

Alpacas

A U S T R A L I A

WINTER 1993

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**BREEDER
PROFILE**

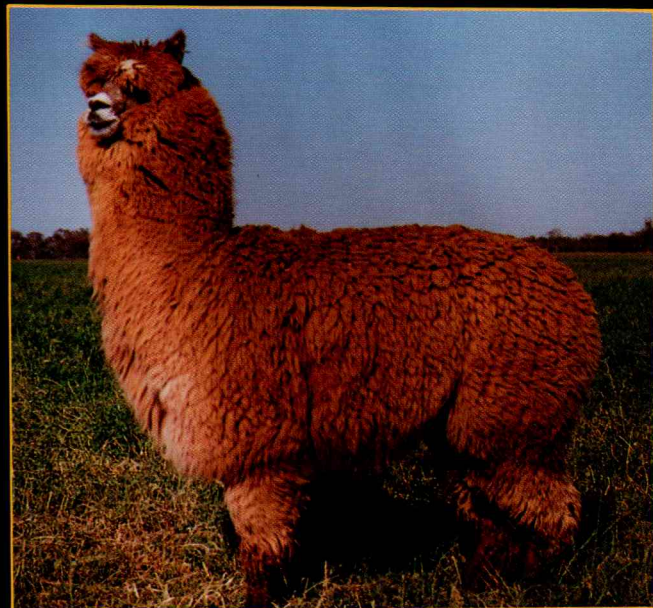
**NZ AND OZ ALPACA
RESEARCH SWAP**

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Cover: "A far cry from South America, Alpacas graze peacefully at Glenlyon, Vic."

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ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

More blue skies ahead for Alpaca Industry.

I AM WRITING this exhausted but elated, after what I believe was our best ever Alpaca Seminar. The professional standard of organisation of the event, the excellent venue and the level of preparation by the speakers made it an inspiring event (read more in Jill Short's article). A lot of new faces this year – it's good to meet the diverse range of new people entering the industry.

Everyone I've spoken to is particularly excited by the idea proposed at the seminar by our President, Alan Hamilton, of the formation of a Fibre Production and Marketing Co-op. Alan was hopeful of a majority support for the idea, but even he was overwhelmed by the 100% support given by every attendee. This venture will give every alpaca breeder an opportunity to be part of the industry in a larger and more meaningful way. By owning shares in a company dedicated to the marketing and sales of alpaca fibre products we can all have control of our own destiny in terms of the ongoing success of our breeding industry. What an opportunity for people considering the purchase of alpacas. They are not just buying an animal, they are entering a strong industry with a united purpose and direction from which they can reap the benefits. You will hear more specifics about this project at the AGM in October.



Proceedings are available for both the main seminar and the vet seminar at a cost of \$23 each (incl. postage) from Jenny Jones, Australian Alpaca Association, 381 Tooronga Road, Hawthorn East Vic 3123.

We have an opportunity to show Australia that there are blue sky opportunities and success stories despite the hard times the country has been through of late. I believe success or failure is a self-fulfilling prophecy and I've got my money on success. Off my hobby horse now and out to admire my animals.

Cherie Bridges
EDITOR

Alpacas
AUSTRALIA

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THE ALPACA INDUSTRY'S FIRST JUDGING SCHOOL

*A milestone was
reached by the
Association when it
trained and accredited
Grade 1 and Grade 2
judges in its first
judging school.*

THE ALPACA INDUSTRY in Australia is in a maturing process. As people invest in their new animals to establish their herds, they are keen to learn how to improve them, what to aim for in the breed. For this reason, the Australian Alpaca Association ran its first judging school in February this year.

Applications to attend the judging school were invited from Association members and each applicant was screened by a panel to ascertain experience with alpacas and other live-stock.

The aim of the judging schools is to establish consistency in judging



Participants at the Association's first judging school

and enable the Association to recommend suitable judges for all levels of shows. Criteria had been established by the Association committee as:

- 65% fleece characteristics (coverage, density, handle, evenness, lack of guard hair)

BENLEIGH ALPACA STUD

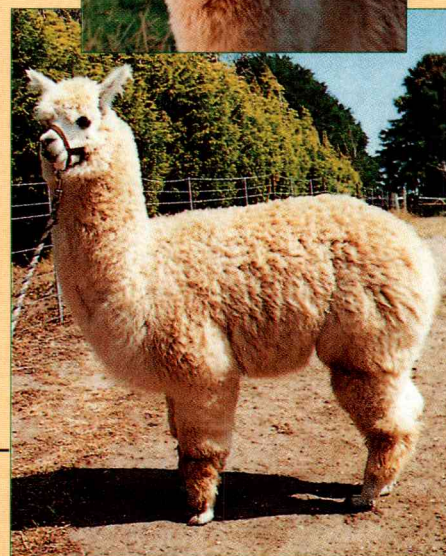
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We congratulate the Australian Alpaca Centre

The Australian Alpaca Centre, Berrima,
NSW, celebrates its first full
year of wholesaling and
retailing fine quality alpaca
products to an ever-increasing
family of alpaca fibre admirers.



The Australian Alpaca Centre also congratulates
Nick and Lindy Polin's success
in continuing NSW's oldest and
finest Alpaca Studs Grand
Champion record, at the Sydney
Royal Show for Coolaroo Alpacas.



The Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

For all enquiries and assistance to new and existing breeders

please contact: Philip or Judith Street

Phone (048) 78 5118 Fax (048) 78 5233

or Andrew Forrest

Phone (02) 290 1100 Fax (02) 290 1104

- 30% conformation
- 5% presentation.

The venue for the February school was the Haldane family's property 'Purrumbete', Camperdown, Victoria. Roger Haldane, one of the instructors, was kind enough to provide fleece and animals for the use of the school. The other instructors were Alan Hamilton, Geoff Halpin, Darrell Bishop and Ian Bucknell.

RINGCRAFT

Ian Bucknell taught ringcraft for judges and exhibitors. Ian is a member of the Royal Agricultural Society Show Committee and is recognised internationally as an authority on sheep and cattle judging.

Ian's primary message was control. The judge should be in control of the ring at all times and determines how the exhibits are to be paraded, lined

up and inspected. He recommended that exhibitors be given more education on presentation as many alpaca breeders are not experienced at showing stock.

The alpacas should lead easily



Ian Bucknell shows how to maintain control in the ring.

from both sides; the exhibitors should be well dressed and act with quiet dignity remembering that they are not just showing their animal but presenting their industry to the public.

JUDGING IN PERU

The trainee judges were shown a video of alpaca judging in Peru, providing a glimpse of Peru's elite bloodstock.

The judging is quick and sure – the judge being incredibly efficient. A quick visual assessment followed by three to four brief fleece assessments was all a judge required to place the animal. His confident and learned approach was worth aspiring to.

RECOGNISING UNDESIRABLE TRAITS

The next step in training was recognising undesirable traits in alpacas.

INCA ALPACAS

HAVE STANDING AT STUD

SNOW SPIRIT

Senior champion
Royal Melb. Show
pure white sire
co-owner's
Jenny & Lindsay
Gadsden

SALES



BLACK MAGIC

Senior champion
Royal Melb. Show
our jet black sire

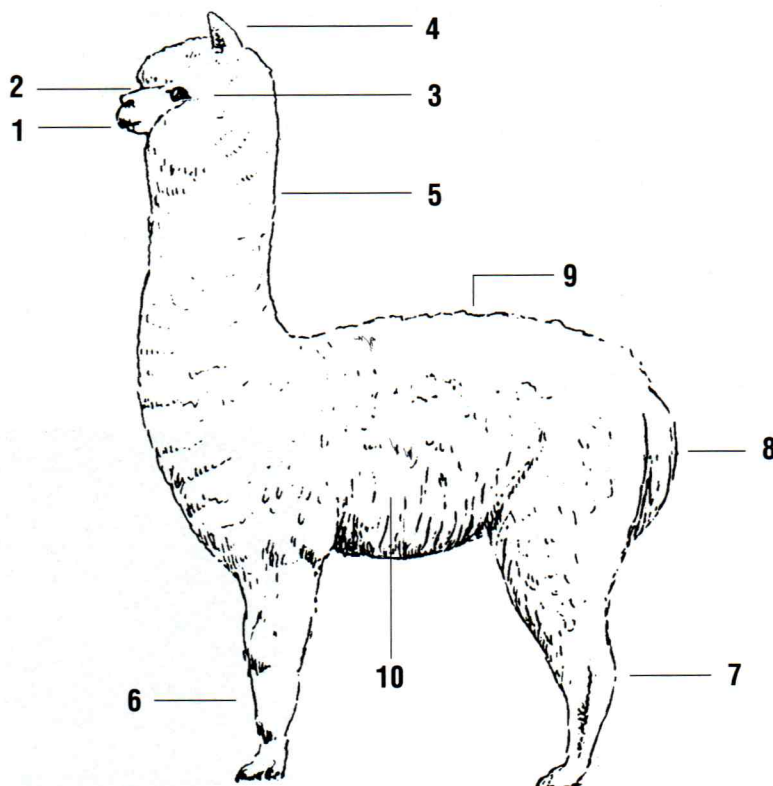
AGISTMENT

Both have superb fleeces, temperament and conformation
Irene & Ken Allston Telephone: (059) 67 3338 - Fax: (059) 67 3634

DESIRABLE ALPACA FEATURES

- 1 JAW – not over or undershot.
- 2 NOSE – broad, medium length muzzle.
- 3 EYES – bright.
- 4 EARS – medium length, well shaped, not banana shaped.
- 5 NECK – in proportion to body.
- 6 FRONT LEGS – straight or slightly deviated but not to excess. Toes pointed to the front and not fused.
- 7 BACK LEGS – straight, not bowed. Not sickle or cow hocked. All feet must stand squarely on their pads.
- 8 TAIL – low set tail.
- 9 BODY – back strong and straight with slight, gentle curve. Ribs well sprung and body well proportioned.
- 10 FLEECE – lack of medulation or guard hair with density and fineness. Good coverage of soft alpaca fibre on legs and head with face cover not to excess.

Animal must have presence, be clean and well prepared.



SUGGESTIONS FOR SHOWING YOUR ALPACAS

- Only show animals with a fleece length of nine months to two years. In animals with a longer staple even two years' fleece can be too long for a judge to evaluate.
- Do not over-groom. Animals should be clean and well presented but not over-brushed or blown as this compromises the handle of the fleece. Shampooing is discouraged.
- Make sure animals' toenails and teeth are trimmed.,
- Teach your animal to behave on the halter and lead from both sides. Practice opening its fleece and touching as a judge would. This will ensure your alpaca behaves in the ring.
- Dress in smart clothing and footwear.
- Don't talk to other handlers during the judging.



- ❖ Raised on the northern slopes of Mount Macedon
- ❖ Home of **MOUNTAIN BLACK LOCH**, excellent solid black male of outstanding presence
- ❖ Alpacas bred for sound conformation and dense fine fleece coverage
- ❖ **QUALITY PREGNANT FEMALES AVAILABLE FOR SALE NOW**

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ALPACA TYPES

Characteristics of the three main alpaca types, huacaya, suri and chili.

ANYONE who has visited a few alpaca studs will be aware that there is a variety of alpaca types. How do they fit together in one industry? Is one better than another? How do they differ?

The genetics of the alpacas are very mixed. Most animals in Australia originated from Chile where they are generally not selectively bred for type or colour, hence the unpredictable colour outcome when breeding.

As our industry matures, there will be distinct goals and aims for breeding. It may take time, but eventually we will be able to influence the type of animal we produce.

There are three main types of alpaca: huacaya, suri and chili, each with its own set of characteristics.

HUACAYA

The true-to-type huacaya has a soft bonnet of wool on the forehead and "mutton chops" on the cheeks. The body wool grows straight out from the body and is dense. The degree of crimp in the fleece varies but the denser animals generally have more crimp. The fleece coverage should be even and extend down the legs.

Huacayas make up the majority of alpacas in South America, United States and Australia. The wool is strong and has good elasticity.

SURI

The fleece has a strongly defined staple. The animal is covered in long, pencil fine locks which hang straight

ALPACAS FOR SALE

Being Australia's largest alpaca stud, we have a great selection of pregnant New Zealand born, Australian born and Chilean females for sale. Many of these fine animals are due to deliver their offspring immediately!

We specialise in assisting new comers into the industry with top quality breeding stock, and helpful, ongoing advice. Advice on any aspect of buying or raising alpacas is only a phone call away.

For a sales list of available alpacas, and a **FREE REPORT** on **INVESTING IN ALPACAS** call now:

Peter & Pauline Williams

Telephone: (052) 67 2353 . Facsimile: (052) 67 2628

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REPORT**

Investing in Alpacas

~ guide on how to turn \$25,000
into almost half a million
CALL TODAY!

HUACAYA



SURI



HUACAYA AND SURI



down from the body. Unlike the huacaya the fleece has lustre and the feel is more slippery and silky.

Suris are predominantly white or light fawn. The average micron is lower on the suri than the huacaya fleece, but it is flexible and elastic.

The suri is less common than the huacaya or the chili. The estimated Peruvian population is twenty thousand animals – or less than 1% of the entire alpaca population. In the US there are only 250 and in Australia around 30.

