



ALPACAS AUSTRALIA

The official publication of the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

ISSUE 46 • AUTUMN 2005

Be a Showring "Show-Off" • Hypothermia in Alpacas • R&D Directions • Birthing Process Pictorial

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Shearing 2004 Statistics

Mid-side samples.

Whole herd in WA at Shearing October 2004 (Males & Females)

Majority White & Light Fawn. Some Colours.

Includes ALL breeding females & ALL males including working Sires.

Excludes retired, non-breeding females.

All alpacas on year round green reticulated kikuyu pasture.

Supplementary fed daily with added minerals.

Statistics shown are the average result for the age group.

Age Group	No of Animals	FD Micron	SD	CV%	CF%	Spin Fineness
< 12 months	26	16.2	3.7	22.7	99.7	16.0
1 to 2 years	31	18.7	3.7	19.9	99.1	18.0
2 to 3 years	23	20.6	4.2	20.3	96.7	20.6
3 to 4 years	11	21.5	4.0	18.9	95.8	20.6
4 to 6 years	10	21.8	4.3	19.8	94.7	21.0
6 to 8 years	10	23.2	4.7	20.1	90.2	22.5
8 to 14 years*	14	26.1	5.3	20.3	79.6	25.2

Total Number 125 Animals

**Age group consists of original peruvian imports & older purchased animals*

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A Message from the President

Showing has never been more popular yet many alpaca owners only watch from the sidelines or sadly don't go near the shows because ... why?

This year will again break all records for entries in our show circuit. By the time you read this the Canberra Royal Show (RNCAS) and the Sydney Royal Show will be over, each with record entries beyond our previous imagination for these events.

It is a fact that many new breeders and some that have been in the industry for many years do not participate. Why?

Most regular exhibitors are only too pleased to assist newcomers to the showing business even though it can be quite competitive. First time exhibitors can get quite tense with trying to remember where to be when and what needs to be done for inspections etc., etc.

A quiet word of enquiry by the experienced exhibitor about whether the new exhibitor is comfortable and whether they need some help in sorting themselves into a pen and organising water etc. can be of great assistance to newcomers getting into the showing business.

Well, why not bother to either show for the first time or, if you are a regular exhibitor, help someone through the ropes? It is worth the effort because everyone wins, the new chum feels better and the experienced exhibitor can get a sense of achievement too.

Showing is a lot more than taking your animal into the ring and possibly winning a ribbon. Showing is educational for the owner and the animal.



Kerry Dwyer, President, showing at the Canberra Royal 2002

Showing also exposes the new exhibitor to a new range of contacts in the industry and provides links for further information as you learn more about the production and genetic improvement of your herd.

Showing can be a fun time with lots of like-minded people who have a lot to share. Showing can also lead to getting involved with your Region and at the same time expanding your knowledge. Remember that the more you know about the business, the more the business is likely to return to you.

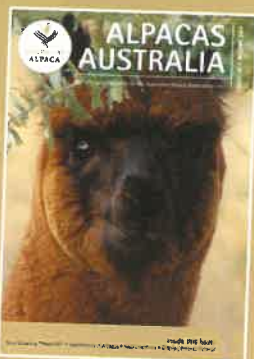
Give it a go! (Refer pages 4, 6, 43, 55, 56) ■

Kerry Dwyer, President



Adelaide Royal 2001

© Cath Norman



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 NSW

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Briefly Speaking

Peruvian Plantel Collection arrives in Australia

On Monday 7 March at 3am at Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne, Shanbrooke, Surilana, Pinjarra and Canchones welcomed their alpacas from Peru. It was an amazing sight to see crates of alpacas being unloaded from the aircraft. All the animals arrived bright and alert and in excellent health after their long trip.

These alpacas were sourced over a few extensive trips to Peru, more than 12 months ago. The shipment contains both huacaya and suri.

After a month in quarantine in Melbourne, the alpacas will finally arrive at their respective homes.



Have you moved?

Please remember to notify the AAA National Office of address changes, including telephone and fax numbers if applicable. Let us know by:

Phone +61 (0)3 9873 7700

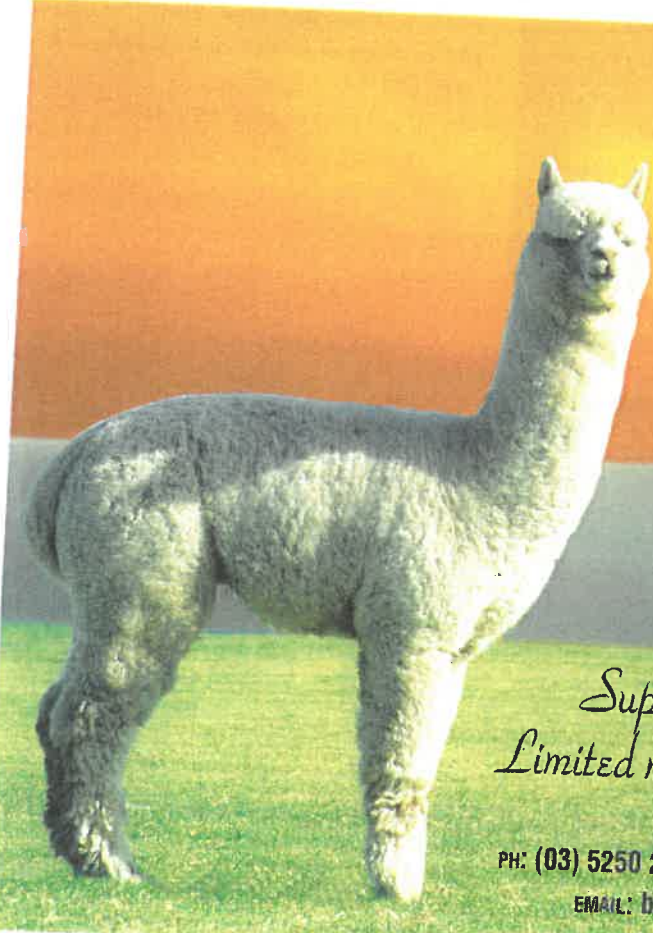
Fax +61 (03) 9873 7711

Email alpaca@alpaca.asn.au

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.

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.



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~~~ contact ~~~

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# Exciting New Venue for 2005 National Show and Sale!

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Glenn Sutherland** > Show Convenor

This year's premier event on the Australian alpaca calendar will be held in Bendigo, Victoria on October 14-16. Please note the earlier date than past years.

The Show will be held in the Rural Centre of Excellence at the Bendigo Showgrounds, a multi-million dollar, international-standard, purpose-built venue. The expected completion date of the new complex is 17 June 2005.

The Show and Sale will substantially be the same as the excellent events held in Canberra in recent years, but it is anticipated that there will be two new exciting additions:

- > an Art/Photography Section
- > a first-class alpaca fashion parade at the Saturday night dinner

The judges for this year's event will be:

|                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Animal Section:          | Julie Bird and Bill Plunkett |
| Fleece Section:          | Jenny Jackson                |
| Craft Section:           | Judy Craig                   |
| Art/Photography Section: | Mark Short                   |

Located in central Victoria, Bendigo is a grand goldfields city of 80,000+, with a huge range of accommodation options and tourist attractions.

*Highlight this weekend in your diary now! ■*



For accommodation enquiries:  
Tel: Freecall 1800 813 153 or  
Email: [tourism@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:tourism@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

For any other queries contact  
the Convenor, Glenn Sutherland:  
Tel: (03) 5472 3416 or  
email: [gl2@mcmedia.com.au](mailto:gl2@mcmedia.com.au)



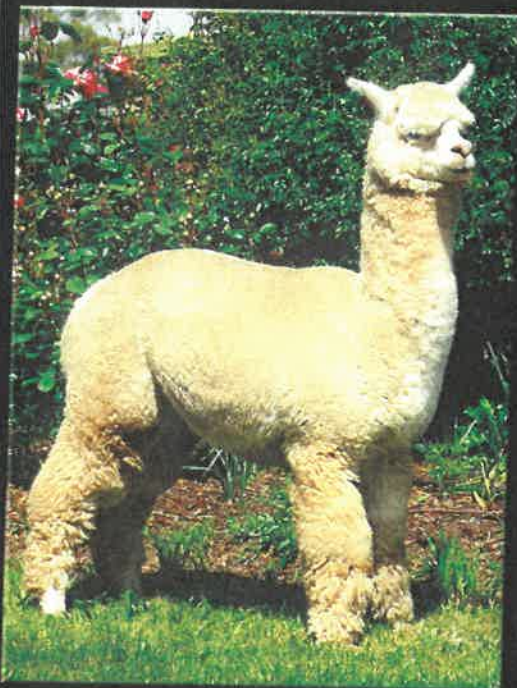


# Shanbrooke

## The Accoyo Alpaca Centre

### "Stud Sire Collection"

Shanbrooke  
Accoyo Tulaco



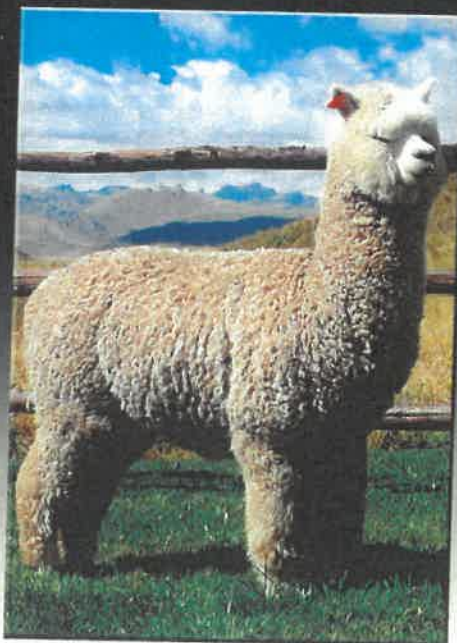
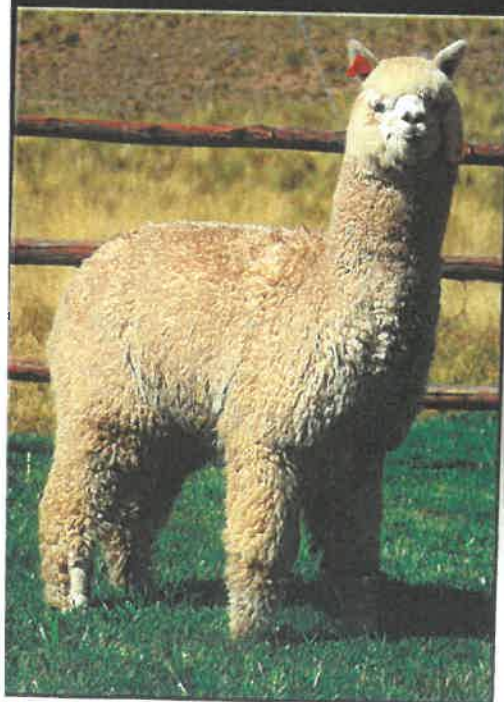
If you are looking  
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to your herd come and  
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and females

Peruvian Wiracocha

Shanbrooke  
Accoyo Rasputin

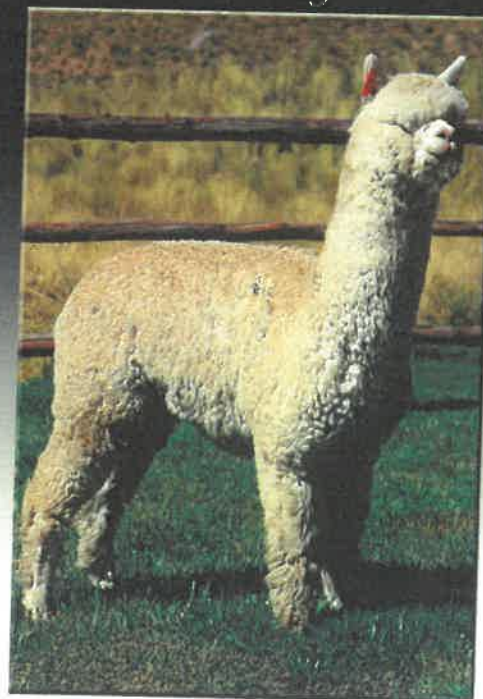


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# The AlpacaMark on Show

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Rick Hodgson** > Adori Alpacas, NSW



While having a chat with Paul Haslin (2004 National Show convenor) at the 2004 Sydney Royal Show he made a simple comment to me, "You are in charge of setting up the showing for this year's National". "By the way, we are using turf for the ring this year", was the only extra information forthcoming.

I guess all this came about as a result of the 2003 National Show where I turned up 'to give a hand' and found myself working on the showing alongside Paul (that was when he was not required in other areas). My first thoughts were of how we could make the ring a focal point for the show. Sure, it looks fine with the plants and white chain but how can it be improved? The turf ring was a great plus but the underlying factor was of course, the budget. The quest to make something impressive yet inexpensive was the challenge. On with the thinking cap but some of my original thoughts did not raise Paul's interest.

Some weeks later I drove down to see Paul and his wife, Fran to sound out my latest idea. "How would the new alpaca logo look painted on the grass in the showing?" I asked. Paul looked straight at me and immediately said, "I like it. Do it".

Well the idea is one thing, to do it is another, especially if you are only a retired plumber come alpaca 'pimp'. It is amazing how things come together sometimes with one thing just leading onto another. The first call was to a large hardware store for some paint suitable for grass that was non toxic. Well, that drew a blank straight away. I remembered that next to the local produce store there was a signwriter. After explaining to them what I required I was given the lead on a business at nearby Doyalson (NSW) that, would you believe, did all the grass logos for the NRL. What a break!

This business could not have been more helpful. I explained the concept and size of the project but the only copy of the logo I had was on the cover of the latest *Alpacas Australia* magazine. This did not appear to be a problem for them and they could supply us with a 3 or 4 metre design depending on our budget. Things were starting to look good.

Now the paint! Yes, it was water based and non toxic but unfortunately they did not have a colour chart on hand and it would have to come from Albury. Paint, Albury, freight costs! Hang on, Paul and Fran will probably be going to the Royal Melbourne Show so the next challenge is on. With no time to lose a quick call to Paul reveals that they are leaving for Melbourne early the next morning. Another couple of phone calls and I had arranged an appointment for Paul to see the paint supplier in Albury. Paul and Fran selected the colours and made arrangements to pick up the paints the following week on their trip home from Melbourne.

Things were falling into place but I still felt a little daunted by this project because of my limited knowledge of sign painting. I was very aware of the time frame and also the fact that I only had one chance to get it right in the ring.

As with all good plans there is always a hiccup or two somewhere waiting to catch you out. I picked up the stencil only to find out that it had not actually been made into a stencil; it was still a design on a very large sheet of vinyl. Thank goodness I received some helpful hints on how to proceed from this point. Luckily my brother and his wife, Phil and Dot Ware came to the rescue, turning their lounge room into a large workroom so the 4.5m sheet of vinyl could be laid out for cutting. It took Phil and I four hours of crawling around on the floor for the stencil to be ready.

Canberra, here we come! We were loaded up with stencils, paints, spray guns as well as the ride-on mower and trailer for transporting 300m of turf. First job of the day was to lay out a plastic membrane and seal it to protect the timber parquet flooring. Then started the mammoth task of laying the turf which had to be packed tight so as to eliminate any movement.

Day 2 was our big test - 'Logo Day'. Two Western Australian onlookers, Lorraine James and Judy Little, willing to give plenty of advice, soon found themselves with a job. Their assistance was greatly appreciated and it turned out to be a great team effort by all.

After two days of showing and nearly 500 animals through the ring the logo showed signs of looking tired, however, all that was required was a quick spruce up ready for the auction on Sunday.

To be able to showcase our Association logo in such an unusual way certainly had an impact.

To sum up all the effort by those involved I guess Jenny Jones from the AAA Inc. National Office said it all, "It looks bloody fantastic!" ■



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# Young Chilean Designer Launches our Alpaca in her 2005 Winter Collection.

FASHION ARTICLE by **Michael Talbot** > Managing Director, AAFL

After a successful launch at the L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival, Lorena Laing, one of Australia's leading up and coming designers, used Australian alpaca fleece, spun by Macquarie Textiles, in her 2005 Autumn/Winter collection.

The fabric she selected was made out of 70% 18.5 micron merino wool and 30% 20-23 micron fine alpaca, in black and white houndstooth and a Prince of Wales check.

Because of the success of this range and her obvious talent Lorena was nominated in the Mercedes Australian Fashion Awards in the New Generation Show where she launched her new collection.

**O**ffbeat, artful and intellectual, Lorena breathes emotion, humour, femininity and a high level of craftsmanship, well placed at the forefront of high fashion in Australia.

"This range consists of romantic sentiments with the use of aged treatment on cloth and lace, giving pieces an allure of history; precious items caught in time... to the masculinity of traditional 'houndstooth' checks in fluid alpaca cloth, gently alleviated by fine sheer tulle and grosgrain ribbon that beautifully ties the collection together. Each design reflects a journey well lived," says Lorena.

"Each collection tells a tale of memories inspired by the very thoughts and recollections of my life, combining the elements of alpaca wool and the cultural style of Chile, but always with a subtle approach".

Lorena was born in Concepcion, Chile and with her parents, migrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1986 at the age of 11. In 1997 Lorena began studying Fashion Design at RMIT University, the only institute offering an internationally recognised course in fashion.



She is hoping to send her collections to London and Paris, keeping her fingers crossed they will be well received.

Lorena attended the AAA Inc. National Show and Sale in October, where she donated one of her outfits from her collection for the fundraising auction, and worked with AAFL's other strategic partners in talking to growers about our unique alpaca fibre.

There's a touch of irony but a wonderful marketing opportunity to have a lass descended from Chile promoting *Australian Alpaca*. ■

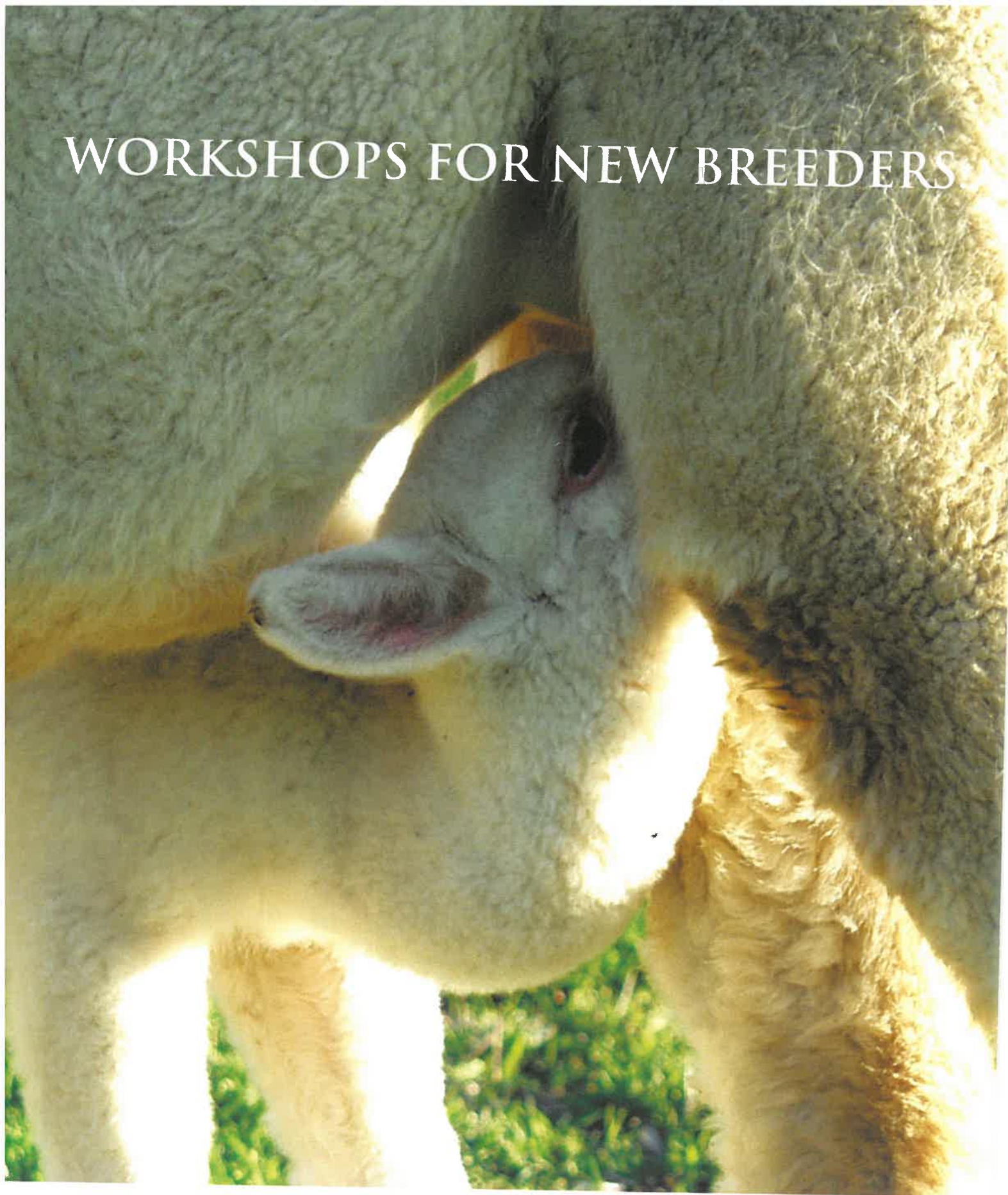








# WORKSHOPS FOR NEW BREEDERS



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FLOWERDALE ESTATE ALPACAS



# Alpaca Losses in Victoria

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE ARTICLE by **Meddwyn Coleman** > Lee Carrow Alpacas, VIC  
on behalf of Victorian Central Region Committee

**O**n 2-3 February this year Victoria experienced extreme weather conditions that included a rapid drop in temperature, heavy rain that fell steadily for 31 hours, strong winds and the threat of hail. These conditions were unprecedented in the Victorian Central Region. A stock weather alert was broadcast by the ABC and the weather bureau announced that it was the first such set of climatic conditions recorded in the past 125 years.

