

Providing Education, Guidance, Support and Resources

MAPACA

Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

Summer 2011 Newsletter

Alpaca News You Can Use



Models on the runway showcasing alpaca fashions during the fashion show at the MAPACA Jubilee 15th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday evening, April 9, 2011.

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15th Anniversary MAPACA Jubilee Review Page 6

Look back at this year's show and remember all the excitement and fun!

Caution: Show Ring Ahead Page 10

Some show ring tips from the industry's favorite alpaca handler! Guess who!?

Embryo Transfer: A Breeder's Perspective Page 14

An Australian breeder and renowned judge gives us an update on embryo transfer. Find out about this process and think about what it could mean for your own herd.

Part III: What Are You Doing with Your Alpaca Fleece? Page 20

Take a fun fiber adventure: read a spinner's perspective about interviewing mini-mills. Find out what questions to ask a mill. Learn about different yarn combination options.

...and so much more!!

I've Seen Shows from Both Sides Now

I think that it was Tuesday, April 6th, just two days before over 1000 alpacas were set to arrive at the Harrisburg Farm Show Complex, that it suddenly hit me...What the heck had I gotten myself into? Sure, I had helped with many alpaca shows including the 2010 Jubilee, but never had I felt responsible for how the alpaca community would view the 15th Anniversary of this now iconic staple of the AOPA show calendar. Never mind that the show had sold out nearly three weeks early and that the Board of Directors and a small legion of volunteers were poised to welcome the 700 plus attendees for the big celebration. What had we forgotten?

"Never mind," I told myself, "the wheels are in motion and whatever will be, will be at this point."

My fears were quickly put to rest. Event Managers Chris and Jess Armstrong arrived with several shows to their credit and an accommodating attitude. The MAPACA Board members arrived ready to pull long days and late-nighters to get ready and the throngs of volunteers, guided by the very capable leadership of Rob and Allison Brink, reported for duty and took over their chosen areas like seasoned pros. And, one by one, some of the best judges and show superintendents appeared to do what they do best...professionally, thoughtfully and thoroughly execute their duties...to select the best of the breed and to conduct all those auxiliary competitions with care...fleece, spin-off, fiber arts and performance/showmanship contests. All of a sudden I found myself at the center of a big machine whose wheels were set in motion. The biggest concern at this point was how well we could pull off all those extra features that we decided to try out...the fleece to shawl competition, ongoing fiber demos, the MAPACA Member Product Store, Championship Sunday, and most importantly, the Saturday night dinner and alpaca fashion show. Even though some of these features were brand new to the Jubilee, overall they were quite successful. Some of them we will repeat and some of them we will improve and bring back for 2012. One thing an old boss used to tell me..."Ain't nothing I hate worse than not trying something!" Despite the obvious double negative, he had it right. How else can we keep things fresh and grow?

Onward and Upward!

NEW
Jubilee Dates for 2012!
April 12-15

Join MAPACA today at www.mapaca.org

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And what a show it was! Our farm has attended every Jubilee since 2003, and I can personally attest to how far we have come. In 2003, I thought it was extremely clever for one breeder to display a box of sheep's wool beside a box of alpaca fleece. The idea, of course, was for alpaca newbie's to feel the obscene difference between the two natural fibers. Fast forward to 2011...I hope you were able to catch the fashion show that was so professionally produced that I bet you think it was rehearsed for months before the event. Although there was months of planning, it all came together just the Friday night before the big show thanks to Michele Armour, Rob Bruce, Chris Gillman, Robin Shatzkin and their whole crew, not to mention the incredible number of breeders that showcased their own farm's alpaca handiwork. From luxury alpaca fabrics made into men's and women's formalwear to alpaca upholstery fabric to all the exquisite and unique items showcased in the MAPACA Member Store, how could you not be excited and inspired by what is beginning to happen with the North American Alpaca fiber production? And that simple side-by-side comparison of sheep's wool and alpaca fiber in 2003? It has now become a "fiber tasting counter" thanks to Autumn Mist and Autumn Kiss. Set up just like a dessert showcase, Jubilee attendees could "sample" the myriad of home-grown fiber products produced right here in the US! Sure, we still have a lot of work to do, but Mid-Atlantic Alpaca farmers, "You've come a long way baby!"

