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- Camelid Tourism

CAMELID CONNECTIONS

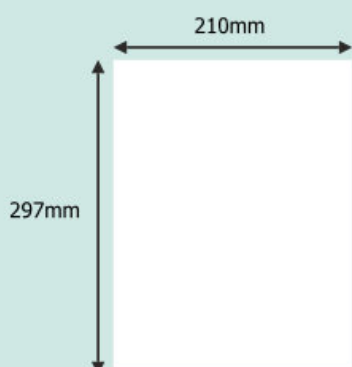
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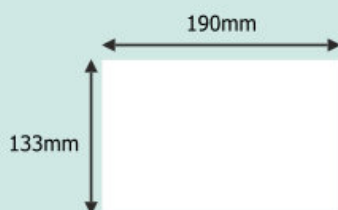
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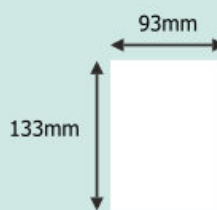
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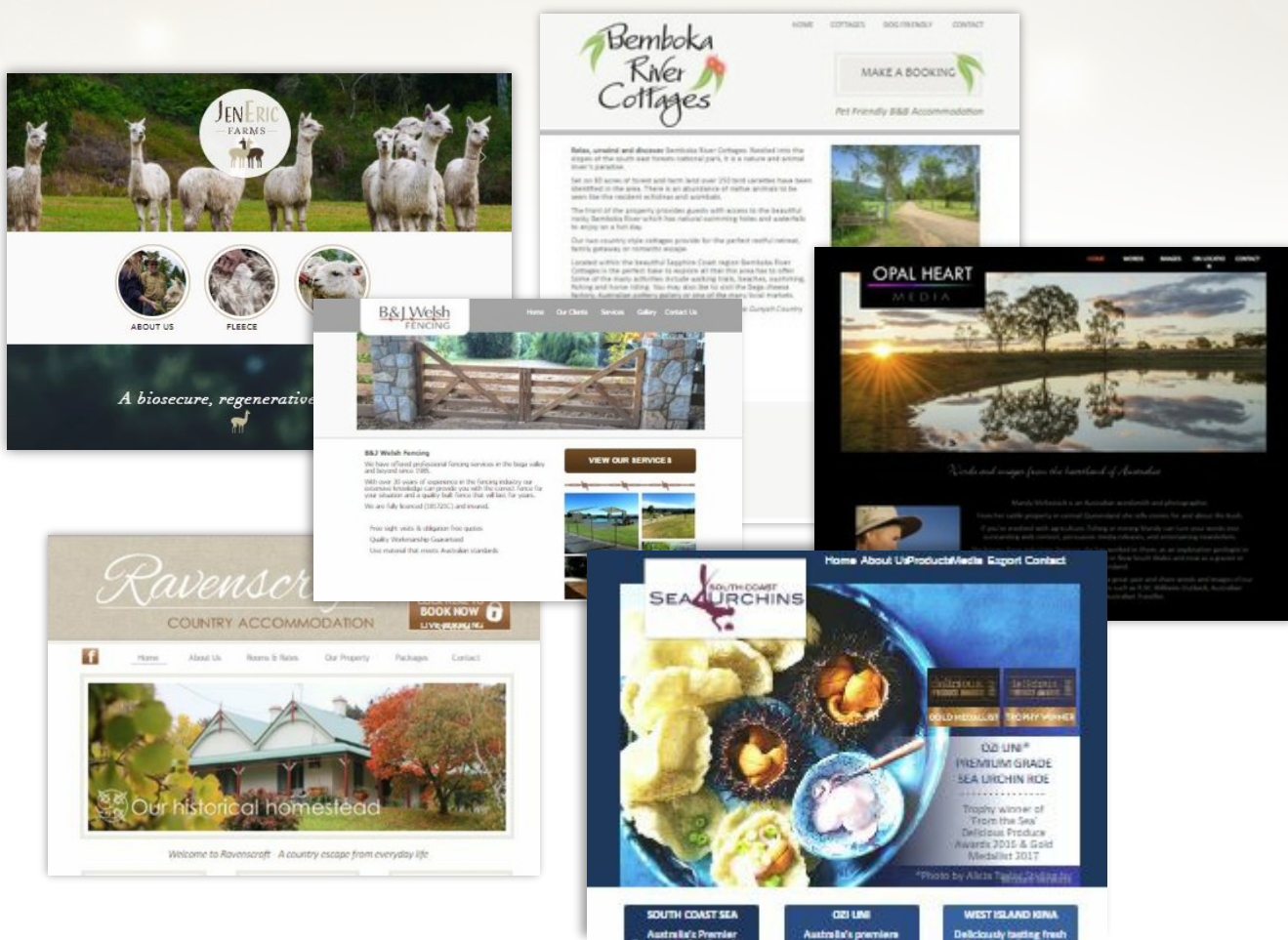
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Cover Image: Courtesy Keith Payne - Big Ears Llama Ranch

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Welcome to Camelid Connections

Welcome to the Spring edition!

It's hard to believe that we have been publishing this magazine for six years, starting in September 2017.

We should like to thank all of you who have taken the time to contribute articles and to our readers, especially those who let us know how much they enjoy reading the magazine, we hope you continue to enjoy the magazine and recommend it to other camelid breeders. Special thanks to our advertisers particularly those who have supported us from the beginning we really appreciate the support and would like to see others follow suit.

We have a very special **giveaway for our subscribers** in this edition and we look forward to hearing from you - see Page 13. (Not a subscriber? Why not join now so you can enter the competition!)

We have a great article from New Zealand Llama breeder Keith Payne who has supplied the first in a series of articles on his recent trip to Peru. Keith is a very knowledgeable llama breeder and has written many articles for us. We also have well known Suri breeder and international alpaca judge Angela Preuss who has contributed an excellent article on lustre in suri fleece essential reading for all serious suri breeders.

In each edition we have a section from the Australian Alpaca Association and we hope that by passing on Association information we can encourage new breeders to consider joining the Association. This edition highlights the recent National Show which brings breeders from all around the country to show the results of their breeding efforts and to enjoy the social side of belonging to an Association.

Read about how one breeder who is promoting her camelids through tourism and discover beautiful felted creations by a talented fibre artists who incorporates alpaca fiber into her designs.

Meet The Team



Esme Graham - Editor

My husband and I have bred suri alpacas for over 20 years, I was heavily involved with both regional committees and the national board of the Australian Alpaca Association for a number of years and had the honour of being selected as a life member of the Association.

My major interest has been in marketing and education and to this end I was editor of Alpacas Australia magazine for six years and I hope that the experience I gained editing that publication can be extended to educate and inform a wider range of alpaca and llama breeders who are not necessarily association members but have a love of all things camelid.



Julie McClen - Designer/Editor

A breeder of ultrafine Huacaya alpacas for over 20 years at Oak Grove Alpacas, I have a passion for fine fibre and the genetic connection to the most diminutive and finest of the camelids - the wild Vicuna.

I strongly believe that education in any industry is the key to success, so with Camelid Connections we hope to provide interesting and informative articles to assist all camelid owners in getting the most out of their animals and businesses.

I also own Oak Grove Graphics a web and graphic design agency which is producing this magazine, and also allows me to connect with many different people in the camelid related world through my design and web work.

www.oakgrovegraphics.com.au

LUSTRE IN SURI FLEECE

By Angela Preuss - Surilana Alpacas

IDEALLY SURIS SHOULD HAVE THE 'WOW' FACTOR. When a highly lustrous suri fleece is opened, the same word, 'WOW' is usually said!

“GOOD LUSTRE GOES HAND IN HAND WITH A BEAUTIFUL HANDLE.”

Highly lustrous suri fleeces will have the hallmark handle of the suri. Suris are renowned for their superior handle. The fleece should feel cool, silky and slippery. The most lustrous fleeces will have the best handle. Dry fleeces with low lustre, often feel “chalky” and harsh. Fine suri fleeces with poor lustre will often have a harsher handle than higher micron fleece with superior lustre.

Lustre is a genetic trait, (as with other traits such as fineness, density, lack of guard hair etc). A suri fleece will be genetically set with its degree of lustre. A suri fleece cannot be made more nor less lustrous. If breeders are wishing to improve the lustre in their herd, then they should look to introduce genetics that are proven to breed on with this important trait.



In some environmental conditions, it is best to assess lustre and handle close to the skin.

However, environmental conditions can affect the degree to which lustre is displayed. We have found that lustre will be displayed at its peak in winter. When the weather warms, the animals sweat and roll more and the display of the lustre will be diminished. When a fleece is compromised with dirt and dust, the lustre will not be as well expressed. However, if a suri is lustrous, then it is lustrous!

