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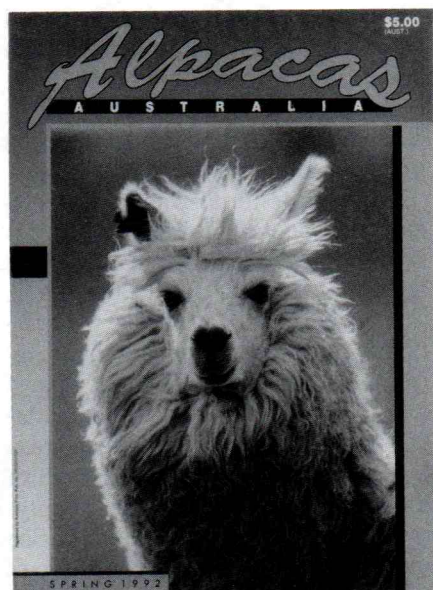
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Cover: A regal master of all he surveys. Photograph: Ken Irwin

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Across the Editor's Desk

Spring surprise for alpaca owners

I hope spring has arrived in your part of the world. As I write this we have had about two days of sunshine to tease us and enough rain to warrant building an ark. It seems one half of Australia is in flood and the other half in drought.

I well remember our first spring with alpacas - coming outside on the first warm, sunny day to find all the animals stretched out "dead". What a shock. There they were, lying on their sides, eyes shut, four legs stretched straight out.

We tentatively approached a cria and gave him a nudge. Nothing. Another nudge and suddenly, his dreams disturbed, he leapt up and scampered off indignantly kicking up his heels.

We hadn't seen the sun worshippers in action before; there hadn't been any sun for them to worship during a Victorian winter. I have heard other breeders report the same introduction to the alpaca in spring.

There are plenty of jobs around the farm in spring - 5-in-1 injections (twice, one month apart for the cria), worming, feet trimming and soon it will be shearing time. Don't forget to leave a little fleece on, particularly along the backline to avoid the sunburn from which alpacas of all colours can suffer.



Alpacas Australia editor Cherie Bridges ... and friends.

It's good to see that a number of breeders are holding open days for new owners and those interested in entering the alpaca industry. There have been shearing, feet and teeth trimming and ultrasound demonstrations as well as displays of spun fibre and garments.

Networking is the foundation on which sound industries are built so keep it up.

A lot of people who have come to look at our alpacas have commented favourably on how friendly and helpful they have found alpaca breeders. Many have said it compares well to some other stud stock industries

where people more jealously guard information. This open attitude among alpaca breeders is encouraging more people to enter the industry. The only problem seems to be finding enough animals for them.

The Tocal seminar was a great success and was fully booked. In this issue we have articles from two of the speakers, Karen Baum and Chris Tuckwell. Chris, who works with the South Australian Department of Agriculture, has been very supportive of alpaca breeders. He has set up a database to collate information on trace elements and worms in Australian alpacas. Please help him by supplying information on your animals. See page 33 for details. We want to look for more support from departments of agriculture which we will only get by demonstrating a willingness to work with them.

Congratulations to those who supported the Australian Alpaca Association stand and the class judging at the Royal Melbourne Show. This issue closed off too early to include the results. They will be published in the next issue.

Until next time, take care of and enjoy your alpacas.

Cherie Bridges

Cherie Bridges
Editor

Alpacas
AUSTRALIA

Volume 1, No. 3

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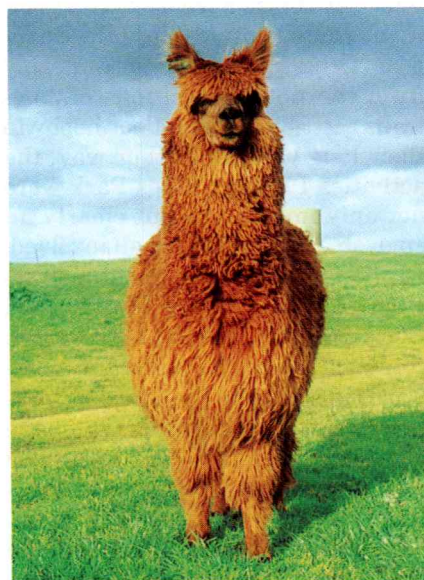
Fibre plus!

While the Australian industry's current emphasis is on breeding stock, it's important also to build a strong market for alpaca fibre. Sandi Walter Keane discusses the need to find out what the end-users are looking for - and work hard to provide it.

The speed at which the alpaca has established itself as one of Australia's most exciting and lucrative breeding-based industries is staggering. With such a healthy demand for these charming animals, selling them has been a piece of cake. Who needed any sales or marketing training?

But, what of the by-product? How many bales of this wondrous fibre are stockpiled in barns all around the countryside?

Given the current market price of alpacas, no-one is going to get rich quick from fibre production. So, why have some breeders spent so much time and effort wooing the local spin-



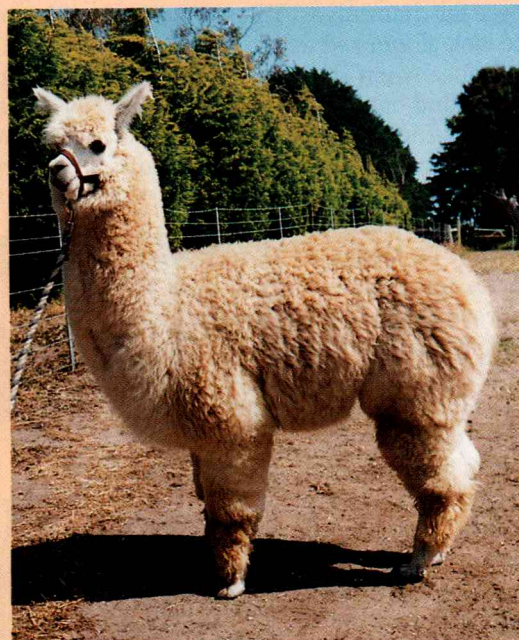
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ners and weavers market? This is especially so in the United States where I recently attended the Estes Park Wool Show and AOBA conference in Colorado.

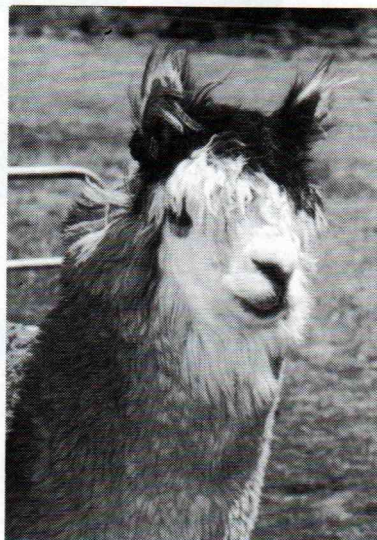
The North Americans have always had a vigorous folk art tradition - some say this is a legacy of their cultural roots, notably middle-European. Others, less generous (probably from the northern climes of Australia) attribute this indoor hobby to their long winters. Either way, the activities I saw at Estes Park were not only impressive but clearly an enjoyable experience for all involved.

Talking to alpaca fibre enthusiasts such as Linda Berry Walker and Chris Switzer, it didn't take long to convince me of the substantial rewards in selling to the domestic market. Australian breeders who have put in the time and effort to develop similar markets here would obviously agree.

Acquiring any knowledge about the production of fibre must enhance our breeding programs and give us a competitive edge for eventual large-scale production. What better way to learn about our product than by talking with the end-user?

We can start by inviting the local spinners group and spinning teachers to come and see the animals and fleece for themselves. You should see the look of amazed delight on a spinner's face when they first handle alpaca? Find out what their needs are and try to accommodate them. This is the most vital step in marketing any product.

You'll find that buyers will be happy to advise us on how to improve the product. This, in turn, ensures we get the optimum price for it (all income helps toward the upkeep of our animals). They may even come up with the answer of what to do with the lower quality fleece. Some spinners have successfully blended this with other fibres, so don't throw it away.



Contacts

The following people offer fleece cleaning and carding services.

Peter and Annette Rodaughan, MacGregor Rd, Beveridge 3753. Phone: (03) 745 2518.

Beryl Wallace, RMB 4328, Langwarry Road, Drouin 3818. Phone: (056) 25 2920.

Sydney Mohair & Wool Centre, Tam O'Shanta. Phone: (045) 77 2570 or 77 6966. Fax (045) 77 6720.

The Reel Ewe, Barbara Mundell, Chespeak, Roberts Rd, Werombi 2570. Phone: (046) 53 1457.

Some of the things we need to find out about are what length of staple they prefer and whether they want to buy half fleeces. I know of one breeder who gave away small samples to try and ended up selling the client a whole fleece.

By listening to experienced spinners we will soon learn about the degree of preparation they require in a fleece. Carolyn Jinks has tips for you on this on the following pages.

We will then be less likely to sell dirty or poor quality fleece as a result of incorrect harvesting methods (i.e. throwing the whole fleece into a single bag instead of separating it into prime saddle, neck, then lastly, the rest). Remember: attention to preparation will ensure repeat business.

As a "spin-off" (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) there could be a chance to sell some wethers to spinners who like producing their own fleeces.

To help members develop their own on-going clientele, the fibre sub-committee decided that what was needed was a central contact person. A member of the committee, Mary Terracall, herself an experienced spinner, has

offered her services in that role.

The sub-committee will place advertisements, supported by articles, in craft journals and newsletters. Inquirers will be directed to Mary as their first contact. She, in turn, will keep an up-to-date record of fleece for sale with details such as colour, farm location, etc. All you have to do is let Mary know if you have any fleece for sale and provide her with the details so that she can pass them on.

Mary lives in Drysdale, near Geelong, Victoria, and can be contacted by phone on (052) 53 1562 or fax (052) 53 1600.

If there are any volunteers who would like to offer with fellow members a similar service in other states and help reduce the need for costly phone calls, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Let's be creative. Look at new ways of attracting buyers. Talk to local agricultural societies about exhibiting fleeces at shows. Take some fleeces or, better still, a live alpaca to the local spinners group meeting. Donate a fleece as a prize at your local craft fair. Talk to yarn shops about taking fleeces on consignment, etc.

If anyone has any other good ideas, please share them.

Promoting the end product will develop confidence in the industry in general. This benefits us all.

One of the fibre sub-committee's goals is to develop a Code of Practice for the marketing and preparation of fleece to ensure consistency of quality and confidence in our product. We'll keep you posted.