The harsh climate in South America is decreasing the Suri numbers. Cold temperatures can be harmful in an animal whose fleece parts along the backline, leaving it exposed to the elements. More benign US and Australian climates, better nutrition and more adequate shelter allow the suris to flourish. They are producing higher live weights and fleece yields and exhibiting excellent fertility.

CHILI

This is the term used in the US to describe the animals that fall between the huacaya and the suri. These animals have a more open fleece than the huacaya with wool that is more "falling". However, they do not have the defined pencil staple of the suri. Chilis have a fringe of fleece on their forelock which is long and straight. On average, they are softer handling than the huacayas, not as dense and generally do not yield the same weight of fleece.

It was suggested at the judging school that, Australian breeders will mate their chili females to suri alpacas as they more closely resemble this type and are more likely to throw suris. Females of the huacaya type, will more likely be mated with huacaya males. Eventually the breeds in Australia could fall into two distinct types – the huacaya and the suri.

ROSEWORTHY SEMINAR HAPPY ALPACA ... ING AT ITS BEST!

By Jill Short

*Amid breeders,
investors, onlookers,
mice, a joey and
a baby, participants
were treated to a
very full and
exciting program.*

HELD AT ROSEWORTHY Agriculture College in South Australia, the 3rd Alpaca Industry Seminar attracted 250 participants and was described by many, if not all, as the best yet!

The oft repeated ice breaker, "Where are you from and how many have you got?", could be heard repeatedly as people networked and swapped experiences. In addition the rooms were warm (a surprise after Tocal) and the food was good. As always fun was had by all on the Saturday night despite the large number of injuries which appear to have occurred as a result of overzealous bush dancing.

Dr. Murray Fowler, a veterinarian for 36 years and author of the "pink

book", *Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids*, both entertained and informed with his presentations on Reproduction in the Male Alpaca; Dental Care; and Hypophosphatemia and Rickets in Alpacas. Hypophosphatemia, for those not familiar with the term, is the cause of low blood phosphorous. According to Fowler there is little question that the immediate cause of at least one form of rickets in alpacas is hypophosphatemia.

GENETICS

There was a lot of lively discussion on genetics following papers from Dr. Raul Ponzoni, Principal Research Scientist (Genetics) with the Primary Industry Branch, Primary Industries



Making friends at Roseworthy.

(S.A.) and Chris Tuckwell, the Livestock Officer for Developing Industries with the SA Department of Agriculture.

Both cautioned about the inherent risk of inbreeding, pointing out that relative to other livestock industries, we have a very limited gene pool in Australia.

Choice of herd sire was seen as critical with great emphasis being placed on ensuring that all owners use only "top sires" to breed from.

Chris Tuckwell created much excitement by suggesting that unless breeders have a large population of alpacas they shouldn't be selecting any males from their own herds for breeding as it is odds on they will make a big mistake. He advocated relying on the data bases of the large herds to make objective assessments of the most suitable sires for the industry.

In theory it was agreed he made sense, but it is doubtful many went home to transform the young hopefuls in their paddocks to wethers — despite the suggestion which was put strongly by some.

Chris also commented that if breeders keep moving and changing their genetics in an effort to improve herds they could end up worse off. His advice to smaller breeders was to select a stud from which to source sires and to keep with that stud.

Basic Care of Alpacas

For those just starting out on their adventure with the alpaca, Cherie Bridges provided some very useful information and practical advice on her own experiences as a breeder.

Starting with taking the animals home she covered shade and shelter, water, paddock care and pasture grasses before moving on to discuss care of the alpaca itself. Supplementary feeding, inoculation, parasite control were all covered as well as cria care, weaning and pregnancy.

The Tara Hills Experience

George Davis currently oversees the Alpaca Research Project at Tara Hills in New Zealand where for three years close observation of alpacas has now been undertaken. Some findings of particular interest included:

Mating females – at a minimum weight of 40kg (10-12 months of age) is possible with no long term detrimental effect on dam or cria. Crias have been observed to grow slightly slower to 4 months but by 6 months have nearly caught up (2kg difference).

Weaning – at five months seems optimum for both cria and dam.

Shearing – annually in October works well at Tara Hills with cria also being shorn. Greater fleece yield occurs by shearing cria and then shearing again as Tuis rather than waiting until they are Tuis. They have also had no evidence that shearing in late pregnancy has a detrimental effect on the dam.

Coat Colour – records from 130 births at Tara Hills have shown:

- When both parents are white 75% of cria are white, 25% white with either brown or black patches.
- When one parent is white 26% brown & 51% black progeny.
- When both parents are brown roughly 66% brown and 33% black.

The results generally support the notion that white is recessive to coloured and black is recessive to brown. There is also no evidence of any dominance of sire over dam or vice versa.

LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Geelong vet Dr. Ewen McMillan who looks after approximately 1200 alpacas and llamas at his practice spoke on pregnancy diagnosis and showed slides of ultrasound pictures which more resembled rural topography than alpacas. McMillan advocated ultrasound as the best diagnosis of alpaca pregnancy and suggested that in his experience females should be 12-18 months old and at least 50kg in weight before mating. It is heart-



Tara Hills

LOOKING FORWARD WITH FIBRE

Set against a solid background of Alpaca Information one of the highlights of Roseworthy was the suggestion that the Association form a Fibre Co-operative to participate in the development of a commercial textile company.

Following addresses on fibre from Professor John Leeder and Ken Allston, Association President Alan Hamilton made the comment that Australia and New Zealand should be able to lead the world in Alpaca Fibre Production given our favourable climate, abundance of land and the state of the South American fibre industry. He then floated the idea of a fibre co-operative comprising members of the Association but separate from the Association.

Two classes of shares would be issued. 'A' class shares (entitling the holder to voting rights) and 'B' class fibre shares.

All members of the Association would be invited to purchase 'A' class

shares with a maximum allowable shareholding of say 10% to ensure no dominance by any single shareholder. Co-op members and interested Association members would then be asked to contribute their fibre for three years to the Co-op in return for 'B' class fibre shares.

After three years fibre would be purchased from members commercially.

The Co-op's charter would be to add value to the industry's fibre by processing, manufacturing and marketing highly saleable, commercial products.

The Seminar overwhelmingly endorsed the concept, one which will help ensure that the Alpaca Industry is here for the long term, not only with an exciting fledgling livestock industry but also a viable textile one.

The Association will now look at the proposal in depth with a view to having a firm proposal for members to consider early in 1994.

ening to hear Australian vets speak with authority as for so long we have had to rely solely from the advice and experience of other countries.

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

As in previous years the program also included practical sessions on halter training, correct show procedure and assessment of quality, led by Roger Haldane and Geoff Halpin. Some concern was expressed at the lack of definitive criteria given for both showing and assessing quality. It was pointed out that the industry is still very much feeling its way on standards. This is considered necessary to avoid imposing standards which may, in the longer term, lead the industry down the wrong path by encouraging traits which may prove undesirable once more is known about the optimum commercial direction for the industry.

The seminar concluded with an Open Forum on the Sunday afternoon where questions on everything from the importation of Suris to 'Johne's diseases' were raised and answered and the formation of an Australian Llama Association was announced. Many stayed on for the Veterinary Seminar on the Monday.

Congratulations must go to the Association and its Administrative Officer, Jenny Jones for organisation of what was a first class event.

CHÉ THE SURI

Standing at Stud in Victoria from early October for a limited season only.

With soft brown eyes, excellent conformation and lustrous light fawn fleece Ché is the first Suri Male at stud in Australia.

An ideal sire for those looking to breed to finer, softer handling fleece.

Particularly suited to the "Chili" type. Softens, adds lustre and staple definition to fleece.

This is a rare opportunity, not only to improve the quality of your Huacayas but maybe to breed your own Suri (50% chance).

For further information call:

Cherie Bridges : HamiltonBridges

Telephone: 053 48 7744 Facsimile: 053 48 7754

Jill & Martin Ruzicka : Bracken Ridge (AST) Alpacas

Telephone: (03) 819 1454 Facsimile: (03) 819 3583

MARKETING PUSH PAYS OFF IN AMERICA

*Mike Safley
reports from
America on the
AOBA marketing
campaign that's
creating intense
public interest and
producing strong
sales growth.*

THE MARKET FOR ALPACAS in America has recently progressed from a steady simmer to a vigorous boil. Both large and small breeders are reporting strong sales. The Alpaca Breeders and Owners Association (AOBA) membership grew by 35% during 1992 and new applications are being received almost daily.

Alpacas have always sold well in the US, but the bulk of the sales were by the larger breeders. During the last few months, buyer interest has been intense and many smaller breeders are now beginning to enjoy strong sales from their ranches.

Why are sales noticeably better and the market broader? Several forces are at work. First, the alpaca is receiving more interest from the general public than ever before. This is a result of more ranches being established and becoming visible across the country. Second, AOBA made a strong commitment to marketing at their 1992 convention in Estes Park,

Colorado – and it's paying off. The concept of Alpaca Fests, which is being promoted by breeders regionally, is generating both immediate sales and long term market development. Regional markets are also being established on the East Coast which complement the strong existing markets of the West.

The AOBA board of directors was instructed by its members to make marketing its number one priority during 1992-93. The board in turn appointed Bruce Barr, Jim Faiks, Bill Graham and myself as co-chairmen of the marketing committee. The committee was given the freedom to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy. Finally, the board of directors demonstrated its commitment to the project by funding \$10,000 in seed money and it promised more funds if needed.

The committee's strategy was to first produce quality marketing materials. Once these promotional tools were completed, the committee retained a public relations firm to promote the alpaca in the local and national news media. All inquiries generated by these stories are directed to AOBA, which then responds by sending each interested party the new marketing information.

The committee created several marketing tools, beginning with an alpaca video, fashioned after the Australian video.



*Alpaca sale and
breeders party
at Julie Otis Congdon
Ranch, Snowmass
Colorado.*

Next, a state-by-state breeders' directory was published, listing advertisements from each participating ranch. Revenue from the directory was used to create a full colour brochure which generally describes alpacas and provides information about their care. Finally, a 28-page Alpaca Investment Brochure was developed to articulate the financial rewards of owning, "The World's Finest Livestock Investment".

1993 AOBA CONVENTION

The 1993 AOBA convention was held at Estes Park, Colorado during the first part of June. Marketing was on everyone's mind and the mood was upbeat. The seminars and workshops were well attended. The speakers polled their audiences about the length of time they had owned alpacas. Fully one-third of the attendees had owned alpacas for less than one year. Many in attendance had not yet bought animals. The workshop on pre-purchase exams was particularly well attended.

The sale barn contained 75 to 100 alpacas, many of which were shown in the halter class show on Saturday. The market committee promoted the event as the largest show and sale in the US. There were few sales until the last day of the event. But starting about noon on Sunday, sales boomed. People began making their choices after a weekend of looking. Breeders left the convention with renewed optimism for the alpaca market.

ALPACA FESTS

The first Alpaca Fest International was held at Northwest Alpacas Ranch during July 1992 in Oregon (see article in *Alpacas Australia* Summer 1992). The event was sponsored regionally by eight breeders. Since this initial event, Rock Run Alpacas of Malvern, Pennsylvania sponsored a similar multi-breeder event. Julie Otis

Congdon of Snowmass Alpacas recently hosted an Andean evening, which featured several breeders, lots of alpacas, a country and western band and an outdoor cook-out.

Each of these events or festivals has been a great success. The publicity that results increases awareness of the host ranch in the local area. The gathering of a large number of

animals attracts lots of people and news media. The breeders generate sales and form closer relationships, all of which fosters future co-operation.

This year's Alpaca Fest International is scheduled for Spokane, Washington in September. The event will run during the inter-state fair, which attracts over half a million people. There will be an alpaca

Capalpa Park

FOR ALL YOUR ALPACA NEEDS



BOOKS

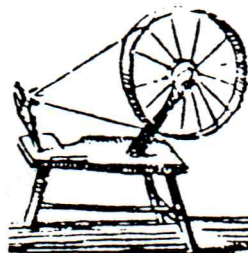
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investment seminar, a halter class show, shearing demonstrations, vet talks and fibre workshops. The host ranch is Castle Hill Farms and there are ten sponsoring breeders. The Fest is being advertised nationally and sales should be strong.

STRONG SALES CONTINUE

Established alpaca ranches from around the US are reporting their best sales. Phil Switzer of Colorado recently sold twelve alpacas in ten days, mostly to first-time buyers. Anthony Stachowski has sold over forty animals since the first of the year. He is now buying animals from smaller breeders. The best news of all is that smaller breeders are reporting sales. Linda and David Livengood of Cloud Nine Alpacas, a small breeder, sold their entire year's production at the West Coast Exotic Animal Show held in Eugene, Oregon during May.

Joan Spiers of Santa Barbara, California recently completed the first US sale of alpacas to Japan. The new owners call Joan regularly for advice. The alpacas are reported to be enjoying their new home. Hopefully they will have more company soon.

GREAT MEDIA

Those of you who are still reading this article probably realise that I am decidedly upbeat about alpacas. But I left the most exciting news for last.

The public relations campaign initiated by AOBA is now coming to life. NBC news aired a three-minute piece about alpacas on the Today Show at the end of June. *Forbes Magazine* did a story about investing in alpacas; it will run this summer.

The National Business News radio broadcast a ten-minute, life interview with me on June 24. CNBC, the financial news television network shot an alpaca segment at Fred and Linda Walker's range in New Jersey, which was aired during July.