If breeders are wanting to show their suris in warmer months, then, if possible, put the show team in the cleanest paddock available. Hosing a suri down close to the show can also be advantageous to remove some dirt and dust from the fleece. However, in these conditions, a judge will look and feel the fleece close to the skin where the dust and dirt has not penetrated. The handle and lustre will be easier to assess at the skin.



In some environmental conditions, it is best to assess lustre and handle close to the skin.

WHY SHOULD SURIS HAVE GOOD LUSTRE AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

Lustre is the amount of light reflected from a surface and the low scale structure of suri fleece promotes this reflection. The end product from suri fleece should have a superior handle, drape and lustre.



Products made from quality suri fleece are highly regarded for their drape, lustre and silky soft handle.



A highly lustrous fleece



A suri fleece with poor lustre



A highly lustrous brown fleece



A brown fleece with poor lustre

'Grease' or wax in the fleece promotes lustre and nourishment. The wax from the sebaceous glands also protects the fibre.

Grease, (wax) is a desirable trait in suris:

- For protection of the fleece
- Suris with a good level of grease usually have the highest Secondary to Primary fibre ratios.
- Non greasy fleeces are usually more open in style, because of a lower Secondary to Primary fibre ratio.
- Suris with low grease are usually more static, which can cause the fleece to attract more vegetable matter.

Well nourished fleeces tend to hold onto a well defined lock structure. This lock structure protects the enclosed fibres from environmental factors. All the "goodies" such as fineness, lustre etc, are protected within the lock.

The major grease points in suris, (between the legs and in the apron) are sorted into pieces and not included with the saddle.

1. Dirt and vegetable matter will affect the processing of suri fleece far more than grease, as dirt is abrasive, whereas grease is protective.
2. Grease is clear in comparison to suint which is yellowing.
3. The unoxidised grease and the majority of the oxidised grease are easy to remove during scouring.
4. Grease acts like a protective "polish" on the fleece.

THIS 'GREASY' TYPE OF FLEECE IS USUALLY INDICATIVE OF A DENSE AND INDEPENDENTLY LOCKED FLEECE.



WELL NOURISHED FLEECES OFTEN HAVE A 'WET' HANDLE AND APPEARANCE.

They may appear "dirty" and dull from the outside, but opening the fleece will reveal another story. Cria which develop greasiness between the front and back legs, as well as the apron, develop the best lustre.

It is like finding the beautiful pearl inside the oyster shell!






'GREASY' FLEECE SURI, OFTEN TAKE ON THE COLOUR OF THE SOIL (DISTRICT COLOUR) ON THE OUTSIDE.

However, the true colour and lustre will be revealed once the fleece is opened.

UNIFORMITY OF LUSTRE

Ideally, lustre should be uniform across the entire body: midside, rump, shoulder and apron. Often lustre is more evident in the mid side and diminishes into the shoulder and rump. The higher quality suris will carry their lustre uniformly across the entire body.





*Very uniform lustre
across the body:*

1. on the mid side



Very uniform lustre across the body.

2.on the neck/apron



Very uniform lustre across the body.

4. on the shoulder

DO NOT CONFUSE "SHEEN" WITH LUSTRE

Often suris can look "shiny" on the outside, but are dull when they are opened. More often, suris that look dull and "dirty" on the outside will display the best lustre inside.



Very uniform lustre across the body.

3. on the rump/ back leg



Often suris can look "shiny" on the outside, (especially in full sunlight), but are dull when they are opened.



Often suris can look “shiny” on the outside, (especially in full sunlight), but are dull when they are opened.

CONCLUSION

It is always difficult to say whether one trait of a suri is more important than another and the traits should always be balanced. However, I would consider pronounced lustre a pre-requisite when assessing suris.

A high degree of lustre ensures that the fleece also has the beautiful silky soft handle that suri fleece is renowned for. High lustre also seems to go hand in hand with a defined lock structure and density.

High lustre in the fleece is also highly transferrable into the end product. When people open a lustrous suri fleece or when they feel a beautiful suri product, they should experience the same unmistakable delight that only highly lustrous suri fleece can provide.



More often, suris that look dull and “dirty” on the outside will display the best lustre inside.



Chocolate Gift Box

SUBSCRIBERS GIVEAWAY

A big thank you to Gorge Chocolates VIC - home of the chocolate alpaca - for this gift box of alpaca inspired chocolates!

If you want to be in the running to be the lucky person who gets this gift giveaway this is how to do it.

ENTRIES CLOSE: 30 September 2023

Email - julie@camelidconnections.com.au

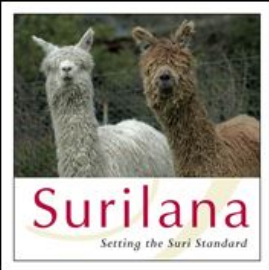
** All entries will be considered & the winner will be the entry that we determine to be the best answer & our decision will be final.*

Camelid Connections magazine reserves the right to use your entry in advertising our publication on our website, in our magazine or on social media.

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2. Send us via email a message of up to 25 words why you enjoy reading Camelid Connections magazine.*
3. Cross your fingers that it's you who wins this delicious prize!





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RECIPE: Alpaca Shanks

By Daisy Vasic



Slow cooked Alpaca shanks with zesty orange, dark chocolate and red wine sauce and honey butter bean puree.



This recipe has been tried, tested and thoroughly enjoyed! Without overpowering the subtle flavor of alpaca, the orange and dark chocolate compliment the light and beautiful meat, without being too oily or rich as classic lamb shanks can sometimes be.

What's going in it:

- 4 x Fleurieu Prime Meats Alpaca shanks
 - Olive oil – Couple of splashes
 - 1 brown onion, finely diced.
 - 3 celery sticks, trimmed and finely diced.
 - 1 carrot, finely diced.
 - 3 garlic cloves, crushed.
 - 1 heaped tbsp. tomato paste
 - 2.5 cups of good quality red wine
 - 400g can cherry tomatoes or crushed tomatoes
 - 400g Italian passata puree
 - 400g water
 - 1 cup chicken stock
 - Zest of half an orange
 - 5 sprigs of thyme
 - 2 bay leaves
 - 1 square of dark cacao chocolate
- Butter bean honey mash:
- 2x 400g can butter beans
 - 1/2 cup cream
 - 1 tbsp Honey
 - 50g butter
 - Salt and white pepper to taste

How to actually cook it:

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
2. Prepare a heavy based pot with lid or fry pan and oven tray. Heat two generous splashes of olive oil in pot or frypan, season the alpaca shanks with salt and pepper and brown until evenly golden.
3. Remove the shanks and set aside, turn down the heat and sauté onions, celery and carrot on a low to medium heat for 5 minutes or until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and sauté for another 2 minutes.
4. Add the tomato paste and cook for a further 2 minutes.



5. Now we add the wine – place the shanks back into the pot on top of your sauteed vegetables. Crank the heat up and pour in your wine, let it heat up and reduce the wine to about half then throw in your canned tomatoes, passata, stock, orange zest, bay leaves and thyme – make sure the shanks are pretty much submerged by your sauce. If they're not add some water.

6. Bring your delicious sauce up to the boil, if you're using a heavy base pot, time to chuck the lid on and throw your creation into the oven and let the magic happen. If you're using an oven tray, transfer your shanks and then sauce into the tray, place a sheet of baking paper on top and cover with foil. Place it in the oven.

7. Cook your shanks on 180 degrees for approximately 2.5 hours, or until sauce is reduced and the meat is lovely and tender – season at the end to taste.

8. LAST! But not least! The dark chocolate, stir through your sauce before serving a generous amount on your shanks!

Note** Don't be afraid to have a peek and add more water to your shanks if needed, you don't want the sauce to reduce too early on as this can dry out your meat!

Butter bean honey puree:

1. Strain and rinse your butter beans
2. Slowly warm butter, cream and honey – you don't want to boil it!
3. Add your butter beans and slowly heat until beans soften, and the cream mix has slightly reduced – about 5 minutes. You want a mash potato consistency!
4. Blend in a blender or with a stick blender, season to taste and you're good to rock and roll!!!

Serve shanks with puree and some fresh broccolini or roasted baby carrots!

The recipe for alpaca shanks was developed and supplied by Daisy Vasic.

Daisy did her cheffing apprenticeship at the British Hotel, North Adelaide, and then started her own catering company called 'Dining Miss Daisy'.

When COVID hit, Daisy decided to follow her dream of working with animals. She is currently studying a Bachelor of Veterinary Technology, and next year will start a Bachelor of Veterinary Bioscience/Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine. She is passionate in her work with alpacas.