Sandi Walter Keane (left) from Pinjarra Alpacas, is secretary of the Australian Alpaca Association's fibre sub-committee. Carolyn (right) and Allan Jinks run Benleigh Alpaca stud.

Careful fibre sorting is essential

Carolyn Jinks looks
at the practicalities
of fibre preparation.

Before shearing, fleeces need to be as clean as possible and any time spent removing debris will be well spent.

Sorting the fleece into areas of quality is essential to keep superior and inferior fleece separate.

At the alpaca conference in Colorado, Linda Berry Walker, an experienced lecturer in textiles and designer of hand-spun garments, gave an informative and educational talk on the importance of harvesting fleece effectively.

Most owners who have shorn al-

pacas divide the coarser belly and leg fleece from the rest but, as Linda pointed out, the neck fleece needs to be classified into another group.

By sorting into three areas, as shown on the accompanying diagram, we will have slightly less quantity but the improved quality of the bulk of the fleece will command appropriate prices. Including the neck fibre with the blanket lowers the overall standard.

The neck fleece is still usable. Socks made from this area are great and creative craftspeople in the United States are producing wonderful wall

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hangings and floor rugs using the third quality (leg and belly fleece).

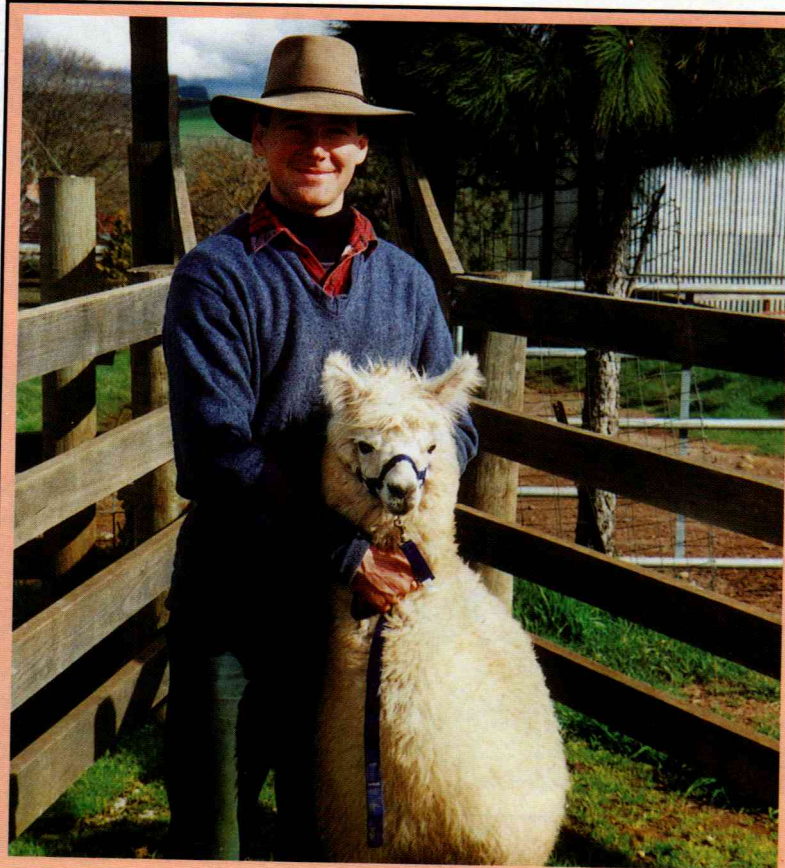
As alpacas turn their backs to the wind, a lot of "debris" accumulates at the base of the neck. This pocket of debris needs to be removed and discarded as no amount of work will solve this trouble spot.

This leaves the blanket as a superior and highly prized fleece.

The small effort in classifying fleece into these groups will make a more marketable product which is, of course, our goal.

1. Blanket - Prime fleece.
2. Neck - Some guard hair likely
3. Coarse fibre on legs and belly.

Shaded area: Fleece to be discarded.



Never too young to start

The youngest new alpaca breeder in Australia is Mark Jefferis. At the tender age of 21, Mark has been working hard on his parents' sheep stud as well as shearing for the past few years.

He saved hard, planning to invest his money in a property. This year he got a job on an alpaca stud and fell for the animals.

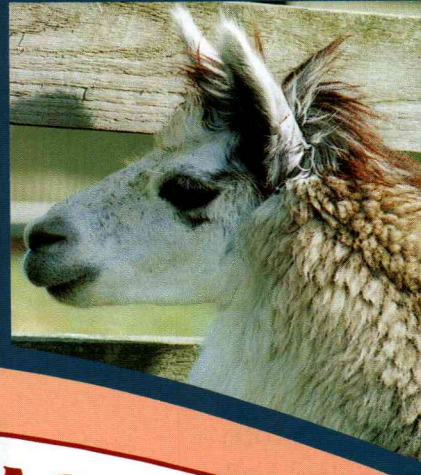
"They're so much better than sheep," he says. "They're easier to look after and with more personality."

Mark also saw the level of interest in the industry, as part of his job is showing potential buyers around the animals.

"I thought that with all these people wanting to buy animals, even though the rural industry is so depressed, I must be on to a good thing."

Mark bought two pregnant females and is eagerly awaiting the arrival of their offspring.

He will be shearing his first alpacas this spring and says he'll be making sure there are no nicks.



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Coats of many colours and characteristics

Daniel Weston Schoenthal looks in detail at the make-up of lama fibres.

The logical place to start the process of looking at lama (alpaca, llama, vicuna and guanaco) fibre types is with the two wild species - vicuna and guanaco.

There are many similarities between the two as well as at least one significant identifiable difference. Both are two-coated animals, meaning that they have both primary and secondary fibre types within their fleeces.

The primary fibre, commonly called guard hair, is a straight highly medullated coarse fibre that serves several purposes. Guard hair is very resistant to wear and abrasion and so protects the fine fibre and skin. This coarse fibre also acts as a support system to fluff up the fine fibre to increase the effective loft (insulation

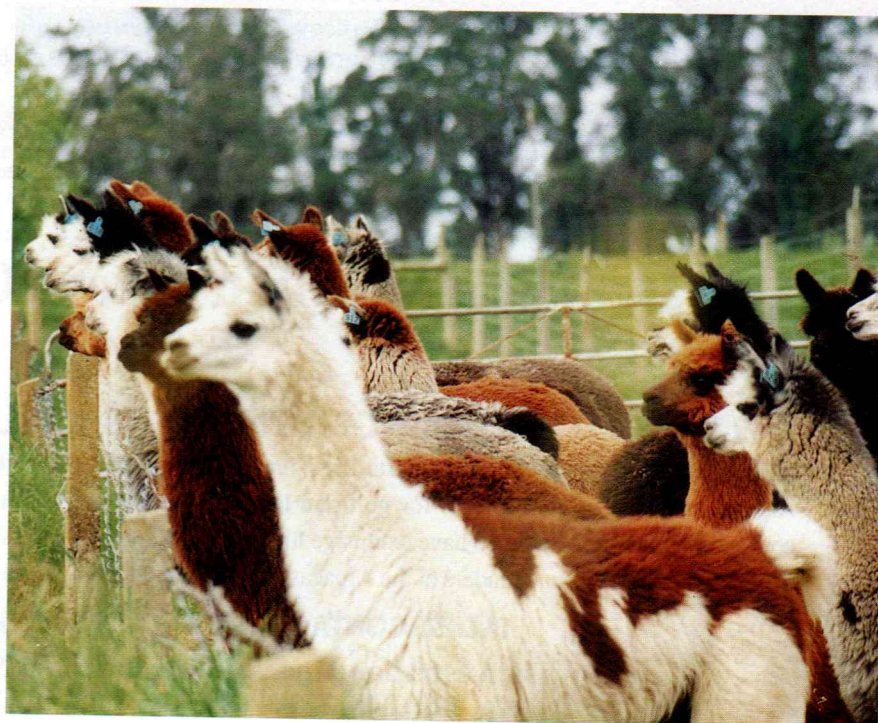
value) and to act as a channelling system to allow water to run down and off instead of soaking into the fine fibre.

The secondary or fine fibres are primarily for protection from the cold as they act to trap air and warmth next to the body. These fibres are highly valued by weavers for their fineness, warmth, softness and optical qualities.

Both vicuna and guanaco annually shed their fine fibres in the summer and regrow this undercoat before the cold of winter sets in.

The two primary differences between vicuna and guanaco fibres are diameter and curl.

The guard hair of the vicuna is about 40-50 microns and guanaco 80-90 microns. The fine fibre of the vicuna is some of the finest in the world, measuring in at 10-15



Daniel Weston Schoenthal, from the Pacific north-west region of the United States, has conducted research on lama nutrition, fibre and genetics over 12 years. He is a computer consultant and operates a fibre measurement laboratory. He and his wife, Bett Weston, own a herd of llamas.

microns, and the guanaco's fine fibre measures 15-25 microns. These may seem like large differences, but the vicuna is also smaller than the guanaco.

The percentage of coarse fibre in both species is in the 20-40% range depending on the measuring method used.

The differences between the Huacaya alpacas and the Ccara llama fibres are much more dramatic. Although both are domesticated llamas they were selectively bred by the native South Americans for very different purposes.

The alpacas were carefully bred for thousands of years as a heritable source of meat and fibre. The llama was primarily bred as a pack animal and secondarily as a source of meat and hide products.

The domesticated alpaca is perhaps one of mankind's greatest breeding successes. Beginning with the flighty wild vicuna with a relatively short fleece all the way to the herd-oriented long-fibred domesticated alpaca. Many factors were taken into account in that long meticulous process.

The domesticated alpaca is perhaps one of mankind's greatest breeding successes.

Quality fibre means constancy in length, diameter, colour, softness, curl and so on. All of this was accomplished over the lengthy time that formed the process of domestication.

Because the coarse guard hair was picky in the final product, it had to be removed one way or another.

The long term solution was to gradually reduce its percentage in the fleece by selective breeding. Modern day alpacas have as little as 3% or less coarse fibre in the major fleece areas.

This selective removal of coarse fibre has had interesting side effects. The tensile strength of the fine fibre increased as the variability of its diameter stabilised. Although diameter of the fine fibre increased slightly

from an average of 20 to 25 microns, it retained its softness.

The ability to shed was also lost so that it became necessary to manually cut off the fleece in the early spring as opposed to collecting the shed fibres from rocks and brush or plucking it from the trapped animals.

Protection from the rain was greatly diminished and this most likely limited the areas where the alpaca could be raised.

