

Spits and Pieces

Volume 16: Issue 2

Autumn 2011



Got Spare Time?

Hah - just a trick question....but seriously, if you think you have the capacity to help out the region with one of the many events we have on this year, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please contact any of the following people - they all need help with their events.

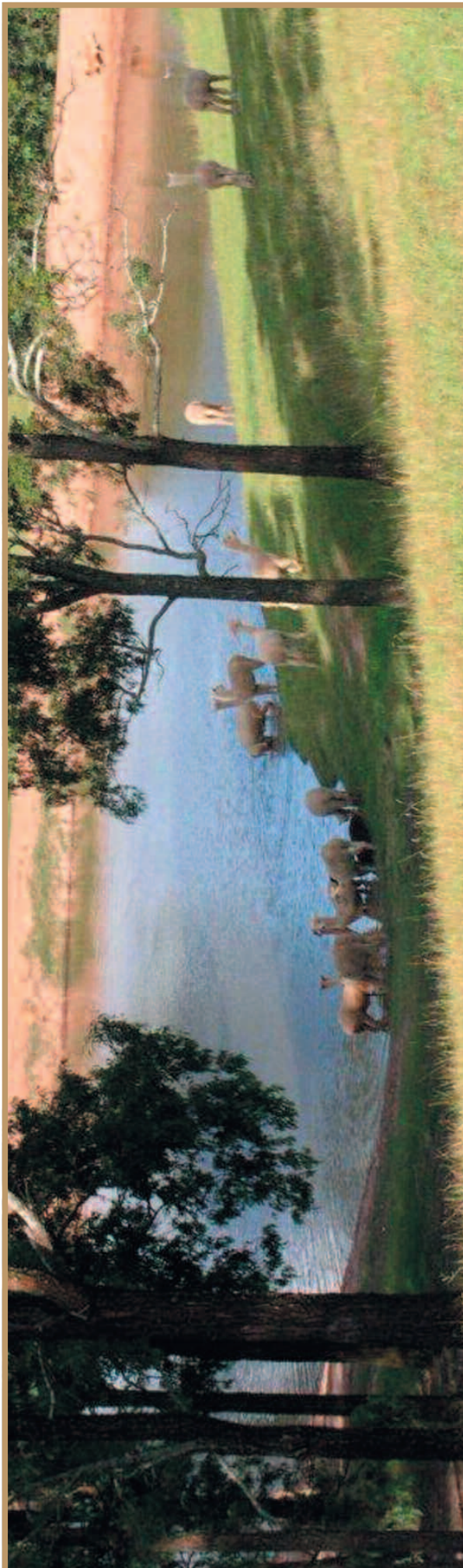
Hawkesbury Show - contact Don Culey

National Alpaca Weeks - contact Graeme Dickson

National Show & Sale - contact John Hay

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What animals are low maintenance; kind to the ground; fleece producing and lovable, all at the same time?

ALPACAS OF COURSE

Alpacas are ideal for both small and large acreages. Their soft padded feet have very low impact on your property and are easy to contain with standard fencing. Shorn only once per year, with no mulesing required, they are the all round environmentally acceptable livestock.

**Come and see the alpacas and talk to breeders at the Hawkesbury Show on the 13th-15th May, 2011
at the Hawkesbury Showground, Clarendon.**

*If you would like to learn more inquire now for our
"Getting Started with Alpacas" seminar being held 18th-19th June, 2011.*



AUSTRALIAN
ALPACA



For more details contact: The Secretary
HAWKESBURY/BLEUE MOUNTAINS REGION
Email: alpacas@tpg.com.au or phone: 02 9653 2277
Web site: www.hbmalpacas.com.au

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DISCLAIMER

The Editor and the Committee of the Hawkesbury-Blue Mountains Region of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd assume no responsibility whatsoever for accuracy of material in the magazine. Liability is not expressed, nor is it implied. Interested parties should make their own enquiries.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

We are pleased to report that from our AGM in July we now have seven members on the Regional Committee. Five from last year with two “new” members in Sue Maynard (Secretary) and Jeanne Brown (Minute Secretary), thank you all for volunteering. We also have a great team of non committee members who have taken up responsibility for the various tasks that go to make a region function, again thank you all.

Our financial position at the end of June was better than budgeted but our accounts have highlighted that the shows are a drain on our resources and regrettably we need to introduce charges for pen usage in order to recoup the cost of pen collection.

After a break of four years we conducted the Alpaca Expo (Previously known as the Fiesta) at the Hawkesbury Racecourse over two days in September. All reports indicate that a successful and enjoyable weekend was had by all who attended. Some sales were made during the expo but the encouraging part is that quite a few sales have been made on follow up to both new and existing members.

The seminars were well attended, with seventeen potentially new members attending the “How to get Started in Alpacas” on the Saturday and in excess of sixty attending a very educational series of presentations on Sunday from a textile expert, two representatives from Austrade (one from Sydney office and one from Tokyo office) and a carpet manufacturer from Melbourne. These presentations recreated interest and excitement in the use of Australian alpaca fibre in products ranging from top shelf garments made from <21um alpaca/cashmere blend to luxurious carpet made from 28- 35um alpaca/blend using a range of

natural colours. These products are currently being marketed in Australia, Europe and Japan and prices now being paid for the fleece are far in excess of what we have been able to achieve in past years.

We were able to present teams of experienced spinners/weavers and felters displaying their skills on both days and the Fleece to Fashion Competition created great excitement. The sale of their products enabled us to donate \$500, with a little help from the Region, to the Women's Cancer Foundation – Ovarian Cancer Institute.

We were disappointed in the number of public we attracted to the expo despite a widespread advertising campaign however the retailers reported reasonable sales. It was encouraging to witness the launch of The House of Alpaca range of products using 100% Australian fibre, of which a considerable amount was grown in the H/BM Region. They experienced good sales and we wish them well for future trading.

In summary I believe the effort was worthwhile and we have reinvigorated interest in Alpacas and alpaca fibre both in our region and adjoining areas.

A big thank you to all who made the weekend a success.

We now have an additional 50 panels and part of this cost will be paid for from the proceeds of the Expo weekend. We were only able to purchase these in advance thanks to the generosity of Keith and Jeanette Hollingsworth who underwrote the order. This purchase also saved us hiring another trailer load from our friendly neighbourhood region.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Our Regional members were well represented at the National Show & Sale in Tamworth, and apart from some unseasonal weather the Central Coast & Hunter Region are to be commended on the presentation of the venue.

Sunday the 12th December was our final OGM for the calendar year at Tanglin Lodge, Tennyson. The meeting was followed by Christmas BBQ plus many "goodies" from our hosts Cheryl and Geoff Uren. We thank them for providing the venue and being so hospitable.

2011 has started with disasters all over Australia but we are pleased to report that our region has been spared. We have a busy year ahead with the show season about to commence, National Alpaca Week in May at the Hawkesbury Show, a "Getting Started with Alpacas" seminar in June and our participation in the National Show, Sale & Expo at the RAS Homebush in October. The Region is committed to providing the logistics

as well as organising the Expo section and to this end John Hay has volunteered to chair a separate H/BM sub-committee. We will need as many volunteers as possible so please contact John if you can help in any way.

We look forward to experiencing a more positive year and encourage all members to promote the alpaca industry at every opportunity. We will be pursuing the AAA to increase their marketing effort during 2011 and beyond to support the existing members and at the same time increase the membership.

Graeme Dickson

March 2011

Next Meeting:
Sunday March 27th, 10am
Alpacandes Alpaca Stud
76 Arcadia Rd Galston

Regional Contacts

Tee Pee

(Alpaca Sales Listing) 02 4576 4576
02 4576 4555 (fax)
Bronwyn Davey alpacas@lanscape.net.au

New Breeders

Seminar 02 4573 1177
Alicia Anderson regalh@bigpond.com
Cheryl Kosaras

RAS

Representatives 02 4567 2167
Hazel Tutty 0419 829 551
Keryn Burns

Property

Cheryl Kosaras regalh@bigpond.com

Castle Hill Show

Convenor 0407 469 177
Linda Moore linda@follyfoot.com.au

Hawkesbury

Show Convenor 02 4576 4576
Don Culey alpacas@lanscape.net.au

Fleece

Collection Coordinator See email communication from
Graeme Dickson - 16th March

H-BM

Webmaster 0412 845 025
Mark Newman redgumstudios@ozemail.com.au

FROM THE EDITOR

Well 2011 is charging along and we are heading fast into show season !!