Over the following days reports of significant stock losses began to come through on Victorian Central Region's e-mail network. Because this event had such significant repercussions for breeders in our Region (and indeed for the entire alpaca industry) our Regional committee mobilised a response. It was initially decided to survey actual losses and compile a database with a view to approaching the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) seeking relief services for affected studs. I was co-opted to this task and had preliminary discussions with DPI representatives in Bendigo. Following their advice a survey form was developed and circulated to all studs in our Region. Information requested by DPI included:

- > the % of annual farm income lost by each stud
- > the % of herd lost by each stud
- > the \$ value of the loss from each stud
- > the number of days elapsed since last shearing for those animals lost, and
- > other factors which may have contributed to these losses (e.g. general health of those alpacas lost).

I was also advised by my DPI contacts that this event was not officially viewed as an emergency. For these reasons it was unlikely that financial support would be forthcoming. It became clear that we needed to link our efforts with those of the broader livestock bodies in order to reinforce to DPI the magnitude of stock losses. This included liaising with both relevant government bodies as well as the Victorian Farmer's Federation. Obviously, to achieve maximum lobbying power, we also needed to present a single voice from the alpaca industry across Victoria so we contacted both other Victorian Regions and sought their participation and support in the data collection process.

At the time of providing this information to *Alpacas Australia* we are still engaged in this process of data collection. We cannot therefore make clear statements regarding the outcome of our efforts. Because this entire process has no precedent we are maintaining a flexible approach to the process. We have broadly established goals that will include:

- > Development of educational packages for breeders with respect to risk factors for alpaca herds in relation to hypothermia. This will also include risk reduction strategies (e.g. provision of shelter blocks, when to shed, when to shear, etc.) and treatment management strategies for affected animals.

- > Cementing the recognition of the alpaca industry as a recognised arm of broader livestock production industries with a view to strengthening our inclusion in future considerations with governmental decision making bodies.
- > Exploring internal industry based support options for affected studs. This would include approaches to AAA Inc. to ascertain any options for financial consideration (e.g. waiving transfer or registration fees for affected studs for a set period of time etc.) as well as the possibility of Regionally based fund raising options.

From this brief overview it is no doubt obvious that this report is only an initial set of notes aimed at informing all our breeders of the current response strategy by Victorian Central Region. A more comprehensive report will be provided at a later date.

## From AAA Inc. Vice President, Bob Richardson:

The AAA Inc. National Committee has agreed that assistance will be made available to all AAA Inc. members who suffered alpaca losses during the extraordinary cold snap in southern Australia in February, and who will seek to obtain alpacas from other members to replace their lost animals.

Members who lost registered alpacas as a direct result of the recent storms in southern Australia may apply for an exemption to the transfer fees for registered replacement animals of the same sex.

- > To qualify for the transfer fee exemption both the deceased animals and the purchased animals must be registered on the IAR database - the deceased alpacas as at the date of the storm event.
- > Those wishing to take up this offer are asked to notify the AAA National Office of the death of their registered alpaca(s) between 1-4 February, due to the prevailing weather conditions in southern Australia, notification occurring not later than 29 April 2005.
- > An application to transfer replacement alpacas must be received not later than 30 June 2005.

## For further information please contact:

Jeanette Williams, AAA National Committee Member  
By e-mail at: [jeanette@alpaca.net.au](mailto:jeanette@alpaca.net.au)  
By telephone: 03 5780 1555  
By mail addressed to: AAA Storm Loss Registrations  
C/- PO Box 50, Strath Creek Vic 3658

*The AAA Inc. President and National Committee fully understand that this offer by no means overcomes the losses suffered by many members, but hopes that this offer of support will encourage other members to assist those who suffered losses to renew their enthusiasm for these companions we all feel so deeply about. ■*



# Taxing Tails

EDUCATION ARTICLE by **John Fisher** FCA, Tax Agent  
(and the usual spaghetti alphabet) > Fire Mountain Alpacas, NSW



## Part 3: Are your alpaca losses tax deductible?

**W**ell, as I put fingers to the keyboard, it's February already, the year is well under way and we need to think about planning for the end of the tax year. "Oh, no", I hear you say, "Let's leave it until later". BUT, there are some things you do need to think about in advance. This article is one of them.

### Hobbies

If you have two or three alpacas down behind the shed and you are content that they add to the menagerie at your little holding of land and you are not interested in getting any tax deductions, then turn the page now and seek some more erudite, uplifting article on a more animal friendly subject.

This was my initial plan when I thought of moving to the country - a small plot with a few animals which we could all watch grow and prosper and not spend too much time on. 'My lady chair' had other ideas and we soon had the need of a business plan, a herd development plan and a mixture of advisers. Out of the hobby arena real fast. My background being in the financial world I then had to think about the Taxman's views on this subject. So I plan to share the results of my research with you.

One of the more contentious areas of tax law can be found under the heading of primary producers and whether those activities are sufficiently commercial in nature to constitute the carrying on of a business.

### Carrying on a business

The technical publications on the subject always tell you this is a question of fact. I have always found this to be a particularly useless piece of advice so let's explore the detail. There are a myriad of legal cases where learned beaks have opined at length on this subject which would bore you to death, however the most important elements that I can discern are:

- > The activities must have a commercial character
- > Size and scale are important however this does not mean that the business cannot be carried on in a small way
- > Regularity of the activities is significant
- > The activities must be carried on in a business like manner - i.e. planned, organised so that it may rise to profitability
- > A profit making purpose must be evident. **Note:** an intention to make a profit is not enough - there must be a genuine belief that a profit will be made - at least, eventually
- > Detailed records and accounts must be kept

**Example 1.** If you have five acres which includes the house, the pool, the tennis court and a small paddock where you keep three alpacas, but you have no intention of mating them, make no effort to sell the fleece, have no accounting records and generally regard them as pets, it should come as no surprise that the Tax Commissioner thinks this is a hobby.

**Example 2.** You have acquired 20 acres, have seven female alpacas and use a male down the road to mate them with a plan to grow your herd significantly. You have discussed the soil analysis with your agronomist, put down some lime and fertiliser, seen the accountant and done a business plan which shows you will be that profitable, at least eventually. Sounds like you have a good argument that you are carrying on a business, doesn't it? The Taxman should agree.

So you now have your little business going through its development stage and you will probably make a loss. This of course must be funded somehow and we will assume that you have other income to support your alpaca adventure. So the big question is, "Can you deduct the loss from your alpaca activities against your other income?"

Our elected representatives have passed laws dealing with this subject that apply from 1 July 2000. These are known as the '**Non Commercial Loss Rules**'. Originally it was intended that a business activity needs to be capable of deriving assessable income and allowable deductions AND that the new laws were aimed at activities that are 'unlikely to ever be profitable', although as often happens with new legislation the net is actually cast far wider. The rules apply to individuals and partnerships. You don't have to worry about these rules if your other income is less than \$40,000 and you make a loss from primary production. Otherwise you are squarely in their sights.

### Similar business activities

Similar business activities can be grouped together, but this is not compulsory although likely to be to your advantage. If not grouped then the tests apply to each business.

The Explanatory Memorandum that was released with the legislation gave an example of an olive grower who produces olive oil for sale and also starts an olive oil bottling business. The two activities are to be treated as being of a similar kind and can be treated as one for tax purposes. However, if the olive grower subsequently went into producing a new insecticide for olives and earns royalties from a patent, then this would not be treated as similar.



The Tax Office has issued a tax ruling that indicates the factors that may allow the grouping together of business activities of a similar kind. The factors that would indicate separate businesses include:

- > Different activities carried on at different locations
- > Different assets used in the businesses with few or no common attributes
- > Significant differences in the items produced by the businesses
- > Little or no interdependency between the activities
- > Little or no commercial links between the activities

Thus it is quite arguable that if you run your primary production enterprise - being a mixture of alpacas, cattle and sheep, and you operate from the same location, using the same staff, assets, management and you sell progeny, wool and fleece - that there is a high degree of similarity and you should therefore be able to group these activities.

### When can you deduct a loss?

You can deduct a loss from a business activity against other income provided you pass any of the following four tests.

- 1 You have assessable income from your alpaca business of at least \$20,000 (before expenses). If the business has operated for only part of the year then you need to make a reasonable estimate of the assessable income on a full year basis.
- 2 You have made a profit in three out of the last five years (including the current year).
- 3 You use real property (as distinct from unreal property?) worth at least \$500,000 on a continuing basis. This means real estate and does not include your house and the garden around it. Real property normally includes land and fixtures such as sheds, fences, dams and roads. The value is either the cost of the property (reduced by any relevant tax claims) or the market value, whichever is the greater.
- 4 You use other assets worth at least \$100,000 on a continuing basis. This includes depreciable property like tractors, farm implements, computers and your trading stock (i.e. all those cute little and not so little alpacas). Cars and motor cycles are not included. Depreciable assets are included at their depreciated value while other assets are included at their taxation value. Leased assets are included at the total of future lease payments less the interest component.

In the case of a partnership, each partner must assess their interest in the business both as a member of the partnership and as an individual. The assets used in the business, as real property and other assets, can be included by each partner in evaluating the tests.

If you have trusts or companies as partners then it gets even more complicated and you need to see your accountant for specific advice.

### The Commissioner's Discretion

Now, you can fail all these tests and still have a hope of getting your tax deduction - assuming that you can get the Tax Commissioner to exercise his discretion in your favour. The Commissioner can only exercise his discretion in your favour if:

- 1 Your alpaca venture would have passed one of the tests but for special circumstances outside your control. For example, a drought or a bushfire, or
- 2 You have just started your alpaca enterprise and there is a lead time before a profit can be expected. As the lead time for a new alpaca enterprise is probably several years this basis would appear to be reasonably arguable.

My advice is to go this way only if you have to. The paperwork is not inconsiderable and you will spend an amount on tax and accounting fees that will greatly increase your loss.

### What if the loss is not deductible?

If you cannot pass any of the tests set out above and you cannot obtain the Commissioner's discretion then you cannot offset your loss against other income. The loss is then deferred and can be offset against income from your alpaca venture in a following year or when you do pass one of the tests or the Commissioner exercises his discretion in your favour.

**Example.** Peter starts up Peter's Alpacas and makes a loss in the first year. He believes he is running a business while at the same time earning a salary from an outside job. The loss is \$5,000. Peter cannot pass any of the tests and the Commissioner does not exercise his discretion in Peter's favour so Peter cannot deduct the loss against his salary. The loss of \$5,000 is therefore deferred.

The next year Peter makes a profit of \$2,000 by selling some crias and getting exceptional prices. The profit of \$2,000 is offset against the loss from the prior year as he again does not pass the tests or have the Commissioner exercise his discretion. The loss deferred is reduced to \$3,000.

In the third year Peter makes a loss of \$10,000 but is able to pass one of the tests. He is therefore able to deduct the loss of \$10,000 for the year as well as the deferred loss of \$3,000 against his salary.

### Conclusion

The tax arena is always a complicated one and with 10,000 pages plus, and growing, of tax legislation, rulings etc, it's almost impossible for an average person to be on top of the complexity. I have tried to make the jungle a little more intelligible for the 'Non Commercial Loss Rules'.

#### The best advice is:

**Have a business plan, keep records of what you do and what you spend and seek some good tax and financial advice when you set up.**

*The information in this article has been presented as a guide only as individual circumstances vary. You should consult your accountant or tax adviser to provide specific advice on your activities. ■*



# Process to Product

INDUSTRY ARTICLE By **Lynne Moynihan** > Member Services Fleece Officer, Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

Following a visit to Creswick Woollen Mills last year, I have put together a collection of photographs to show one of the commercial processes associated with alpaca.

The industrial woollen carding and spinning machines at Creswick have been used over many decades to process mohair, Merino wool and cashmere into product but never before had they been utilised to process alpaca. Each fibre type requires different speeds, tensions, solutions, timing and care. An immense amount of time and attention is required to reset each machine every time a

run of alpaca or alternative fibre is scheduled for processing into product. Quality control is paramount at each step and the experienced staff are constantly monitoring and inspecting for faults or problems. Creswick Woollen Mills is the last remaining coloured woollen mill of its type left in Australia. The ability to spin small quantities of natural coloured fibre makes Creswick a perfect partner for alpaca.



1. Scoured fleece is placed in the hopper and blended before going into the Holding Tank.



2. The Oiling Box. Fleece has an oil mix added to it for ease of handling before proceeding to the next stage of processing.



3. Fleece travels through ducts from the oiling box and arrives at the entry point of the carding machine.



4. During the carding process, fleece is combed into parallel fibres giving the appearance of a thin sheet.





5. Loosely carded alpaca fleece is wound onto carding cones.



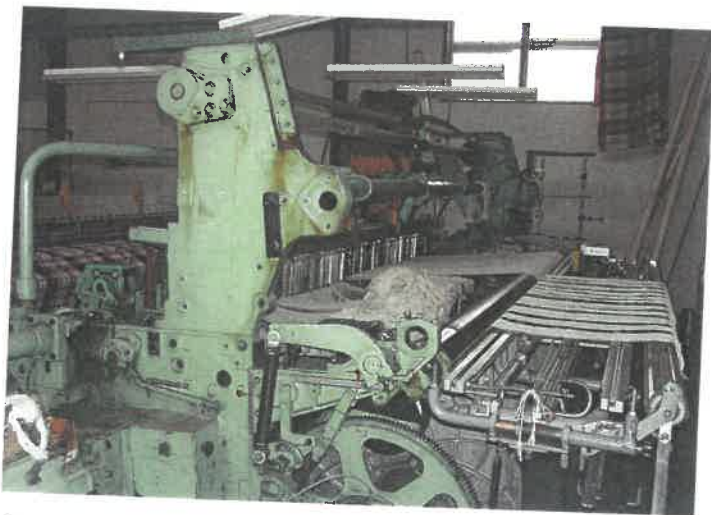
6. This is a small example of waste expelled at the end of the carding machine due to vegetable matter contamination. This is *after* the alpaca fleece has been scoured and carded.



7. The carding cones are transferred to the yarn spinning machine and wound onto yarn cones.



8. The yarn cones are taken to the Winder machine. The Winder checks for imperfections and uses electronic air splicing which creates an even thread.



9. This is a Dornier Loom. Here blankets and throw rugs are woven.



10. After weaving, this Perch rolls through the bolt of fabric and is manually checked for imperfections.

**For more information contact:** Boaz Herszfeld, Executive Director, Creswick Woollen Mills  
 6 Roche Street, Hawthorn Vic 3122 Phone: 03 9818 5055 Fax: 03 9818 5066 E-mail: [info@creswickwool.com.au](mailto:info@creswickwool.com.au)  
 Web site: [www.creswickwool.com.au](http://www.creswickwool.com.au)





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# Suri News

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Angela Preuss** > Suri Sub-committee

The Suri Sub-committee has been active on a number of fronts in the last few months.

## Postponement of Suri Extravaganza 2005

Organisation was well under way for the inaugural Suri Extravaganza that was to be held in June this year at Wagga Wagga, NSW.

However, due to the alpaca losses sustained in Victoria and Southern NSW in the extreme weather conditions that prevailed in early February, organisation was abruptly halted.

The Suri Sub-committee wants this event to be something really special and so the decision was made to postpone until 2006, when the industry has recovered and the event can be given the full attention of the organising committee.

Thank you to those people who had already given their time to the initial planning of this event. We look forward to the 2006 Suri Extravaganza.



## Australian suri breeders to promote Australian suri fleece to Italian fashion designers

The prestigious fashion yarn fair, Pitti Imagine Filati, winter collection, will be staged in Florence, Italy on 6-8 July 2005. This year three Australian suri studs are launching an assault in an attempt to seduce the Italian spinners with exquisite Australian suri.

The Vanderbeeks (Birrongo Suri Alpacas, NSW), Linda Davies and Paul Cramley (Pacofino Pty Ltd., NSW) and the Gelbers (Bumble Hill Alpacas, NSW) are descending on Florence with their hand luggage bulging with suri product samples (i.e. raw fleece of all colours, rovings, yarn, etc.) and Italian phrase books. The purpose of the visit is to convince the Italian mills that Australian suri fibre is superior to that sourced from other markets and that we can assure continuity of supply and quality through the Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. (AAFL) collection medium.

Hopefully by mid year AAFL will have received sufficient quantities of white superfine and fine suri fibre to assemble a suri 'super' bale. This bale will be offered to the top Italian spinners – Zegna Baruffa, Filpucci, Loro Piano, Lanificio dell'Olivio to name a few, either through auction or tender and hopefully one of them will take up the challenge. Not an easy project, for they will have to begin from scratch to process a difficult but exquisite fibre. But the Italians are masters with luxury fibre and should create a masterpiece.

During a visit to Pitti Filati five years ago the Gelbers received strong positive responses to the samples of Australian superfine suri fibre shown to the Italian spinners. In fact they could have written business for around 500kgs of superfine suri on the spot, but of course they simply didn't have the fibre. Five years on our alpaca industry is in a much stronger position to launch Australian suri on the international market.

We wish them well on their trip and look forward to hearing the results of their 'seduction'! ➤

Australian suri breeders have a superior suri fibre product; better grown, finer and more uniformly graded, and which, if we find the right customers, should return a significant price premium to the grower.



## Australian breeders transforming suri fleece into beautiful products

In this issue, we are featuring three very clever people, from three different states, who are producing wonderful products from suri fleece – Fiona Laughton from Queensland, Maree Hornery from NSW and Judy Craig from Victoria.



**Fiona Laughton** and her husband Darrel are alpaca breeders from Gin Gin, Queensland. They started breeding suris in 1996, after they decided that the suri's more open fleece better suited them to warmer climates. Fiona says, "We found that the rare, exotic beauty and the economic potential of the suri was limitless. Being part of a new industry we looked outside pre-conceived ideas and tried new and innovative ways to present this elite, luxurious fibre to the public. We felt the elegant coats, which are a world standard for suri processing, were not an option for us in T-shirt and shorts country. We found that there seemed to be a lot of negativity regarding the commercial processing of suri fibre. 'Too long', 'too slippery' and 'too hard' are terms often associated with suri processing.

Not coming from a fibre processing background, none of this seemed important to us. We *knew* we had the ultimate in luxury fibres and we *knew* it had to lend itself to many other applications, so in spite of all the 'can't be dones', or 'haven't been dones', we set out to see what *could* be done".

Fiona has worked extensively in felting, spinning and weaving with suri fibre. She says, "When **felting**, suri gave us some beautifully light and lustrous pieces of fabric, which we used in slippers and samplers as well as using some for the cap in a wedding veil. We also discovered that the felt proved to be fireproof, water-resistant and makes wonderful cria coats.

Experimentation with **spinning** woollen (fibres mixed and crossed) and worsted (fibres aligned) processing showed us that, for suri fibre, the worsted process gave superior results with greater handle, lustre and drape in the finished product. Woollen processing gave a loftier (bulkier), soft handle and sheen, but more 'frizz' to the finished product.

We also soon discovered that micron was not as important to the 'handle' of a finished product as was a low CV and SD. This is not to say that low microns should be disregarded as a breeding goal, but that consideration must be given to *all* measurements to achieve the elusive lustrous handle, which we believe is what people associate with alpaca and will pay top dollar for.

**Weaving** suri results in a fabric that is so light and sensuous to touch, the reality leaves you breathless and in awe. Our *SSSC (Superb Stunning Suri Creations)* label which produces award winning, fine and gossamer weight, 100% suri yarns and garments, will never have more than a niche market due to the very nature of production, all hand combed, spun and crafted. However we feel that the future for Australian suri breeders is limited only by their imagination. Since falling under the suri spell our realisation that we were part of a quality new Australian industry has encouraged us to experiment with this sensuous, silky, 'angel's hair'. Using a worsted system, we found how well gossamer suri processing gives a sensuous drape and subtle lustre to garments and lace pieces. The positive response by leading Australian designers and craftspeople to the quality and potential of our fine, superfine and gossamer yarns and garments under the *SSSC* label proves there is an eager market for quality suri product.

We fully support the Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. in its endeavours to develop the commercial processing of suri fibre for the world markets, as we believe anyone serious about a credible and healthy Australian alpaca industry should do, *but don't be afraid to try something different*. Our vision for the future would be to see 'Australia' and 'Suri' linked in peoples' minds as the ultimate in luxury fibres and fabrics, as are 'Shetland' shawls and 'Italian' suits. Just imagine the decadent luxury of lightweight, silken suri fabrics – they would be a world-beater".