Our thanks to Chris Williams - Ambersun Alpacas Pty Ltd & Fleurieu Prime Alpaca for sourcing the above information.



Dental Issues

In The Older Alpaca

By Allison Quagliani

When I first wrote this article it seemed quite timely.

I bought my first two alpacas back in 1996. They were two females, Mistletoe 18 months old and Grace 14 months old. I've since lost one of these beautiful old girls - Grace who was just over 22 years old. Grace spent her whole life with Mistletoe who was about to turn 23 later that same year. I had an ageing herd with four over 18 years old and several in their early teens. I had good pasture and it wasn't until Mistletoe and Grace turned 19 that they really started to look 'old' and started to struggle with holding a good body condition score.

Like myself there are many breeders and pet owners that have alpacas that they have owned for many years. Their old alpaca may be a special stud, the first alpaca they bred, a good guard animal or the family pet. Whilst I'm experiencing first hand 'the ageing alpaca' it is the change in their ability to process their food from a dental perspective that I am able to discuss in more detail.

Before we can discuss the problems I see in older alpacas I firstly need to explain a little about the dental anatomy of an alpaca and how the mouth works. Fig.1 below shows the dental anatomy of an alpaca.

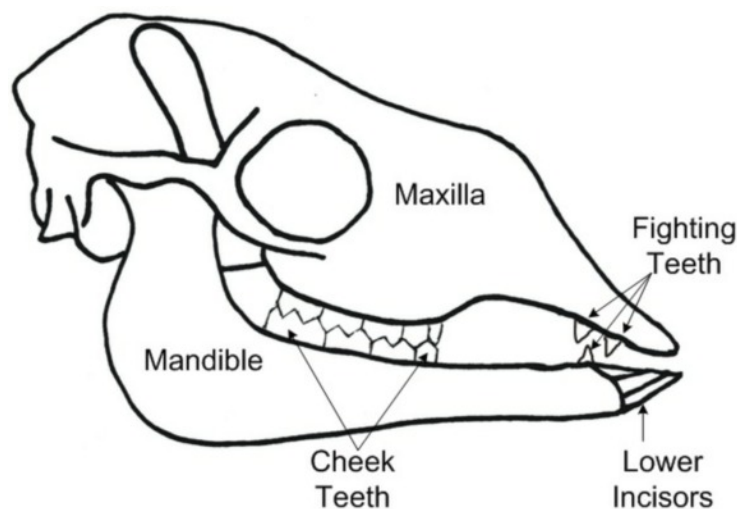


Fig 1- Dental Anatomy

An adult alpaca has 30-32 permanent teeth and during its lifetime will have two sets of teeth. The first set is made up of the deciduous (or baby) teeth and the second set is the permanent teeth. Cria are born with some of their deciduous teeth, and by several months old will be munching away with a complete set. Permanent molars (cheek teeth) start erupting at around nine months of age but eruption of the full set of permanent teeth and the loss of the deciduous teeth will not be complete until well into adulthood.

To further complicate the process alpaca teeth are designed to keep erupting into the mouth throughout the lifetime of the alpaca. The teeth form and grow in the jawbones beneath the gums. These teeth erupt into the alpaca's mouth and wear away against the opposing teeth or dental pad, little by little as the animal bites and chews. This process of continual wearing and eruption continues throughout the life of the alpaca until the teeth are worn out. As you can imagine it is not a perfect world inside the alpaca's mouth and this loss of deciduous teeth, eruption of the permanent teeth and the continual wearing down of the tooth surface does not always go to plan!

If the molars in the top and bottom jaws or the incisors and the dental pad do not meet each other correctly then the teeth will wear unevenly or often not wear at all. This is usually obvious when we see overlong incisors that do not meet or wear against the dental pad correctly. In the back of the mouth, the molars don't always wear evenly but unfortunately, as it is difficult to see inside the mouth these problems will go unnoticed.

Over time, along with the normal wearing of the teeth any small abnormalities that are present will become more obvious problems as the condition progresses and the alpaca ages.

So what problems do I see in older alpacas?

Individual alpacas will age differently. Conformation, the type of food that the alpaca eats and the dental care that the alpaca receives, throughout its lifetime, have an influence on the long-term health of an alpaca. Alpaca diets vary throughout Australia depending on climate, soil and the type of grasses available. What the alpaca eats will have an influence not only on nutrition but also how the teeth wear.



Fig 2 - Incisors of a young Alpaca



Fig 3 - Functional Incisors of a 16 year old alpaca

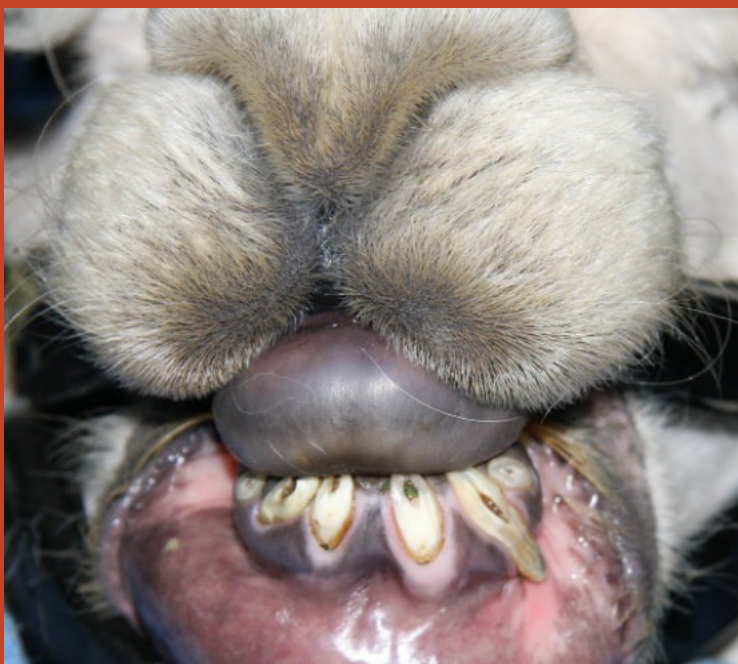


Fig 4 - Incisors Worn to Gum level

I see alpacas in their early teens with incisors worn level with the gums. Fig 2, 3 and 4 show incisors of alpacas at various ages. I see alpacas in their late teens with well functioning mouths. I see many that have cracked teeth, loose teeth, gum disease, ulcers (Fig 5) and those that have lost many of their molars. As molars 'wear out' the tooth surface becomes smoother losing the ability to chew or grind.



Fig 5 - Ulcers Inside the Cheeks from Sharp Teeth

I also see problems with molars that have usually been present for several years and get to the stage where the teeth aren't effectively grinding the alpacas food. This results in a negative influence on the general health and body condition of the animal. Most of these serious, more painful conditions are usually the result of molars not wearing against the opposing teeth and becoming long enough to wear into the gums and in extreme cases the bone of the opposing jaw (Fig 6 opposite). These issues usually require treatment by a vet or consultation with an animal dentist familiar with alpaca dental anatomy.

Feeding the older alpaca is different from feeding the younger ones. The changes in the teeth all need to be considered. Most alpacas seem to cope with worn incisors especially if they have good grazing and access to additional rations. On the other hand chewing with worn out molars can be more of a challenge. Hay takes a lot more effort (and energy) to chew than lucerne or oaten chaff. I allow my older alpacas free access to chaff mix that they prefer to hay.

I also feed a concentrated feed pellet for extra nutritional value, in an amount appropriate for the alpaca. There are lots of articles written to cover alpaca nutrition that can help you ensure your older alpaca has a suitable balanced diet.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of checking the body condition of your alpacas, especially the older ones. Weight loss is often an indication of a dental or other health problem and the sooner you can investigate the cause the easier it will be to manage.

