the shape of cloven-hoofed sheep and cattle whose hooves are not flat, these values may be under-estimated especially on firm surfaces.



## CONSERVATION FARMING AND NO-TILL SOWING

Conservation farming is the practice of sowing crops and pastures without cultivating the soil to preserve more soil moisture and prevent soil erosion. The use of no-tillage sowing equipment for sowing both pastures and crops is essential for preventing soil erosion and improving soil health, especially increasing soil biota and soil structure.

We will also see alpacas increasingly used in the mixed farming / grazing enterprises, especially in no-tillage systems. This is not only because they are soft on land but also because alpaca wethers can maintain their condition on crop stubble [Vaughan and Costa, 1998] unlike other livestock. Alpacas will be used to reduce stubble levels and to control weeds like wireweed, which are difficult to control with herbicides, allowing crops to be sown without stubble blocking up no-tillage equipment.

Another advantage of alpacas in mixed farming grazing areas is that they can be readily fed cereal grain without problems associated with other ruminants. Saliva flow in alpaca is much greater than sheep and this allows buffering against acids in the stomach. Another advantage of alpacas is that they have no gall bladder so bile is continuously secreted from the liver. This increases efficiency of their stomachs and also protects against acidosis during rapid fermentation that can occur with cereal diets [Vaughan and Costa, 1998].

## PROTECTION OF LIVESTOCK FROM PREDATORS

The number of alpacas used to protect lambs and kids against foxes depends mainly on the size and the shape of the paddock rather than the size of the flock. This is because the alpaca will chase the foxes away if a fox is seen or smelt near the paddock. One mature (>15 months old) alpaca per 20 ha should be sufficient. Farmers have reported increases of lambing percentages of greater than 30% where foxes are a serious problem. If there is more than one alpaca in the paddock they may stay together and isolate from the flock but at night they will camp with the flock.

To protect against crows and other predatory birds an alpaca would need to protect each lambing ewe for about 3 hours

depending on the mothering ability and health of the mother. A rough guide of one alpaca per 100 ewes should be adequate.

When required for protection against wild dogs and dingoes, the more alpacas the better. At least 5-10 alpacas are recommended and even more in heavily timbered and rangelands with large paddocks. Alpacas have also been successful in preventing foxes from eating the tongues of calves during delivery.

Alpacas make excellent lead stock and recently, during the bushfires, an alpaca was observed leading a flock of sheep to safety. Alpacas also chase unwanted wild grazing animals like kangaroos from small grazing paddocks. However at this stage it is not sure whether they will continue to do this when they realise that they are not predators.

## ORGANICALLY GROWN FIBRE

Very few chemicals are required for alpaca management i.e. no organophosphates for flystrike, no pesticides for footrot and no artificial colouring needed for producing the wonderful range of natural colours that alpacas provide. Dark coloured fleeces require less dye for dark artificial colours like navy blue.

Drenches are the only chemicals regularly used by some alpaca breeders for worm control. Drenching is minimal when no other livestock are grazed in the same paddocks, especially in drier climates, and also due to the sanitary use of dung piles by alpacas.

In addition, alpacas are ideal for biological rabbit control because they force foxes to prey on rabbits in paddocks not being guarded by alpacas. Therefore farmers need not use baits to poison foxes and rabbits which may also endanger the native wildlife.

## ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE

The price of alpaca fibre (up to 26 micron) is currently 3-5 times higher than the price of wool of equivalent micron. This, plus the low cost of production of alpaca fibre due to no crutching, mulesing, tail docking operations and no dipping for lice or jetting for flystrike being required, will help make running alpacas for fleece production commercially attractive at some time in the near future. Alpaca fibre will be cheaper to

produce than wool because alpacas don't need to be crutched (60 cents), dipped (35 cents), backlined (90 cents) or mulesed (90 cents). These costs plus the labour costs of handling sheep for these extra operations will be greater than the slightly more labour intensive costs associated with shearing commercial numbers of alpacas.

There is huge potential for value adding by blending alpaca with wool, one of our major export industries in Australia. Alpaca blends well with wool combining the non-shrinking properties and superior strength of alpaca fibre with the elastic (non-stretch) properties of wool. A blend of 20% alpaca with 5% of the wool grown in Australia would require about 40,000 tonnes of alpaca fibre, so there is a huge potential market without considering other fibres. However, the recent AAA 2020 Vision Report by Strategic Development Task Force [Anon 2004] predicts that there will be 1.2 million alpacas producing about 4,000 tonnes of quality alpaca fibre in 2020.

The other long-term advantage for alpacas is that they have at least twice the longevity of sheep and goats. This means that a self-replacing flock of alpacas will only require less than half the numbers of breeding females to maintain a flock of wool cutters. Thus the culling rate of females will be able to be higher and the genetic improvement quicker.

In Australia with our low altitudes we have a natural advantage in producing superior quality fleeces because at high altitudes ultra violet light causes significant damage to the tips of fibre. This is especially evident in Peru, the country that currently produces the majority of alpaca fibre for world use.

In Australia we are also lucky to be able to take advantage of valuable research conducted by the CSIRO, Universities and State Government agencies on fibre production industries. So, the alpaca industry can take advantage of advanced breeding research as it already has done with ET (Embryo Transplants) and will eventually do with AI (Artificial Insemination). This along with fibre production breeding projects like the AGE (Across-herd Genetic Evaluation) will help develop our industry as a world leader. As well we will follow the lead of many woolgrowers that are already adding value on farm.



## MEAT MARKET

Fortunately we have the potential with alpacas, like sheep, to cull poorer quality and older animals and sell them for their meat. Enterprising breeders are currently exploring a specialty alpaca 'viande' market.

Although an estimated wholesale price of \$100/head is not yet very attractive to most breeders when guardian alpacas can fetch from \$300-500/head.

Several trials have been successfully conducted in Australia to introduce 'viande' in the gourmet market. Recently, chemical analysis, using a non-representative sample of wethers, indicated that alpaca meat is essentially very similar to other available commercial meats [Charry, 2003].

Table 2 (see below) shows the initial results obtained in Australia of the comparative nutritional value of 'viande' to beef and lamb.

However alpaca meat is apparently also low in fat as well as cholesterol. Poorer quality cuts would be ideal for the specialty production of biltong (dried meat product).

## CONCLUSION

Alpacas are already showing that they can be successfully bred over a large area of Australia and can improve the profitability of other livestock industries as well as helping to sustain and even regenerate the environment. ■

Table 2: 'Viande': Preliminary Chemical Analysis

|                                        | Beef | Lamb | Alpaca |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|--------|
| Water (g/100g)                         | 73.8 | 73.6 | 76     |
| Protein (g/100g)                       | 21.6 | 22.0 | 21.7   |
| Fat (g/100 g)                          |      |      |        |
| Cholesterol (mg/100g)                  | 60   | 66   | 56     |
| Iron (mg/100g)                         | 2.2  | 1.8  | 1.9    |
| Saturated Fatty Acids (% total)        | N/A  | N/A  | 45.7   |
| Mono Unsaturated Fatty Acids (% total) | N/A  | N/A  | 39.1   |

Source: P. & R. Lahey, 2003, Personal Data Obtained from Dr H. Greenfield, Report RN327942, The University of Sydney

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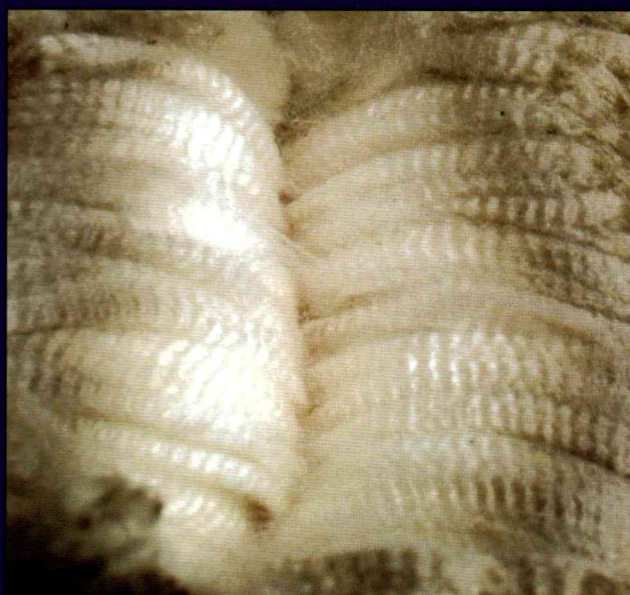
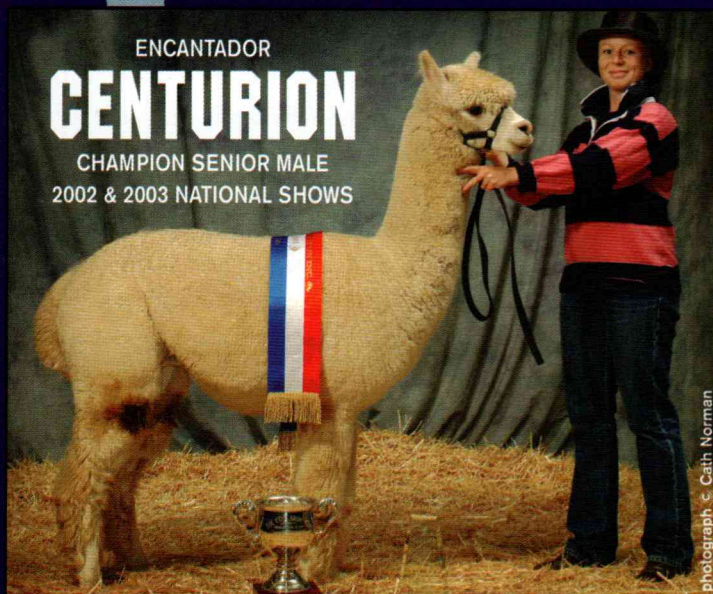


# ALPACANDES ALPACA STUD

MN-3  
Cert. No  
A010/2003/05

76 Arcadia Rd, GALSTON, NSW 2159  
Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth  
Ph: 02 9653 1696 Fax: 02 9653 1040  
Email: [alpacandes@ozemail.com.au](mailto:alpacandes@ozemail.com.au)

"Dorroughby" Kenyu Rd, BOOROWA, NSW 2586  
Kylie, Keith & Jeanette Hollingworth  
Ph & Fax: 02 6385 8305  
Email: [dorroughby@bigpond.com.au](mailto:dorroughby@bigpond.com.au)



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# Crying over spilt onions?

by Dr IAN DAVISON  
Illawarra Alpacas, NSW

*Fifteen years into the industry, and still I struggle with the jargon. Was there ever an industry more beset with quaint and often archaic jargon than the textile industry? Noils, warp, weft, sliver, carding, tops, etc. etc. – where do they find these words, and to whom are they useful apart from textile manufacturers and Scrabble tragics?*

*Today, in a casual but lively discussion with Cameron Holt, conducted during breaks in the less than lively 2004 Australian Open Tennis Final, I confronted my own confusion regarding the terminology that we apply to the feral fibres that we are all trying so hard to eliminate from our fleeces. You know, the ones that cause prickly factor, the ones we hear judges rail against as "medullated fibres", the ones we learnt about in skin histology as "primary fibres", the ones dismissively cast out with the skirtings as "guard hair".*

*All the same, right? Wrong!*

What we see in a fleece as individual fibres that stand out from the underlying softer and finer fleece are **guard hairs**. I remain uncertain as to what they are meant to guard against, but perhaps they are referred to as guards in much the same way as we refer to sentinels: they stand out boldly from the crowd of surrounding fibres, and are the fibres of first contact with the outside world, protecting the skin underneath. It is generally accepted that these guard hairs are likely to be longer, straighter, coarser, and perhaps more brittle than the surrounding throng of softer fibres that make up the undercoat, and they stand out both tactilely and visually.

**Medullated fibres**, as described and classified by Villarroel<sup>1</sup>, are fibres with a central core, which may be continuous, interrupted, or fragmented. Here, the cortical cells that make up the walls of the fibre, are wrapped around a medulla, or core, that is made up of another type of cell (surprisingly called medullary cells). Later, these cells may contract or disappear, and hence the proud reference to "hollow fibres" that was so often heard in the early days of the industry, which in fact was a reference to medullated fibres.

Finally, there are the **primary fibres**. These are quite specifically those fibres arising from the primary follicle, which are histologically and embryologically identifiable as the first crop of hair follicles to appear in the skin, and are histologically unique in having not only sebaceous (wax) glands nourishing the emerging hair, but also a sudoriferous (sweat) gland and a smooth muscle (the so-called pili-erector muscle, which is the one that "makes your hair stand on end"). The latter two structures distinguish them from the secondary follicles, which appear later in the skin development, and lack the sweat gland and the muscle fibre. Primary and secondary follicles are arranged together into distinct entities called follicle groups, in each of which there are three primary follicles arranged together with a variable number of secondary follicles.

OK, so primary fibres, guard hair and medullated fibres are often one and the same right? Right! Always one and the same? **Wrong!**

To start with, you can't **see** medullated fibre. You might guess, often correctly, that a guard hair is medullated, but the only way you can know for sure is to look at it under the microscope. So why do judges and fleece judging sheets refer to "medullated fibre"? Well, quite simply, what they **mean** is guard hair, which **can** be seen and distinguished by the naked eye, according to the definition above. And most often,

if one **were** to look at them under the microscope, they would be found to be medullated, but to call them medullated on visual inspection is just an educated guess. If one were to examine the guard hair of an impossibly fine and dense alpaca, it is theoretically possible that the guard hairs would be longer, coarser and straighter than the fibres of the undercoat, but still be non-medullated.

Now to the primary fibres. It is probably fair to say that most guard hairs are primary fibres: if they stand out from the crowd, if they are longer and coarser than the fibres around them, then almost certainly they are primaries. **But not all primaries are guard hairs.** Take the advanced Merino fleece: every follicle group still has three primary fibres and a whole bunch of secondary fibres, but on visual inspection, you can't distinguish between them. This is because selective breeding has made them finer (Jim Watts<sup>2</sup> says the increased density of the secondary follicles leaves less room for the primary follicles, which are effectively squeezed down until their fibre diameter approaches that of the secondary fibres). So they have effectively eliminated guard hair, and possibly eliminated medullated fibre, by progressively reducing fibre diameter, but the primary follicles remain as a histologically indelible fact of life, as do the primary fibres. We do not aim to eliminate primary fibres – it is doubtful that we could – and if we did so, the loss of sweat glands would quite possibly have profound implications for the alpaca in terms of thermoregulation and electrolyte balance. The aim is to reduce primary fibre diameter until it approaches that of the secondary fibre, so that we produce a more even fleece, of **whatever** average fibre diameter.

And remember, **any** fibres, including secondary fibres, may be medullated, partially or completely. Naturally, the coarser the fibre, the more likely this is to be true. So a judge may well remark that a coarse fleece contains a lot of medullated fibre, and there is every likelihood of his/her being quite correct in that statement. However,



only a microscope can resolve that question, whereas the message can be just as easily inferred from the factually correct statement that the fleece is 1) not fine, and 2) shows significant guard hair.

So let's all say what we *mean*, rather than trying to sound scientific, and when we inspect fleeces, describe what we see – *guard hair* – rather than what we think it might look like under the microscope, or from what kind of follicle we think it might have grown.

The tears shed in the show ring by an exhibitor may well be shed in sadness; but equally, they may be shed in joy, or pain, or (extraordinarily) from the smell of onions. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that the bugger's crying.

**I have asked Cameron Holt to add some further technical information for this article and his comments follow.**

## PRIMARY FIBRE

The primary follicle is the first follicle to form in the skin. It has two major glands associated with it:

- 1 **Sebaceous gland (wax)** which lubricates and protects the fibre.
- 2 **Sudoriferous gland (sweat)** produces differing degrees of sweat in various animals.

Also,

- 3 **Erector pili muscle.**

The primary fibre can normally only be identified from the structure from which it grows. However, with the possible exceptions of elite fibre in sheep, the primary fibre tends to be the longest and most coarse of the fibres within the fleece, and this is the present with alpaca.