So finally Spits has arrived. Unfortunately my work commitments have been overwhelming in the past 11 months which has resulted in us missing an edition or two of Spits. Sadly we are also missing advertising dollars to keep the newsletter running. Ideally the newsletter should pay for itself.

I am glad to report we have several articles from our members, but we certainly need more to support 4 editions a year. So if you have an interesting article, letter, opinion or story you would like to submit for publication in Spits and Pieces please forward your electronic copy with photos if applicable, via email to: enquiries@ironbarkridgealpacas.com.au. Similarly if you are heading off to a show, seminar or sale day, pack your camera, pen & paper and report for your region! That is what makes this newsletter a worthwhile and entertaining read for your fellow members.

Anyway, it has been a busier than usual 2010 with our Alpaca Expo in September, the National Show & Sale in October, and The Land Small Farms Expo in November. It is possible 2011 won't be much quieter with Castle Hill & the Hawkesbury Show not too far away, and the National Show & Sale in our backyard this year.

Good luck to those who are showing in the upcoming months. Looking forward to receiving lots of piccies, articles and requests for advertising space.

Fiona

Submissions for Spits and Pieces will only be accepted in electronic format, in either Word, Pages (Mac), PDF, JPEG.

Deadline for next edition: Friday 3rd June, 2011

H-BM COMMITTEE

President

Graeme Dickson
Warralinga Alpaca Stud
Ph: (02) 4576 5048
warralinga@hotmail.net.au

Vice President

Hazel Tutty
Valleyridge Alpacas
Ph: (02) 4567 2167
roy.hazel@bigpond.com

Secretary

Sue Maynard
Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas
Ph & Fax: (02) 9653 2277
alpacas@tpg.com.au

Minutes Secretary

Jeanne Brown
Alleena Alpaca Stud
Ph: (02) 4576 3333
alleena@zeta.org.au

Treasurer

Ken Willes
Molonga Alpacas
Ph: (02) 4572 1945
molonga4o@bigpond.com

Spits & Pieces Editor

Fiona Maxwell
Ironbark Ridge Alpacas
Ph: (02) 4576 1622
ironbarkridge@optusnet.com.au

Committee Members

Ian Braithwaite
Patagonia Alpacas
Ph: (02) 6359 5036
info@patagoniaalpacas.com.au

SHEARING & SPINNING @ THE ALPACA EXPO

By Beverley Burns - *Mandala Alpacas*

When Graeme (Dickson) first asked Keryn & I to co-ordinate the Shearing and Spinning at the Expo it was like HELP! Never organized something like that before, but with Keryn's love of anything Art and Crafty we decided why not, we'll give it a go.

The shearing was more or less the easy part, with a man of talent, but few words as our shearer, it was like - don't worry Bev just go with what our esteemed teacher from TAFE had taught you and the last three years under the guidance of Jeanne Brown helping out during shearing at Alleena and all will be fine. And I think all who attended the Expo will agree it was. Jim was not unduly pressed for work and thankfully agreed with us that the weekend was all about promoting the industry and not making money.



Jim's patience with the help of roustabout Jason Fritch started Christopher on what is hopefully going to be his introduction in learning to be a good Roustabout and ultimately a Shearer, a course he is going to complete in Dubbo towards his Queens Scout Award next year.



Shearer Jim Murray teaching Christopher

Now to the Spinning, Weaving and Crafts - a challenge in the beginning; we had the bright idea (or not so bright we began to think) to run a "From Fleece to Fashion" Competition, we would ask the ladies who participate in the Wool Challenge "Back to Back" for Breast Cancer to see if they would participate in a mini version for the Expo. With the help of Jenny Dunn from Virginia Farm and Jackie Wall from the Kurrajong Spinning and Weaving Group we ended up with 5 teams, 2 Teams from Kurrajong, 1 from Virginia Farm, 1 from Petlins Rhodes Runners Spinning Group and 1 from the Springwood Spinning and Weaving Group.

Jenny set Sue Griffiths to work to design an easy, but pretty scarf pattern that could be completed in just 4 hours. In the beginning the challenge seemed to be that not one of the ladies liked spinning Alpaca Fleece as it was usually of poor quality and always dirty. Helen Fritch from Dural Alpacas kindly agreed to donate the fleece from two of her little coated wethers for the competition and Jim Murray agreed to shear them free of charge for the Competition.

With the help of our great MC John Hay and

With the help of our great MC John Hay and Ian acting as timekeeper the competition got off to a great start at 10am on the Sunday morning. Jim shored the animals, Chris Taylor gave it a quick skirt and the ladies were up and running. The comments from the teams as I walked around talking to them was how lovely the fleece was to spin and how clean it was and by the end of the day all were converted and full of praise for the fleece. The lesson for us as breeders to learn from this I feel is if you are going to sell to the home spinners DO NOT feel tempted to offload inferior quality fleece and make sure you have cleaned it to the best of your ability first, then maybe we can then encourage more home spinners to use alpaca fleece over their more favored Merino.

The first team finished was the Kurrajong Team A, finishing in just 2 hours and 44 minutes, with Seignior Romano Favari agreeing to act as judge and Keryn acting as his adjudicator checking all the scarves for mistakes either in numbers of rows or patterns (as seen in the photo



here). All teams completed well under the 4 hours and Kurrajong Team A were declared the winners. At the completion of the competition Heather from Braeside Alpacas kindly offered to wash the scarves in her Unicorn Fibre Wash before they were auctioned all proceeds going to the National Ovarian Cancer Centre in Surry Hills. Our deepest thanks go to everyone who bid at the auction \$320.00 was raised from the actual auction

and the Region has topped that up to \$500 a great effort thank you.

The prize fleece for the winning team was kindly donated by Sue Maynard and John Hay of Gunnamatta Alpaca Stud, again thank you.

That was the Sunday taken care of so now what to do about Saturday, over and above our Shearing Demonstrations how were we going to fill the day with interesting crafts?

Jackie Barrett "The Mad Spinner" agreed to come and sit for the day spinning as did Judi Johnston and I think both enjoyed the excuse to just sit and spin for the day. We had great difficulty in locating someone to demonstrate

the art of felting for us, again not too many liked using the Alpaca fleece and once again we found most of what they were trying to use was coarse and contained too many secondary fibres, but good news we now have another convert in Janet Page whose great patience in coping with

Jessica's desire to learn all she could in one day must have been more than a little trying.

Keryn and I had first met Peter Harford from Dairy Road Alpacas when he demonstrated spinning during our second week on the Info Desk at this year's Sydney Royal, so we decided to ask him to help. Firstly, if his group the Sutherland Shire Spinning Group were interested in joining the "Fleece to

SHEARING & SPINNING @ THE ALPACA EXPO

Continued from Page 8

Fashion” Competition. To our horror they declined, however this soon turned to joy when Peter and wife Lyn organised (with the help of their President Karen Severn) not just one or two ladies, but a whole bus load – 15 in total came to sit and spin, weave and knit their hearts out for the day. They brought with them many samples of their various crafts which were lovely; Karen’s samples of weaving in particular were beautiful. They had a wonderful day and all went home on a high having bought some lovely fleeces and made many new friends, all vowing to return next year.

Alice Dryburgh from Sayantsi Alpacas kindly lent us her hand knitted Evening Coat, Christening Gown and Suri Scarf to display for the public to see some of the wonderful creations which can be made using Alpaca Fleece.

Thank you one and all for helping to make the Shearing, Spinning, Weaving and Felting section of the Alpaca Expo such a great success.



Above: One of the winning team from Kurrajong Team A

Thanks Beverley for putting together such a great story on one of the great successes of our Expo - Ed

Advertising Rates - H-BM Members

	Colour*	B & W
Full Page	\$100	\$50
Half Page	\$50	\$25
Back Page (Full page only)	\$120	N/A
Inserts (provided by advertiser)	\$50 (up to A4)	

Advertising Rates - Non Members

	Colour*	B & W
Full Page	\$120	\$80
Half Page	\$70	\$50
Back Page (Full page only)	\$140	N/A
Inserts (provided by advertiser)	\$80 (up to A4)	

* Spits is published in colour when sufficient requests for coloured advertising is received

NATIONAL SHOW AND SALE 2010

By Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey - Rocky Hall Alpacas

The 2010 National Alpaca Show and Sale was well attended by interstate alpaca breeders. Unfortunately when we arrived we found there were very few HBM breeders.

