



Australian Alpaca  
ASSOCIATION

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Vicuna Chaccu
- Importing Llamas
- Alpaca Fleece Density
- Transporting Alpacas
- Charles Ledger



# CAMELID CONNECTIONS

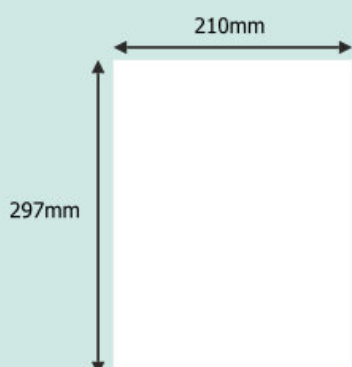
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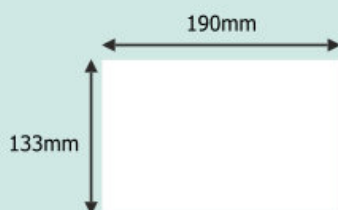
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  - Camelid Connections offers readers a wide variety of quality articles of interest to attract a broad audience
- .....

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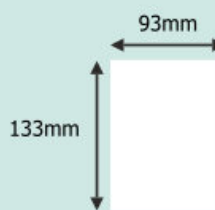
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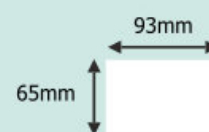
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- Package rates for prepaid advertisements in 3 issues of Camelid Connections receive a 10% discount.
- Double page spread receives a 25% discount (no additional discounts apply)
- Inside front cover and opposite page attract a 10% loading.
- Camelid Connections magazine will be a quarterly publication commencing in September 2017\*
- Advertising needs to be provided as a PDF or JPG to specifications listed above.
- Other advert configurations considered - ask us for a quote

**To book advertising or for further details contact either:**

- Julie McClen - Graphic Designer Ph: 02 6493 2036  
Email: [julie@camelidconnections.com.au](mailto:julie@camelidconnections.com.au)
- Esmé Graham - Editor Ph: 0457 304 868  
Email: [esme@camelidconnections.com.au](mailto:esme@camelidconnections.com.au)

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# Websites for Farmers

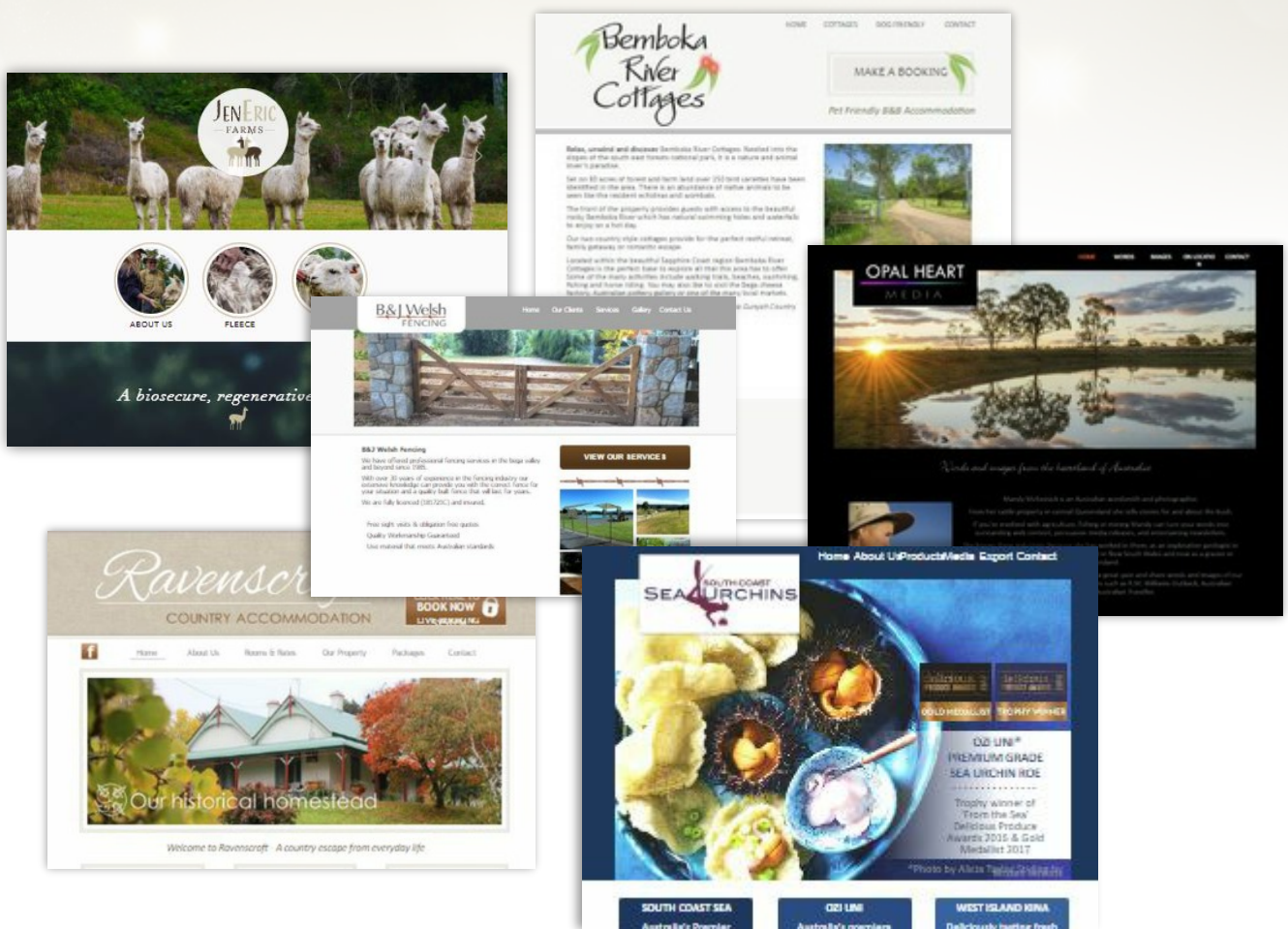
A website today is the basis of most business marketing - a website helps you sell your livestock, your produce or services to the widest audience possible.

## WE KNOW & UNDERSTAND RURAL BUSINESSES

Here at Oak Grove Graphics we understand what it takes to make a great website for farmers, because we are also farmers as well as web designers! We offer you web site options to suit you, from easy self maintained sites to we do it all for you options, we design sites that are attractive, functional and individual like your business. From the land to the sea, if your business is rural we can help you promote your business locally or Australia wide.

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Cover Image:Vicuna Chaccu - credit Christie Hayward

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# Is it Goodbye for Camelid Connections?

Camelid Connections has been providing a free online magazine to owners of alpacas, llamas and camels ever since the Australian Alpaca Association stopped producing it's member magazine back in 2017.

We have received many emails over these years thanking us for the quality of the articles we provide through the magazine, the diversity of interests we cover, and the often invaluable husbandry information we provide from breeders and vets.

This is our 31<sup>st</sup> issue (4 issues per year) with just our team of two sourcing all articles and producing the magazine, maintaining the website so readers have access to all our articles in our online library, and advertisers have their adverts enjoying a long shelf life, unlike print media. The only compensation we receive for the weeks of work that goes into each magazine is through advertising support.

But over the years, apart from a few long time supporters the advertising has dwindled, particularly since Covid, despite our more than affordable rates. Even with the sad loss of World Of Alpacas Magazine where many alpaca breeders used to advertise in the form of advertorial stories about their businesses, we have not seen any increase in requests for any type of advertising.

So we, via the AAA, sent out an email a few months ago to all AAA members letting them know if they valued the magazine, and would like to see it continue, then we would appreciate it if they could on occasion advertise their alpaca businesses with us, and also to let us know if they had any articles of general interest we could include. We received a grand total of one alpaca breeder who provided an article and took an advert, as well as two AAA regions who provided event information.

Sadly this response was lack lustre to say the least, so since this magazine is only a very small offshoot of a busy web and graphic design business, and for some time now has been a labour of love, it isn't viable to continue in this fashion when the time is better spent on more profitable endeavours.

So dear reader, this may be the last Camelid Connections Magazine we produce, unless readers decide they want this resource to continue to be available so start to support it. Eventually the website will also be taken down once the current annual hosting falls due, as keeping a library of magazines available without support from those who benefit from it isn't economically viable.

**Please email either [esme@camelidconnections.com.au](mailto:esme@camelidconnections.com.au) or [julie@camelidconnections.com.au](mailto:julie@camelidconnections.com.au) by 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025 if you wish to offer your advertorial support, or have constructive ideas how we can continue to make production of this magazine economically viable.**

## Meet The Team



**Esme Graham - Editor**

My husband and I 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 23 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](http://www.oakgrovegraphics.com.au)



# Creswick Woollen Mills & Alpaca

By Creswick Woollen Mills



Located in Creswick, approximately 120km outside Melbourne, Creswick Woollen Mills is one of the largest private employers in the region. Its products are made from natural fibres including merino wool, possum, alpaca, cashmere, cotton and bamboo, woven into sophisticated modern designs.

The mill was established in 1947 and in the following years, Creswick Woollen Mills continued to evolve. In the 2000's, Creswick Woollen Mills expanded, welcoming tourists from around the world to its historical mill. An interactive exhibit was opened aiming to educate and entertain visitors. The exhibit won gold in the RACV Victorian Tourism Awards in the 'Tourism Attraction' category in 2016.

Over many decades Creswick Woollen Mills has partnered with leading charities to donate blankets to the cold and





needy. In recent years over \$1 million worth of blankets have been distributed to help people experiencing homelessness.

Concern for the environment has led to 138 solar panels powering the Creswick blanket room – The company's carbon neutral goals will become an exciting reality very soon.



In 1998 when the Australian Alpaca Industry was in it's infancy Creswick commenced using alpaca to manufacture throw rugs and scarves followed shortly after by blankets. Using Australian fibre as much as was available and importing what they couldn't source locally they quickly realised that as alpaca fibre is semi hollow and super soft this allows the fibre to trap more air and acts as a natural temperature regulator. This makes the product lighter and warmer in winter than other types of quilts while allowing summer weight quilts to be made for warmer climates.

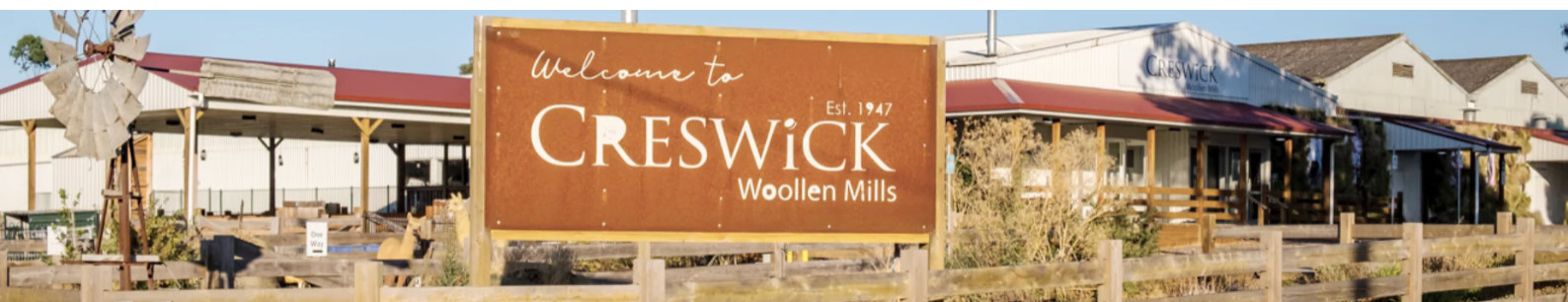
Because of the special qualities of alpaca wool, alpaca quilts make great summer bedding options. Alpaca fibres are renowned for their remarkable ability to wick away moisture, feel lightweight, and breathe easily, which makes them perfect for controlling body temperature in warmer climates. Alpaca quilts offer the ideal amount of ventilation and insulation to keep sleepers cool on sweltering summer nights. These quilts are also appropriate for people with allergies or sensitive skin due to the inherent hypoallergenic qualities of alpaca wool. Even in the sweltering summer.