And just look at all the new and forming fiber organizations...the New England Fiber Co-Op, The Coarse Broads, The Cottage Industry Alpaca Breeders' Association and Alpaca United. We're getting there...we really are...and what a great way to showcase all these efforts under one roof at the Jubilee!

Preparations are well underway for 2012 which brings to mind a modest request...no...make that a plea. We need a full slate of candidates for the upcoming MAPACA Board of Directors elections. You know who you are...you have great ideas and a vision about where you want to see the North American alpaca industry go. Serving on the MAPACA Board of Directors is not only personally rewarding, but it is a great way to push YOUR organization in the direction that you want it to go. We will be making calls in the very near future, asking involved individuals to run for office, but you don't have to wait on that call. If you have an interest in joining this cohesive and dedicated group of fellow alpaca owners, be sure to contact one of us on the current Board. We'll be glad to answer any questions that you have and explain how easy it is to run.

Have a wonderful, safe and relaxing summer! See you at the Fall Membership Meeting!

Alan Clark, President
By day, Alan Clark is President of the Board of Directors of MAPACA, and co-owner of Finca Alta Vista in Pleasant Mount, Pennsylvania. By night he is a Pharmacist. He is trying to sleep on a more regular basis!



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Morris Animal Foundation Study Sponsored by ARF

Subcutaneous and Intramuscular Pharmacokinetics of Florfenicol in Healthy Adult Alpacas



A research study, done under the auspices of the Morris Animal Foundation and funded by the Alpaca Research Foundation, is taking place between September 1, 2010 and August 31, 2011. The principal investigator is Dr. Daniela Bedenice, DMV, Diplomate ACVIM, Diplomate ACVECC, Assistant Professor, Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in North Grafton, MA. The study grants amount is \$8,826.

“Bacterial infections that require long-term antibiotic therapy, such as pneumonia, peritonitis, sepsis as well as uterine, bone and dental infections are significant causes of illness and death in alpacas,” says Bedenice. “Unfortunately, veterinary care is hampered by a lack of information about antimicrobial use in camelids. Florfenicol is a broad-spectrum antibiotic that could be potentially useful in alpacas, with few side effects reported in other species. However, treatment with florfenicol is currently based on research studies in cattle, sheep and other animals. Because the pharmacokinetics of this antibiotic have been shown to vary among species and between different drug formulations of florfenicol, it is important to determine the appropriate drug dosage for use in alpacas.”

Objective: This study will evaluate subcutaneous (under the skin) and intramuscular administration of two commercially available formulations of florfenicol in healthy adult alpacas, to evaluate the drug’s ability to maintain the plasma drug levels necessary to be effective, without inducing adverse effects. This is the first step in determining whether this is an effective drug for fighting bacterial infections in alpacas.

Procedures: Six alpacas will participate in a two-part study. A single dose of florfenicol will be administered in random order to animal groups A and B (group A: 20 mg/kg given into the muscle; group B: 40 mg/kg given under the skin). Following a 14-day washout period (rest in pasture), each group will receive the alternative dose. Blood samples will be obtained at designated time points following drug administration to determine plasma florfenicol levels. Potential side effects of the antibiotic will be evaluated by sequential physical examinations, complete blood count and serum chemistry analysis.

Clinical Relevance: Many bacterial infections affecting alpacas require prolonged, broad-spectrum antibiotic therapy. However, only a limited number of antibiotics have been tested to determine their safety and efficacy in camelids to date. Florfenicol is a broad-spectrum antibiotic with a prolonged activity and wide distribution in body tissue. Incorrect dosing may lead to insufficient drug levels that prevent the cure of disease and promote resistant bacteria. Therefore, florfenicol needs to be evaluated specifically in camelids to circumvent treatment failure due to its current empirical and anecdotal use in veterinary practice.