Our region was represented by Warralinga Alpaca Stud, where Lyn Dickson shared the hardest job at the show with Jude Anderson as the led class judges, Graeme Dickson was one of the MCs at the show desk with assistance from John Hay. And showing animals were ourselves (Rocky Hall), Alpacandes (Jeanette & Keith Hollingworth), Gunnamatta (Sue Maynard & John Hay), Patagonia (Ian Braithwaite & Cathi McMullen), and Redgum (Mark Newman).

The venue for the show, The Australian Equine & Livestock Events Centre, was a very large arena with a great show area, but looked very empty even with the numbers of breeders there watching. The led classes had a total of 582 entries (including 116 Junior females) which seemed to present a challenge to our judges as they inspected classes of up to 25 animals. There appeared to be very few easy decisions about the prizes to be awarded. The judging took place over 3 days and must have tired out the Judges and

all the other volunteers who were marshalling and assisting in the running of the show.

There were also 250 fleece entries presenting a challenge to the Judge Bill Robbins, who took 2 days to complete the judging.

On display were Photographs, Art, spinning & weaving, pelts and knitting & crochet. We enjoyed examining all the entries and taking our time to checkout the different craft entries.

Hawkesbury Studs achieved the following results in the led classes:-

- Gunnamatta Laelia - 3rd Intermediate Female Grey
- Patagonia Celtic Flamingo - 1st Adult Female Fawn light & Reserve Champion Adult Female
- Patagonia Midnight Sun ET - 2nd Adult Female Brown
- Rocky Hall Jericho - 3rd Intermediate Male Fawn Med/Dark
- Rocky Hall Lucille - 1st Senior Female Roan

Following the judging, early on the Sunday morning was the Association Annual General Meeting where one of our local members, Geoff Redelman was elected to the company board.

On Sunday afternoon we attended the Auction Sale which was well attended with around 40 registered bidders. Bidding was slow but the final results were quite good. Hawkesbury breeders purchased two of the offerings:-

Lot 1 Wild Card, Banksia Park Mystic Challenger ET Light Fawn Huacaya Male purchased by Alpacandes Alpacas

Lot 12 Leranda Ridge Madam Butterfly Solid White Huacaya Female purchased by Codan Investments

Our congratulations to Patagonia for selling Lot 4, Patagonia Celtic Flamingo, Light Fawn Pregnant Huacaya Female sold to Riverport Alpacas

Also deserving special mention is Shirley Berry from Red Ridge Alpacas who was the convenor of the show and her assistants from the Central Coast and Hunter region who were able to produce a well run show.

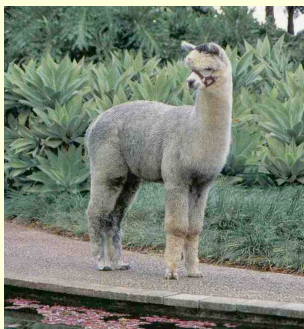
I hope that with this years National Alpaca Show being held locally lots of local breeders will be able to assist in the organisation and showing.

Stud Male Register

<p>This listing is open to members of the Hawkesbury Blue Mountains Region.</p> <p>The cost is \$25 per ad for the year - running from the Winter Edition through to the Autumn Edition.</p> <p>If you would like to have your Stud Male featured here please contact the Editor providing details and a picture.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Forestview Chiapas (SLF)</p> <p>Sire: Coonawarra Shogun (MG) Dam: Kurralea Claret (DBR)</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$440 Drive Through Mobile mating by arrangement</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Encantador Centurian (SLF)</p> <p>Sire: Windsong Valley Iceman Dam: Rocky Hall Jemima</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Rocky Hall Jeronimo (SMF)</p> <p>Sire: Purumbete El Dorado (SMF) Dam: Rocky Hall Jemima (SMBR)</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ross Creek Achilles (W)</p> <p>Sire: Fine Choice Peruvian Ultimo (SW) Dam: Windsong Valley Arctic Pearl (SW)</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rainbows End Dante (MG)</p> <p>Sire: Highfields Illusion Dam: Rainbows End Eliza Doolittle</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Rocky Hall Jazzman (MF)</p> <p>Sire: Windsong Valley Iceman Dam: Rocky Hall Jemima</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through</p> <p>Contact: Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey Rocky Hall Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 4576 / 0418 208 376 E: alpacas@lanscape.net.au W: www.rockyhallalpacas.com.au</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dreamwood Estate Callistus (BLK)</p> <p>Sire: Coonawarra Shogun (MG) Dam: Kurralea Claret (DBR)</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$440 Drive Through Mobile mating by arrangement</p> <p>Contact: Donna Schmelitschek Dreamwood Estate Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 5711 / 0411 253 386 E: alpacas@dreamwoodinternational.com W: www.dreamwoodinternational.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Woolebull Silver Cloud (MG)</p> <p>Sire: Porters Thunder (MG) Dam: Royal Canadian Carrera (DG)</p> <p>Stud Fee: \$660 Drive Through Mobile mating by arrangement</p> <p>Contact: Donna Schmelitschek Dreamwood Estate Alpacas Ph: 02 4576 5711 / 0411 253 386 E: alpacas@dreamwoodinternational.com W: www.dreamwoodinternational.com</p>

Stud Male Register

Gunnamatta Marconi (MG)



Sire: Coonawarra Shogun (MG)
Dam: Gunnamatta Marcasite (MG)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through

Contact: John Hay & Sue Maynard
Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas
Ph: 02 9653 2277
E: alpacas@tpg.com.au
W: www.gunnamattastud.com.au

Ambersun Gallipoli (W)

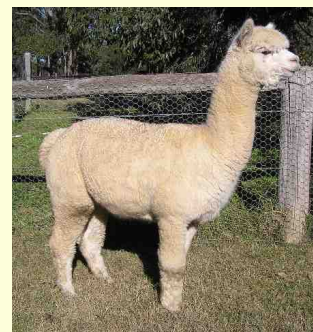


Sire: Purrumbete Highlander (SW)
Dam: Ambersun Auze Digger (SDF)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through

Contact: John Hay & Sue Maynard
Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas
Ph: 02 9653 2277
E: alpacas@tpg.com.au
W: www.gunnamattastud.com.au

Forestglen Warlord (SW)



Sire: Jolimont Warrior (SW)
Dam: Prestige Arabesque (SW)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement

Contact: Jillian Nicholas
Belgrave Park Alpacas
Ph: 02 6355 2477
E: jill@belgraveparkalpacas.com.au
W: www.belgraveparkalpacas.com.au

Belgrave Park Orpheus (SLF)



Sire: Schubert Maestro(W)
Dam: Belgrave Park Rose Marie (RG)

Stud Fee: \$660 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement

Contact: Jillian Nicholas
Belgrave Park Alpacas
Ph: 02 6355 2477
E: jill@belgraveparkalpacas.com.au
W: www.belgraveparkalpacas.com.au

Belgrave Park Kamillo (SLBR)



Sire: Schubert Maestro(W)
Dam: Belgrave Park Kasey (SMBR)

Stud Fee: \$770 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement

Contact: Jillian Nicholas
Belgrave Park Alpacas
Ph: 02 6355 2477
E: jill@belgraveparkalpacas.com.au
W: www.belgraveparkalpacas.com.au

Mountain Haggis (SBlk)



Sire: Yalin Nelson
Dam: Mountain Black Currant

Stud Fee: \$770 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement

Contact: Jillian Nicholas
Belgrave Park Alpacas
Ph: 02 6355 2477
E: jill@belgraveparkalpacas.com.au
W: www.belgraveparkalpacas.com.au

Stud Male Register

Shanbrooke Accoyo Yavari (W)



Sire: Unknown Peruvian (Accoyo)
Dam: Unknown Peruvian (Accoyo)

Stud Fee: \$1200 Drive Through
Mobile matings be arrangement.
Co-owned with Gorge Alpacas & Shanbrooke Alpaca Stud

Contact: Lyn & Graeme Dickson
Warralinga Alpaca Stud
Ph: 02 4576 5048
E: warralinga@hotmail.net.au
W: www.warralinga.com.au

Warralinga Celtic Lad (SMF)