Creswick also supplies an extensive range of alpaca blankets and throws from around the world. Its most iconic product is the world exclusive 80% Alpaca blanket and throw made in Australia. The Alpaca Fibre is blended with high quality lambswool to obtain maximum manufacturing efficiency.

These Alpaca blankets & throws differ from traditional European Alpaca products which have low % of Alpaca Fibre. These Australian Made products spare no expense with a relatively high Alpaca Blend that gives the consumer ultimate comfort. These Alpaca blankets & throws differ from traditional South American Alpaca products which have significant synthetic fibres blended with Alpaca Fibre.

Alpaca wool has a soft, durable, luxurious and silky fibre. It is extremely versatile and can be used on its own or blended with other sustainable fibres such as silk or bamboo to create a wide variety of goods.

So next time you need new bedding think Alpaca!





Est. 1947  
**CRESWICK**



*Love at First Touch*

# ALPACA WOOL

Discover Creswick luxury Alpaca  
throws and blankets collection

## VISIT US IN-STORE!

### **CRESWICK CAMBERWELL**

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☎ (03) 9818-5055

### **CRESWICK DAYLESFORD**

📍 79 Vincent Street, Daylesford  
☎ (03) 5348-2936

### **CRESWICK HEALESVILLE**

📍 213 Maroondah Hwy, Healesville  
☎ (03) 7034-0450

### **CRESWICK WOOLLEN MILL**

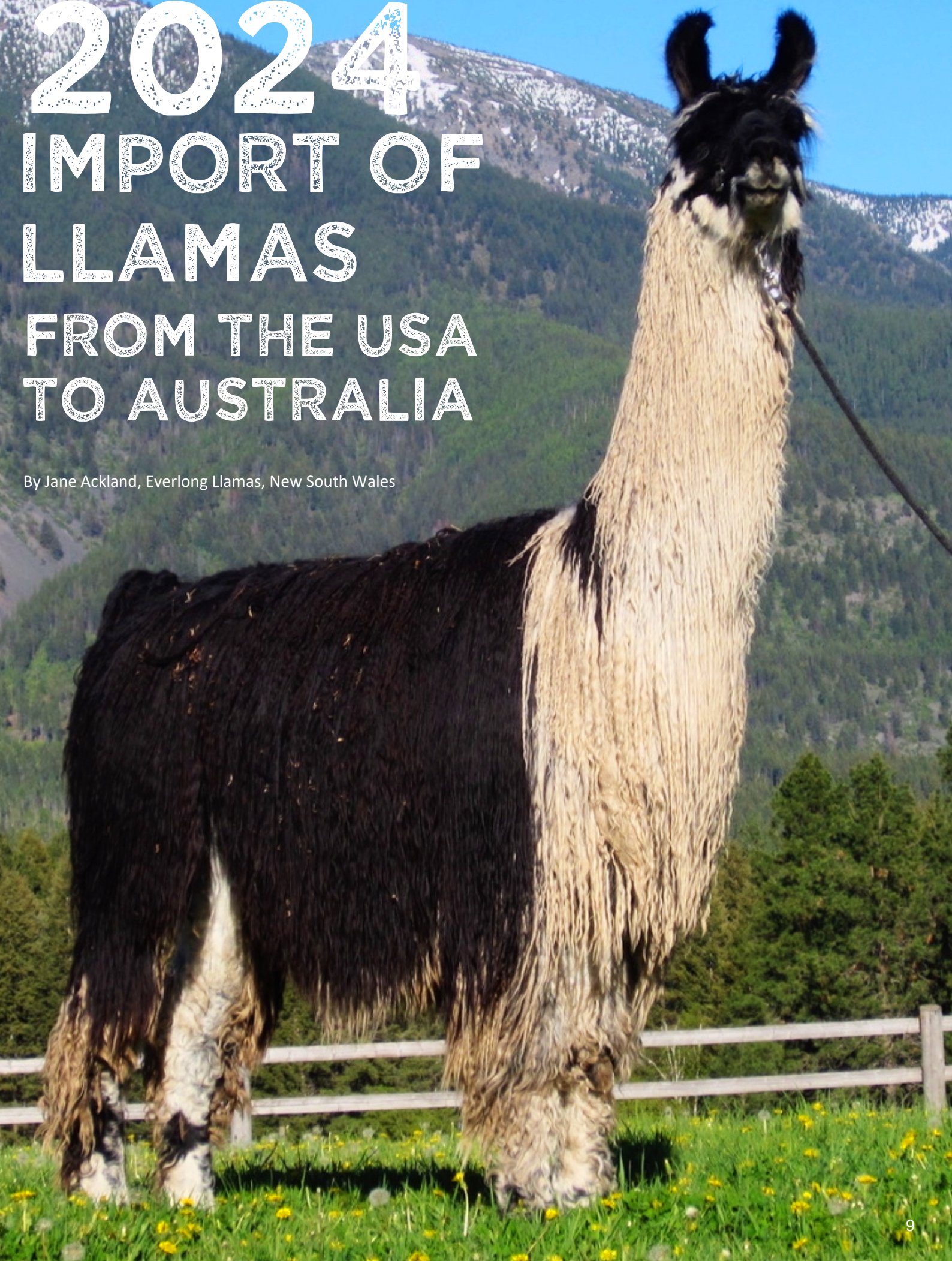
📍 Railway Parade, Creswick  
☎ (03) 5345-2202





# 2024 IMPORT OF LLAMAS FROM THE USA TO AUSTRALIA

By Jane Ackland, Everlong Llamas, New South Wales





Importing llamas has been a project of the heart for me. It has taken two years to go from an idea that seemed highly unlikely to come to fruition, to having five amazing llamas from the USA join us at Everlong Llamas in February 2024.

And yes, it cost a bomb. I have absolutely no regrets that I set my mid-life crisis fund on fire for something I love though. The llamas I've been able to bring here have exceptional genetics and are outstanding individually and as a group.

I'm a relative newcomer to the llama community. I bought my first llamas five years ago and was perfectly happy for at least five minutes to say I'd only ever own two, maybe three llamas. I joined the LAA at the outset and have found this community friendly, helpful and more than willing to share their knowledge and experience with a newcomer. The content of the Llama Lines publication, with all editions available through the on-line library, along with other helpful guides for members, are great resources.

In recent years, I was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and I left the work force ahead of schedule. The curious, gentle, and social nature of llamas brings me peace and I spend most of my time outside with them. Investing in breeding the best llamas I can gives me new purpose. I decided that if I wanted to breed, it needed to be in the best interests of the llamas. From the perspectives of species resilience, health, form, function, and fertility, I feel genetic diversity is valuable at this time in Australia's llama history. It has been quite some time since Australia acquired new genetics. I understand the last imports from the USA, South America and New Zealand, were around 20-30 years ago.

My aim is to build on the strengths in my Australian-bred llama herd with llamas from breeders I admire from Northern America, focusing on confirmation, athleticism, beauty, fleece, and temperament.

## THE SEARCH

I thoroughly researched llamas across the length and breadth of the USA, including breeder websites, social media groups and all issues of the on-line American Llama Magazine, which includes features on confirmation and breeders. I followed and where possible, live-streamed, American llama shows and auctions to gain an understanding of the market and types of llamas making their mark there.

I found some differences in what was sought between the show llama and the working or packing llama. The North American Ccara Association's suggested desirable structural attributes for athleticism and stamina include broad feet, strong pasterns, long and sloping shoulders with long upper leg bones, strong backs, and longer but proportional necks

carried slightly ahead of the vertical when on the move. These attributes are suggested to contribute to a superior range of motion, free and longer stride length, mechanical efficiency, shock absorption and locomotion.

I joined the International Llama Registry, which is an invaluable resource for researching pedigrees and finding details and photos of registered llamas, including ancestors of many of our Australian llamas. I have spent a LOT of hours on that database, researching llama ancestors, full/half/more distant relatives, and their progeny.

I read up on livestock and racehorse breeding theories to increase my knowledge of how to balance the benefits of outcrosses (e.g. for the benefits of health, soundness, vigour, longevity, fertility) with the murky water and differing theories on in-breeding and linebreeding.

I found schools of thought and practice in horse and llama breeding circles that consider a four-generation pedigree with no more than 37% common ancestors and inclusion of a specific ancestor deemed to be of superior genetics, to be an acceptable combination of outcross and linebreeding. This approach is thought to develop and reinforce a preferred type without compromising the physical and reproductive health and potential of the animal. I learnt about 'ingredient' animals, used selectively in breeding programs, to contribute a specific attribute or trait.

I was fortunate to have had many amazing llama breeders generously share their time, experience, advice, and suggestions with me. Amongst this group of breeders, I would particularly like to thank Marilyn Wynia of Sijama Llamas, Sarah McGovern of New Leaf Llamas, Sherri Tallmon of Hidden Oaks Llama Ranch, Steve Roling of Great Northern Llama Company, and Justin Timm of Frog Pond Llamas.

These breeders helped me refine and test my thinking and search for animals that would bring the genetic diversity, phenotype, and with the demonstrated quality and consistency deep into their pedigrees that I was looking for.

## SELECTION

I considered the pros and cons of selecting a small group of animals with genetic diversity not only to my Australian llamas, but also with each other. This included the potential of a collection of genetically diverse individual animals to produce more varied offspring with my Australian herd and offer different lines to experiment with over time.

This option certainly was exciting and attractive in terms of maximising diversity. However, I felt it carried a higher risk of unpredictability of offspring type and a more complex pathway to achieving depth in consistency, quality, and type of my future herd.





Sijama Ikandy

Informed by the breeding theories, practices, and experience of the USA breeders I spoke with, I instead decided to select llamas that had commonalities in type, some ancestry, and the proven ability to combine lines I particularly like to produce quality offspring. It is my hope that the combination of this American 'block' of genetics and type will combine well with my Australian 'block' of genetics and type, to produce quality, consistency, and depth in my future herd. Time will tell.

There are some truly beautiful llamas in the USA. I really admire the breeding herds of the breeders mentioned above, and I found my idea of the perfect llama with respect to type, pedigree, and offspring in contemporary Suri herd sire, Sijama Ikandy.