AOBA maintains a strong commitment to promoting and marketing alpacas. I was personally encouraged that Bruce Barr, who owns alpacas in both the US and Australia and who served on the marketing committee, was elected to AOBA's board of directors. Bruce will undoubtedly become a strong voice for the continuing development of the alpaca market on both continents.

NEW PROJECTS

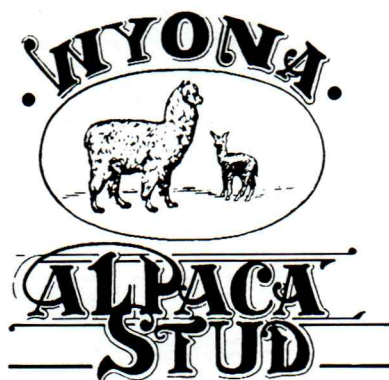
There are several new projects being discussed by the marketing committee members.

One such project is the "infomercial". This would involve the creation of a 30-minute television program which would be broadcast nationally by satellite. Commercial spots will be purchased by co-operating breeders to pay for air time.

There is also talk of the first breeder supported alpaca auction to be held in the spring of 1994. Given the collective effort of the AAA and AOBA to publicise and promote alpacas, the time will soon come when the question, "What is an alpaca?" will not often be heard.

I believe that alpacas today are a ground floor opportunity in a new and profitable, international business. The next two or three years will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to be a pioneer in the art and science of raising and breeding alpacas, the 'aristocrat' of all farm animals.

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KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MATING

Ian Scott, Research Associate with AgResearch, New Zealand discusses the problems that can occur in efforts to achieve a successful yearly cycle of pregnancy and birth.

TO HAVE FEMALES PRODUCE healthy offspring in each year of their productive lifetime is the aim of every livestock breeder. This is not easily achieved. It is especially difficult for alpaca breeders because the gestation length is around 342 days, leaving only three weeks in which to get your alpaca pregnant to achieve a 12 months cycle! There is also a number of physiological factors that can conspire against you.

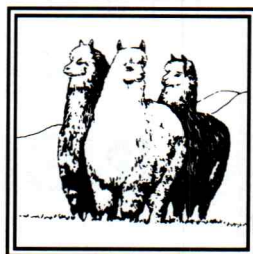
MATING

Unlike most livestock species, female alpacas do not have regular oestrous cycles. That is, they do not come on

heat at regular intervals throughout the breeding season. They do however, have regular cycles of ovarian follicle activity. Over a period of about twelve days a follicle will grow, mature and then regress. This happens time and again so that there are waves of follicle development. At any one time there is usually not more than one follicle greater than 6mm in diameter present on one or other of the ovaries, but there may be several smaller than this. Introduction of a male to a previously unmated female will usually result in the female sitting in a sternal recumbent position, allowing the male to mate.

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There will be times however, when the female is unreceptive, and she will try to run away, or will show aggression towards the male. In most instances, this is simply a case of bad timing, because if there are no follicles of at least 3mm in diameter present on the ovary she will not be receptive. Try mating her again every other day for five days. If she is still not receptive, then the cause is most likely something else. Are you sure she is not already pregnant?

A possible cause of continuous non-receptive behaviour is hypoplastic ovaries, a defect where the ovaries are very small in size, and have little or no follicle activity. Laparoscopy or ultrasound will reveal this condition, and these females should be eliminated from the breeding flock.

OVULATION

Having got your pair of alpacas mating, the next event on the way to pregnancy is ovulation. Stimulation of the cervix during copulation causes the pituitary gland in the brain to release a surge of luteinising hormone (LH) into the blood stream. This LH travels down to the ovaries causing any mature follicles to release an egg (ovulation). Occasionally (about 5% of the time), a female will have a spontaneous ovulation. That is, a large follicle will spontaneously erupt and release an egg without mating having occurred.

Whether following a spontaneous ovulation or copulation, a corpus luteum (CL) will form on the ovary at the point of ovulation and begin to secrete the hormone progesterone, preparing the uterus for a possible pregnancy. This CL will normally persist for about 10 days, during which time the female will not be receptive. If the female become pregnant the CL persists throughout pregnancy, which is why pregnant females remain unreceptive.

In rare instances the CL will survive for up to 90 days although she is not pregnant. This is referred to as a persistent or cystic CL. Diagnosis of this condition is very difficult without ultrasound, as behaviourally and hormonally she will appear pregnant. Once diagnosed, your vet can treat the animal to make the CL regress, and she will be ready for mating in a few days time.

Unfortunately, because of the wave-like nature of follicle development, only about 50% of the females will have a mature follicle at the time of mating. This is the most common reason for females failing to ovulate and become pregnant. Mating each female every other day until she becomes receptive may overcome this problem, but this is very time consuming and impractical in large flocks, and may overwork the males.

Research is currently being carried out at Tara Hills to see if we can control follicle development. This would ensure that mating occurs at a time when we know there will be a mature follicle present.

Sometimes a follicle fails to stop growing at a mature size, and it becomes grossly enlarged, or cystic. The female will usually remain receptive when a cystic follicle is present, but the follicle will fail to ovulate. Follicles will usually only remain cystic for about ten days before regressing and allowing a new follicle to mature. Although a vet can readily diagnose this condition by laparoscopy or ultrasound, because fertility is only temporarily affected, it is most likely to go undetected.

Occasionally there will be an animal that won't become pregnant no matter how many times she is mated.

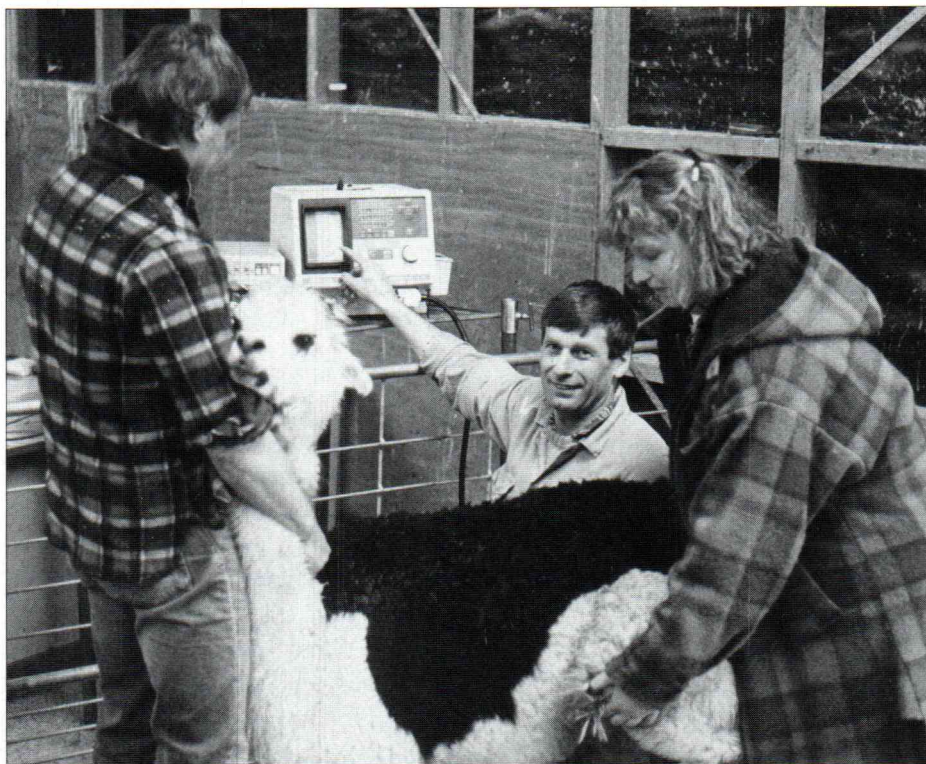
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Ian Scott demonstrating an alpaca ultrasound

In this situation pituitary gland function may be impaired. These females will have normal ovaries that can develop mature follicles, but have an inability to release sufficient LH following copulation to cause ovulation. This can be detected by your vet injecting GnRH (a drug which stimulates release of LH) when there is a large follicle present. Females with impaired pituitary function will not

ovulate, and should be eliminated from your breeding flock.

PREGNANCY

From South American data it has been estimated that foetal loss in alpacas may be as high as 50% between mating and 90 days gestation! Research at Tara Hills and Flock House has shown this figure to be much less in New Zealand at 23%,

but this is still unacceptably high. In sheep, foetal loss is only about 5% up to 40 days gestation. Alpacas (and llamas) are unusual in that they seem to be incapable of supporting a pregnancy in the right uterine horn. This means that in order to survive, an embryo originating from an ovulation on the right ovary must migrate to the left uterine horn. Since alpacas ovulate with equal frequency from the left and right ovaries, this may be a cause of foetal loss. As yet, it is not fully understood why there are no pregnancies in the right horn. The right uterine horn is smaller than that of the left, and therefore may be an inhospitable environment for developing foetus. Also, it appears that when a pregnancy is started in the right horn, the hormonal signals from the empty left horn are stronger and fool the reproductive system into thinking that there is no foetus present. It is hard to reason the evolutionary advantage of such a system, but it is likely to prove extremely difficult to overcome.

A common cause of pregnancy failure in alpacas is uterine infection, which renders the uterus incapable of accepting a developing embryo. Infection may be caused by a difficult birth or retention of afterbirth. The infection can usually be effectively

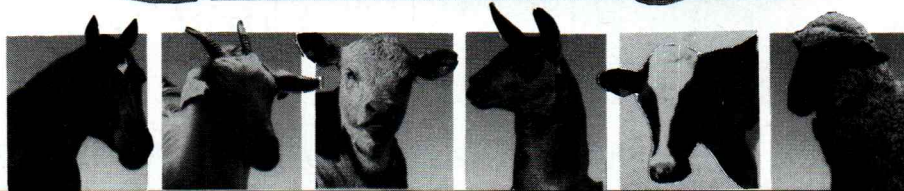
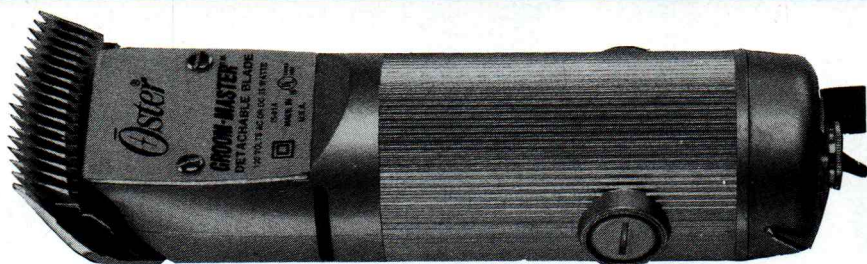
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treated with antibiotics and a uterine flush, but prevention is better than cure. Difficult births are best attended by a vet, who will probably give a prophylactic shot of antibiotic.

Infection may also be caused by poor mating technique by the male.

It is not uncommon for the male to insert his penis in the rectum of the female by mistake, and then withdraw and insert his penis in the vagina. This transfers bacteria which are harmless in the rectum to the reproductive tract, where they may initiate infection.

At the beginning of mating it always pays to ensure that the male has his penis correctly positioned in the vagina, and be prepared to assist him to do so if necessary. Done carefully this will not disturb the mating couple. Stress is also implicated in

foetal loss, especially later in the pregnancy. Fifteen females at about 9 months gestation were trucked for 2 hours from Tara Hills to another district, and three aborted over the following ten weeks. In contrast, all fifteen of the pregnant females retained at Tara Hills gave birth to health crias. It is not known if the abortions were caused by stress due to transportation, a change in feed or a combination of these and other factors. It seems advisable to avoid, if possible, transportation of alpacas in late pregnancy.

Having identified females with reproductive abnormalities and eliminated them from your breeding flock, with careful management a pregnancy rate of close to 100% is quite achievable. Although it is inevitable that there will be some foetal loss, a birthing rate of 80% is possible.

ATTENTION!

ALPACA OWNERS AND BREEDERS

Lorna Howlett, well known author of *COMPLETE BOOK OF PONIES*, *PONIES IN AUSTRALIA*, *THE PONY*, etc. is presently writing the history of *ALPACAS IN AUSTRALIA*.

Owners and breeders are invited to contribute short histories of studs and interesting short incidents they have experienced for possible inclusion. Quality colour and b/w photographs will be considered but all material **MUST** bear sender's full name, stud name and address, which must also be placed on back of photographs. Please send only **COPIES** of photographs. Stud numbers are important.

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A ONE-YEAR-OLD MIRACLE

MILLIE RECENTLY celebrated her first birthday and had her photograph taken with owner Carolyn Jinks to record the event.

Those of you who have followed Millie's progress over the last year need no reminder of her battle to survive.