Update: At the time of this writing, Bedenice reports that the investigators have completed the evaluation of two different doses of the commercial florfenicol product, Nuflor®, in healthy alpacas. It has become apparent that the absorption of Nuflor® is markedly lower when the drug is given under the skin, compared to injections into the muscle. The potential for side effects in alpacas needs to be carefully investigated as the study progresses.

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What’s in a Name?

Put on your creative thinking cap. We’re looking for a name for our newsletter! Please send in suggestions to trishtylerdavis@verizon.net. The person who submits the winning name will receive a FREE 1/2 page ad in the newsletter.

Question for Membership:

How did you come up with the name of your farm? I will post responses in the next newsletter. Feel free to include your logo. Send your responses to Diane at dbeau@ptd.net.

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Our Champions

10X



A.L. Paca's Blues Breaker
co-owned w/ Eastland Alpacas

6X



Sheer Galaxy
5-time Get-of-Sire

2010 MAPACA Jr Herdsire of the Year!

Sheer Galaxy son sells for \$87,000 at 2010 Breeders Edge Auction (high seller)..
co-owned w/ Dreamland Alpacas, LLC

17X



A.L. Paca's Revolution

2011 MAPACA Sr Herdsire of the Year!

Revolution daughter sells for \$46,000 at 2010 AOBA National Auction (high seller).

7X



Black Male Color Champion
2011 AOBA National Show

IF Santiago

co-owned w/ Independence Farm

3X



A.L. Paca's Khanquistador

co-owned w/ Meadowgate Farm Alpacas

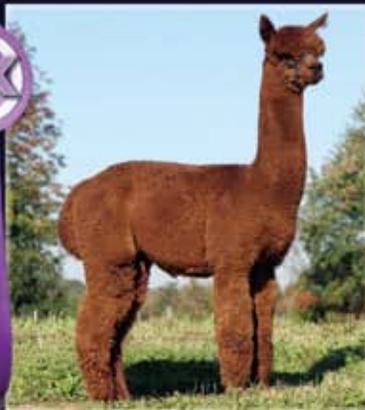
3X



A.L. Paca's Copper Top

co-owned w/ Take Me Home Alpacas

2X



A.L. Paca's JD Hawk

co-owned w/ Never Ending Alpaca Farm

5X



A.L. Paca's Jackhammer

Modern Rose Grey
co-owned w/ Hart-So-Big Alpaca Farm & Alpacas of York

4X



Midas' Angelo

co-owned w/ Clearview Alpaca Farm & Stone Hill Alpacas

are at your service...

99 fat ribbons won so far by our boys!

Call now for breeding reservations.



A.L. Paca's Andromeda Galaxy
co-owned w/ Clearview Alpaca Farm and
Bay Shore Alpacas, LLC



Simba's Silver Maze
co-owned w/ Autumn Acres Alpacas



Simba of A.L. Paca's
12-time Get-of-Sire



A.L. Paca's Zamboni
co-ownership Interest Available!



A.L. Paca's Rev it Up
Thank you to Stone Hill Alpacas their
purchase at 2011 AOBA National Auction



Fawn Male Color Champion
2011 AOBA National Show
Ringo Cloud
Judge's Choice at 2011 Carolina
co-owned w/ Tuscany Valley Alpacas

Champions begetting Champions™ - our next generation:



A.L. Paca's Grey's Anatomy
co-ownership Interest Available!



A.L. Paca's Whirlpool Galaxy
co-owned w/ Tuscany Valley Alpacas



A.L. Paca's Centaurus Galaxy
co-owned w/ Winterberry Farm Alpacas

The 2011 MAPACA Jubilee in Review

By Diane Beauchner

The 2011 MAPACA Jubilee was a spectacular show, with the addition of many special features to celebrate this milestone year -- the 15th Anniversary of the Jubilee. From humble beginnings under a tent in a nearby pasture in 1993, it's been 15 years of alpacas, fiber and fun! It's always fun to look back on an event of this magnitude: one that took a year of planning and countless hours of organizing, marketing, preparation and hard work to make the show run as smoothly as it did. The Board of Directors, under the expert and tireless leadership of Alan Clark, the legions of volunteers, our sponsors, vendors, exhibitors and visitors can all take credit in having made this show such a success.