The challenge to us in Australia is to pioneer a world beating commercial suri processing industry that is THE international benchmark for quality, super-light, sensuous suri fabrics.



**Judy Craig** from Upper Plenty in Victoria is an expert in transforming suri fibre into beautiful, practical garments and 'wearable art' products. Judy and husband Jeffrey, produce a range of products in their *Becreatif* range. Judy's work entails taking the unprocessed fibre literally straight from the alpaca and having the fleece scoured / washed / carded into tops and spun into knitting yarn. Judy's award winning creations include over shoulder shawls/ponchos and nuno felted scarves, boots, hats and bags. Judy's natural progression into creating alpaca products came with the purchase of her first two alpacas in 1997. Judy is now very excited about introducing suri products into the *Becreatif* range, including the new release of suri knitting yarns. She has been trialing a number of combination blends for over a year to select and grade the right type of fleece for this product.



The new product is called, *LUSTRUS Suri Yarn*, and is being specially processed by Robert Beard. The blending of specific natural fibres produces a knitting yarn that is well suited to both hand knitting and machine knitting for garments that have fabulous lustre and sheen with a 'silk-like' feel. By combining fleeces of various qualities, Judy has at last been able to achieve a consistent level of quality yarns in natural colours. Whether it is natural or dyed, machine knitted or hand knitted or made into felted items, the suri has a glow about it, with a light, warm and ever so soft feel. Judy has found that people just love the gorgeous, soft handle and slip of suri fleece and her suri knitting yarn is selling like hot cakes. We congratulate Judy on her experimentation of the uses of suri fleece.



**Maree Hornery** and husband Mark own Macusani Alpacas in Parkes NSW, which is more or less the centre of NSW and home of the famous 'Dish'. They have been breeding alpacas for many years and specialise in breeding suris. Maree has always enjoyed working with the fleece and is now producing beautiful, hand woven, hand dyed and hand spun products. Last year, Maree and Mark opened *The Alpaca Country Shop* on their property at Parkes. The shop boasts an extensive range of alpaca products, including original suri items produced by Maree. The array of items includes gorgeous natural and hand dyed suri yarn and beautiful suri scarfs.

Maree also conducts spinning and weaving classes and has an ever increasing following of people who have now fallen in love with working with alpaca fleece.

Maree and Mark are also great ambassadors of the suri and alpacas in general, by providing the opportunity for the many visitors to their property to have hands-on experience with these beautiful animals, to feel the luxury of the fleece and to see the array of items that can be produced. ■

Maree says, "I learnt to spin huacaya fleece and soon mastered it with great satisfaction, but the delight when I began spinning suri gave me greater joy. Whilst it needs a greater twist, the end result is finer and indeed lighter. When I wove my first

suri scarf I knew why we were breeding suris. The lustre and the silky feeling of this scarf were amazing. It floated through my hands and this wonderful soft handle continues to amaze the customers. They all love the huacaya weaving, but are rounded when they feel the suri scarves and ter, "It's so soft!!!".





# Hypothermia in Alpacas

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE ARTICLE by **Rosemary Eva and Liz Coles** > Longueville Park Alpaca Stud, NSW

It is difficult to imagine that alpacas in a sub-tropical climate could become the victims of hypothermia, however it has happened!

## What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia is a reduction in the body's core temperature and can occur deliberately in a controlled environment e.g. for operative or therapeutic processes or, as in this case by environmental means.

## Setting the Scene

The month of October 2004 was getting hot but fortunately all the alpacas had (as usual) been shorn in the middle of September. However, in the middle of that month the bushfire season had reared its ugly head far earlier than normal. The temperature was in the high 30s, humidity was very low and the recipe for disaster was in place. Fires were all around us, helicopters were conducting extensive water bombing of impenetrable country and plans were in place to evacuate the alpacas if the fires jumped the containment lines.

On the evening of 17 October the temperature dropped from 38 degrees, the skies turned an ominous dark green and the rains and winds vented their anger against the fires. We thought, "Terrific, the fires will soon be out and the clean

up can start". During the night the storm showed no sign of abating and the next morning (18 October) the temperature was only 12 degrees but with the 'wind chill factor' closer to 10 degrees. The alpacas were four weeks off shears.

As is the daily routine, it was out to the paddocks at 6.30 a.m. to check and feed the herd prior to putting them in to their day paddock. And still the rain came down... Our first sign of something amiss was when one of our stud males, normally the first to come for his breakfast, lay motionless, cold and shivering. Living in a sub-tropical climate our first fear was a tick but none was to be found. He was barely responding so we rolled him on to the carry-all on the tractor and took him up to the shed where we started to dry him and get him warm.

We then checked the remainder of the herd and our worst fears were realised - most of them were down! The next hour was like a scene from a Mad Max movie as we raced through the paddock, loading one animal at a time on to the carry-all and getting them up to shelter. In all we shedded thirty animals in varying stages of hypothermia.

Immediately we implemented the principles of triage and discovered that ten were in a critical condition, in fact, virtually moribund, the remainder would survive. It is interesting to note that of the ten the ages ranged from three months to 14 years - the newborn were fine!

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## Management of Hypothermia

The normal temperature for an alpaca is around 39 degrees - random temperatures on our guys were 34 degrees with heart rates of 16 per minute. They were paralysed, barely responding and could not 'cush'; we knew we had a potential disaster on our hands and time was of the essence! The first priority was to get them dry and to slowly raise their temperature. So we went from one to the other rubbing them with towels, using a hair-dryer and as they were drying, putting on coats and then covering with hessian bags.

It was still raining and a frantic dash into town ensued to buy bales of bedding straw that we then packed around each animal to get them in the 'cush' position. Next step was to get some warm fluids into them and to raise their temperatures. We always keep a supply of electrolyte sachets ("Lectade") and we made this up using warm water, administering it orally as a drench. Extreme care is needed to ensure that the fluid does not go in to the lungs and to that end it took a long time to get these guys to develop a swallowing reflex. So, after a couple of hours most of the animals were starting to show positive signs of responding. Needless to say the drying and warming had to be continued, as their temperatures were very slow to rise. This was the routine for the remainder of the day. Those animals that were not so affected quickly responded as they were dried and hand fed and subsequently were off the 'critical' list.

At 6.00 p.m. the ten 'critical' patients were all starting to respond, now fully conscious, eating and drinking but not standing. As their temperatures returned to normal it was imperative to start removing the layers so that they did not then swing the other way and become hyperthermic. In this condition animals lose the ability to regulate their body temperature and can over heat very quickly.

By 8.00 p.m. we were confident that all would survive so we kissed them all goodnight and left them in the shed on a thick layer of bedding straw with feed and drink available.

Time for a strong brandy!

The next morning they were all up and wanting to go back to their paddock and wondering what all the fuss was about. If only they knew!

## Outcome

In this case, fortunately the outcome was successful. However, three pregnant girls absorbed their pregnancies and two suffered rain scald. Today all are now pregnant and their fleece is recovering from the rain scald.

## Lessons Learnt

Perhaps the salutary lesson is never to be complacent. Don't ever think, "It will never happen to us".

These animals must have access to wind proof shelter and had we not had the shed I fear the outcome would have been disastrous. **Shelter is imperative, irrespective of climatic zone.**

Seek Veterinary advice in such circumstances.

- > Keep a ready supply of electrolytes - invaluable for these events and many others.
- > Always have plenty of towels and/or hessian bags on hand.
- > If weather alerts are broadcast be prepared to get your animals to shelter.

## Epilogue

On that fateful day, 18 October 2004, we have been informed that between Tweed Heads and Port Macquarie over thirty animals perished. To these breeders we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

We hope that by sharing the lessons we learnt that day we are all more aware of the unexpected, and even though these animals are so stoic they are still very vulnerable to the climatic extremes. ■

## Editor's note:

*Alpacas Australia* contacted NSW veterinarian and alpaca breeder, Dr Richard Dixon for some tips for the prevention and treatment of hypothermia. Richard was well aware of Rosemary and Liz's emergency and praised their quick response to the situation, "I spoke to Liz Coles within a week of her debacle, and I'd agree with all that she did".

As well, Richard suggests:

- > Ask your shearer to use a Snow comb when shearing. This leaves about 1 cm of fleece on the animal. According to a sheep grazier in Nimmitabel, Southern NSW this fleece is equivalent to putting a coat on sheep in terms of thermal insulation.
- > I have been told that many of the alpaca that died were nursing mums. These gals need extra energy intake when coping with producing milk and keeping warm. Therefore, if there is any likelihood of cold plus rain, feed out lucerne hay night and morning until the cold/wet snap subsides.
- > Some form of shelter in the paddock is invaluable. If sheds are not available, consider planting a X-shaped windbreak, which will allow shelter from any direction. I'd make the arms some 3 or 4 metres long.
- > Get into the routine of listening to your local radio station, or log onto the Weather Bureau's web site ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)), and keep your ears open for a Grazier's Alert. If this comes, give your critters extra feed or get them into shelter.
- > For an individual cria or larger animal I'd recommend warm saline enemas. Make up 1 teaspoonful of salt in 600 ml of water at 40°C, an ordinary clinical thermometer will do for this.
  - For a cria use 50 ml injected slowly using a 50 or 100 ml syringe, or go to your chemist and get a rubber enema bulb.
  - For an adult use 200 ml.Repeat the warm saline enemas each hour. The boy scouts and girl guides among us will, of course, get the enema syringe BEFORE the cold /wet snap and have it in the First Aid kit. ■



# It Takes One to Know One

MARKETING ARTICLE by **Kim Donaldson** > McGregors International, NSW

## Analysis of the member profile survey results

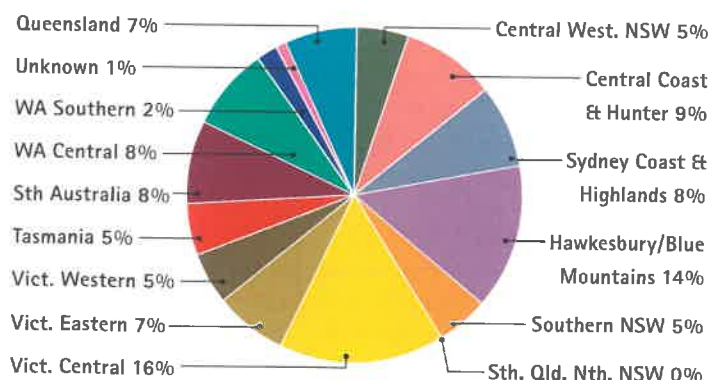
Late last year, McGregors issued a survey to AAA Inc. Regions in order to profile the current membership base of the Association. The last survey of this kind was conducted in 1997. By understanding the people who make up the industry we can maximise the effectiveness of future marketing activities as well as develop strategies to retain and grow membership.

The Regional Marketing Representatives (RMRs) distributed the survey through various means including dissemination at Regional AGMs, insertion in the Regional newsletter or e-mailing to members.

A total of 298 completed surveys were received, portraying just over a 13% sample of the total membership. Below is an outline of key results from the member survey:

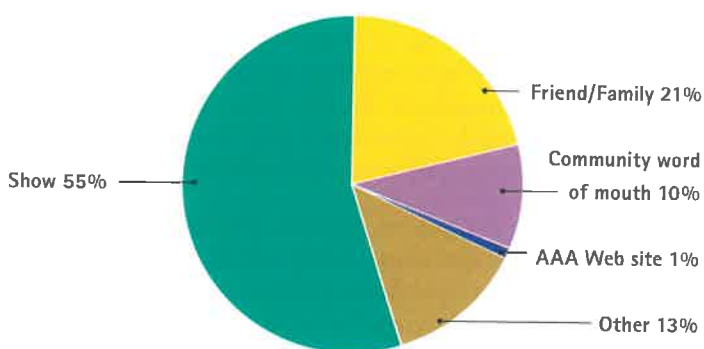
- > Members who do not have any previous farm/breeding experience have most often entered the industry for a lifestyle change
- > 55% of responses highlighted shows/events as the first point of contact with the industry
- > Top three reasons for first purchase of alpacas are:  
1) Lifestyle change 2) Investment 3) Fell in love with the animal
- > Financial/investment interest has decreased as a reason to purchase alpacas by 34% since the 1997 survey
- > Members who own 11-20 animals are most likely to increase the number of animals they own
- > 45% of respondents classified their farm as a breeding enterprise
- > 25% state 'Ease of care' as the main aspect that appeals to them
- > Referrals account for 31% of all alpaca sales

The graph below shows the Regional breakdown for the surveys that were received.



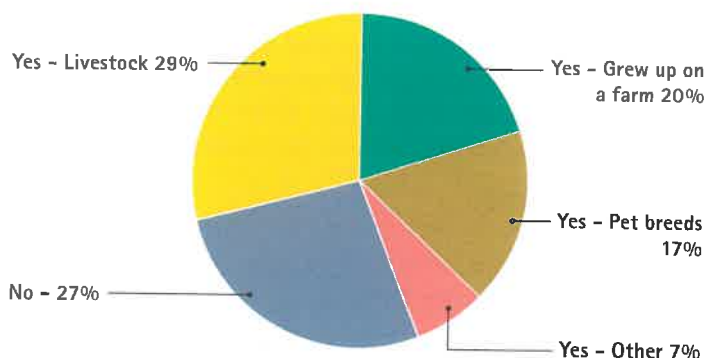
## How did you first find out about alpacas?

Most people found out about alpacas from shows with 55% of responses highlighting events as the primary point of contact for potential breeders/owners. It was noted that the AAA web site had not been a primary avenue for people to learn about the industry and appeared to be a secondary tool for people to gather additional information about alpacas.



## Have you had farm/animal breeding experience before alpacas?

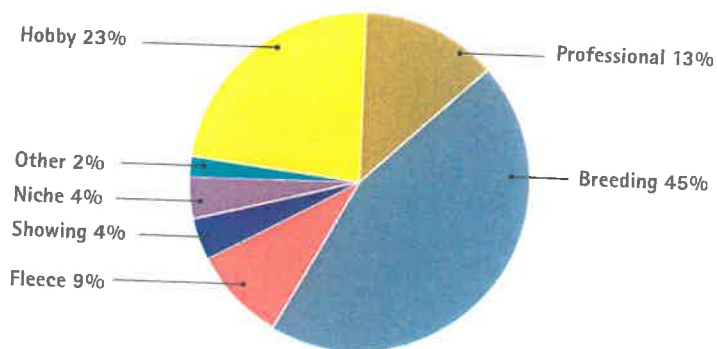
The following graph illustrates what kind of rural/animal background members had before entering the industry. A total of 73% of members has had some familiarity in breeding animals and/or a rural background. Although not always specified, the 'Other' category refers to work related, fashion or studies.





## How would you best classify your farm?

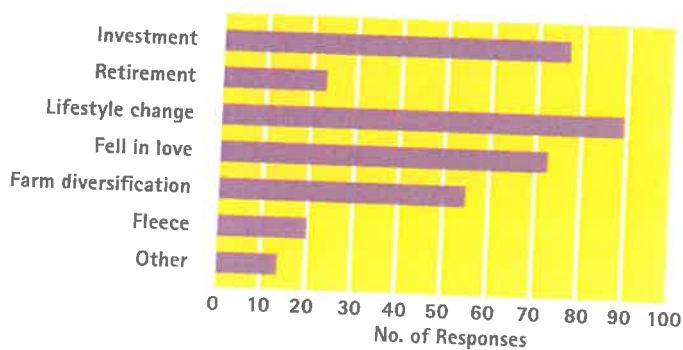
More than 160 of the people surveyed (45%) stated breeding as the classification for their farm. The second highest classification was 'Hobby' with 23%, followed by professional enterprise, which equated to 13% of responses. NB. In some instances there was more than one category used.



## Reason for your first purchase

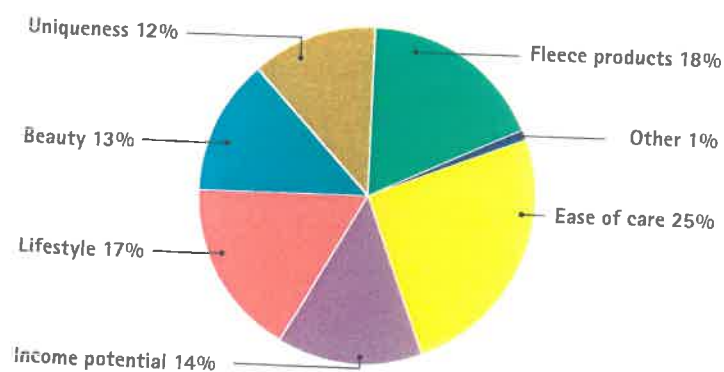
The top three reasons why people entered the industry were:

1) Lifestyle change 2) Investment 3) Fell in love with alpacas. In comparison with the 1997 survey results, it was seen that investment (as a reason for purchase) had decreased significantly while the lifestyle market had increased by approximately 10%.



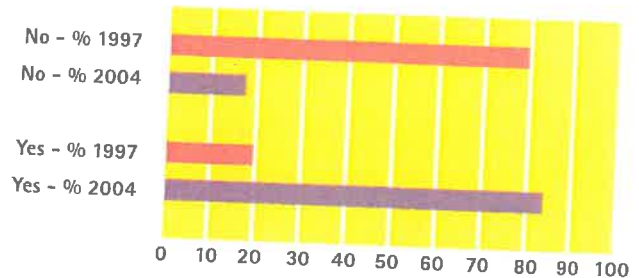
## What aspects of alpacas appeal the most?

The graph below illustrates what AAA Inc. members consider are the most appealing aspects of owning alpacas. This in turn highlights the key messages and aspects of the industry to reinforce in marketing campaigns. 'Ease of care' and 'Fleece products' have the highest percentages.



## Internet access – 1997 vs 2004

Since 1997 (when 20% of respondents recorded that they had internet access) the internet has been more widely adopted as a communication medium, with 83% of members having access nowadays.



## Conclusion

The survey has allowed the AAA Marketing Team to develop focused campaigns targeting the relevant areas of the community. For example, as shows and events are primarily the first point of contact for new industry entrants, a strong focus is being placed on materials and displays at events.

Conducting the membership profile survey and analysing the results holds the alpaca industry in good stead as we need to know where we are, to best develop strategies to where we want to go. In conjunction with the development of the survey analysis report from a national perspective, the data has also been broken down into Regional specific results – so Regions have the power to make marketing decisions based on local information. ■

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<http://members.dodo.net.au/~bungalook>

# Join the Brand Wagon

MARKETING ARTICLE by **Michael van den Bos** > McGregors International, NSW

## Report on the Regional Marketing Representative Workshop held in November 2004



Back L-R: Trudi Arnold (SA), Derek Bullen (HBM - NSW), David Rouse (Sthn NSW), Ray Seymour (SCH - NSW), Richard Bowden (Vic Eastern), Ron Raynor (WA Central). Front L-R: Prue Walduck (Vic Central), Emma Griffith (CCH - NSW), Ann Henderson (QLD), Jan Davies (WA Southern), Lynn Kincade (Sth QLD & Nth NSW), Terry Brophy (TAS), Kate Cuthill (Vic Western).

USP, LAMP, PR, WIP – just some of the numerous acronyms in a marketer's vocabulary. The most important one for the AAA Inc. marketing team is RMR (Regional Marketing Representative), all of whom are playing a key role in the marketing of this amazing industry.

Last November, RMRs converged on Melbourne to take part in a marketing workshop. The workshop provided an invaluable forum for the Regions to share ideas. It was an important channel for feedback, it garnered suggestions from the Regions for future marketing activities and provided Regions with the tools to effectively market the industry. It also set the platform for consistent branding throughout Australia.

Facilitated by the Marketing Sub-Committee and McGregors International, the workshop was divided into sessions covering current marketing issues, branding, internal communications, media training, events, advertising and Local Area Marketing Plans (LAMPs).

### Introduction

With RMRs getting to know one another or being reacquainted, introductions included telling funny alpaca stories, of which there was no shortage. After introductions it was down to business and identifying marketing issues from a Regional level. Some of the experiences and observations raised were:

- > that new owners are not becoming AAA Inc. members (there is a need to set targets such as membership growth figures)
- > access to marketing material
- > ongoing marketing resources
- > affordability and different entry levels for the industry

It is this type of feedback that will help shape the direction of future planning and activities.



## Internal Communications

Over the last 12 months, steps have been taken to build on internal communications. An internal marketing newsletter is now produced to facilitate the sharing of information between RMRs. We also now have a better understanding of the membership base from analysing the membership profile survey.

As a result of the November workshop the Marketing Team is now working towards the development of a member marketing kit. AAA members are the Australian alpaca's most staunch advocates and it is this passion that will help preach the word. As such, material is being developed to help RMRs present information to their Regions about how the industry is being marketed and how individual members can market their own alpaca venture.

Another pertinent issue covered was how Regions can make money to fund other marketing activities. With 14 Regions, there were varied and very helpful suggestions including silent auctions, raffles (one Region bought a float and then proceeded to raffle the product with great success), advertising, hiring out the Region's equipment and conducting education sessions.