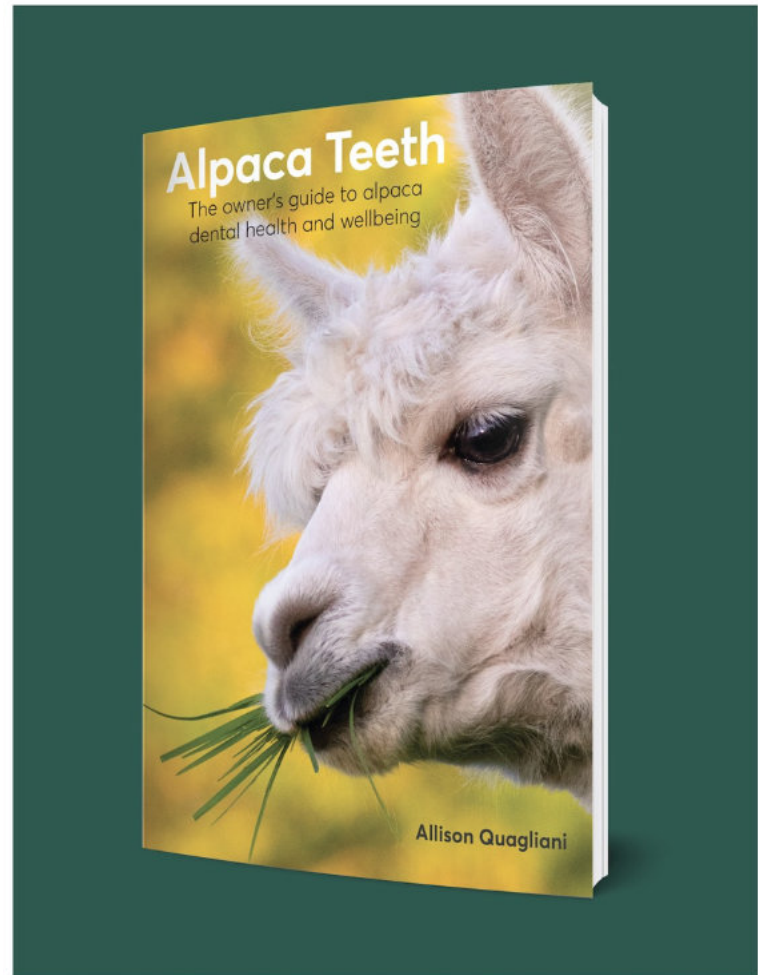


Fig 6 - The Skull of an older alpaca.

The lower long molar has worn a gap between the upper teeth, worn away the gums and damaged the skull bone

Alpaca Teeth: The Owner's Guide to Alpaca Dental Health and Wellbeing is available now.

<https://www.alpacadentist.com.au/alpaca-teeth-the-owners-guide-to-alpaca-dental-health-and-wellbeing>



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Wild Woolly

USING ALPACA IN FELTING

By Di Conroy - Fibre Artist



At Wild Woolly we love all sorts of fibres. We supply all sorts of needle felting tools, kits and of course wools with a focus on Australia made where possible.

Alpaca is one of our speciality fibres and often used in our workshops. We educate participants on all the possibilities that different fibres can bring to a project. Alpaca fibre is one of those fibres, blended or used alone, that takes your needle felted creation to the next level.

Alpaca fibre has a lot of great qualities, popular in needle felting mostly for the wide variety of natural colours. With a huge array of colours available, once blended you can make any natural colour that you need. As a lot of people love to needle felt animals, it is handy to have Alpaca fibre in your stash. This allows you to blend alpaca with other fibres to create the colour you need for the particular animal you are making.

Alpaca works well to finish off projects as well. To add that finer bit of detail that brings your project to life. Needle felting with a special fibre like alpaca takes your creation from a store bought toy to a real life replica. By adding alpaca fibre to a horse's tail/mane, a dog's coat or to bird feathers brings your project to life.



About Di

Di was born in Sydney, Australia many moons ago.

Di comes from a family of artists, her father a talented artist, her mother a seamstress, and her grandmother a wedding dress maker. Growing up Di was surrounded by people making various things with all kinds of mediums. Di first started selling her art at the Byron Bay markets in 1986. Moving to London in the late 80s Di continued her love of fabric, and fibre, and selling items at local markets.

After moving to Tokyo, Japan in 1990 Di soon established herself with a business in vintage Japanese fabrics. Di's classes were waitlisted for many years, where she taught her art of creating wall art, quilts, and handbags from vintage kimonos, yukatas and obis.

While living in Tokyo for 16yrs Di studied needle felting as a hobby with some of Japanese finest teachers. Felted fibres became a passion and continued when she moved to Singapore where her felted art began to take form.

Now living in Brisbane, Australia Di runs Wild Woolly where she does commission work for clients. Di's inspiration comes from her love of animals, the details in Japanese fabric and art, the lushness of Singapore, and her tropical Queensland garden.

Di spends most days in her studio/workshop with her sister Annette, who is also a talented artist and the silent partner that keeps Wild Woolly humming again. They brain storm and bounce ideas off each other, while their dogs Birdie and Holly sleep under the tables.

As Alpaca is a soft fibre it is not used to begin projects. Needle felted 3D projects start with a coarser, core wool which is easy to sculpt. Once you have achieved the shape you are after with the core wool it is time to add the colour. Most often this will be merino or corriedale wools which are used alone or blended with other fibres to create different looks. Alpaca is often blended into these wools at this point of the project to create texture, colour or a softer feel. However, I find the best value is at the end when all the detail is being added. Alpaca used for tails is fantastic, and can soften facial features to get a lot more expression in your piece.

Overall, I love working with alpaca, blending it with other fibres to see how to best needle felt it. Mainly, I am a needle felter but have used alpaca in wet felting as well. There are so many beautiful wet felted items made with alpaca it is a versatile and popular fibre for both needle and wet felting.

If you would like to contact with Di Conroy - Fibre Artist, she has a website <https://wildwoolly.au> or via her social media:

<https://www.instagram.com/wildwoollyau/>

<https://www.facebook.com/wildwoollyau/>



Wild
Woolly



Llama and Alpaca

in the Andes Altiplano

By Keith Payne



Numerous million years ago when the original camelid began to venture south from mid North America, down through what is now Central America, it arrived at a long range of very high mountains which we recognise as the Andes.

The Andes has two spines, one running down the west coast and the other further inland to the east having the vast Amazon collection area on its inland slopes. In between these two spines lies a high altitude plateau, called the Andes Altiplano. Here is where you will find the majority of the many millions of llama and alpaca which reside in South America.

Some of these immigrants ventured down the west coast of South America, and in time developed and evolved into today's guanaco and llama, the others who headed down the altiplano section we now know as vicuna and alpaca. Some 2 to 3 million years ago, the genera of the original immigrants from Texas separated into the genetics of the guanaco and vicuna.

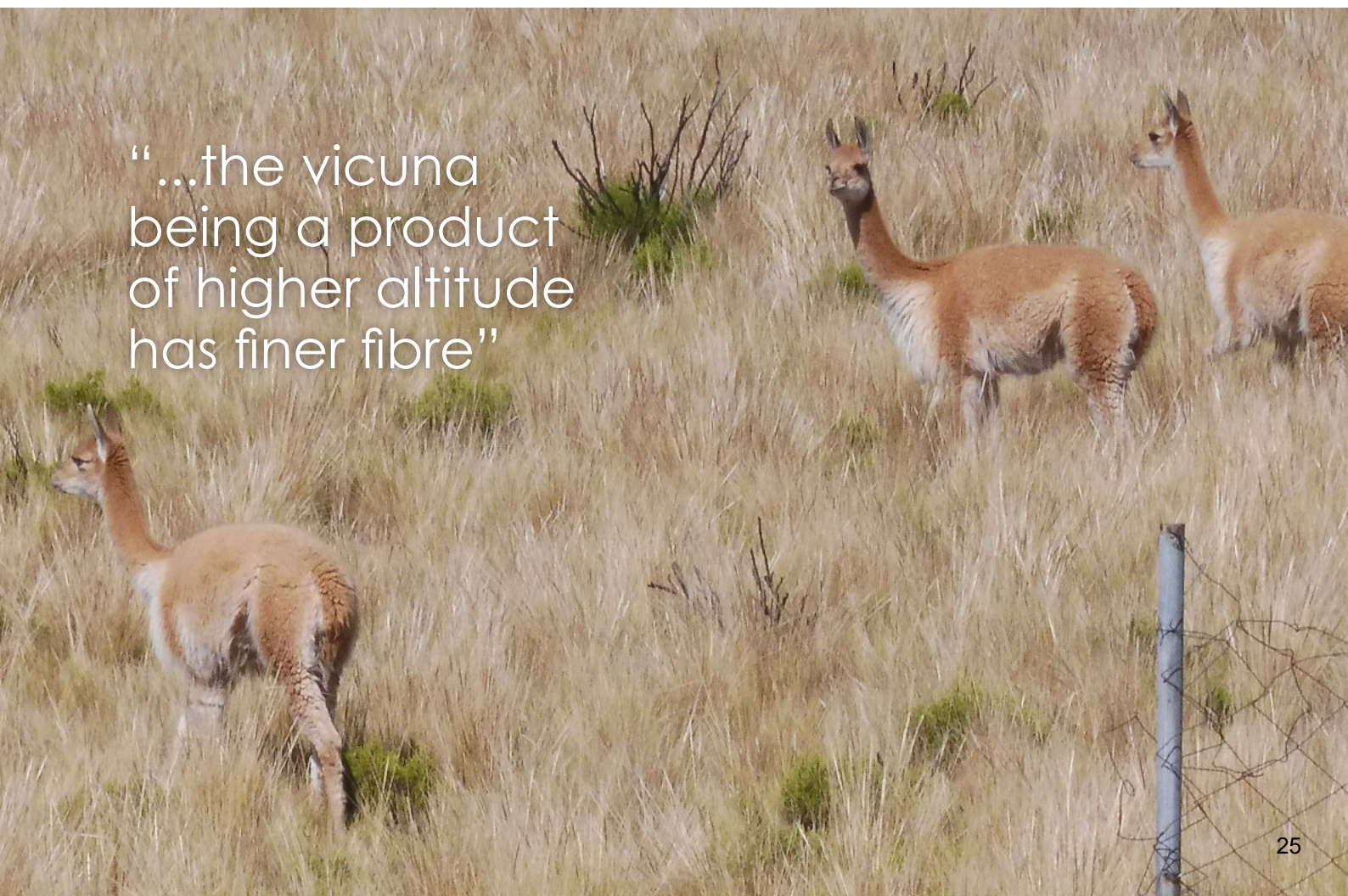
Both of these animals have a similar genetic structure that is with 74 chromosomes, a three compartment ruminating digestive system and complementary reductive systems. They share a similar pacing movement (unique to them) balanced by a long neck. Both have hollow fibre which is