For those who are new to the Association, Millie's vet, Dr Ewen McMillan has provided the basis for a novel potted history:

There once was a cria called "Millie"

*With a leg that was broken -How
silly!*

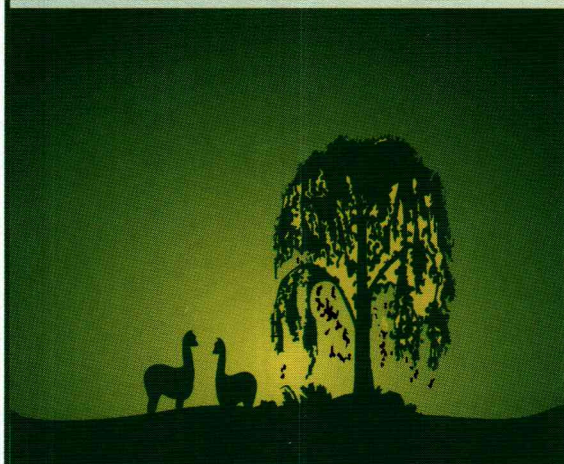
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FIBRE PRODUCTION & MEASUREMENT FOR ALPACAS IN NZ

*Tumen Wuliji et al –
AgResearch, Invermay
Agricultural Centre.
Continuing research
being undertaken in
New Zealand for the
purpose of developing
the alpaca industry.*

THERE ARE TWO BREEDS of alpacas, huacaya and suri. Huacaya is larger, having crimped hair and bulky fleece like that of a Romney sheep, while suri is slightly smaller and grows straight hair, which appears as a slippery and compact fleece like that of an angora goat. All imported alpacas in New Zealand are Huacayas. Alpaca fibre is praised for its natural colours, softness, lustrous, bulky, superb strength, light weightiness and better insulation property.

The aim of introducing camelids into New Zealand is to establish a new specialty fibre industry. Over the past four years our study has been focusing on monitoring the fleece weight and seasonality of fibre growth; investigating the fleece weight components and their relative importance in animal selection, and developing routine techniques of shearing, fleece sampling, classing and laboratory assessments.

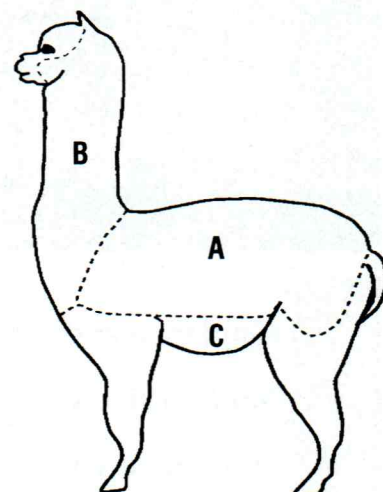
This article discusses briefly the shearing procedure, fleece weight, fleece characteristics and spring liveweight of alpacas at AgResearch Tara Hills Station and a contracted grazing property between 1989 and 1992.

PERFORMANCE RECORDING, FLEECE SAMPLING & MEASUREMENTS

Animal performance was recorded from 1989 to 1992 for live weight at shearing (October), fleece weight and fibre diameter. All fleece were sam-

pled prior to shearing, from the left mid-side region above and mid body line centred on the 6th rib by clipping a patch (c. 12 x 12cm²) with small animal clippers. Clean fleece weight was determined using an air-flow Fibre Diameter Apparatus (IWTO-6). Alpacas at Tara Hills were also used to estimate seasonal fibre growth rates within a defined patch (12 x 12cm) on right mid-side. The patch was clipped using small animal clippers (blade size: No. 30) and expressed as clean dry fibre growth mg/day/cm² area. A series of 12 patches were sampled for 12 full fleeced alpacas in 1989 to determine the most representative site for fibre tests.

Fig. 1 Fleece partition on body regions for shearing.



ALPACA SHEARING

Alpacas should be grouped separately for sex, coat colour and age (i.e. adult, tui and cria), and shorn in the sequence white, grey, brown, black and mixed colours to minimise colour contamination.

Alpaca fleece comprises wool and hair, with wool fibre covering the sides and the loin of the animal and hair fibre covering the chest, belly, head and legs. Therefore the machine shearing technique has been developed for separating these two parts in alpacas.

The animals are shorn lying on their side with the two hind legs tied to a wall. Electric clippers with sheep shearing comb and cutters are used. An assistant holds the alpaca by both front legs, stretching and rolling the alpaca to expose the unshorn parts for the shearer. Shearing is initiated on the right side by first running a blow from the belly line, vertically to the shoulder area towards the withers. A second blow is made along the hair belly line towards the rump, and then repeated blows run lengthwise until the backline is reached.

The fleece is collected and the alpaca rolled over to repeat the procedure on the other side in the opposite direction.

FLEECE CLASSING

Shorn fleeces were classed into colour categories: white, grey, fawn, light brown, brown, dark brown, black, roan, brown and white, black and white and spotted (or mixed colours).

Fleeces were separated into those less than 1 year-old cria (baby), tui (1 to 2 year old) and adult, and sorted into: (a) premier fleece (back, side, part of shoulder and rump); (b) neck; and (c) oddments (apron, bellow, legs, head, shankings, tail and other extreme hair pieces) as illustrated in Figure 1.

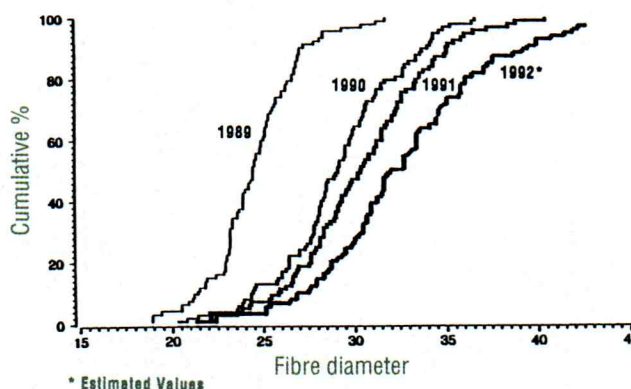


Fig. 2
Change in fibre diameter for two herds over three fleece productions (1989 to 1992) expressed as cumulative % of animals at each fibre diameter grouping.

RUFUS YOUNGBLOOD



Rufus Youngblood formerly of Glenwood Alpacas, now residing in the Hawkesbury Area of NSW established himself as a top sire when his daughter Angelique won the 6-12 months class, Royal Easter Show (Syd) 1992. His son Chipper won the 6-12 months class, taking out Reserve Champion Male at the Royal Easter Show (Syd) 1993.

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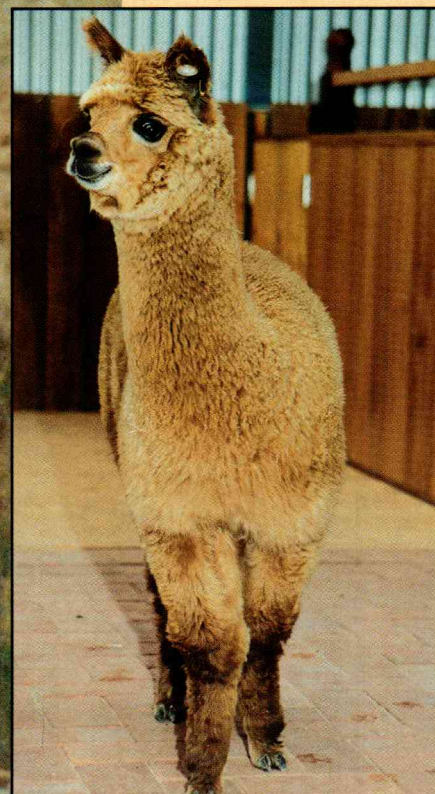


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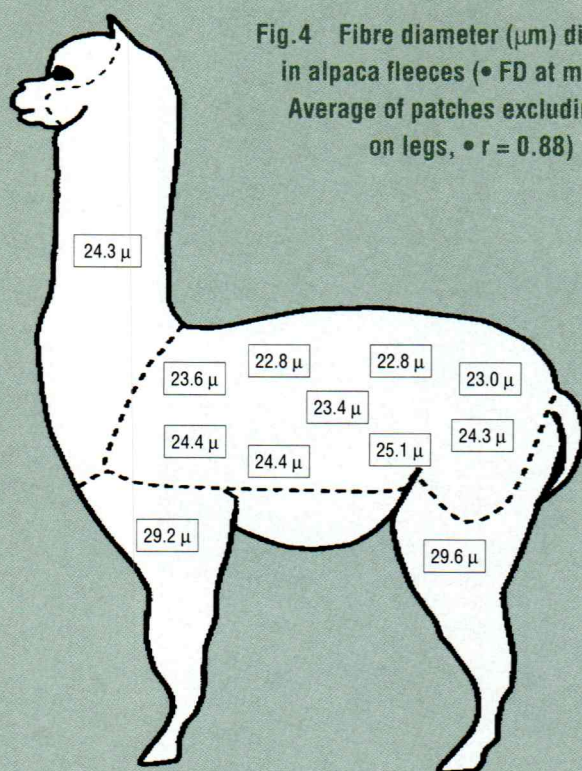
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Fig.4 Fibre diameter (μm) distribution in alpaca fleeces (\bullet FD at midside = Average of patches excluding that on legs, $r = 0.88$)



Premier fleeces were graded according to fineness into baby ($<22\mu\text{m}$), extra fine ($22-4.9\mu\text{m}$), medium fine ($25.0-29.9\mu\text{m}$), and coarse ($>30.0\mu\text{m}$) categories.

Extremely coarse guard hair and kempy fleeces were also separated from the main lots. Fleeces were also sorted for length

into short ($<6\text{cm}$), medium ($6-12\text{cm}$) and long ($>12\text{cm}$) grades.

ALPACA PERFORMANCE IN NEW ZEALAND

Greasy fleece weight, clean fleece weight and staple length were similar in production year 1990 to 1992, while shearing liveweights were

increased from 64kg at 1989 to 66kg, 68kg and 71kg respectively in the subsequent years for the herds.

Machos (male) produced higher greasy fleece (+59%), clean fleece (+56%) and staple length (+13%) than hembras (female).

The fleece weight of alpacas in New Zealand were similar to those reported in South American literature.

The alpaca fleece show a higher yield than sheep wool due to its lower moisture and grease content as a result of fewer sebaceous glands in the skin. The major impurities of the fleece were vegetable matter and soil caught up in the fleece through their "dust bathing" habits.

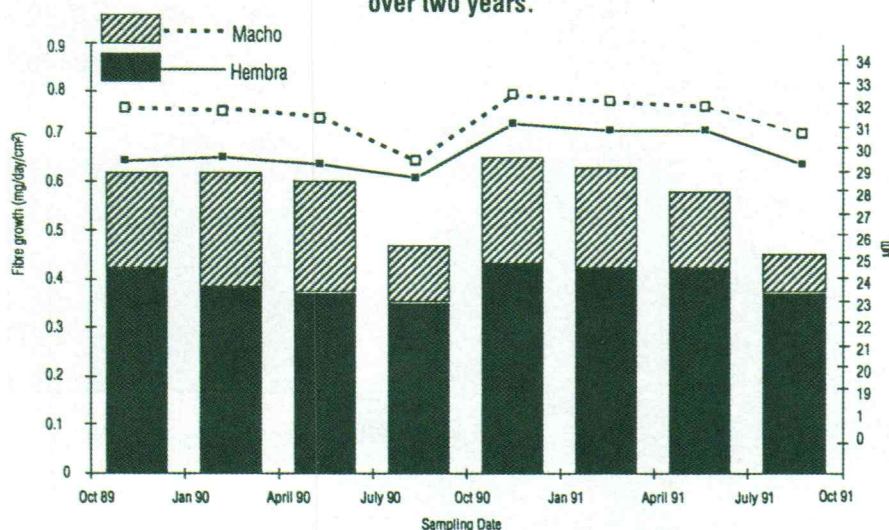
There was a significant coarsening in fibre diameter from the first shearing to the second and third shearing by $4.6\mu\text{m}$ and $5.8\mu\text{m}$ respectively and thereafter an approximate 1μ in a year.

The overall coarsening of fibre diameter in the herd is likely to be the result of both better nutritional condition in New Zealand and increased animal age of herds (see Figure 2).

Seasonal fibre growth pattern (mg/day/cm^2) was monitored in alpacas. Fibre growth rate and fibre diameter changes in each of the three monthly periods for machos and hembras were as shown in Figure 3. Males appear to grow more and coarser fibres than females, though both sexes have the same patterns being higher in summer/autumn and lower in winter/spring.

Fibre diameter was $31\mu\text{m}$, $27\mu\text{m}$ and $25.4\mu\text{m}$ in 1991 short fleeces for adults, tuis and crias respectively, which were markedly coarser than the corresponding age groups in Peru where $17.7\mu\text{m}$ and $27.5\mu\text{m}$ were reported for one year and 6 year olds. Variation of fibre diameter over the body regions of alpacas show that the

Fig. 3 Fibre growth rate on the mid-side in seasons over two years.



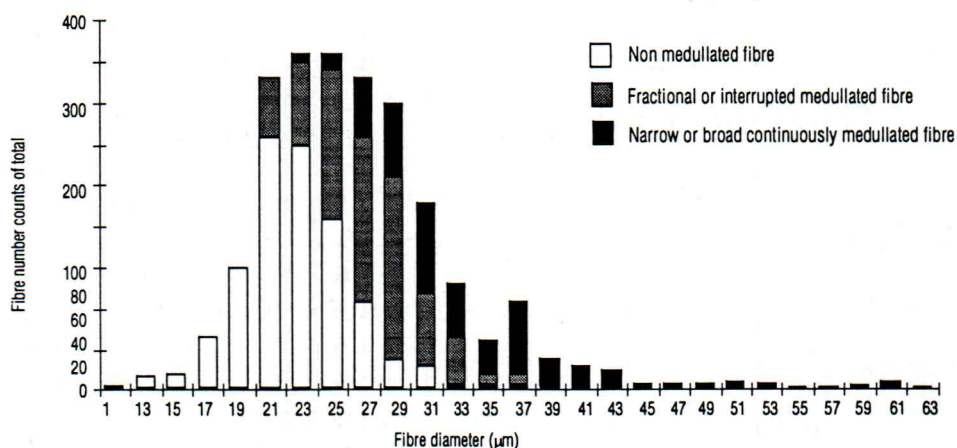
site serial 12, which is centred on the 6th rib above midbody line (correlation coefficient with other series excluding belly and legs is $r = 0.9$) is representative of main fleece and neck (a + b) for fineness tests (Figure 4). Medullation rate and its degree progressed with fibre diameter increases (Figure 5).