This primary fibre (depending on micron) may be partially medullated and this medullation will not be visible to the naked eye. This should not be confused with the highly medullated guard hair (see right).

## MEDULLATED FIBRE

*(most likely guard hair)*

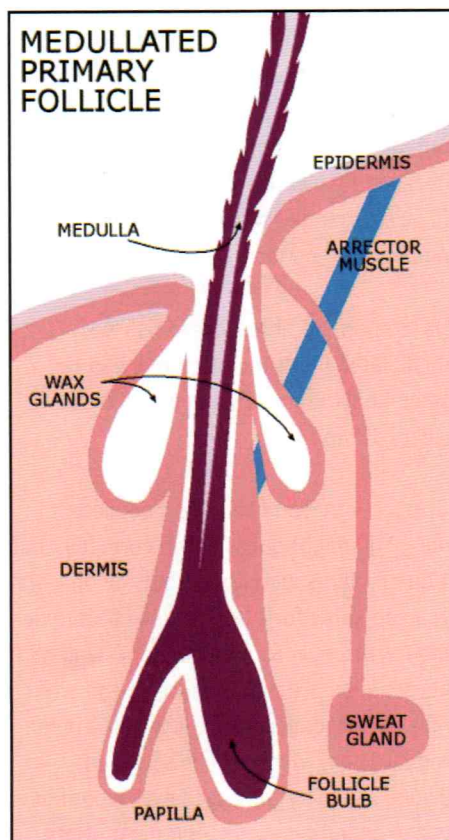
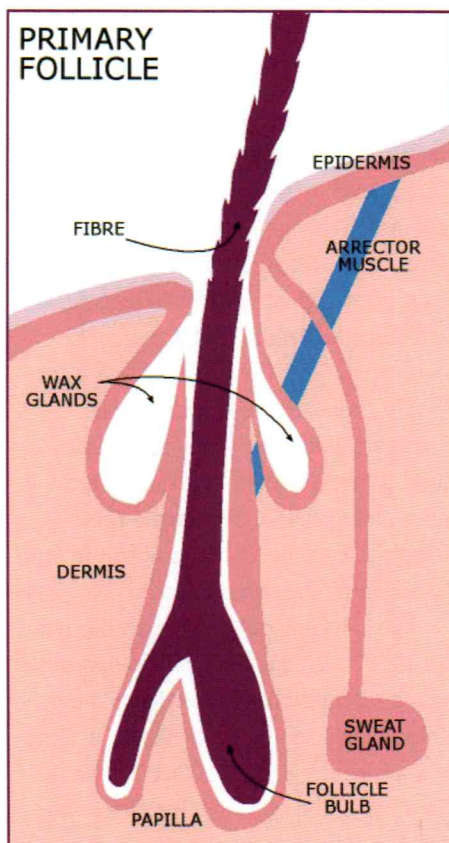
The medullated fibre normally grows in the primary follicle structure, having all associated glands similar to the normal solid primary fibre.

The structure found in medullated (guard hair) fibres is probably an inheritance from

previous wild primitive animals that used these fibres for protection.

Medullary cells are formed at the dome of the papilla (see below) and are confined to the central region of the fibre as it develops up through the follicle.

The medullary cells may break down before the fibre emerges, and if so the centre of the fibre will be empty (hollow).

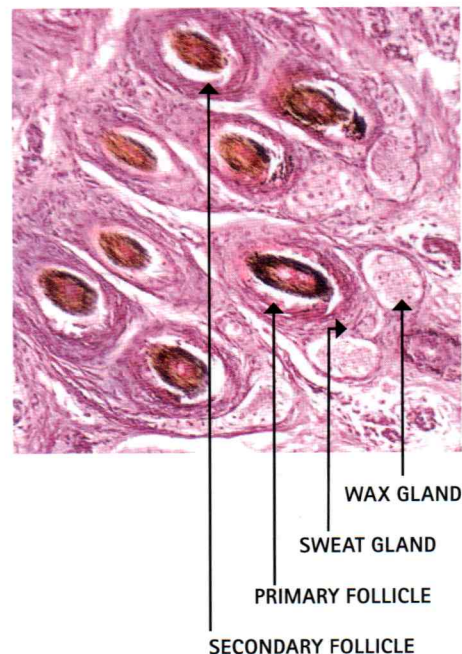


## SECONDARY FIBRE

The secondary fibres are those fibres which grow from the secondary follicle. This follicle forms after the primary follicle and is identified by its singular wax gland, and absence of sweat glands and the pili-erector muscle. The secondary follicles are divided into two groups, that is secondary and secondary derived. The secondary fibres that grow from these follicles are shorter and finer than the primary fibre and the secondary derived are slightly shorter and finer again than the secondary. These secondary derived normally share a common opening in the secondary follicle.

Secondary fibres can also be medullated, that is have some form of medulla structure within the fibre without affecting the visual appearance to the naked eye.

As Ian mentioned before, these fibres grow from a follicle structure normally called "trio groups." This means that there are three primary follicles with a surrounding number of secondary and secondary derived follicles attached to each primary follicle. It is from this group that we get our term S/P Ratio, that is the number of secondaries to one primary. The photograph below has an S/P Ratio of 3 to 1. This is obviously the very lowest range for alpacas but measurements have been taken as high as 17 to 1. The current average S/P Ratio is approximately 9 to 1.





Some terms used to describe particular types of medullated fibre:

**Kemp** consist of short, brittle, chalky white medullated fibres found about the head and legs of most breeds of sheep and in crossbred goats.

**Gare** refers to the long hairy coarse fibres which may be found in the britch area of a fleece. As these fibres lack crimp they are easily detected. They may be shiny and are either totally or partially medullated.

**Guard hair** is medullated fibre grown by goats, and some camelid animals as a protective fibre for the fine underdown. These may be short like kemp fibres or quite long. They normally grow from the primary follicle. In the cashmere goat they are the coarse fibres forming the primary coat of the two coated primitive fleece. This fibre is generally very coarse in fibre diameter with a broad medulla cell within.

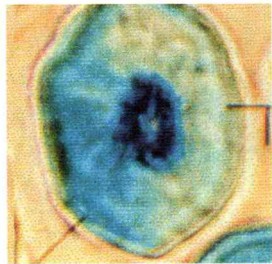
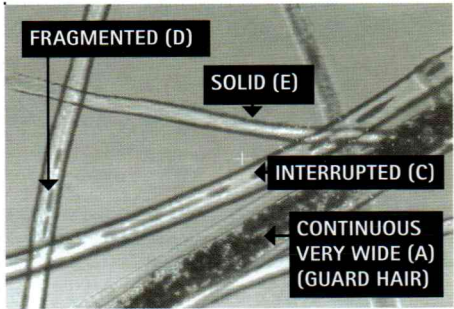
Alpaca fibre, depending on micron, has some medullation. J. Villarroel<sup>1</sup> defined medullated types into five categories for his alpaca research in 1959.

C Holt and I Stapleton<sup>3</sup>, in their research on alpaca fibre for the AAA (1993), confirmed the findings of Villarroel. Example of midside measurements (percentages of fibres) in alpaca:

| Average Micron | Solid (E) | Interrupted (D & C) | Continuous (B & A) |
|----------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 21.8           | 58        | 33                  | 9                  |
| 22.6           | 65        | 24                  | 11                 |
| 26.9           | 87        | 10                  | 3                  |
| 27.8           | 3         | 48                  | 49                 |

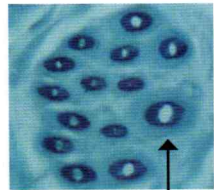
To fully appreciate the above figures you need to picture a histogram which you would receive when you test your fleece. You will find a spread from the very finest to the very coarsest and an average micron is given for all these measurements. In each micron group in the example above, the finest of the fibres will be solid, the middle group fragmented and interrupted, and the coarsest of the fibres will be continuously medullated. For higher average micron fleeces, the percentage of medullated or partially medullated fibres will be greater.

The following microscopic images (Holt, unpublished data) from Australian alpacas can be identified and graded using those categories (again, think of the histogram). ■

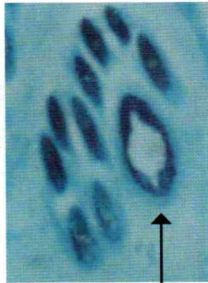


A huacaya cross-section showing the bi-lateral structure (para and ortho cortex cells) and the medulla cell in the centre. This fibre is an INTERRUPTED (C) type and

would appear normal, with crimp. You could not tell with the naked eye that there was any medullation contained within.

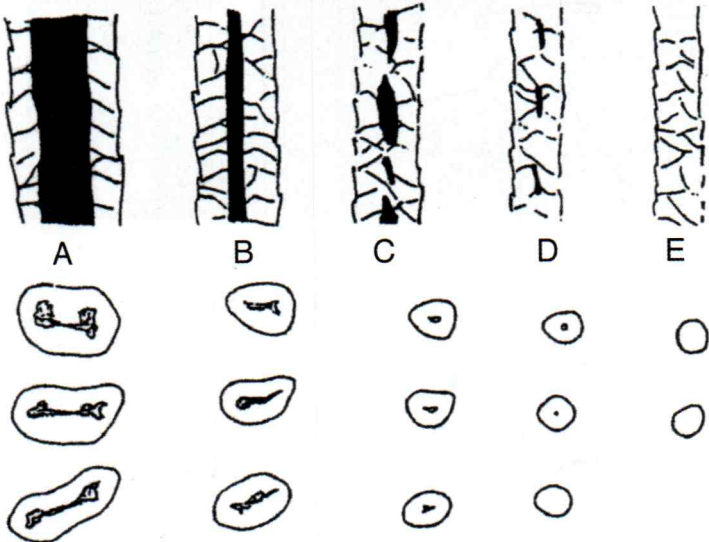


A normal solid primary fibre growing from a primary follicle.



A medullated fibre growing in a primary follicle

Types of medulla & typical cross-section shapes in white alpaca fibres.



- (A) Unbroken very wide (near to lattice type), 60 or more micron diameter
- (B) Unbroken medium wide, 40-60 micron diameter
- (C) Interrupted, 30-40 micron diameter
- (D) Fragmented, 20-30 micron diameter
- (E) Non medullated fibres, 15-20 micron diameter

Group "A" is considered undesirable in alpaca fleece.

| AVERAGE RANGE           |      |             |
|-------------------------|------|-------------|
| PRIMARY                 |      |             |
| Micron                  | 28   | 17.3 - 44.1 |
| Medullation (all types) | 89%  |             |
| SECONDARY               |      |             |
| Micron                  | 19.4 | 13.5 - 29.4 |
| Medullation (all types) | 45%  |             |

AVERAGES FROM PERUVIAN ALPACAS (extract from J. Watts, J. Hicks<sup>4</sup>)

Many thanks to Ian Davison for raising this important topic and for his invitation to comment and elaborate on his article.

CAMERON HOLT  
International School of Fibres, NSW

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# Alpacas and Blue Gums

## – a friendly symbiosis

by DENISE MOYSEY  
Arcadian Alpacas, SA

*On the scenic and historic property of Trenance at Bugle Ranges in the Adelaide Hills, the gentle sound of humming and soft alpaca footsteps have replaced the bleating and hooves of sheep. The original four rooms of Trenance House were built in the 1890's by the significant South Australian family, the Bonythons, with extensions following in the 1930's and 1970's. Although run as a sheep property, the Bonythons' passion for the arts has seen Trenance host concerts and art exhibitions. An art gallery and a large museum building (constructed in the 1970's but never used) are also located on the Trenance property.*



Denise Moysey (left) and Kelly McNamara with friends ready for the 2003 Royal Adelaide Show city parade.

**i**n the early 1990's the property was sold by the Bonython family and passed through several owners, running cattle and operating Bed and Breakfast accommodation, before being acquired by Schutara Pty Ltd. Trenance is now home for Steve McNamara and Robyn Schutte and their two children, Kieran and Kelly, along with Jack, their indefatigable Jack Russell dog, and a growing number of alpacas and plantations of Tasmanian Blue Gums.

On Easter Sunday in 2003, Steve attended an Alpaca Information and Education Day run by Denise Moysey and Tom Gouldie of Arcadian Alpacas, on their property located only a few kilometres away in Wistow. From that meeting a firm friendship and supportive working relationship has evolved between Arcadian and Schutara.

The Trenance property now consists of 150 acres and has about 85 acres currently planted with Tasmanian Blue Gums, purpose grown, cropped and marketed as firewood by Enviro Systems Renewable Resources Ltd. The gum seedlings on Trenance were planted in 2002 and will be ready for their first harvesting in 2008. The trees will be coppiced and then allowed to regrow, to be harvested again every 5-6 years.

Initially, alpacas fit into the picture as an environmentally-friendly way to keep the vehicle access tracks and unplanted areas of Trenance grazed, and, once the young trees are of sufficient size, for grass control in the actual plantations. Alpacas are preferred by Schutara because they are considered not as damaging to the trees, ground or fences as cattle, easier to care for than sheep and are an aesthetic addition

to the whole Trenance environment. Fleece production plus the potential for sales of guardian wethers or meat stock will see the Schutara alpacas contribute further to the big picture.

The rotational cropping of the gums will create areas with both more, and less, grazing for the alpacas. The initial blue gum plantation should be ready for alpaca grazing in a year or so. The plantations will provide excellent protection after shearing and massive shade in summer / shelter in winter with the alpacas also getting plenty of healthy exercise on the hilly terrain.

The liaison between Arcadian and Schutara has enabled a friendly symbiosis to develop, from which both parties benefit. In the case of Arcadian Alpacas, they are like many dedicated medium-sized breeders, having built up a promising herd over eight years and desiring to pursue





Historic Trenance House shrouded in a summer morning's mist.

further excellence but needing more land than their own acres. The choice is often to move or stagnate, but for Arcadian their friendship with Schutara will enable them to stay *and* grow. Arcadian currently run about one third of their herd at Trenance, utilising the excellent grazing for their 'dry' females and older weanlings. This has reduced stock pressure on the Arcadian home property

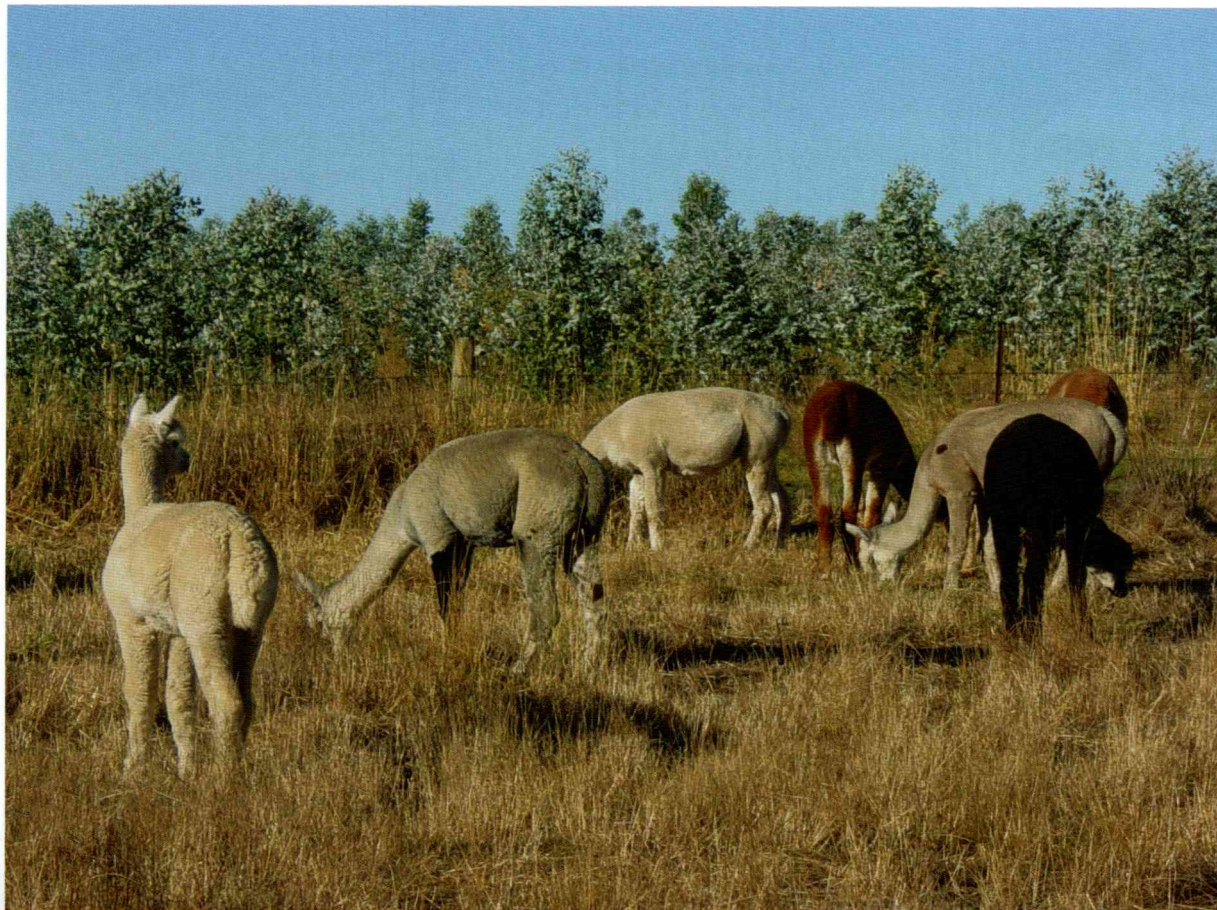
and will also allow for pasture renovation there. For Schutara the gain is from ready access to the alpaca knowledge and bloodlines of Arcadian and the support of Denise and Tom in matters alpaca.