The Ccara llama was bred as a pack animal, a completely different pur-

pose yet ultimately one of great importance for a people whose natural resources and communities were spread out over a very large area. As a pack animal, its intelligence and the corresponding ease of training was of primary interest to breeders.

Other requirements of the breed were the ability to handle the stress of a pack load and the harsh environment. It was also important that they be easily maintained along the trail in terms of food, water and care.

The presence of guard hair was an



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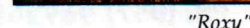
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important trait as it protected the animals from the pack and the weather and also made cleaning the coat easy. The fine fibre had to be dense enough to provide protection from the cold during the night and yet short so as to not allow excess body heat to build up during the working day.

The conformation to carry large loads over long distances was also carefully considered.

Because of their hardiness, other breeds of llamas were most likely de-

veloped for use as only meat and fibre producers for areas that could not successfully raise alpacas. Historical records give us no evidence of a llama that was both a pack animal and a producer of high quality fleece.

There are two very distinct differences between the fibres of the Huacaya alpaca and the Ccara llamas.

The first is the great difference between the percentage of guard hair, having been bred to a minimum in the Huacaya and retained completely

in the Ccara. Some of the guard hair in the Ccara can be more than 120 microns and these fibres represent more than 25% of the total fleece.

The other main difference is the variability of diameter and curl in the Ccara.

In the best Huacaya fleeces there is less than 15% diameter variation along any given fibre. This helps give the alpaca fleece a high tensile strength and an even look and feel to yarns produced from the fibre.

In the Ccara llamas, the fibre diameter can vary by more than 75% along its length and results not only in many weak break points but also an uneven curl and an uneven look to yarns spun from the fleece.

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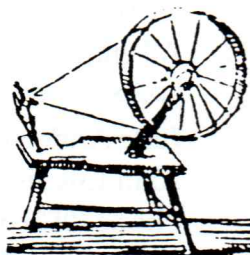
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Of importance to
spinners who dye
lama fibre, the
medullated centre
takes dye differently
from the shell and
can result in unique
uneven shades.

It is of interest to note that the variability also shows to a lesser extent in huarizos and crosses between Ccara and Tapada llamas and is most likely part of the reason that these crosses show abnormal shedding traits.

In looking at these fibres under magnification these differences show quite clearly.

Figure A shows these fibres at about 25X.

The guard hair, fibres #1 and #2, stands out as very straight fibres about three times the diameter of the fine fibres.

Although the fine fibre of the vicuna, fibre #3, is also quite straight, its fineness makes it distinctive from the coarser guard hair.

The fine fibres of the different breeds are not as distinctive at this magnification.

Poor quality alpaca fibre might look more like Ccara fine fibre and excel-

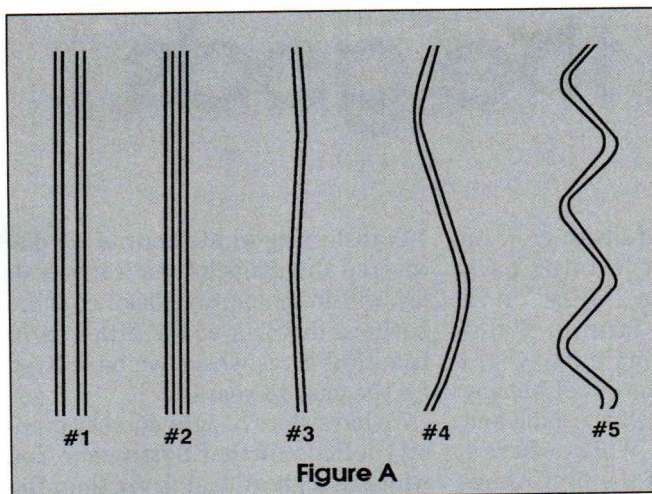


Figure A

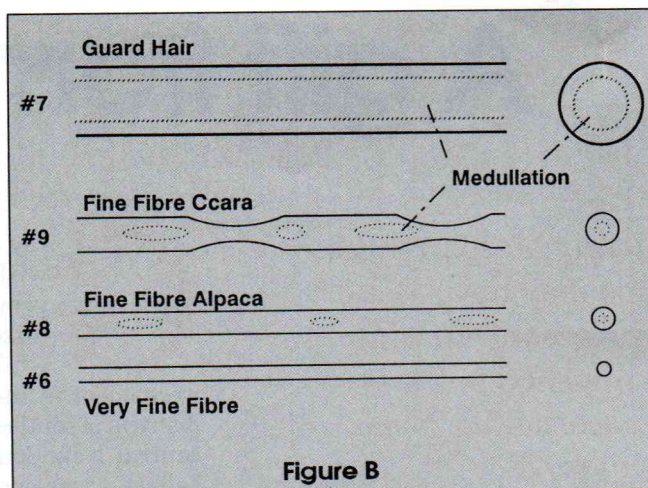


Figure B

Figure A: Relative diameter and curl. 1. Guanaco/Ccara guard hair - about 100 microns; 2. Vicuna guard hair, about 60 microns; 3. Vicuna fine fibre, about 15 microns; 4. Mixed breed fine fibre, about 25-35 microns; 5. Huacaya alpaca fine fibre, about 25 microns.

Figure B: Enlargement and cross sections. 7. Guard hair showing continuous medullation and shell; 8. Huacaya alpaca fine fibre with fragmented medullation; 9. Ccara llama fine fibre showing variable diameter; 6. Very fine Vicuna fibre showing lack of medullation.

lent Tapada llama fine fibre can look closer to the Huacaya. Nevertheless, even at this view, the best fibre will still stand out due to its constant curl (fibre #5).

At a much higher magnification these differences stand out more clearly as shown in Figure B.

The straightness of the coarse guard hair, fibre #7, and the complete medullation of the fibre is clearly seen. The shell may only be 20% of the fibre diameter.

Of importance to spinners who dye lama fibre, this medullated centre

takes dye differently from the shell and can result in unique uneven shades.

At this level of magnification, the differences show between the fine fibres of the Huacaya and Ccara.

Although both show the interrupted or fragmented sections of medullation common in fine fibres, the variability of fibre diameter clearly stands out.

The Huacaya's fine fibre, fibre #8, shows an even diameter along the fibre length where as the Ccara, fibre #9, shows the thick and thin regions

associated with lamas that contain a high percentage of guard hair.

These thin regions lack the high tensile strength associated with high quality fibres and are the cause of breakage or shedding in the field as well as causing undesirable traits in spun yarns.

Careful observation of analyses of the fibre traits of our best animals and how those traits affect the goals of our breeding programs, coupled with careful breeding practices, will bring the best results to the future of alpacas as a fibre producing animal.

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A gift from the gods

Jenny Morgan thinks she may have found the answer to what happened to the unicorn after Noah sailed off.

Gray and I both grew up with a farming background, Gray on a mixed farm in Wales while my early years were spent in the fine wool Merino districts of southern Queensland and central New South Wales where I believe I was one of the first recognised jillaroos.

Helping out in the shearing shed as a roustabout or piece picking I watched the amazing talents of the old wool classers, who also advised on the selection of stud rams for use the following season.

It was here my interest in natural fibre began.

Economics took both of us off the land and into city life. Gray was just starting in a career in electronics and I was working as a computer programmer in London where we met and married in the 1960s.

I convinced him life in Australia was pretty cool. When we found ourselves living in Adelaide and could combine our mutual love of the land with a corporate life, we bought our first property south of Adelaide raising cattle, horses and goats.

Transferring to Melbourne we discovered the magic of the Yarra Valley, within commuting distance of the business districts, so we settled on 70 beautiful acres where we have lived for the past 18 years.

We have since bought another property a little further north near Yea which is a great deal dryer than the Yarra Valley. We find the cattle do much better there than in this rather wet part of Australia.

Fat lambs and vealers are produced by our Yarra Valley neighbours with the larger holdings, while we are surrounded by some of the best known names in the wine industry. Apples, cherries, peaches and strawberries add another dimension to this fertile valley, and now the elegant alpacas can be seen adding their charms to an ever increasing number of properties.

The winters are long and cold, with an extremely high rainfall (50 inches), snow falls on the surrounding hills, and frosts can be rather severe on the fingers in the early mornings but, to compensate, the very hot weather of summer is short and droughts such as experienced by other parts of Australia are almost unknown. Green pick, even if it only paspalum, is available right through summer.

Pastures are rye and clover with a good mix of all the well known weeds, but we are lucky in that there are no burr or thistle problems to speak of hence very little vegetation contamination of our fleeces.

Along with the Angus cattle, which we keep mainly at Yea, we breed Angora and Anglo Nubian goats and Tukidale sheep (which are specialty carpet wool producers with a fully medullated fibre and well suited to our wet conditions), and then came alpacas.

As a child I can remember my mother referring to anything alpaca with great reverence. It was almost as if it was spoken in italics, but I

Gray and Jenny Morgan own Amberdale Alpacas at Coldstream in Victoria's Yarra Valley.



Gray and Jenny Morgan take a closer look at their fleeces.

must admit from whence it came was completely unknown.

Several years ago we saw a photograph of some crias and fell in love.

Word that these beautiful fibre producing animals were in New Zealand and possibly being permitted entry into Australia circulated among our mohair producing friends.

I remember telling my mother that one day we would love to own some and her advice was that life was too short to wait for that one day to come and asked what was wrong with now.

It was wonderful advice. Following several phone calls and assistance and advice from several kind people, we found ourselves anxiously awaiting the arrival in Australia of three pregnant females and an introduction to a exciting new interest.

We filled the months before their arrival reading everything we could lay our hands on (which is not much) so that we would be able to cope with the new arrivals.

We need not have worried. Our



Part of the Morgans' flock.

three ladies together with a young white male moved onto our property, calmly settled in and proceeded to make themselves completely at home with a minimum of fuss.

The only animals stressed by it all were our Anglo Nubians. The alpacas - always on the look out for an open gate and a new horizon to investigate - wandered through into the Anglo Nubians' yard and shed area, the Nubians took one look at these inter-

lopers and bolted out the gate and up the hill.

The alpacas were delighted with this response and, sure that this was a new game for their benefit, took off after them.

Visualise if you can a herd of large Anglo Nubian goats, udders and ears flying followed close behind by a swarm of leaping, cavorting alpacas.

On reaching the top of the hill the Nubians realised they were being fol-

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These wonderful "companion animals" are easily trained to pack, drive and ride.

A few pregnant females and weaned males have just been released for sale, providing a rare opportunity to enter this new industry.

Excellent males are standing at stud.

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A youngster finds the Yarra Valley to his liking.

lowed and positively flew back down again, much to the delight of the alpacas who followed in hot pursuit.