Based on the South American experience, our observation and the current market trends, breeding should concentrate on: uniform colours in priority of white, fawn, grey, brown and black; improved fleece weight and staple length; reduced fibre diameter and medullation rate. The steady improvement

in liveweight, fleece weight and fibre quality of alpacas farmed in the temperate environment of New Zealand indicates that camelid species can

adapt and be farmed in various conditions, and with their specialty hair fibre production alpacas may offer an opportunity of diversified farming.

Fig. 5 Fibre diameter and medullation



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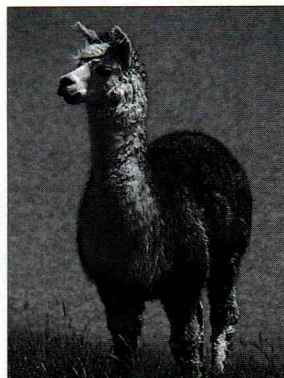
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BREEDER PROFILE

By Mike James

*This is the first
"Breeder Profile",
a new Alpacas Australia
feature which will
appear regularly.
To begin the series, who
better to profile than
Geoff and Nancy Halpin,
pioneers in the
Australian alpaca
industry.*

TEN YEARS AGO, Nancy Halpin would have laughed off suggestions that she would one day be a successful public speaker. These days, it's routine for Nancy to be addressing large gatherings of alpaca enthusiasts; part of everyday life to be promoting and selling woollen garments; a daily delight to be developing an on-farm zoo. Ten years ago Nancy hadn't heard about alpacas.

In 1983 her husband, Geoff, then a leading Angora goat breeder, found himself frustrated in his efforts to diversify and develop new fibre industries. During a trip to New Zealand Geoff voiced his frustrations to a friend who suggested alpacas might provide a solution. As Geoff says, "These little guys sounded all right!"

On returning home, Geoff talked to Nancy and the couple began an involvement with alpacas that would change their lives.

When Geoff and Nancy began investigating the possibilities of the breed the paucity of information –

even on basic husbandry – was a constant source of disappointment and frustration. Nancy remembers the excitement of receiving a reply to an early letter of enquiry – only to find that the letter was written entirely in Spanish. An expensive translation yielded little of substance.

A trip to the USA in 1985-86 was the turning point. It provided not only the Halpin's foundation herd, but also introductions to an array of US alpaca breeders. These friendly and enthusiastic Americans proved of invaluable assistance to the Halpins when their first alpacas landed and the new task of rearing began.

Geoff also travelled to Peru to study alpaca husbandry and although many wonderful and generous people shared their information and hospitality, it saddened him to see the terrorist disruption of Peru threatening not only the alpaca industry but the very fabric of daily life.

The Halpins first animals were selected from Alaska which, thanks to its latitude, has a virtually disease free status. Additional animals came from the Stachowski herd in Ohio. An anxious period of quarantine began. Geoff's contacts and experience from his days as an exporter of Angora goats held him in good stead as he waded through the red tape.

Geoff was grateful for the help and encouragement he received from the local and Canberra representatives of the Department of Agriculture. Although the animals were completely new to Australia and exports from Alaska unheard of, quarantine conditions imposed by the Department more than satisfied the requirements of the anxious Halpins.

The first alpacas arrived at their farm, Capalba Park, Seymour, from quarantine at Spotswood in May 1988.



Geoff Halpin with his son Douglas on 'Romeo'.

As the first alpacas in Australia since Ledger's doomed experiment of 100 years before, they created a sensation. A media day at Seymour drew over 60 reporters. An article in *Town and Country Farmer* had the phones ringing hot and a trickle of visitors to the farm became a tidal wave. Shows and field days became a month by month marathon, exhilarating but exhausting. In a way Geoff and Nancy couldn't have anticipated, alpacas took over their life. It became increasingly difficult to keep up the mainstream activities of the farm and extra help had to be hired.

What was inescapable was the appeal of the animals themselves. Articles and advertisements caught the attention of a huge audience, but for most the conversion came when they met the animals "in person". Tiring as those few months were, they were probably crucial to the establishment of the breed.

"We probably made mistakes but it was important then to grab the bull

by the horns, get out there and give things a very big yank!" Geoff recalls.

With six rare and high-priced North American animals imported into Australia, the Halpins were understandably nervous when they saw New Zealand import nearly 1,000 alpacas from Chile.

They soon realised that the presence of animals in larger numbers would only speed the attainment of their prime objective, the establishment of a viable fibre industry in Australia.

In April of 1990 a meeting was held at Halpin's farm, attended by nearly all of the 15 or so breeders



Nancy Halpin with two of the initial herd – Stonewall and Majorette

then active in Australia. Plans were drawn up for the establishment of the Australian Alpaca Association whose brief was to develop the industry. Geoff was its first president.

The ensuing years have seen a quantum leap in the number of animals in Australia and in the sophistication and knowledge of alpaca own-

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ers. This has led to a significant upgrading of the national heard. As Australia moves year by year towards increased standardisation of the breed, careful consideration of conformation, fibre quality and density has taken over from the initial 'woolly' enthusiasm.

Geoff is keenly aware of the overriding importance of fibre as a criterion for animal selection and the crucial breeding determinant. He believes that the scope for Australian fibre development is enormous. These are matters, of course, to which the Alpaca Association now devotes itself keenly and Geoff is an active supporter of the development of regions and the training of judges. The next important step is research into fibre markets and the marrying of alpacas' inherent strengths to the demands of these markets.

Education of growers and shearers is vitally important. Owners who are new to the fibre industry should be giving careful thought to the types of pastures they run their animals on, the time of year they are shorn and the way the fibre is taken from the animal and sorted. Summer seeds and clinging burrs are a particular contributor to dirty fleeces and poorer returns.

Geoff cautions, "You can have a beautiful alpaca, but shear it at the wrong time of year to end up with a fleece full of debris and you're just wasting your time. Processors aren't interested in having to make repeated passes through a carding machine."

Length of fibre, too, is an important consideration with processors seeking a consistent product neither too short nor too long.

Geoff suggests that the work being done by the Melbourne College of Textiles, with input from the Alpaca Association, is of vital importance to every alpaca owner. The courses, demonstrations and field days promoting sound basics and a new method of shearing are well worth while. In essence, sound practice involves removal of coarse fibre first, leaving the blanket or back wool as your premium product. This method saves sorting and assists in presenting uncompromised product.

Geoff and Nancy emphasise that wherever alpaca fibre and products are seen they must be promoted and recognised as the very best of their kind. They also urge newcomers to the show circuit to be aware of the way they present their animals, with quality promotional materials and grooming that reflect the prestigious

nature of the animal. This does not mean over-grooming of the animals themselves. A natural but clean cover is far preferable to the "cotton wool" or "candy floss" appearance which so often is only achieved at the risk of damaging the fibre and compromising its eventual worth.

Geoff and Nancy are also well known for their alpaca products shop. As well as books on alpacas, they also sell and promote alpaca wool garments. Many of these still come from Peru – a legacy of the days when there was nothing available in Australia and Nancy was keen to show the alpacas' new fans an end product. Nancy and her associates are working to increase the representation of quality Australian designed and produced products, all the while helping to educate local growers as to the demands of the marketplace. They also caution that when "value adding", never lose sight of the value factor. It is not enough for a product simply to be made in Australia, it must represent value and quality too, especially in the ferociously competitive "rag trade".

Keen as they are on local craft and design the Halpins see the long term future of the fibre industry being a more global affair with the



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Association or its marketing arm pooling the Australian clip, sorting by colour, gauge, length and quality to offer a top class product to a very demanding international fibre market. Here again, the production of quality starts right at the farm with clean fleeces being paramount. Geoff and Nancy stress the importance of market research. It's a futile exercise to leap into the production of, say, an 8-ply yarn from your raw fibre and expect the market to gratefully receive it. Delivering what the market wants through a step-by-step process of investigation and trial is the path to success, a case of learning to walk before we run.

Diversity has always been the key to the Halpins' thinking as they've developed their farming interests. Freed from relying on a monoculture, the Halpins have been able to balance their earnings and develop new farming ventures on their attractive Seymour property, Capalba park.

As a natural progression from the overwhelming fascination their first alpacas provoked, Geoff and Nancy are now in the process of developing a zoo, adding tourism as an offshoot to their conventional farming activities. Although in its infancy, the tourism concept has benefited both the Halpins and their region. The Shire of Seymour boasts an array of historic farming, army and railway attractions, yet on the cover of their tourism brochure they chose to feature alpacas as their newest and most unique attraction. Alpacas provide a mighty drawcard for the Seymour region and interest in Capalba Park has been boosted by the Shire's appealing brochure.

Geoff and Nancy, with some years of husbandry under their belts, have a surprisingly simple prescription for alpaca nourishment and health. They keep the food intake as natural as possible, supplementing grazing in hard times with lucerne hay and a very sparing use of pellets. They point out

that this regime is appropriate to their situation, which is not afflicted by the selenium deficiencies that characterise many other parts of Australia's grazing land. Selenium deficiencies, particularly in infants, while relatively easily treated can be responsible for a host of problems if left unchecked.

Geoff is adamant that over feeding with high concentrate pellets can create a dependency on what should be a supplementary food and he recalls seeing many overweight animals in the USA. It's cruel to be too kind. The alpaca's dense coat can mask its real condition, so it is important to feel along the back bone to gauge its condition rather than relying on the indicators that present simply to the eye. The most accurate gauge to condition is keeping a record of weight.

In common with so many other breeders, the Halpins feel lucky in having a local vet who has been entranced by alpacas. These novel animals have stimulated his interest and their gentle personalities have won his heart. Geoff recalls being amazed when his vet, on first checking the animals over thoroughly, stopped, picked up and smelled their feet!

"These," he pronounced, "have got the sweetest smelling feet of any animal I've come across."

Geoff and Nancy make the point too that in coming to grips with the "grass roots" demands of your locality, the Agriculture Department vets in your region are an invaluable resource, with access to the nation's biggest agricultural information network. They will know about deficiencies in your region's

soil and will be aware of animal health problems.

As Nancy observes, alpacas are stoical animals whose instinct is to mask their illness to maintain pace with the herd. Most owners with small herds will be close to their animals and sensitive to changes in their demeanour but, and this applies especially to new owners, by the time you notice an alpaca looking poorly, the chances are it really is ill, so 'panic early' and waste no time in seeking advice if you are the slightest bit in doubt.

Although Alpacas have established an enviable record for health and disease resistance, Geoff and Nancy are keen to see the region by region building of a nationwide data base of alpaca illness and a record of post mortem details of any premature deaths.

Good may come out of misfortune if problems and symptoms are better understood and the few vulnerabilities of this breed become apparent.

Australians have done well with alpacas but the truth of the matter is that the breed is still relatively new to Australia and our knowledge still in its infancy. The setting up of regions and the sharing and flow of information that this will encourage is a sign of the industry's maturing and a great hope for the future.



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Dear Sir

I see by yesterday's Argus that four fine Alpacas had just arrived at Adelaide. The fleece, the editor remarked, was more like fine flossy silk than hair, and averaged about 7½lbs. each animal. We must premise, too, that they must have lost some portion of it knocking about on board a ship for three months. What a pity it is, Sir, that we cannot manage to procure a few hundreds to form a nucleus wherewith to stock the colony. Here is a splendid animal, whose fleece is worth at the present time from 2s. 9d. to 3s. 6d. per pound, very hardy, can pick up a living where a sheep would starve, and whose flesh is delicate and wholesome food; and yet, for the sake of two or three thousand pounds, year after year goes by and nothing is done towards introducing what, in the course of a few years, would be a source of invaluable wealth to the colony. I happen to know the length and breadth of South America pretty well. During a residence of four years there, I have had both Llamas and Alpacas in my possession, and am therefore able to give you a short and truthful account of the different varieties, which are often confounded with one another. My only object is to induce, if possible, some of our principal men to take the subject in hand and thereby confer a great and lasting benefit both upon themselves and their adopted country.

First, then, Sir, comes the Guanaca, generally about five feet high, although I have killed one five feet nine inches, about three feet six

inches to the shoulders; back, neck, and thighs reddish white; breast and belly dingy white; wool (more properly hair) shorter, coarser, than the Llama. Very abundant in Patagonia and southern part of Buenos Ayres; considered good eating. Travellers frequently term them "the Huanica", which is wrong.

Second. We have the Llama. They run about four feet eight inches to the top of their head, and three feet to the shoulder (may be an inch more or less either way); and while the Guanacas are generally one uniform colour, the Llamas are varied, frequently some kind of brown, with shades of black and yellow. Its wool is used for making coarse ponchos and rugs. They are principally used as beasts of burden, and, like the camel, will refuse to walk if it has too great a load upon its back.