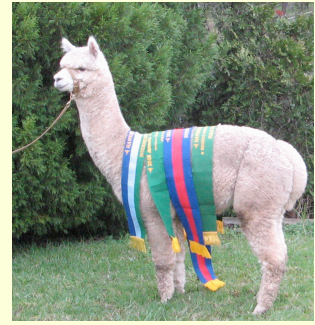


Sire: Patagonia Celtic Triumph (W)
Dam: Warralinga Honey Suckle Rose (SMF)

Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement
Co-owned with Casa Aldo Alpacas

Contact: Lyn & Graeme Dickson
Warralinga Alpaca Stud
Ph: 02 4576 5048
E: warralinga@hotmail.net.au
W: www.warralinga.com.au

Banksia Park Pure Witness ET (SLF)



Sire: Jolimont Warrior (SW)
Dam: Prestige Arabesque (SW)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement

Contact: Lyn & Graeme Dickson
Warralinga-Gorge Stud Stock
Ph: 02 4576 5048
E: warralinga@hotmail.net.au
W: www.warralinga.com.au

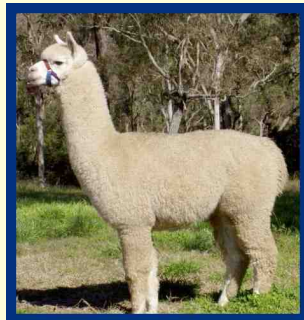
Warralinga-Gorge Samurai (SW)

Sire: Jolimont Warrior (SW)
Dam: Ambersun Primera (SW)

Stud Fee: \$770 Drive Through

Contact: Jeanne Brown
Alleena Alpaca Stud
Ph: 02 4576 3333
E: alleena@zeta.org.au
W: www.alleenaalpacaastud.com.au

Alleena Da Vinci (SLF)

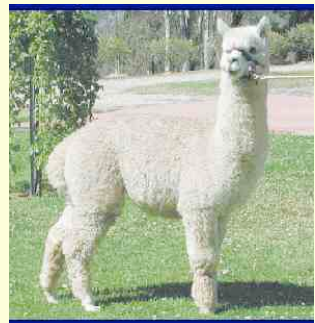


Sire: Forestglen Plutach (SW)
Dam: Alleena Wild Honey (MF)

Stud Fee: \$660 Drive Through

Contact: Jeanne Brown
Alleena Alpaca Stud
Ph: 02 4576 3333
E: alleena@zeta.org.au
W: www.alleenaalpacaastud.com.au

Windsong Valley Braveheart (W)



Sire: Purumbete Highlander (SW)
Dam: Jolimont Daphne (SW)

Stud Fee: \$550 Drive Through
Co-owned with Regal House Alpacas

Contact: Jeanne Brown
Alleena Alpaca Stud
Ph: 02 4576 3333
E: alleena@zeta.org.au
W: www.alleenaalpacaastud.com.au

**Regal House Mr Darcy
(SLF)**



Sire: Shanbrooke Accoyo Yavari (W)
Dam: Regal House Pamela (DF)

Stud Fee: \$1100 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement.
Multiple mating discounts available

Contact: Alicia Anderson

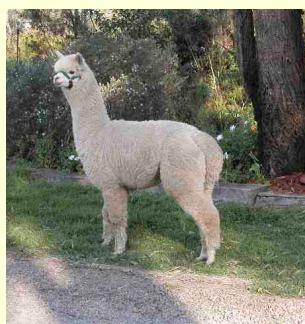
Regal House Alpacas

Ph: 02 4573 1177

E: regalh@bigpond.com

W: www.regalhousealpacas.com.au

**Regal House Drummer
(SW)**



Sire: Schubert Maestro (W)
Dam: Regal House Princess Layla (W)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement
Multiple mating discounts available
Co-owned with Walkley Field Alpacas

Contact: Alicia Anderson

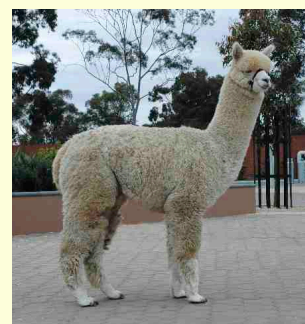
Regal House Alpacas

Ph: 02 4573 1177

E: regalh@bigpond.com

W: www.regalhousealpacas.com.au

**Encantador Ring Master
(SMF)**



Sire: Blue Grass Centurion (LF)
Dam: Encantador Showgirl (SLF)

Stud Fee: \$880 Drive Through
Mobile matings by arrangement
Multiple mating discounts available

Contact: Alicia Anderson

Regal House Alpacas

Ph: 02 4573 1177

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BABY'S GOT BLUE EYES

Dinah Fisher

This article first appeared in the Summer 2010 Alpachachat, the newsletter of the Central Western NSW Region and is reprinted with the permission of the author.

Mark Jessop, the AAA regional president from Tasmania raised a laugh by feigning discomfort when Dr Belinda Appleton described the reasons why the alpaca gene pool is relatively narrow and prone to a higher rate of genetic faults than other domestic livestock.

Belinda was updating the AAA Council at their meeting, held in Melbourne in November, on the progress of her research project into the alpaca genome. The project is funded for \$350,000 for 3 years with a combination of government funding and funding provided by Alpaca Genomics Australia, a group of 6 or 7 Australian alpaca breeders.

A map of the alpaca genome already exists but it is for huacaya. It was developed in America and is available to Belinda and her research team. Belinda is in the process of identifying the marker for suri and is also working on identifying the markers for a number of genetic faults in alpacas such as blue eyes, wry face, cyclopia, fused toes, polydactyly and choanal artresia.

The bottlenecks in the alpaca gene pool as Belinda outlined them have been due to

- The alpaca cull in Peru during Spanish colonisation
- Selective breeding for white, and
- Line breeding

I have a small interest in this project. I am **not** a financial contributor to it but I have contributed some DNA samples from Bluebell, my blue-eyed white girl and her rose grey daughter. The blue eyes are obvious so why identify the marker? Most of the genetic problems that Belinda is researching are recessive. Each parent will contribute one allele so even if their cria doesn't exhibit a fault they might still be carrying the gene for the fault from a parent and that fault could re-emerge in a future generation. Belinda believes that alpaca breeders should be breeding to eliminate the faults.

White with blue eyes and deafness occurs in other mammals, such as cats. White alpacas with blue eyes are typically deaf but this doesn't necessarily preclude them from living comfortable lives. Some breeders prize blue-eyed whites for their sparkling white fleeces and their capacity for throwing grey cria. But the gene can re emerge generations on and one has to consider the tendency to deafness. In New Zealand it is no longer possible to register alpaca males with blue eyes as stud males. The owner of a blue-eyed alpaca faces a dilemma - to breed or not to breed knowing that the blue-eyed gene is continuing down the generations. Belinda has now



developed a test for the marker for blue eyes and soon it will be available to alpaca breeders. This could ultimately help identify whether or not a particular mating will be likely to produce a cria with the gene for blue eyes.

While the issue of whether or not blue eyes should be bred out of alpacas is contentious, some of the other faults such as wry face and choanal artresia are far more disturbing. While a slightly wry face may not be perceptible, examples so extreme that the alpaca cannot eat or see properly or at all do occur. With choanal artresia, a blockage or other fault in the oesophagus, the cria will ingest milk into the lungs and ultimately contract pneumonia and die. There are many other examples where the prognosis is dire and the cria usually die or are euthanized soon after birth. Belinda's work will identify the genes that cause these distressing faults so that in the long term they can be eliminated from the alpaca gene pool.

To do this Belinda really needs DNA samples from alpacas born with these more distressing problems. Understandably breeders who have alpacas that have produced cria with these problems are reluctant to contribute DNA, concerned that having such faults identified with their stud animals could damage their reputations and businesses. Belinda guarantees complete confidentiality so that no one need ever know that an alpaca in your herd has been affected by any of the genetic faults that they are researching. Sampling live animals is very simple. The most cost effective samples for the project are small blood samples that can be taken very quickly by your vet. The tests for these samples are quick and economical and Belinda would be happy to provide kits for them. I live a little way from town and when I offered DNA samples for the project, Belinda's research fellow sent me 2 DNA cheek swab tests. These were really easy to use. It was simply a matter of swabbing saliva from the inside of the cheek then placing the swabs into the tubes provided before posting them off to Melbourne University. The down side for the researchers is that the test kits for saliva samples cost \$12 each which would mount up and place a strain on their limited budget if all the samples were gathered in this way.