At the start, I was only looking for two, at a stretch maybe three llamas. My first approach was to Marilyn Wynia of Sijama Llamas to enquire if she would consider selling Sijama Reykjavik, a Sijama Ikandy son, GNLC Hightower grandson, and GC's Inca Legend grandson, for export to Australia. Marilyn was gracious and cautious, but willing to explore the possibility with me.

When I learnt that the cost of the crate and flight was the same irrespective of whether there was one or multiple llamas, I made the decision to go up to five young llamas. I selected the five with some duplication of individuals in pedigrees that I particularly liked as a form of genetic insurance policy given the risk I was taking with unproven fertility.

I bought three of the five llamas through direct engagement and private treaty with Sijama Llamas and New Leaf Llamas, and two I bought via one of Justin Timm's live online auctions. That auction was truly nerve-racking. It was worth it though, as Sijama Mallorca and Sijama Nebiollo, both offspring of the lovely tall, grey, Suri herd sire, GNLC Switchfoot, are here because of that online shopping blowout.

I am so grateful to Marilyn of Sijama Llamas and Sarah of New Leaf Llamas for their patience during this long process and entrusting their beautiful llamas to me to bring to Australia. It is my hope that they will have a significant and positive influence on llamas in Australia.





GNLC Hightower



GC's Inca Legend



GNLC Switchfoot

# 5 AMERICAN LLAMAS AT EVERLONG LLAMAS

## Sijama Reykjavik

Male

Born 20 May 2022

Silky - black and white tuxedo

Sire: Sijama Ikandy (Suri)

Dam: Sijama Jurnee (Silky)



## Sijama Nebiollo

Male

Born 30 June 2022

Suri – bay with a couple of grey spots

Sire: GNLC Switchfoot (Suri)

Dam: Sijama Zumiez's Lady in Red (Silky)





## Sijama Mallorca

Female

Born 7 June 2021

Silky - white and grey

Sire: CNLC Switchfoot (Suri)

Dam: Sijama Dania (Silky)



## Sijama Ember

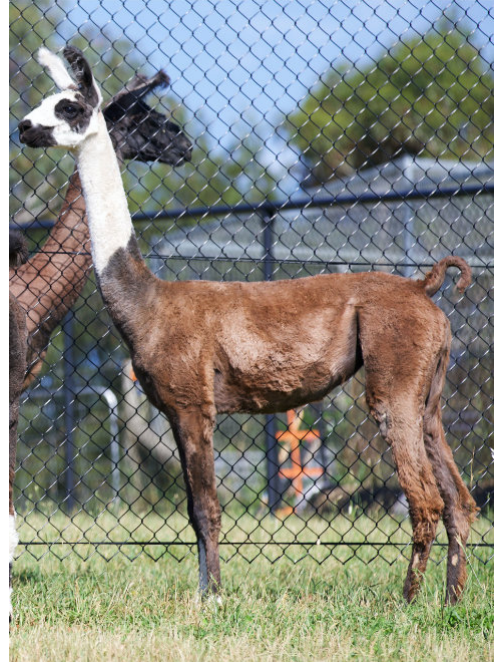
Female

Born 28 May 2023

Suri - brown, grey and white

Sire: Sijama Barolo (Suri)

Dam: FPL Elektra (Suri)



## New Leaf's Waratah

Female

Born 28 May 2023

Silky - black, brown and white

Sire: GNLC Full Tilt (Silky)

Dam: New Leaf's Jasmin (Silky)



# NAVIGATING THE IMPORTING PROCESS AND LOGISTICS

Amanda VandenBosch of Stanford Livestock International is an import and export agent, who specialises in moving pedigree livestock and camelids to and from long distance destinations. Amanda has been breeding alpacas for nearly three decades, owns Flying Dutchman Alpacas and is an international alpaca judge, judge trainer and teacher. I have the highest regard for Amanda and recommend her services unconditionally. She took care of the exporting end of the process for me, including veterinary examinations and travel certifications, transport, insurance, liaison with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), engagement of a private vet and shearer, documentation, and keeping this nervous first-time importer calm. Amanda's international experience, contacts, timing, diplomacy, and communication were first class.

Back in Australia, I had been in regular contact with various areas within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). We had several video and phone conferences as we navigated the first llama import in a long



time. The DAFF biosecurity veterinarians, Mickleham Quarantine Station team, and airside ground crew were very helpful, diligent, and competent. Everyone communicated well, solved problems as they arose and were genuinely excited about this import. I was lucky to have such a professional and enthusiastic group of people around me and the llamas.

The first llama to move from its farm of origin was New Leaf's Waratah, who was transported from California to Sherri Tallmon's property, Hidden Oaks Llama Ranch (HOLR), in Oregon. Shortly after, the four Sijama llamas moved across the state and joined Waratah at HOLR. I am very grateful to Sherri for then trucking the llamas to Amanda's property, also in Oregon.

It had been my hope that everything could happen on the West Coast to minimise the extent of travel on the llamas. It would have been ideal to obtain USDA approval for Amanda's farm to be the pre-export quarantine premises and for the llamas to fly out of Seattle or San Francisco. Unfortunately, the only West Coast airport option was Los Angeles, which was around 13 hours from Amanda's place by road. This was not an acceptable pathway to DAFF, due to the potential for the llamas to be exposed to biosecurity risks on the road trip after they had completed their 30 days pre-export quarantine, including disease carrying insects such as midges.

Amanda identified another option of undertaking pre-export quarantine and flying out of Chicago, however, the government facility had closed during COVID and not reopened. Amanda found a USDA endorsed privately run facility that is 20 minutes from Chicago airport, so we locked that in and transported them to Chicago in a dedicated (no other animals) truck.

During the pre-export quarantine period from 19 December 2023 to 28 January 2024, Chicago experienced a significant cold front with snow and ice storms. This delayed shearing until a few days before they travelled and the last-minute procurement of specially made rugs to keep the llamas warm once shorn and in the plane.

I elected to fly the llamas to Australia on a Qantas freighter. While a more expensive option than other airlines, Qantas had a direct route and could accommodate a bigger crate on its upper deck, which I preferred as one of the llamas is quite tall. The crate was designed and custom-built in consultation with DAFF officials. It separated males from females, had thick bedding, food, and water, and was enclosed in fine netting to keep insects out.

They flew out from Chicago on 28 January 2024 to Honolulu for a refuelling stop and landed in Melbourne on 30 January 2024. The flight was around 20 hours all up and I followed its progress online the whole way.



*The five llamas in their crate in the shade following disembarkation from the plane and waiting to be loaded onto the truck to go to Mickleham Quarantine Station*



*Sijama Mallorca peering out of the crate*



*Are we there yet? Sijama Ember and New Leaf's Waratah looking over Sijama Mallorca*



Mark Heffernan from Jet Pets acted on my behalf as the importer for the purposes of officially receiving the llamas at the airport with DAFF officials. Mark also arranged for the crate to be transported to Mickleham Quarantine Station, then disposed of in accordance with Australia's biosecurity requirements. As with Amanda, Mark was outstanding. Mark was on the phone to me talking me through their arrival, sent photos and videos and coped well with my tears of relief and joy that they had made it safely and well.



*On arrival at Mickleham Quarantine Station*

The llamas spent just over two weeks in post-entry quarantine. My partner Neil and I had an escorted visit within their first few days. I was required to engage a private veterinarian in case the llamas required treatment during quarantine, as well as to take blood on day 14 for blue tongue virus testing. I received a call from the Mickleham personnel on a Sunday to let me know that one of the llamas had a small swelling under her jaw. While I arranged for my nominated vet to attend at 0830 on Monday, I used the Phone A Vet service for an opinion via a video consult on the Sunday. The view was that it should be biopsied but didn't appear to be of significant concern. The following morning the swelling had resolved itself and was considered likely to have been from a bump.

Just in case things started going too smoothly, the DAFF vets then identified that the Pestivirus tests conducted in the USA that had provided negative results had to be re-run due as the blood testing sample used was incorrect. It was supposed to be peripheral blood leucocytes tested, but serum was tested instead. The USDA had to re-run the test using the samples they had stored from pre-export quarantine. At the same time, we were testing for blue tongue virus here in Australia. There were a few more anxious days while we waited for results, but thankfully they tested negative both in the USA and Australia and the llamas were cleared for release from quarantine.

We brought them home in a convoy of two horse floats, one for the boys and one for the girls. My thanks to Neil, my sister Bronwen and my friend Lauren for doing the drive to Mickleham Quarantine Facility and back to Wamboin in one day with me.

In the lead up to bringing them home, Neil and I had been madly building new llama shelters and putting up 2m high fencing after having been given the heads up by Amanda that Sijama Mallorca was a better fence jumper than her show jumping horses. We've not had that issue with any of them since they arrived, even in the paddocks with lower height fencing, so I think Mallorca was just scared when she cleared that triple row of 1500mm high fences in Oregon and gave Amanda a new appreciation for the athletic potential of llamas.

It's fair to say that my Australian llamas were initially deeply unimpressed with the Americans joining their ranks, but they have since all settled in together well. Apart from my existing older stud male, Llama Magic War Dance, who is still swearing at the new younger stud boys.

## BRIGHT LIGHTS AND PROMISES, A FARM FULL OF DREAMS...

Sijama Nebiollo was very keen to let us know that he was born to be a stud and ready to go. We bred Nebi to some of our Australian girls and have veterinary ultrasound confirmation of pregnancies, with the first cria due in Autumn 2025. Sijama Reykjavik is a gentle fellow, enjoying life as one of the lads out with the geldings and got serious about ladies a bit later than Nebi. Rey's first cria is due in Spring 2025.

Much as I would like to keep every Everlong Llama that we produce, it is not my goal to have a large herd. Everlong Llamas has a Facebook page and is setting up a website so if anyone in our llama community is interested in buying progeny when they come along, they will be able to find available llamas there. At this early stage of our breeding program, we are not offering outside breedings to the boys.

While the cost was indeed significant, and the process complex and took time, importing llamas has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. We are so fortunate that our farm is home to these beautiful llamas, and we can't wait to see what the future holds.



*(L-R) New Leaf's Waratah, Sijama Mallorca, Sijama Ember at Everlong Llamas*





## Llama Association of Australasia Inc.

Not for Profit Association established in 1993 providing education and communication opportunities between our members and the general public as to the caring for and appreciation of llamas and to advance the interests of the llama in Australasia.

Value for money membership fees. A network of passionate members for collaboration and connection, quarterly magazine, Llama Registry, education material and events, participation in llama activities and lots more.

Interested? Go to our website [www.llama.asn.au](http://www.llama.asn.au) or email [secretary@llama.asn.au](mailto:secretary@llama.asn.au)



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# Vicuna Chaccu

## 2024 Alpaca Fiesta

By Christie Hayward





In October 2024, a group of 10 Alpaca enthusiasts from all around Australia travelled to Peru, known as the home of alpaca. On the second day of the Alpaca Fiesta, we travelled to the Highlands to take part in a traditional Vicuña Chaccu.

Attending this Chaccu was the first time many of us had travelled this high in altitude. Starting our journey at Arequipa, which is 2,300m above sea level, we travelled by bus approximately 2 hours, to reach the highlands at 4,600m above sea level. For context, Mt Kosciuszko, Australia's highest mountain, is 2,228m above sea level. The altitude definitely affected all of us differently, but nothing could stop the enthusiasm and smiles all around.