As they thundered past for the third time my daughter and I were almost paralysed with laughter.

To add the alpacas to our property required no alterations or additions to our existing farm facilities. Fences, shedding and yards were all more than adequate for their requirements.

Sheds to suit

A large hay shed no longer used for hay due to the introduction of the round bales proved a hit. They seem to love the large open shed with its warm dry floor, and spend hours lounging in it. Smaller, closed sheds seem less acceptable to the discerning newcomers.

The dams are also one of their favourite haunts and - summer and winter - they love a paddle and dip in the water. We found on hot days if a

dam was not accessible they would actually sit down in any available water trough indicating a great need to lower their body temperature.

Now, whenever we have any alpaca away from a dam, we place a 6 ft diameter x 2.5 ft deep fibreglass trough in the paddock and half fill it with water, these they use as a dam substitute.

We were advised that anything we did for sheep and goats would be okay for an alpaca.

We have followed this advice now for nearly two years and they appear to have thrived under our conditions.

Due to our high rainfall and heavy clay soil we were rather concerned

how the alpacas would survive their first winter with us. Once again they took to it all like the proverbial duck.

Having selected the Tukidale sheep for their black feet, and battled foot scalding in the Angoras for years, you can imagine our delight when the alpacas came through that first winter with feet in perfect condition.

Also the fleeces showed no signs of water damage and two crias born in June with only a couple of nights spent in a shed have grown on beautifully, taking all the cold wet conditions in their stride.

In fact, the alpacas show a great deal of indignation if we fuss over them even when the icy wet winds sweep over us.

Four crias have now been born on the property. The birthing process would have to be the most civilised affair in the animal world.

How many times has the life been squeezed out of my arm while assisting a cow calving; how many nights

have we sat up in the freezing cold with a goat who waits till 6am to produce, just in time for us to begin our day's work again?

Here is an animal who waits patiently and quietly till you have had that morning cup of coffee, sorted out the rest of the farm for the day and then oh so quietly and easily presents you with what must be the most delicate looking infant, who within hours staggers to its long spidery legs, has a quick drink from mum and then proceeds to take off for a quick exploratory run. Amazing!!

How many nights have we wandered the paddocks with a spot light endeavouring to keep those ever vigilant foxes away from our new lambs and kids?

One morning we sighted an intrepid fox who had the audacity to set foot in the alpacas paddock. Trumpeting wildly, the matriarch of our alpaca herd, head snaking low along the ground, took off after him. Hey presto! No fox.

We have never worried since, confident our alpaca babies are safe.

We are now blessed with nine wonderful females, a saucy wether, a young male and we were lucky enough to be invited to share a lovely light fawn male with several other breeders.

At this stage in the development of our herd this was a wonderful idea. It has enabled us to use a superior male over our small herd without it being excessively expensive and would thoroughly recommend this idea to other small breeder groups.

Access to top quality males is essential in herd improvement.

The future

We would like to see our herd grow to perhaps 100 breeding females and all going well this is quite possible. They are not a labour intensive animal and as we are approaching what could be called "advanced" years feel we could still manage that number, whereas doing battle with what quite often can be an aggressive bulk of beef seems less appealing.

Top quality lucerne and clover hay brought in from northern Victoria has always been one of our staple feeds for all our stock and the alpacas



The Morgans' daughter, Ceinwen, shows off one of their crias.

appear to be doing very well on it together with our pastures.

They certainly are not voracious eaters and sometimes only appear to eat something offered to please us.

Commercial horse mixes, pellets, grain and lucerne chaff have been offered, but usually treated with disdain. Obviously our pasture and hay provide all they need.

Salt and mineral blocks are available in all paddocks at all times and the alpacas do seem to use them.

Standard 5 in 1 vaccinations are carried out and worming with Ivomec in summer and autumn seem to be keeping the stock healthy.

Vitamin B1 and B Complex are on hand and a 3ml injection given to ward off any after effects of stress where necessary. To date our vet bills reflect a very healthy group of animals.

Showing animals is not our scene. For many reasons we do not believe that it in any way improves the standard of the breed as many of the

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animals which are shown successfully are raised and kept in what can be a very artificial manner and these same animals kept under paddock conditions may not necessarily be the best producers.

However, from a PR point of view it is always good for the breed and possibly for this reason it is a necessity.

Perhaps more emphasis on fleece judging could balance this in the right direction.

Fibre assessment

We have always been keen on fibre production. As well as subjective assessment we use all forms of objective measurement available to increase our knowledge and improve our stock.

We are recording all fleece weights at shearing and micron measurements every six months using our projection microscope and also the Fibre Fineness Distribution Analyser service available through the Melbourne College of Textiles.

This service is readily available and extremely economical considering the amount of information gained. The Australian merino industry uses testing services extensively, especially on all rams used for stud purposes. To-day they produce one of the finest and most even fleeces in the world.

The alpaca industry can only benefit from following these basic procedures and must, as a result, in the not too distant future be able to move out into a world market with a product of which it can be proud.

Selection of quality males is vital. Wethering of those males not in the top percent should be encouraged.

If we want a future for the Australian alpaca fibre industry we must start now and aim to produce only the best.

For anyone considering entering the industry we offer very positive support. The alpaca would have to be one of the easiest animals to maintain and also the most rewarding.

These gently intelligent animals give so much more than a beautiful fleece:

A stroll down the paddock to be met by the troops, all quite delighted to see you. To sit quietly in the grass with them while one meditates on their future is very relaxing and reassuring or to enjoy the silly antics of the babies in the late afternoon sun is more than one could ask.

A mystery solved?

The story of the mythical unicorn carries a strange fascination. What did happen to those mischievous independent animals who refused shelter on the ark?

Surely those nimble-footed creatures leaped and pirouetted their way to the Altiplano to escape the flood, there they found security so shed their horns and became clad in a fibre exceeding all others in softness.

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Adventures in the Andes with alpacas

This is an extract from the book 'Unsung Heroes and Heroines of Australia' which was produced as a bicentennial project. The chapter on Charles Ledger, 1818-1905, was written by Terri McCormack.

Terri McCormack is a historian by profession and has for many years been a freelance writer and researcher.

In November 1858, the citizens of Sydney were treated to the spectacle of hundreds of llamas and alpacas grazing in the Domain.

An apparently grotesque combination of long-necked camels and woolly sheep, they were a bizarre sight behind which lays story of high adventure linking Australia's history with that of the wild Andes country of South America and one of the most remarkable men ever to visit our shores.

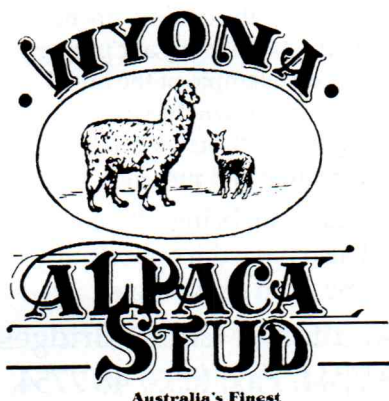
Charles Ledger, born in London in 1818, was one of that breed of nineteenth-century entrepreneurs who sought profit, renown and innovative enterprises in unlikely places. By 1842, he was established in Tacna, Peru, as an exporter of cinchona (quinine tree) bark, copper, alpaca wool and vicuna skins. By 1852, his advice was sought by the British Consul on the feasibility of exporting alpacas to New South Wales.

Ledger had long been aware of the



Terri McCormack recently spent five months in Central and South America where the barren beauty of the Peruvian Andes and Bolivian Altiplano was a reminder of Ledger's courage and determination during his three-year trek across this inhospitable terrain in the 1850s.

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Acclimatisation Society medals marking Ledger's achievement in bringing alpacas and llamas to Australia.

wool-producing potential of these valuable animals. Despite stringent restrictions on their export by the Peruvian Government and continual obstruction from his Indian workers, he had built up a herd of 600 at his estate on the Peruvian-Bolivian frontier in the hope of a change of policy or a revolution.

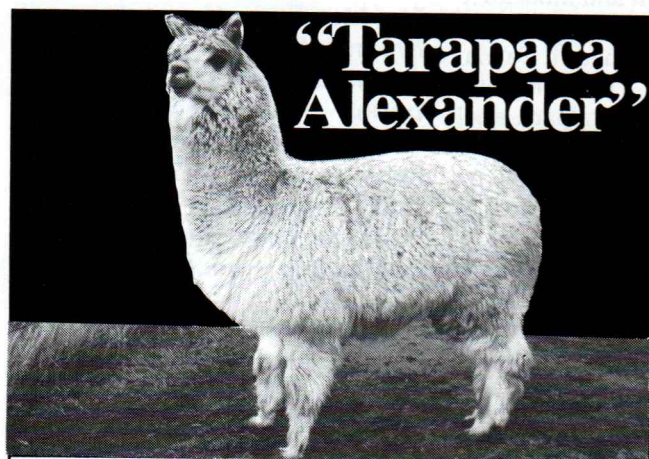
Having been discreetly assured of the support of Her Majesty's Government for his extraordinary enterprise, Ledger visited NSW and found the Monaro district suited their husbandry. Governor Fitzroy was enthusiastic: "If

you succeed in introducing 100 alpacas only into the Colony, we will treat you with the same liberality as the McArthurs ... you shall have a grant of 10,000 acres."

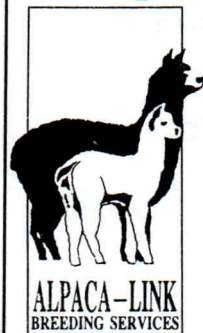
Returning to South America in May 1853, Ledger rejoined his flock and shepherds who had already begun their epic trek from Peru through Bolivia and the Argentine to the Chilean coast. In their five-year journey, the expedition traversed some of the world's highest and most inhospitable regions where attacks by vicuna-hunting bandits were a constant threat as was death through starvation or exposure. In August, 1856, Ledger managed to foil an attempt by a Bolivian military force to arrest him and his property. He received assistance to drive his flock across the Argentine and arrived at Coplapo in Chile in April 1858.

"Only those acquainted with the country and its habitants can form any ideas of the difficulty and dangers I had to surmount," said Ledger after his arrival in Australia, but some appreciation of the terrors and beauties of the lands through which the expedition passed can be gained from a sketchbook now in Sydney's Mitchell Library. The naive charm and humour of these sketches, drawn by the unknown artist Santiago Savage, do not disguise the hardship and perils encountered during this remarkable journey.