lanolin free, the vicuna being a product of higher altitude has finer fibre however the guanaco has proven to possess the more effective survival traits, its population at arrival of humans estimated to exceed the vicunas tenfold.

Today a visit to South America would reveal that 80 - 90% of its camelids are resident on the altiplano. The altitude of the altiplano does vary significantly from the north of Peru to the south of Bolivia and into some sections of Argentina and Chile. The variation of altitude is from 3,000m to 5,000m, the majority being in excess of 4,000m.

There is some local variation of climate but generally one would expect to encounter warm summer days (with cold nights), frosty moderate rainfall autumns, wet springs and cold winters. But the principal feature is daily temperature variation. I visited recently in the month of May and encountered nights of 5-15C below zero, a peak of 15-20C at midday and back to sub zero by 5pm.

But the one very significant feature of the altiplano is the vegetation. The millions of llama and alpaca which live there are very reliant upon a single plant, it is known to the locals as "ichu" grass. Its scientific name is "Stipa lchu" of the Family "Poaceae" and sometimes referred to as Java lchu, or simply "Feather Grass". It is similar to tussock grasses (mountain grass) which grow at altitude in mountainous regions in various countries about the globe.

A photograph showing three vicunas in a field of tall, dry, golden-brown grass. The vicunas are light brown with white underparts. One is in the foreground on the left, looking towards the right. Two others are in the middle ground on the right, one looking towards the left and one towards the right. A wire fence is visible in the bottom right corner.

“...the vicuna being a product of higher altitude has finer fibre”



The preponderance of ichu in the camelid diet is quite fascinating. It has a rough stem and rough leaves and looks quite undesirable. The llama is considered to be the only animal in the world which can survive on a diet of it. Even the hardy alpaca diet requires to be supplemented with the juicy vegetation found in "Andes wetlands".

A feature of the altiplano is these wetlands, called "bojedale" in Quechua, "mojedale: in Aymara or "vegas" in Spanish, these unique high altitude areas result from snow, glacier melt or release from man made dams in dry summer periods. A great variety of water reliant vegetation can be found and is highly favoured by alpaca herds.

In these areas it is common to find large herds of female (hembra) alpaca and llama, mingling together when grazing (separating into homogenous groups at night) except when it is mating season in which case the two are separated by distance, each with their respective alpaca or llama males (machos).

Drier areas where the vegetation is often 90% ichu one can expect to find large herds of llama with few alpaca numbers. The altiplano is largely unfenced, llamas are identified by special identity "nicks" in their ears, and the herds roam constantly each days often covering several kilometres. The largest herds are the hembra with crias at foot. In the months of December, January and early February, intact machos will be introduced to the hembra herds, ratios vary but usually in the range of 50 - 100 to one.

Herds of male llama and alpaca also roam the altiplano, these normally are transported at age 20 -24 months for the meat market, Llamas are rarely sheared on the altiplano, female alpaca are usually sheared annually.

Llama are no longer utilised for carrying cargo or produce. The odd farm may still put them to work where no other form of transportation is available or access by motor vehicle is not realistic. Or for the pleasure of visiting tourists, special festivals, etc

The diet of llama and alpaca is not supplemented in the Andes. There is very little machinery available to work the soil and seed is expensive. In several "progressive" farms" I did witness effort to grow small areas of oats and alfalfa (lucerne), about 1/2 acre in total. In all cases the land had been worked and planted by hand - a significant labour given the condition of the rocky, dry soil. The resulting crops would not have impressed a western farmer. And in each case these supplementals were only fed to the machos, who are generally held in high regard by the individual farmers, due largely I expect to the much higher purchase price associated with them.



I spent a considerable amount of time studying the llama herds of the Bolivian altiplano, the fitness and health of the herds is excellent, an impressive achievement given their simple diet and general lack of individual care. After viewing thousands of animals I can share I did not see a thin or obese animal, a lame or leg deformity, blue eyes, a dropped pastern, a poorly shaped hip, a deformed jaw, etc etc.

It is indeed a travesty that a working animal like the llama is no longer worked in the Andes. And as each decade passes, the old skills of domesticating, training and outfitting llamas for cargo duty fades further from memory. Several local young men who assisted me in my study of the herds would ply me with questions about training llamas and then outfitting them for a journey. The community elders recount the stories of large caravans of llamas transporting a cargo of goods all over the Andes and the youth of today long for these adventures.

Of one thing I am sure is that the llamas also would also cherish the opportunity to once again ply their trade up and down the rugged Andes with its deserts, altiplano, rivers and salt plains.

NOTE: photos taken by the author on the Titicaca, Turco and Copasa sections of the Bolivian altiplano (2023). All article photos taken at altitude 4,300m or higher.



Preparing your fleece for processing

By Tanya and Jim Boston - Boston Fine Fibres

Prior to shearing

So you've spent some years and considerable dollars, feeding, shearing, medicating, sheltering and nurturing your alpacas. Now its time to reap some benefits from their luxurious warm fleece. Coming up to shearing, you need to decide what you're going to do with your fleece. Will you knit, crochet, weave or spin your own fleece, or will you sell your raw fleece to one of the co-operatives?

It is absolutely key to the productivity of your alpaca enterprise that you make this decision before shearing so you can inform the shearer of your intentions.

You'll need to create a clean space for shearing and collection of fleece and have suitable bags ready to separate the various segments of fleece. You should have a good idea of the quality of each animal and choose which ones you are likely to process. As a general rule, older fleeces and cria fleeces can be difficult to process and we tend to send these straight to the co-ops.



Shearing Day

The blanket or saddle of the alpaca fleece is the most suitable part for processing because it makes up the bulk of the weight (giving optimal yield) and is reasonably uniform in terms of micron (fibre diameter) and staple (fibre length). Additionally, the saddle usually has fewer heavier primary fibres.

Many shearers will assist you to collect the saddle in a way that avoids contamination from or heavier fibres present in the legs, belly and brisket, as well as soiled patches around the rump.



Skirting

If possible, skirt your fleece at the time of shearing. Even a quick skirting at this time will reduce unwanted fibres that are difficult to remove during processing. We also recommended that you return to the fleeces at a later stage and skirt them more thoroughly before processing.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of skirting your alpaca fleece. Once skirted we recommend that you pull the fleece apart thoroughly. Give it a good shake to rid it of dust and remove vegetable matter and unwanted heavier fibres. When skirting a coloured fleece you might also choose to pull out spots of unwanted colour.

In general, mills base their costing on incoming weight so it is in your interest to provide clean, well skirted fleeces which are relatively free of contaminants.

If you are unsure about skirting, check the Internet for some great video clips that will assist you in this process. The Australian Alpaca Association also offers workshops, from time to time, on the subject. Some mills offer a skirting service at a cost and most are willing to show you how to skirt your fleece for future processing.

Once skirted, ensure your fleece is completely dry before you place it in a bag for storage. It is preferable that you store your fleece in a clear, perforated fleece bag to ensure the fleece doesn't sweat. When storing individual fleeces make sure you label the fleece with the name of the alpaca and the year of shearing. If possible also record the weight and the micron (if known) on the bag.

Store your fleece in a dry place, out of direct sunlight. You need to be sure that moths and mice cannot get to your fleece as mills, for obvious reasons, cannot accept fleece infested with moth eggs, lice or rodent litter. One of the problems with long-term storage is that any vegetable matter in the fleece tends to break down and ends up contaminating the entire fleece spoiling it with tiny specks of vegetable matter.