The Vicuña is the smallest member of the camelid family and lives in the plains of the high Andes, at altitudes exceeding 4,000m above sea level. To the Andean and Incan cultures, Vicuñas' were considered a sacred animal. They were never used as sacrifices, instead they would be caught yearly to be shorn and re-released.

When the Spanish arrived, Vicuñas' were threatened by excessive hunting and environmental damage which drove the animal to near extinction. Thanks to the protection programs, the Vicuñas' today are protected, and their numbers are making a steady increase. Vicuña fleece is incredibly valuable, so instead of hunting them, the local communities utilise the traditional method of round-up, known as a Chaccu.

It was amazing to see this Chaccu experience in person, to be involved with communities from the high mountains as they come together to herd, catch and shear the wild Vicuña.



During the Chaccu, everyone lined side by side, holding a rope between each other with flags on it. The presence of people, multicoloured flags and noise is enough to guide the Vicuñas' into the enclosure. It was incredible to see these beautiful animals up close, because there are none in Australia!

Key features of the Vicuña include their reddish-brown coloured fleece, with an extremely white chest and very hairy brisket. Their fleece is very slow growing, but extremely fine and soft to touch.

Once secured in the catch pen, we then got to see a shearing demonstration. This looks very similar to how alpacas and llamas are shorn in Australia, using electric shears and its front and back feet are restrained... but someone was holding them rather than tie down with rope. The biggest difference with the shearing was that they only shored the 'saddle' of the animal, as the other areas (neck, legs, brisket etc.) contain coarser guard hairs.





The 'wedding' was also a highlight of the Vicuña Chaccu experience. Part of the welcoming ceremony to the visitors attending the fiesta, was a 'wedding' between a male and female Vicuña. It was so special to see everyone get involved with music, dancing and dressing up two animals. They had a traditional smoking ceremony before getting the male to mate the female.

It was amazing to see the culture surrounding the Vicuñas' in all aspects of their existence, including the fleece, husbandry, reproduction and celebration.

Overall, the Vicuña Chaccu was a great experience, I learnt so much about traditional methods and how they are used still to this day.

The Vicuñas' are remarkable and seeing them in the wild throughout the countryside for the remainder of the trip was amazing!

*Christie Hayward was part of a group of young people on a study tour to Peru attending the International Alpaca Fiesta, funded by Janie Forrest and the RAS Foundation.*



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# The Ill-thrifty Weanling - a whistle stop tour

By Lissie Gercke BVSc (hons) CertAVP(CP) MRCVS

Cria are typically weaned from 6 months of age and weaning techniques vary from farm to farm. The advised cria weight at weaning is 25kg. Some will be lighter (towards 21kg) and many 30kg plus. Occasionally cria might be weaned earlier, where the dam is struggling to maintain condition, or an underweight or undersized cria might be weaned late to stay on a well-conditioned dam with good milk production for a little longer.

It is not uncommon for 1 or 2 youngsters in a group to drop back and it can be down to a number of factors. Multiple animals failing to thrive is a bigger concern and requires speedy intervention. Weaning is a stressful time for cria and the stress alone can cause an individual to fall back. Genetics also play a role and it is worth going back and looking at records from the dams previous cria.

Weighing at least monthly is key at this stage. Body condition scoring (BCS) alongside weighing is useful but on its own is not as precise for quantifying condition gain or loss in juveniles. When weight is not regularly monitored poor does can go unnoticed initially.

When working up a poorly doing weanling, after a full clinical (including dental/oral) examination, I like to go back to birth and run through any factors that might have set it up to do badly from the start. Did it have a traumatic delivery? Did it get enough colostrum in the correct time frame? Did its dam have a good milk supply? Did the dam maintain an adequate BCS (2.5/5) during lactation? Did it have any periods of illness? What age and weight was it at weaning? I review its recorded weights from birth and calculate its daily weight gain each month to see if the problem started post weaning or if there have been other periods of sub-optimal weight gain.

Review the recent and historic worm egg counts (WEC) for the individual and any worming treatments. Worms (including tapeworm), coccidia and fluke will negatively affect weight gain, however, don't necessarily cause diarrhoea and so can go unmissed without regular surveillance. Discuss results with your vet to identify when to treat and which anthelmintic is most appropriate. If a recent worm or coccidia burden has been identified and treatment carried out then a post treatment WEC should be taken to confirm successful treatment.





Re-check the ration being fed and behaviour of the group around feeding. Is there adequate feed and water space? Is there any bullying? Growing cria require 0.03 MJ ME per gram weight-gain and 0.3 g of crude protein per gram of weight-gain per day on top of maintenance. It can be a challenge to meet nutrition requirements and this is often limited by appetite (a 30kg cria will eat about 540g dry matter per day, a max of 30% of this can be hard feed). Forage analysis is recommended to confirm sufficient quality of conserved forage. Check component of the ration.

Lastly, I always take a blood sample during an ill thrift assessment to evaluate trace elements (copper, B12/cobalt, selenium), protein and energy levels. If these are all normal the blood can be used to run further tests if required (haematology, biochemistry, mycoplasma smear or PCR)

In summary – regular weigh-ins and parasite monitoring are key to picking up problems. Intervene quickly. Speak to your vet if the cause of ill-thrift is not obvious.

Lissie graduated from Bristol in 2012 and works for The Livestock Clinic in Surrey where she enjoys a lovely varied caseload of camelid work. She completed a certificate in camelid practice in 2023.

The Livestock Clinic is a farm animal vet team based in Surrey, covering farms across Surrey, Sussex and into parts of Kent, Hampshire and Berkshire.

We are a small independently owned practice catering for the full range of commercial livestock, smallholders and backyard pets. We have a large and growing camelid caseload of alpaca and llama herds with a few camels thrown in for good measure. We spend time training and exposing our vets to camelid work to ensure that the whole team has an excellent level of experience approaching and managing camelid cases.

Lissie has a cert AVP in camelid practice.

She has been working with camelids for her whole career but they have steadily become a large part of her caseload. As a practice we work closely with 2 local equine hospitals in order to be able to keep referral cases as local as possible whenever appropriate.



This also means our vets are able to follow their cases through the referral process.

Our vets are all members of the British Veterinary Camelid Society and keep up to date with recent research and ongoing CPD.



As a practice we are hoping to take a more active role in camelid based research over the next few years.

*Originally printed in the British Alpaca Assoc. magazine and reprinted with their permission.*





# Making Transporting Alpacas as Hassle Free as Possible!

By Esme Graham – Editor Camelid Connections

My husband and I bred alpacas for about 20 years and during that time we transported alpacas from Queensland throughout New South Wales and frequently to Victoria. Before starting our transporting journey we gave considerable thought as to how we could do this without causing harm either to the alpacas or ourselves.

We realised that we would have to make stops along the way, so my husband designed a series of panels (a) to divide the inside of the float and (b) to form a comfortable, safe pen to retain the alpacas outside the float. These panels hung on the side of the float while we were travelling. A major consideration is the ease to get the animals in and out of the float, we didn't want them to have to jump in and out and possibly cause injury. A float with a ramp – not too steep – at the back with non slip material on the floor is the easiest way to access safely.

Many people transport their alpacas in vans and I have seen many alpacas jump quite happily into a van however it can be a traumatic experience getting others to load easily. I have also seen some very ingenious ways to make ramps for loading into vans so worth giving it some thought before you make the first attempt as once an animal is spooked it is very difficult to get them loaded.

The main reasons for transporting animals are to pick up and deliver after purchase or sales, travelling to shows, taking females for mating or males for stud duty or a visit to the vet.

The easiest from a transport point of view, but often quite stressful for you and the alpaca is a visit to the vet as it is usually a short distance. However, keep in mind that you may need to take a companion animal with you to keep stress levels as low as possible and if your animal needs to stay at the vet you may need to leave the companion with the sick animal – discuss this with your vet.

If the distance to be travelled is over two hours make sure the bedding on the floor of your float is a thick layer of good quality straw/hay without seeds and contaminants. This makes it comfortable for the animals and easy for you to pick their fleeces once you arrive at your destination – especially important if you are taking animals to shows where you want clean fleece.

Take a moment to assess the temperature and whether the air flow in the float is sufficient and if necessary open window or vents to improve air flow. Keep in mind that alpacas are herd animals and prefer to travel with company.



Travelling long distances with your alpacas is a different ball game and requires some planning. Are you travelling with entire males and females? If so you need a divider in your float high enough so the male cannot jump over. If you are travelling with a female and cria as well as other females it may be a good idea to separate them from the other females. We have travelled from Queensland to Victoria on numerous occasions and had very little trouble, we find the 'pacas are good travellers.

We stop every two hours as the animals tend to travel in cush and this allows them to stand and relieve themselves or mums to feed their cria. We offer them water but find they rarely drink in the float. At lunch time we find a park or resting place along the highway put up the pens and allow the animals out giving them feed and water. They are very inquisitive and hop out of the float onto the grass and stretch their legs (quite often providing entertainment for other road users – we answer lots of questions while we are eating lunch). After about an hour we load up and off we go again after making sure we cleaned up the area. After a few trips we had found motels along the way which have a paddock or grassy area behind the motel and we set up the pens again and settle the animals for the night. They can get in and out of the float as they wish and seem quite happy. We also had alpaca breeder friends and some nights we parked the float in their paddocks and let the animals out whilst we enjoyed the night with fellow breeders.

It is important to avoid as much stress as possible for your alpacas. Before a long trip, if possible, park your float in a smallish paddock and encourage your animals to get in and out so they are used to the float. Always put halters on your alpacas before loading them so if you encounter any problems along the way, it is easy to click on their leads to take them to safety or walk them calmly when you reach your destination. Floats are getting larger and more sophisticated but the basics are the same – keeping your alpacas and yourselves safe and happy.

It is important if you are travelling to have the correct documentation and if you are crossing State borders you may need to have your animals sprayed or inspected so check before you travel. Each State has their own requirements. Farm biosecurity is important so make sure the destination farm has quarantine measures in place to receive your animals and vehicle.

Paperwork required to transport alpacas - [South American Camelid Declaration Waybill 2022 Fillable](#)

Travelling to a show? Check the following as well - [Herd Health](#) for shows.  
Enjoy your travels.

*(Note – This is our personal experience and we had no problems over a long period of time so we hope you may pick up some ideas to help you and your alpacas enjoy the journey )*





# AN OBJECTIVE METHOD FOR COMPARING ALPACA FLEECE DENSITIES

By - Bob Kingwell, Monga Alpacas

Fleece density has a major effect on the weight of a fleece and is therefore a desired requirement for the commercial success of an alpaca fibre industry.

The current objective method for determining fleece density involves taking a skin sample and counting the number of fibre follicles and then expressing the result as so many follicles per square millimetre of skin. The process is invasive, expensive and only useful when comparing densities between alpacas of a similar size and body score.