The old Gallery building on Trenance was lavishly converted into a Bed and Breakfast facility by a previous owner and it now functions as The Gallery Bed and Breakfast.

The serenity of the growing blue gum forest and alpacas provides a lovely backdrop for business seminars or those wanting a getaway. In future, horse-riding guests might even be able to bring their horses 'along for the ride'.

Thirteen year old Kelly McNamara has shown a keen interest in getting to know about the alpacas and has helped Denise with handling and training some of the young stock. Kelly proudly participated by leading an alpaca during the Royal Adelaide Show city parade in August 2003 and is also 'godmother' to a young alpaca, *Arcady Swan Song* (Swanee to her friends) who has taken up residence at Trenance and is 'wowing' guests with her very friendly nature and chatty repartee.

It is exciting to see that alpacas can be successfully slotted into the long-term plans of such diverse business interests as those at Trenance. It is also satisfying to see that alpaca stud stock interests and a more general commercial interest from separate businesses may be woven together in such a friendly and mutually beneficial way. Perhaps there are other, as yet untapped forms of alpaca symbioses just waiting out there to be discovered and to further expand alpaca horizons. ■



Alpacas grazing among the gum trees.



# Think Globally – Act Regionally



The Marketing training seminar.

Marketing Report  
by MICHAEL VAN DEN BOS  
McGregors International, NSW

*What is a brand? How can we build awareness of the industry with target audiences? Why is marketing so important for the Australian Alpaca industry and what's the big fuss about conveying a consistent look?*

**t**he answer to these questions can now be delivered by any one of the Australian Alpaca Association Regional Marketing Representatives (RMR), who recently converged on Melbourne to attend a marketing training seminar.

Taking place on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 February 2004, the seminar was the first time that nominated members from each Region had come together with the specific mission to discuss, share ideas and develop marketing programs on both a National and local level.

As a result, RMRs are now set to play a key role in the marketing of this amazing

industry and will ensure Regional input on marketing activities on all levels. Broadly speaking, RMRs will be the main liaison point on local marketing issues. They will maintain the brand within the Region, administer the Regional Marketing Guide (a marketing resource tool) and co-ordinate local marketing activities.

The RMRs are part of an overall Australian Alpaca Marketing Team. This team also consists of McGregors International, the marketing communications agency that works with the Association to implement the Strategic Marketing Plan on a National level, and the Marketing Sub-committee, which directs national marketing activities.

The new Australian Alpaca marketing network aims to create a unified sense of identity for the industry and a forum whereby Regions can interact and share great marketing ideas. The enthusiasm shown by the RMRs over the weekend places the industry in good stead as we develop a successful brand that will maintain the high price of animals and products for all involved.

The intensive two day marketing workshop was facilitated by the Marketing Sub-committee and McGregors International. At the seminar each RMR was presented with a Regional Marketing Guide, was instructed on its use, and participated in brainstorming sessions on marketing needs.

The seminar was split into four sessions covering Branding, Internal Communications and PR, Events and Advertising, and Local Area Marketing Plans.

## INTRODUCTION AND BRANDING

With blurry eyes and a hot coffee to kick start the first session, RMRs participated in familiarisation exercises as well as delivering their best male alpaca greeting noise. Suffice to say, a few hidden talents may have been uncovered.

During the session, Unique Selling Points (USP) for Australian Alpaca were brainstormed. Some of the points raised included uniqueness of the animal, the fleece and its qualities, lifestyle, ease of maintenance and gentleness to the environment. It is these USPs, that help develop Australian Alpaca as a brand.



## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The internal communications segment was an important component of the workshop. AAA members are the Australian Alpaca's staunchest advocates and it is the members who will breathe the life into the brand. RMRs identified internal communication tactics that have worked well in their Region. They included newsletters, workshops, Regional meetings with speciality speakers (for example, a noxious weed expert), internal auction of donated items and Regional web sites.

Activities that will help translate membership inquiries into memberships were also identified as an area to be further developed. As a result of the discussions, the Marketing Team will develop materials such as introduction letters and mentoring systems, helping to consolidate the AAA membership base.

RMRs were also put through their paces on the Public Relations front, from mock radio interviews to drafting media articles. With some media skills now under the belt, this cost effective and credible vehicle of communication will increasingly raise awareness of the industry and benefit all involved.

## EVENTS AND ADVERTISING

Events are obviously a major part of the industry, and as such, were an integral part of discussions during the weekend. Although some material is already available, over the next 12 months the Marketing Team will be working with each Region to identify exactly what is needed and then produce a shopping catalogue of items. Items identified during the weekend included fact sheets, leaflets/hand outs, posters, stick-on buttons and an easily portable display system.

Advertising was also discussed during the third session, particularly future strategies. One outcome was agreeing to produce radio material, a cost effective and powerful medium for the industry. Subsequently, the Marketing Team is investigating the creation of a CD comprising professionally produced 60 second stories and a 30 second advertisement, leaving 5 seconds at the end to tailor to local events. The CD can then be supplied to radio stations and agreements made to run the advertisements whilst also broadcasting the stories.

## LOCAL AREA MARKETING PLAN

Before the Marketing Team tackled issues relating to developing a local marketing plan, time was taken to investigate what has worked well in the Regions to date. Some of these activities included having a full year

of integrated marketing activities, raffles, breeder seminars, open days and fashion shows. From a national perspective, media coverage in all mediums (print, television and radio) has translated into healthy attendance at events and an increase in membership inquiries.

## FINAL SAY

Overall, the weekend was heralded as a major success by those who attended. With the help of the Marketing Team, the next steps for RMRs will be working with their Region members to develop a local marketing plan, developing a thorough insight into target audiences and co-ordinating marketing activities throughout the year.

On a national basis, activities will include profiling members, developing radio and show display material, providing ongoing RMR support, conducting regular media relations, and developing strategic alliances.

Finally, a big thank you should be extended to RMRs for not only agreeing to take on this important role, but for making the time to attend the seminar. There certainly was a lot of information to digest. It was a big ask, with many departing their homes in the early hours of the morning and some leaving the imminent arrival of crias. The end result however, will be a strong sense of identity for each Region and the Australian Alpaca industry as a whole. ■

Members of the Marketing Team.





# On Prolapses and Pasterns ... ... a very steep learning curve

by FIONA VANDERBEEK  
Birrong Suri Alpacas, NSW

*This was to be only our second cria and, the first having died at a week old, we were anxious to have a straightforward delivery resulting in a healthy cria. All our experienced breeder friends and the "Alpaca Breeders Birthing Handbook" assured us that major birthing problems are rare but none of us realised what a very steep learning curve we were about to ascend. I was subsequently asked to write this article, including a contribution from our veterinary surgeon; I have highlighted some of the particular learning points which we hope will help anyone else faced with a similar scenario.*



**a**t 7.30 am on 3 October 2003 the female showed the first signs of labour – rolling, pawing the ground, lying on her side and making frequent trips to the poo pile. She is a big, strong girl and this was to be her second cria. We had bought her from a very experienced breeder and close friend, who had selected her as an ideal animal for a new breeder. This was day 337 of her pregnancy and after four hours she was making no progress. Another experienced breeder, who lives very locally, came over and thought he could feel the cria's nose in the birth canal. We phoned the vet who suggested observing her closely for a while; by this stage the nose had disappeared again. During the remainder of the day she showed only intermittent signs of labour.

By the following morning she again appeared to be in definite labour. The vet came out, ascertained that the cria was not yet in the birth canal, and believed that she was simply not yet ready to deliver. Two hours later the female was showing signs of distress and the head could now definitely be felt in the birth canal. The vet came out again

and at 1.30 pm delivered an 8.5 kg male, who had become stuck with one leg twisted behind his head. Two umbilical clamps were required to stem profuse bleeding.

**Learning Point: Umbilical clamps cost less than 50 cents and can save a cria's life. Always have them as part of your Cria Birthing Kit.**

At this stage the dam was given Rimadyl (for pain relief) and antibiotics, as there were some tears around the cervix, together with Oxytocin, to stimulate milk production and placental delivery. By 4 pm she had not delivered the placenta and had no milk; a further 1 ml of Oxytocin was administered. During this time the cria was struggling to stand due to extreme weakness in his pasterns. He was given a total of 100 mls glucose.

**Learning Point: Have glucose available as a quick energy source for a weak cria.**

At 5.30 pm, four hours after delivery, the dam prolapsed her entire uterus, with the placenta still attached. She lay down in the paddock and leaned her entire weight against

the friend who was sitting on the grass nursing the cria, in a gesture that quite clearly said, "help me". The vet came (again), cleaned as much grass and dirt as possible off the uterus and replaced it – still with parts of the placenta attached as it would not separate cleanly. She was sutured across the vulva to prevent further prolapse, given pain relief and more antibiotics.

**Learning Point: The appearance of a prolapsed uterus can best be described in layman's terms as resembling a piece of prime rib-eye fillet. While waiting for the vet to arrive, keep the uterus as clean as possible and prevent it drying out. This is best done by confining the mum and wrapping the uterus in a clean damp towel. A plastic bag can then be put over it.**

Between 6 pm and 8 pm the cria was given 200 mls of plasma orally, and began to be bottle fed with Biolac, taking approximately 60 mls every two hours throughout the night. By the following morning his temperature and weight remained stable.



**Learning Point: Make sure you know where you can get hold of plasma for a cria that has not received colostrum from its mother's milk within the first 12-24 hours.**

The mother was started on a regime of 3 mls Rimadyl (pain relief) and 4 mls Engemycin (antibiotic) daily. However, by mid-morning on the second day she was showing signs of extreme pain and distress and so the vet was called. He removed the sutures and extracted several large pieces of rotten placenta. By late afternoon the same day she was bleeding profusely. The vet was unable to suggest any further treatment other than surgery, which he felt she was very unlikely to survive. Her temperature remained normal and her vagina was flushed with saline to help remove further small pieces of placenta. The cria meanwhile continued to feed well from the bottle and was able to stand though very down on his pasterns and with one front leg badly kinked. It seemed unlikely the mother would live and we faced the prospect of trying to hand rear a cria that looked unlikely ever to walk normally.

Surprisingly, when we had all but lost hope, both mother and cria survived their third day, and by day four he was seen beginning to drink from his mother. At this time small maggots were found around the dam's vulva, which alarmed us, but were of little concern to the vet. All fleece was clipped away from her tail and upper legs and a fly repellent ointment applied. She was flushed out with saline to remove maggots and further pieces of rotten placenta.

**Learning Point: Removal of fleece heavily contaminated with blood and the use of an insect repellent will reduce the risk of maggots infesting rotten tissue.**

On day five, the mother's sutures were removed, and still more bits of placenta were flushed out. She continued to be given IM antibiotics daily and this was now supplemented by 50 mls oral Yakult daily, to prevent gastric problems due to prolonged use of antibiotics. By this stage the cria was starting to reject the bottle in favour of his mother's milk; his weight had returned to 8.5 kg, having initially dropped to 8.0 kg.

**Learning Point: A supplement such as Yakult may be helpful in ensuring essential flora remain alive in the gut when it is necessary for an animal to be on antibiotics for a prolonged period.**

For the next week the mother continued to be given daily antibiotic injections and Yakult. When antibiotic cover was ceased at day eleven, Yakult was continued for a further five days. Her temperature was monitored daily for a total of 17 days, and remained stable at around 38 degrees.

**Learning Point: Daily monitoring of temperature and weight are vital in "intensive care" situations.**

The cria continued to receive supplemental feeding, with decreasing frequency, until he was 12 days old and weighed 11.5 kg. At this stage mother and cria were no longer shedded at night. His pasterns were gradually strengthening and his legs straightening, though we had doubts if they would ever be entirely normal. When he was a month old he was given 0.5 ml ADE (vitamins) and moved to a large, hilly paddock with the main herd. Here he made outstanding progress and at eight weeks old weighed over 20 kg with legs that are perfectly straight.

**Learning Point: Cria that are severely down on their pasterns will come up. It was believed that ADE and exercise helped in this case.**

The mother was ultrasounded two months after her prolapse and no sign of uterine abnormality was detected. The vet's advice was to re-mate her as soon as she was willing to sit.

We can hardly believe that both mother and cria have made the recovery they have and undoubtedly would not have done so without the support of our more experienced friends and the expertise of Sam Hamilton of W.R. Beresford and Associates, Veterinary Surgeons.

The following comment on uterine prolapse in alpacas was written by Bill Beresford: "A uterine prolapse occurs when the uterus turns itself inside out and protrudes through the vagina. It may be partial or it may be complete with the entire uterus out and hanging down to the hocks. In some cases the bladder may be involved as well and this can cause added complications because the female cannot urinate.

Uterine prolapse in the alpaca is very rare. In the last 15 years I have only seen three cases. All of these responded well to treatment and to the best of my knowledge

have all successfully bred again. There is very little documented on uterine prolapse in alpacas. Generally speaking there are two causes of uterine prolapse in other species (particularly cattle, sheep and goats). These are:

- (a) Following dystocia [difficult birth] with a large cria and/or retained foetal membranes. This causes the female to push and strain excessively.
- (b) Associated with hypocalcaemia (low blood calcium or milk fever). The uterus is muscle and becomes flaccid as a result of the low calcium and just rolls out.

The clinical signs of uterine prolapse are fairly obvious. The placenta may or may not be still attached. The uterus will swell and dry out soon after it happens and the uterine lining will become contaminated with dirt and faeces. The female may be standing and still walking around or she may be shocked and unable to rise. There may be some abdominal pain particularly if the bladder is involved.

Treatment is a veterinary procedure and the quicker it is replaced the better the outcome. While waiting for the vet it is important to keep the uterus as clean as possible and prevent it drying out. This can be done by quietly confining the mum and wrapping the uterus in a clean damp towel. A plastic bag over the top can also be useful. The vet will generally administer an epidural to stop the straining and facilitate the replacement with the minimum trauma to the uterus. Thorough washing with a mild disinfectant solution is essential. If possible the placental membranes are removed before replacing. Antibiotic cover is usual and Oxytocin given to get the uterus to shrink back down after being stretched to the limit. Suturing of the vagina to prevent recurrence is dependent on circumstances.