In Valparsi, Ledger incurred debts of 6000 pounds for freight, fodder, salaries and insurance before embarking



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Taking water to the animals in the Andes.

with 336 animals and 13 shepherds in 1958. The mountain-bred animals suffered greatly from seasickness. But on November 28, 275 animals - 184 alpacas, 11 llamas, 74 crossbreds and six vicunas - were landed at Sydney.

From their spectacular lodgings at the Domain, the flock was moved to the Saphienbury estate near Liverpool. Alpaca meat received favourable reactions at fashionable dinners and Ledger was awarded with medals from scientific societies and the 1862 London Exhibition for his efforts. By this time, however, his hopes of being generously reimbursed by the Government had been dashed and he was obliged to accept a Government offer of 1500 pounds for the flock with the proviso that he remained as superintendent on an annual salary of 300 pounds with which to maintain the remaining five men.

When the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria expressed interest, Ledger immediately began organising further exports of alpacas and vicunas of superior breed. In the prevailing climate of inter-colonial rivalry, this was interpreted as a breach of faith by the then Minister of Lands, John Robertson, and Ledger's battle with entrenched and short-sighted bureaucracy culminated in his suspension from office in August 1862 after a heated interview with the Minister.

His appeal to the Governor, Sir John Young, for recompense for his efforts was rejected because of lack of any record of promises given by the British Consul in Peru, necessarily



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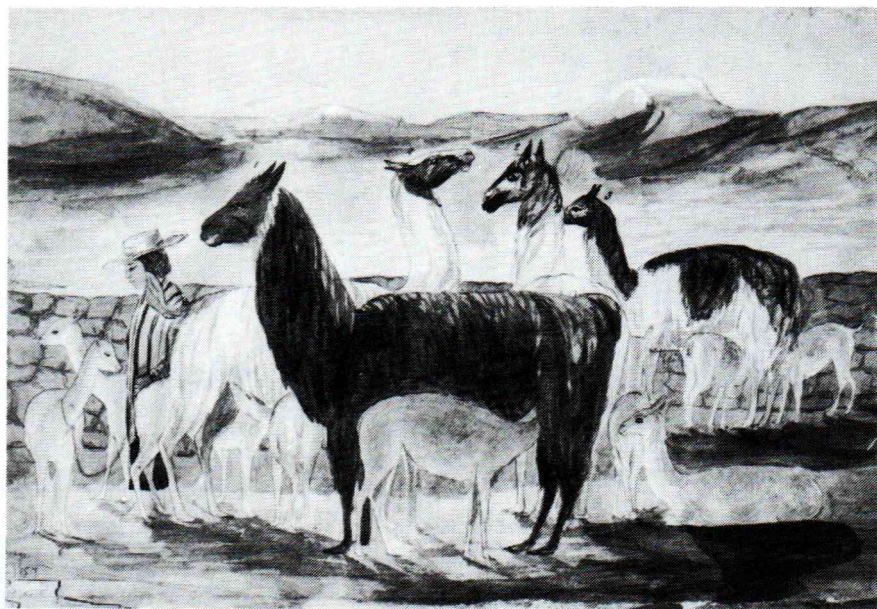
verbal, and by Governor Fitzroy, since deceased.

Having failed in his attempt to sue the NSW Government, Ledger returned to his estranged family in Peru in August 1864 "unable to support the expense and delay and abandoning all hope of ever obtaining justice".

The remaining animals failed to be sold at auction and were given away to farmers and zoos. The failure of the enterprise was attributed to the low rate of increase and coarse hair of the animals but the powerful merino lobby may also have played a part.

In 1920, the Lands Department acknowledged: "Mr Ledger always affirmed that if the Government had carried out his suggestions and taken the flock to the Monaro district in the first place, a different end would have resulted."

On his return to Peru, Ledger was, as he anticipated, met with extreme hostility and a price was reputedly put on his head. Undaunted, he became engaged in another far more successful and beneficial project. Circumventing Peruvian and Bolivian



A sketch of some of the llamas during the trek.

export regulations yet again, he smuggled out seeds of the cinchona tree which were bought by the Dutch Government and successfully cultivated in Java.

Later known as Cinchona Calisya Ledgerianna, these trees provided an inexpensive source of quinine. By 1900, Java supplied two-thirds of the

world's supply of this life-saving drug. However, for his part in supplying Ledger with the original seeds, his servant, Manuel, was starved to death by the Bolivian authorities.

After living in the United States, Argentine and Uruguay, Ledger was back in NSW by 1895. Although, in 1897, the Dutch Government recog-

Coping with phosphorus deficiencies in alpacas

A number of Australian and New Zealand breeders have reported problems with phosphorus deficiency.

It seems to be a bit of a misnomer because the vets have generally agreed that the problem is not so much the lack of phosphorus available to the animal but its ability to absorb it.

The problems have been reported particularly through the winter months. Symptoms are:

- restricted movement in the animal, walking slowly or stiffly;
- failure to grow and thrive in crias;
- angular limb deformities; and
- general lethargy, sitting down more frequently than usual.

General agreement among the vets involved in both Australia and New Zealand is that the problem

arises from the lower levels of UV light available to the animals during the winter months.

Alpacas come from an area with extremely high UV light and our winters, in particular, do not provide anywhere near the same amount.

Sunlight provides Vitamin D to the animals and Vitamin D is very important in the assimilation of phosphorus. This results in a chain reaction: Vitamin D deficiency leading to phosphorus depletion.

Vitamins A and D work together and one of the richest natural sources of both is cod liver oil.

Some breeders have opted for this as a monthly drench through the winter (20ml for adults and 10ml for crias). As it is safe and inexpensive it is a good idea to use it as a precautionary measure as well as a treatment.

Vitamins A and D are also available

in an injectible form, but care is needed in dosing. It is an oil-based rather than a water-based liquid so the body cannot get rid of excess dosage, which can be dangerous.

In problem animals, breeders have also provided phosphorus to get in animals' levels back to normal in the norm of either injectible phosphorus or DCP (dicalcium phosphate) powder mixed in liquid and drenched.

Reported problems so far have nearly all been with dark-coloured animals (black, chocolate brown). This is consistent with similar reported problems with black sheep.

It seems that the dark wool absorbs the UV light before it can get through to the animal's body.

Another precaution to take is to avoid mating dark-coloured animals for late autumn and winter births.

nised his services to humanity by granting him an annuity of 100 pounds a year, when Ledger died at Leichhardt in Sydney on May 19, 1905, his estate was valued at only two pounds.

A man of vision and indomitable perseverance, Charles Ledger was both an entrepreneur and a public benefactor to whom peril and vicissitude were small obstacles. Well might the NSW graziers have felt threatened by his supreme confidence in the fine quality wool he expected to produce from his strange animals: "If my views are carried out or I live long enough to carry them out, NSW will be celebrated as the only country producing this 'non plus ultra' in wool. I spare no trouble or expense and I can only hope that parties of enterprise in NSW will supply the means to make me realise my fond hope and expectations."

Sketches courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Sydney.



Alpacas watch while Ledger washes in a stream.

A touch of heaven in the Yarra Valley



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US alpaca breeders put their best on show

In June, Carolyn and Allan Jinks attended the first North American Alpaca Conference at Estes Park, Colorado. Carolyn reports on the event.

Carolyn and Allan Jinks run Benleigh Alpaca stud at Moolap near Geelong, Victoria.



Allan and I, and fellow Australians Clyde Hal-dane, who was working in South America at the time, and Sandi Walter Keane, enjoyed the four activity-filled days of lectures, demonstrations and an alpaca show.

At the evening meeting which opened the conference, the Australian Alpaca Association was praised for its alpaca promotion video and it was suggested that copyrights be obtained by the AOBA.

We were proud to see our video being shown continuously and groups of Canadians and Americans clustered around to see it. It really put Australia on the "alpaca map".

The seminar was run differently to the two held so far in Australia. Before the conference, participants paid to attend a selection of lectures by leading speakers and demonstrations of fleece sorting, shearing, pregnancy testing and handling of animals were held continuously.

This worked well as groups at lectures were limited to about 40 which gave a quite personal approach.

I had elected to attend two half-day lectures by Murray Fowler (the vet who wrote the "pink book" or "alpaca bible"). He covered prem crias and

neonatal care as well as general health issues. Murray's no-nonsense approach reminded people not to "over fuss" with these hardy animals, letting observation be the keyword in preference to intrusion.

Our local vet, Ewen McMillan, had recently returned from working with LaRue Johnson in the US and I was keen to hear what this world-renowned alpaca vet had to share.

During his lecture, it became apparent that local climate, feed, pasture and health procedures will vary considerably so owners must work in conjunction with their vets to achieve ideal results.

Many Americans were amazed to discover that Australian alpacas live outside all year. Many of their animals are in barns for much of the time.

The alpaca show was eye-catching. As we are so accustomed to seeing white coats on handlers, the novelty of an alpaca being led by a lady in a tuxedo drew more attention to her than her animal. Not all were as dramatic, but black and white clothes were required.

Two social highlights were a luncheon and fashion parade.

The parade showed hand-fashioned or knitted clothing. The cream hand-spun, hand-knitted alpaca jumper from Australia was equal to the best there and created comment as, in the US, it would be called a sweater. They thought the word jumper rather cute.

The finale to the four days was a Peruvian feast, an extravaganza and fun night. Those dressed in Peruvian costume added much colour. A major raffle - with prizes such as stud services, a pair of male cria, farm banners or weekends in the Bahamas - was a great fund-raising exercise.

For everyone who attended the conference - from Canada, Great Britain, Australia and the US - the event will hold happy memories and a feeling that this new industry is definitely international and here to stay.

LEFT: An alpaca show, Colorado-style - formal dress for the handler and a 'poodle cut' for the animal.

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Food, glorious food

American veterinarian, Karen Baum, who was one of the speakers at the AAA seminar in Tocal, gives some practical advice on how to feed your animals.



Dr Karen Baum runs Little Doc's Veterinary Care in Huddleston, Virginia, US, and is president of the Llama Association of Mid-Atlantic States. She is involved with the llama industry at all levels - owner, manager, officer and veterinarian.

Each llama has an individual metabolism - on the same diet some will get fat while others lose weight.

The individual animal's condition is the most important guide to the success of your nutritional program. Accurate scales and learning to do body condition scoring (hands on) are essential for precise assessment of your animals' health.

Record keeping is also important. Regular (monthly) review of the records, looking at trends for the herd as well as individuals, is usually optimal but often over-looked.