Taking tests from dead animals might be a little distressing but is still relatively easy. Belinda asks those alpaca owners who are prepared to contribute to the research to simply provide a live tissue sample. It doesn't have to be very large and if you fell unhappy about doing this, perhaps you could ask your vet to do it. The sample can be quite small, a tiny piece of ear would do. Belinda says she has received some extraordinary things in the mail: ears, testes and so on. Once the sample has been removed from the alpaca simply place it in the freezer and contact Belinda for advice on how to send it to her lab in Melbourne. She also asks for photos showing the abnormality exhibited by the alpaca from which the DNA sample has come.

Where will all this testing lead us? In the short term it is a step in the process to develop tests for particular markers. Ultimately it will also lead to effective parentage screening. We want

Australians to be world leaders in alpacas. We aspire to being world's best practice in all things alpaca. The International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG) recommends parentage testing for 14 genetic markers. In the US both alpaca parents are tested for 18 markers. Belinda feels that in Australia we should be testing both parents for 18 markers. The Australian Alpaca Breeders Association is already testing both parents.

If you wish to contribute to the project please contact Belinda or her research assistant Felicity by email at b.appleton@unimelb.edu.au or f.jackling@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au or telephone Felicity on (03) 8344 5137. If you cannot supply samples for DNA testing because the incident was some time ago or because the alpaca died or was euthanized even supplying IAR numbers for animals who had a congenital defect or whose progeny had a defect would assist the project.

Regional Newsletter Editors

If you are considering promoting your stud further afield, perhaps consider advertising in other AAA regional newsletters.

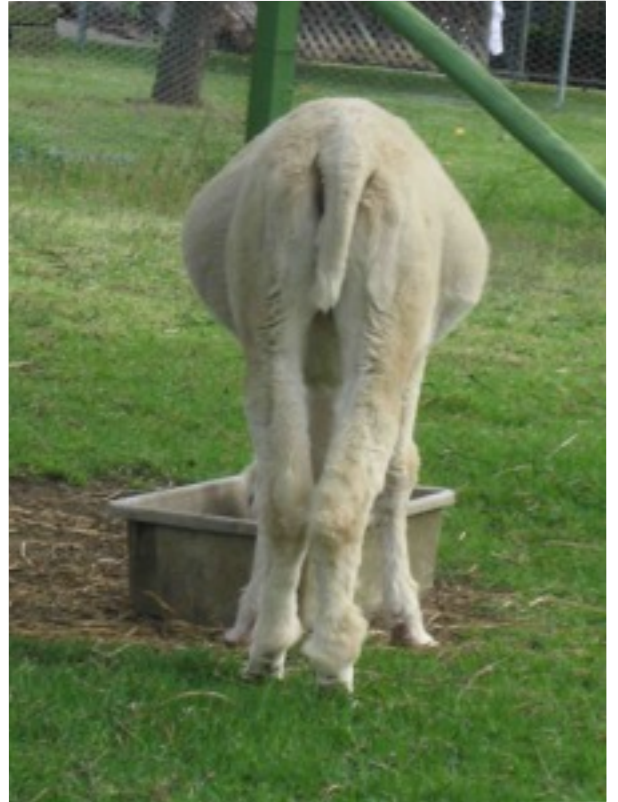
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BIG LIL

By Jeanette Hollingworth - Alpacandes Alpaca Stud

No, that probably will not be her name, but until we decide on one, it fits her description!

In December '10, our 6 ½ y.o. Alpacandes Millicent (always affectionately known as Milko) presented us with the biggest cria we have ever seen. Milko is a large girl herself, and as all of her previous 3 cria had been around the 9-10 kg mark, we knew this one would not be small. By the time she reached 11 months gestation she was already huge, and we were willing her to have it there and then. But no, she managed to stretch it out to 3 days short of a year, which certainly did not help. By this time we were convinced she was having a baby elephant, so at around 11 ½ months I had taken the “before” photo on this page, showing the huge triangle that stuck out either side of her.



On the morning of 18th December, it became obvious that this would definitely be the day. We were very thankful when the presentation of the cria was correct, with nose and two front feet coming first. If ever we wanted a correct presentation, this was it! However, it soon also became obvious that Milko was not going to be able to finish unpacking on her own, and when the cria's mouth and lips began to turn purple, we moved in to assist. Our super cria was eventually on the ground, gasping and regaining that nice pink nose colour.

Milko came through it well and without damage, the only sign of any trauma being a fair bit of blood on our otherwise SW female cria. Baby was on her feet and suckling in quick time, though both her front legs were awkward and unsteady for the first day or so, due no doubt to her cramped position in utero, as well as having them pulled pretty hard during delivery. However, this didn't last long, and at picture no. 2, taken with her mum when she was a week old, her legs were 100%.



Now for her weight! Once she had dried out we checked her on the old bathroom scales, but these wavered between 12 and 13 kg, so the far more accurate digital scales were retrieved from the house, and she weighed in at a whopping 13.0 kg.! As I write this, she is 3 weeks old today, and this morning topped 18 kg. She towers over our other cria, in particular one which was premi and 5+ kg born – “All That Jazz” is now 8 weeks old and shorn except for her head and tail: we keep weighing her too, to satisfy ourselves that she is doing just fine, as the two look ridiculous when standing together.



“All That Jazz” at 8 weeks and “Big Lil” at 3 weeks.

So – I am keen to know if anyone out there has had a bigger cria? Please tell me about it if so!

Jeanette

HAVE YOU EVER WRITTEN FOR A MAGAZINE BEFORE?

If you are attending one of the many shows in the next couple of months, don't forget to take your camera with you. Pictures and stories are most welcome for the next edition of Spits and Pieces.

Calendar

March

20 - Moss Vale Show

26 - Goulburn Show

April

3 - Castle Hill Show

9 - Camden Show

21-26 Sydney Royal Easter Show

29 - 5th May - Tocal Field Days

May

National Alpaca Weeks

6-8 Bathurst Royal Show

13-15 Hawkesbury Show

June

12 - New England Alpaca Show

18 & 19 - “Getting Started with Alpacas” seminar

Oct

13-16 18th AAA Ltd National Show & Sale

TEE PEE - For Sale Listing

Blackwattle John Hawthorn		(02) 9829 5555		
A91374 Blackwattle Sharon (F) (SMB)	11/3/07	Burning Gold Blackjack	Kalinda Raine	\$1500
Mated to Blackwattle Owen.				
A91366 Blackwattle Barbie (F) (SLF)	2/01/05	The Pines Deerhunter	Blue Grass Chasca	\$2500
Barbie has a male cria at foot. Remated to Blackwattle Owen.				
IAR 30011 Blackwattle Lucy (F) (SLF)	14/4/98	Peruvian Heritage	Hawthorn Cottage Duchess	\$2500
Lucy has a male cria at foot. Remated to Blackwattle Owen.				
Also available a number of young pregnant females at realistic prices. More info & pics @ www.blackwattle.net.au				
Blaydon Matt & Carol Ridley		02 6355 2372 blaydon@bigpond.net.au		
IAR 111371 Blaydon Queen of Hearts (F) (SW)	20/4/06	Schubert Maestro (SW)	Almaray Valentina)	\$5500
Terrific potential; from show-winning family. 2nd fl: 17.3µm 3.4µm SD 19.5%CV. Mated to Warralinga-Gorge Samurai.				
IAR 111339 Blaydon Arielle Rose (F) (MF)	5/4/06	Jolimont Massimo (SW)	Willows Ro Cloud	\$5500
Stunning fleece and from female family of multiple show winners. 2nd fleece: 16.7µm 4.1 µm SD 24.7% CV. Mated to Schubert Maestro.				
IAR 111367 Blaydon Diva Belle (F) (SW)	21/12/05	Prestige Valentino	Blaydon Pebbles	\$1650
By outstanding sire in Valentine. Proven breeder. 2nd Fleece 19.4µm 3.7µm S.D. 19% C.V. Fine & Even.				
IAR 111374 Blaydon Lady Stardust (F) (SW)	24/11/06	Swan Valley Achiever	Orrapoora Vibrato	\$1650
Great potential and excellent genetics. First fleece 21.1 µm, 4.5µm SD, 21.5 CV. Mated to Warralinga-Gorge Samurai.				
IAR 111370 Blaydon Vivere (F) (SW)	9/4/06	Ambersun Romanza	Orrapoora Soprano	\$1100
By a Jolimont Conquistador grandson. Currently open. Breed or use as ET recipient. 2nd fleece 25.9µm 4.7µm S.D. 18.1% C.V.				
Boongala Jill & Peter Derrin		02 4567 2208		
IAR 32333 Boongala Diamond Tina (F) (SB)	1/4/98	Falconstooop Zeus	Royal Canadian Royal Diamonds	\$990
Dam Of Multiple Ribbon Winner Diamontina Tu Soks.				
IAR 108906 Boongala Paladin (M) (SW)	1/5/05	Boongala Ensignia	Boongala Picabo	\$2200
Very gentle temperament ready to certify. 2nd Fleece 19.4µm, SD 4.3µm, CV 22.1%, CF 98%.				
*JD MN3 status.				
Follyfoot Farm Linda Moore		0407 469 177 linda@follyfoot.com.au		
IAR 86352 Belgrave Park Michelangelo (M) (SDF)	4/11/04	Schubert Maestro	Belgrave Park Kasey	\$7500
Now with stunning show quality cria on the ground for inspections. See website for further details. 4th fleece 24.4u / 4.3 SD / 18.38 CV / 93.5 CF.				