We received a lot of feedback about the show and will take all comments into consideration as the planning commences for next year's show, which will be April 13-15, 2012. Many people commented on the out on time promise, the "blast" that the fashion show and Saturday night festivities were, the fleece-to-shawl competition and an endless number of kudos to Alan, the BOD and the Brink's Band of Volunteers. As long as there are shows there will be complaints and improvements that can be made, right? Some of the comments we heard were that some couldn't hear the announcements over the sound system in the suri ring section,

changes in class times and the food lines were too long.

Registration Data! The number one reason most breeders come to the show is to show their alpacas in front of judges, right? We are proud to be a Level V show and one of the largest alpaca shows in the country. This year's show housed over 1000 alpacas and breeders from 29 states up and down the East Coast and Michigan as well as fleece entries from Texas, Oregon, and Arizona. Including production classes, the final number of entries totaled 1031 animals competing.

The fleece show included 46 classes - 10 championships and 10 reserves (a full set). The halter show included 140 classes - 28 championships and 28 reserves (a full set). There were 318 youth and adult performance entries - 5 champion and 5 reserve champion banners, a total of 77 youth and 18 adults registered for classes.

Animals occupied nearly 600 pens, which covered nearly an acre of Kentucky Bluegrass brought in from a Pennsylvania sod farm. The 68,000 square feet of sod began arriving on Tuesday and was installed in time for the pens to be completely set up by early Wednesday evening. We had four rings of simultaneous alpaca judging by world-renowned judges. This year we also added the private judge consult on Sunday for all non-placing alpacas. How great was that?!

It's Show Time Folks! The Pennsylvania Deputy Secretary of Agriculture opened the show on Friday morning and our 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner; Ernie Kellogg officially cut the ribbon. All events took place again this year under one roof in the main Exhibition Hall: alpaca stalls, vendors, fiber demonstrations, fleece show, and show rings. The Harrisburg Farm Show continues to be a great location for our event.

Meet Me at the Crimp and Curl Cafe! That's just fun to say, isn't it? The credit for the layout of our show goes to our Event Managers Jess and Chris Armstrong, who measured and remeasured and remeasured, until they could figure out the BEST layout to fit all the alpacas and showcase all the special events. The hub of the show



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was the Information Booth, which was adjacent to the ever-popular social gathering place, The Crimp and Curl Cafe, and situated near the Raffle Items, Silent Auction and Herdsire bidding stations. In this same location we had our FIRST EVER MAPACA member product store! What a success that was thanks to the organizer, Jennifer Tompkins and the 36 contributing farms. Total sales were just shy of \$4500 with a wide range of products, including raw fleece, rovings, yarn and clothing, offered for sale.

It's All About the Fiber. The focus on fiber was very evident and knew no boundaries. Our fleece show had 221 entries and we awarded 10 Champion Banners. The Spin-off Competition had 215 entries and there was a wide variety of fiber arts entered into the Fiber Arts competition. The MAPACA Jubilee was also the very first AOBA Certified show to include Production classes for fleece and there were 10 entries. Four blue ribbons were awarded, one each for Produce of Dam and Get of Sire for both Suri & Huacaya.

We were thrilled to include a Fleece-to-Shawl competition this year with four highly enthusiastic teams competing. There were many spinning, knitting, weaving, drop spindle and crocheting demonstrations going on throughout the weekend and some special fiber related activities for the Youth. Another new feature this year was a Youth Activities Day and Alpacas 101 for Youth Groups.

Wine, Cheese and Fleece Championships. As Saturday halter judging ended we turned our attention to the Fleece and Fiber Area and our sponsors, Patti Anderson of Wild Rose Suri Ranch and Kristie Smoker of Sweet Valley Suris presented the numerous fleece awards, which included CASH PRIZES while everyone enjoyed a pre-dinner snack of hors d'overs and drinks.