Many people will remember the image of James Herriot struggling to replace a prolapsed uterus in a cow – in particular the use of sugar onto the uterus to reduce the oedematous swelling (it does work) and when he got it back in he used a beer bottle to extend his arm to make sure the horn tip had completely turned back the right way. Prevention is not really an option because it is so rare and sporadic in alpacas." ■



# Breeding For Black

by DOMINIC LANE  
Viracocha Alpacas, TAS

*It was in 1997 that we first came across alpacas and were instantly enchanted by them. Very quickly we decided that we wanted to become involved in owning and breeding these animals, and of course, we were faced with several important questions.*

- > *Should we breed Huacaya or Suri? Or both?*
- > *Should we follow the trend and breed whites? Or decide on colour? And if colour, which colour?*

*In the end we came to the conclusion that we would breed black huacaya and suri.*

**W**hy specialize in breeding black? It is a commonly asked question and needs explaining. There is no doubt that white is the colour mostly widely bred because it can be dyed and this gives it considerable commercial advantages. Whites also outclass coloured alpacas in the show ring because they can display superior fleece qualities. However, it is still

not known whether this superiority stems from the physical quality of white fibre or from the fact that such enormous efforts have been put into breeding for white to the detriment of coloured alpacas. Perhaps, with continued efforts and experimentation, the fleece quality of coloured alpacas may come to equal their white cousins. Moreover, to concentrate on breeding only white alpacas ignores the remarkable variety of natural colours available – over 22. And there is a clear movement amongst hand-knitters and the fashion industry in general for natural colours.

Now black fibre holds a special position – it is the only true black fibre in the world available for spinning into wool or twining into cloth. One of the unique qualities of black is that it can have a wonderfully soft handle, so that an already fine fleece may feel 2-3 micron finer than other fleeces.

Despite the ever-changing trends in the fashion industry, black remains the classic colour. Women love it because it is slimming, matches everything and is suitable for almost any occasion. Somehow men and women appear confident in black. Consequently, if one has to spend extra money to buy that classic suit or other garment, then that expenditure will not be resented because the

article, if in black, will not date and will last the year in, year out. It should be possible to persuade increasing numbers of fashion-conscious buyers to purchase garments made from alpaca, not only for its softness and feel but for its lightness and wonderful insulating properties, making it cool in summer and warm in winter. At Viracocha Alpacas we are taking the final steps before producing and marketing a line of black alpaca garments using pure black alpaca fibre.

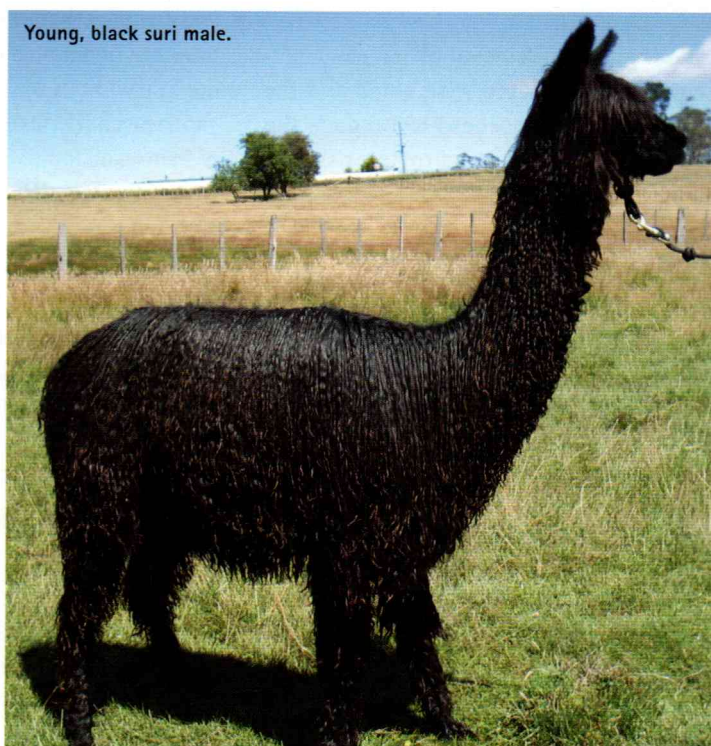
Originally our major concern was whether it was possible to breed fine black alpacas. In the early days so many black alpacas had high micron readings; but we believed that there should be no reason why, with a strict breeding programme using the best black genetics available, this problem could not be overcome. The challenge was to produce a black fleece that displayed high-quality fineness, density, crimp and lustre carried by a well-conformed animal. Well, years have passed and we are now breeding blacks with first fleeces recording between 18-20 micron. Other black breeders are having similar results with selective breeding programmes.

To me there is nothing more striking than to see a large line-up of blacks in the show ring, especially black suri. As an AAA judge I have the privilege of seeing alpacas

Fifth generation black male huacaya.



Young, black suri male.





in different parts of the country and I can say without hesitation that the quality in the colour classes has come on in leaps and bounds over the past few years. However, before we get carried away, it needs to be emphasised that there is a long way to go. Blacks still lag behind whites and fawns by some distance. Will this situation always be the case? The answer to that no-one knows and so that is the challenge. The biology of the alpaca is different and there are clearly many more genes involved in producing a particular colour, for example, than are presently understood.

Whilst the majority of breeders in Peru and Chile are breeding for white for commercial purposes, a perfectly understandable decision, there are still quality black alpacas in South America whose offspring, both huacaya and suri, continue to be imported into Australia to improve and diversify our gene pool. What is more, we are already producing in this country some of the best coloured alpacas in the world. Consequently, there is no real problem with the availability of good black genetic material. How, though, can black alpacas improve their density, fineness and character, areas where white alpacas outshine coloureds? What are the advantages and dangers of crossing a good quality fawn with black females in an attempt to lift quality in these areas? At this stage the jury is out. I have seen examples in the show ring of blacks with white or fawn introduced. As you might guess, some results are very good, others not good at all. Because the outcomes are so inconsistent it is, we believe, unwise

to introduce white or fawn into one's herd except under a strict system.

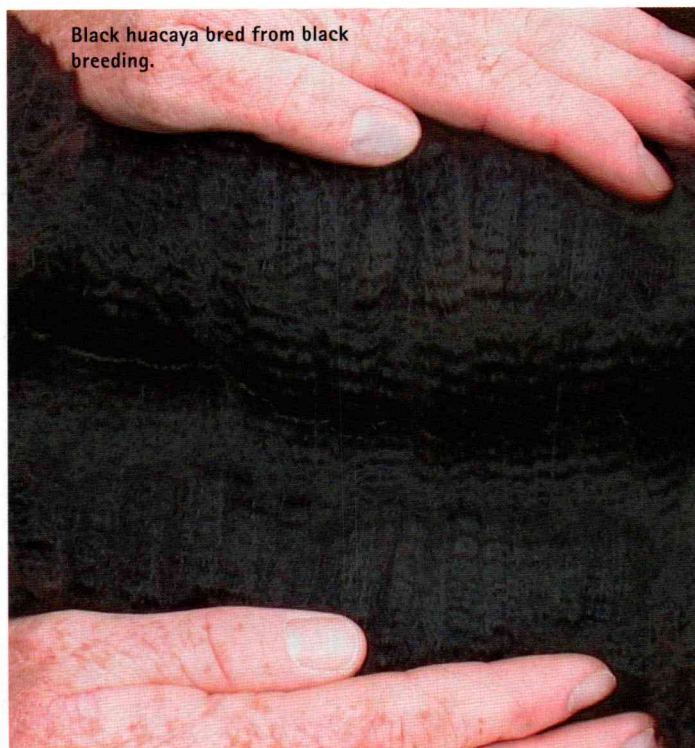
At Viracocha Alpacas we have two separate breeding programmes: a black to black programme and a second programme in which high-quality white, but more particularly, fawn sires are crossed with black females. Female progeny from these matings are then mated back to black. The results from both huacaya and suri in this programme have been mostly solid brown and solid black offspring. Here, again, we come up against another continuing puzzle facing alpaca breeders – predicting colour outcomes. All breeders will have scratched their heads at the peculiarities of colour results in their crias. Various theories have been put forward but none are able to clarify the problem entirely. It seems to be a matter of probabilities, not certainties because we just do not know the number of genes involved in the process. Quite clearly, however, the purer the colour ancestry of one's alpacas, the more likely the desired colour will be achieved.

It will, therefore, be some years before we will be able to say with confidence whether the introduction of fawn sires to some of our black females has improved fleece quality without compromising pure black outcomes in the years ahead. Only by careful monitoring of the programme will a clear outcome be reached.

Nevertheless we do believe that it is possible to breed a black alpaca which will be able to stand in the show ring with just as good a chance of carrying off Supreme

Champion. In the process we will learn more about colour outcomes and we will be able to see whether genes introduced to improve fleece traits such as fineness and density continue to be passed on without further introductions at a later stage. We may learn something more about that soft handling advantage that blacks can have. Is that compromised by the introduction of fawn or white? Is it a quality that can be passed to other blacks that lack it? And so on.

The truth of the matter is that here in Australia, like all countries outside South America, we are in our infancy as breeders of alpacas. We are really only into our fourth or fifth generation of observations and innovations. We cannot expect to know very much yet for certain, but we are on the way. The journey ahead is long and full of challenges and that is why every breeder who undertakes research in their herd, who tries to think laterally and does not necessarily accept current theories uncritically will help to improve knowledge for everyone. It should not be a question of following the majority nor being different for its own sake, but of pursuing a personal goal. Ours is to produce the best possible, black alpaca strain and, by so doing, enable us to make available a really desirable and financially valuable black fibre. We have to remember that in the years ahead when the Australian herd is so much bigger, when the availability of good males and females will be wider, the income for an alpaca breeder will shift from selling alpacas to selling fleece. And that fleece must be the best. ■



**Black huacaya bred from black breeding.**



**Black suri bred from black breeding programme.**



**Black suri bred from fawn sire and black dam.**



# Australian alpaca on show at the Heimtextil Fair in Europe

by TREVOR BEUTH  
Managing Director,  
Kelly & Windsor Australia Pty Ltd  
Campbellfield, VIC

*In January 2004, Kelly & Windsor Australia Pty Ltd, a strategic partner of the Australian alpaca industry, exhibited its alpaca bedding collections at the international Heimtextil Fair in Frankfurt, Germany.*

**h**eimtextil is the world's largest international home textile fair and exhibition, attracting trade visitors from around the globe and was held over five days, 14-18 January 2004.

This year's fair was the largest ever with 3,100 exhibitors from over 150 countries and over 92,000 trade visitors during the first four days and 50,000 public visitors on the last public day of the fair.

My decision to exhibit at Heimtextil represented a major commitment by Kelly & Windsor and I was most appreciative of the enthusiastic support provided by the Australian Alpaca Association (AAA) and the Australian Alpaca Co-operative Ltd (AACL).

The theme of the stand at Heimtextil was "Australian Alpaca Home Wares" and I was convinced that it offered an ideal opportunity to introduce the Australian alpaca bedding range to Europe and the world.

The Kelly & Windsor stand was located in the main bedding exhibition hall where all of the main European bedding manufacturers were exhibiting. This position was carefully chosen to maximize the exposure of the product range and profile of the Australian alpaca industry. The stand's location provided an excellent exposure with most visitors being surprised to learn that alpacas were bred in Australia given their South American origin. Many visitors were also impressed with the Australian alpaca industry structure and its initiative in value adding the alpaca fleece through a strategic partner program.

On display, a full Kelly & Windsor alpaca bedding collection was shown with quilts, underblankets and pillows together with a collection of alpaca throw rugs and blankets from Creswick, which also created significant interest particularly in regard to their quality and styling with the new natural color patterns.

The Kelly & Windsor alpaca quilts were presented as the standard Blue Ribbon Collection as sold in Australia in various weight options i.e. summer weight and winter weight, plus a new "Euro" version of the Kelly & Windsor alpaca quilt with a high quality German cover fabric aimed at the top end of the European market. The Euro quilt was very well received with a sample order being placed at the show despite the higher price of the quilt using the German cover fabric.



(L-R) Mr Robert Boylan (Australian Consul) and Trevor Beuth (Kelly & Windsor) pictured at the display at Heimtextil.



The alpaca underblanket also created significant interest as the only similar product that was seen in Europe was a very low-end quality wool underblanket from Eastern Europe.

Visitors to the Kelly & Windsor stand came from every corner of the globe with specific interest coming from 14 countries and sample orders booked at the show from Japan, Taiwan and of all places, Denmark.

A number of new alliances were also established which will assist in following through in the coming months with a European export development plan.

The Australian Consul, Mr. Robert Boylan who also heads up the Austrade export assistance office in Frankfurt, also visited the stand. Robert was very enthusiastic about the presence of Kelly & Windsor at such a large international show and very supportive of our program to promote Australian alpaca home wares into Europe where he felt there was a real opportunity for exports.

Despite the commitment, cost, effort and logistics of exhibiting at Heimtextil in Germany, the exposure to Europe

of the Australian alpaca industry and the recognition of our ability to design and manufacture a world class range of alpaca bedding products was very rewarding.

The conclusion from Heimtextil was that the Kelly & Windsor bedding collections are the right quality, price and profile for the European market which up to now has not seen alpaca fleece being used in quilts, underblankets and pillows.

I am sure the benefits of my decision to exhibit the Kelly & Windsor alpaca bedding range will with time, patience and perseverance be rewarded with a strong export business. This will create an enormous opportunity for the Australian alpaca industry.

It will now be the challenge for all of the key partners in the alpaca alliance i.e. the breeders, the AAA, AACL and Kelly & Windsor, to ensure that the fleece supply, quality, manufacturing and marketing are coordinated and managed through the whole chain, to ensure that the value added opportunities of our unique product can be fully realized in the international market. ■



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We look forward to seeing you in Rotorua

### Speakers

|                                  |                                             |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mike Safley (USA)</b>         | Alpacas in the USA<br>Genetics and Breeding |
| <b>Marty McGee Bennett (USA)</b> | Behaviour and Handling                      |
| <b>Jane Vaughan (Aus)</b>        | Nutrition & Embryo Transfer                 |
| <b>Elizabeth Paul (Aus)</b>      | Colour Genetics                             |
| <b>Martin Hawes (NZ)</b>         | The Business of Alpaca                      |