Choosing your fleece for processing

In choosing which fleeces to process, there are many things to consider about the nature of your particular fleece characteristics. These include comfort factor, micron and staple length.

Comfort factor

While there is a technical explanation, comfort factor is essentially a lack of "prickle factor" or the apparent softness of the fibre. The higher the comfort factor, the softer the fleece will feel.

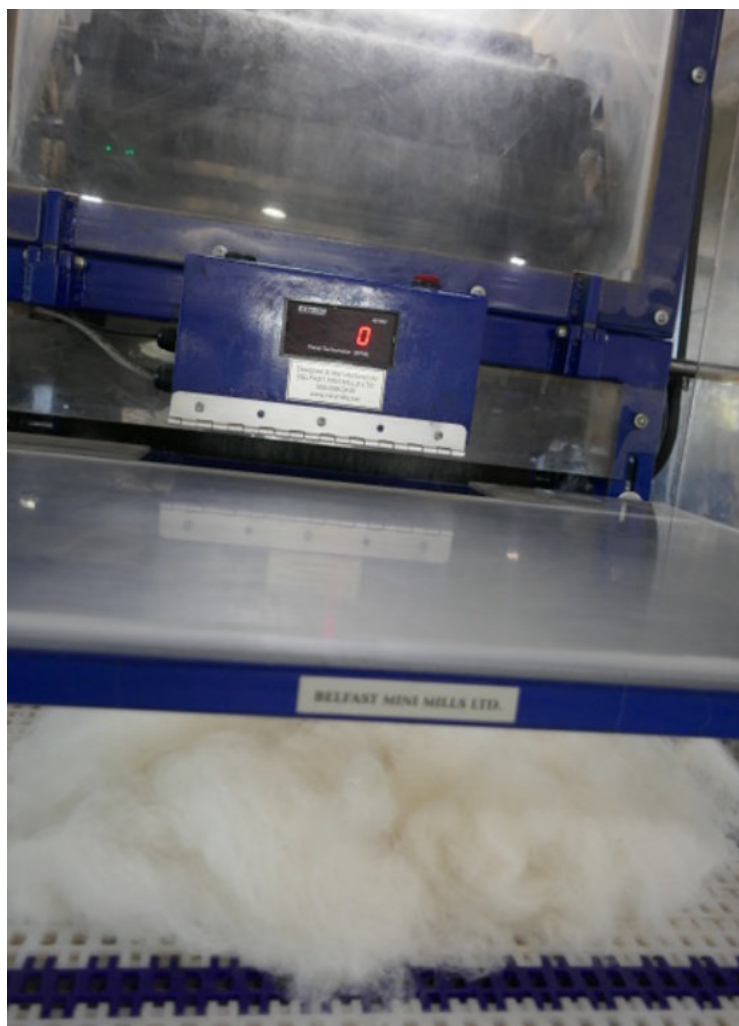
Ask yourself if you could wear this fibre against your skin and process only those fleeces that evoke a positive response. Disregard all prickly fleeces as no amount of processing will create a nice product from a fleece with a low comfort factor.

Micron

You should contact your preferred mill to discuss any limitations on acceptable micron. In general, best results are achieved from fibres with uniform micron of between 18-25 micron.

Staple Length

Most mills accept a staple length (fibre length) of between 80 and 150 mm. This length is fairly standard for when the alpaca is shorn yearly. You should check with your mill for specific requirements of their equipment.



Tender fleece

It is important to check that your fleece is not tender so that it doesn't break during processing. Hold a staple end in each hand and pull it apart sharply. If the fleece is tender, it will break in your hands. Tender fleeces are not suitable for processing.

Cria fleeces

Some cria fleeces can be processed but the tender tips are likely to break during the process and can result in the creation of neps (small knots embedded in the fibre) during processing. Apply the test for "tender fleece" to see if this is likely to be a problem with your cria fleece. You will also need to ensure that your cria fleece meets the minimum micron, staple length and weight requirements advertised by mills.

Huacaya crimp

Huacaya fleeces that are very crimped, along with highly aligned crimp and well-formed staples produce the very best huacaya yarns. The air, naturally captured by the crimp during processing, guarantees a soft, more elastic yarn that better retains memory once knitted into a garment.

Suri

Not all mills spin suri fleece as it can be difficult to process. Make sure that your suri fleece meets the staple length requirements of the mill. In addition, go to some trouble to pull apart the locks thoroughly. This aids in the early processing and significantly reduces loss throughout. Adding a percentage of huacaya fleece can aid the processing and provide some elasticity (memory) to the final product.

Weight

Most mills have a minimum incoming weight requirement. This is to ensure that you receive the best yield from your fleece as a degree of loss is inevitable during the process. Generally, mills will experience a loss of around 30% (and sometimes more) from the incoming weight, largely as a result of processing and the characteristics of the fibre. To avoid disappointment, talk to your mill owner to understand where losses are likely to occur.





Final Product

There are a number of mills located around Australia. A list of these is available on the Australian Alpaca Association's website. Most mills offer a range of products from fine to bulky yarns, blends and rovings.

When considering processing, it is important to consider what you intend to be your final product and how you might use it. For example, you might leave your yarn on a cone for large projects or machine knitting. If you knit while you're travelling, you might prefer balls. If you want to dye your yarn, we'd recommend your final product be in the form of skeins instead of balls.

Whatever final product you'd like, we recommend you contact your preferred mill before sending your fleece, to discuss your requirements. All mills offer free advice on product options to clients.





Are you prepared for your Spring cria to drop?

By Esme Graham

Understanding the signs that show your girls may be close to birthing and being prepared with essential birthing equipment will give you confidence when this exciting season starts.

GESTATION

The average time for this is 343 days but be prepared for earlier births and keep in mind that like human babies cria will make up their own minds when they are ready and this could be several weeks early or even over 12 months from the last mating date.

WEIGHING OR BODY SCORING

If you have scales you should have been weighing your girls during the pregnancy to ensure consistent weight gain. Loss of condition should trigger extra feeding to maintain the pregnancy keeping in mind that most foetal growth occurs during the last trimester. If you don't have scales make sure you body score your girls regularly. (For more information on Body Scoring see Camelid Connections Issue 18 December 2021 available in the library on our website - www.camelidconnections.com.au)





OBSERVATION

Try to have your females close by for the month before their due date so you can check in with them regularly during the day.

Most crias are born in the morning but this is not guaranteed. Late afternoon or evening births can, but not necessarily, need more attention and the crias need to be watched more closely particularly in colder areas.

SACROTUBEROES LIGAMENT

At three to five days before birth a ligament just beside the tail and between the two sides of the pelvis will relax to give the cria room to pass through the pelvis. Its possible to feel this change in tension and so you can monitor this to get a clue as to when the birth may occur. Stand by the hips facing rearwards, the ligament runs from the base of the tail to the point of the hip (compare with a non pregnant female if you are not sure, it feels like a thick guitar string)

BIRTHING IMMINENT

Quite near to partuition the dam is likely to visit the poo pile more regularly than usual or she may move away from the herd. The majority of births are problem free but still need monitoring.

Enjoy your new cria!

CRIA KIT

As with all births, either human or livestock, the majority of births are trouble free, but preparation for unexpected emergencies at birthing is also a prerequisite of good management.

The following should be part of your kit - thermometer, Betadine Antiseptic, bottles, teats, cria coat, bubble wrap, Glucose powder, frozen plasma or colostrum replacer, milk replacer powder, electrolyte solution, petroleum jelly, accurate scales, pen & paper, Microlax enema, surgical clamp, dust proof container to store everything. (for more information see Issue 18 - December 2021 of Camelid Connections in our library at - www.camelidconnections.com.au)



Camelid Tourism

Murrumbateman NSW



Blackwattle Alpaca Farm

Visit us to meet the alpaca or llama of your dreams!

OPEN 10am-4pm, Thursday to Sunday

blackwattlealpacas.com.au

Blackwattle Alpaca Farm is a family owned and operated business that specialises in indie-dyed yarn and guided animal encounters with alpacas. The farm is located in Murrumbateman (NSW); a quick 3 hour drive from Sydney or a 30 minute trip from Canberra.

Our love affair with alpacas began back in 2008, when we acquired two young wethers, Mikey & Two-Socks. Initially we intended to go out and buy a goat to keep the grass down but came home with an adorable pair of alpacas instead.

Our alpaca numbers quickly grew and we now run a herd of approximately 60 alpacas and 5 llamas. We also have the occasional kangaroo who likes to become an honorary member of the herd.