This new method is not expensive, can be used regardless of alpaca size and can easily be performed by the alpaca owner. It ideally requires the weights (WT) of consistently skirted fleece saddle together with their test results from a mid-side fleece sample, preferably taken within a couple of weeks before or during shearing. Tests should preferably have been performed using an OFDA2000 instrument with the trim high setting turned OFF. The test results of average fibre diameter (FD), its standard deviation (SD) and the staple length (L) are then used to calculate the average fibre volume (V).

The saddle weight and average fibre volume are then used to calculate an estimate of the total number of fibres ( $N \times 10^6$ ) within the saddle fleece where N equals the weight divided by the volume ( $N = WT/V$ ).

The value of N is then used in a matrix of FD vs N to allocate an apparent density score out of 10 points. The higher the score, the greater is the apparent density. The matrix has been based on calculated values of N for fleece entries in three national shows (2020 National Fleece Challenge and 2019 and 2018 National Shows). Allowance has been made in the matrix to account for reduced fleece weights resulting from additional skirting requirements as microns increase and alpacas become older. This enables fleeces from the same alpaca over a number of years' to be compared. Although the value of N may decline with age, the apparent density score should remain similar. When the method was applied to a large number of alpacas from the same herd over a number of years, the apparent densities for each alpaca were found to be remarkably stable.

The most reliable estimate of apparent density will be obtained from either second or third year fleeces. This is because the first year fleece will contain fibres that have not been growing for the same period of time and fleeces after the third year will have started to blow out and require additional skirting.

## CALCULATING APPARENT DENSITY

In order to calculate a value for N, it is first necessary to double click on the table shown below. This converts the table into an Excel spreadsheet (You will need to contact the author at [mongaalpacas@bigpond.com](mailto:mongaalpacas@bigpond.com) for an emailed copy of the spreadsheet). The tested values of FD, SD, L and WT for a fleece saddle are then entered into a row below the test fleece. By then copying and pasting the test value in column G to the row below, the spreadsheet will automatically calculate the value of N for this fleece.

The apparent density score for each fleece is then determined by entering the fleece values of N and their FDs into the matrix on the following page. These scores can then be added to the Excel spreadsheet for comparison of fleece densities.

For those readers that are interested, details of the methodology behind this assessment of apparent density can be obtained by contacting the author.





ADVANTAGES

- It is an assessment of density based on the number of fibres in a fleece rather than a subjective assessment based on feel and appearance.
- It is an objective assessment based on tested values for weight, micron, SD and average length.
- It can be used to compare fleece densities from alpacas of different sizes and body scores.
- It is not affected by differences in environmental conditions between different years and properties.
- The scores make allowances for increased skirting requirements on weight with increasing fleece microns as alpacas age.
- It will still produce acceptable values for comparison if all tests are carried out using the OFDA2000 trim high setting turned ON. Extreme differences between the ON and OFF values for SD will however result in higher values of N with the lower trim ON value of SD.

LIMITATIONS

- The method assumes that the entered fleece weights are for consistently skirted fleece and that areas such as neck or leg fleece are not included.
- The method assumes that fleeces with microns below 23 require minimal skirting. A dense fleece requiring considerable skirting may have a similar weight to another fleece of a similar micron that is not as dense and required minimal skirting. Neither however, would compare with a heavy fleece that was both dense and required minimal skirting.
- Medullation results in reduced values for WT but does not affect the calculation for V and these lower weights produce lower values for N. This however can have a positive effect on scores since it rewards those fleeces that have low levels of medullation for any one micron.

- Because consistent skirting requirements have been accounted for in the scoring process, minimal or excessive skirting will result in either higher or lower values for N. This is not necessarily a disadvantage since it acknowledges the extent of fleece uniformity across the saddle area.
- It will not produce consistent results for different fleeces from the same alpaca if any one fleece requires abnormally excessive skirting as a result of contaminants, poor shearing or large changes in the extent of medullation.
- It may not give reliable results for fleece from alpacas that are older than about 6 years due to the potential for excessive medullation. Coarse straight fibres with diameters over about 40µ will be fully medullated and this may represent some 60% of these fibre volumes.
- It will not give reliable results for first year fleeces since not all fibres will have been growing for the same period of time.



EXCEL SPREADSHEET FOR CALCULATING NUMBER OF FIBRES (N) (example layout)

PROPERTY	ALPACA	FD µ	SD µ	SL mm	WT kg	Nx10 <sup>6</sup>	DENSITY SCORE
	Test	20	4	90	2.5	66	10



## FLEECE MICRON vs NUMBER OF FIBRES (Nx10<sup>6</sup>)

24/11/2022

### APPARENT DENSITY SCORE

MICRON	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12.6-22.5	70-65	64-59	58-53	52-47	46-41	40-35	34-29	28-23	22-17	16-11
22.6-23.0	69-64	63-58	57-52	51-46	45-40	39-34	33-28	27-22	21-16	15-10
23.1-23.5	67-62	61-56	55-50	49-44	43-38	37-32	31-26	25-20	19-14	13-8
23.6-24.0	66-61	60-55	54-49	48-43	42-37	36-31	30-25	24-19	18-13	12-7
24.1-24.5	64-59	58-53	52-47	46-41	40-35	34-29	28-23	22-17	16-11	10-5
24.6-25.0	63-58	57-52	51-46	45-40	39-34	33-28	27-22	21-16	15-10	9-5
25.1-25.5	61-56	55-50	49-44	43-38	37-32	31-26	25-20	19-14	13-8	7-5
25.6-26.0	60-55	54-49	48-43	42-37	36-31	30-25	24-19	18-13	12-7	6-5
26.1-26.5	58-53	52-47	46-41	40-35	34-29	28-23	22-17	16-11	10-5	
26.6-27.0	57-52	51-46	45-40	39-34	33-28	27-22	21-16	15-10	9-5	
27.1-27.5	55-50	49-44	43-38	37-32	31-26	25-20	19-14	13-8	7-5	
27.6-28.0	54-49	48-43	42-37	36-31	30-25	24-19	18-13	12-7	6-5	
28.1-28.5	52-47	46-41	41-35	34-29	28-23	22-17	16-11	10-5		
28.6-29.0	51-46	45-40	39-34	33-28	27-22	21-16	15-10	9-5		

NUMBER OF FIBRES (Nx10<sup>6</sup>)



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# PATTERN

FREE

## Knit up this gorgeous Cap & Scarf

To fit adult, medium size head.

Finished measurements:

Cap: 42 cm diameter, stretched 65 cm.

Scarf: Length 54 cm, width 16 cm (blocked), 13 cm (unblocked).

Materials: Cap approx. 75 g 100% suri or huacaya alpaca yarn 3 to 4 ply, 2.3metres/gram.

Scarf 100-150 g (depending on desired length) 100% suri or huacaya alpaca yarn 3 to 4 ply, 2.3metres/gram

Note: 3 x 50 gram balls should be sufficient for both – Yarn required could vary depending on yarn weight, needle size and tension.

Knitting Needles: 4.5 mm or size 7 Cable needle  
Tapestry needle (to sew the seam on cap)

Gauge: 21stitches/10 cm and 25 rows/10 cm (adjust your needle size if needs be)

Abbreviations: K = knit, P = purl, K2tog = knit two stitches together to decrease

### Cap Pattern

Cast on 100 stitches.

*Hint: If you slip the first stitch on each row you will get a neater seam.*

Cabled Brim: Row 1: K2, P2, K4, P2, repeat to end Row 2: K2, P4, K2, P2, repeat to end Row 3: Repeat row 1

Row 4: Repeat row 2

Row 5: K2, P2, (slip next 2 stitches onto cable needle, leaving stitches in front of work), K2, then (K2 stitches from cable needle), P2. Repeat to end

Row 6: Repeat Row 2 - *Repeat these 6 rows twice (total of 18 rows).*

Row 19: Repeat row 1 Row 20: Repeat row 2

Stockinette/stocking stitch commences: Row 21: K (knit) to end

Row 22: P (purl) to end

Repeat these two rows nine times (total of 18 rows)

Decreasing rows: Row 1: K8, K2 tog. Repeat to end of row. (90 stitches) Rows 2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16 i.e. alternate rows: P (purl) all stitches.

Row 3: K7, K2 tog. Repeat to end of row. (80 stitches) Row 5: K6, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (70 stitches) Row 7: K5, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (60 stitches)

Row 9: K4, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (50 stitches)



*Unlock your creativity!*

Row 11: K3, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (40 stitches) Row 13: K2, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (30 stitches) Row 15: K1, K2tog. Repeat to end of row. (20 stitches) Row 17: K2 tog. Repeat to end of row. (10 stitches)

Break the yarn, leaving a length approximately 35cm long (to sew the seam), and draw through remaining 10 stitches, then sew up the side seam with the remaining yarn.

Weave in the ends.

### Scarf Pattern

Cast on 42 stitches. Purl 3 rows

Cable pattern:

Row 1: K2, P2, K4, P2, repeat to last 2 stitches, K2 Row 2: P2 then (K2, P4, K2, P2), repeat this to end of row. Row 3: Repeat row 1

Row 4: Repeat row 2

Row 5: K2, P2, (slip next 2 stitches onto cable needle, leaving cable in front of work), K2, (K2 stitches from cable needle), P2. Repeat along row to last 2 stitches, K2.

Row 6: Repeat row 2

Repeat these 6 rows until the desired length is reached. Repeat rows 1 and 2 again.

Finish with 3 purl rows. Cast off. Weave in the ends.

Block scarf if required.

Enjoy! Pattern courtesy of Banyandah Alpacas



# Camelid Tourism

## Harrisville QLD



### Discover Summer Land Camels: A Unique Australian Camel Farm Experience

Just 45 minutes from Brisbane and a little over an hour from Toowoomba and the Gold Coast, Summer Land Camels is a must-visit destination in South East Queensland's stunning Scenic Rim. As Australia's largest commercial camel dairy, it offers an unforgettable farm experience, where visitors can get up close with camels, enjoy award-winning camel milk products, and explore the beauty of this unique region. Whether you're an animal lover, a foodie, a fan of camelids, or simply looking for a unique adventure, Summer Land Camels has something special to offer.

### A Day on the Farm

From the moment visitors arrive, they are greeted with breathtaking views of open paddocks, the sight of camels roaming peacefully, and the fresh country air, setting the tone for a relaxing and educational visit. Whether you're a camelid enthusiast, an animal lover in general, a foodie, or looking for an authentic farm experience, Summer Land Camels offers something for everyone.

With free entry, guests can enjoy the warm, country hospitality that makes this farm such a welcoming and memorable place to visit.

### Camel Encounters & Farm Tours

One of the biggest highlights is the chance to get up close and personal with the camels. Visitors can hand-feed the camels in the café yards for just a few dollars - an experience that brings plenty of smiles and laughter.

For those wanting a deeper insight into the farm's operations, the Tour, Taste & Camel Encounter is a must-do. This guided tour provides an insider's look at camel dairy production, the history of camels in Australia, and the sustainable farming practices used at Summer Land Camels. It also includes camel milk and cheese tastings, plus a chance to interact with the friendly camels.

For a truly exclusive experience, the VIP Camel Encounter offers an immersive, behind-the-scenes visit. Guests enjoy private camel interactions, learn about their care and behaviour, and take part in hands-on feeding opportunities.