Third follows the Alpaca, or Puco (the "Puco Vordae, of Los Hijos dul pais"). They are the fellows I should like to see over here, they are something like a sheep, but a far more graceful and elegant animal, with the large expressive eyes of the deer. The fleece is beautifully soft and very long, almost like floss silk and it shines in the sun, when of a white or yellow colour like silver and gold; their usual colours are grey, white, black, and mottled; their flesh is excellent eating (save the old rams). I kept two of these animals at San Colonia for twenty-two months, the female had young twice – two at one birth, and one at another. These beautiful animals would follow me like a dog anywhere. The female, when she had

young ones would attack a dog with great fury, and generally managed to send him howling away, however large. No Dingo would think of attacking their young, if he knew when he was well off. I may as well say, the difference between the Alpaca and Llama is very trifling, save that the Alpaca is nearly one-fourth smaller. Great quantities of their flesh is jerked for the consumption of the miners; their backs are generally hollow after carrying burdens; their feet spread in walking; when loaded, they carry a weight of 125 to 160 lbs., and they can trot at a quick pace, from 30 to 40 miles a day over very rough ground, and very few attendants can guide a considerable number.

Fourth. I will now speak of the last variety, the Vicuna. I do not think they have as yet been seen in France or England; they are larger than the last animal spoken of; its wool (or silk, you may term it) is much finer than that of the two last animals. I never saw any of it out of South America, and a poncho wove from it will cost from 30 to 60 dollars there. (£6 to £12). It shines like pale bright gold in the sunshine. General colours: reddish yellow hue, peculiar to the animal. They are a wild animal, but when taken young are easily tamed, and become very docile. In looking over several works upon South America, the only author I have seen who gives an accurate description of them is Humboldt. By this account, you see both the Llama and Alpaca would be most valuable acquisitions to us. The difficulty is to get them out of the country, people say. Sir, there need not be any difficulty about it;

all that would be required would be the dollars to buy, and meet the necessary expenses. They may be bought, I should say, at from 3s. to 8s. each.

Whether the authorities allowed them to leave the country or not would be a matter of the most perfect indifference to me. I would contract a few gauchos to drive them right across the Pampas, if I were going to procure any myself, and, upon their safe delivery at any given seaport on the La Plata, pay for them. A good roomy schooner could be easily chartered at Buenos Ayres, or Monte Video, and so run across, via the Cape of Good Hope. By taking them across the Pampas all collision with the authorities would be avoided. But there are

several other routes. The animals, being as hardy as goats, would bear the voyage as well, I have no doubt. They will cut any kind of small bush, thistle, etc, and very seldom drink. What fine runs could be found for them in our three great mountain ranges, and in the Cape Otway district. I explored that place 15 months ago; it could keep millions of these animals, but I doubt if you could rear a single sheep there.

The cochineal insect would thrive here admirably, according to the climate; and many valuable trees and shrubs (medicinal, etc) may be introduced in addition to the Alpaca from South America; but I will leave off with the remark that the experiment of introducing

the Alpaca and Llama need not be a costly one – £2,600 to £3,000, with care and economy, would bring over a fine flock of them. Fifty or sixty might be picked up in a tour through Europe. I know a nobleman in Spain who used at one time to have seventy or eighty of them, and they often have surplus stock to dispose of at the different zoological gardens.

And now, Sir, trusting that an abler pen than mine may be induced to bring forth this important subject for the consideration of the capitalists of Victoria,

I remain, Sir,

Yours, most respectfully,

M.F.

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NZ AND OZ ALPACA RESEARCH SWAP

*Chris Tuckwell is
Snr Livestock Officer -
Developing Industries
for Primary
Industries (SA).
He recently visited
New Zealand and
studied current
developments in
alpaca research.*

I VISITED NEW ZEALAND in February 1993 to look at, among other things, aspects of alpaca research. The Australian Alpaca Association contributed to the funding of this study tour as it recognised the importance of familiarity with research that has been and is being undertaken in New Zealand.

It is also important to make personal contact with New Zealand researchers and industry representatives to investigate and foster opportunities for co-operative research as funds for research and development are increasingly hard to source. The Australian industry and its researchers need to closely examine and prioritise research activity and investigate ways of reducing the funds needed while ensuring no work is duplicated. This does not necessarily mean that in Australia we will not have to repeat some completed work. For example if there is a clear environmental influence on results, we may need to undertake the same work in our environment.

I made many contacts in New Zealand during my visit and have discussed possibilities for collaborative research, generally with positive results. Australia and New Zealand need to build on this initial contact and keep each other informed of research proposals to allow co-operation within this new industry, to encourage its development and to improve the ability of the industry to attract a reasonable share of, increasingly restricted, research and development funding.

GEORGE MOORE – TARA HILLS

The first stop in my alpaca itinerary was Tara Hills research station which is located towards the centre of the South Island. The Tara Hills alpaca enterprise is self funded from sale of fibre and surplus animals. I spent some time with George Moore discussing alpaca research at Tara Hills. He described a project undertaken with others, including George Davis and Tumen Wuliji, on fibre production and fleece characteristics of alpaca in New Zealand. A summary of their work and its implications for Australia indicate that although we should be able to significantly increase the liveweight of alpaca we are unlikely to be able to double the fleece production of alpacas farmed in Chile.

Currently annual fleece production of female alpaca in New Zealand averages 1.7 to 1.8kg. This means that if fibre production is already averaging 1.7 to 1.8kg per head, producers may need to reconsider their primary breeding objectives. It may be that more emphasis should then be placed on selection based on fibre diameter rather than primarily on fleece weight. However fleece weight is an important characteristic that contributes to fibre derived income and must definitely not be ignored.

Although the researchers found some differences in fibre characteristics of tuis shorn or unshorn as crias, there appears to be no advantage in delaying shearing until animals are one to two years of age (tuis).

The researchers also found that it is unwise to delay the shearing interval to longer than twelve months because of the resultant significant increase in damage to the fleece. Major impurities that accumulate in the fleece were found to be vegetable matter and soil derived from "dust bathing" habits. In New Zealand weathered fleece tips and ultra violet damage of the fleece also occurred and were severe when the shearing interval was extended.

In Australia this damage and impurity contamination risk is likely to be even greater than that seen in New Zealand due to our generally drier climate and greater intensity of ultra violet light. To maximise fleece value it seems very important that alpacas are shorn annually.

Fibre Sales

George also described how fibre from Tara Hills is sold. Presently they are amassing their white and brown fibre for a processor to undertake a trial processing. Their aim is to have a large enough volume to allow garments to be made and sold at a 'reasonable' price. The processor is also mixing black fibre with 50% sheep wool to produce an alternative product.

Average fibre prices for fleece wool is \$A54/kg with white fibre returning slightly more and coloured fibre slightly less. Leg and neck fibre returns average about \$A35/kg.

Parasite Control

All adult alpacas at Tara Hills receive two anthelmintic drenches each year. They use only two of the three broad spectrum anthelmintic chemical groups available, in a three-yearly rotation. In year one they use an oral Ivomec preparation; in year two a Benzimidazole (white) drench is used; in year three an injectable Ivomec preparation is used; then in year 4 revert back to an oral Ivomec.

Levamisole (clear) drench is not used as there is a suggestion that, as alpacas have a metabolism rate similar to goats, it will be ineffective.

Crias are first drenched at three months of age.

Vaccinations

An eight-in-one Tasvac vaccine is used, principally to cover three particular clostridial strains of bacteria that occur in Chile but are not common

in Australia. This is a French vaccine and it may be that it should be considered for use in alpacas in Australia too, but at this stage I cannot make any recommendation. Owners should fully investigate all causes of animal loss particularly if they die with 'clostridial like' symptoms and have been routinely vaccinated.

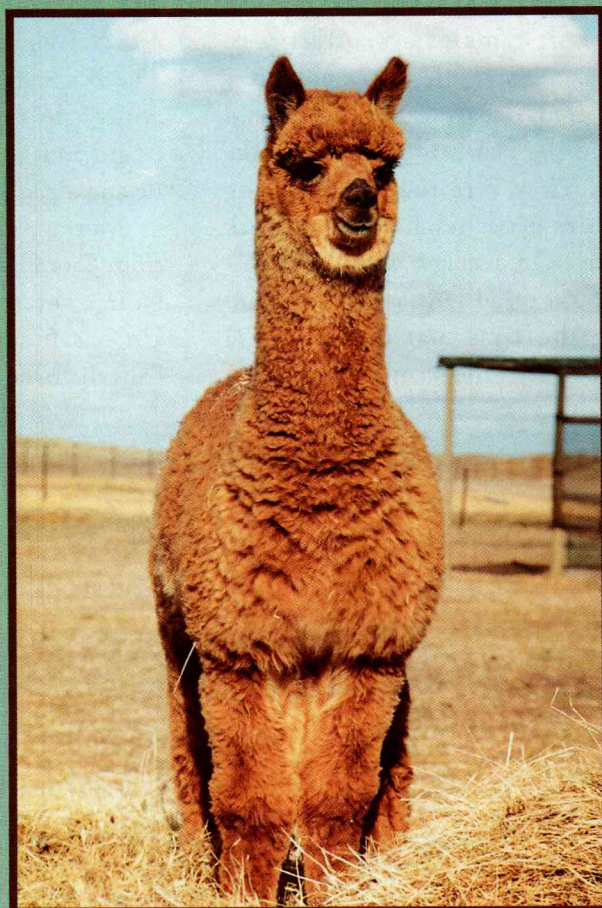
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the soil at the base of the block rather than the block itself. There is room to carefully question the need for expensive supplement blocks in Australia in well fed alpaca.

Mating/Pregnancy

Gestation length for spring born cria is close to 11.5 months and for cria born after December is closer to twelve months.

Even if cria reach 40kg liveweight in their first year they are not mated until the following year as yearlings (tuis). The Tara hills program is using controlled timing of mating to ensure the majority of cria are born in spring.

They use rectal probe examinations to confirm pregnancy at 28 days. Prior to that each female is submitted to a receptivity test (represented to the male) every two weeks. Pregnant females actually try to escape and "spit off", while non-pregnant females are observed to run around the pen before sitting for the male. They find that yard mating produces better results than paddock mating. On average, with yard mating, 60% of all females are pregnant from the first mating and 85% pregnant after the second mating.

The researchers have been looking for methods of identifying which male joins which females during normal paddock mating. Sire-sine harnesses have not been successful as they appear to distress the male.

Most females remain receptive to males for at least three days in any one oestrus period.

Liveweight

Cria are routinely weaned at four to five months (30kg liveweight). There is no significant difference in live weight if cria are left on their mothers until they are ten months of age (on average only an extra 1kg live weight).

MURRAY AND LORRAINE BRUCE – WAIMATE

I was very hospitably looked after by Murray and Lorraine Bruce for an afternoon and evening on their property at Waimate after I left Tara Hills. The Bruce family live about half way along the east coast of the South Island and grow potatoes, sheep, cattle and alpacas.

Murray bought 40 head of alpaca from Tara Hills and has other animals he has purchased direct from Chile. He has females who are in their fourth breeding season on the

property and is currently talking with Dawsons in England about alpaca fibre processing.

After de-hairing, the fibre of any one lot must have a micron range of no more than three to four microns to be a saleable product.

Murray also showed me their beautiful brown male which they are looking to breed from to increase the number of females of his colour.

GEORGE DAVIS – INVERMAY

George works from the Invermay Research Station but works co-operatively with other researchers from the New Zealand AgResearch group. Invermay Research Station is close to Dunedin which is on the southern end of the east coast of the South Island.

He described work he has undertaken with George Moore and emphasised the effect of time of mating, and subsequent birth, on gestation length (discussed earlier in this article). He explained that the average gestation length for females mated in autumn (giving birth in spring) is 339 days. For those mated in spring the average gestation length is 349 days with a few animals experiencing

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more than 365 days. He also explained that this gestation length phenomenon has not been recorded at the Flock House Research Station in the North Island of New Zealand. They are investigating this further, but it appears there may be a latitude effect which influences gestation length.

From Australia's point of view, because of our higher latitude (which affects photo periods) than that experienced at Tara Hills, gestation length of alpacas in Australia may be less affected by timing of mating (even less than that experienced at Flock House which is positioned on a latitude very similar to King Island in Bass Strait). However we should investigate this more closely in Australia.

Reproductive physiology

On average only 70% of female alpacas in New Zealand produce cria in any one year.

Current survey work is aimed at investigating the barrenness of the females and male libido. In both of these areas there are opportunities for co-operative work with Australian alpaca breeders which should not be missed.

Fibre Biology

Tumen Wuliji has nearly completed some work on skin and fibre biology of alpacas. Results of the work are not available to date but could provide vital information that will help identify those animals, particularly males, which should be selected as sires to maximise genetic ability to produce "ideal" fleeces and subsequently maximise potential fleece value. The work could have direct application to alpaca breeding in Australia.

Coat Colour Inheritance

George Davis has begun looking at coat colour inheritance. He has some matings which have produced cria with similar patterning and colour to one or other of their parents. He is

intending to repeat these matings to examine repeatability of coat colour produced from particular matings.

It is vital that all owners record colour and patterning of each dam, sire and cria from all matings and also record other relevant observations, such as whether repeat couplings of a particular male and female produce cria of the same colour and patterning.