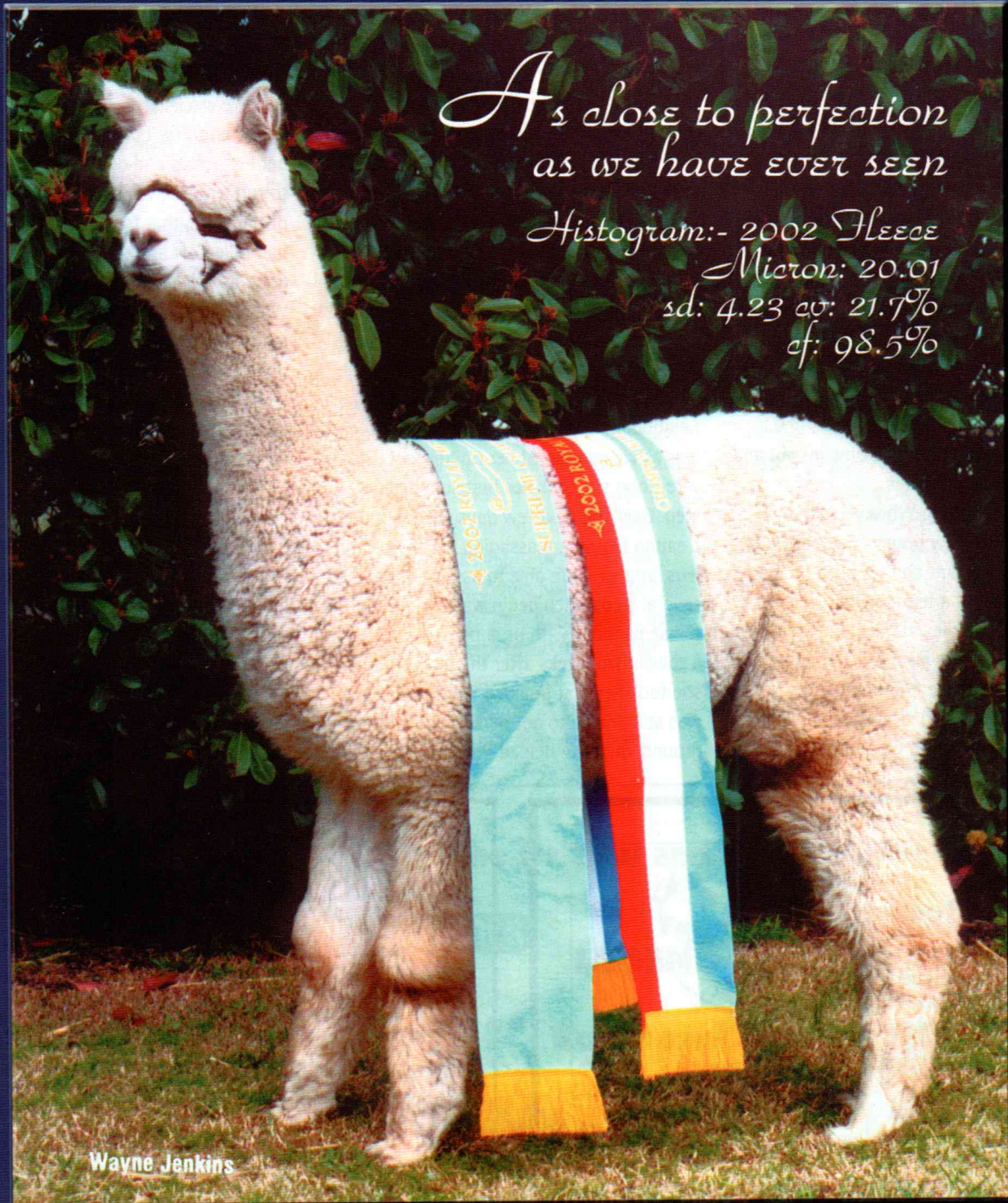
### Registration

|                                 | <b>Early birds<br/>before 15th May</b> | <b>Full<br/>Fee</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Members - single                | \$NZ250.00                             | \$NZ300.00          |
| Members - partnership           | \$NZ400.00                             | \$NZ450.00          |
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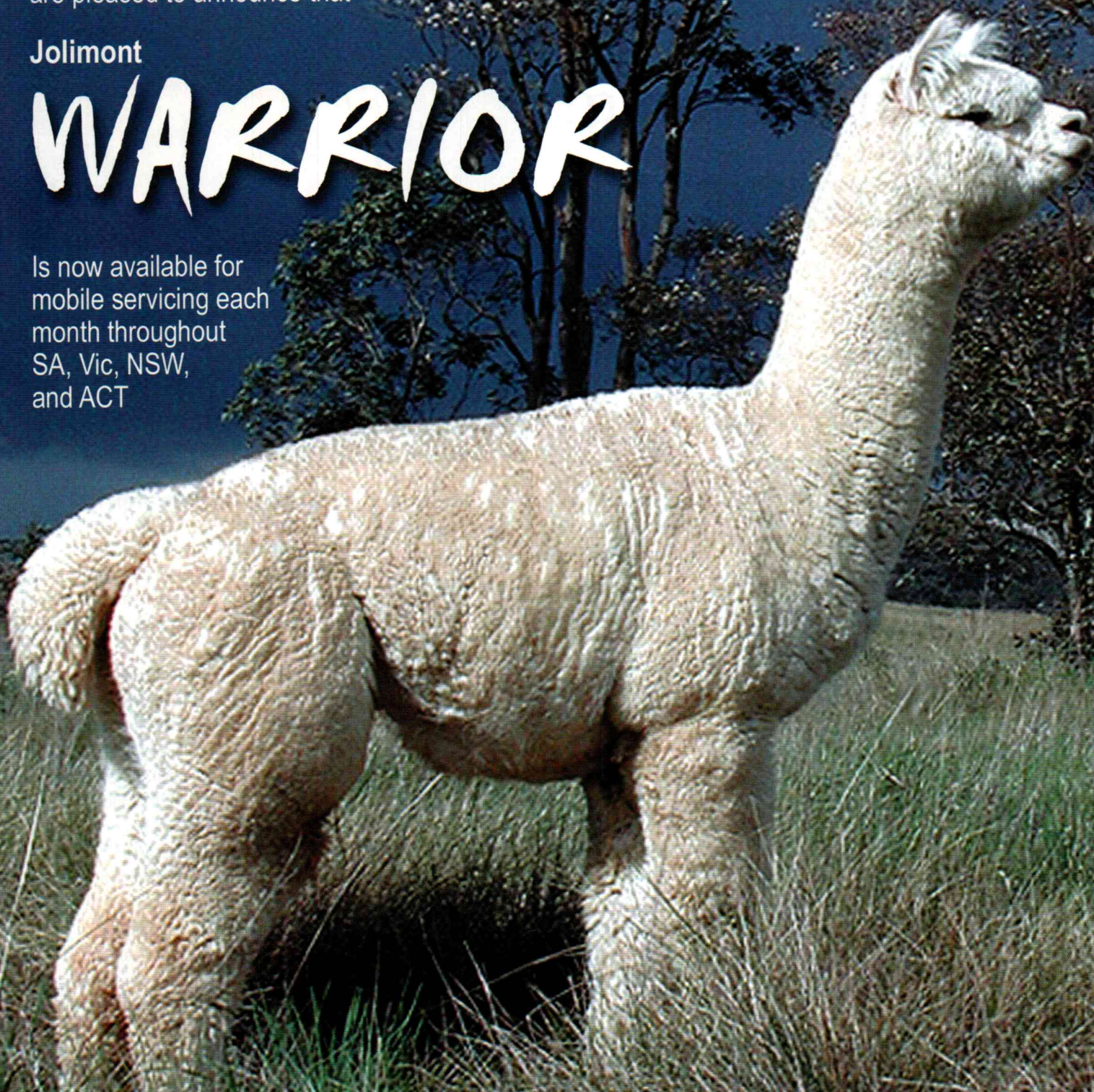
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Photo: J. Mavros

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Chris: 0417 826 762**



# EP CAMBRIDGE'S GALLERY OF CHAMPIONS



## ERINGA PARK SHOWTIME -

Sired by Ruffo

2002 National Champion Adult Female

2003 Champion Adult Female: Geelong, Stawall,  
Bendigo, Hamilton & Royal Adelaide

2003 Royal Melbourne Senior Champion Female



## CAMBRIDGE SHOWSTOPPER -

Sired by Ruffo

Junior Champion Female 2003:

Bendigo Sheep & Wool, Royal Adelaide,  
Royal Melbourne and Strathalbyn

Supreme Champion Strathalbyn



## CAMBRIDGE CAJAMARCA -

Sired by Ruffo

Bendigo 2003 1st Junior White Male

Reserve Champion Junior Male Bendigo 2003

Hamilton 2003 Junior Champion Male

*Sold to the UK - Congratulations Blenheim Alpacas*



## ERINGA PARK ENCOUNTER -

Sired by Conquistador

2nd Junior Male Royal Melbourne 2003

National Junior Champion Male 2003



## ERINGA PARK ARIELLA -

Sired by Conquistador

Junior Champion Female Clare 2003



## CAMBRIDGE STORMTROOPER -

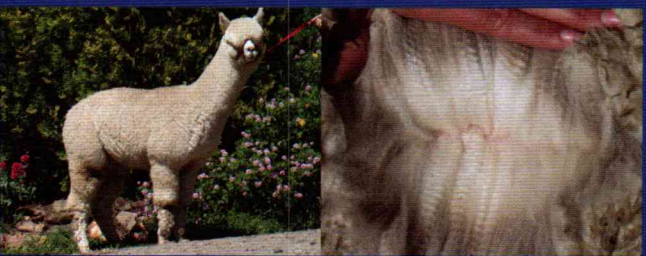
Sired by Conquistador

Junior Champion Male Hamilton 2002

Intermediate Champion Male Royal Melbourne 2002

Reserve Champion Intermediate Male National 2002

*Sold to the NZ - Congratulations Silverstream Alpacas*



## JOLIMONT GIANMARCO

Supreme Champion: Bendigo 2002, Hamilton 2002  
and Wodonga 2003

Champion Senior Male: Royal Canberra 2004

12 Championships throughout 2002 & 2003



## JOLIMONT SCULPTOR 2

Supreme Champion 2003:

Stawell, Bendigo Sheep & Wool and Clare

National Mature Senior Champion Male 2003

Supreme Champion 2004:

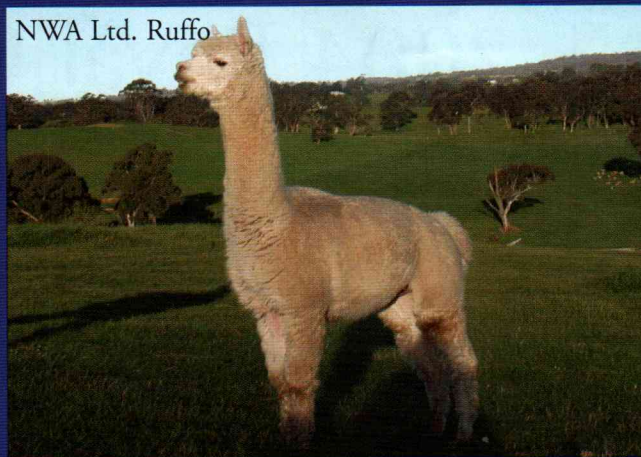
Royal Canberra, Mt. Pleasant



# THE CHAMPION SIRES OF TODAY



Jolimont Conquistador



NWA Ltd. Ruffo

## SIRES PROGENY

- Royal Melbourne 2002
- 2nd National 2002
- Grand sire National Supreme 2003
- Sire to highest priced lot in 2003, National Auction - \$83,000

## SIRES PROGENY

- 1st Bendigo Sheep & Wool 2003
- 1st Royal Adelaide 2003
- 3rd Royal Melbourne & National 2003

## MEET THE CHAMPION SIRE OF TOMORROW

# Commissario

(The Commissioner)



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Property location: Oakbank, South Australia, PO Box 261, Balhannah, SA 5242



# 2004 Royal Canberra Show

by JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN  
Convenor

*The lead-up to the 2004 Royal Canberra Show held a number of trepidations for the organisers of this Show. The Southern Tablelands was drought declared and had been for nearly three years. Judges and officials had memories of long hot, dusty days in the searing heat of a Canberra summer. It had been the hottest February on record. Setting up was undertaken on a 38°C day! Phew!*

We needn't have worried. The Gods smiled on us and the physical precautions taken to house the alpacas, the covered ring and covered marshalling area beat the heat. Also, it was a short fleece show for huacayas.

Friday was a fleece judging and alpaca arrival and preparation day. The spectacle of an array of 125 alpaca fleeces, in their silks, set out for judging was most impressive. After an early start, the judge, Julie Bird, and the team of fleece stewards worked assiduously through each class until late in the afternoon. Ultimately, Illawarra Alpacas was awarded the Champion and Reserve Champion Huacaya Fleeces for fleeces from *Illawarra Wizard* and *Illawarra Xplorer* while fleeces from *Belbourie Juniper* (Belbourie Alpacas) and *Andean Park Ringmaster* (Leranda Ridge Alpacas) were highly commended by the judge. The Most Valuable (Huacaya) Fleece was awarded to a fleece from *Lillyfield Matilda* (Lillyfield Alpacas).

The number of suri fleece entries was disappointing but there was no doubting the quality of the class winners, particularly the Champion and Reserve Champion Fleeces from *Bumble Hill Generic* and *Bumble Hill Chimera* (Bumble Hill Alpacas). The judge was impressed with the presentation of the majority of the fleeces and commented very favourably on the large number of very competitive fleeces in the huacaya classes, 9-18 months and 18-30 months. She recommended that more consideration should be given to some of these fleeces also being entered in the Most Valuable Fleece class.



Royal Canberra Show Grand Parade in the Main Arena

By inspection time on Saturday morning the stretched marquee (200' x 50') was filled to capacity with the 225 alpaca entries from all eastern mainland States. The suris were first into the ring with entries in most classes and good competition among the younger animals. Ambleside Alpacas was awarded the Supreme Champion trophy and ribbon for their suri alpaca, *Ambleside Ivory Ice*. The huacaya classes were large and very strongly contested, particularly the younger white and fawn classes. The judge commented favourably on the continuing improvement in the breeding of the younger animals and in the depth of quality that was being maintained in the older animals. She was kept very busy for the remainder of the day determining the class placings and section Champions and Reserve Champions. From a spectacular championship line-up, the Supreme Champion trophy and ribbon was awarded to the long-travelled team from South Australia, EP Cambridge Alpaca Stud, for their Mature Male, *Jolimont Sculptor 2*. It was a well-received result.

After a good night out on the town, the activities for exhibitors on Sunday morning started with the Junior (and Senior) Handlers events. All classes were well represented including an impromptu event for some enthusiastic students from an agricultural college at Bathurst. The Region's newest judge, Karen Caldwell, in her inimitable way, orchestrated a fun-filled morning and set the tone for a relaxed networking day. Perhaps next year there might even be some entrants for the Junior Judging competition? In the adjoining hoecker a strong contingent

of spinners, knitters and designers of other alpaca products demonstrated their skills and capabilities to the constant stream of Show visitors. It was very encouraging to hear the knowledge of the breed and the enthusiasm and interest of the visitors as they watched the demonstrations and then circulated through the pens and pens of alpacas.

A silent auction of services from prominent sires drew considerable attention by noon on Sunday. The proceeds will be used to benefit the Region's show activities.

The Grand Parade in the Main Arena was the final scheduled event for the 2004 Show and provided an opportunity to showcase the ribbon winners. The participation by the alpaca section was well received by the Royal Canberra Show organisers.

As with all Shows the most important ingredients for success are the exhibitors and Region's membership, however, a show wouldn't happen without the sponsors who generously donate monies, trophies and services from selected sires; the judge for his/her clear determinations; the stewards and many helpers who work tirelessly to keep the program on schedule and, finally, to those members at home who release the workers from their chores. I am very grateful for the assistance, goodwill and generosity of all these people before, during and after this Show and hope it will be forthcoming for the convenor next year.

**The complete results of the 2004 Royal Canberra Show are available on the web sites of the AAA [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au) and the Southern NSW Region [www.alpaca-s.com](http://www.alpaca-s.com)** ■





**Supreme Champion Huacaya**  
*Jolimont Sculptor 2*



**Ch. Jnr. Female (H) Blue Grass Leading Lady 3 (l)**  
**Res. Ch. Jnr. Female (H) Monteagle Moonlight Sonata (r)**



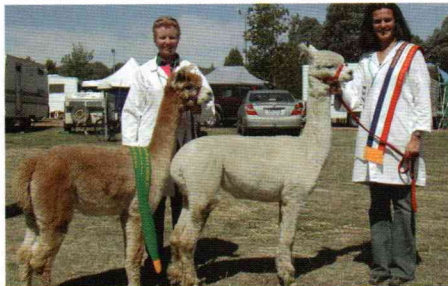
**Ch. Jnr. Male (H) Illawarra Yucatan (l)**  
**Res. Ch. Jnr. Male (H) Forestglen Pendragon (r)**



**Ch. Int. Female (H) Cambridge Let's Elope (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Int. Female (H) Chachani Highland Zephyr (l)**



**Ch. Int. Male (H) Illawarra York (l)**  
**Res. Ch. Int. Male (H) Blue Grass Star Warrior (r)**



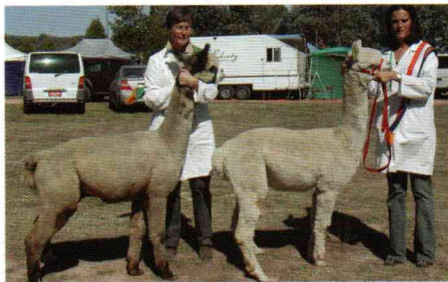
**Ch. Adult Female (H) Cambridge Havanna (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Adult Female (H) Warralinga Honeysuckle Rose (l)**



**Ch. Adult Male (H) Blue Grass Waterloo Sunset (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Adult Male (H) Benleigh Lorimer (l)**



**Ch. Snr. Female (H) Jolimont Roxana (l)**  
**Res. Ch. Snr. Female (H) Alpacapartners Tinkebell (r)**



**Ch. Snr. Male (H) Jolimont Gianmarco (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Snr. Male (H) Bumble Hill Shillac (l)**



**Ch. Mature Female (H)**  
**EP Cambridge Peruvian Amethyst**



**Ch. Mature Male (H) Jolimont Sculptor 2 (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Mature Male (H) Burnigula Hugo (l)**



**Supreme Champion Suri**  
*Ambleside Ivory Ice*



**Ch. Jnr. Female (S) EP Cambridge Intergaze (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Jnr. Female (S) Bardella Park Meriah (l)**



**Ch. Jnr. Male (S) Ambleside Ivory Ice (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Jnr. Male (S) Glen San Pedro Titan (l)**



**Ch. Int. Female (S) Pacofino SFU Tequila (r)**  
**Res. Ch. Int. Female (S) Pacofino Supernova (l)**



**Ch. Int. Male (S) Tahara Chimu (l)**  
**Res. Ch. Int. Male (S) Tahara Panache (r)**



# A retreat good enough for the most discerning alpacas

An interview with JEFFRY AND CAROL FARMAN,  
Flowerdale Estate Alpacas, Victoria.