Generally animals consume 1-3% of their body weight in dry matter daily. Studies to date indicate llamas eat about 2% of body weight daily. This means a 135 kilogram llama will consume about 2.7kg of feed daily, on a dry matter basis. Alpacas weigh in at about half llama weights - a mature female alpaca will weigh 60-70kg.

Feeds are usually discussed on a dry matter basis. Pastures generally have 16-36% dry matter. Hays usually are 86-92% dry matter. This means your llama needs to eat 2.4 to 5.7 times as much pasture as hay to

consume an equivalent amount.

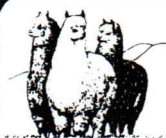
Grass has higher moisture (64-84%) than hay (8-14%). There are other composition changes besides moisture content when forage is processed for hay.

When calculating how much hay you will need, multiply the sum of the body weight of all llamas by 3% by the number of days hay is to be fed.

This will allow for some wastage, discarding of spoiled bales, a prolonged feeding season and weight gain of young animals.

For example, if you have 10 llamas at 135kg (1350kg), five llamas at 90kg (450kg) and four llamas at 34kg (136kg) your total animal weight is 1875kg. So, 1875kg by 3% is 56.25kg per day. Multiply this by, say, 120 days (the number of days depends on your geographic location and management) equals 6750kg of hay.

'Lama' is not a spelling error - it is the species name for South American camelids and covers llamas, alpacas, vicunas and guanacos.



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This is a guide. Exact amounts depend on the total nutritional program and the type and quality of hay.

Concentrates (grains) should always be less than half of the diet on a dry matter basis.

Too high a proportion of grain can cause an acid indigestion type condition. Too quick an introduction to richer feeds can also cause indigestion, enterotoxemia (over-eating disease) or polio (PEM, polioencephalomalacia). Grains tend to be high in phosphorous.

The amount needed will depend on the type and quality of forage feed, the condition of the lama and compensation for growth, pregnancy and lactation (milking).

Most of the foetal growth occurs during the last trimester of pregnancy, the last 3.5-4 months.

Concentrates should be built up slowly - by 100 grams a day - to the desired level.

A guide in pregnant sheep and goats is to build up to 1kg of grain a day for late pregnancy. Sheep and goats are similar in weight or smaller than alpacas but much smaller than llamas (about half or less).

Sheep and goats frequently have multiple offspring but the total weight of all offspring may not be any more than the weight of a single baby llama. The demands of foetal growth should be similar for sheep and llamas. Sheep have a very efficient digestive system, as do llamas.

Another period of severe nutritional demand is early lactation (milking). The first two to three months would be the heaviest production.

Another general rule for sheep is one kilogram of concentrate (grain) per three kilograms of milk produced. If a 15kg llama cria drinks 20-25% of body weight per day the dam must produce at least 3-3.75kg of milk a day. An average alpaca cria weighs 6-7kg.

When the rule is applied to llamas the dam of the newborn should be fed 1-1.25kg of concentrate a day.

This would be adjusted according to production, body condition and weight of the mother and growth of the baby.

Based on information available, previous calculations and practical experience,

the average llama needs 1-1.4kg of concentrate a day during the last two to three months of pregnancy and the first two to three months of lactation (milking), when grazing a moderate pasture or consuming clean grass or mixed hay.

Some females will need more for a longer period, in which case a higher protein grain may be more desirable. The level of protein in the grain which should be fed will depend on what the level is in the forage (pasture and/or hay) being consumed.

Another period of life in which llamas need special nutritional attention to achieve optimal growth is the first 12-18 months of life.

Crias will often begin nibbling on solids the first week. By the time they are weaned they should be accustomed to creep feeding. Besides eating grain with their mothers, crias should have access to their own grain, in an area where the bigger animals cannot gain entry.

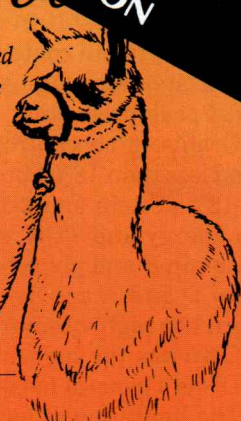
From weaning to 12-16 months they need supplemental concentrates. The

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amount and protein level will depend on the forage being consumed.

More protein and energy are needed during the heavy demand periods - growth, pregnancy, lactation, work.

The diet needed for maintenance of a mature, adult which is not in late pregnancy or early lactation can be fairly simple. Many do well on a good pasture with fresh, clean water as well as salt and minerals available.

Grasses such as timothy, Kentucky bluegrass, fescue, orchard grass, brome grass can contain 4-20% protein and often have 8-15% protein, on a dry matter basis.

The protein content will be affected by adequate nitrogen fertilisation and harvesting in the immature stage. If improperly managed, non-legume grass forages will contain less than 10% crude protein. Most grass forages contain less than 0.9% calcium.

Combining grasses with legumes will improve the calcium level (needed especially during growth, pregnancy and lactation) and the protein level.

Legume forages such as alfalfa and red clover produce a palatable feed which is higher in protein content (12-

The diet needed for maintenance of a mature, adult which is not in late pregnancy or early lactation can be fairly simple.

25%) and quality as well as high in calcium (over 0.9%).

Alfalfa has excellent vitamin A activity when harvested and is rich in vitamin D as sun-cured hay. Alfalfa usually has 1.3-1.5% calcium and 0.24% phosphorous.

Humid seasons and frequent, unplanned rainfall during harvesting result in a poorer quality product and decreased protein content. As the crop matures it contains more stems which become less digestible if harvested past peak production.

Grains, or concentrates, contain less than 20% protein and less than 18% fibre by definition. Most grains contain 8-12% protein and 2-11% fibre. They are generally high in energy and TDN, niacin, thiamine and moderate in vitamin E and phosphorous. Most grains are low in vitamin D and A activity, calcium and B vitamins. Yellow corn has high vitamin A activity.

Corn has the highest TDN (total digestible nutrients). TDN is a general measure of the nutritive value of a feed.

The limitation of using TDN as a measure of feed energy is that it does not take into account losses such as the energy used for digestion.

The usable energy of roughages is less than the usable energy for grains with the same TDN. One must look at the % crude protein (CP) and % fibre as well as the TDN to evaluate the relative value of a feed.

Oats make a palatable, readily available feed for lammas.

It has a good level of protein but fairly high fibre which makes it filling (good bulker) without high caloric intake. Oats are usually part of mixed or sweet feeds.

Depending on the hay or pasture available, often a

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higher protein concentration is more suitable during the periods of high demand.

Sorghum grain and rye tend to be less palatable.

Wheat has high protein, TDN and palatability but tends to be cost prohibitive for livestock feeds.

The other grains are used depending on availability and cost, often mixed with various feedstuffs in the ration.

Wheat bran, dried beet pulp and molasses tend to be laxatives. Wheat bran, dried beet pulp and oats are good bulking agents which fill an animal with a lower TDN.

Molasses has negligible fibre, low protein and TDN, high potassium and magnesium. It is highly palatable, reduces dustiness and can be used as a pellet binder in the manufacturing process. If molasses is at too high a level it may disrupt micro-organisms in the digestive system.

The meals contain high protein (21-50%) and variable fibre (<7-31%). The TDN varies widely (52-80%) due to inclusion of hulls in most meals.

Soybean meal is the most balanced, most palatable, lowest fibre and most commonly used meal in the US. Sunflower meal has a rich source of B vitamins. Peanut meal has relatively high protein and TDN but care must be taken that it does not become mouldy. Cottonseed meal can contain gossypol which can have deleterious effects on non-ruminants. Safflower meal and rapeseed meal have low palatability. Linseed meal is supposed to help the lustre of the coat/fleece.

All the meals go through special processing which affects the feed's digestibility, palatability and nutrient content. They are usually used as a small portion of the total diet.

The total mineral content is often called ash. Major minerals are needed in relatively large amounts in the diet or are present in high levels in the body. These include calcium (Ca), phosphorous (P), sodium (Na), chloride (Cl), magnesium (Mg), potassium (K) and sulphur (S).



A good supply of clean water is vital.

Trace minerals are usually needed in minute quantities in the feed or are present at low levels in the body. They include cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), fluorine (F), iodine (I), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo), selenium (Se) and zinc (Zn). There are complex interactions among the minerals. They have numerous functions in the body.

Deficiencies and toxicities are uncommon but can occur.

Most minerals are naturally consumed. Their availability in the feed depends on what form the mineral is

Water is the cheapest, most abundant and most essential nutrient.

in as well as other feed constituents which can tie-up the mineral.

There are feed additives, boluses, slow release boluses (as with selenium), supplements in salt-mineral mixes or an injectable form of most minerals.

Antidotes to toxicities vary but sometimes involve another mineral.

Vitamins regulate metabolism in numerous ways. They are essential for maintenance of life, growth, resistance to disease and normal vigour. Requirements can increase with old age due to less efficient utilisation and absorption. The form of the vita-

min is important to absorption and utilisation. Heat, oxidation, light and certain minerals can affect the stability of the nutrient.

Well-cured hay or green forages are good natural sources of vitamins E, D, A, K, thiamine, riboflavin, folacin and pyridoxine. Cereal grains contain thiamine, pantothenic acid, niacin and choline. Vitamin B12 can be found in proteins of animal origin and fermentation products. Vitamin E

(which works with selenium) is also found naturally in seed germ or germ oils from plants such as wheat germ meal or oil.

Water is the cheapest, most abundant and most essential nutrient. The body is 45-60% water in adults and 65-85% in newborn animals.

Water is necessary for many chemical reactions, transportation of nutrients, elimination of wastes, lubrication, temperature regulation and structural support of cells.

It is lost through urine, manure, respiration, evaporation and milk.

Water consumption increases with increased ambient or body temperature (fever), lactation, pregnancy and increased salt or nitrogen intake.

A general rule is that the basal daily requirement of water is 65-110cc per kilogram of body weight. This means a 50kg animal needs a minimum of 3-5 litres of water per day. There should be at least 3.5 litres of water available per 50kg of animal each day.

This requirement can easily double with heat, humidity, exercise or pregnancy. It can triple with lactation, especially if there are any other demands such as higher temperatures.

Water should be kept clean and cool in warm weather and clean and unfrozen (or warmed to encourage consumption) in cold weather.

Lamas are fussy about their water so make it inviting enough that you would drink it!