## Media Training

If asked, how would you answer the following question?  
*"How can you justify this is not another fly-by-night industry?"*

When it comes to media interviews it pays to prepare, prepare and prepare. Part of this preparation is thinking of all the possible tough questions and then working on answers. With respect to the question above, your answer could entail some of the following points:

Established in 1988, the industry is continuing to grow with currently over 60,000 registered animals

Vertically integrated new industry

The fibre industry in Australia is well established, with exceptional value adding knowledge available

Demand for some lines of alpaca fleece exceeds supply

A number of strategic partnerships have been developed with key Australian manufacturers and retailers, such as David Jones

Strong export market that is continuing to expand

When it comes to members becoming industry advocates, this same line of questioning does not necessarily have to come from media, it could be from general conversation.

During the training weekend RMRs developed their media skills, which included working through difficult media questions, conducting interviews and drafting media material.

This is important, as...

The press will continue to be a cost effective and credible vehicle of communication that will increasingly raise awareness of the industry.

## Events

With shows and events being the first point of contact with the industry for many people, the development of quality and consistent display material is important.

Since the last marketing workshop, RMRs were asked to work with their Region to develop a 'wish list' for event material. From the wish lists a core show kit (including items such as flyers, banners and posters) was developed and distributed to each Region.

At the workshop valuable feedback was received on the kit, including recommendations for future material.

## Local Area Marketing Plan (LAMPS)

A LAMP is a blueprint for conducting activities that help drive the implementation of marketing tactics. During the RMR workshop instruction was provided and steps outlined to develop LAMPs.

Once all LAMPs are completed it will enable Regions to see what others are doing, help them capitalise on their unique selling points and assist in the development of national marketing activities - resulting in an integrated approach across all activities.

## That's a wrap

Since the first RMR workshop, which was held in February 2004...

We have seen an increase in media coverage generated by the Regions as well as the development of a unified look and consistent branding - key elements for a successful industry.

A big thank you should be extended to RMRs for agreeing to take on this important role, for all their hard work and for making the time to attend the workshop. ■



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Your sale and stud service listings are stored in one place, yet display in two websites at once: the AlpacaSeller trading place promoted at our expense, and your personal website.

You'll never need to update two sets of records again.

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### I don't have a website. How do I get one?

Chat to us. We will happily create a magnificent site that both talks to AlpacaSeller and is customised to *your* look and individuality. We offer very competitive prices and you may even qualify for a free website if you are an Optimate Alpafarm client, or become one!

An AlpacaSeller account is updatable in minutes with very simple forms, and the listings and photos display *instantly*. Updating your AlpacaSeller account automatically updates your website *at the same time*, saving you time and money.

An AlpacaSeller account is FREE for the first month. We want you to have every opportunity to see and use all that AlpacaSeller has to offer. *List as many animals, packages and stud services for sale as you wish*, with up to two images per listing, AND display these in your own website. Every account also allows detailed descriptions about you and your services, upcoming events and auctions, and the display of your logo and a picture of your farm for extra promotional power.

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# The WA Southern Region

## A Region to be Reckoned with?

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Judy McRae** > Editor of *Paca Punch*, Newsletter of WA Southern Region of AAA Inc.

Western Australia is BIG!

2,525,500 sq km!

Too big for one Region of the AAA.

In 1997 the decision was made and in 1998 the WA Southern Region was officially formed, and we separated from the newly named WA Central Region.

A small group of enthusiastic members started the uphill battle of raising funds, recruiting members and organising events. The AAA Inc. National Committee allocated a start up allowance of \$1,000 and the rest was up to us.

That was eight years ago - and look at us now! We now have 46 voting members and our Regional newsletter, *Paca Punch*, has a mailing list of 61. Many of these are mailed to non WA Southern Region members who choose to subscribe to the publication.

Three different hard working Presidents have led the Region over the years, and have all played their part in moulding the way we are today. Not to mention, hard working executive and committee members.

Probably the most surprising fact about the Region is that members still manage to attend meetings and functions even though some have to drive a 16 hour round trip - and they still feel it's worthwhile! Another member flies his own plane to meetings - if there's an airstrip nearby, he'll be there.

Maybe because of these distances there has grown camaraderie between members and our bi-monthly meetings are rather like a family reunion. Once we're through with the serious business we have a really good time.



Over the past seven years we've had many interesting workshops and seminars and have been privileged to listen to many 'imported speakers' like Jude Anderson, Alan Cousill, Julianne Gelber, Ewen McMillan, Jane Vaughan, Allan and Carolyn Jinks, Geoff Judson, Wendy Jones, Janie Hicks, Kerry Dwyer, Mike Nichols and Dennis Ryan.

We've all learnt so much from these speakers and made new friendships too. Everyone's got a story to tell, and not all the stories are pertaining to alpacas.

We've enjoyed workshops on health, fleece, shearing demos, taxation, and even how to use a 'poomobile'!

We all know how much time and energy it takes to organise a workshop or a seminar and then actually get people to come.

Advertising, marketing, web site and all the rest, but out there can be found people with different talents and knowledge and there's always someone to do the job. I think they call it multi-talented.

When the last function is over we're already thinking, "What can we do next time?" "Who will we get to speak?" "How can we raise some funds?" "Will anyone come?"

We've had three sale days over the years with the fourth planned for 8 May near Bunbury - a long way to travel for those members in Albany, Denmark and Esperance but I'm sure we'll be supported as we have in the past.

Yes, sometimes it would be easier to say "b\_\_\_\_\_ it!" when it all gets too much, all too hard, but then we tap into everyone's energy and away we go again. Let's hope that energy source never wanes and we continue to be the successful Region into which we have grown. ■

"Out of little things big things grow"

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"Out of little things big things grow"



### Devices used to manage this process include:

- Submissions Form and Guidelines for 2004–2005 Research Proposals.
- R&D's List of Priorities for research for the industry.

In addition to the above, we follow established research ethics protocols. We are responsible for making investment decisions on behalf of our members, both in terms of finance and contributions in kind. In this context we are accountable to the membership and anyone who may select us for their philanthropic activity.

We also have responsibility for the welfare of animals on which research is being undertaken. Therefore it is imperative that we uphold a high standard of research ethics, by maintaining sound research protocols.

### Supports and Finance

Our aim is to develop a structure that provides support for researchers, whether it be funding, networking, structuring of projects, assistance with administration etc., leaving researchers to do what they do best - research.

Funding of R&D can be very expensive. Whilst the industry can fund and provide in-kind support to small projects, it cannot afford to finance all the R&D we are currently undertaking, let alone what we hope to achieve in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, we are in increasing need for finance from outside the industry, and we are very lucky to be granted significant funding support from RIRDC (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation).

As an agency of the Federal Government, RIRDC was established to facilitate government and industry investment in R&D that is industry-directed and market-focused, and assist and encourage prospective industries exhibiting evidence of commercial viability. RIRDC is the major fund source for the AGE project (Dr Allan Casey) and the AI project (Dr Jane Vaughan).

The Sub-committee is also examining other options for sourcing R&D funds and grants.

### Current Projects

#### Ryegrass Toxicosis Survey

The Staggers Survey, initiated by Mark Gishen of South Australia, has had some initial problems and has not progressed to date. However some recent developments in interest from a Victorian University to collaborate on this study may re-fire the process. The intent of the pilot survey is to establish the extent of the problem in the Australian alpaca population. If clear evidence of a problem in the industry can be established then it is hoped that a more detailed study into treatment and management strategies can be progressed.

### Alpaca Dentistry

Allison Quagliani is a member undertaking a study of alpaca dentistry, funded by AAA, which includes examination procedures, diagnosis and treatment of dental disorders and development of specific alpaca tools.

Dentistry is the discipline that identifies, treats and provides ongoing maintenance of dental disorders.

The mouth of the alpaca is the first stage of the digestive system, and therefore vital to the health and well-being of the animal. There are many factors that can adversely affect this function such as:

- > Hereditary conditions.
- > Conformation.
- > Injury.
- > Feed type.
- > Australian environment.
- > Tooth maintenance (or lack thereof).

Untreated, dental disorders can have a significant negative impact on the well-being of an animal for its entire life, as well as its ability to perform optimally in the areas of reproduction and fleece production/quality. Correctly diagnosed and treated disorders show immediate, significant improvements in general health and well-being.

Allison has completed the theory phase and has commenced practical work. She has struck some problems sourcing a means by which to adequately restrain the alpacas for examination, and is in the process of designing a gag and animal holding system. ➤



## Environmental Impact and Sustainable Farming

Responsible and sustainable environmental management in the agricultural sector is a growing focus of government and community interests.

The AAA Environmental Management Working Party is working to establish procedures and guidelines for the alpaca industry. It is imperative that we have membership consultation on which to base the industry codes of practice.

- > The Working Party has, so far, undertaken Environmental Management workshops in more than half of the AAA Regions.
- > An Industry Policy statement is being developed which broadly outlines our industry commitment to sound environmental management.
- > Further workshops are planned, as the project develops, firstly to ensure member consultation and education, but also to enable tailoring of industry policies to fit real alpaca farming situations.

The development of this project is essential. In addition to the direct benefits, the rural training scheme is dependent on it - there is the requirement that there be codes of practice for the industry.

## Projects under Development

### Collaborations

We have established communication with two Universities that have indicated interest in undertaking alpaca related

research. This is an important breakthrough, as it indicates a growing interest and respect for our industry and therefore considerable potential to expand the scope of alpaca research. Specific projects are still being discussed, but the opportunities are exciting.

### International Fibre Centre (IFC) Project

Education and Training Package for the Alpaca Industry – 'Understanding the unique fibre to fabric process of alpaca/wool blends'.

The aim of this project is to develop a specific education and training package for personnel currently involved in the processing and production pipeline, and for those entering the textile industry in the future.

It will focus on alpaca/wool blends, and include general knowledge about alpaca fibre, how it is processed, and its performance attributes, specifically in blended form with wool.

Of particular interest to us is phase 3, Student Project - development of fibre through to fabric. The major participant will be RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles, and the minor participants are CSIRO, AAFL, AWI and AAA.

In this phase students will take yarn through to fabric and design concept boards, which will form part of an educational visual resource for people involved in the processing and production pipeline.



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Mob: 0423 046 306  
email: mariahhill@optusnet.com.au



## AAA Inc. R&D Sub-committee members

### Iona McKinnon, Victoria (Chairperson)



Iona is a lecturer in Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour (psychology in the workplace), and is a corporate consultant specialising in organisation culture and related issues. She has been a breeder of successful competition horses, a competitor to international level, and an Equestrian Federation of Australia judge. She also established

and managed a specialist equine hospital for a number of years. Iona and her husband Peter have been breeding Angus cattle for about 30 years and alpacas for the past 6 years.

### Wendy Jones, South Australia



During the 1980s and 90s Wendy and her partner initiated a successful livestock artificial breeding business throughout Australia and in NZ and UK, undertaking ET, AI, embryo and semen freezing in sheep and goats. She also established a government licensed station and lab facility for quarantine of donors for semen and embryo export and stud export, and ran teaching schools for vets about

ET, and farmers about AI etc. Wendy has managed alpacas since early 1991, has extensive involvement in AAA committees, and is the industry representative to RIRDC.

### Raymond Haynes, BSc, PhD, Tasmania



Raymond was with CSIRO for 28 years, during which time he rose to the level of Senior Principal Research Scientist leading international research teams from Germany, UK and Sweden in Astrophysics. He was also responsible for IT and PR for major research projects. He is an active and enthusiastic President for the AAA Inc.

Tasmanian Region, and has been running alpacas for the last few years near Hobart.

### Jamie McNeil, Victoria



Jamie is a veterinarian with 14 years large animal experience. He has a strong background in production animal medicine, surgery and management, particularly dairy cattle. For 12 of these years Jamie has learnt about alpacas on the job, the hard way, by trial and error. As a practising vet

Jamie has a good practical understanding of those health issues that require R&D. He is an active member of the Australian Camelid Veterinary Association.

### Roger Walters, Victoria



Roger has over 20 years experience in senior Corporate Finance and business strategy roles, primarily in the Asia Pacific region, in investments, valuations, acquisitions, Independent Expert Reports and the provision of business strategy advice. He has focused primarily on infrastructure

and technology sectors and has been on the Board of a number of Super Funds throughout this period. His qualifications include a Masters of Applied Finance, a Masters of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Economics and ASA - CPA. He has farmed alpacas on a small farm north of Melbourne since 1996.

## The Future

As much of the work described above demonstrates, the R&D Sub-committee has endeavoured to establish a sound foundation on which future R&D, as it is currently defined, can be based. It also acknowledges that we must continue to strive towards achieving excellence in the ways by which R&D is supported and managed.

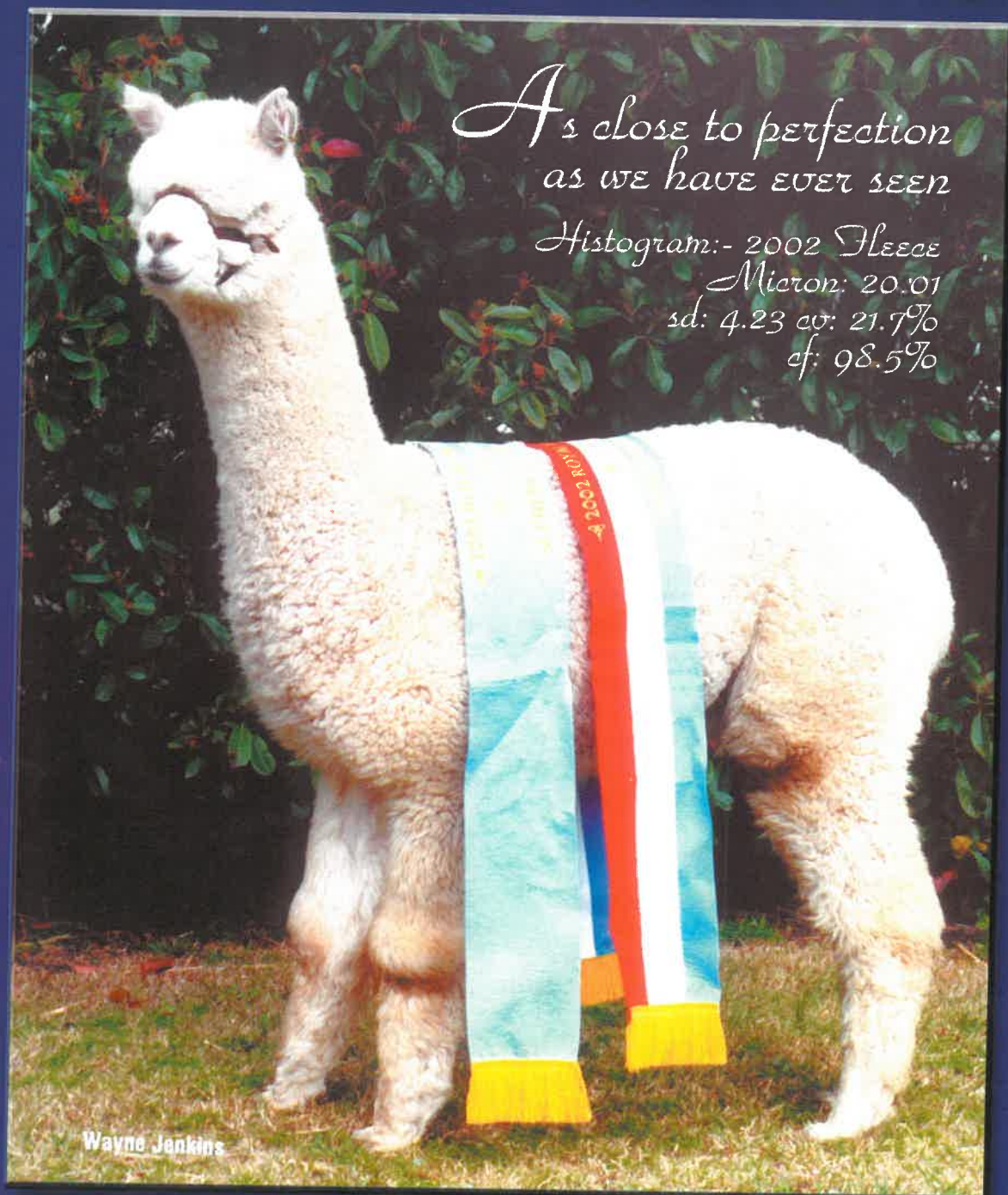
Future objectives include:

- > Develop an industry culture that values and respects innovative ideas and entrepreneurial activity that is founded on sound thinking.
- > Establish the alpaca industry's reputation, as a context in which research and development is valued, is well supported and soundly managed.
- > Encourage and appropriately fund R&D that accommodates the priorities of the industry, meeting short and long-term needs.
- > Attract and encourage researchers and relevant expertise, and students to channel their research activity into alpaca-related projects. Thus, in addition to those research outcomes, develop expertise for the future.
- > Develop strategies and a structure that attracts R&D investment and protects industry intellectual property.

From the forebears of this industry, we have inherited a legacy that is basically very sound. This is largely due to their foresight and courage to make the hard decisions, and to not just point the way, but to also drive the industry forward. As a culture is the product of its history, our forebears should also be acknowledged for the way in which the industry is progressing, exhibiting insight, initiative and commitment to its future. Symptomatic of such characteristics are the Across-herd Genetic Evaluation (AGE) and Environmental Management and Sustainable Farming Systems projects. These initiatives are enormous leaps that will have international significance for the industry, and they set the tone for future activity. This is the foundation on which the future of our industry is based. The quality of this future is dependent on how R&D is valued and managed by the industry.

**"R&D isn't part of the strategy, R&D is the strategy"**  
(Ellis 1989 p.66). ■

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# Fibre Stats: Does the Machine Really Matter?

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by Ian Davison & Cameron Holt

For those seeking a short answer: no. There is no significant difference in the results of measurements for micron made on midside fleece samples between different types of machines.

But the answer can be made longer. Curvature, when measured using the same samples, showed significant variations between optical and laser methodology. And some variation in one of the optical methods proved less reliable when trying to assess whole fleeces using grid samples. This was due largely to the methodology of pre-test sample preparation.

To better understand the discussion, one must first understand the different methods used for measuring fibre, and their application in different types of testing machines.

Most Australian wool offered for sale today is tested before sale. Processors demand accuracy in the testing of fibre so that they can accurately batch (match) and blend the fibre to produce a yarn of a given specification. The technique preferred by the wool industry is the airflow method, whereby a given weight of fibre (2.5 gms) is subjected to a stream of air under carefully controlled conditions, and the fineness calculated as a function of the resistance of the sample to airflow. Larger diameter fibres present a larger surface area to impede airflow, giving greater resistance, whilst finer fibres produce less resistance to the stream of air.

This process, whilst economical, measures only mean fibre diameter. It does not measure variation within the fibre. It is less suited to use with alpaca because of the presence of some medullated fibre in alpaca fleece, which means that an increase in fibre diameter is not always reflected by an increase in fibre mass. This assumption, reasonably made with respect to sheep's wool, is fundamental to the principal by which the airflow machine measures fibre diameter. Furthermore, because of the lower scale height of alpaca fibres, they offer less resistance to airflow than sheep fibres of similar diameter, and machines used for wool need to be recalibrated for alpaca.

## Airflow Machine

A number of processors are now paying a premium for wool that has a low CV. These wools have to be measured on testing machines that can calculate SD and CV. Wools, which have a CV of lower than 24%, produce a yarn that performs like a finer yarn due to their evenness of fibre diameter (spinning fineness).

Almost all alpaca fibre tests currently performed are called "Guidance Tests", because the results are not certified. Only those tests performed by a certifying authority (eg. Australian Wool Testing Authority) can be called Certified Tests, in which case the certifying authority itself samples, measures and weighs the fleece or bale. This type of test is used in the wool industry, as well as for the sale of other commercial fibres (including alpaca), when offering baled fibre for sale. The vast majority of alpaca fibre tests that are performed are done on samples taken by the breeder and then submitted for testing, and are hence uncertified "guidance tests." The testing procedure is, however, essentially the same as that used for certified tests, and the standards by which those machines operate are also the same.



Airflow Machine

## Projection Microscope & General Microscope Method

These methods involve the measuring of 400-600 images of fibres magnified 500 times on to a screen (projection microscope) or an eye piece (general microscope) where they are individually measured by an observer.

These methods are labour intensive and subject to a number of operator errors.



However, if the standard methods are followed correctly, the results obtained are accurate, and are capable of giving the user a measure of the distribution of diameters within the sample. Strict rules are prescribed about the preparation of slides, and the scanning of those slides to avoid measuring the same fibre twice, or selecting points within the field of view, which may not be random.

The test results can be expressed in the form of a Histogram, or a mathematical expression of the distribution such as Mean Fibre Diameter (MFD), the Standard Deviation (SD), and its derivative, the Co-efficient of Variation (CV).



Projection  
Microscope



General  
Microscope

## Laser Scan / Fibre Fineness Distribution Analyser Method

The Laser Scan/FDA is an instrument used for the rapid measurement of fibre diameter that also gives a full diameter distribution.



Prepared snippets of fibre (less than 2mm) in length are dropped into an isoprenol/water mixture where they are dispersed. The dispersed snippets, still in the solution, are then carried past a light beam, and as the fibres intercept the beam, the amount of light scattered is measured.