In the early years, the farm operated as a boutique alpaca stud and we were breeding for shows. As the herd grew, we focused our breeding program on the advancement of fleece for fibre processing. Our yarn and fibre business had a humble beginning, initially processing and selling our own fibre out of our shed.

The business has since expanded to include the production of both natural & indie-dyed alpaca yarn. As trained artists, we have a passion for creating colours and emotions using dye and yarn as the canvas. We also take great pride in working with some very talented Australian crochet and knitting designers to develop patterns to suit our yarn. A crafting hobby of crocheting beanies and scarves, has turned into making finished products to sell at handmade markets and in our farm shop.

Our alpaca tours are a more recent addition to the business and began in response to the drought. The property didn't have a single blade of grass, conditions were tough and the food bills were escalating. The local tourism and visitor's centre suggested hosting alpaca encounters. While a little skeptical, we started hosting tours on the property. We were pleasantly surprised with the interest in alpaca tours and were booked up most weekends.

The tours were (and still are) a wonderful way for guests to interact with the animals, connect with the land, learn about farming and explore the steps involved to get the fibre from the paddock to a finish product. Witnessing the joy the encounters bring to people's lives is incredibly rewarding.

We enjoy seeing family and friends laughing as they relate to all the quirky personalities that make up our herd.

We officially opened our Alpaca Visitor Experience Centre (affectionately known as Blackwattle HQ) in 2022. It took two years to get the centre from concept to reality. There were a few hurdles along the way, (including COVID, bad weather and delays on supplies) but we now have a beautiful destination stop for visitors. We have also been able to achieve a better work-life balance by moving the business away from our house and into a purpose built facility.

The design brief for Blackwattle HQ was 'lots of windows.' After working out of our window-less garage for many years, we wanted to be able to gaze upon our picturesque paddocks filled with alpaca. On clear days we have stunning and uninterrupted views of the Brindabella Ranges. It's an incredibly peaceful and relaxing environment for our herd and our guests.

Blackwattle HQ has opened up the tourism possibilities of the property. The new building features a purpose built dye studio, Farm Shop, function space, cafe and accessibility friendly facilities. We are now able to host daily farm tours for the public, private alpaca encounters, school visits, playgroups, birthday parties, brunches, picnics, functions and crafting workshops.

The llamas and alpacas appear to enjoy the new tours. At 10am Ghost Ryder (llama) eagerly waits at the gate for his 10am stroll with our guests. BB's (llama) curiosity gets the better of him as he pokes his head into the dye studio to check out our workshops. (And) Atlantis (alpaca) is always making lots of "yummy noises" on tours as he eats all the delicious food guests are feeding him.



BLACKWATTLE
ALPACA FARM



OUR TOURS FOCUS ON ESTABLISHING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS TO PROVIDE AN HONEST AND HEART-WARMING EXPERIENCE.

No two alpaca on the property are alike. They each have their own histories, individual likes/dislikes and each play a part in herd dynamics.

MEET POCKET ROCKET

"TODDLER LIFE"

Born on the 30th March 2023, Pocket Rocket is the smallest alpaca we have ever had on the farm.

He might be tiny, but he is bursting with character.

He is incredibly curious, confident and loves to play games with his two besties, Shadow and Pollywaffle. Toddler life can be exhausting, so much so that he fell asleep in mum's food bowl.



MEET FRASCATI

"MISCHEVIOUS"

While most of the animals on the farm are food driven, Frascati is excited by tactile stimulation. He loves pats, stealing your rake, unloading your wheelbarrow and playing with halters and leads.

This young llama will make you laugh with all his mischievous antics.

MEET FLOKI

"LIFE IN THE FAST LANE"

Floki is incredibly athletic and lives life in the fast lane.

He always has to be the first one at the gate when calling the herd in from the paddock; sprinting as fast as he can.

With his intense curiosity and short attention span, Floki is always on the move.



PLACES TO STAY AND THINGS TO DO

Why not plan a wonderful weekend get-away and experience all that the Murrumbatmen region has to offer. The village of Murrumbateman is fortunate to be home to a collective of passionate producers and craftsmen known as the Makers of Murrumbateman.

They are the creators of:

- Boutique & Award-winning wines
- Wonderful restaurants
- Heavenly chocolates
- Delicious honey
- Exclusive artworks
- Entertaining e-bikes experiences
- Amazing accomodation

Everything you need for a wonderful weekend get-away can be found at [-makersofmurrumbateman.org.au](http://makersofmurrumbateman.org.au)

Featured:

Canberra Wine Region E-Bike Tours hires electric powered bicycles to adults with a sense of adventure and who love the great outdoors.

Access many local wineries and attractions via the purpose built off-road bike trail.

winerides.com.au

Tallagandra Hill - Boutique vineyard accomodation offers you the chance to get away from the hustle of city life.

Relax on the deck of your private cottage while sipping one of their premium wines.

tallagandrahill.com.au

Murrumbateman Chocolate Co is a family owned and operated chocolate shop.

Enjoy a selection of hand crafted & sustainably produced chocolate treats.

robynrowechocolates.com.au

Places to Stay & Things To Do



E-Bike Tours with Winerides



Tallagandra Hill



Robyn Rowe Chocolates



Australian Alpaca

A S S O C I A T I O N

Why become a member?

As a member of the AAA you'll have access to the services and information you need to be a part of this growing industry

- Use the eAlpaca database and AAA alpaca-specific tools and resources to develop your herd to its best potential
- Connect with members who share your passion for alpacas at industry events and activities
- Keep up to date on the latest news in biosecurity, husbandry, agribusiness, and research

AAA has a range of memberships available to suit your interests and level of industry activity

Visit www.ealpaca.com.au/join

Australian Alpaca Association

PO Box 594 Gungahlin ACT 2912 Phone: (02) 6151 2073

www.alpaca.asn.au

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Building a
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2023 Australian Alpaca Show Report

By Annemarie Ashton Wyatt - Board Director



A highly successful 2023 AAA National Show was held at Prince of Wales Showground Bendigo from 18th to 20th August. The AAA Board warmly thanks show convenors Jonathon Provis-Vincent, Sharon Dawson, Isabel Renters, Louise Lazarus, their teams of amazing volunteers, and the AAA staff members, for all their hard work and dedication in delivering the premier alpaca event in Australia.

Shows are only possible thanks to the generous contributions of sponsors. The AAA greatly appreciated the support of overall show sponsor Agriculture Victoria and gold sponsors Ashbourne Alpacas, Baarooka Alpacas, EP Cambridge Alpacas, Lakeland Alpacas, Nutrien Ag Solutions, and Storybook Coolawarra Alpacas, in addition to the many sponsors of individual awards listed in the program.

Lunchtime education sessions were well attended. Agriculture Victoria presented valuable information on biosecurity to all exhibitors. Dr Kylie Munyard from Curtin University presented two sessions on alpaca colour genetics. Her trade stand was also well attended by alpaca producers wanting to learn more about genetic testing available through Neogen and the AAA.

National Halter Show

With 61 exhibitors bringing over 400 alpacas, it was an inspiring turnout given the tough economic times being experienced by agricultural producers across Australia.

Exhibitors noted the fun vibe of the show and thanked all who contributed to making it such an enjoyable event.

Halter class judges Roger Clarke from the British Alpaca Society and Molly Gardner from the Australian Alpaca Association ably judged all alpacas exhibited in the show ring. "The quality was outstanding and a real pleasure to judge," said Mr Clarke.

Judges comments on winning exhibits emphasised the importance of good conformation so animals were fit for purpose for healthy breeding and fleece production. They praised alpacas with good density, fleece length, and consistency of micron over the body which are essential to increase fleece yields.

The importance of lasting consistency was evident in a first for the National Show, as both Supremes of Show were repeats of the 2022 winners with EP Cambridge Hoedown named Supreme Huacaya in Show and Kurrawa Man of the Moment named Supreme Suri in Show.

New participants are strongly encouraged to enter the National Show and can be assured of a warm welcome and enjoy a supportive atmosphere. Dulce Alpacas achieved an impressive double win by being awarded Best New Breeder and Best Small Breeder in Show.



EP Cambridge Hoedown - Supreme Huacaya in Show



Kurrawa Man of the Moment - Supreme Suri in Show





National Fleece Show

AAA judge Peter Kennedy-Gane examined 150 fleeces presented by 29 exhibitors for the National Fleece Show. In particular, he praised the quality of fleeces from older animals, noting the importance of lasting softness of handle, length, and density as vital for increasing the fleece yield over each animal's lifetime.