Be sure to check the teeth, gums and jaws on any thin animal especially if they are older. The tongue,

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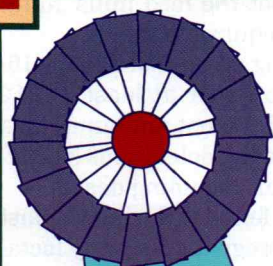
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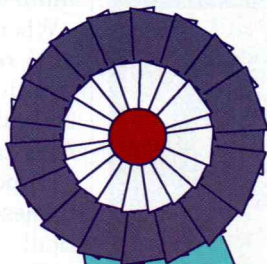
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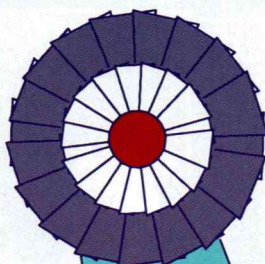
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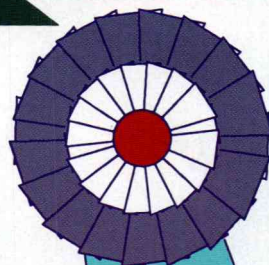
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JUNIOR CHAMPION FEMALE



PURRUMBETE LADY PENRHYN
Second prize
Junior white female

jaw muscles and other muscles and nerves are necessary for an animal to eat. They rechew their cud and eructate (burp) so feed and gas need to be able to come back up the esophagus (gullet).

Any obstruction, narrowing or lack of function from the mouth to the stomach can result in difficulty eating.

No matter how good your nutritional program is, it will be of no benefit unless the animal is able to eat.

Another aspect of a balanced nutri-

tional program that must not be overlooked is parasite control.

Intestinal worms, stomach worms, coccidia, tapeworms and flukes can rob the lama of needed nutrients. This is most devastating during periods of high energy demands. The young, growing animal is often more susceptible to parasites as well as having the increased demands of growth.

Special attention needs to be focused on groups of animals which are crowded, as parasite contamination

concentrates where more animals are gathered. Spreading out the animals in a big pasture reduces the parasite concentration and exposure.

Make sure there is adequate bunk or feeder space for both hay and grain.

Make sure there is ready access to clear cool water in warm or moderate weather; clear, clean warmed water in cold weather.

Have the trace minerals and salt kept in a convenient, sheltered spot to encourage consumption especially in hot weather.

Feed animals as individually as possible, in particular the grain portion of the ration so that individual animals can be supplemented according to their particular needs.

Have your forage analysed. Use the grain most appropriate for your forage. If your hay is 15% protein or less in general I would recommend at least a 15% concentrate for those animals in high demand periods.

Many of the sweet feeds for dairy goats and dairy cattle are 15-16% protein, are highly palatable and affordable.

Deficiencies particular to your region can often be corrected by supplementing the feed.

Another option is to have special feed formulated to meet your needs. Sometimes several farms order together to meet the feed mills' minimum order requirement.

When dieting an animal aim for 10-40% reduction over at least a 3-12 month period. Do not put lamas on a starvation diet as deleterious side effects can occur, including death.

Do not diet females during the last trimester of pregnancy or early lactation!

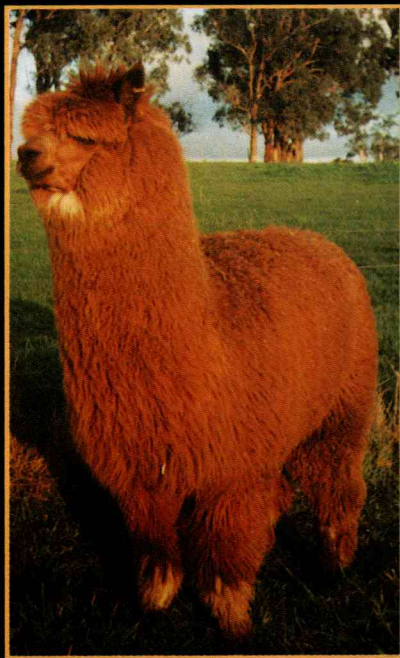
Wait until peak milk production has been reached so that the nursing cria is not deprived of essential nutrition. Dieting in late pregnancy can impair the dam's health as well as the viability of the cria.

Increasing exercise, shearing so there is not complete regrowth of the fleece before cold weather and decreasing pasture time as well as concentrate and hay consumption can help your lama become trim and fit.

Healthy lamas make happy lamas; happy lamas are healthier.

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Just testing!

At the Tocal seminar, Chris Tuckwell discussed trace elements and other supplements. Here he expands on the theme.

Chris Tuckwell is the livestock officer, developing industries, with the South Australian Department of Agriculture. He can be contacted at Box 1671, Adelaide, SA 5001.

Use of the data collection sheets accompanying this article will help collect and collate information relating to blood trace element levels and internal parasite populations of alpacas and llamas in Australia.

If you would like to contribute to the data, please use the sample forms and copy them as needed.

A standard approach to data collection ensures all information collected is compared without any known or unknown bias.

Ideally, I suggest that if you can help with this project you identify 10 animals with a mixture of sex and age (if you have less than this number, sample all animals) and blood and faecal sample them four times a year.

Ideal sample times are mid summer (February), just after the break of the season (April/May), mid winter (July) and mid spring (September/October). Many laboratories offer blood serum trace element profiles and faecal egg count monitoring for herds/flocks at a discount rate. You do not have to test for all the trace elements listed on the form, but at minimum have your laboratory undertake determinations for copper, cobalt, selenium and zinc.

Trace elements

Although some areas of Australia have some particular soil deficiencies which affect livestock production, it is unwise, in my opinion, to assume your stock automatically need supplements of trace elements to balance their diet. In fact, some trace elements are acutely toxic if fed to excess to livestock so across the board supplementation is not recommended.

Trace element requirements of plants and animals are different. Some plants can survive and produce well despite apparent deficiencies of some trace elements. However, stock health and production of stock which graze pastures which have deficiencies can be markedly affected. Selenium, for example, is taken up by plants from soil during growth but it is not essential for healthy plant growth. So plants may be 'deficient' in

selenium and still grow normally while stock grazing those plants may suffer from selenium deficiency.

Soil testing

Soil testing for trace elements does not necessarily indicate the availability of a particular mineral for plant and subsequent animal production. For example, a soil may be rich in copper but if levels of molybdenum are also high the copper is unlikely to be available to plants. In this instance soil applications of copper are unlikely to improve the availability of copper to plants and hence grazing livestock.

My advice is that the first form of testing should be pasture analysis. This will determine whether plants are low in any of the minerals required by livestock. If there is a problem, then look at the soil and determine whether the best course of action is to apply minerals to the soil, the pasture as foliar sprays or to supplement the animals directly.

Pastures are more likely to be deficient during periods of rapid growth - after opening rains in autumn and during the spring flush. During the dry season pastures are less likely to be deficient in minerals and trace elements as most minerals accumulate in plants as they age.

Calcium

The most widespread mineral deficiency in Australian livestock is calcium deficiency. This is often experienced during summer and autumn when stock are fed cereal grain supplements.

All cereal grains are low in calcium and prolonged feeding (more than 4-6 weeks) can result in an induced calcium deficiency.

This can be prevented by feeding stock lime. The cheapest way to feed stock lime is to mix stock lime and stock salt (60:40) in a drum and put the drum near a watering point so that the stock can get easy access to it. The salt attracts the stock to eat the mixture containing the unpalatable stock lime. If they eat it too rapidly add more stock lime. If they do not eat it at all add more salt. Remember, not all alpacas will lick the mixture.

Alpaca trace element assay and faecal parasite egg count records.

[illegible]

Property name:						Laboratory used for analysis:							
Contact:						Laboratory Report Number:							
Date sampled						Please include a copy of your laboratory report if available							
Animal ID	Trace element supplements (last 3 mths) (type, quantity, etc)	Ca	P	Se	Cu	Co	Zn	Mg	Mn	I	Na	Vit B1	Vit E

Ca: calcium; P: phosphorus; Se: selenium; Cu: copper; Co: cobalt; Zn: zinc; Mg: magnesium; I: iodine; Na: sodium; Vit B1:vitamin B1 or thiamine; Vit E: Vitamin E.

AAA Notes

from Dianne Condon

Dianne Condon is secretary of the Australian Alpaca Association and runs Shanbrooke Alpaca Stud at Yarra Glen, Victoria.

Showing

A sub-committee has been formed to set out guidelines and policies for show judging of alpacas.

The committee consists of Kelvin Maude, Dianne Condon, Allan Jinks, Roger Haldane and Karen Caldwell. They will look at running a judge's school for potential judges and set out guidelines on what to look for in animals.

AGM

At the annual general meeting held on August 9, our new committee was elected.

There are two new committee members: Keith Barnett from South Australia and Sandi Walter-Keane from Victoria. We hope that with their new ideas and enthusiasm they will contribute a great deal to the committee.

The president, Alan Hamilton, said that projects to look at over the coming year included:

- development of a regional branch system;
- staging of a major alpaca show;
- setting up of a judge's school; and
- continued education through seminars and field days.

It was decided that at least one and possibly more general meetings are to be held throughout the year at various locations. The committee will decide when and where and members will be notified by mail or through the magazine.

Fibre and alpaca research

The AGM felt we should put our efforts into more research on both fibre and animals. The committee will delegate authority to a sub-committee to report back with a recommendation for an appropriate formula, including budget, for funding further research into the alpaca industry.

Tocal seminar

The alpaca seminar at Tocal Col-

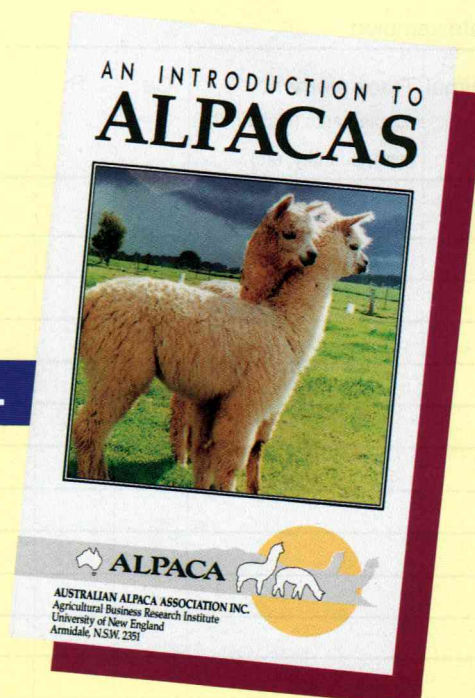
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lege, NSW, was a huge success with 230 people attending.

The two-day seminar had overseas and local speakers whose lectures were of great interest.

Practical demonstration of foot paring, show preparation and halter training were all part of the outside activities. A veterinary session attracted a large audience.