Laser Scan/FDA

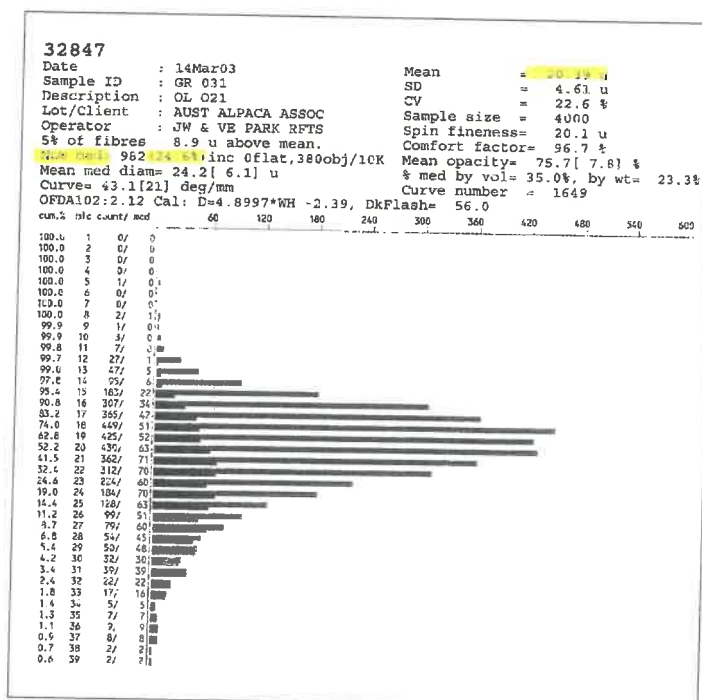
This light scatter is directly related to the diameter of the fibre, and so the machine can calculate the fibre diameter in microns. Mean fibre diameter, standard deviation, co-efficient of variation are all calculated and a histogram of the variation is printed. The FDA measures up to approximately 80 microns. In some cases, this may be too small a range for the micron spread in the sample.

## Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser (OFDA) Method

This optical measuring device was developed in Australia and is widely used in testing wool, Cashmere and Mohair.

The OFDA is an automatic microscope above a moving set of fibres. The analyser captures the magnified images of the individual fibres with a video camera. The diameter of each fibre identified is measured and recorded by means of computer aided image analysis.

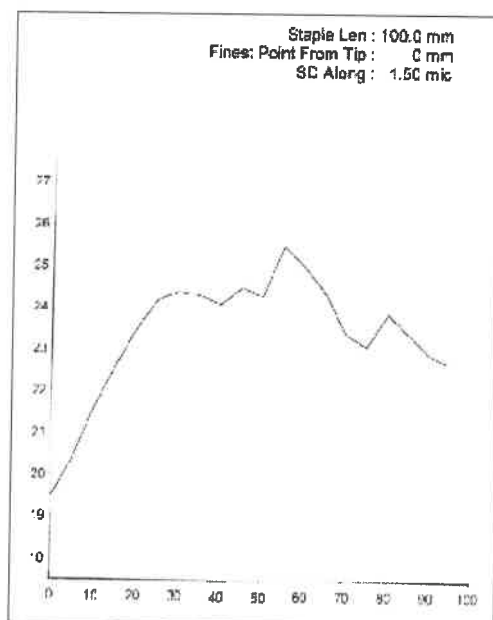
On completion of a pre-determined number of fibres, a histogram printout is produced similar to the Laser Scan/FDA. The OFDA can identify medullated fibres. Fibre curvature can also be calculated on the OFDA. ➤



OFDA 100 histogram

OFDA 2000 gives a report based on the entire staple, sampling it along its entire length.

All these instruments produce a graph of fibre diameter. The Laser machines and the OFDA 100 produce a histogram, indicating the number of fibre measurements recorded in a sample for every possible fibre diameter value in a range (from zero to 60 or more microns). The highest peak or the micron with the greatest number of fibres recorded against it is called the mode (the most commonly occurring value). When the mean (average) and mode are similar then the shape of the histogram is said to have a bell shaped curve which indicates an even spread of the population around the mean. The OFDA 2000 produces a graph, which records the average fibre diameter of the staple, measured at different distances along the staple from the skin. Variations in the fibre diameter along the staple may be interpreted as representing variations in the health, nutrition or climate enjoyed by the animal at the time the fleece was grown.



OFDA 2000 histogram

## Using Test Results

A note of caution to **all**. When using results to compare one animal with another, a number of factors need to be considered.

1. Some research and anecdotal evidence suggests alpacas increase 2 to 3 microns each year in their first 3 years and then tend to remain static.
2. Genotype is likely to be an influential factor in the rate and extent of fibre blow-out with age.
3. Nutritional intake/stress/illness/pregnancy will also affect fibre growth and fibre diameter.
4. When measuring fibre there can be small differences between results, brought about by:
  - variation between samples
  - variation between machine types
  - variation between machines of the same type

The Laser and OFDA 100 used in the laboratory have IWTO accreditation and are approved for certified measurements.

**NOTE:** Different properties will exhibit pastures of different nutritional value. If identical animals were to be reared on those properties, it can be reasonably assumed that their fleeces will show different characteristics on fibre measurement, reflecting those nutritional variations. The same applies to animals reared on the same property, where some are fed supplementary feed, and others are left to graze and forage. So, when comparing animal tests results on your property, you need to consider the four vital parameters, which affect fleece growth:

- > Age
- > Genotype
- > Health
- > Nutrition

So in considering any single fibre test, note firstly the date of *sampling* (which is not the same as the date of testing), and therefore the age of the animal at testing; the nature of the sample (grid of whole or skirted fleece, or single site from midside or elsewhere), and the condition of the animal's health and nutrition at the time of sampling. Only where these factors are comparable can a fleece test be presumed to reflect a truly genetic difference between animals.

## Study into Comparative Differences of Scientific Testing Machines Used in Alpaca Fibre Measurement

This study aims to test the comparability of those techniques in measuring alpaca fibre, and thereby validate their use in comparing fibre measured by different techniques.



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION

By way of background, it should be understood that:

1. OFDA 100 and LASER (LAB) machines used in this experiment have been approved for fibre measurement by International Wool Testing Organisation (IWTO).
2. No two testing machines will give exactly the same results, particularly when they employ different methods, although approved machines will measure to within an acceptable tolerance.
3. No two-fibre samples are exactly the same, even when a single sample is divided in two to produce two separate samples.
4. The grid sample is taken (in this study) from a skirted fleece and the midside sample is taken from an unskirted fleece (note position on alpaca) and therefore a slightly higher micron would be expected in the midside sample.
5. The Laser Inshed technique is suitable only for whole fleeces.

## REPORT

1. When comparing the grid samples of OFDA 100 (lab) and OFDA 2000 (inshed), there was a large variation with a mean magnitude of difference (MMD) of 1.1 microns. After discussions with operators of the OFDA 2000 this difference was considered to be due to the preparation of the sub-sample required for testing.

*INFERENCE: Sub-sampling a grid sample is likely to produce considerable variation in the composition of the sub-samples, and the sampling technique is more likely to be responsible for the wider variation in these results than the accuracy of the machines measuring them.*

2. Comparison of the grid sample and the midside sample, both measured by the OFDA 100 (lab), shows a bias three times the standard error, which was significant (that is, a mean difference of this magnitude is unlikely to occur just by chance). This probably reflects the midside sampling on an unskirted fleece and grid sampling on a skirted fleece. The mean magnitude of difference (MMD) was 0.87 microns and showed a consistent scatter when plotted.

*INFERENCE: The grid sample was finer than the midside sample when both samples were tested on the OFDA 100 (lab). This is a real difference that is determined by the sampling methods (midside on alpaca / grid on skirted fleece).*

3. Comparison of the grid and midside samples, both measured by the OFDA 2000 (inshed), showed a large scatter and had a large MMD of 1.26 microns. It is considered that a single site sample (midside) was more reliable than the grid due to possible sub-sampling errors in the latter. Refer to methods of test houses (OFDA 2000).

*INFERENCE: As noted in (1) above, the technique of sub-sampling the grid sample is the likely cause of the wide variation between the midside measurements and the grid measurements, and is a reflection of the unreliability of that sub-sampling technique for a gridded sample.*

4. Comparison of the grid samples measured by OFDA 100 (lab) and the midside samples measured by OFDA 2000 (inshed) revealed a MMD of 0.82 microns.

*INFERENCE: Measurements taken on grid samples (skirted fleece) measured by OFDA in the lab, with midside samples measured by OFDA in the shed, are two separate populations. The midside is representative of an unskirted fleece (this implies that parts of the middle leg areas of the fleece are included), whereas the skirted fleece has had the coarser areas removed.*

5. The comparison of midside samples measured by the two OFDA techniques, lab and inshed, showed a very tight scatter, with microns (between compatible samples) being within a 2 micron difference. The slope is significantly less than one to one, which may indicate a difference in performance between the individual machines. The opinion is that measurement of a midside (single site) by the OFDA 2000 is validated.

*INFERENCE: This is a validation of the OFDA inshed technique for the measurement of midside samples.*

6. The comparison of the Laser (inshed) technique, applied to a whole skirted fleece, and the Laser (lab) technique, applied to a grid sample of the same fleece, demonstrated a reasonable correlation between the two, with a very slight bias to fineness in the former. Scatter was minimal, allowing for two outliers, with an overall MMD of 0.90 microns. Coring, turning the fleece and re-coring the fleece, may reduce this difference in fineness, when using the Laser (inshed) technique.

*INFERENCE: Comparison of measurements taken on a whole fleece measured by Laser in the shed with those taken on a grid sample by Laser in the lab, is valid.*

7. Finally a comparison of the measurements made on a grid sample by OFDA 100 (lab) and Laser (lab) was made. The MMD was 0.95 microns with a consistently tight scatter. The laser consistently gave a lower micron reading by a factor of 0.87.

*INFERENCE: This validates the alternative use of OFDA or Laser lab techniques in measuring a given fleece sample, though the Laser overall in this trial was inclined to give results slightly biased to fineness. Other trials have shown these machines to produce consistent and compatible results.*

8. It was noticed that between the OFDA and laser machines, a large difference for curvature was observed (17.82 degrees per mm). The laserscan gave the higher measurements (average curvature 53.39 degrees per mm) compared to the OFDA (35.58 degrees per mm).

*INFERENCE: The correlation between curvature measured by OFDA or laser for any one sample is poor, with OFDA measuring significantly lower curvature than Laser. The significance of difference in curvature measurements between machines suggests that meaningful comparisons of fibre curvature between different fleeces can only be made if measured by the same techniques. ►*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

Following the analysis of results with the OFDA 2000 (grid sample), discussions took place with the operator of the laboratory concerning sub-sampling methods, and also with management of IWG (agents for the OFDA 2000), and it is jointly recommended that:

1. Grid samples must be clearly identified as such.
2. Grid samples should be tested on the OFDA 100, or the OFDA 100 mode of the OFDA 2000, until satisfactory sub-sampling protocols are developed for the OFDA 2000.

Following discussions with the operators of the inshed laser scan regarding the two outlier results, it is recommended that (due to the large variation generally found in alpaca across the whole fleece) two corings of the fleece be carried out to improve the accuracy of the sub-sample.

### BREEDERS

It is recommended to alpaca breeders that:

1. Any sample being sent for testing, at any test house and by any method, should clearly identify whether it is a midside or grid sample.
2. Grid samples (at this stage) are not tested using the OFDA 2000 method until a satisfactory sub-sampling method is invoked.
3. If measuring and recording curvatures, breeders should select and stick with one or other of the OFDA or laser format due to the variances in recording by these machines.

## ORGANISERS OF ALPACA FLEECE SHOWS

Where measurement is required and the 6-point grid procedure is used, the following options should be implemented:

1. Send samples to a laboratory that is using an OFDA 100 or 100 mode, **OR...**
2. Send samples to a laboratory that is using the laser scan, **OR...**
3. Engage operators of the laser scan inshed system where fleeces are cored on site. Note: – it is recommended that double coring take place to improve the sub-sample that is used for testing. ■

### Further Reading

*Study into comparative differences of scientific testing machines used in alpaca fibre measurement* (report to AAA Inc.), Dr Ian Davison & Cameron Holt, 2004

*Components of Alpaca (Lama Pacos) fleeces and the potential of inshed measurement of fibre diameter.*, A C Schlink & A M Murray, CSIRO Livestock Industries, W A

*Performance of the OFDA 100 compared to other instruments.*, IWG (Interactive group), Fremantle W A

*Fleecescan and OFDA 2000 Trial*, Andrew Peterson, Agricultural Department, W A

*OFDA 2000 Proficiency trials*, Peter Baxter, Bill Johnston, IWTO Report no CTF 01, 2002

**Special thanks to Professor Brian Sawford (Monash University) for his help in calculating and analysing the results of this study.**

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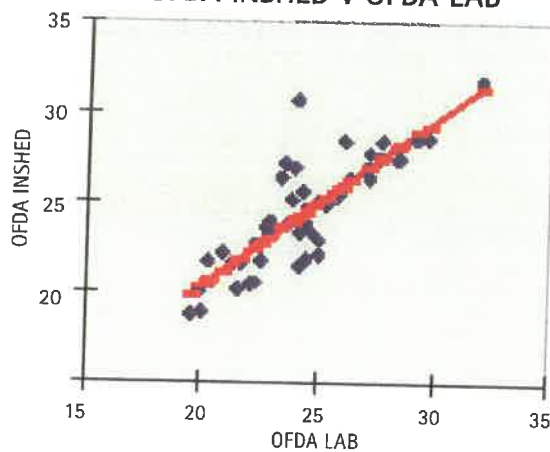
## FOR THE MATHEMATICALLY INCLINED...

| COMPARISONS         |                          | MEAN<br>MAG<br>OF DIFF | SD    | AVE<br>DIFF | STD<br>ERROR<br>OF AVE<br>DIFF | BASE<br>AVE<br>MIC<br>(X) | OTHER<br>AVE<br>MIC<br>(Y) | BASE<br>Ave Finer/<br>Coarser<br>than other | R<br>SQ | INTERCEPT |              | X SLOPE |              |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|--------------|
|                     |                          |                        |       |             |                                |                           |                            |                                             |         | CO-EFF    | STD<br>ERROR | CO-EFF  | STD<br>ERROR |
| OFDA LAB<br>GRID    | OFDA INSHED<br>GRID      | 1.165                  | 1.694 | -.011       | 0.24                           | 24.51                     | 24.50                      | C 0.01                                      | 0.7078  | 1.8747    | 2.1337       | 0.9230  | 0.0865       |
| OFDA LAB<br>GRID    | OFDA LAB<br>MID          | 0.876                  | 1.080 | .435        | 0.15                           | 24.51                     | 24.94                      | F 0.43                                      | 0.8826  | -0.5553   | 1.3652       | 1.040   | 0.0553       |
| OFDA INSHED<br>GRID | OFDA INSHED<br>MID       | 1.265                  | 1.758 | .232        | 0.25                           | 24.50                     | 24.73                      | F 0.23                                      | 0.6927  | 5.4532    | 1.8871       | 0.7867  | 0.0764       |
| OFDA LAB<br>GRID    | OFDA INSHED<br>MID       | .820                   | 1.075 | .219        | 0.15                           | 24.51                     | 24.73                      | F 0.22                                      | 0.8673  | 1.0549    | 1.3592       | 0.9658  | 0.0551       |
| OFDA LAB<br>MID     | OFDA INSHED<br>MID       | .706                   | 0.888 | -.216       | 0.13                           | 24.94                     | 24.73                      | C 0.21                                      | 0.9203  | 2.3164    | 0.9688       | 0.8984  | 0.0385       |
| LASER LAB<br>GRID   | LASER INSHED<br>FLC CORE | .901                   | 1.112 | -.344       | 0.16                           | 23.72                     | 23.38                      | C 0.34                                      | 0.8198  | 2.685     | 1.423        | 0.8722  | 0.0596       |
| OFDA LAB<br>GRID    | LASER LAB<br>GRID        | .952                   | 0.841 | -.785       | 0.12                           | 24.51                     | 23.72                      | C 0.79                                      | 0.9133  | 2.2683    | 0.9701       | 0.8754  | 0.0393       |

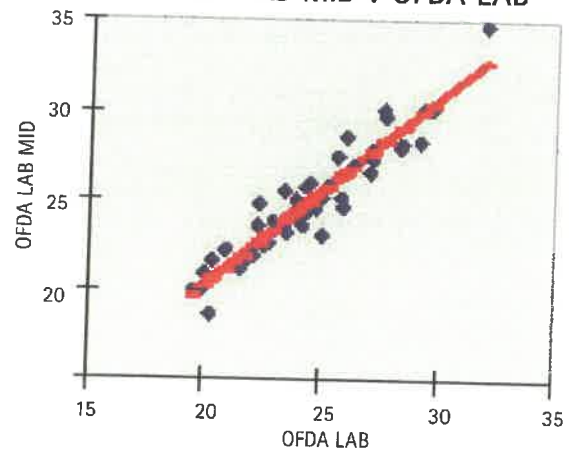
| MACHINE USED    | AVE MIC | AVE CV | AVE CURVE | COMMENTS                                                              |
|-----------------|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OFDA LAB        | 24.51   | 22.80  | 37.31     | AVE CURVE = 35.58                                                     |
| OFDA INSHED     | 24.50   | 20.37  | 33.85     |                                                                       |
| OFDA INSHED MID | 24.73   | 19.57  | 32.92     | Difference between LASER and OFDA was 17.8 deg. SD(4.49) R SQ (0.278) |
| OFDA LAB MID    | 24.94   | 21.66  | 34.77     |                                                                       |
| LASER LAB       | 23.72   | 22.28  | 51.16     | INTERCEPT: CV(13.132) SE(5.295)<br>X VARIABLE: CV(0.420) SE (0.099)   |
| LASER INSHED    | 23.38   | 21.55  | 55.63     |                                                                       |
|                 |         |        |           | AVE CURVE = 53.39                                                     |



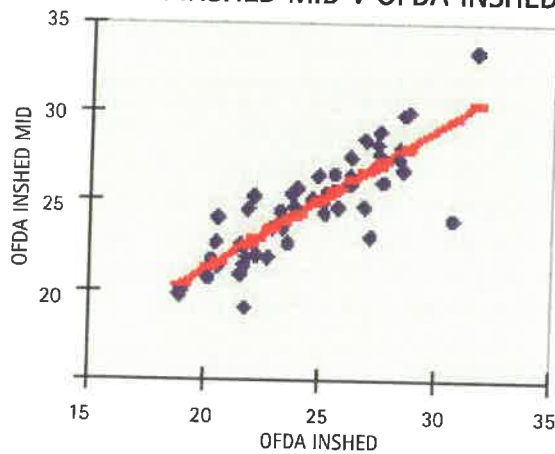
OFDA INSHED v OFDA LAB



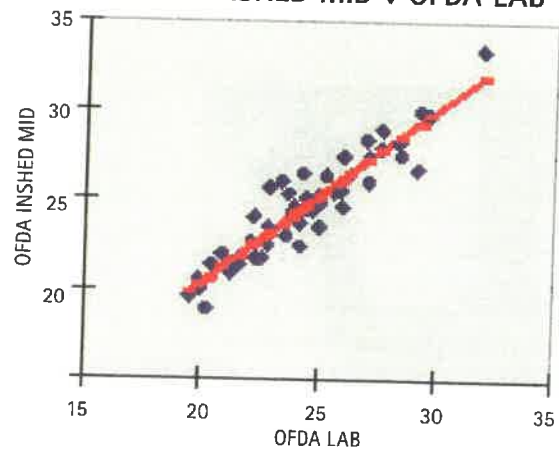
OFDA LAB MID v OFDA LAB



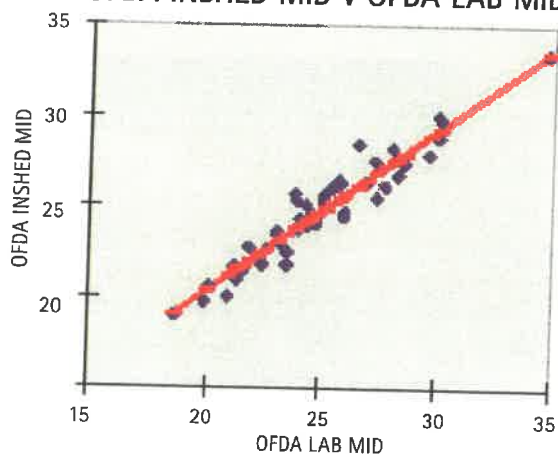
OFDA INSHED MID v OFDA INSHED



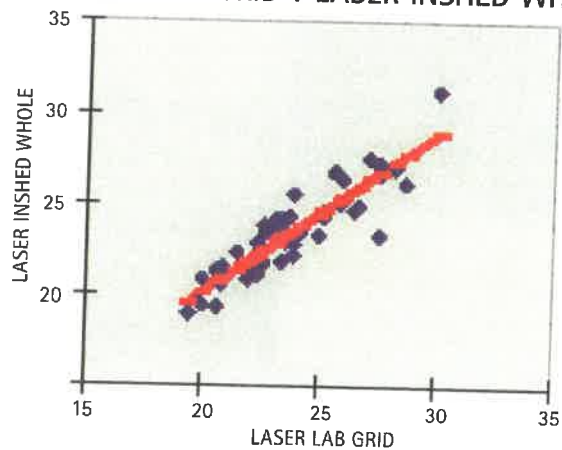
OFDA INSHED MID v OFDA LAB



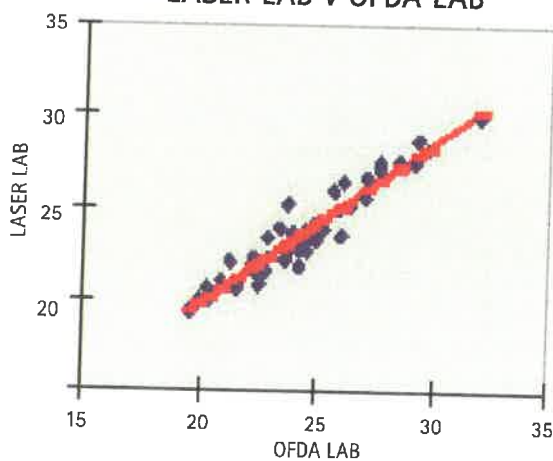
OFDA INSHED MID v OFDA LAB MID



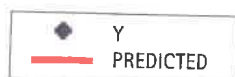
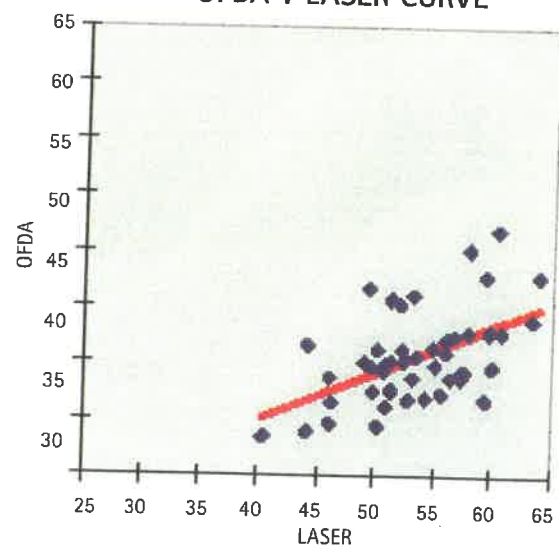
LASER LAB GRID v LASER INSHED WHOLE



LASER LAB v OFDA LAB



OFDA v LASER CURVE



# The Whole Alpaca Birthing Process – it's a beautiful thing

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE ARTICLE by **Jill Winter & Robin Walker** > Blue Tor Alpacas, TAS

On 21 February 2004 at 12pm Valentina gave birth. For only the second time in 8 years of alpacaing, Robin and I were present for the whole process. What's more I even managed to capture most of it on film. So for those who've never seen an alpaca give birth... here it is.