Just north of Melbourne is Flowerdale Estate, the earliest farm settlement in the Goulburn Valley. Once a 10,000 acre sheep run, this property has been continuously farmed since 1842. Today it incorporates one of Melbourne's most highly regarded corporate retreats. Owned by Jeffry and Carol Farman, the property marries together an exclusive, residential conference retreat and a large, 250 acre alpaca stud farm that is beginning to make its mark on the alpaca scene.

**I**n 1999 it seemed a natural extension of the Farmans' conference business to acquire the magnificent retreat owned by the ANZ bank at Flowerdale. The Country Place, their award-winning centre in the Dandenong Ranges, was already recognised as the leader in the conference industry, having twice won the Australian Tourism Award in the Meetings Industry Category.

## BACKGROUND IN MARKETING AND HOSPITALITY

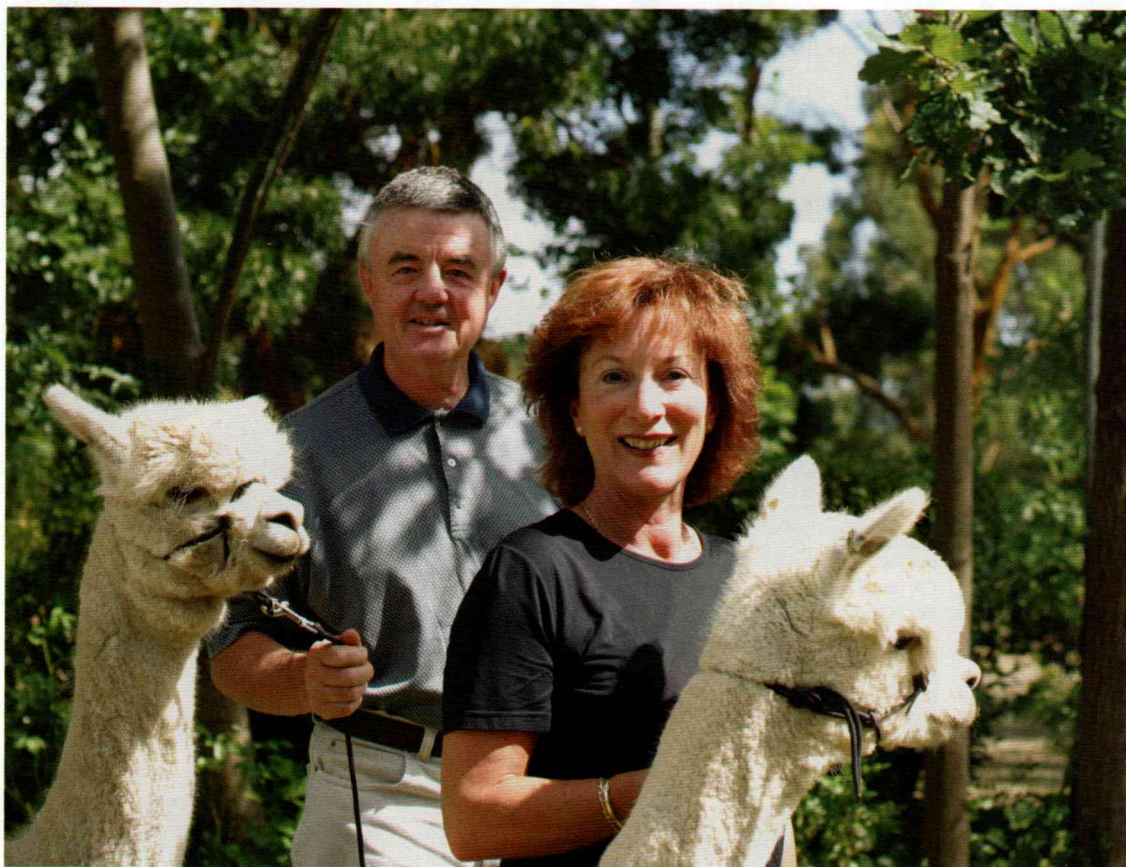
Carol was a senior hostess for Ansett and Jeffry owned an advertising agency for many years. They then went into the conference business providing residential conference facilities for management training, strategy planning meetings, sales presentations, company team building and leadership programs.

The Retreat is a 30 bedroom venue catering for organisations like BHP, ANZ, CSIRO and Shell to use for their management training programs.

The venue has a conference room with state-of-the-art facilities for groups of up to 45 people. It offers break-out rooms, dining room and billiards room, heated swimming pool, gymnasium, sauna, undercover, flood-lit tennis court and a golf driving range. Having taken over the venue, and the farm property, there was now an opportunity to convert the

farm for alpacas. Carol and Jeffry first discovered alpacas on a trip to South America in April 2000. On returning they bought six alpacas from Kingston Park Alpacas, south of Melbourne. Today this has grown to around 100 alpacas with a plan to take the herd to 400 animals within the next five years.

An important part of their planning to achieve this goal has been bringing Jeffry's son, Haydn and his partner Vanessa, onto the farm as full-time managers at the beginning of last year. Like other successful stud farms, Flowerdale Estate now is a real family venture. This move has allowed Jeffry to concentrate on his specialty, marketing and the building of a strong profile within the industry, both here and overseas.



The alpacas of Flowerdale Estate consider themselves amongst the luckiest of animals. Carol and Jeffry Farman, owners of the property, agree. These two girls *Meadow Creek Artemis* and *Shanbrooke Touch of Class* are making a not insignificant contribution to the quality of the Estate's herd.





"Shell Sammy" and "Telstra Toby", two of the very popular company mascots adopted by conference groups at Flowerdale Estate. These two are the best of friends with "Kodak Kenny", "ACI Andy" and "RMIT Rodney".

## FASCINATING ALPACA MASCOTS

The alpacas provide a real point of interest for conference groups. They love to feed the animals and get a great deal of pleasure seeing the alpacas grazing from their bedroom suites in the mornings. Many corporate groups have adopted the alpacas as mascots. There's "Telstra Toby", "Kodak Kenny" and "ANZ Albert" to name just a few.

## STARTING OUT IN ALPACAS IS EASIER THESE DAYS

The Farmans feel that starting an alpaca farm is so much easier today than when those who pioneered alpacas in Australia, began. Today there is so much information and help available.

When Carol and Jeffry started out they conducted their own research by visiting over 30 alpaca farms in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Canada and the USA. They found people to be really generous with their time and genuinely keen to share their experiences.

The Farmans gathered all the best information, using the most innovative farm layouts and facilities to develop their own five year Farm Plan.

Today, Carol and Jeffry are just as keen to share information with new people entering the industry.

They have set up a Farm Planning Service to answer all of the most commonly asked questions about facilities and farm requirements, especially for alpacas. They will even help people to prepare their own farm plan.

There's more information on their website at [www.flowerdalealpacas.net](http://www.flowerdalealpacas.net)

## FOCUS ON QUALITY FEMALES FIRST

As well as a farm development plan, Flowerdale Estate Alpacas has a five year business plan. Their business strategy is based on an accumulation of quality females, for the first five years, using the best, proven stud males available.

In establishing their herd the Farmans say they are indebted to many of the leading breeders that have been prepared to make some of their best blood lines available. Studs such as Shanbrooke, Benleigh, Kingston Park, Pucara, Mariah Hill, Cambridge, Greenvale, Blue Grass and Windsong Valley have all released quality females that have become the foundation breeders in the Flowerdale Estate herd.

A number of these girls have gone on to win broad ribbons at major shows throughout the country and are today producing some very exciting progeny. *Newberry Georgia* (s blk) and *Greenvale Pia* (s brn) have been winners at major shows including Royal Melbourne and the National Alpaca Show. Pia has thrown two lovely female cria, one a solid fawn to *Purumbete El Dorado* and the other a beautiful rose grey to *Merungle Hot Chili*.



Flowerdale Class Act surveys his 250 acre farm that nestles below rolling hills on magnificent river flats, with the King Parrot Creek dissecting the property. This provides a year round water supply. The property also has a 12 acre, trout filled lake used for irrigation. The alpacas are very spoilt in this wonderful environment.



## HOLDING BACK ON INVESTING IN MALES

"Once you have made a significant investment in males you are obliged to use them. This limits your ability to access the best possible genetics, whilst building your herd. As a broad philosophy, it is best to delay the commitment to expensive males as long as your budget allows," says Jeffry.

The Farmans have begun a plan to add superior males to their herd and will expand this as the numbers grow. Their first stud male, *Avon Dream Eclipse* won five times as a junior champion and five times as a reserve champion in his first year. He is now working and they are eagerly awaiting the results.

Carol says, "We have several really exciting young male prospects from last year's breeding that will enter the show ring later this year. We are confident there will be a stud male amongst them".

## WHERE TO? THE ALPACA FUTURE ?

We asked Jeffry for his thoughts on how he sees the industry progressing, given his marketing and promotional background.

"Right now the alpaca market is very buoyant," he says. "There is very strong interest in alpacas, around the world. An interesting phenomenon observed on two trips to Canada and the US was the strength of alpaca sales, even at the depths of a recession in that economy. We think that has a lot to do with people looking to move out of town to a more simple lifestyle, following the events of September 11," says Jeffry.

"During the last year at our farm, we have had visits from German, American, New Zealand and Chinese people showing interest in alpacas. Many local breeders, including ourselves, have reported strong sales in recent months. We have sold animals in four states and overseas," Jeffry adds.

"Looking to the future, I guess one important question is, when will demand level out here in Australia? Nobody knows the answer to that. However, prudent breeders building large herds will be looking for new outlets for their quality stock in the not too distant future."

"I believe export will provide major opportunities for Australian breeders.

Already, overseas buyers are positioning themselves by developing relationships with local breeders to advance the quality of their herds."

"There are sound reasons why Australia is well placed to lead the world in the export of quality alpacas. We have the best pedigree register in the world enabling purchasers to know what they are buying. We have an enviable record in animal husbandry and fleece technology. And most important of all, overseas breeders believe we have some of the best alpacas in the world. Certainly that has come through in our discussions with breeders in Canada, America, Germany and New Zealand," he says.

"And don't forget that some overseas buyers are prepared to pay higher prices for quality stock than the local buyers. American sales achieve 3-4 times Australian prices for comparable stock."

"This is not just an opportunity for the larger breeders. Even smaller breeders can take advantage of the export opportunity by joining together to form export groups to market their animals to overseas buyers," according to Jeffry. ■



Flowerdale Estate is surrounded by wonderful, established gardens and trees, set in a valley known as "The Valley of a Thousand Hills." It's easy to see why these alpacas enjoy a Sunday morning stroll as much as the owners.



# Alpacas at New England Wool Expo Armidale, NSW

by BRONWYN MITCHELL  
Central Coast & Hunter NSW Region

*This will be the fourth year that alpacas have been involved in the New England Wool Expo in Armidale. The New England Region is recognised as one of the premier fine wool growing areas of the world so this event attracts much interest from a very wide group of people in the fibre industry as well as visitors to the area.*



photograph courtesy TAWFA

Those of us involved with alpacas have noted a significant change in the attitude of traditional wool growers who are now recognising the attributes of alpaca fibre and its ability to complement fine wool. We plan to build on this relationship with a larger presence in all activities associated with Wool Week.

**Wool Week 2004** will be launched on Friday 30 April at a gala cocktail evening and opening of a very special themed exhibition at the New England and Regional Art Museum (NERAM) followed by a Wool Ball on the 1 May. During the week there are many activities including such events as producer forums, field days and district tours as well as fashion parades and music in the Mall. The Australian and New England Yard Dog Championships will also be one of the events conducted this year. This will be the inaugural year of the Farmgate Art Exhibition with categories for textiles, sculpture, painting and drawing so we wish to encourage any gifted artist to enter this competition as we want alpacas represented in all possible areas of Wool Expo. Well, maybe not the cooking demonstrations.

Wool Expo culminates with a three day showcase on the creek lands with regular events such as the producer forums, young design and innovation awards, wool craft exhibition and demonstrations, lamb

cooking demonstrations, commercial exhibits with many products and fashions available for purchase.

The Alpaca fleece judging will take place on Friday 7 May and the animal show on Saturday 8 May. This year on Sunday 9 May we have planned an **introductory information day** for new breeders and other interested people. Two weeks after Wool Expo we plan to follow this with an education day providing hands-on opportunities.

Other **new Alpaca events** for 2004 will be:

- Three one day **Alpaca Felting Workshops with Judy Craig of 'Becreatif'** on the 30 April and 1 and 2 May. Visitors to last year's National Show and Sale will have seen, if not indeed purchased, one of Judy's beautifully creative garments.
- **Alpaca Young Designer Fashion Awards** sponsored by the Australian Alpaca Co-Operative Ltd. to the value of \$600.00 in prizes. The competition will be for secondary school students who are studying different fibres as part of their textile and design course. This will be another great opportunity to promote alpaca fibre and hopefully a stepping stone to the involvement of alpaca garments in The Australian Wool Fashion Awards (TAWFA).

The Australian Wool Fashion Awards take place in Armidale each year prior to Wool Expo. These fashions are also paraded throughout Wool Week in Armidale as well as the Sydney Royal Show and other major fashion parades around Australia. There is presently a move to showcase these fashions at other Royal Shows throughout Australia.

The TAWF Awards require a 40% wool component in most of their categories, however there is also a category for other natural fibres where 100% alpaca fibre could be entered.

In 2005 we hope to be able to see many alpaca garments on stage at these Awards and to be able to stage the fashion parade at the 2005 AAA National Show. ■

#### For more information:

- about The Australian Wool Fashion Awards visit: [www.tawfa.com.au](http://www.tawfa.com.au)
- about Wool Expo events visit: [www.woolexpo.com.au](http://www.woolexpo.com.au)
- about information expressed in this editorial: contact Bron Mitchell on Tel. 02 6772 1940 or e-mail: [info@glenhopealpacas.com](mailto:info@glenhopealpacas.com)



# Solving Major Behavioral Problems in Thirty Seconds

*I am only partly kidding. If you haven't paid very close attention to halter fit and you are having trouble with one of your alpacas, you may be able to solve the problem in thirty seconds.*

by MARTY McGEE BENNETT  
TEAM

*I have worked with hundreds of difficult alpacas that were hard to handle only because they were in fear for their lives every second they wore a halter.*



Notice how sharply the nose bone drops off. Not all skulls are exactly the same. It is a good idea to palpate the nose of your animal so you know for sure where the cartilage begins. It is critical that a halter never slide down off the nose bone and into the area of cartilage.

**i** have seen problems from kicking to cushioning evaporate because I changed or adjusted a badly fitting halter. Red, blue, black, brown, polypropylene, nylon, leather, X-style, fixed nose band, three-way adjustable, there are a lot of halters from which to choose. It is CRITICAL that you understand and appreciate how important halter fitting is to your alpaca. Your success as a handler and trainer depends on it. Paying attention to halter fit is easy, and there are few other changes that can make such an immediate and dramatic difference in behavior.

The issue is not only what type of halter you select, but how it fits. Many owners believe that if a halter can be attached to the alpaca's head, it fits. **Nothing** could be further from the truth.