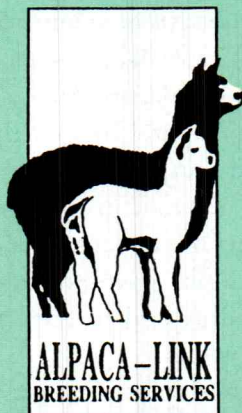
Mating

George also reinforced information that indicates that pen mating using small single-sire groups, over short periods, was a suitable method of breeding alpacas. In their research they found that inadequate male libido and incompatibility of certain couples was not a problem with pen mating although there was variation in male libido and attractiveness to



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females. Generally it was found that breeding performance of animals mated in pens was better than that of animals mated in paddock groups.

TERRY KNIGHT – FLOCK HOUSE

Flock House Research Station is located near Palmerston North in the central southern area of the North Island. Only a small amount of the alpaca research is undertaken at Flock House.

Pregnancy Detection

Terry described work done to detect pregnancy and assess foetal size (age of foetus) by three different methods. The methods used were: blood sampling for progesterone levels, trans-abdominal ultra sound probe and trans-rectal probe.

The trans-rectal probe can detect a foetus as early as day 20 with the foetus becoming visible between days 20 and 30 of pregnancy. The foetus can actually be measured with this technique between days 30 to 87, although use is not recommended after 70 days. Heart beat can be detected from 30 days.

The trans-abdominal probe can detect pregnancy from day 40 and although measurements of the foetus can be made from between days 40 to 237, its scanning should be confined to between days 60 and 200 of pregnancy.

A progesterone concentration of between 2 and 5 mg/ml is measurable in pregnant females from day 25 to 320 of gestation. Non-pregnant animals generally have a progesterone level of less than 0.5 mg/ml.

A recommendation is that the pregnancy status of females can be assessed with a random blood sample for progesterone concentration. Estimation of foetal age could then be determined by using one or both types of ultra sound probe.

CONCLUSION

The New Zealand alpaca industry, although small, appears to have relatively significant resources working for it. They are very fortunate to have people of the calibre of George Davis, Terry Knight, George Moore and Tumen Wuliji, to name a few, undertaking scientific research on its behalf. Research already completed can, in most cases, be applied directly to the Australian industry. Ongoing research should be carefully monitored to enable prudent application of research findings to the development of the Australian industry.

In terms of future research and applications for funding of research, we should foster trans Tasman co-operation between industry researchers and other industry bodies. This co-operation will help ensure that limited funding is used effectively and efficiently to encourage the development of a long-term fibre based industry.

It is my own view that the industry groups in Australia and New Zealand are too small and too geographically close to consider themselves as separate entities. There are significant opportunities and advantages in terms of industry research, development, marketing and promotion by co-ordination of, and co-operation between the two groups.

Co-operation has been initiated by invitation of people like George Davis to the Australian Alpaca Association Annual Seminar, and by my trip to New Zealand, but it is vital that the two across Tasman groups work increasingly with each other at industry level to lobby governments for research funding and to undertake promotional work.

Make no mistake, the industry has a hard row to hoe, but it will be made much easier with close co-operation

between industry "groups" and with active input from all people involved in the industry.

I wish you luck, and hope I can continue to assist your industry's development.

Further Reading

For those who would like to obtain more information about matters covered in this report, the author has suggested the following papers as useful further reading;

Davis, G H, Wuliji, T, Moore, G H and Bruce, G D (1991).

"Growth, reproduction and fibre production of alpacas imported from Chile."

Proceedings of the NZ society of Animal Production 1991, Vol 51.

Pollard, J C, Moore, G H and Littlejohn, R P (1991).

"The sexual behaviour of alpacas imported to New Zealand from Chile."
Proceedings of the NZ society of Animal Production 1991, Vol 51.

Ridland, M, Knight, T W and Wyeth, T K (1992).

"Measurement of Foetal Size by Ultrasonography and Progesterone Concentrations in Pregnant Alpacas."

Proceedings of the NZ society of Animal Production 1992, Vol 52.

Wuliji, T, Davis, G H, Andrews, R N, Turner, P, Moore, G H and Dodds, K G (1992).

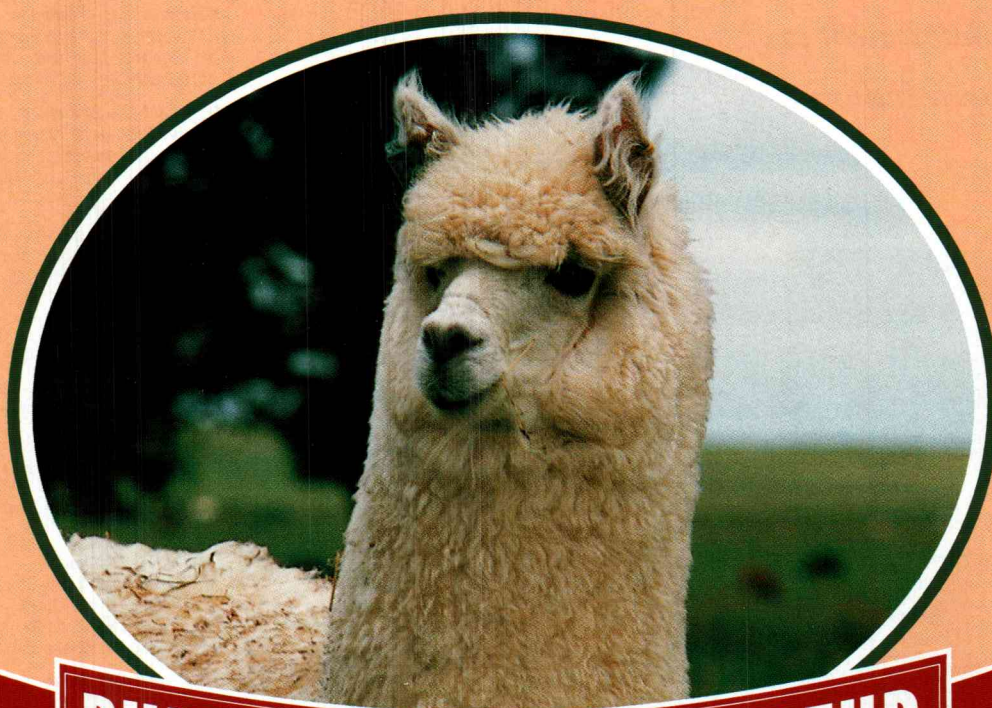
"Fibre Production, Shearing Procedure and Fleece Characteristics of Alpacas Farmed in New Zealand."

Proceedings of the NZ society of Animal Production 1992, Vol 52.

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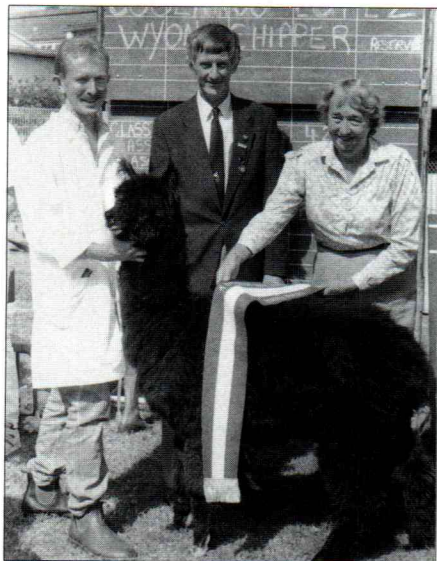
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WILBURTINS SPONSOR ALPACA EXHIBITION

*Wilburtins looks
forward to a
long term sponsorship
commitment to
the Alpaca Industry.*



From left Darrel Bishop, Judge, Geoff Halpin and Mrs Pat Hamilton with Supreme Champion Greater Southern Cross 741

WILBURTINS, one of the largest wholly owned Australian insurance brokers specialising in the livestock area, has recently taken on the role of sole sponsor of the Alpaca Exhibition with the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales.

1993 was the second year that Alpacas have been exhibited at the Easter Show and following strong interest from both the media and general public in 1992, the level of entries for 1993 have proven to be the largest in number for any agricultural show conducted in Australia.

Wilburtins has been the major Royal Agricultural Society sponsor over the past three years, having previously been heavily involved in the sponsorship of beef and dairy cattle.

"With a large portion of our livestock clientele involved with alpacas we saw the sponsorship as the ideal opportunity to promote our services to the alpaca industry and at the same time put something back into an industry from which we derive benefit", said Michael d'Apice, 'Livestock Manager of Wilburtons.

NSW SHOW RESULTS

Male over 6 months and under 12 months

- 1st Wyona Chipper: shown by Wyona Alpaca Stud
- 2nd Coolaroo Arrogant: shown by Coolaroo Alpaca Stud
- 3rd Bethongabel Phantom: shown by N & R Rotne.

Male dark 12m - 24 months

- 1st Lopez: shown by Yarramalong Alpacas
- 2nd Coolaroo Jasin, shown by Coolaroo Alpaca Stud
- 3rd Allaway Samboy, shown by Alaway Alpaca Stud

Male light 12 - 24 months

- 1st Coolaroo Ravel: shown by Coolaroo Alpaca Stud
- 2nd Wyona Acaramachi: shown by Wyona Alpaca Stud
- 3rd Monty's Mate: Carlan Alpaca Stud

Male over 24 months

- 1st Wyona Solo: shown by Wyona Alpaca Stud
- 2nd Wyona San Antonio: shown by Wyona Alpaca Stud
- 3rd Purumbete Roger: shown by CJ Barnes, Running Stream

Champion Male

Lopez: shown by Yarramalong Alpacas

Reserve Male

Wyona Chipper: shown by Wyona Alpaca Stud

Female 6 - 12 mths

- 1st Hot Chocolate: shown by Cedar House Alpacas
- 2nd Hearne Hill Pumpkin: Shown by C J Barnes
- 3rd Coolaroo Calamity Jane: shown by Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Female 12 - 24 mths

- 1st Greater Southern Cross 741: shown by Greater Southern Cross Alpacas
- 2nd Purumbete George Girl: shown by C C Usher
- 3rd Coolaroo Katie: shown by Coolaroo Alpaca Stud

Female over 24 months

- 1st Greater Southern Cross 743: shown by Greater Southern Cross Alpaca Stud

Champion Female

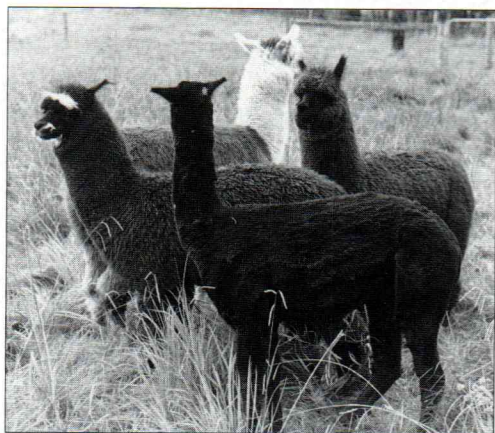
Greater Southern Cross 741: shown by Greater Southern Cross Alpaca Stud

Reserve Champion

Hot Chocolate: shown by Cedar House Alpacas

Supreme Champion

Greater Southern Cross 741: shown by Greater Southern Cross Alpacas



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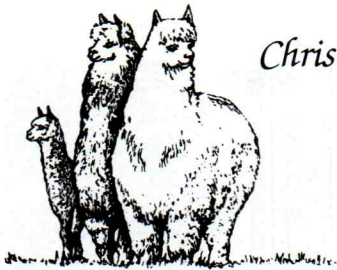
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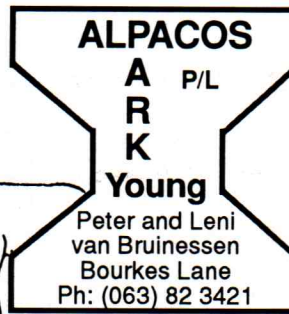
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*Always copied, never beaten
- makes you think, doesn't it?*

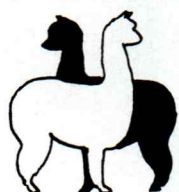
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KNITTING WITHOUT SPINNING

Robyn Morley is an alpaca breeder and PR officer for the Central Region of the Alpaca Association.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT of knitting directly from the fleece without spinning it first? Well, I hadn't either; until I was invited to present alpacas to some spinners and weavers.

A lady came up to me and said, "This lends itself very well to be knitted straight from the fleece". She then showed me how. I thought it would be nice to share this with other alpaca owners.

Alpaca gives you the fluffy effect of knitted mohair, but with a lovely soft finish. It can be trimmed back when the article is finished. It works well for strong fibres, as I find strong fibres often spin up hard.

HERE ARE A FEW SIMPLE STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- 1 Wash your fleece by soaking for half an hour in a bucket of warm water with Softly, then rinse and spin dry in your washing machine. Place on a flat surface to dry – allow 12-24 hours. The washing process stops you getting dirty hands while knitting.
- 2 Pull off a handful of fleece.
- 3 With your other hand pull out out 2-3 inches of fleece with your index finger and thumb. You will have to experiment with the amount you pull out. It seems difficult to get it finer than 8-ply but works very well for the thickness of 12-ply. See fig. 1
- 4 Start knitting with these 3 inches until the handful of fleece nearly reaches your knitting needles, then pull out another 3 inches and continue. See fig. 2 & 3

Keep repeating this step.

- 5 When you have used up your handful of fleece, or if your 3 inches of pulled-out fleece is getting too thin, pull out another bit of fleece with your thumb and index finger, bring it up close to your knitting needles and continue.