The first clue that she was about to drop was that she seemed to be trying to find a quiet place on her own. Looking a little distracted, and being a ladylike alpaca, it was obvious she really would have preferred a bit of privacy. Not possible with everybody around so she ended up behind the biggest tree she could find. Quite quickly and with seemingly no discomfort at all, the head and front legs popped out. At least we knew the presentation of the cria was OK – the humans relaxed and sat back to watch.



Even behind the tree she couldn't get on with it privately. Babiwan was very interested in what was going on.



After the second contraction she moved out to the poo pile. "Oh no!" We thought, "Don't drop the poor thing on the dung heap!!" Too late.



Not more than 25 minutes, no fuss and the cria was out. Virtually at once all the others were round it sniffing and checking it over. Both humans were desperate to know whether it was male or female, but didn't want to go too close and interfere with the natural bonding process (or spoil the photos!). Robin peered over as close as he could and said, "It's a boy". "Bugger!" was my response.





From the first moment the cria was rolling around rubbing off the membrane and trying to sit up. Ten minutes later, he had got into cushed position and took a breather before the next step.



He tried valiantly for what seemed like ages to stand up – falling first on to his head, then rolling sideways, a quick rest, then onto his knees and he was nearly there. It must be a very frustrating time for mum, only being able to give baby an encouraging snuffle every so often, rather than a helping hand.



Then suddenly he was up – wobbly but standing. Valentina immediately relaxed and put her head down to munch. At this point more onlookers arrived. A family of tourists were driving right past and stopped to look so we invited them to come over - as proud parents do! Their little girl was fascinated.



The next trick of course is to make sure the cria has had a drink. He went in frontwards, backwards, sideways, from between mum's back legs then from the front angle. For an interminable time he searched. "I know it's here somewhere!" Finally he appeared with a frothy mouth and we relaxed again – another hurdle over.

By this time we were a little concerned that Babiwan was a trifle too interested in him. I really think she would have adopted (or stolen) that baby if she could. We decided it wouldn't hurt to put both mum and cria into the barn together just to cement the bond without another alpaca interfering and maybe coming between them. It was also not a very warm day, so a quick phone call and he was sporting a nifty red dog coat!

I had always thought that alpacas didn't truly lick but Valentina covered this cria in licks at every opportunity and he responded. I know we shouldn't attribute human emotions to alpacas but everything about her, her whole body language was shouting out that she was so proud of this little thing and she loved it to bits. It was just so obvious that she totally adored him. This was fantastic for us as her previous cria had died at 6 days and we didn't really know what kind of mum she'd make. The right genes were all there we knew, and so it has turned out. She has been a phenomenal mother.

We struggled to find a name for this cria.

(I don't know why it should be but some just name themselves and others you really have to work at.) It was already clear that this little one had a quite incredible lustre to his fleece. I'm not kidding, it shone as if it had been polished so we wanted to reflect that in his name (no pun intended) and we eventually settled on Galahad, from the

Knights of the Round Table as he was the purest knight who saw the Holy Grail.



Two days later Robin came in

one evening looking very sheepish. He said very quietly, "You know Galahad..." and paused, "He's not Galahad, she's Galadriel!" And we both just laughed and laughed - 8 years breeding alpacas and we still can't tell male from

female. What hope is there! ■





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Chris, Princes Hill  
Mark, Paddy's River  
Jill, Tatura  
Bruce, Toora  
Keith, Mirboo  
Chris, Mt Macedon  
Sharon, Pearcedale

David, Tarago  
Hugo, Harden  
Barbara, Berrybank  
Jolyon, Birdwood  
Kye, Birdwood  
Terry, Lobethal  
Loretta, Springton  
Geoff, Skye  
Carol, Bargo  
Alan, Hobart  
Keith, Galston

Bronwyn, Armidale  
Peter, Robroy  
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# Be a "Showring Show-Off"

EDUCATION ARTICLE by **Marty McGee Bennett** > TTeam

It is clearly in the long-term interests of the alpaca industry for the animals to be shown to the judge and to the public to their best advantage.

**W**hat exactly are we showing when our alpacas parade around a ring? Obviously, we are showing the animals to the judge for the purposes of learning about the conformation and fleece in order that we may improve our breeding programs. We are actually showing a lot more than that!

We are also showing the uninitiated how much fun it is to work with an alpaca, how interesting the process of breeding fleece animals is, and how, in the midst of a competition, we are good sports. In short, we are also showing future alpaca owners our animals and our industry. Depending on how it is done, we could be showing off our huggable investment or a righteous rodeo!

Many resources are expended getting the general public to our shows. You have to wonder what John Citizen must be thinking when alpacas are upended and tackled for nothing more complicated than a look at their fleece. It is clearly in the long-term interests of the alpaca industry for the animals to be shown to the judge *and* to the public to their best advantage. We want the public to see beautiful animals that behave beautifully. In my opinion, there is more to successful showing than good preparation at home.

Showing an alpaca off requires the cooperation of not only the animal but the entire show team – including judges, ring stewards, show organizers, and exhibitors. Animals that are normally very tractable can be made to behave badly by well-intentioned but uninformed ring stewards and a lack of coordination between handler, steward and judge. Animals, like people, only have so much tolerance – using it all up before the show starts is a recipe for bad alpaca and human behavior.

Showing is a choice. Enter the ring and you have made an agreement to abide by both the ring procedures and the decision of that particular judge. When you choose to take your alpaca to a show, it will necessarily involve some boredom, annoyance, and some new sights and sounds – nothing unreasonable. There is no point in making it more difficult that it needs to be.

I have seen alpacas that are miserable at a show and ensure that their owners are too! It is my observation that with very little effort, we could make the process of getting ready to show and the act of showing much easier for all concerned. I offer this article as food for thought for judges, ring stewards, organizers, and exhibitors.

## In the Showring

There are certain general principles of animal handling that determine the likely behaviour of an alpaca in any given circumstance. I call these principles the Laws of Camelidynamics. I have organized this article using these laws and how knowledge of them can help with specific issues in the showing.

When an alpaca is afraid, it wants to run away.  
When prevented from running, it will fight.

Alpacas can think, but they are largely creatures of instinct, particularly when they find themselves in new and strange situations – like a show. Instinctive responses to danger are the flight, fight and freeze responses. The alpaca's first response to danger is the flight response and is the most heavily relied on. When confronted with something frightening, an alpaca wants to run away from it. Prevent the alpaca from running away, and he will have no choice but to fight. Techniques that help make your alpaca feel safe with you and his environment will reduce, if not eliminate, unpredictable instinctive behaviors.

Containment works better than restraint for controlling the flight response.

**Containment:** *Limiting* the space in which the animal *can* move.

**Restraint:** Physically holding or tying an animal with the aim of preventing movement.

Instinctive responses are muted when animals are worked in a contained area. The smaller the area, the more muted the response. A space approximately 3 sq metres is ideal and can be constructed using portable panels. Allowing some movement in a small contained area that also allows him/her to practice standing quietly in the catch pen will make him/her more co-operative during the pre-show inspection. When alpacas are restrained, they are left with the fight or freeze response to danger or some unpredictable combination of both. When we know that many animals are going to be at least a bit frightened and unsure of themselves at inspection time an alpaca that is used to standing quietly in a catch pen will be less likely to react in either of these ways. This practice will definitely help in the show ring too when you don't have the luxury of a catch pen. ►

**Law of Cameldynamics:**  
 Animals feel safer and are less likely to fight when they are allowed to have some distance from humans and when they are standing in balance.

In the showing, judges have different ways of checking the fleece (more on this later). If the inspection steward mimics the method of fleece checking that the judge will use, the process can serve as a bit of a dress rehearsal for the fleece check in the showing. The inspection of animals is informal and doesn't happen with an audience; perhaps exhibitors with difficult animals could be encouraged to bring a bit of grain with them to help the alpaca remain calm. In any case, setting up the inspection so that it is easy for the animal lays a good foundation for the showing.

My personal preference for checking fleece is to stand on the left side of the animal and reach over the back checking the fleece on the animal's right side.

When the alpaca moves, it will be to move away from the contact with my hands and move into my body. In this way, I can keep the animal in balance between my hands and my body. If the animal kicks, it will likely be on the side that I am checking – the side away from my body – and that is always a good thing!

Checking fleece on the same side of the animal on which you stand does not give you the opportunity to control movement between your hands and your body. The animal moves away from the contact with your hands and also moves away from you. This means using some sort of restraint, unless of course you are in a catch pen. Inspection stewards who prefer to check fleece on the same side on which they stand can use a side of the catch pen as the other boundary. Simply line up the alpaca parallel to one of the four panels (the handler behaves as described regardless of which method the checker employs.)



In informal situations, such as the pre-show colour check, use a fence or the side of a catch pen as a boundary for checking fleece.

The following is the procedure for checking fleece inside a catch pen with one handler and the inspection steward standing on the left checking on the right. *(Later in this article I will offer tips for fleece checking in the showing without a catch pen.)* The handler stands the animal in a corner with the body parallel to a panel (see photo on left). The handler stands on the animal's left, slightly ahead of the eye about 45cm away from the alpaca, with the right hand on the lead rope very close to the halter

The handler is using a combination of a connection with the lead and a hand on the neck to balance this alpaca.



and the fingers of the left hand resting lightly on the neck (see photo on left). The steward stands on the left and leans over the body to check fleece on the animal's right side. The steward is safer and can control the movement of the body more easily when standing close to the alpaca.

It is much better to part the fleece with a very definite motion using the sides of the hands or by pushing the fingertips into the fleece and opening the fingers (see photos below).



These four photos illustrate two different ways of parting the fleece to examine it. You can use the side of your hand or your fingertips to part the fleece to look inside. However you do it, I suggest that you use one definite movement instead of several smaller tentative movements which are annoying to the alpaca.

Gently sorting through the fibre tickles and will usually provoke a negative reaction. The handler uses the lead rope to attempt to keep the animal's weight evenly distributed over both front feet. The handler does NOT use the lead rope to hold the animal back or hold him still. With the handler's hands positioned as described above, he can move the balance to the animal's right or left and can also feel the alpaca's intention to move with the fingers of your left hand on the neck. Should the animal begin to fuss and indicate a desire to move, the handler allows the animal to move up to the next corner and the steward follows.

Balancing an animal involves using intermittent signals on the lead to shift the weight in the desired direction followed by a RELEASE when the animal comes into balance.



When I use the word 'release', I do not mean letting go of the lead rope or loosening your connection with the animal – I mean only to release pressure on the head. Steady pressure on the lead rope will push the panic button and cause the alpaca to begin to fight. With a few minor changes, your job as the handler will be the same in the showring.

The trick to fleece checking in the showring without a catch pen is to build one with people. Alpacas primarily think of escape as a forward event. They go where they can see. Since you have a lead rope on the alpaca and the ability to steer, you can contain your alpaca quite handily with three people: the judge, the ring steward and the handler.

Let's assume that the judge wants to check fleece in the way I described earlier – that is, on the right by standing on the left and reaching over the back. (You can just as easily use these techniques standing on the right side of the animal checking the fleece on the left. Just remember that the ring steward will always stand on the side opposite the judge.)

In this case, the judge is going to provide the left side of the catch pen. The ring steward knows that the movement will likely be away from the judge's body, so he assumes a position on the right side of the animal. The handler forms the third side by standing directly in front of the alpaca about 30cm away from the nose – right hand on the lead close to the halter, fingers of the left hand lightly on the neck (*see photo on below*).

The handler focuses on the feet and works to keep the animal's weight evenly distributed over both front feet. Remember to release when the animal is in balance. Balancing can always be plan A. If it is obvious that the animal needs more support, then the handler and ring steward are both in a position to move to plan B and add more restraint. BUT REMEMBER...



The handler, steward and judge have built a box around the animal. The handler is not holding the animal by the neck but blocking forward movement and balancing the animal.

Alpacas get better at what they practice. Fight with the alpaca and he will get better at escape and evasion!

Alpacas generally fight restraint to one degree or another. Try to hold an animal still and his first response is to fight that restraint. There are generally two kinds of alpacas; the kind that give in easily to restraint and the kind that don't. The kind of alpaca that gives in easily really doesn't need to be restrained and will quite happily stand in balance when he learns that he can. The kind of alpaca that won't give in just gets worse and becomes more and more determined to fight his way out of what he sees as a dangerous situation.

The good news is that a majority of the animals that fight the hardest when restrained, respond the most positively when given an opportunity to stand without restraint. The trick is that most people do not know how to fully release pressure on a lead and put an animal in balance. Most handlers feel more secure with pressure on the lead and that pressure is what pushes the panic button and actually causes the problem.

**Here is an example of how the principles of balance and containment can help solve problems for stewards and handlers.**

**Example:** The alpaca swings his body away as the judge approaches on the left to fleece check.

**Discussion:** In my experience, this is often caused by the handler applying steady pressure on the lead rope. An alpaca pivots around his front legs, where most of his weight is naturally borne. Holding steadily on the lead while standing on the animal's left, the natural tendency is for the alpaca's rear end to swing in the opposite direction.

**Solution:** As the judge approaches the animal from the left, the handler uses his lead rope to move the animal's weight to the right front leg and moves to the front of the animal. This will help prevent the alpaca from swinging his rear end to the right and closes the 'front door'. The ring steward moves to the animal's right side to form the third side of the catch pen as the judge walks up on the left.

The ring steward can help immensely without touching the animal. Many people object to the ring steward grabbing their animal. The job of ring steward is a tough one. The judge expects the ring steward to help him inspect the fleece. The exhibitor quite often wants and needs help. A ring steward who learns where to stand without reaching for restraint first off, can do a good job of helping both the judge and the exhibitor – a win-win situation! What more could you want at a show? ➤

Certain general principles of animal handling determine the likely behaviour of an alpaca in any given circumstance. I call these principles the

## Show Preparation and Training

It is only fair to recognize that alpacas come with a variety of temperaments. Not all alpacas cope equally well with the tedium of the halter showing. Having said that, I think there are lots of ways that we can prepare our animals for the experience, accommodate their limitations, and still show them successfully.

Before participating in his first show, your alpaca should be comfortable with handling of a basic nature, be comfortable in his equipment, and know how to lead. The bottom line is that the more comfortable your alpaca feels with you, the more he will trust your judgment. An alpaca that trusts his handler will assume that when you lead him into the show ring, everything will be fine. An alpaca that is frightened of people will assume the worst and will behave instinctively, primarily with the flight or fight response, which interferes with showing.

When preparing for a show, many people focus only on leading and showing skills. In fact, the way you catch and halter your animal and even how you trim toenails and give injections are just as important. Your alpaca decides whether to trust you based on how responsibly you behave, period. Investing the time to organize your facilities and learn some handling skills makes everything easier, including showing.

## Nervous? Who, Me?

It is critical that you recognize that your nervousness is perhaps the biggest problem for any alpaca that is new to the showing. Nervous handlers send their jitters right down the lead line like current through an electric cord. Whatever you can do for yourself to ease the jitters, do it! Get enough sleep, eat breakfast, be as organized as you can, get up early so you aren't in a hurry, and remember to BREATHE! Breathing is like yawning – it is contagious. Breathe loudly and often, and your alpaca will follow your lead and take a deep breath. Breathing deeply and regularly will help both of you to relax.

Practice at home, or get together with a group of friends and stage a mock show. Trips to the local nursing home will not only brighten someone's day, but will also give your alpaca valuable experience coping with new situations. While all of these things are helpful, showing an alpaca is definitely the best practice for showing an alpaca. The National Show is probably not the best place to make your ring debut. If possible, pick out a smaller, local show for your first experience. Ideally, your first showing experience would be with an alpaca that is a veteran of the showing and that is bombproof.

Nervous handlers ALWAYS hold too tightly on the lead line and don't offer their animal enough space. The judge can see your animal and the way he or she moves much more easily if you are a bit out of the way. You can control your alpaca with your hand 30 cm or so down the lead away from the head. Leading your alpaca from just under the chin is annoying for the animal and is more likely to negatively affect the gait.

## The Importance of Halter Fit

Halter fit is critical in the showing (*see photo below*). Trying to control the body of an animal from its head is difficult in the first place. Add the complicating factor of a long neck, and it becomes even harder. Trying to control an animal with a halter that doesn't fit makes it almost impossible. In the showing, you need to help your animal stay calm and focused. A halter that is too big and spins around the head, one that is too small and ties the mouth shut, or one that slips off the nose bone onto the cartilage (which compromises the airway) makes your job twenty times harder. A proper lead rope is not nearly as important as your halter, but it can also make a difference. My preference is a lightweight hook with a rope that is not too skinny.



Heavy hooks can be annoying to your animal and make it more difficult to maintain a light connection with the head. Lead ropes that are too skinny or too stretchy also contribute to this problem.

This halter fits well up on the nose bone and the crown piece is snugged up enough that the halter cannot slip forward and off the bone. An alpaca skull protects the eyes but the nose is very vulnerable. It is critical that your halter rides well up on the nose bone as pictured.

## Butterflies

Pretend that you are showing a butterfly. Alpacas resist steady, heavy pressure and will jump, spook, refuse to come forward, and lean back on the lead rope in response to attempts at too much control. GET LIGHT! That is, like a butterfly is on the end of your lead.

Periodically, look at your alpaca's feet (*see photos below*). You are using the lead rope to help keep your animal's balance evenly distributed on all four feet. Concentrate most of your attention on the front half of the animal; the back half always follows! Remember that, following each balance correction, you must RELEASE. Your animal is walking a metaphorical tightrope. Pull too hard to one side, and he will fall off; apply steady pressure, and the animal simply relies on the rope for balance and leans to the outside. The process of balancing an animal is made up of a constant series of small corrections followed by releases.



The handler is holding steadily and the alpaca is using the lead line for balance.



The alpaca is walking in balance with the handler.



## Overcoming Obstacles

Just because you are only interested in showing at halter doesn't mean you can't benefit from using obstacles as part of your training. Obstacles are interesting for your alpaca, and they build trust. They are particularly useful for retraining animals that have become bored and soured on the showing. Work together over challenging obstacles, and you and your alpaca will turn into a team. Something as simple as poles on the ground can help a frightened, scattered alpaca learn to focus, but more inventive obstacles are also useful (*see photo top right*). The most important thing about obstacles is that they can be taken apart and made easier. I like to use clear plastic on the ground as a challenge. If the alpaca is too frightened to walk on the plastic, I use two pieces of plastic to create an aisle way (*see photo right*). I gradually move the two pieces of plastic closer together until the alpaca feels confident and is willing to step onto the plastic. Dragging a frightened alpaca over scary obstacles is not a good way to build trust.