For food lovers, the Premium Paddock to Plate Experience is not to be missed. This luxury tour explores camel farming, sustainable agriculture, and gourmet camel dairy products. The highlight? A tasting of farm-fresh delicacies, including the world's first award-winning Camel Milk Vodka, made from whey, a by-product of the dairy process.





For an even more memorable experience, guests can also ride a camel! With three different ride options, there's a choice for every comfort level. Whether it's a gentle ride through the countryside or a more immersive experience, this is a chance to learn about the unique way camels move and interact with their environment.

## The Café & Camel Milk Delicacies



No visit to Summer Land Camels is complete without stopping at the on-site café, where visitors can enjoy delicious camel milk products. A camel-cino—made with smooth, creamy camel milk—is a must-try, and the camel milk gelato is a unique and refreshing treat.

For a heartier meal, the café serves fresh, locally sourced dishes, including a gourmet Scenic Rim Tasting Platter featuring camel milk cheeses and other delicacies from across the region. Guests can relax with morning tea, lunch, or afternoon tea on the homestead verandah or in the café gardens, soaking in the stunning farm views.

### The Farm Shop – Take a Piece of the Farm Home

Before leaving, visitors can browse the Farm Shop, which offers a range of camel dairy products, including camel milk skincare, cheeses, and camel milk powder. The shop also stocks camel-themed giftware and merchandise, making it easy to find a unique gift or take home a piece of the farm experience.



## More Camelid Encounters Nearby

For those keen to extend their camelid adventures, nearby attractions include:

The Llama Farm (near Ipswich) – Home to Queensland's largest llama herd, this farm offers intimate experiences with these charming and gentle animals. (Bookings essential.)

Mountview Alpaca Farm (Canungra) – Visitors can enjoy walking and feeding alpacas while taking in the beautiful surrounds of the Scenic Rim. (Bookings essential.)



## Exploring the Scenic Rim

Named one of the Top 10 Regions in the World to Visit in 2022 by Lonely Planet, the Scenic Rim is a must-visit destination. Summer Land Camels is the perfect starting point for exploring more of what this incredible region has to offer.

Harrisville – A charming country town just a short drive from the farm. Harrisville boasts two fantastic pubs—the Royal Hotel and Sip & Scull Commercial Hotel—as well as a Country Bakehouse and quirky little cafés. The Harrisville & District Historical Museum is worth visiting; check their Facebook page for opening hours.

Scenic Rim Farm Café & Elderflower Farm (Kalbar) – A picturesque farm café set among beautiful gardens, offering local produce and handcrafted treats.

Kalbar – This quirky town has become a hub for visitors, offering great coffee, boutique shops, and fantastic local dining on weekends.

Mount French & Moogerah Dam – Nature lovers will enjoy exploring Mount French, part of Moogerah Peaks National Park, with bushwalking trails and spectacular lookouts. Moogerah Dam is a popular spot for picnicking, fishing, and water sports.

The Overflow Estate 1895 – A historic property with a vineyard and cellar door, perfect for wine tasting while enjoying stunning lake views.



## Where to Stay

To make the most of a trip to the Scenic Rim, why not stay overnight and experience even more?

For a list of recommended places to stay, visit: [Where to Stay – Summer Land Camels](#).

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The Moogie House collective comprises of a self-contained holiday house that sleeps 6, a tiny house, container conversion studio for 2, and a luxury off grid glamping safari tent for couples.

For further information see website [www.moogiehouse.com.au](http://www.moogiehouse.com.au)



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Rides & Tours: Friday to Sunday, plus extra availability during school holidays

Website: [www.summerlandcamels.com.au](http://www.summerlandcamels.com.au)

One of the most special parts of a visit to Summer Land Camels is the warm country hospitality that greets every guest. Whether it's the friendly team sharing their passion for camels, the relaxed farm atmosphere, or the welcoming café and shop, visitors instantly feel at home. It's a place where city meets country, where people can slow down, reconnect

t with nature, and enjoy genuine rural experiences.

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## EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

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\*Closed some public holidays





# A Single Desk Fleece sales platform Underpinned by a AAA Classing Course



By Steve Ridout | Board Director - Australian Alpaca Association

The Single Desk concept is a platform by where the industry starts to drive change through the nations Alpaca fleece production.

It's a single point of sale where buyers and sellers come together for commercial transactions. For this concept to succeed the industry must invest in reviewing the way fleece is classed and provide training for all members to adopt.

The benefits of the concept are numerous, firstly the concept can be used by the industry to ensure a quality management type system is in place. An educational tool to drive the grower to alter fleece presentation and in turn a better product for sale. The consolidator is then able to provide the end buyers with a more consistent product not to mention lessen the work load and costs associated with what's being presented today.

There has been a void between what's happening in the shearing shed, classing course make up and end presentation of fleece to buyers. Both the Industry specific course and single desk concept will fill that void and enable the AAA to drive that change.

## Acknowledgment

Over the last 2 decades or so there has been a considerable amount of work completed by volunteers within our Industry. Government agencies were contracted for reviews with the development of accredited training courses, the provision of industry recommendations and the AAA development of regional training / fleece programs for AAA members. That work needs to be acknowledged and will be the backbone of the proposed Industry Specific Classing Course.

## Background

In a 2005 article written by the DPI which is based on the Production, attributes and relative value of alpaca fleeces in southern Australia and implications for industry development, see link below!

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921448805002427>

## There is a conclusion which reads:

The productivity of Australian alpacas is the equal to or better than traditional producing regions. The productivity and

economic returns from fleece production of Huacaya and Suri animals in Australia is similar. The Australian industry needs to implement more commercial mating, shearing and culling strategies to maximise production and returns from animals aged less than 3 years. The main driver of economic value from fleece production is lower mean fibre diameter of the fleece.

The article is nearly 20 years old, in fact I think if the research was conducted today the conclusions would be the same. Does that mean the industry hasn't moved in that direction?

Another article from a 2002 Agrifutures / RIRDC publication (see link below) goes even further by suggesting a National approach to education. Whilst accredited training establishments had produced training course for classing Alpaca there has not been an Industry specific course to date.

<https://agrifutures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/publications/02-016.pdf>

Its conclusions and recommendations are on page 21 and 22, whilst some of them are outdated there is a consensus for Industry to develop and nurture training. It also suggests that all fleece be sent to a central location for sorting and grouping for fleece measurements. We know this has been tried to a degree in the past but even then, the same problems arose. The quality of fibre coming off the alpaca is not being classed properly and presented for commercial consolidation or for production.

## The AAA are committed to:

Develop an Australian Alpaca Association Accredited Alpaca Fleece classing course that will take the Alpaca Industry into the future. The Fibre Classing course will also address

- Quality of fibre being presented for sale
- Consolidation issues
- Commercial orientation in lines based on commercial requirements
- Quality assurance to buyers
- Fibre production based on commercial requirements
- Classers stencil design and registration by the AAA
- Classers code of conduct



The course itself will be robust and fit for purpose, it will enhance fibre production and presentation with a quality assurance basis for industry credibility.

### Benefits

- Platform for all buyers and sellers of Australian Alpaca Fibre
- Industry specific
- Reduction in costs for consolidators
- Increase in quality of fibre for sale
- Reduced time in commercial transactions
- Standardisation of fleece preparation
- Industry driven
- Providing Industry a direction in commercial growth
- Increase in education
- Increase in Alpaca Fibre Classers
- Opportunities for small businesses
- Ability for Industry and Commercial input to grow fibre production
- Possible levy on sales to be used on Alpaca Fleece Promotion / R and D

### Quality assurance

Our Industry needs another method of recognising and registering Alpaca classers that doesn't encompass courses centred around sheep wool. In turn the benefits are solely for our Industry. Our course will not fit in with current TAFE courses which can still be used for those that want a broader accreditation.

The course whilst being fit for purpose, it will be robust and provide an educational tool for members of the AAA. It will endeavour to provide a quality assurance system to buyers of Australian Alpaca fibre and provide the market with a more consistent product. Most of the course modules will be available online for completion whilst workshops / training days for a hands-on approach will be scheduled as a part of the course.

The process of the course construction will be presented to the board and fleece industry for review prior to any implementation.

An EOI has been published for experienced people to assist with the development of Classer Trainers. Their role is to establish a level of competency after the online course has been completed through hands on practical workshops.

It's envisaged that the course cost to members will cover the workshops and facility. Any AAA subsidised funding models

maybe reviewed and assessed by the working group for discussion by the board.

A review of the course modules and classing code of practice is estimated to take 8 mths. Ongoing meetings with the build provider are occurring to ensure the modules are fit for purpose and cover off the content we feel is required to ensure a level of competency in our Classers moving forward.

The course itself will encompass both online modules as well as hands on teaching over a 4 day period. The only modules will be based on reading and quizzes with a percentage pass rate or repeat the module until pass rate has been achieved.

We will also provide all members wishing to do the course but without becoming classers that opportunity to gain further knowledge towards the commercialisation of their own clip.

### Costs and Cost Recovery

The course will require a considerable investment by the Industry to get it to the implementation stage. This will give the industry a quality educational product that is owned by the AAA. It will create opportunities to further educate the industry in years to come, provide a cost recovery revenue stream (Course participation and Classer registration fee) and ability to look at licensing agreements with other Alpaca Industries across the world.

The modelling of course fees must be at a level that can be sustained in today's market and at the same time provide the industry with funds to ensure its growth and directional change into a more Commercial Industry. AAA Classing course will have 3 levels of accreditation, 1/ Certificate of Alpaca Fleece, 2/ Owner Classers – enabling owner breeders to class their own fleece. 3/Professional Classers enabling PAC's to class across Australia.

Flow on opportunities for regions and private businesses to use the qualified Classers will only benefit our industry long term and lift the quality of fibre being offered for sale.

### Can we have a Classing Course and not a Sales Platform?

Most definitely the Classing Course is the foundation of the way forward in a commercial fleece industry, the Sales Platform is the next stage bringing buyer and sellers together. Without the improvement in classing of the Australian clip there is no point of a sales platform.

More details of the AAA Classing Course to follow in the monthly AAA MATC Newsletters!

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www.alpaca.asn.au





# A Yellow Cria?

By Dr Stephen Mulholland, Ph.D.



As anyone who has tried breeding camelids knows, the colour genetics of these lovely animals can be rather complex. When birth time comes, and the cria just starts to poke out its little nose, I wait in anxious curiosity to see what colour (or colours) have resulted.

In November 2012 one of our alpacas was giving birth, and I was lucky enough to be in the paddock at the time. The head emerged, and it was bright yellow! I knew immediately something odd was going on.

The cria was alive and vigorous, so I ran back and got the camera to record the event. When I returned the head and legs were out, and moment later an apparently healthy, and very yellow, boy was on the ground.

#### What is going on here?

The yellow colour was visible because the cria was white, the tint would have been lost against a darker coloured cria. The colour comes from the meconium, the first stool (poo) the cria was born with. Usually the meconium is passed in the first 24 hours after birth, but in this case it has emerged early and filled the space created by the birth membrane. The

yellowy- brown colour of the meconium, when spread over the bright white fleece of the newborn cria, looks yellow.