Exhibitors and alpaca enthusiasts greatly appreciated the innovation of filmed judge's commentary on winning fleeces. These videos are available for viewing on the Australian Alpaca Association National Show Facebook page. In recognition of the importance of fleece competition, winners of Supreme Championships were presented with their trophies at the Bendigo event. Suncloud S021 Swagger was awarded National Supreme Huacaya Fleece and the Bill Plunkett Memorial Trophy for the Highest Scoring Fleece Overall. Pacofino Bacardi was awarded National Supreme Suri Fleece in Show.

No fleece photos were supplied.

National Art and Photography Show

Nateisha Davis - 12 years Old Junior Art Champion

Anastasia Keilani - 8 years Old Junior Art Reserve Champion



2023 National Young Paraders Competition

The Young Paraders Competition is an event in the showcase of alpaca activities, designed specifically and exclusively for young people aged between 7 and less than 26 years of age.

It is a competition designed to demonstrate the bond that develops between alpacas and their handlers, and the skills required for their upkeep and management. The YPC incorporates two distinct areas, with three levels of experience, and provides for several age groups. The two elements/sections of the competition have been described as:

Showmanship

This section demonstrates excellence in preparation, presentation and handling of alpacas in the show ring. It enables young people the opportunity to demonstrate a sound understanding and general knowledge of alpacas, their conformation and husbandry needs.

Stockmanship

This section offers the opportunity to demonstrate the excellence in the handling of alpacas in their normal daily management. This highlights through consistent training the bond that can be formed between the alpaca and its handler.

Young Judges

Progression through the Parader program leads onto our young judges competition where our youth are taught a more in depth method of appraising animals and judging them for particular traits, weighing up advantages and placing animals as a AAA halter judge would. It is not a requirement that our young judges become AAA halter judges however it is a great opportunity if a desired pathway. This section of the youth program is worked very closely with the AAA Showing and Judging Committee.

Youth Winners

National Preliminary Supreme Champion - Genevieve Loo

Master Trainer - Kyra Smith-Stevens

National Open Supreme Champion - Chelsea Shepherd

Young Judges - Supreme - Georgia Bishop

Reserve - Mia Hancock





National Craft Show

Champion for Weaving - David Bootten

Champion for Knitting - Cynthia Hall

Champion for Crochet - Pauline Glasser

Champion for Felting - Lezley Golding

Most Successful Exhibitor - Cynthia Hall





Alpacas are Joining the NLIS

Biosecurity is a vital part of Australian agriculture and underpins our international reputation as being a safe supplier of food and agricultural products.

All properties with livestock are required to have a Property Identification Code (PIC). The PIC helps with traceability of animal movements in case of a disease outbreak and ensures that information can quickly be delivered to livestock owners in times of need.

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) provides a unique number for each animal that identifies their property of birth and enables their movements to be verified throughout their lifetime. This unique number is attached to each animal on an ear tag.

All NLIS tags have the PIC and NLIS number printed on them. Electronic ear tags contain the animal's ID information on a microchip and can be read with a wand reader. E-tags are very popular for large farms.

All animal movements are recorded on a central database, which can be accessed by officials around the country to meet the obligations of the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA).

From 2023 onwards, every alpaca can have an NLIS tag with their unique identifier number. This system is voluntary at present, but it is hoped that the scheme will become mandatory throughout Australia in the future.

eAlpaca has already been updated to enable the use of either NLIS or IAR numbers for registering alpacas. South American Camelid waybills will continue to be used in the interim for recording animal movements, with the NLIS number recorded instead of the IAR number.

More information on the scheme is available here:

<https://alpaca.asn.au/nlis/>

NLIS alpaca tags can be ordered through the AAA website:

<https://alpaca.asn.au/alpaca-tag-order-form/>

NLIS Q&A

Do I have to have an NLIS tag?

No, the scheme is voluntary. You can still use the IAR brass tag for eAlpaca registrations at this stage.

Do I have to have an electronic wand reader?

No, all tags have the PIC and NLIS identifier printed on them.

Do they need a different applicator to the IAR tags?

Yes, you can buy the new applicators through the AAA online shop.

The tags are bigger than the brass ones, will this be a problem?

Several large alpaca studs in different parts of Australia have been using NLIS size tags for years and find them less problematic than the IAR brass tags for getting hooked on fences or causing infections.

Do I have to take out the IAR tag and replace it with an NLIS tag?

Only if you choose to. Alpacas not born on your property can have a post-breeder tag put in if you want to transition fully to NLIS numbers.

How old does my alpaca have to be to get a tag?

Some studs apply them at birth leaving some extra room for the ear to grow.

I use NLIS and am selling a mother with cria at foot, does the cria need a tag?

Yes, each animal must have its own unique NLIS tag before it is moved off the property of birth.

If my alpaca loses its NLIS tag, can it be replaced?

Yes, you just buy a new NLIS tag and add the new number to the alpaca's record.



ALL ABOUT ALPACAS

CLASSROOM RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY F-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 & SECONDARY 7-10



A Quick Guide to EADRA

The Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) is a contractual agreement between Australian, state, territory governments and the livestock industry. It aims to collectively reduce the risk from disease and to manage a response if a disease outbreak occurs.

The AAA has worked with Animal Health Australia for over ten years to become a signatory to EADRA. This has been an important goal for the AAA, as participants in EADRA agree to share costs of responding to an emergency animal disease.

EADRA has five main parts:

1. Participation and cooperation, ensuring a national approach to disease control,
2. Prevention and risk management, to reduce the risk of a disease outbreak,
3. Detection and response capability, to ensure early identification and effective intervention,
4. Cost-sharing, to reduce impact on livestock producers, single industries, or jurisdictions, and
5. Training, to ensure that people in all jurisdictions have the skills needed to participate and respond to emergencies.

Industry contributions are met through a levy on NLIS tags. As part of the transition to the scheme, the levy component cost of the tags is currently being met by the AAA as a benefit to members.

As cost-sharing is scaled to the size of the industry, an important part of the work undertaken by the AAA has been to obtain an independent economic valuation of the industry. The Compact Business Case for the alpaca industry, was completed by the AAA working with independent agricultural economics GHD Pty Ltd and published in December 2022. This report was funded by AgriFutures Australia under the Emerging Industries Program. The report can be read here <https://agrifutures.com.au/product/alpaca-a-compact-business-case/>

All About Alpacas

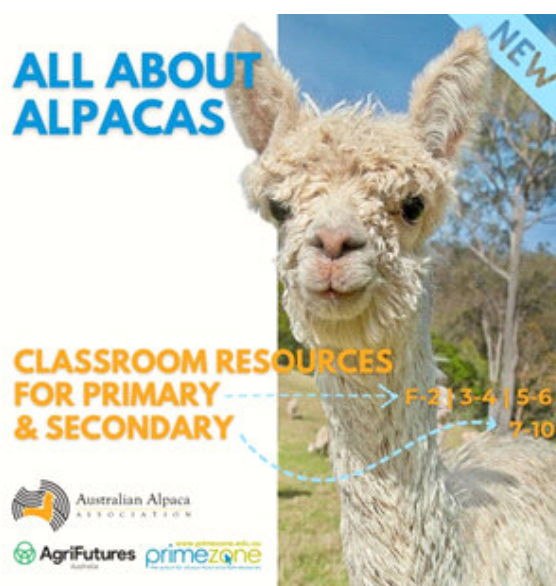
Growing the alpaca industry depends on increasing awareness of products produced and in encouraging people to enter the industry. The AAA is committed to growing our future farmers through education and in supporting the alpaca youth program.

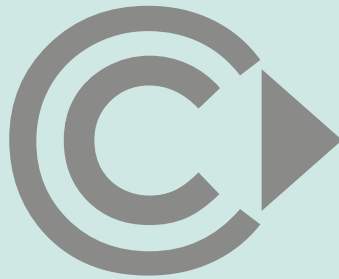
The Alpaca Youth Education Committee approached the AAA Board in late 2021 to apply for a grant to update the alpaca information available for schools. A small working group led by Annemarie Ashton-Wyatt and Louise Holbrook successfully obtained a grant from AgriFutures Australia and the All About Alpacas project became a reality.

Katy Armson-Graham was employed as the Project Officer and worked with Annemarie and Louise to gather new and informative content from alpaca producers throughout Australia. This content was provided to expert agricultural educators at the Primary Industries Education Foundation of Australia to align the material to the Australian curriculum.

With comprehensive teacher guides, student worksheets and printable card game, the All About Alpacas project provides a suite of curriculum-linked resources targeted to students in Years F-2; 3-4; 5-6; and 7-10. These resources focus on the Design and Technologies, Science, Mathematics, and English learning areas. Students engage in hands-on, collaborative activities that encourage discussion, problem-solving and organisation of information.

Resources are available free of charge to all teachers and schools here <https://www.primezone.edu.au/resource/all-about-alpacas/>





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