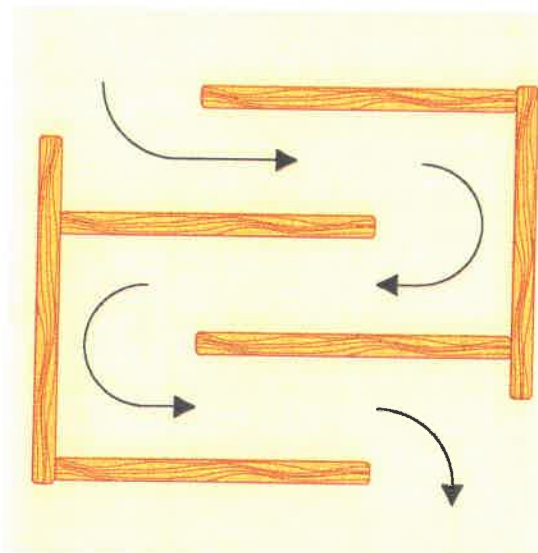
Plastic is a terrific confidence builder. If your alpaca is too frightened to walk on the plastic at first create an aisle way between two pieces of plastic.



Walking over poles on the ground is a great way to help nervous or scattered alpacas begin to focus and pay attention.

## At a Standstill

Teaching an alpaca to stand still can be very challenging. Arranging six PVC poles, each about 2.5 metres long, into a maze is a great training aid (*see diagram right*). Walk your alpaca into the middle of the maze and practice standing still. Even these subtle boundaries will help your alpaca learn to stand still and in balance. You may find it useful to use a wand or other extension of your arm to give cues from a distance (*see photo right*). If your alpaca is still having trouble, practice the same exercise inside a catch pen. If your alpaca is really nervous and cannot stand still at all, walk the alpaca around the edges of a catch pen, walking directly into each corner. With the alpaca standing parallel to the edge of the pen in the corner, use your lead rope to help him stand still for just a second or two and then proceed directly to the next corner. This will really help to settle a very nervous animal. Once the alpaca begins to settle down, try asking the animal to stand still in the centre of this small pen. Once you are having some success with standing quietly inside a small contained area, move to a slightly larger area. Your next step will be to ask for the behaviour in the maze inside a paddock about the size of a showing. ➤



Six poles placed as in the diagram left make a great tool for teaching an alpaca to focus. The handler uses this maze or labyrinth to teach an alpaca to stand still. The wand also helps to create a sense of containment and boundaries. Another trick for helping to calm your animal is to wrap a big "Figure Eight" around him using stretchable Vet Wrap or other gauze bandage, as shown in the photo below. This helps the animal feel secure and his behavior will be improved during the training session.



## Less is More

Most handlers ask for too much too soon, especially with the pressure of a looming show. The only way your alpaca will improve at particular behaviour is if you can get him to do it – even if it is just for a moment.

Trying in vain to get your alpaca to stand still for five minutes at a time is not going to be nearly as effective as asking the same animal to stand still for twenty seconds inside the maze and having him actually do it! You must build on success rather than practice misbehaviour.

Fleece checking, testicle inspection and bite examination are not exactly fun activities for an alpaca. I suggest that you take your show candidates for walks, work over obstacles, and work at asking your alpaca to stand in balance inside the maze for short periods of time (one to two minutes tops).

We all only have so much tolerance for irritation and tedium. If you use up all your alpaca's tolerance before you enter the ring, your alpaca will do worse not better.

Handling animals is a skill, and you will improve faster the more animals that you handle. It is far better to practice with six animals for 10 minutes than it is to practice with one animal for an hour.

If you can, it is also better to practice on animals that are commensurate with your handling skills. Certainly you must work with the tough ones, but realize that there is a lot to be learned by working on your handling skills with easier-to-handle animals.

A video camera is your best friend. Aim the camera at your practice arena, and view the tape when you have finished. You will be able to see what you are doing that works and what you are doing that is making your animals misbehave. Look for indications you are:


- > Encouraging your animal to rely on the lead rope for balance. Is the animal carrying all his weight on one side of his body? If so, you are holding steadily.

- > Taking your animal out of balance by leading with a heavy hand. Does your animal lose his focus when you go around a corner or try to get him to stand still? If so, you are probably overcorrecting. **LIGHTEN UP!** Practice using signals that are so light that someone watching you would not see the signals as you gave them.
- > Noticing when your animal is moving freely and looking at what you are doing at the time. What does the lead rope look like? How much tension is in the lead line? Look at the hook that attaches to the halter. What is it doing? If your hook is dangling and pointed at the ground, you have released pressure on your animal. If the hook is parallel to the ground, you have not released and may be interfering with your animal's freedom of movement. ■

*From haltering and leading, to toenail trimming and shearing, Camelidynamics training methods allow handlers and animals to interact with a minimum of stress for both parties. Since 1981 Marty McGee Bennett has devoted her professional life to the well-being of llamas and alpacas and the education of camelid enthusiasts. Marty brings a variety of experience and qualifications to her work with camelids, including a B.S. in Animal Behavior. Contact her at [www.camelidynamics.com](http://www.camelidynamics.com) or [marty@camelidynamics.com](mailto:marty@camelidynamics.com).*

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# A Measure of Greatness

INDUSTRY ARTICLE by **Matt Ridley** > Blaydon Alpacas, NSW

## Purrumbete El Dorado A Damsire of Distinction (Part 2)

*In the last article, we looked at some special female progeny of Purrumbete El Dorado, those of his daughters that have made their mark as dams of champions. Now we'll look at some of the rest of El Dorado's exploits as a damsire of distinction.*

**El Dorado** has more registered progeny (all figures as at 13 October 2004) on the ground than any sire other than ILR *Peruvian Auzengate* 6010 – 607 compared to 622 – and there is quite a gap to the rest with *Purrumbete Inti* on 485 and *Purrumbete Highlander* on 408. So, it is natural that he should exert a major influence on Australian alpaca breeding. But even with this in mind, it is still interesting to see how El Dorado's daughters have produced winner after winner across Australia, across the colour range, and by sires of all standards.

Having moved around in his lifetime, El Dorado has also probably had more opportunities than most stud males. Originally imported and used at stud by Roger Haldane, he was at Shanbrooke Alpacas, Victoria, in the mid 1990s, then leased out to Coolaroo Alpacas on the NSW Southern Highlands for a year and, when Coolaroo decided against purchasing him outright, was sold in 1997 to a partnership of Forestglen and Warralinga Alpacas, both in NSW.

### Away from Home

El Dorado has spent most of his stud time in Victoria and NSW, but his progeny crop up everywhere. Across Bass Strait, El Dorado's influence is limited, for there are few of his daughters in the apple isle. But those few have made their mark, the progeny of *Purrumbete Romance* including broad ribbon winners in Launceston and Hobart from 2000 onwards in *Clarence Point Princess* (dam of three champions) and *Clarence Point Bayden* (three times a Supreme Champion).

And *Terrabarb Bella* has been to *Pinaroo Farm Ghost Rider* three times for three show performers in *Terrabarb Tess* (Supreme Champion Launceston 2000), *Terrabarb Tara* and *Terrabarb Lachlan*. Another El Dorado daughter, *Trimax Peruvian Harliquen*, produced the best grey (and Reserve Champion Junior Female) at the 2000 Hobart Royal in *Trimax Ra-Shalon*.

El Dorado's influence extends to Western Australia, where his daughters have been crossed successfully with *Windsong Valley Royal Inca* in particular. In 1999, *Windsong Valley Yashinca*, a result of this cross, won a broad ribbon at the Royal Perth Show. And Yashinca's son *Rosa Glen Picasso* (by *Purrumbete Ledgers Dream*, so she had a head start) won the Reserve Champion Intermediate Male ribbon at the same event in 2004.

That same breeding mix also produced *Malakai Malkarni* (male by *Windsong Valley Royal Inca* from *Windsong Valley Satin Rose* by El Dorado), a blue ribbon winner at the Adelaide Royal in 2002 and also successful at Colac (Reserve Champion Junior Male), Whittlesea, Stawell and Seymour during 2001 to 2003. Malkarni was accompanied around the show circuit by his elder half-brother *Malakai Sirocco* (by *Kingston Park Paragon*), and he picked up two broad ribbons and numerous placings at the same venues – more grist for the mill.

Other WA quality performers with El Dorado damsires include *Windsong Valley Tapani*, *Courtney Lodge Tuahini* and the descendants of *Coolaroo L'Amorosa*, viz *Cordillera Sonderado* (multiple Champion), *Ellen Vale Jocinda*, *Ellen Vale Aquila*, *Ellen Vale Lincoln* and *Ellen Vale Cassandra*.

In the sunshine state, *Warrington Julzina* and *Warrington Latte* have carried the El Dorado dams to successes, as has *Adori Extreme Fantasy*, a Champion at the Queensland Royal in 2001. *Barkala Dulcinea* has also been a Supreme Champion at Toowoomba this year.

With the Timbertop alpacas (mentioned right) and representatives from Adelyn in *Adelyn Tranquility*, *Adelyn Serinity* (and her daughter *Adelyn Lace*) and *Adelyn Flair*, South Australia has been a happy hunting ground for progeny of El Dorado girls. Add to these *Parnabrae Cleopatra* and her daughter by ILR *Peruvian Drambuie G220*, *Andean Gold Yasmin* – also a winner at the National and Melbourne Royal in 2003.

### Sires of all Types

One bonus in having a daughter of El Dorado is that almost any sire will give you a good result over her, but there are some "nicks" that have cropped up, and are worth noting. Obviously, the predominant cross is that with Forestglen Maestro (see page 52), but consider these:

#### To > ILR Peruvian Drambuie G220

This is a cross that is predictable. With El Dorado and ILR *Peruvian Drambuie G220* standing at stud alongside each other at Warralinga Alpacas in the NSW Hawkesbury Valley, putting Drambuie over El Dorado females was soon a winning formula, producing performers of the calibre of *Alleena Benedictine*, *Monteagle Sprocket*, *Pucara Benedicto*, *Forestglen Delilah*, *Blue Grass Winter Princess*, *Blue Grass Tim Tam*, *Monteagle Apricot Princess* and *Warralinga Baileys Irish Cream*.

#### To > Purrumbete Inti

Surprisingly, despite El Dorado and Inti standing together at stud for some time, there has not been a preponderance of show performers with this breeding cross, but amongst those there have been some very good alpacas, like *Adelyn Tranquility*, *Adelyn Serinity*, *Barrabinda Bonza Star* and *Barrabinda Desert Star*. And the Reserve Champion Senior Female at the 2003 National Show almost qualifies, *Morning Brael Serenade* being by Inti, but from a daughter of the El Dorado producer *Grangeview Park Soccora*.



#### To > ILR NWA Ltd El Sol

*Nindethana Phoenix* (Melbourne Royal and Australian Sheep & Wool Show placegetter and Champion Junior Male at Whittlesea) and *Timbertop Lassitter* (Reserve Champion Intermediate Male Adelaide 2000) are examples.

#### To > Shanbrooke Peruvian Signature

Here we have *Wahroongah Harlequin Mist* (1st at Melbourne Wool Show 1999), *Barcoo Tiara* (Broad ribbon New England Wool Expo 2000 and dam of show performer *Barcoo Tattoo*), *Fran-Jo Chivas Regal* (Melbourne Royal 2001), and *Barcoo Kakadu* (Seymour 2002).

#### To > ILR Ppperuvian Auzengate 6010

A most useful cross, with *Forestglen Pizazz* (Class Champion Fleece Sydney Royal 2004), *Forestglen Australis* (NSW regionals 2002), *Almaray Voltaire* (Castle Hill 2004), *Burnigula Pablo* (Champion Junior Male Charles Ledger 2001), *Valparaiso Gladiator* (Charles Ledger 2002, Sydney and Canberra Royals 2003).

#### To > Jolimont Warrior

Another proven formula, with *Blue Grass Serengetti* (Canberra Royal and Southern NSW Regional 2004), *Monteagle Rosie Posie* (Bathurst & Boorowa), *Monteagle Moonlight Sonata* (Canberra Royal and Central-West Regional 2004), *Monteagle Cherry Blossom* (NSW Regionals 2004) and *Silcron Trojan Warrior* (Royal Queensland, Gold and Sunshine Coasts).

#### To > Peruvian Sonoma G200

*Ladysmith Celebrity* (National Champion and successful dam), *Cordillera Sonderado* (multiple broad ribbon winner in WA, 1999) and *Suzendy Sonoma Son* (Melbourne Royal, National, Shepparton etc) are examples.

#### To > Windsong Valley Braveheart

A "local" cross that includes *Shogun Yoko* (Canberra and Sydney Royals, Castle Hill 2003), and some useful crosses by Jeanne Brown of Alleena Alpacas: *Alleena Talisman* (Champion Fleece Canberra Royal 2003, broad ribbons at NSW Regionals), *Alleena Lady Arwen* (Sydney Royal 2004), *Alleena Miss Sunline* (Toowoomba 2004) and *Alleena Liam's Pride* (Hawkesbury, Charles Ledger, Sydney Royal etc.).

#### To > NWA Ltd Ruffo G4574

This one works well, as with *Burnigula Lucette* (National 2002, Charles Ledger 2003 etc.), *Timbertop Off-Shore* (Sydney and Melbourne Royals and Champion Adelaide Royal 2001), *Timbertop Jupiter*, *Timbertop Royal Dancer*, *Timbertop Armani* (Sydney Royal), *Timbertop Camillio* (Sydney and Melbourne Royals), *Timbertop Alibi* (National, Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart Royals etc.) and *Timbertop Serena's Magic* (Charles Ledger, Adelaide Royal etc.).

#### To > Peruvian Primero G216

The Acheron experience with Shiralee (see part 1 in *Alpacas Australia* Issue 45), has been repeated successfully here with *Acheron Somersby*, *Acheron Armani* and *Acheron Sprite*, all broad ribbon winners between 1999 and 2003.

#### To > a Suri?

Or, if all else fails, send an El Dorado girl to a suri sire, and get results like *Anclif Tarka* (Champion Suri Male at Ipswich in 2000 and 2001 and a blue ribbon recipient at the Royal Queensland Show in 2001) and *Anclif Okasheri*, successful in the suri classes at several Queensland shows during 2001. *Cedar House Sandpiper*, a son of *Peruvian Senator G153*, was the sire in both cases. ➤

# A New Son On The Horizon

## Standing At Stud: BLUE GRASS MILAGRO

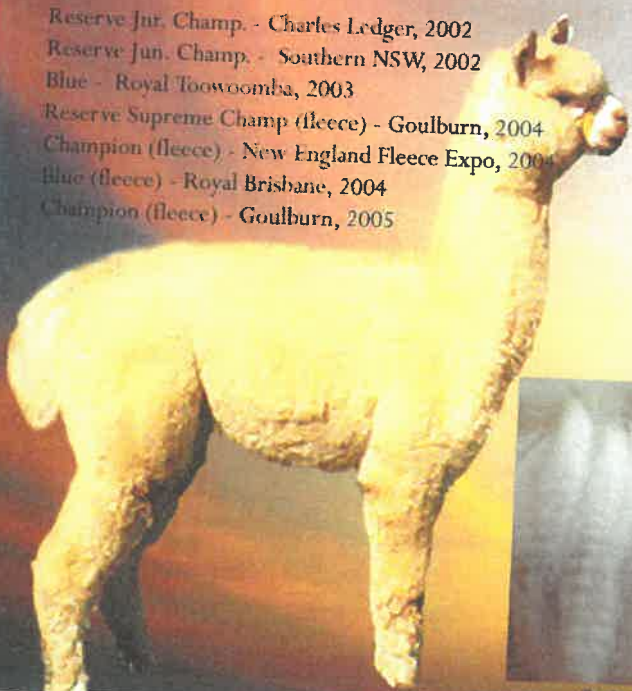
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Grandsire: Jolimont Massimo

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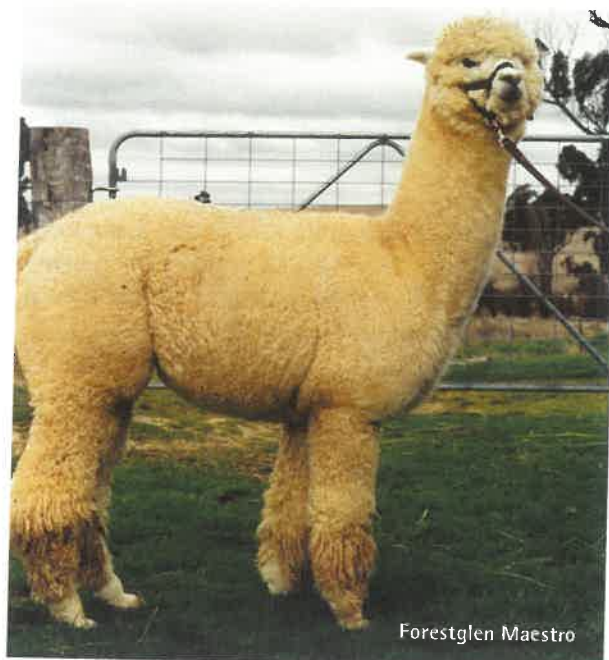
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## Keeping it in the Family

If one El Dorado isn't good enough, why not try two? Line-breeding to El Dorado has been extremely successful for Maureen Carey's Forestglen Alpacas of Millthorpe in Central NSW. Being a part-owner of El Dorado Maureen has, of course, had access to some of his best sons and daughters, and one of those sons, *Forestglen Maestro* (out of the remarkable *Purrumbete Minty*), has proven to be a most successful stud animal. So Maestro has been mated to plenty of El Dorado daughters, to give a 3x3 cross of the great sire:

|                |                           |                             |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                |                           | <b>Purrumbete El Dorado</b> |
|                | <b>Forestglen Maestro</b> |                             |
| <b>PROGENY</b> |                           | <b>Purrumbete Minty</b>     |
|                |                           | <b>Purrumbete El Dorado</b> |
|                | <b>DAM</b>                |                             |
|                |                           | <b>GRANDDAM</b>             |



Forestglen Maestro

**Purrumbete High Priestess** (SW) 2415 (F Imp Chile (Haldane)). Dam of:

**Purrumbete Precious Magic** (W) 12516 (F by *Purrumbete Snowman* (SW)) 14/7/94. Dam of:

**Forestglen Penelope** (SW) 30030 (F by *Purrumbete El Dorado* (SMF)) 23/3/98. Dam of:

**Forestglen Plutach** (W) 55415 (M by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 8/5/02. Reserve Champion Intermediate Male C-W (NSW) Reg 2003; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18W C-W (NSW) Reg 2003; 3<sup>rd</sup> M12-18W H-BM (NSW) Reg 2003; Champion Fleece Bathurst Royal 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> HF18-30L Bathurst Royal 2004; 3<sup>rd</sup> M18-30W Bathurst Royal 2004; 3<sup>rd</sup> M18-30W CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> HF18-30All Charles Ledger (NSW) 2004;

**Forestglen Pendragon** (SLF) 62138 (M by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 20/4/03. 5<sup>th</sup> M6-12F National 2003; Reserve Champion Junior Male Canberra Royal 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12F Canberra Royal 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> HF6-9F Canberra Royal 2004; Champion Junior Male Boorowa 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12F Boorowa 2004; Reserve Champion Junior Male Castle Hill 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12F Castle Hill 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12F Sydney Royal 2004; Supreme Champion Hawkesbury 2004; Champion Intermediate Male Hawkesbury 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F Hawkesbury 2004; Supreme Champion Bathurst Royal 2004; Champion Intermediate Male Bathurst Royal 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F Bathurst Royal 2004; Champion Intermediate Male C-W (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F C-W (NSW) Reg 2004; Supreme Champion CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; Champion Intermediate Male CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; Supreme Champion HBM Reg 2004; Champion Intermediate Male HBM Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F HBM Reg 2004; Champion Intermediate Male Sthn (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F Sthn (NSW) Reg 2004; Supreme Champion CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; Champion Intermediate Male CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; Champion Intermediate Male Charles Ledger (NSW) 2004; Best Fawn Charles Ledger (NSW) 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18F Charles Ledger (NSW) 2004

**Forestglen Panache** (SW) 38378 (F by *Purrumbete El Dorado* (SMF)) 17/4/99. 3<sup>rd</sup> HF18-30L Bathurst Royal 2001. Dam of:

**Forestglen Pizazz** (SW) 46573 (F by *ILR Ppperuvian Auzengate 6010* (SW)) 15/2/01. 3<sup>rd</sup> F6-12W CC-H Reg 2001; 3<sup>rd</sup> F12-18W Sydney Royal 2002; Champion Fleece 30+ mths Sydney Royal 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> HF30+W Sydney Royal 2004

**Forestglen Australis** (SW) 55394 (M by *ILR Ppperuvian Auzengate 6010* (SW)) 5/3/02. 5<sup>th</sup> M6-12W H-BM (NSW) Reg 2002

**Forestglen Lion Heart** (SLF) 62123 (M by *Cedar House Brave Heart* (SW)) 28/2/03. 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12F Sthn (NSW) Reg 2003

**Forestglen Pandora** (SW) 55381 (F by *Purrumbete El Dorado* (SMF)) 22/7/01. Dam of:

**Forestglen Pegasus** (SW) 72198 (M by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 5/12/03. Reserve Champion Junior Male C-W (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12W C-W (NSW) Reg 2004; Champion Junior Male CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; 4<sup>th</sup> M6-12W HBM Reg 2004; 3<sup>rd</sup> M6-12W Sthn (NSW) Reg 2004; 3<sup>rd</sup> M6-12W Charles Ledger (NSW) 2004; Champion Junior Male CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M6-12W CC-H (NSW) Reg 2004



**Biddlesden Alisha** (SLF) 9609 (F by *Purrumbete El Dorado* (SMF)) 23/5/94. Dam of:

**Forestglen Dame Nellie** (SW) 30033 (F by *Cedar House Lucifer* (SMF)) 8/5/98. 1<sup>st</sup> HF18-30L Bathurst Royal 2001. Dam of:

**Forestglen Desiree** (SW) 46551 (F by *ILR Peruvian Drambuie G220*) 28/5/00. Dam of:

**Forestglen Dimitri** (SLF) 55411 (M by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 2/5/02. 1<sup>st</sup> HF9-18L/F Bathurst Royal 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> M18-30F Bathurst Royal 2004; Champion Adult Male C-W (NSW) Reg 2004; 1<sup>st</sup> M18-30F C-W (NSW) Reg 2004

**Forestglen Dana** (SW) 62146 (F by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 14/5/03. 4<sup>th</sup> F6-12W Sydney Royal 2004

**Forestglen Disraeli** (W) 55421 (M by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 1/6/02. Champion Intermediate Male H-BM (NSW) Reg 2003; 1<sup>st</sup> M12-18W H-BM (NSW) Reg 2003; 3<sup>rd</sup> M12-18W Charles Ledger (NSW) 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> M12-18W CC-H Reg 2003

**Forestglen Avalon** (SLF) 38392 (F by *Purrumbete Monarch* (SW)) 2/1/00. 2<sup>nd</sup> HF9-18F Sydney Royal 2001; Reserve Champion Junior Female Charles Ledger (NSW) 2000; 1<sup>st</sup> F6-12F Charles Ledger (NSW) 2000; 3<sup>rd</sup> F6-12F CC-H Reg 2000; 5<sup>th</sup> F6-12F C-W (NSW) Reg 2000; 2<sup>nd</sup> HF9-18F Total Fleece Show 2001. Dam of:

**Forestglen Avoca** (LF) 55395 (F by *Forestglen Maestro* (SW)) 6/3/02. 2<sup>nd</sup> HF9-18F Total Fleece Show 2003

This breeding features in the pedigrees of *Barkala Dulcinea* and the Forestglen clan of *Forestglen Bianca*, *Forestglen Caprice*, *Forestglen Crackerjack*, *Forestglen Lassiandra*, *Forestglen Marco* and *Forestglen Sachmo*, all up there at the shows.

