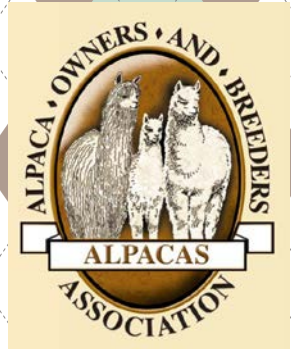


## Michigan Alpaca Livestock Producers And Commerce Association

October 17, 2013

### Alpacas in Michigan



- Alpacas were first imported to the United States from South America by private individuals beginning in 1984 – imports came mostly from Peru, Chile, and Bolivia and were conducted according to a screening method developed by US importers to ensure the finest foundation stock were selected to form the US National herd.
- June 17, 1988 at Shanty Creek Lodge in Bellaire, Michigan 38 alpaca owners gathered to begin formation of the Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA), recognized as the national association for the US alpaca industry. From this meeting, also in 1988 the Alpaca Registry was formed requiring DNA verification for registry – a first for camelids - the registry was closed to new imports in 1998.
- Currently around 200 family farms raise alpacas in Michigan with over **8,300** registered alpacas of which over **2,500** are *Suri* and over **5,800** are *Huacaya*. There are three alpaca livestock shows held each year in Michigan, and numerous US halter and fleece shows.
- Alpacas are shorn annually in the spring in Michigan, with fleece harvest weights ranging from 1 – 13 lbs. Fiber is separated into 3 categories as it is being shorn from the alpaca:
  1. First is the prime fleece, also known as the blanket, that covers the back and sides of the animal – this is the fiber used primarily for yarns and garments worn next to the skin. The finest fleeces are like cashmere but more durable and lustrous.
  2. Seconds consist of the neck, shoulders and rump fiber. This fiber may be as fine as the prime, but often is not. Typical uses for “seconds” are coats, blankets, rugs, and textiles not worn next to the skin.
  3. Thirds consist of chest, belly and leg fibers typically containing stronger guard hairs that protect the animal. Uses for thirds include rugs, insulation, and hobby uses such as felting and fly tying (fisherman).
- Alpaca fiber is considered stronger and more durable than cashmere as well as sheep wool of similar micron; softer, warmer, lighter than most sheep wool. Individual fiber diameter ranges from as low as 14 microns to over 30. Fiber is graded based on micron ranges, starting with below 20, then 20-22, 23-25, 26-28, 29-31, 32-35 and over 35 microns.
- Alpaca is classified into 16 different natural colors in the US; in Peru the color chart is expanded to 22 natural colors for textile production. Fiber must be sorted and graded.
- Alpaca fleece has a different physical structure than sheep wool. Sheep wool strands have tiny barbs that can cause wool to feel itchy. Alpaca fibers are smoother, with lower scales making it feel less itchy. Lanolin present in sheep wool holds dust and microscopic allergens. Alpaca is practically lanolin free making it naturally hypoallergenic
- Alpaca fiber is valued by fiber artists who hand spin, weave, knit, crochet, felt and sew with felted cloth. Many Michigan alpaca breeders are involved in some form of fiber finished goods production, and many contribute to one of several out-of-state fiber co-ops.
- The Michigan Alpaca Livestock Products And Commerce Association (MI-ALPACA) was formed in 2010 to advance the alpaca industry in the State of Michigan through the joint efforts of alpaca breeders, fiber processors, and commercial producers/sellers of alpaca finished products, Michigan educational institutions and alpaca research organizations. [www.mialpaca.com](http://www.mialpaca.com) is the official website for MI-ALPACA.

Prepared/Updated by: Cora Foley, MI-ALPACA Board of Directors, Vice President

## Alpaca Registry Inc. (ARI) Registered Alpaca Statistics

Registered Alpacas in the United States: 243,039

- Registered Huacaya Alpacas: 196,851
- Registered Suri Alpacas: 46,188

	State	Suri	Huacaya	All Alpacas
1	OHIO	5,757	21,914	27,671
2	WASHINGTON	4,214	14,969	19,183
3	OREGON	3,767	12,712	16,479
4	COLORADO	2,477	12,642	15,119
5	CALIFORNIA	2,584	11,505	14,089
6	PENNSYLVANIA	2,224	10,859	13,083
7	NEW YORK	889	11,138	12,027
8	VIRGINIA	726	8,222	8,948
<b>9</b>	<b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>8,343</b>
10	WISCONSIN	2,465	5,240	7,669

**Top Ten Total Alpacas:** Michigan ranks 9<sup>th</sup> nationally in total registered alpacas.

	State	Suri	Huacaya	All Alpacas
1	OHIO	5,757	21,914	27,671
2	WASHINGTON	4,214	14,969	19,183
3	OREGON	3,767	12,712	16,479
4	COLORADO	2,477	12,642	15,119
5	CALIFORNIA	2,584	11,505	14,089
6	NEW YORK	889	11,138	12,027
7	PENNSYLVANIA	2,224	10,859	13,083
8	VIRGINIA	726	8,222	8,948
<b>9</b>	<b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>8,343</b>
10	TEXAS	819	5,775	6,594

**Top Ten Huacaya:** Michigan ranks 9<sup>th</sup> nationally in total registered Huacayas.

	State	Suri	Huacaya	All Alpacas
	OHIO	5,757	21,914	27,671
2	WASHINGTON	4,214	14,969	19,183
3	OREGON	3,767	12,712	16,479
4	CALIFORNIA	2,584	11,505	14,089
<b>5</b>	<b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>8,343</b>
6	COLORADO	2,477	12,642	15,119
7	WISCONSIN	2,465	5,204	7,669
8	MARYLAND	2,295	3,205	5,500
9	PENNSYLVANIA	2,224	10,859	13,083
10	FLORIDA	1,339	2,897	4,236

**Top Ten Suri:** Michigan ranks 5<sup>th</sup> nationally in total registered Suri alpacas.

### US Primary Color Distribution

Natural Color	Percentage
White	25.6
Medium Fawn	10.1
Medium Brown	10.1
True Black	9.8
Light Fawn	9.4
Dark Brown	6.3
Beige	5.9
Dark Fawn	5.4
Bay Black	4.3
Light Brown	4.3
Med. Silver Grey	2.5
Med. Rose Grey	1.9
Dark Silver Grey	1.3
Dark Rose Grey	1
Light Silver Grey	1
Light Rose Grey	0.9

Using advanced DNA technology, ARI validates the parentage of alpacas submitted for pedigree registration. Once an alpaca's parentage has been validated, ARI issues a registration certificate that provides known lineage and assigns a unique number to each alpaca. The Registry protects the existing gene pool and helps ensure each breeder's investment is protected from cross-breeding with other camelids, and precludes registration of an alpaca if its parents were not ARI registered alpacas.

Data current as of Oct. 17, 2013