#### What does it mean? What are the risks?

There is a chance that the labour contractions may have been long and hard, enough that they squeezed the cria's abdomen to the point where the meconium was forced out. So even though the labour had looked normal when I arrived, the cria might have had a more difficult birth than it first appeared.

There is also a chance that the cria might have aspirated (inhaled) some of the meconium. This can lead to acute problems like blocked breathing passages, or it can cause a dangerous infection in the days after birth. You should treat the cria as being "at risk", as though they had come through a difficult/assisted birth.

In this case of our little yellow boy we decided (after a chat with our vet) to give him some prophylactic antibiotics, and we kept a careful eye on him for his first week- making sure he was not running a fever, and that he was feeding well and gaining weight. So if you see a yellow cria, pay extra attention to make sure their unusual birth doesn't turn into a more serious problem. A small preventive action early on can prevent a major disaster later.

## DID YOU KNOW?



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# Charles Ledger

## Australia's First Alpaca Importer

By Matt Ridley



Australian Alpaca  
ASSOCIATION

Alpacas were being (usually illegally) exported from South America by the nineteenth century, and it was not surprising that they would eventually find their way to Australia.

Charles Ledger is the name usually associated with the introduction of alpacas to Australia, and the 1858 arrival in Sydney of his alpaca shipment is generally accepted as the first attempt to start an industry although several other attempts had been made.

### Alpacas for the New World

Around 1850, Ledger had a discussion with the British Consul at Arica on 'the advantages that could accrue from substantial alpaca breeding in Australia – and a related alpaca wool industry in England – along the lines of the introduction of Merino into the colony from Spain in 1804'. There were certainly communications between the Consul, the British Government and the colony on the issue, although records are incomplete, obviously due to the legal impediments that had to be overcome, or ignored.

Then in 1851, and completely unexpectedly to Ledger (who had a most effective 'bush telegraph'), the vessel, under Captain Dunnium, arrived at Arica to transport a cargo of alpacas to NSW. Thomas Mort of Sydney had been the major financier, but the export ban, brought into effect after the vessel had left Sydney, meant that the vessel returned empty, and the investment was lost.

While this was a disaster for some, for Ledger it represented an opportunity; the export order emphasised that there was an interested purchaser and reinforced his view that breeding alpacas in another country was feasible. He knew he was the best placed person in South America to export alpacas, and if that meant smuggling them, so be it. Nor was Thomas Mort one to be deterred: he was a major player in Sydney who had considerable influence with the governments in both the colony and London.

Ledger convinced Mr Pitt-Adams, Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires in Lima that he was the man for the job, and Pitt-Adams even contacted London about the proposal. Eventually it was decided that, as a minister, he really could not invite Ledger to break the laws of Peru and possibly further worsen what had become a tenuous relationship between the two countries.



Charles and Candelaria Ledger - Taken at Tacna, presumably in 1852 (Family archives Lima)

*"You would be probably aware that in the commencement of last year a vessel arrived from New South Wales chartered by a Company with the object of exporting alpacas from the republic to that Colony; this object was frustrated by the illiberal spirit of the Peruvian Government. I have received a despatch from Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Lima, informing me that H. M.'s Govt. are of the opinion that it would be very beneficial to the interest of the said colony that the views of the company be carried out, and requesting me to furnish him with any suggestions of the means by which the proposed object might be accomplished. I am given to understand that you have given this subject your attention and that you are more likely to be able to give the information required than any other person in Peru. I should feel obliged therefore if you would give me any information in your power as to the feasibility of procuring alpacas in large quantities, the expenses attendant on the same, the method of exporting them, in the understanding that any information you may think proper to give me will be forwarded by me to Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Lima for communication to Her Majesty's Government."*



Then, in January 1852, and most likely because of the commercial successes being enjoyed in England by Titus Salt, the British Government had a change of heart. Ledger received a carefully worded letter from G H Nugent, the Consul in Lima, suggesting that the British Government might be willing to ignore the laws sufficiently to encourage a shipment of alpacas for the colony of NSW.

Ledger leapt at the chance. He supplied the information and was soon in Lima talking to Pitt-Adams, who was understandably reluctant to commit too much to writing but left Ledger in no doubt as to the purpose of the exercise. Ledger was soon on reconnaissance, mapping out possible alpaca smuggling routes.

He planned the actual collection and transportation of the alpacas, leaving detailed instructions for his staff for the movement of the animals so as to avoid the Peruvian coastal area which was under close surveillance by the authorities. The actual distance from Chulluncayani to the sea port of Arica was a mere 150 kilometres, but Ledger was prepared to move his flock from southern Peru into Bolivia and through Argentina, and finally to the Chilean sea port of Puerto Caldera. This meant he would have to move the herd over 2,000 kilometres in all – a monumental task. By December 1852, Ledger was mid-Pacific en route to NSW to assess the suitability of the colony for alpacas. Once in NSW, however, Ledger suffered his first setback. He received correspondence from his agent (or sea captain, it is uncertain) Mr Blondel stating that he (Blondel) had withdrawn from his arrangement with Ledger to assist in transporting alpacas, even though he had pocketed a sizeable advance. Blondel went further, also threatening to inform the Peruvian Government of Ledger's plans.

Ledger kept busy in NSW: meetings were held with Thomas Mort and Henry Moore, and with Governor Sir Charles FitzRoy who, in the presence of Mort, Moore and the Hon E Deas Thomson, advised Ledger that if he was able to land 100 alpacas safely in the colony, he would be able to sell them profitably and "would be treated with the same liberality as had been shown to the MacArthurs for the Merino sheep, and would receive a grant of 10,000 acres .." Yet again, given the sensitive nature of the undertaking, nothing was committed to writing.

During a two-month stay in the colony, Ledger convinced himself of the suitability of the land for alpacas, and he sailed for Peru on 21 May 1853.

Returning to Peru six weeks later, Ledger received more bad news: Charge d'Affaires in Lima Pitt-Adams, and NSW Governor FitzRoy had both died. It would be almost six years before Ledger would realise the full impact of the latter's demise. It was not until 1858 that Ledger would eventually disembark in Sydney with 243 camelids having lost 80 on the voyage.



### Disaster in New South Wales

Charles Ledger had landed in Sydney full of hope. His journey of almost six years was at an end, and he would at last be able to realise his dream. It was springtime in a vibrant NSW. Ledger and his herd soon moved some 25 miles south west of Sydney Town to a property named Collingwood owned by J. H. Atkinson near present day Liverpool.

Ledger was a celebrity. His amazing journey was the talk of the town; he revelled in the adulation and looked forward to a new life with financial rewards and a sizeable land grant. But it was all a façade, for Charles Ledger was broke: his herd was still mortgaged for £15,000, he owed about £3,000 to his late wife's family, and he'd invested all (probably almost £7,000) of his own funds in acquiring and transporting the herd.

Everything rested on the NSW Government. Ledger had, not surprisingly, anticipated that the government would soon fulfil its part of the 1853 verbal agreement made with Governor FitzRoy, and he would not only receive his 10,000 acre land grant, but would also be in a position to either develop his herd or sell it to the Government so it could start an alpaca industry. He and his staff were the only people in the colony who knew how to handle the camelids, so he was indispensable.



The first blow came with Commissioner Halloran taking possession of the herd on behalf of Joshua Waddington. But all was not lost for, if the Government would allow Ledger to retain management of the animals, he could breed, cross-breed and sell sufficient stock to quickly repay Waddington before developing a profitable fleece-producing industry. He was still the owner of the herd, albeit it was mortgaged to Waddington, and he still had faith in FitzRoy's pledge.

The NSW Government had a few options available. It could retain (and pay for) the herd and exploit it, but would have to engage Ledger to manage the project. Or the herd could be sold, hopefully at a price that would enable Waddington to be paid out and leave something over. Another path was to encourage the formation of a private company that would exploit the herd commercially.

The last option was investigated, and the herd offered for sale for £45,000 – a huge sum that would prove too much, even for influential and enthusiastic businessmen like Thomas Mort, E Montefiore, E Deas Thomson and E Wrench who unsuccessfully sought out investors. The asking price dropped to £35,000 again without attracting investor interest.

The last thing Ledger wanted was for the herd to be sold off to individual farmers: he had repeatedly warned of small groups of animals ending up with ignorant farmers on far-flung properties, which he foresaw as the start of a rapid demise of the alpaca in the colony. There was still quite some public enthusiasm for the potential of the alpaca and when a Victorian bid, reportedly at £64 for each animal was suggested, The Sydney Morning Herald pleaded: "If this offer were accepted it would defeat what had been the desire of the Colony for many years." All this was going on against the backdrop of a buoyant and influential Merino wool industry. Merino owners lobbied government intensively: they did not want competition, and nor did they want more fleece entering a market approaching saturation.

So, in April 1859 the government did what governments do best, it determined to pursue a compromise solution that satisfied no-one completely, implemented it, and then changed its mind. It was decided to buy the herd from Ledger for £15,000, to engage him as herd superintendent at a salary of £300 plus expenses to allow £360 annually for an Indian assistant and nine shepherds (an amount so paltry that Ledger supplemented this from his own pocket), and to reimburse Ledger for some of his costs. Ledger had no choice but to agree and immediately repaid Waddington the £15,000.

Soon afterwards, and probably reacting to the Merino lobby, the government decided that it should not be in the business of owning and breeding alpacas, but its move to sell off the herd was defeated on the floor of the Parliament. In mid 1859 the first shearing of alpaca in Australia had taken place at Collingwood, a fashionable event that attracted over 300

ladies and gentlemen of Sydney society including the Premier the Hon Charles Cowper and featured a barbeque of grilled alpaca-llama.

Ledger's spirits were lifted. By now, the herd had increased to 291. He embarked on a visit to the Snowy Mountains district, assessed it as most suitable for the alpacas, and in late November that year began moving the animals to the Maneroo (now Monaro) region. He used Arthursleigh Estate, a property near Goulburn owned by a Mr Holt (presumably linked to Thomas Holt – one of his major supporters), as a staging post for the alpacas.

He was also awarded a medal by the Societe Imperiale d'Acclimatation of Paris, was invited to travel to Melbourne in 1860 to brief the locals on the potential of alpacas in Victoria, and negotiated improved financial arrangements with the NSW Government including:

- The government agreeing to sell him back the alpacas for £20,000 to be paid in 15 years, all secured by a mortgage to the government;
- Him receiving £2,000 for the first year and £1,000 annually for the next five years to manage the herd;
- Provision of a suitable grazing property; and
- A year's leave of absence to bring his children from Peru to NSW

While in Melbourne, he received an attractive proposition from the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria that involved him starting an alpaca industry there based on importing 'Coya' alpacas from near Cuzco in Peru. As well, he could continue other trading activities including importing cinchona seeds.

Edward Wilson was an ardent proponent of the acclimatisation movement, and he would become yet another early devotee of the alpaca. His 1862 letter to typifies his enthusiasm:

*The Times*

*"The alpacas of Mr Ledger have rapidly multiplied. They are exempt from every malady, and appear to accommodate themselves better to the indigenous plants than to the clover and lucerne and other cultivated plants first given to them ... The propagation of the alpaca in Australia is only a question of time."*

So Ledger ran the two projects in parallel, typically not seeing any conflict in being a NSW public servant at the same time as working on the Victorian concept. Things seemed to be improving: the herd, now mostly at Arthursleigh Estate, had grown to 349 by February 1861; and in May he travelled again to Melbourne, this time to address the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, where he impressed his audience to the extent that the society agreed to advance him £2,000, of which £600 was paid soon afterwards by the Victorian Government.