Gunnamatta Sue Maynard		02 9653 2277 alpacas@tpg.com.au		
IAR 170796 Gunnamatta Shangri-La F (MG)	8/4/10	Gunnamatta Marconi	Gunnamatta Mardi Gras	\$4400
Gorgeous grey show quality female weanling with dense, crimped fleece and perfect conformation. Halter trained and lovely nature.				
Ironbark Ridge Andrew & Fiona Maxwell		02 4576 1622 ironbarkridge@optusnet.com.au		
IAR 57943 Kurrabell Park Frances (F) (SLF)	21/1/02	Windsong Valley Romanov	Kurrabell Park Patrica	\$1,600
Quiet natured, large framed, brilliant mother. Dark Fawn female cria at foot (18/03/2011)				
IAR 142664 Ironbark Ridge Bossa Nova (M) (SW)	02/07/08	Prestige Alexander the Great	Talamasca Donna Bella	\$4,000
Lustrous dense fleece, good conformation. Fleece results 19.4µm, 3.8 SD, 19.5 C.V , 99.3%CF				
IAR 109000 Ironbark Ridge Brandee (F) (SDF)	15/11/07	Prestige Alexander the Great	Kurralea La Petite Etoile	\$1,200
Brandee is a very large framed maiden female. Fleece results 20.62µm, 4.95µm, 24 C.V.				
MN3 status				
Ngullaminya Joan & Tom Kent		02 6355 2393 joantomkent@bigpond.com		
IAR 111850 Ngullaminya Almond (SLF) (M)	26/10/06	Swan Valley Achiever	Shipley Jacaranda	\$5500
Impressive young sire, 22.5 at 3rd shearing, Shanbrooke & El Dorado genetics- shows include Blue ribbon Bathurst 2009.				
IAR 66391 Ngullaminya Shropshire Lad (SW) (M)	8/4/03	Prestige Valentino	Kurabell Park Signature	\$2200
Certified Male, Proven performer, great genetics, strong frame, extremely dense, soft fleece, many show ribbons.				
IAR 134405 Ngullaminya Ellora(SW)(F)	14/11/07	Ngullaminya Shropshire Lad	Coolaroo Picardie (Minderoo)	\$2200
Large framed, Minderoo & Valentino genes, pregnant to Ng. Ultima Thule, tested 22.4 on third fleece				
IAR 24711 Ngullaminya Jordon of Brigantine (MBr) (M)	15/2/99	Purumbete Brigantine	Coolaroo Picardie	\$2200
Easily handled, experienced male who produces excellent evenly coloured brown & grey crias.				
All prices include GST. JD MN3 and Q-Alpaca tested				
Opotiki Cathy Sutherland		02 9653 1890 bnctv@ozemail.com.au		
A40488 Opotiki Coppertop (W) (MF)	12/7/01	Alpacandes Peruvian Dictator	Opotiki Miss Mocha	\$440
N/R Opotiki Bailey (W) (LF)	28/4/04	Alpacandes Peruvian Dictator	Cedar House Toffee	\$440
N/R Opotiki Boomerang (W) (MB/W)	21/5/05	Summerhill Sundance	Cedar House Toffee	\$500
JD MN3 status				

Rocky Hall Don Culey & Bronwyn Davey		0418 208 376 alpacas@lanscape.net.au		
IAR 82709 High Ridge Shannon (F) (SMF)	8/12/04	Prestige Valentino	High Ridge Bella	\$1650
Quiet and small framed female with fine fleece. Mated to RH Jeronimo, due 5/11.				
IAR 71774 Rocky Hall Madeline (F) (W)	8/12/03	Jolimont Oscar 2	Acheron Masquerade	\$990
Madeline is an attractive female with a good frame and conformation. Fleece 27.5µm. Mated to Rainbows End Dante (MG).				
IAR 71771 Rocky Hall Roxette (F) (RG)	5/6/03	Forestglen Reuben	Belgrave Park Racine	\$4400
Grandsire Purumbete El Dorado. Always throws crias with superfine, lustrous fleeces. Mated to Rainbows End Dante (MG).				
IAR 124864 Rocky Hall Marcel (W) (SMF)	16/4/07	Jolimont Warrior	Ross Creek Michelle	\$440
A compact wether with a beautiful fawn fleece that spinners admire. Fleece 15.7µm 3.3µm S.D. 21% C.V.				
IAR 36466 Benleigh Arissa (F) (SW)	9/8/99	Purumbete Brigantine	Benleigh Arica	\$3300
A solid white peruvian female, excellent mum. Fleece 23.4µm S.D. 4.4µm C.V 18.8				
JD MN2/Q Status.				
Sunvalley Barbara Turner		02 4751 6017 alan-turner@bigpond.com		
IAR 159792 Sunvalley Larissa (F) (SW)	4/2/09	Forestglen Warlord	Belgrave Park Lilliana	\$4000
Excellent genetics, wonderful potential. 2nd fleece; 18.7 micron, 3.8 S.D. Pregnant to Patagonia Celtic Triumph. Due 5/11.				
IAR 147828 Belgrave Park Lavinia (F) (SW)	17/2/08	Starline Sputnik	Belgrave Park Lilliana	\$1200
A very pretty 3 year old solid white maiden. A joy to handle. 3rd fleece; 24.5 micron, 4.9 S.D.				
IAR 67223 Belgrave Park Lilliana (F) (SW)	1/12/03	Shanbrooke Accoyo El-Prado	World Class Crème Caramel	\$900
A Proven breeder, 2 male, 2 female cria. Last cria first fleece micron 16.7, 3.5 S.D., 100% C.F.				
IAR 159791 Sunvalley Kristiana (F) (RG/R)	6/10/08	Janannie Park Voltaire	Belgrave Park Katja	\$3000
Very light and even rose grey. Pregnant to Gunamatta Marconi (LG) due 4/11				
IAR 147835 Belgrave Park Abelia (F) (SBr)	12/11/07	Belgrave Park Rainmaker	World Class Ace of Spades	\$900
A very elegant 3 year old maiden. Lustrous blue black fleece. A real sweetie.				
JD MN3/Q Status. No GST on these animals				
Tableland Warren & Kay Eldridge		02 9481 9831 surveyor@netspace.net.au		
IAR 119261 Chimbrook Sonny (M) (LF)	7/5/06	Warralinga Bold Eagle	Gunnamatta Kaylee	\$1000
Ready for Certification.				
IAR 7899 Rowallan Desert Kite (CM) (DB)	10/3/97	Purumbete Desert Hawk	Rowallan Delta	\$550
Certified Male Case No.7899.				
IAR 52733 Rocky Hall Candice (F) (SDF)	14/5/03	Bluegrass Wolfgang	Orrapoorra Caprice	\$1000
Mated to Rowallan Desert Kite on 2/10/09.				
IAR 159346 Tableland Ringlet (F) (DB)	15/7/09	Illawarra Wellington	Rocky Hall Candice	\$800
Weanling, not yet ear-tagged or registered.				
IAR 67628 Chimbrook Primrose (F) (LF)	11/5/04	Warralinga Bold Eagle	Gunnamatta Kaylee	\$1000
Mated to Rowallan Desert Kite on 26/9/09				
Whole herd dispersal. Further animals available on request.				