Alpacas are semi-obligate nasal breathers. This means that they **cannot** survive if forced to breathe solely through their mouths. Anything that compromises the nostrils or the nasal passages is not only uncomfortable, it is life threatening. When compared to other animals, the nose bone in camelids is comparatively short and drops off sharply. [See photo of skull.]

Add this to the awesome leverage that a camelid's long neck affords, and it is easy to understand why alpacas are often reluctant to allow us to halter them. Haltering and

halter fitting is further complicated by a camelid's horizontal head set. Because an alpaca carries his head with the nose oriented horizontally rather than vertically (like a horse) a halter that slips off the bone must literally overcome gravity to return to its original position.

## THE ELEMENTS OF HALTER FIT: THE BIG THREE

### Safety

A properly fitted halter's nose band not only rests on the bone, but stays there NO MATTER WHAT. It isn't enough for the halter to start out on the nose bone, it must stay there when the animal pulls back, bucks, rolls, grazes, steps on his lead rope, breaks away from the handler dragging his lead, or scratches his face with his foot. The smaller the animal, the shorter the nose bone and the trickier he is to properly fit.

It is particularly important to understand the dynamics of halter fit if you intend to use your halter for any type of restraint. It is incredibly frightening for an animal to be tied or restrained, in a halter that feels as if it could slip off the nose bone. Imagine how you would feel with your feet tied to the bottom of a swimming pool with just enough of your nose above water to barely get a breath. This experience might give you some

idea of what it is like for an alpaca to wear a badly fitting halter in a restraint chute. Animals that have been restrained in an ill-fitting halter never forget the experience.

### Comfort

Preventing harm to your camelid is the highest priority of halter fit. From your alpaca's point of view, the second most important aspect of wearing a halter is comfort. Your alpaca should be able to do everything with its halter on that it does with its halter off. These activities would include eating and grazing, ruminating, and yawning.

Well-fitting halters do not rub raw spots or create calluses on your animal's head even if left on for a few days. Once the halter is adjusted properly, your alpaca should quickly forget that it is even there until you use it to communicate with him.

### Effectiveness

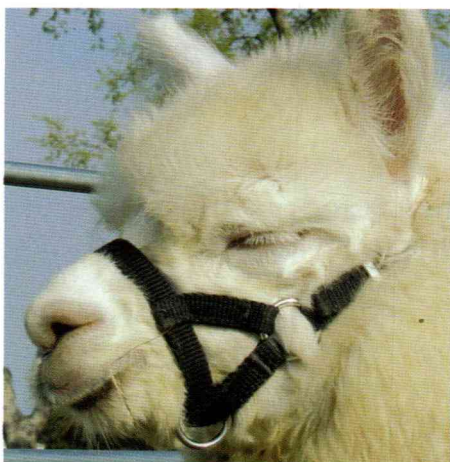
The halter is the most important piece of equipment you own. Horse people have a variety of tools to communicate with their horses. They have a choice of bits and other tack as well as their legs and seat with which to signal their requests. Essentially, alpaca trainers have a halter and a lead rope. It only makes sense to select a halter that is truly effective as a tool of communication.





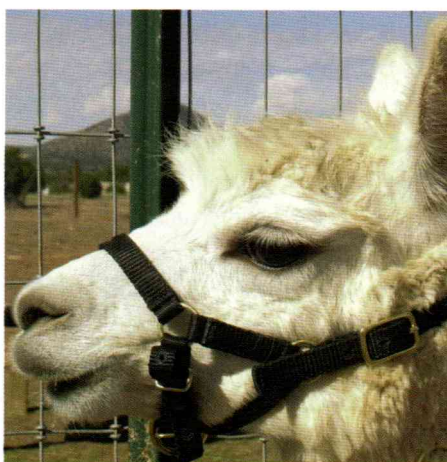
**Correct halter fit:**  
This halter fits correctly up near the eye on firm bone and is snug enough that it will not slip off the bone under any circumstances.

## HALTER FIT PROBLEMS



### Fixed nose band

This halter is typical of the halters used on alpacas these days. It is a fixed nose band halter and rests right at the edge of the nose bone. While this halter may not be compromising the alpacas ability to breathe, I think it is creating a distraction that will interfere with performance.



### Bad halter fit

This halter is adjusted so that it rests on the edge of the nose bone. If this halter slips forward even a little bit, it could compress the nasal cartilage and compromise the animal's ability to breathe.



### Halter compressing nose bone

This halter is compressing the alpaca's nose bone. At the least, this halter will distract and distress the animal. If the alpaca is left tied and unattended, it could kill him.



## TYPES OF HALTERS

When the camelid phenomenon first began, it was a challenge to find a halter – any halter – that would remotely fit a camelid. Many people had their own halters made or used modified sheep or foal halters. Now the reverse is true. It is just as frustrating these days to pick and choose from all the types of halters available. There are three types of halters with variations on these basic themes: fixed nose band, X-style, and adjustable.

### Fixed nose band

This type of halter features a continuous loop for the nose band that cannot be adjusted. The crown piece may be adjusted, but any variation in the nose band is achieved only by changing to a different halter in a different size.

### X-style halter

A halter in which the crown piece and the nose band form a continuous loop. It is not possible with an X-style halter to adjust the nose band and the crown piece independently from one another. Loosening the crown piece provides slack in the nose band; tightening the crown piece takes up slack in the nose band.

### Adjustable halters

These halters feature adjustability in both the crown piece and the nose band. These two elements can be adjusted independently of one another.

Another important aspect of a halter is the way in which the possible adjustments can be made and how they fasten. Some halters have a slide arrangement. Others feature buckles and holes and still others use fastex or spring loaded clips. Halters usually come in nylon, leather, or polypropylene, in a variety of widths. I want a halter that is safe, comfortable, and is effective as a tool of communication.

I use the following criteria to choose a halter that fits the bill:

- I want a halter that has a wide variety of small adjustments and can be adjusted easily *without* taking the halter off the animal.

- I want a halter with a short cheek piece and one in which the throat latch and the nose band travel through the same ring under the chin. These two features taken together encourage the halter to stay further back on the nose bone where it is safe.
- I want a halter that includes rings on the nose band allowing me to lead from the side ring and increasing the clarity of signal as well as the leverage I have over the animal's balance.

A two-way adjustable halter – a buckle halter with adjustability in both the crown piece and nose band – meets these criteria better than any other type of halter I have found. The proper halter is one thing, but how you adjust it on your animal is everything. The same halter on the same animal could be safe, comfortable, and effective, or it could be unsafe, uncomfortable, and useless. The outcome is totally dependent on how the handler adjusts the halter.

X-style halters are fine for animals that already know how to lead. They are usually comfortable and do a good job of staying put on the nose once properly adjusted. They fit a wide variety of animals. On the down side they don't convey signals from the handler to the animal as well as a halter with an independently adjustable nose band.

I DO NOT like or use halters with fixed nose bands. They are more often than not unsafe, uncomfortable, and do a poor job of communication, as well. These halters are inexpensive to manufacture and are quite prevalent especially for smaller or young alpacas. This is very unfortunate in that a young alpaca's smaller head makes it even more important to have an adjustable nose band.

### PUTTING ON THE HALTER AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

1. Before putting the halter on the animal, adjust the nose band opening so that it is bigger than you think you need. A good rule of thumb is to open the halter to within one or two holes of its largest adjustment. Adjusted this way, the nose band will easily slide up the nose close to the eye and will still have slack available. If, on its largest

setting, the halter will not slide well up on the nose in front of the eye with slack still available, your halter is too small! If there is no slack available when you buckle the crown piece, you are not allowing for normal movement of the jaw or mouth. It is quite common for owners to literally tie their animal's mouth shut. A nose band that fits this way is usually unsafe, as well, because it is prevented from sliding all the way up the nose bone.

2. Snug up the crown piece. The crown piece must be tight enough so that the nose band cannot slip off the nose bone – even when significant forward pressure is applied to the nose band.
3. Next, take all extra slack out of the nose band. Leave enough room for your animal to ruminate and eat comfortably.

The most common re-adjustment I make on a halter that is improperly fitted is to loosen the nose band significantly and tighten the crown piece to take up the slack. The net effect of these adjustments is to cause the nose band to slide further up toward the nose on firmer bone. From a safety standpoint, I would rather err on the side of adjusting the halter too close to the eye and a tad snug in the crown piece than to allow the nose band to slide too far down the nose. This is especially true if your animal has not been led before or you intend to use your halter for staking out, tying, or restraint.

### DYNAMICS OF ADJUSTING THE HALTER

Many alpaca owners are unaccustomed to seeing a halter nose band this close to the eye and are reluctant to adjust the halter this way. Concern for the eye is misplaced. Once on the face a halter cannot poke an animal in the eye and the graduated shape of the nose prevents the halter from slipping up over the eye.

Halters high up on the nose bone disappear from the animal's view and are less obtrusive than when they are closer to the front of the nose. In order to be firmly on bone and to be safe, the halter must be very close to the eye. This is true



for virtually all alpacas. Depending on the size and head shape, many alpacas under four months of age may be too small to wear a halter comfortably. These animals have such a small amount of bone with which to work that you must tighten the crown piece up so tightly that the halter is uncomfortable – otherwise the halter is unsafe.

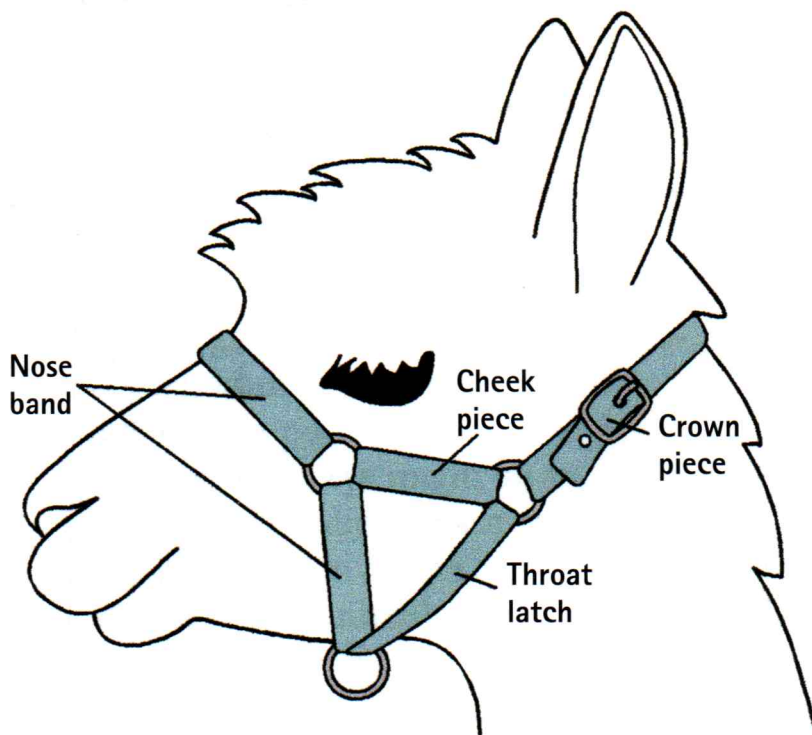
I believe that alpacas are distracted and annoyed by halters that rest in what I call the danger zone – the middle area of the nose bone. When the handler puts forward pressure on the halter (as in leading), it feels as if the halter could slip off the bone. The animal is literally waiting for the ax to fall. Animals wearing halters with the nose band in the danger zone may become extremely resistant to wearing a halter, push when asked to lead, or will bolt or panic suddenly as if for no reason.

When discussing halter fit, owners always ask me to quantify how to do it. They want to know how to adjust the halter in terms of numbers of fingers or inches, how much room to leave in the nose band and the crown piece, and where exactly on the nose bone the nose band should rest. I cannot make quantitative guidelines that will work for all animals. You must think about fit proportionately.

## THE CROWN PIECE

The adjustment of the CROWN piece is what determines how far the nose band can slip forward. How much room you should leave in the crown piece is totally dependent on the length of the nose bone. This means that the crown piece can be looser on a big-headed alpaca than it can be on a small or young alpaca. It also means that a very short nose bone requires a very snug, if not tightly-fitting crown piece.

The length of the nose bone is different for adults versus weanlings or babies. The portion of the nose bone in front of the eye might be an inch long on a weanling alpaca and three to four inches in length on an adult alpaca. Young animals whose heads are simply too small to fit both safely and comfortably in any halter, need to grow some more. I think it is only fair to wait to put a halter on until you can satisfy both requirements.



The length of the nose bone also varies from individual to individual. I have palpated nose bones and found that they were much shorter than I expected them to be. In many cases these alpacas exhibited extreme behavior related to haltering.

Also, halters tend to stretch when warmed up by the animal's body heat changing the way a halter fits. On a big alpaca, halter stretch is of little consequence, but on a weanling alpaca tied to a fence it can be extremely significant.

## THE NOSE BAND

Adjusting the nose band has far more to do with comfort than it does with safety. The nose band must allow the alpaca enough lateral movement to ruminate, eat, and graze unencumbered. Again, this varies depending on the size of the animal and his jaw.

Adjusting the halter so that it is close to the eye is not only safer it also means the nose band is much closer to the hinge of the jaw. When the animal chews there is less lateral movement at the hinge of the jaw than at the front of the mouth. Have a look at your animal while he eats. Because of this fact, you can snug up the nose band close to the eye a bit more and still leave plenty of room for eating and rumination. A snugger nose band is more effective for communication.

Many people complain that they have a certain alpaca that is much harder to fit – these animals usually have a very steep

nose bone and a shorter nose. When haltered in the traditional manner, the halter slides right down the nose bone like a car on a steep icy hill. Adjusting the halter as I suggest also solves this problem.

## THE HALTER DESIGN

Many halters on the market are not proportioned to be worn as I describe. No matter how hard you try, you won't be able to adjust them as I have described. This is because the parts of the halter are not the right length. In some cases, the nose band is simply not big enough to allow it to be worn close enough to the eye to be safe. Buying a larger halter with more room in the nose band may not solve the problem because the crown piece may be too long. Some halters have a cheek piece that is too long. A long cheek piece causes the crown piece to slip down the neck. A low crown piece is not unsafe, but a halter is most useful for communication when it stays at the poll – immediately behind the ears. With certain halters, if you tighten the crown piece so it is up behind the ears (where it should be), a cheek piece that is stiff and too long forces the nose band down into the danger zone.

Some halters feature a fleece lining under the nose band, ostensibly for greater comfort. A fleece lining inside the nose band is no substitute for proper fit. Fleece lining on a nose band that is already too small only makes it tighter and more uncomfortable.



## ADJUSTING A HALTER

A properly fitting halter is safe and comfortable. The nose band rests firmly on bone and stays there NO MATTER WHAT. There is enough room in the nose band for the animal to chew without interference.

- Before you put the halter on, always open the nose band so that it is larger than you think you need.
- Snug up the crown piece. Tighter for animals with smaller heads.
- Take the slack out of the nose band. Larger animals need more room.
- Always carefully examine the nose bone before you put a halter on an animal you don't know.
- Recheck halter fit after about ten minutes.

If you have doubts about animals you have haltered after reading this article, put your current halter on and adjust as usual. Really look at your animal. Does the halter interfere with the freedom of movement in the jaw? Does your alpaca have to struggle to get a mouthful of grain or hay? Do the nostrils flare more with the halter on than off? Take hold of both sides of the nose band of the halter and tug forward. If you can pull the halter forward off the bone, your animal can, too, and is in danger.

I did a clinic in Alaska some years back. We were working on leading techniques and one of the young males was impossible. He would walk along nice as pie and suddenly for no apparent reason, go absolutely bonkers. He was difficult to halter and had a history of this type of behavior on the lead.

I thought the halter fit was marginal, but we were working in a field some distance from the barn. This guy took a while to halter the first time. It was close to the end of the day, and I didn't want to go to the trouble of taking the alpaca back to the barn and changing his halter. I remember thinking "That alpaca has the brains of a gnat."

He was a young intact male, and I thought he was a nervous, highstrung, alpaca feeling his hormones. I watched as this guy blew up with several different people. I finally decided to take the time to change his halter. When I brought him back after changing his halter, the group thought I had switched animals. The behavioral change was unbelievably dramatic. I almost couldn't believe it. He was a puppy dog on the lead and not only with me. Five or six different people led him over and under challenging obstacles.