A very similar cross has worked with another El Dorado son in *Summerhill Sundance* covering El Dorado daughters, to give the same 3x3 line-breeding in *Sierra Inigo*, a good performer at the NSW Regionals in 2003.

It would be unfair to give all the credit to El Dorado, for he has been fortunate in being mated to females from some of the best families in the land, a good example of which is *Purrumbete High Priestess* (IAR 2415). This family provides yet another example of the line-breeding success of *Forestglen Maestro* over El Dorado's daughters, with the resulting offspring including *Forestglen Plutach*, the outstanding *Forestglen Pendragon*, and *Forestglen Pegasus*.

The same family has produced, by *ILR Pperuvian Auzengate 6010*, useful performers in *Forestglen Pizazz* and *Forestglen Australis*. An argument could be mounted that just about any sire could have been successful with these opportunities, for this family has also produced – via *Moore Park Highland Princess* – the brilliant Swan Valley performers *Swan Valley Calypso*, *Swan Valley Heritage*, *Swan Valley Elegance* (and her daughter *Swan Valley Super Elegant*) and *Swan Valley Achiever*, the last three all by *Shanbrooke Elite*.

*Biddlesden Alisha*, a daughter of El Dorado from a Chilean import, provides an example of the versatility of El Dorado as a damsire and creator of matriarchal dynasties, and also the effectiveness of line-breeding El Dorado daughters to *Forestglen Maestro*.

From Alisha has come *Forestglen Dame Nellie* who, when mated to *ILR Peruvian Drambuie G220* – there's that in-house cross again – has produced *Forestglen Desiree*, the mother of two excellent alpacas in *Forestglen Dimitri* (Champion Adult Male at the Central-West Regional, 2004) and *Forestglen Dana*, a placegetter at the 2004 Sydney Royal. Both are the result of line-breeding to *Forestglen Maestro*.

To emphasise the potency of this cross, another of Alisha's daughters in *Forestglen Avalon* (by *Purrumbete Monarch* and a broad ribbon winner at the 2000 Charles Ledger) was sent to *Forestglen Maestro* in 2001 to produce the Total placegetter *Forestglen Avoca*.

## A Kaleidoscope

Being a solid medium fawn animal, it is to be expected that El Dorado would throw predominantly fawn offspring. While there is a fair proportion of fawns, he is versatile enough for his daughters to produce show calibre cria in all colours, even some blacks (like *Warralinga Blackmail* and *Kurabell Park Charcoal*) and almost blacks (such as *Keiana Lodge Lena*, a daughter of Champion *Forestglen Lexie*) and the greys mentioned earlier.

**Does all this make *Purrumbete El Dorado* a champion? It's a compelling argument. ■**



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# Royal Canberra Show 2005

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Carolyn Austin** > Show Convenor

**T**he weekend of the 25,26 & 27 February and this year's Royal National Capital Agricultural Society Show (aka Royal Canberra Show) has come and gone. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the competitors for the manner in which each and everyone conducted themselves - it was a very friendly and cohesive show.

Although the weather was hot and unseasonably humid for a Canberra summer, the stewards were highly professional and approachable, the judges (Wendy Billington, animals and Kylie Martin, fleeces) were efficient and their decisions well-considered, and the quality of the animals and fleeces was outstanding. A few more Suris would be very nice to see next time - so a challenge is out there for all Suri breeders for 2006.

The final numbers for the show were 204 animal exhibits (remaining from an original 265 entries lodged) with 122 fleece entries. There were significant animal exhibit cancellations as a result of the lag effect of the drought and late shearing dates not allowing appropriate fleece length to be achieved. Although the marquee was extended by 25 feet, future consideration will need to be given to accommodation should numbers continue to grow. What an issue to deal with - too many entrants! One would say there are never too many and the organising committee would be very reluctant to limit numbers in any real way.



Supreme Huacaya was awarded to "Illawarra Yucatan", a white adult male exhibited by Illawarra Alpacas of Cambewarra, NSW and Wyndarra Alpacas of Bungendore.

The Royal Canberra Show continues to go from strength to strength attracting large general public numbers for the exhibition and judging days, the fleece display day and the junior handling exhibition. The general level of interest in the breed continues to grow and is a positive indicator for the future of the industry.

2005 had a number of new initiatives trialed, one being the operation of the Help Desk system first introduced at the 2004 National Show. This was a marvellous development, aiding the general public, breeders and the show organisers and I thank all involved with this service.

2005 also saw the organising committee arrange to display all award winning fleeces in the judging tent on the Sunday. Although it took a little strategic thinking on a number of stewards' parts, the result was nothing less than FANTASTIC. To see all those magnificent fleeces displayed in a well lit venue, side by side with industry representatives, spinners and product sellers was a truly wonderful sight and I thank all involved. ■



Supreme Suri was taken out by "Elysion Texas Ranger", a fawn junior male exhibited by Paul and Francis Haslin of Elysion Alpacas, Canyonleigh, NSW.

For full show results visit AAA Inc. web site [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

# Colourbration

SHOWING AND JUDGING ARTICLE by **Meddwyn Coleman** > Colourbration Co-convenor



*On behalf of the Victorian Central Region of the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. please let me tell you about our inaugural Victorian Spring Colourbration Carnival, held at Lancefield in the heartland of our region in September last year.*

The name Colourbration is intended to be an amalgam of the words Celebration and Colour, hence Colourbration – a deliberate Celebration of the Alpaca Rainbow.

Colourbration was held over two days and was conducted as a carnival of alpaca events with:

#### **Educational Speakers:**

- > Bill Robbins on "Line Breeding in Alpacas"
- > Elizabeth Paul on "Colour Genetics"
- > Alan Frampton on "Don't Send your Fibre up the Khyber!"

#### **Craft Workshops:**

- > Victorian Machine Knitters Association
- > Judy Craig on "Felting with Alpaca"

Also featured was Nerida Aldred with one-on-one hands-on TTeam introductions.

Fashion parades, trade stalls, an alpaca swap meet, evening dinner gathering, and eight separate single colour shows judged across the two days kept participants and spectators interested and entertained.

The inaugural Colourbration Carnival attracted 201 animal entries with 26 fleece entries across the eight individual shows over the weekend.

WOW! In our first Colourbration we instantly became the fourth largest show in Victoria!

#### **Our goals in running Colourbration were broadly:**

- > To encourage and support genetic improvement in coloured (defined here as non-white/light fawn) alpacas.
- > To foster a climate of welcoming encouragement to small breeders.

#### **Hence, Colourbration.**

In this show structure each alpaca is judged against its colour-mates. White is judged against white for Supreme White, brown is judged against brown for Supreme Brown, grey is judged against grey for Supreme Grey, etc. We have eight separate single colour shows. Six of these are for huacaya, two for suri (currently Coloured Suri and Light Suri). In planning the structure of these shows we were meticulous about staying within the guidelines of the AAA Inc. Showing Rules but were also consistently warned against being seen to be discriminatory. It's ironic then that in abiding by the AAA Inc. Rules about Fancy alpacas we were forced to be discriminatory – no Supreme for them and no fleece show for Fancies! We were also not able to use the word Champion hence no age or gender champions or reserve champions.



Because this was an inaugural show we only held six sections per show (junior male/female, intermediate male/female, adult male/female). Supreme for each show was selected from the blue ribbon winners from each section.

So, how did it go? A total of 74 studs participated! We were delighted to see studs exhibiting who we had never seen in a showring before and we were also grateful for the interstate support of studs from South Australia and New South Wales, some of whom traveled for over nine hours to be with us.

Experienced and new breeders rubbed shoulders in our workshops. Our stud sire auction raised \$7,550, special efforts over both days contributed \$620, fun auction raised an additional \$1,450, and entry fees contributed about \$4,000. What a great start! And importantly, people had fun.

Don't think for one minute that the standard of alpacas was allowed to slip. Bill Robbins was our judge over the two days and rigorously applied the judging standards of the AAA Inc. yet his closing comments related to his delight at the standard of alpacas we are now seeing in the showrings.

To conclude, some comments from our President, Ken Haines, "The Central Victorian Colourbration Promotion held at Lancefield on the 4th and 5th of September was an outstanding success. This event has been the inspiration of Meddwyn Coleman and, with valuable assistance from Jillian Holmes, together as co-convenors they are to be congratulated. Their perseverance, persistence and organisational abilities ensured that this event was conducted

within AAA Showing Guidelines whilst satisfying those members who support promotion of the entire colour range available in both Suri and Huacaya alpaca.

This was the first Colourbration conducted in this format and at a location where we had not previously conducted alpaca shows, all of which made their task more complex. With over 200 animals entered and over 70 alpaca breeders represented, it was obvious that the convenors had conducted a successful advertising campaign. Judging was capably conducted by Mr. Bill Robbins in his own inimitable style.

A highlight was the Fashion Parade arranged and presented by Mrs. Kay Cleaver using garments provided through the generosity of a number of Victorian Central Region alpaca studs and very well presented by a number of budding models from our own ranks.

Congratulations to all involved, very well done! Commence your arrangements for next year, as the Colourbration will be a regular event on the Victorian Central Region Show Calendar."

If you would like further information regarding this event contact Co-convenors of Colourbration:

Meddwyn Coleman, Lee Carrow Alpacas:  
Tel: (03) 5448 8032 E-mail: meddwyne@hotmail.com

Jillian Holmes, Jigaru Alpacas:  
Tel: (03) 5429 2158 E-mail: jigaru@bigpond.com ■

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Sat. 28th / Sun. 29th May: Conference  
Mon. 30th May: Workshops

**More information...**

Alpaca Association New Zealand  
Central Regional Committee  
Eric Lister - President  
Phone 06 325 8449 - Email: Eric@alpacasunlimited.co.nz

Heather Olsson - Secretary  
Phone 06 356 4069 - Email: hloolsson@xtra.co.nz

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|---------------------|----------|--------|--------|
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| 27                  | 28       | 29     | 30     |
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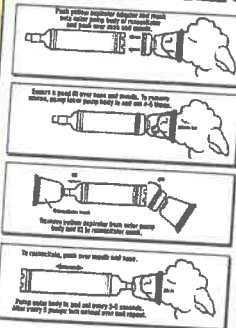
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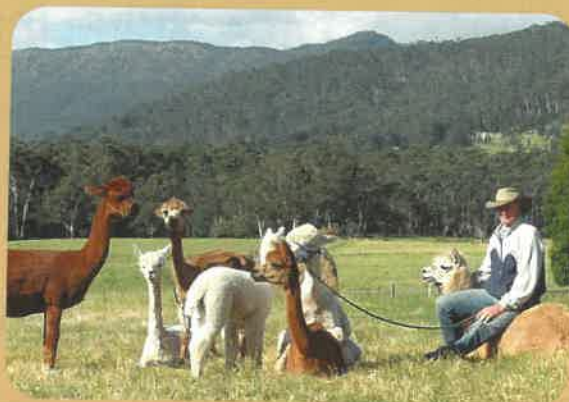
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< I'm the king of the castle >

Pearl Urquhart  
Bodeguera Alpaca Stud, WA



< It's a tough job, but someone's gotta do it >

Maril Stout  
Mount Peerless Alpaca Stud, VIC



< Last tangle in Paris? >

Denise Moysey  
Arcadian Alpacas, SA



< All in a day's work >

Ann Jelinek  
Charisma Alpacas, VIC





< Just look into my eyes >

Dianne & Kevin King  
Wynwood Alpacas, NSW



< Alpaca make-over >

Trish & Sean Munley  
Trisean Alpacas, VIC



< I really need a bigger bath >

Cora Zyp  
Coraz Alpacas, QLD



< Do you recognise me mum?  
They've put my fleece back on >

Sandy Retallick  
Softfoot Alpacas, SA



< I'd rather get Vitamin D naturally >

Bob & Judy Richardson  
Clearview Alpacas, NSW



< I'll tell you a secret...  
I'm not really a horse >

Lesley Maxwell  
Kurralea Alpacas, NSW



< Mudpaca sawdust - the latest  
in fleece conditioning >

Penny Pearce  
Homespun Handknits, NSW



< If I eat my greens, will I grow up  
big and strong like you? >

Geoff Pearson & Marilyn Mathews  
Daisy Bank Alpacas, NSW



< Did someone say lunch? >

Ian & Angela Preuss  
Pinjarra Alpacas, VIC



< Our little Diablo >

Heather Pain  
Threshold Alpacas, VIC

# Upcoming Events

## April

### 23-24 Alpaca Extravaganza: SA

Venue: Oakbank Racecourse  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Jane Wray (08) 8388 7604  
Trudi Arnold (08) 8556 8420

### 23-24 Alpaca Autumn Show: WA

Venue: Whiteman Park  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Ron Reid (08) 9296 4888

### 29-1/5 Tocal Field Days & Tocal Fleece Show: NSW

Venue: Paterson  
Highlights: Fleece judging  
Contact: Peter Feldman (02) 6558 3003

## May

### 5-7 AgFest: TAS

Venue: Quercus Rural Youth Park, (near Launceston)  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: John Milward (03) 6391 1433

### 8 Alpaca Promotion & Sale Day: WA

Venue: Waterloo (near Picton)  
Highlights: Promotional display & alpaca sales  
Contact: Judy McRae (08) 9725 6268

### 12-14 Ipswich Agricultural Show: QLD

Venue: Ipswich Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display;  
Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Julie MacGregor (07) 3202 3113

### 13-15 New England Wool Vision: NSW

Venue: Armidale  
Highlights: Alpaca judging (14 May);  
Fleece judging;  
Alpaca young fashion designer awards  
Contact: Bronwyn Mitchell (02) 6772 1940

### 14-15 Stawell Good Life Festival: VIC

Venue: Stawell  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging;  
Promotional display;  
Alpaca sales; education seminars  
Contact: Jerry Krupa & Tracy Emerson  
(03) 5359 2388

### 15 Annual Sale Day: VIC

Venue: Yarra Glen Racecourse  
Highlights: Private treaty animal sale;  
Alpaca product display & sales;  
Stud service silent auction;  
Information sessions  
Contact: Ian Earle 03 5772 3339

### 21-22 Alpaca Fiesta: NSW

Venue: Hawkesbury Racecourse, Richmond  
(opp. RAAF base)  
Highlights: Alpaca auction; Demonstrations;  
Alpaca raffle; Fashion parade  
Contact: Bill & Jan Crosby 02 9484 1323

### 27-28 Campbell Town Sheep Show: TAS

Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Raymond Haynes (03) 6225 5306

### 29 The Valley Field Day: QLD

Venue: Walloon State School  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Julie MacGregor (07) 3202 3113

## June

### 4-5 New Breeders Seminar: NSW

Venue: Clarendon  
Highlights: Lectures; Demonstrations  
Contact: Sandra Vella (02) 4578 2657

### 11-13 "Alpacas On Parade": NSW

Venue: Maitland Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca auction;  
Fleece & alpaca product sales;  
Demonstrations; Fashion parades;  
Wether raffle  
Contact: Helen Sorby (02) 4353 3007

### 16-18 Sunshine Coast Show: QLD

Venue: Nambour Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging (18 June)  
Contact: Graham Smith (07) 5445 9492

### 16-18 Primex: NSW

Venue: Casino, NSW  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Shayne Barnett (07) 3200 0585

### 25 Victorian Eastern Region Annual Dinner & Fleece Competition: VIC

Venue: TBA  
Highlights: Fleece competition; Gala dinner;  
Victorian Eastern Region Alpaca of the Year award  
Contact: Ian Earle (03) 5772 3339

## July

### 2-3 Alpaca Fest: VIC

Venue: Werribee Equestrian Centre  
Highlights: Trade displays; Alpaca product sales;  
Demonstrations  
Contact: Maree McCosh (03) 5565 9413

### 2-3 Alpaca Industry Seminar & Workshop: WA

Venue: TBA  
Contact: Anne Smith (08) 9753 1079

### 3 Southern NSW Region Show: NSW

Venue: Goulburn Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca judging  
Contact: Mark Garner (02) 4884 1222

### 9-10 Mudgeeraba Agricultural Show: QLD

Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Wendy Summereli (07) 5543 0207

### 15-16 Mudgee Small Farm Field Days: NSW

Venue: Mudgee  
Highlights: Alpaca judging (16 July)  
Contact: Judy Easten (02) 6372 1714

### 15-17 Australian Sheep & Wool Show: VIC

Venue: Bendigo Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging;  
Fashion parade; Education sessions  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210

### 16-17 Laidley Agricultural Show: QLD

Venue: Laidley Showgrounds  
Highlights: Promotional display  
Contact: Julie MacGregor (07) 3202 3113

### 30 "Alpacas And You" Seminar: QLD

Venue: Caboolture  
Highlights: Educational seminar  
Contact: Graeme Smith (07) 5445 9492

### 31 Ballarat Sheep & Wool Show: VIC

Venue: Ballarat Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Pam Baxter (03) 5360 8210

## August

### 1-2 Hamilton Sheepvention: VIC

Venue: Hamilton Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Maree McCosh (03) 5565 9413

### 11-20 Royal Queensland Show: QLD

Venue: Brisbane Showgrounds  
Highlights: Alpacas on display (18-20 Aug);  
Fleece judging (18 Aug);  
Alpaca judging (19 Aug)  
Contact: Camilla Smith (07) 3266 9822

### 13-14 Fairbridge Village & Peel Region Alpaca Show: WA

Venue: Fairbridge Village  
Highlights: Alpaca & fleece judging  
Contact: Darryl Sherman (08) 9530 1284

### 27-28 Totally Alpaca Field Days: NSW

Venue: Goulburn Showgrounds  
Highlights: Pen sales; Parades; Mini seminars;  
Quality auction  
Contact: Nestor Ellinopoulos (02) 4821 5678



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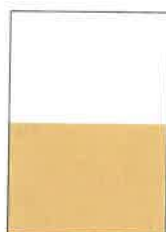
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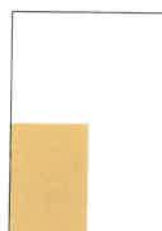
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Further advertising material enquiries can be directed to:

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## Deadlines

### Issue 47: Winter

Due: August 2005  
Deadline: Friday 3 June

### Issue 48: Summer

Due: December 2005  
Deadline: Friday 7 October

### Issue 49: Autumn

Due: April 2006  
Deadline: Friday 10 February

Please book and send all editorial and advertising material to Sandra Wright

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