Camelidynamics - Advanced Course in Bend, Oregon

by Alicia Anderson - Regal House Alpacas

Last year I encouraged some new alpaca owners (who are now new friends) to attend the Camelidynamics Basic Course to be held at Daisy Bank alpacas, it has always been my belief if you ever had the chance to attend one of these courses - YOU SHOULD! Regardless of whether you are an "old hand" or a newbie to alpacas and camelids. Well, little did I know that suggestion would have had such a knock-on effect! My friends came back from the course with so much enthusiasm, encouraging me to do one of the advanced courses as "it is what you teach us anyway". Of course the advanced course wasn't just down the road or in another Australian state, no, it was on the other side of the world - in Bend, Oregon! Ever heard of Bend?? We were told it was a little hick town - no way! It was a fantastic outdoor activity town and the people were just so friendly - we loved it.

I can hear you asking - why would I want to travel to the other side of the world to work with alpacas??? Many of you would know that I have done a lot of ring stewarding over the past 15 years - my main reason for doing so was to help and support the breeders with their alpacas in the ring. Now I would like to extend this to outside the ring and help those that are interested in working with their alpacas in a calm, kind, efficient, respectful and fun atmosphere. This is what Camelidynamics is all about. So arrangements were made and we also decided to take the opportunity and have a holiday in Canada & Alaska after the course - our first overseas holiday in 15 years so we felt it was well deserved!



Demo cradle hold on Doris 2

Anyway, I digress - I contacted Marty and asked if I could attend the advanced course - no problem, MY hesitation was it had been 13-14 years since I had attended the basics clinic! I was concerned I would be too far behind for the advanced clinic and the other participants but Marty was willing to "give me a go" anyway.



Alicia being an alpaca

The advanced clinic consists of 4 full-on days of hands-on training with a large variety of alpacas and llamas, being videotaped and receiving individual feedback on your techniques and learning new skills that you may have missed out on - Camelidynamics is evolving and developing new techniques all the time. We had a fun group of approx 12 people with most participants from various parts of the USA, with one participant from Sweden and of course, myself from Australia.

I am very happy to say I did not feel left behind at all and in fact felt right up there with the participants that were practitioners (teachers). I think I even impressed Marty - her compliments on my "natural ability" really put me at ease and renewed my enthusiasm with working with alpacas. I must admit though, I have never worked with llamas before and had only ever been near one once - and he was huge!!!! All the camelids we worked on at the course were brought in from other studs with varying degrees of handling difficulties or "issues". The llamas that came in were beautiful - and big! I was not willing to "stuff up a llama" the first couple of days but on the last day I decided it was now or never - it was time to "have a go" with a llama. Well... it was so much fun - I really enjoyed working with the llamas and alpacas - some were quite challenging - just like what we all have in our own herds.

was an eye opener to see their different style of shearing - particularly for the shows! The "show cut" consists of full legs i.e. no shearing of legs and a full head and under the chin/neck - practically looking as though the alpaca had a "goiter". Didn't look particularly pretty to us but things ARE different in the US!



The "Show Cut"



Marty being an alpaca for Alicia

We had a couple of field trips that Cheryl and I took advantage of - one was to visit Amanda VandenBosh at Flying Dutchman Alpacas, unfortunately Amanda had to cancel but we did get to catch up with her at Marty's place as she had some of her animals there for training. The other field trip was to visit Crescent Moon Ranch - a stunning property of approx 150 acres with hundreds of alpacas. It

Was it worth the 32 hours it took us to get to Bend? Absolutely! Bend itself is a fabulous place with lovely people - it is a highly desired area to live in although jobs are scarce. And the Camelidynamics course has given me renewed enthusiasm, I have joined the Guild and am in the Practitioners course so I'll be able to hold courses in Australia. The Practitioners courses are very involved and require a huge commitment but the benefits have already paid off - our animals are a whole lot more trusting of us and working with them is so much more pleasurable and enjoyable! I have one regret... that I didn't do this 10yrs ago!

As for the holiday - Canada and Alaska were absolutely fantastic!

Have fun with your alpacas!
Alicia

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A Strategic Decision – What to do with your Fleece?

by Janie Hicks

Editors Note: This article was submitted early last year; however as we have not had an issue since the Autumn issue, it has been included now for all members to read. Our thanks to Janie for taking the time to send it through to us for publication.

We exist in a highly competitive marketplace for world textiles which is suffering a slump. Contrary to many so called experts there is little money in buying and selling alpaca fibre right now, in Australia or even, Peru. Yes, it could sell better, if alpaca was world class quality but, right now, it is not. We cannot expect to make a light weight, soft handling jumper out of 28 micron alpaca and expect it

to compete for the couple of hundred dollars that a cashmere jumper of below 20 micron will attract.

What we promote today as 'alpaca' will be the reputation of 'alpaca' for tomorrow's industry so what is our strategy? After all, first impressions are lasting impressions.....

There will be tremendous repercussion to the profitability of our textile if we become known as a middle of the range, try hard that claims exotic roots, but frankly is often prickly to wear.

Adopting higher margin, premium marketing strategies and disciplined quality control are

imperative. Then we will provide the world with a leading natural fibre enjoying a global demand, and rub shoulders with the world's most elite fibres and be found in fashion houses in Paris, London, New York, Tokyo, Sydney and Beijing?

So which way do we want to go? What are you going to do with your alpaca fleece harvest this year?

Remember, if we do not produce a quality product, we will not get paid for one, or at least not a *second* time. Alpaca has properties that are remarkable but others that are very ordinary and one of them is the huge micron range in any one fleece. Dangerously often, a manufacturer uses a mix of fibre diameters to make a big enough batch to make it most cost affective to run the machinery. It is only logical that the coarse fibres will drop the overall standard produced.

Simply put we cannot afford any drops in standard. The textile pipeline from paddock to product involves areas where short cuts, ignorance or disinterest can seriously affect our long term future. I have identified where we, you and I, can influence the end product quality.

Decisions made by the breeder as to what are our breeding objectives in meeting the expectations of the high quality end producer.

Decisions made by the classer, to maintain strict quality control preceding manufacturing.

Decisions made by our industry and our Association as to whom we should entrust our fleeces to maximize the beauty of alpaca in the process of manufacturing and production.

For the purposes of this article, I am concerned principally with the role is of the fleece classer. He plays a highly underrated but a critically important role in our industry and I reiterate, the alpaca fleece, in its more primitive state, has significant variation through it, unlike its advanced paddock mate, the merino.

The Fleece Classer

Let's have a look at this fleece classer. This person is responsible for ensuring that the fleece harvested from the animal is carefully prepared for dispatch to the manufacturer. In sheep shearing sheds, the classer is contracted to identify any weaknesses in the fleece, and allocates it to bins based on variations in quality, after which the bins are baled. Their destination is the Australian Wool Auctions. Each bale goes through significant testing for quality control, is labeled accordingly, and is then presented to discerning buyers or wool experts. If the classer has done a good job, the testing will confirm the classing, and there will be low variation in the parameters tested,, and the wool breeder will receive the maximum possible price on the day. If the classer does a poor job, the wool experts or buyers will see the faults and variation in the wool, and the return per kilo will be poor.

Our industry does not have that wool auction floor where stringent testing determines lines available to the manufacturer to purchase.

Integration of the industry taking fleece to fabric began in earnest with the eagerly awaited Australian Alpaca Co-operative Ltd formed in 1995, and has evolved progressively into what has now become the Australian Alpaca Fleece Ltd. It began as a breeder-driven organisation that created products manufactured and designed in Australia, and carried out valuable R & D to set the basis for the commercialisation of the Australian alpaca industry. That work underlined the critical importance of

classing. Testing of lines proved that inaccuracies in identifying micron ranges within single fleeces devalued 'The Golden Bale', and other genuine attempts at providing ultrafine lines. In 2003 experts drawn from the angora and wool industries were employed to take on the role of professional classing for AAFL.

At Coolaroo, experimentation with manufacturing began in 1996 when I quickly learnt that the expertise and advice of manufacturers was focused on processing and manufacturing. What they needed in the raw product to ensure high quality end product was unknown territory for them. Who determined the criteria for fibre diameter, fibre strength, staple length, vegetable content to maximize the quality of the end product? Consequently by trial and error we established our own parameters. Our pioneer attempts with Merino Gold produced product that had poor dye uptake and garments flawed by those escapee primary fibres that result in prickly factor as they protruded from the weave. Smaller micron ranges were essential, and the hair content was 'the nightmare' that Jim Watts, our breeding consultant, had promised it would be.