Ledger also convinced NSW authorities to make a presentation at the (July) 1862 International Exhibition in London, an idea involving the slaughter of six or seven alpacas for consumption in Sydney hotels and clubs where the fare was well received. The London presentation also received favourable comment, so much so that Ledger was awarded the Exhibition Gold Medal, the highest award, which was accepted on his behalf by his brother George.

October 1861 was a month of mixed fortunes for Ledger. On the 3rd, the Legislative Assembly of NSW rejected the proposal to sell the alpaca herd to Ledger. On the 23rd, Ledger married again, his bride being the widow Charlotte Olliver whose family was involved in spinning and owned a major store and who, at 43, was the same age as Ledger.

During 1862, when Ledger should have been enthused by the presentation of the Exhibition Gold Medal, events turned against him. Firstly, the NSW Government insisted he pay from his own pocket for his replacement while he was away in Peru, and then the Victorian Acclimatisation Society reversed its position on the importation of alpacas: the scandal surrounding the failure of the Duffield shipment had altered attitudes, the NSW Government saw the Victorian project as a threat, and the Merino lobby was hard at work. The Society broke its agreement with Ledger and demanded return of the £600 advance, which Ledger had already spent on livestock he had planned to sell in Peru.

The NSW Government accused Ledger of a conflict of interests over his Victorian dealings and, on 14 August 1862, suspended him from his position and stopped his salary. The herd at Arthursleigh was placed under the management of Mr Edward Payten, who moved it to Wingello at the beginning of December. Ledger tried to defend himself but, by July 1863, was forced to officially resign. He and his new wife had by now sold most of their possessions just to survive. He was finally paid some of the salary due during his period of suspension, but it came too late. Despite Ledger's protestations, the Government decided to sell off the herd, and to do so in the worst of all possible ways by dividing it into small lots: the alpaca industry in Australia, at least for the foreseeable future, had received its death sentence.

23 June 1863 was a fine winter's day at Wingello when Mr Wrench opened the auction. 307 animals were offered in 51 lots. Each lot contained at least one wether, almost as though there had been a conscious decision to make selective breeding impossible. Just eight lots had some potential for the future: these comprised four pure female alpacas, one male and one wether each. A further 10 lots comprised a wether, a male and four second or third cross females; and some 20 lots were mostly llamas.

The auction was a major social occasion with over 150 people attending, including the Governor, the Director of the Botanical Gardens, Ministers and Members of Parliament, and the Colonial Secretary, all entertained by a parade of

mounted police. Ledger was absent, unable to face the humiliation.

The Government, using Mr Merrick as agent, encouraged events with an opening bid of £5 per head for Lot 1, and secured the lot with a successful bid of £30 per head. A few other lots were knocked down, for as much as £15 a head for some cross-bred females, but the sale was closed as interest waned. The Government invited any offers, but then, fearing cross Tasman competition, refused £25 per head for pure alpacas offered by an agent on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

The Government subsequently gave the remaining animals away to various farmers in NSW and Queensland. The auction realised £345 of which the Government itself had provided £180.

### **The Herd Vanishes**

What happened to the animals after the Wingello Park sale is a mystery. Berry Carter spent hundreds of hours seeking out clues while researching for his book, but to no avail: "The disappearance of Ledger's herd is extraordinary: no documentary record at all; no lithographs, paintings, drawings or photographs. There are written accounts of animals of all kinds in the lives of Australians, yet nothing of llama except the exploits of Charles Ledger..."

What is known is that those animals given away to farmers either died, just as Ledger had predicted, or finished up in zoos.

There are some snippets of information on the fate of the herd. "A few went to farms, some as far away as the Queensland border; some went as curiosities to such places as the estate of Henry Parkes, and to the mental home at Gladesville, Sydney to amuse the inmates."

### **130 Years Later**

Helicopters buzzed the Victorian town of Seymour. Melbourne breakfast television had sufficient footage for a week of features, and more than 60 journalists – from television, radio and print media – swarmed over the Capalba Park property of Geoff and Nancy Halpin.

It was 6 June 1988, and the focus of all this attention was a group of just three alpacas, named Romeo, Stonewall and Majorette.

Almost 130 years after Charles Ledger had arrived in Sydney with his Camelid herd, alpacas were back in Australia. They had come to the Halpin's three days earlier, following a plane trip from North America and had been in quarantine at the Spotswood Quarantine Station in Victoria since January.





# Australian Alpaca

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## 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](http://www.ealpaca.com.au/join)

### Australian Alpaca Association

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

[www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

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# National Alpaca Week

10 - 18 May 2025

## OPEN FARM DAYS

- Alpacas
- Free information
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Find open farm locations on our  
Facebook page @ South  
Queensland & Northern NSW  
Region



Wahgungurly Alpaca Stud



## South Queensland & Northern NSW

### National alpaca Week Events

*(please contact members for opening dates & times unless they are listed below)*

**Big Sky Alpacas** - Michelle Malt

Email: bigskyalpacas@gmail.com

43 Murphy's Rd., Bean Creek via Old Bonalbo

**Erwin Alpaca Stud** - Roland Schwertner

Email: erwinalpacastud@primus.com

444 Gap Road, Alstonville 2477

**Jacanda Alpacas** - Fred and Jaquie Alley

Email: fred@jacandaalpacas.com

86 Mt Norman Rd, Wallangarra 4383

**Kallaroos Alpacas** - Judy Barlow

Email: judebarlow53@gmail.com

Cudgen Road, Cudgen 2487

**Mysteria Alpacas** - Cathy O'Sullivan

Email: cath.lach@bigpond.com

748Hiddenvale Rd, Grandchester 4340

**Wahgungurly Alpacas** - Pauline and Col Glasser

Email: cpg4764@bigpond.net.au

2276 Lawrence Rd, Lower Southgate, Grafton 2460

Opening Mothers Day 11th May 10am – 3pm

“Pat a Pacca”, Free Devonshire tea, Displays,

Bring your own lunch plenty of picnic areas.



Australian Alpaca  
ASSOCIATION





## Victorian Eastern Region

Calendar of Events 2025:

### Shows/Events

Berwick Show Alpaca Competition 22nd February 2025

Red Hill Show Alpaca Competition 8th March 2025

Farm World – 27th – 29th March 2025

Alpacas have a long history with Farm World a premier regional agricultural field day providing patrons the opportunity to get up close and talk with experts in the field, learn all there is to know about farm animals, and purchase some great products direct from the makers and suppliers. A great event for locals and urbanites with a passion for the great outdoors.

### Social Events

**VER Navigation Challenge** – Sunday 13th April 2025

Time: 8am-2pm

Entries: ealpaca, closes 1st April 2025

Similar to “The Amazing Race” but in your car!

This will be a super fun event culminating in a BBQ where you can relax and catch up with friends. Starting in the Dandenong Ranges and finishing up on the Mornington Peninsula. Go to the AAA Events Page for full details <https://alpaca.asn.au/events/>

**Denim & Diamonds Awards Dinner** - Saturday 24th May 2025

Venue: Beaconhills Golf Club - Time: 6pm

Something very special is on the horizon, an event that promises to be unforgettable.

Open to all VER members, past & present, along with friends & families. This night will be filled with celebration, connection & fun.

Enjoy a delicious meal & drink, together with exciting activities, including: Annual Award Ceremonies, Fleece Show, Photography & Craft Competitions, Trivia and Giveaways.

Mark your calendars, gather your loved ones & prepare for a great night!

### 2025 Workshops

#### General Alpaca Health & Care

Date: Saturday 15th March 2025 - Time: 10 am -12.30pm

Venue: Chakana Blue – Seville East

Entries via eAlpaca

### Halter Training

Date: – Saturday 15th March 2025 - Time: 1pm-3pm

Venue: Chakana Blue, Seville East

Entries via eAlpaca

### Additional VER Absolutely Everything Alpaca workshops proposed for 2025

Pasture Management -Date: – April TBC

Parasite Workshop - Date: – May/June TBC

Alpaca Dentistry - Date: – June/July TBC

Halter Making

Fleece Classing, Skirting & Sorting

First Aid

Let us know if there is any workshop you would like held!

### FARMS OPENING FOR ALPACA WEEK

#### Lalirra Yellingbo

Yellingbo - Sunday 18th May, 11am – 3pm

Farm open to learn about owning and caring for alpacas. Alpacas for sale.

[www.lalirrayellingbo.com.au](http://www.lalirrayellingbo.com.au)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553166480469>

#### Pitchingga Ridge Alpacas

Red Hill - 10am till 3pm

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>, Sunday 11th May, Saturday 17th

Sunday 18th May

Offering the perfect opportunity to explore what is involved in having alpacas on your property. Onfarm shop loaded with beautiful alpaca fleece product. Friendly alpacas for sale.

[www.pitchinggaridge.com.au](http://www.pitchinggaridge.com.au)

#### Heritage Alpaca Co.

Buckley, 3240 - Friday 9th, Saturday 11th, Sunday 12th, Friday 16th, Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>, Sunday 18th May.

Meet our alpaca mums and babies and see their luxurious fleece transformed into yarn, apparel and accessories in our farm shop. Learn about the history of alpacas and how they came to be in Australia. With over 35 years of experience breeding alpacas, we can answer all your alpaca questions, from husbandry and herd management, birthing and neonatal care, to alpaca handling, behaviour and much more. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61558743560782>

[https://www.instagram.com/heritagealpaco/?igsh=NHVpb3piNnV3ZXQ5&utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/heritagealpaco/?igsh=NHVpb3piNnV3ZXQ5&utm_source=qr)



# VER Events and Absolutely Everything Alpaca workshops held in 2024

Berwick, Red Hill, Lardner and Sale Halter and Fleece Shows

Farm World, Gulf Station Heritage Festival, Castration Days, ARM and Social Lunch, Mornington Peninsula Alpaca Breeders and Dandenong Ranges Alpaca Group Christmas Parties, National Alpaca Week

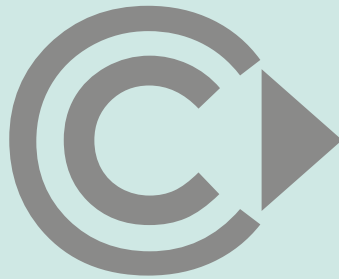
Fourteen workshops were conducted throughout the 2024 year:

Farm Set Up, General Alpaca Health, Breeding/Genetics, Halter Training, Alpaca Fibre Handcrafts, Felting, Parasite Signs and Symptoms, Parasite Identification, Farm Management, Fleece Skirting and Classing, Beginners and Farm Set Up, Birthing Preparation and Overview, Shearing, Farm Set Up

We would like to thank the following studs for their time and support in holding the above workshops: Chakana Blue, Stevley Park, Merungle and Auravale.







[www.camelidconnections.com.au](http://www.camelidconnections.com.au)

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