Lights! Cameras! Models on the Runway! Imagine transforming the exhibition hall into a sit-down dinner and fashion show event, complete with runway. Impossible? Not for the Jubilee Show Committee and the professional alpaca breeders who orchestrated the fashion show. Those who attended Saturday evening's festivities, they enjoyed the great food, the presentation of special awards, as well as the entertainment by Brett Kaysen. Who can forget "Run, Forrest, Run?" Brett used his auctioneer talents to auction off the beautiful shawls created during the Fleece-to-Shawl competi-

tion with all proceeds benefitting the Youth Grant Program.

The PACA Patrol, the Girl Scout interest patrol that works with alpacas and dances with them too kicked off the fashion show with the debut of "Thriller!" The Fashion Show, emceed by Kim Devos of Inca Fashions was a sensational showcase of alpaca fiber garments. Attractive men, women and children modeled everything from dolls, hats, gloves, shawls, dresses, skirts, and suits made with our precious alpaca fiber. The timing of the models down the runway, the lights, and lively music was the professional work of Michele Armour and Rob Bruce of Rosehaven Alpacas. Many members said that seeing this alpaca fashion show lifted their spirits, gave them such pride in being an alpaca breeder and they would like to see an encore production at next year's show.

Education. An important part of the MAPACA mission is to educate our members. From our Pre-Show learning track with Marty McGee Bennett and Coarse Broads to our numerous seminars, we try to offer topics of interest to new and experienced breeders. Although it is a bit of a walk to get to the seminar rooms, it's always worth it to hear respected industry leaders like Norm Evans, Brett Kaysen, Andy Merriwether, and Wini Labrecque.

The Grande Finale. It's an awe-inspiring fact that the Jubilee is run almost entirely by volunteers and as one survey respondent said, "Volunteers, too dedicated for their own good, provide the backbone of services that brought this alpaca show to life." Thank you to all of our members who contributed their time and talents, to our sponsors, and to all who participated and attended. Our hope is that you enjoyed the Jubilee this year and found it to be worth your time and money. It's never too early to make a commitment to next year's show. If you are interested in volunteering, simply contact any member of the Board of Directors. We look forward to seeing you at Jubilee 2012!



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The Jubilee Goes Green

Plus: Where in the World has the MAPACA Jubilee Water Bottle Gone?

Did you realize that our Event Managers, Chris and Jess Armstrong, made an effort to use products that were 'green'? Here are a few of the ways they tried to reduce MAPACA's carbon footprint:

- The t-shirts were printed on organic cotton with a process called Rehance. TS Designs specializes in eco-friendly work and they are a very forward thinking company when it comes to the environment. <http://tsdesigns.com/>
- The Show Program was printed locally and on 100% post-consumer waste paper. It was designed to be press efficient in order to reduce waste in postproduction. Likewise the class list was spec'ed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.
- The meats, cheeses and eggs were from PA Preferred™ sources and we avoided imported fruits and vegetables.



Where possible we opted for real china as opposed to disposable plates, and specified recycled or compostable paper goods and utensils where possible.

- We eliminated plastic bags and opted instead for recycled envelopes and reusable portfolios for the registration packets.
- The nearly full acre of sod was not sent to a landfill. Once it was hauled away it was taken to a nearby farm for composting. The poop was likewise composted.
- The messenger bags for the volunteers were produced on recycled cotton, the hats were organic cotton and the aprons will be reused in future years so that the Volunteer "thank you's" can be more diverse. All these items were embroidered rather than printed with PVC inks as is most often the case with promo items.
- The MAPACA water bottles were sourced as BPA free and kept tons of wasted water and petroleum for manu-

facturing and shipping out of the waste stream. Keep reusing your water bottle and let's see how far that bottle can travel between now and next year's Jubilee! So far it has been to Garden of the Gods in Colorado! Send a photo to Diane Beauchner at dbeau@ptd.net and tell her where you have taken your MAPACA water bottle in your own effort to go green!

If you have an idea on how to make next year's Jubilee even greener, let one of the members of the Board of Directors know.



Beauchner's Tiger Lily
First Place in the MAPACA Jubilee 2010 Fleece Show!