It may be a bit difficult when you first cast on the stitches, but it gets easier once you actually start knitting.

GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY KNITTING!

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



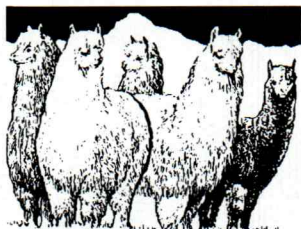
PACA PICS COMPETITION

WIN \$50

Send us your pic with an appropriate caption. We'll feature the best pics recieved, with a stud name credit. Our judges will award \$50.00 to the sender of the winning entry in each issue. If your photo is featured on the front cover of an issue of *Alpacas Australia* you'll receive \$150.00

Keep those photos coming in folks!

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- A** **Auction** – You actually get the animal you buy on the day
- C** **Credibility** – and Integrity of the vendors is assured
- A** **Auction** – Where vendors offer their **TOP** Alpacas

WHY SELL ALPACAS AT AUCTION?

- A** **A** – Premium price for superior stock
- L** **Lots** of promotion for your stud and marketing potential of your alpacas
- P** **Payment** of proceeds guaranteed by the agent
- A** **Attract** new buyers for your alpacas
- C** **Correct** valuation for alpacas offered
- A** **Abundant** overseas interest present at the auction
- S** **Sets** the price structure for future sales

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PACA PICS...

PIC OF THE PACK

"MUCH BETTER THAN THE CUDDLY TOYS MUM USED TO GIVE ME"
Ryan Maddams and 'Rojo'. Photo by Steve Maddams, c/o L & M Binks, Pentland Alpaca Stud.



"JUST GETTING THE DAILY CUDDLE RATION"
Trudi with Caesar's Gold, Photo by Keith Barnett, Murragamba Alpaca Stud.



*"IF HE THINKS I'M GETTING
OUT HE'S GOT ANOTHER
THING COMING!"*
*Photo taken by K. Green and K. McConchie,
Sherwood Alpaca Stud.*



*"I KNOW YOU LOVE ME, BUT
THIS IS RIDICULOUS"*

*Brooke Barnett. Photo by Bill
Barnett,
Alpacas of America.*



*"DO YOU MIND? I'D LIKE
TO HAVE A DRINK"*

*Photo by Cherie Bridges,
Coliban Valley Alpaca Stud.*



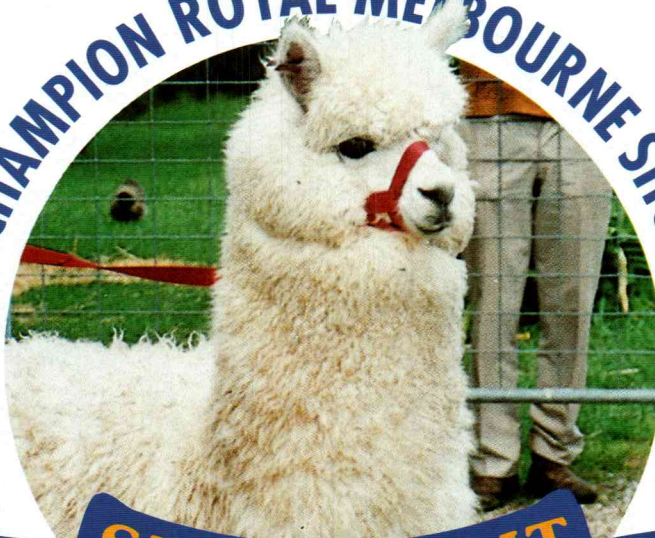
*"PLEASE DON'T EAT
THE DAISIES"*

*Photo taken by Mr Mark Jefferis of
4 mile Alpaca Stud, Benalla.*

Bethongabel Alpaca Stud

Jenny &
Lindsay
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Road,
Coldstream
Animals
and
fibre for
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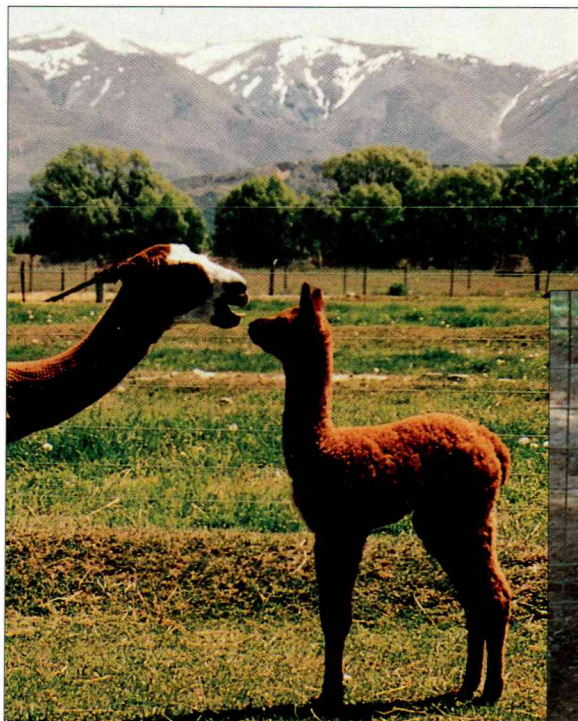


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PACA *PICS...*

"COMFORT IS A SOFT ALPACA"

Amy and Steele Caldwell of Wyona Stud. Photo by Mrs J. Hales, Silverdale Alpacas.



*"IF YOU SEE THEM COMING WITH
A HAND PIECE — RUN!!!!"*

*Photo taken by Mr George Davis,
Invermay Agricultural Centre, NZ.*

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AAA NOTES

From Dianne Condon

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

NATIONAL SHOW & SALE

*Dalgety's Stud Stock Sales
Complex, Oaklands Road,
Oaklands Junction Vic.
Melway Ref: 177 J1*

This will be one of the Association's major events and promises to be full of excitement. The National Show will take place on Saturday 6 November with one of Australia's top judges.

We urge all members to have a go at showing. The show ring is a real learning experience and – who knows? – you may have a champion sitting in your paddock just waiting to achieve fame. You'll never know if you don't show.

Saturday evening the Association will hold a lavish dinner (Black tie or Fancy dress) to be held at the Regent Hotel, Melbourne. Owners of Champions from the Show will receive their awards at this dinner – and with a popular comedian as MC, auctions, raffles and other surprises it should be a fun night not to be missed.

The Dalgety Classic will be held the following day when we can get down to the serious business of buying quality stock.

If you own or are thinking of owning alpacas this fun-packed weekend should not be missed.

JUDGING SCHOOL

The Association now has six new, qualified Grade 1 judges and four Grade 2 judges. Members organising shows in their area are encouraged to use their services.

School venue was the Haldane's property which had excellent facilities. Our thanks to Sue and Roger for their hospitality. There's a full report on the Association's first judging school on page 5.

ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW

This year's Melbourne Royal promises to be better than ever. Judging will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 18th September. A fashion parade with new and existing fashions will be held prior to judging.

Fleece classes have been added to the judging and we encourage all members to exhibit their animals and fleeces.

FORMATION OF REGIONS

Victoria now has three regions up and running. Members have been very active organising field days, fleece days, shows and social get-togethers.

In NSW the Mudgee area has become a region and members are holding field days and displays at shows.

A steering committee has been put in place in Sydney and will advise the executive on any decisions to form regions in the future.

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 381 Tooronga Road, Hawthorn East, 3123 Victoria, Australia

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST 15

Geelong meeting

Geelong Region will hold a meeting at A & R Clarke's Bellbrea.

Contact: Ann Clarke (052) 613 714 or Allan Jinks (052) 502 737

AUGUST 27

WA Annual General Meeting

AGM to be held at Williams Hotel, Williams commencing 10.00am.

Contact: Joy Wilson (09) 330 1476

AUGUST 29

NSW Mudgee Field Day

Central Northern Region will be holding an Open Field Day and Regional Field Day at the property of Judy and Ivan Easten's "Duraltyne", Mudgee. Veterinary and fleece aspects to be covered. All welcome. Contact: Aloha Barnes (063) 588 212.

AUGUST 29

Vic Field Day

Eastern Region will be holding a Field Day at Pakenham Racecourse, starting 10.00am. Features will include guest speakers, shearing, foot paring, animal maintenance, show preparation and all aspects of husbandry. Alpaca merchandise will be on sale. Lunch will be available. Contact Jenny Cochrane (059) 425 453 (evenings).

SEPTEMBER 3 - 11

Royal Adelaide Show

There will be an Association stand. Members will be asked to support by manning the stand on a roster system. Contact Keith Barnett (087) 66 0026 or Sally McKay (08) 267 2718

SEPTEMBER 18 - 23

Royal Melbourne Show

Alpacas will again be judged on the Saturday afternoon in the Federation Ring. Fleece judging has also been added to the classes this year, see AAA notes. Animals will be on display until Thursday evening. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399

SEPTEMBER 28 - 30

SA Yorke Peninsula Field Days

If any member can offer help, there will be an

Association stand as part of the gourmet and fashion 2002. Contact: Keith Barnett (087) 66 0026 or Lyn Shepherd on (085) 246 150.

OCTOBER 2 - 9

Perth Royal Show

WA Region is offering two prizes - one being for 50gms of hand spun Alpaca fleece and the other for an article or item made from predominantly Alpaca fleece. We will also have a display stand of Association promotional material and some animals for show. Contact: Joy Wilson (09) 330 1476

OCTOBER 10

Annual General Meeting

Meeting for the Association to be held at the Commercial Club, Dean St, Albury, commencing at 1.30pm. Preliminary meeting to commence at 10.00am.

OCTOBER 14 - 16

Geelong Show

Victorian Western Region - Alpaca judging Contact: Phil McConachy (052) 295100 Ah (052) 224 991

OCTOBER 24

Alpaca Expo Vic Central Region

Alpaca and Fibre Show judging and Field day combined. Alpaca related industry exhibitions and top speakers. Contact: Robyn Morley (054) 285 189 or Peter Nicolas (054) 237 220

NOVEMBER 6 - 7

AAA National Show, Sale & Gala Dinner

This promises to be a huge Show and Sale one of Australia's top judges will be judging the show. This will be followed by a lavish dinner at the Regent Hotel, Melbourne on Saturday evening where the major awards will be presented. Don't miss this exciting weekend.

NOVEMBER 20 - 21

Vic - Lilydale Show

Lilydale Ag. Show will hold Alpaca classes for the first time. Judging will be held on Saturday 20 Nov. Contact: Dianne Condon (03) 730 1399

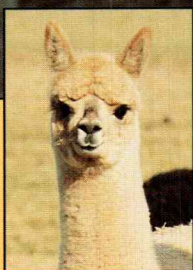
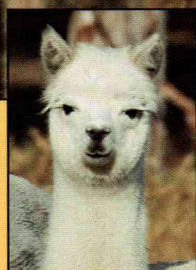


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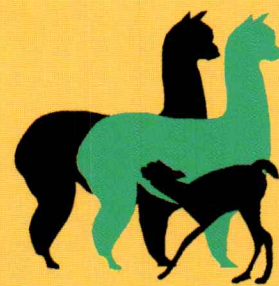
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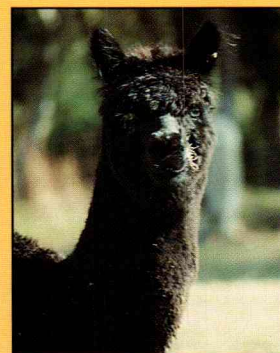
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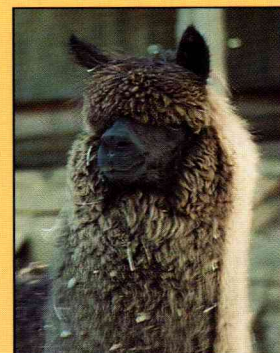
THE CEDAR HOUSE



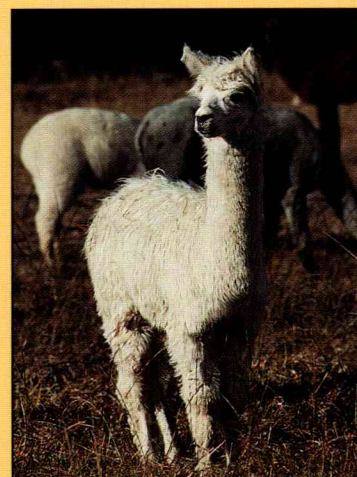
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'Black Jack'



Reserve champion female
'Hot Chocolate'



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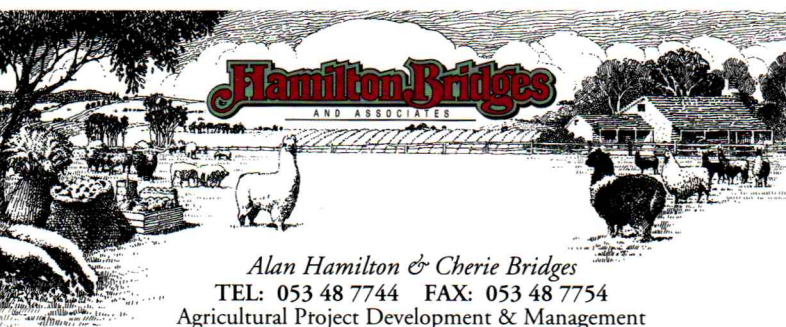
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