Proceedings from this session, where Dr Karen Baum and Eric Sharpnack spoke, can be obtained from the secretary Dianne Condon, PO Box 202C, Melbourne 3001. Price is \$35 plus \$3 postage.

WA Seminar

The Australian Alpaca Association's Western Australian branch seminar, held in July, was hailed as a great success.

The event, attended by about 90 people, was opened by Kim Chance, a member of parliament representing the Minister for Agriculture, and featured as guest speakers Karen Baum from the United States and Roger Haldane and Cherie Bridges.

A fashion parade featuring wool and fabric garments from Peru, the eastern states and Western Australia was wonderfully received.



Alpaca garments starred in the WA seminar's fashion parade.



Karen Baum led two segments covering neo-natal care, problem breeding and nutrition; Roger Haldane gave practical demonstrations of many aspects of alpaca handling and husbandry and spoke about animal selection; Cherie Bridges covered promotion, marketing, the future and alpaca excitement.

People at the seminar included alpaca owners and those interested in

owning them in the future, representatives from the fashion industry, vets, veterinary students and tutors, and pathology laboratory workers.

The branch also organised spinning demonstrations throughout the day and wools, garments, books and association promotional material were available for sale.

The day ended with a dinner and open forum.

Alpacas on show

A large contingent of owners, breeders and enthusiasts were at the Melbourne Sheep and Wool show in July to watch the alpaca judging.

A crowd of 250 watched as the entrants in each section were carefully examined by the judge Kelvin Maude, who has wide experience in herd management in both New Zealand and Victoria.

After the age sections were judged and the championships began, the crowd's attention became more intense as they exchanged opinions on which animals would win.

Among exhibitors were two relative newcomers to the industry, Kael Francis and Michael Pulo, who exhibited their one and only alpaca, a male, Top Gun, for the first time.

Kael and Michael began looking for an alpaca to buy after reading an article about the animals last November. After visiting a number of studs they found what they instinctively felt to be the right one.

Months of preparation later they had headed for the Melbourne sheep show, hoping their decision had been justified.

Kelvin backed their judgement when he awarded Top Gun the grand championship. As he sashed the champion, Kael and Michael were congratulated from all quarters.

As I said in last issue's report on the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, exhibiting your animals takes time and great effort. The exposure gained from such events as these is what brings people such as Kael and Michael into the alpaca fold.

We need owners and breeders to continue to exhibit their animals to increase awareness of the breed and to consolidate the industry.

Public awareness of the alpaca is an important priority and, judging by the response at the sheep show, we are heading in the right direction.

- Wendy Hill

The Winners

Junior champion, 6-12 months:
Narwarren Boy
Reserve: Shanbrooke Caramello
Champion male over 1 year:
Top Gun
Reserve: Pucara Spiros
Champion female over 1 year:
Shanbrooke Anzac
Reserve: Pucara Roxy
Grand Champion: Top Gun

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When you want photographs to tell the full story contact:

Ken Irwin
Photographer
(03) 866 4396

Coming Events

October 3

Workshop

South Australian alpaca workshop for new breeders. Shearing demonstration and husbandry discussion. Chris Tuckwell will give advice on nutrition. Barbecue lunch. Contact: Trudi Barnett (087) 66 0026.

October 9

Show

Display of alpacas at Shepparton, Victoria, show.

October 11

Open day

Open day and alpaca workshop, South Australia. Shearing by Kelvin Maude and ultra scanning by a local vet. Contact: Lyn Shepherd (085) 24 6150.

October 11

Open Day

Open day at Cedar House Alpacas. Demonstrations of husbandry and grooming. It is the stud's shearing day as well. Contact: Wendy Billington, phone/fax (02) 656 1551.

October 15-17

Show

Alpaca judging will be held for the first time at the Geelong, Victoria Show. Advice and information available. Contact: Alan Jinks for details and entry forms. (052) 50 2737.

October 21

Display

Gourmet and Fashion 2002 at Stoneyfell Winery, South Australia. This event is sponsored by private companies and the SA Department of Agriculture. Margaret de Zwart will be co-ordinating the fashion parade with professional models. Anyone interested in having their garments paraded can contact Margaret. The association will have a static display and helpers and ideas are welcomed. Contact: Chris Tuckwell (08) 226 3994; Margaret de Zwart (08) 294 5795; Trudi Barnett (087) 66 0026.

October 24

Show

Display of alpacas and general information at Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, show.

November 1

Auction

Dalgety Alpaca Classic Auction, Oaklands Junction, Victoria. Contact: Andrew Sloan, Dalgetys (03) 616 6700.

Early November

Open day

Open day, general discussion and ultra scan display at Ascot Farm, South Australia. Contact: Sally McKay (08) 280 7036.

November 10-12

Field days

Orange field days, NSW. Display and general information. Members willing to assist on the promotional stand should contact: Karen Caldwell (063) 83 3531.

November 20

Information

Alpaca evening to share information and alpaca events; Glenelg, 7pm please bring a plate. Contact: Margaret de Zwart (08) 294 5795.

GLENWOOD

ALPACA STUD



Phone
(054) 27-0500

Fax
(054) 27-0685

Laurie & Sandra
Harrison
3 Chain Rd,
Cobaw
Victoria 3442

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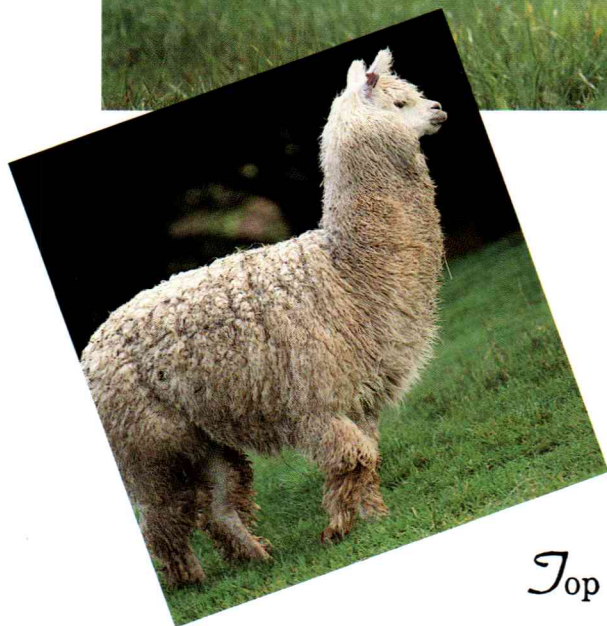
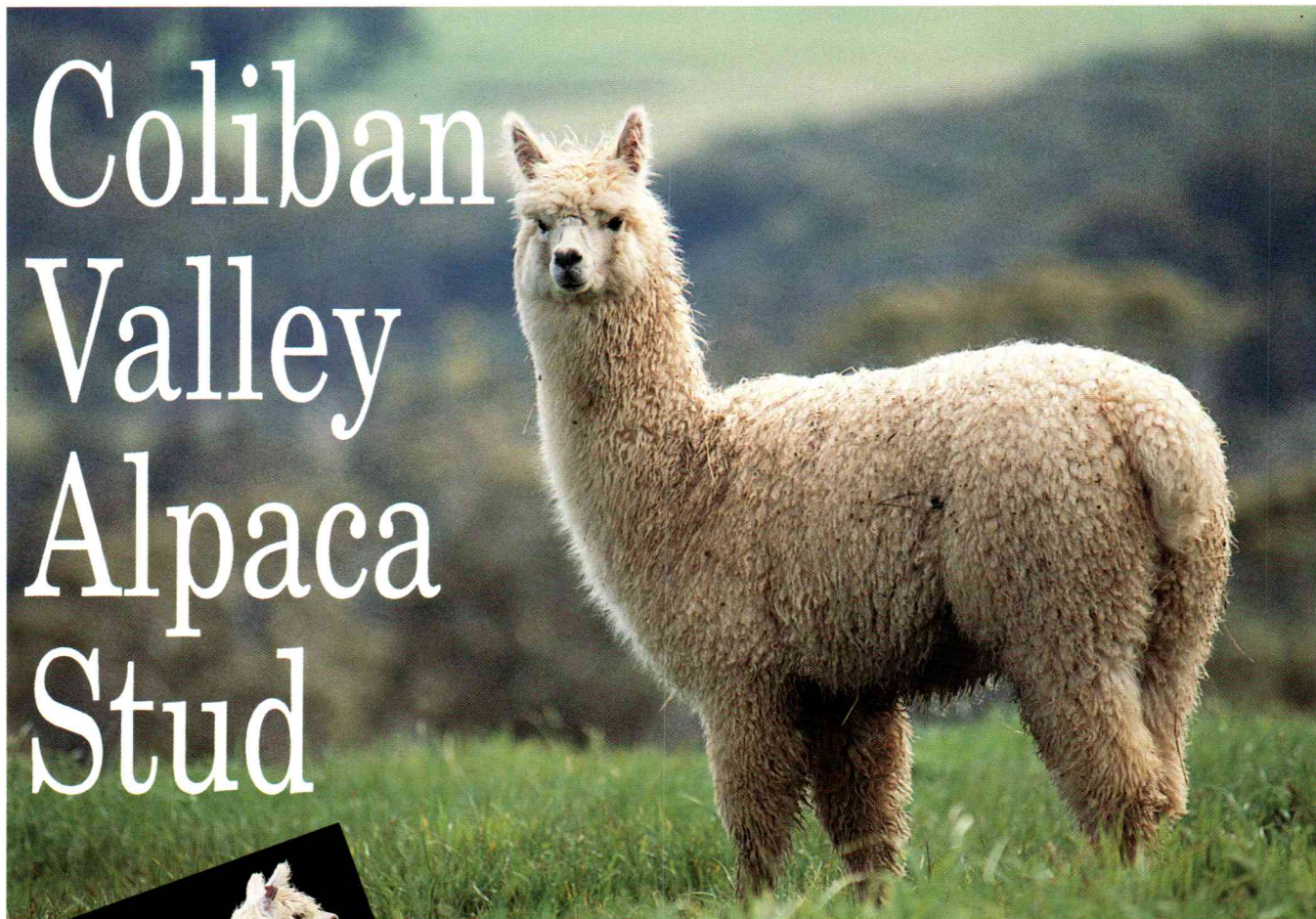
has now established himself as a
sire of the future. At the 1992 Royal Easter Show
(Sydney) his first female Cria won her class
(i.e female 6-12 months).

• *Please phone or fax for appointment* •

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ABOVE: Coliban Valley Umberto.

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