Against very stiff competition, Beauchner's Tiger Lily took First Place in the MAPACA Jubilee 2010 Fleece Show! Judge Cheryl Gehly gave this beige fleece 19 out of 20 for fineness and handle, 16 out of 20 for micron, length and color and 9.5 out of 10 for character. The judge had these comments on the score sheet: "WOW! Fineness! Great character!"

Tiger Lily has numerous performance ribbons. She is confirmed pregnant; service sire is Accoyo America Triton, an alpaca name well-known on the West Coast.

Beauchner's Tiger Lily is FOR SALE.
ARI #31020923 DOB: 6/14/2008
DAM: Blankstone's Desiree SIRE: Starbuck de Alta Vista
Contact Diane at dbeau@ptd.net or 610-366-2055 for purchase details.
The Beauchner Family is SHEPHERD HILLS ALPACAS
"You don't have to own a farm to own alpacas."
www.shepherdhillsalpacas.com



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Winners of the 2011 MAPACA Jubilee Battle of the Mid-Atlantic Herdsire All-Stars!

Four Champion Males to Reign as the 2011 Herdsires of the Year

The 2nd Annual MAPACA Herdsire of the Year Competition had 18 herdsires competing in four different categories. Thank you to all of the owners of these fine males for allowing them to compete for this distinguished title. The four awards were announced to the membership shortly after the Jubilee. Two Seniors (5 years of age and older) and two Juniors (less than 5 years of age) of each breed type were chosen. We will present the official Herdsire of the Year Awards at the Fall MAPACA Membership meeting.

Congratulations to these fine herdsires claiming top honors in their respective categories! Winning sires are chosen based on progeny (and herdsire himself) placements in the 2011 Jubilee Halter and Fleece shows, percentage of popular vote gained and amount of money raised in the on-line herdsire service auction. For complete rules, visit the Jubilee website. Winners receive front-page billing for a full year on the MAPACA website, this full-page announcement in the MAPACA newsletter and of course.... BRAGGING rights!

Senior Huacaya Herdsire of the Year



A.L. Paca's Revolution
A.L. Paca's Farms
Doug & Denise Caldwell
Weedsport, NY 13166
(315) 834-6969
Doug@BeMyAlpaca.com

Junior Huacaya Herdsire of the Year



CCNF Man in Black
Double "O" Good Alpacas
Ernest & Barbara Kellogg
Gainesville, VA 20155
(703) 754-4019
doubleopaca@erols.com

Senior Suri Herdsire of the Year



Accoyo Allegiance
Wild Rose Suri Ranch
Patti & Alan Anderson
Havre De Grace, MD 21078
(443) 740-4240
anderson@wildrosealpacas.com

Alpacas of Gettysburg
Larry & Helen Hombake
Gettysburg, PA 17325
(717) 334-0078
hombake@embarqmail.com

Junior Suri Herdsire of the Year



Young Princeton
Ameripaca Alpaca Breeding Co.
Gail Campbell, DVM
Galesville, MD 20765
(410) 867-4204
info@ameripaca.com

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Caution: Show Ring Ahead!

How to make showing alpacas easy and safe

By Marty McGee Bennett

I am just back from one of my favorite springtime trips: my tenth year as a presenter at the MAPACA Jubilee in Harrisburg PA. I treasure this invitation. It's a mystery to me how they do it, but year after year the show gets more fun!

Many of the people I worked with this year have been having trouble in the show ring. My job is to listen to their fears and frustrations and to offer advice to help solve their problems. It is an interesting experience. Although I do my level best to be a good communicator, I am often surprised to discover quotes I never said. I recently heard about an exhibitor who refused to put her arm around an alpaca's neck to show the bite when the judge specifically asked her to do so, telling the judge that I had told her not to! More on that later but, judges...I promise that is not what I tell people! I console myself that I can control only what I say, not necessarily what people hear. Presenting seminars is a lot like that game we all played as kids—telephone. You remember, one person whispers something in the next person's ear and by the time it gets back to the beginning, it is completely unrecognizable! In addition to clarifying potential misunderstandings, I continually refine my techniques. In the interest of being accurate, therefore, here is the latest on handling and training for the show ring, directly from the horse's mouth.