This is one of many examples in my memory of positive behavior changes spurred by the seemingly simple act of equipping your alpaca with a properly fitting halter. If I have scared you about halter fit, it is for good reason. Paying attention to halter fit has a direct impact on the safety of your animals and your success as a handler. Use these guidelines and you can rest easy knowing your alpaca is comfortable and free from danger. ■

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*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 web site at: [www.alpacainfo.com](http://www.alpacainfo.com)*

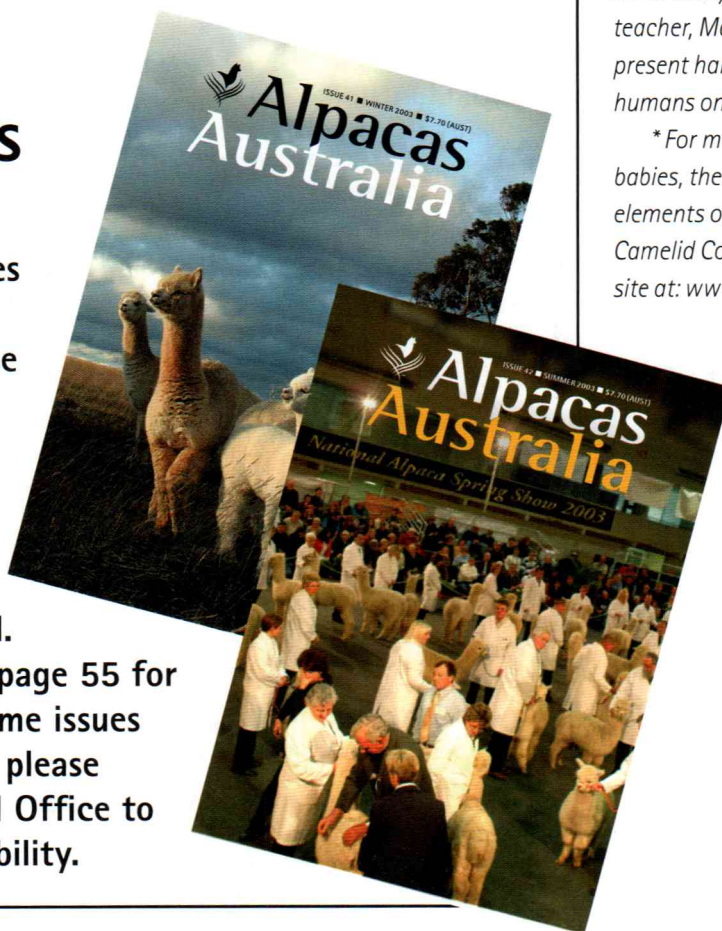
*The assistance of Dave Belt, Editor of "Alpacas Magazine" and Steve and Annie Segal, Design Horizon, USA is greatly appreciated.*

*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.*

*\*For more information about training babies, the TTtouch, the bodywrap, and other elements of Camelidynamics, read "The Camelid Companion" or visit Marty's web site at: [www.camelidynamics.com](http://www.camelidynamics.com)*

## 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). Now 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.





# Tasmania - venue for the 2004 AAA National Conference

by **RAYMOND HAYNES**  
2004 Conference Convenor

*It will soon be upon us! The community of Tasmanian AAA members is looking forward to welcoming fellow AAA members, and non-members, to what is promising to be a great conference, held on 20-22 August 2004, in a superb location at Wrest Point Conference Centre on the banks of the Derwent River in Hobart.*

By now most of you will have received a copy of the preliminary Conference enrolment information brochure mailed from the AAA National Office in February. If you haven't, copies are available from the office upon request.

This Conference will be unlike any you may have attended before in that there will be three (3) parallel streams of talks aimed respectively at 'beginners', 'intermediate' (small herd owners), and 'advanced' breeders. Some of the sessions will be plenary sessions for all attendees and there will be discussion and summary sessions to keep everyone informed of all the subject matter throughout the Conference.

The Conference promises to be a very special event with excellent speakers from overseas and around the country booked to come. I am very pleased to announce that renowned researcher, Dr David Anderson, Head of the Camelid Research Centre at Ohio State University and Eric Hoffman, well known speaker and author of *The Complete Alpaca Book* have agreed to attend the Conference. Additionally, a host of other knowledgeable researchers and presenters from around Australia and overseas will be featured.

All Conference speakers will be providing their lectures in written form for publication in the *Conference Proceedings* that will be available to each participant at the start of the Conference.

For those people who are interested in advertising (bookings close 1 June 2004) in the *Conference Proceedings* please contact



Wrest Point  
Conference Centre  
from my dinghy

**Ros Haynes** at [R.Haynes@unsw.edu.au](mailto:R.Haynes@unsw.edu.au) or phone (03) 6225 5306 or 0402 025 045.

We will also be running two workshops. A field workshop at New Norfolk on general animal husbandry, fleece management and finding good quality animals, and the other on business planning, taxation issues and marketing.

In addition to these educational and learning experiences there will be entertainment, fun sessions and a special Friday night event, as well as a conference dinner, dancing and repartee on the Saturday night!

And, don't forget that the Conference is open to AAA members and non-members alike. Thus, if you have customers, friends or family who are interested in knowing more about the alpaca industry please encourage them to contact me to receive enrolment forms: **Raymond Haynes** at [rhaynes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rhaynes@bigpond.net.au) or phone (03) 6225 5306 or 0402 428 044 or by fax (03) 6225 5307.

Wrest Point Hotel and Conference centre is an ideal location right on the foreshore of the Derwent River. 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. Visit <http://www2.wrestpoint.com.au>

The exhibition space will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday of the Conference so for those people wanting to show off their wares this will be an excellent selling opportunity. In this area six spinners and weavers from The Hand-Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Guild

of Tasmania will be putting on a special display for the duration of the Conference. If you would like to book an exhibition space please contact **Glenn Bruce** at [cpalpaca@tassie.net.au](mailto:cpalpaca@tassie.net.au) or phone (03) 6383 4175.

As you arrive at the Conference venue you will be welcomed by Tasmanian AAA members. Please also take the opportunity while in Tasmania to see some of the AAA member studs. You will be most welcome.

Travel to Tasmania from Melbourne is frequent and cheap. *Spirit of Tasmania I* and *II* travel in smooth comfort overnight taking your car for free between Melbourne and Devonport. There is also a Ferry available from Sydney to Devonport. Visit <http://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/index.htm> Don't forget ... if you arrive in Devonport on the morning of Thursday 19 August 2004 a group of Tasmanian alpaca breeders will meet you offering guidance to help you enjoy your trip to Hobart, stopping at scenic spots along the way, before arriving at about 4.00pm. If you would rather fly, there are approximately 14 flights a day into and out of Tasmania.

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

For all the details of the special accommodation and travel prices for the Conference, please contact **Amanda Barry** of RACT Travel at [a.barry@ract.com.au](mailto:a.barry@ract.com.au) or phone (03) 6232 6502.

If you have never attended a National AAA Conference in Australia, this is your opportunity. ■





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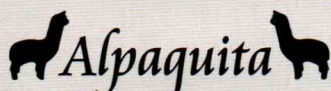
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# pacapics



< Hang on mum, itchy leg >

Odette Mayne  
Currumbong Alpacas, ACT



< What a soft pillow! >

Kathryn Connell  
Glenshiel Alpacas, NSW



< Looks just like me >

Jan Sutherland  
Somersby Alpacas, NSW

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## Upcoming Events

*Alpacas on show at the following venues – All welcome –*

### April

- 23-25 HAWKESBURY SHOW - NSW  
Venue: Hawkesbury Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657
- 23-25 BATHURST ROYAL SHOW - NSW  
Venue: Bathurst Showgrounds  
Highlights: Fleece judging (22 April)  
Alpaca judging (25 April)  
Contact: Kate Bailey (02) 6887 1233
- 25-26 ALPACA AUTUMN SHOW - WA  
Venue: Whiteman Park  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Ron Reid (08) 9296 4888
- 30 - 1 May EAST GIPPSLAND FIELD DAYS - VIC  
Venue: Bairnsdale Aerodrome  
Highlights: Promotional display; product sales  
Contact: Jen McDavitt (03) 5147 2444
- 30 - 2 May TOTAL FIELD DAYS & TOTAL FLEECE SHOW - NSW  
Venue: Paterson  
Highlights: Fleece Show  
Contact: Helen Sorby (02) 4353 3007
- 30 - 2 May 3 x ONE DAY FELTING WORKSHOPS - NSW  
Venue: Armidale  
Highlights: Presenter- Judy Craig  
Contact: Bronwyn Mitchell (02) 6772 1940

### May

- 1-2 CHESTERFIELD FARM ANIMAL EXPO - VIC  
Venue: Chesterfield Farm, Scoresby  
Highlights: Display only  
Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140 (AH)
- 6-8 AGFEST - TAS  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: John & Gwen Milward (03) 6391 1433
- 6-8 IPSWICH AGRICULTURAL SHOW - QLD  
Venue: Ipswich Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Julie MacGregor (07) 3202 3113
- 7-9 NEW ENGLAND WOOL EXPO - NSW  
Venue: Armidale  
Highlights: Fleece judging (7 May)  
Alpaca judging (8 May)  
Education day (9 May)  
Alpaca young fashion designer awards  
Contact: Bronwyn Mitchell (02) 6772 1940
- 13-15 GYMPIE SHOW - QLD  
Contact: Graeme Smith
- 15-16 STAWELL GOOD LIFE FESTIVAL - VIC  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210

- 22 VICTORIAN EASTERN REGION FLEECE COMPETITION & ANNUAL DINNER - VIC  
Venue: Cardinia Cultural Centre, Pakenham  
Highlights: Fleece competition; gala dinner; Victorian Eastern Region Alpaca of the Year award  
Contact: Ann Parry (03) 9776 5766
- 22 THE VALLEY FIELD DAY - QLD  
Venue: Walloon  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Wendy Summerell (07) 5543 0207
- 22-23 ALPACA FIESTA - NSW  
Venue: Hawkesbury Racecourse, Richmond (opp RAAF base)  
Highlights: Alpaca auction; demonstrations; raffle; fashion parade  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657
- TBA BUNDABERG SHOW - QLD  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Fiona Laughton (07) 4156 3364
- 30 VICTORIAN EASTERN REGION 3rd ANNUAL SALE DAY - VIC  
Venue: Pakenham Racecourse  
Highlights: Private treaty animal sale; alpaca product display and sales; stud service silent auction; information sessions.  
Contact: Bob McLeod (03) 5629 1140

### June

- 15 SUNSHINE COAST SHOW - QLD  
Venue: Nambour Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca judging  
Contact: Graeme Smith (07) 5445 9492
- 17-19 PRIMEX - NSW  
Venue: Casino  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Shayne Barnett (07) 3200 0585
- 20 BEAUDESERT COUNTRY & HORSE FESTIVAL - QLD  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Wendy Summerell (07) 5543 0207
- 26-27 NEW BREEDERS SEMINAR - NSW  
Venue: Hawkesbury Showground  
Highlights: Lectures; demonstrations  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657

### July

- 3-4 ALPACA FEST - VIC  
Venue: Werribee Park Equestrian Centre  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging; craft show; husbandry & educational talks  
Contact: Lynn Jacoby (03) 5283 1081
- 3-4 COUNTRY LIVING SHOW - VIC  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Sue Northfield (03) 9754 5152
- 3-4 MUDGEERABA AGRICULTURAL SHOW - QLD  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Wendy Summerell (07) 5543 0207

- 11 LAIDLEY AGRICULTURAL SHOW - QLD  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Wendy Summerell (07) 5543 0207
- 16-17 MUDGEES SMALL FARM FIELD DAYS - NSW  
Highlights: Alpaca judging 17 July  
Contact: Judy Easten (02) 6372 1714
- 16-18 AUSTRALIAN SHEEP & WOOL SHOW - VIC  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210
- 24-25 AN INTRODUCTION TO ALPACAS WORKSHOP  
Venue: Best Western Centretown, Goulburn  
Highlights: Lectures, 'On farm' demonstrations  
Contact: Fiona Vanderbeek (02) 4878 9310
- 25 BALLARAT SHEEP & WOOL SHOW - VIC  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210

### August

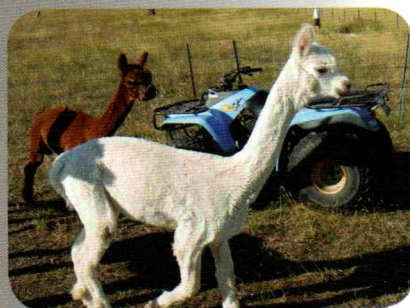
- 1-3 HAMILTON SHEEPVENTION ALPACA SHOW - VIC  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Rob Johnstone (03) 5529 2592
- 5-14 ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW - QLD  
Venue: Brisbane Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpacas on display (12-14 August)  
Fleece judging (12 August)  
Alpaca judging (13 August)  
Contact: Camilla Smith (07) 3266 9822
- 7-8 NEW BREEDERS SEMINAR - NSW  
Venue: Ranelagh House, Robertson  
Highlights: Hands on tutorials covering all facets of alpaca management  
Contact: Heather Vickery (02) 4885 1040
- 15 HAWKESBURY SPRING SHOW - NSW  
Venue: Hawkesbury Showground, Clarendon  
Highlights: Alpaca judging  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657
- 20-22 NATIONAL ALPACA INDUSTRY CONFERENCE - TAS  
Venue: Wrest Point Conference Centre, Hobart  
Highlights: Lectures on latest industry developments  
Contact: Raymond Haynes (03) 6225 5306
- 26-28 GOLD COAST SHOW - QLD  
Venue: Gold Coast Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca judging 28 August  
Contact: Bob Chessor (07) 5527 3948
- 28-29 SOUTHERN NSW SPRING SHOW & FIELD DAY - NSW  
Venue: Peden Pavilion, Goulburn Showground  
Highlights: Alpaca judging; promotional display; husbandry and educational talks; selected quality animal auction  
Contact: Nestor Ellinopoulos (02) 4821 5678





♪ Chantilly lace n' a pretty face... ♪

Joy Allenby-Acuña  
La Granja Alpacas, NSW



< We're here, we're here >

Odette Mayne  
Currumbong Alpacas, ACT



< You're the baby of the herd now >

Graham Macharg  
Fowberry Alpacas, England



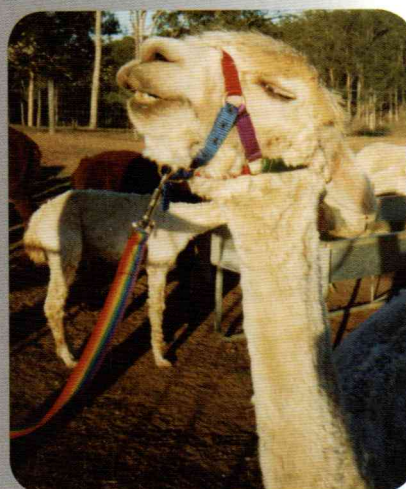
< I'm really just a pussycat >

Penny Pearce  
Homespun Handknits, NSW



< It's all about accessories >

Melissa Semmler  
Lyndoch, SA



< But I don't like the  
rainbow colours! >

Cora Zyp  
Coraz Alpacas, QLD



< Right, let's play tig >

Jenny Macharg  
Fowberry Alpacas, England



< Now... THAT'S stuffed your photo >

Odette Mayne  
Currumbong Alpacas, ACT



< Psst... Can you keep a secret? >

Melissa Semmler  
Lyndoch, SA



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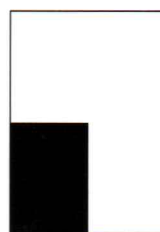
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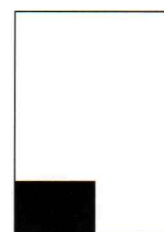
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### Issue 44: Winter

Due: August 2004

Deadline: Friday 4 June

### Issue 45: Summer

Due: December 2004

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### Issue 46: Autumn

Due: April 2005

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