It was with relief that we handed over the responsibility of classing to the professional classers at AAFL, but not without some concern as the cost demands of affective classing of alpaca revealed itself.

What is classing?

It's important to know, as a stud breeder, how your wools are progressing from year to year. So this year we chose to carry out our own classing in our shed. It will be re classed professionally to ensure the tightly graded lines are suitable for their end usage. We rigorously skirted, sorted, graded, bagged, weighed and recorded per fleece. We couldn't have done it without the help of four

terrific students from the Animal Science faculty at Sydney University.

As an aside there is nothing more rewarding in breeding than to relieve an owner of its fleece that is spectacularly bright and lustrous and covers the entire fleece table, that handles like gossamer and, despite closer inspection, is free of uneven fibre diameters. Such fibres manufacture into garments of exceptional quality and of global desirability.

As we know it is a series of attributes of a fleece that determines the price for our alpaca: Lets have a quick look at them:

Softness of handle is determined by micron and evenness of that micron throughout the fleece amongst other things. A good classer, who knows the importance of end product quality, will also be looking for processable attributes in the fleece, and the most important of these is crimp. High character or deeply crimped wools are highly manageable fibres, determining the manageability or spinnability of the fibre, allowing it to turn, twist and be easily manipulated into a yarn. The yarn is compliant to the machinery's demand and will provide a predictably high quality garment that is essential to the modern wearer, garments which are easy to care for, lightweight, and soft.

We are also paid on weight. Weight is advantageous to the grower but also, high density fleeces improve fleece structure, forcing increased crimp definition. So, whilst high fleece weight means you are paid that extra dollar per saddle of fleece, it probably means you may be paid more for its overall quality as well.

So, what are the faults that hinder quality end product?

Coarse fibre, especially the medullated guard hairs, are flatter, broader, more brittle, and crimp less than the softer and finer fibre in the fleece. This stiffness causes resistance to turn and twist that is required to spin such fibres, which often break and stick out from the yarn, adding prickly and reducing the “comfort factor” of any garment from which it is made. Additionally, lack of elasticity, drape and lustre, and the inability of such fibres to accept dye, further diminishes the value of alpaca fleece. And, yes, when it is sorted poorly it will not gain the returns you need to even cover the cost of shearing.

An inexperienced alpaca sorter or classer, who mixes coarse fleece with soft fleece in any one saddle, whether he does so inadvertently or intentionally to increase fleece weight, will compromise the handle and consequently the value of the whole fleece. And, what is worse, it lessens the quality of what sets alpaca apart from all other coarse or kempy fibres. It is important we are highly critical and disciplined about skirting these inferior segments out of our saddles, a discipline which is not easy in a shearing shed sometimes.

Having tested and weighed all fleeces, clearly there will still be variation across any one fleece, despite aggressive skirting. Many fleeces testing midsides below 20 micron will demonstrate a degree of variation that dictates that it should be classed into higher a micron category. Unless conditions and light are optimal, and time sufficient, mistakes in classing are inevitable, and expert coaching is essential.

So, as I write, I am looking for strict quality control procedures which a good collection house will have in place prior to any manufacturing. Then, I am looking for a manufacturer who will not amalgamate

micron ranges. Otherwise, I know I am doing alpaca fleece, and the Australian alpaca industry, a disservice.

Decisions regarding your choice of manufacturer

Garbage in Garbage out. If you are of the opinion that you must seek a return for *all* your fleece, short, hairy, coloured pieces etc, remember that these are “discards”. Do not risk having it identified simply as “alpaca”, and bringing the premium product into disrepute. Put it in doonas or behind lining, but not against human skin. The returns from this sort of fleece will never run a viable farm: it is simply a by-product of an elite fibre, and the two must never be regarded or branded as one and the same. To do so will simply devalue the perception of alpaca as an elite fibre..

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Quality in Quality out: If you of want to maximize your return, then breeding for a world class quality fibre is essential for the viability of our industry as a fleece producer. Such premiums potentially will sustain a commercial herd in Australia.

Currently, the only organization I know that understands the importance of the alpaca 'reputation' is the **Australian Alpaca Fibre Limited**. They are paying very careful attention to classing, sensitive to prickly factor in the end product etc, and are highly aware of the importance of projecting an image that will label alpaca as an elite luxury fibre well into the future'

Now, with a classing facility in Peru, utilizing the generational expertise of Peruvian classers in Arequipa, and in-house testing with state of the art machinery to ensure quality control at every stage of manufacture, this is a huge step forward to improve the overall quality of our product. More cost effectively than ever before, AAFL can class, blend, spin, and dye Australian product in their own right, supplying to the Australian grower a verifiably Australian product including yarns and tops which can

then be sold, or further processed in Australia, as 100% Australian alpaca.

Of course, this is not the only road. There is a selection of buyers and processors listed under the Fleece Section on the Australian Alpaca Association website.

However the buck stops with us. It is not up to the buyer/manufacturer to meet the ambitions of our breeders for our industry. It is up to you and me. If you sell it without control of end product quality, that decision will have inevitable and tragic consequences for our industry. If you are mindful of these issues, seek out a buyer for your fleece who has proven expertise in classing, who is backed by quality assured manufacturing processes, and whose products reflect the quality of those processes

Let a world class apparel that is soft, silky, luxurious, and fit to be worn against the skin become synonymous with the brand 'Australian Alpaca'.

Your industry depends on it.

INTERESTED IN ALPACAS?

Come and talk to breeders at the Hawkesbury Show
on the 13th to 15th May
at the Hawkesbury Showgrounds, Clarendon.

Would you like to learn more about alpacas?

Enquire now for our "Getting Started with Alpacas" seminar
to be held 18-19th June 2011.

For more details contact: The Secretary
HAWKESBURY/BLUE MOUNTAINS REGION

Email: alpacas@tpg.com.au
or phone: 02 9653 2277

Web site: www.hbmalpacas.com.au



WOT'S ON??

Autumn 2011

hbmalpaca.com.au

NEXT MEETING
SUNDAY MARCH 27TH
10AM
ALPACANDES
ALPACA STUD
76 ARCADIA
RD
GALSTON

Want to get involved with your Region?

The region has
many opportunities
for people to lend
a hand in the
upcoming months

HAWKESBURY SHOW

The Hawkesbury Show alpaca showing day will be Saturday the 14th May, 2011. If you can give your time either prior to the show or on the day, please contact Don Culey.

As the Hawkesbury Show runs for 3 days, we have the opportunity to have stud displays set up in the Alpaca area on Friday 13th, and Sunday the 15th May. If you are interested in getting some free promotion time direct to the public, please contact Don Culey

NATIONAL ALPACA WEEKS

Are you participating in the National Alpaca Weeks this year? Are you able to assist in the coordination efforts for the region in relation to NAW? If so, please give Graeme Dickson a call as he urgently needs help

GETTING STARTED WITH ALPACAS SEMINAR

In June (18 & 19) the region will be running a getting started with alpacas seminar over 2 days. If you are able to assist please contact Graeme Dickson

NATIONAL SHOW, SALE & EXPO 2011

Sydney Showgrounds - October 12-18. Our region has been tasked with Logistics. John Hay has formed a sub-committee and they would love to hear from people who can assist. John will be more than happy to explain the multitude of jobs available.



Hawkesbury Show - 2004



New Breeders Seminar - 2009



*National Alpaca
Week*

National Alpaca Weeks - May 2011

**Get your forms back
to Sue by Friday
March 25th if you
are participating**



**Reminder: Hawkesbury Show entries
close Friday 29th April, 2011**

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Ambersun Gallipoli



We are delighted to advise that the progeny of our stunning white Supreme Champion stud male, Ambersun Gallipoli, are making their mark in the show ring.

Gallipoli is a Purumbete Highlander son and his grandsire is ILR Pperuvian Auzengate.

Gallipoli is standing at stud at Running Stream where he is available for drive through matings or mobiles. Arrangements can be made for matings in the Hawkesbury region, by appointment.

Service Fee: \$880

Mudgee Region:
John Hay
"Oakleigh" New Olivers Road
Running Stream, NSW (02) 6358 8210

Hawkesbury Region:
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- Central Coast Region 2007
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- Central Western Region 2008
Champion Mature Male
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