My goal is to make showing easy and safe for judges, ring stewards, exhibitors and animals. Success in one facet does not mean failure in another. In fact, my experience is that what is easy for the animals are easy for all concerned. I do challenge some of the old ways, but I am not so much trying to eliminate existing techniques as to add new options. One central tenet that I fully embrace is "If what you are doing isn't working, do something different!" In my experience, nothing, including my own technique, always works all the time. For example, some alpacas react much worse than others do when a handler uses an arm around the neck to show the bite or to steady the animal for fleece examination. I can think of no good reason in such a case to insist that

the handler conforms to this common practice. In some cases, an arm around the neck may work well. Your choice of method depends on what your animal is accustomed to and which method has worked before. It is my nature to resist doing things the way they always have been done just because they always have been done that way. I have no investment in trying to create yet another dogmatic approach, only to offer solutions to the challenges I see. Many factors can cause an exhibitor to have trouble with an animal in the ring. It is not as simple as it may seem to be. I address some of these factors below.

The Halter Doesn't Fit!

A poorly fitting halter is the most common show difficulty and the easiest to fix. Given that alpacas breathe out of their noses and eat out of their mouths, halters that slip off their nose bones or restrict their ability to open their mouths are distracting and uncomfortable. Sliding a halter on until the noseband completely contacts an animal around the nose and mouth, then tightening the crown piece insures restriction of jaw movement, effectively tying the animal's mouth shut. Use of a halter that fits this way will interfere with your animal's ability to focus, with your ability to communicate through the halter, or with both! It is much more effective to fit the alpaca's head, not its nose. The loop comprised of the throatlatch and the crown piece must make contact with the back part of the alpaca's jaw before the noseband restricts its mouth. You must make sure before you enter the ring that the halter works and is comfortable for your

animal. I have strong opinions on halter fit which I outline in numerous industry magazine articles as well as in my book, *The Camelid Companion*.

The exhibitor is inexperienced in animal handling in general and in show ring procedure in particular and simply does not know what to do.

You cannot know what you do not know. Everyone has to start somewhere. If you are an inexperienced handler then you lack experience! Get some! If you are showing an animal that is likewise inexperienced, you have the blind leading the blind. If you want to do well and maximize your chances for success in the show ring, get your animal off the farm before you take her to her first show. A trip to a neighboring farm, a short ride to a controlled environment like a fenced in athletic field is worth the couple of hours you spend. One previous experience can make a huge difference for both of you. If you are new to showing, I suggest starting at a small show with a previously shown animal that is easy to handle. Participation in a practice show with some neighboring farms is a great way to get some low stress pre-show experience.

Show organizers can help the inexperienced exhibitor. It is good for everyone, and it is especially good marketing, for organizers to educate new exhibitors and make them feel welcome at a show. Many new exhibitors would welcome a practice class organized and "judged" by a group of experienced exhibitors. Such a class early in the morning before the show starts, or as part of check-in the evening before would help newer exhibitors. Perhaps organizers could offer exhibitors the opportunity during color check to practice show ring techniques and to ask questions. I already hear the show organizers among my readers groaning that there is no time, but an investment at the beginning of a show may save time over the course of the show, and



This halter fits properly. It is well up on the nose bone and the crown piece is adjusted snugly enough that it will not slip forward AND there is still enough room in the nose band to allow the animal freedom of movement in the jaw.

it certainly would make showing less daunting newcomers.

The exhibitor worked diligently to get an animal ready to show, yet still gets in trouble with the judge for being unprepared.

Judges undoubtedly have more knowledge about the show ring than I do. Judges, however, are deliberately separate from people who show in front of them. This may be a good practice from the standpoint of objectivity but it insulates judges from the effect their words may have on exhibitors. In my role as teacher to new alpaca owners, I hear the frustration exhibitors feel at being chastised for unruly animals and on hearing that they did not work hard enough to prepare a particular alpaca for the show ring. Often this could not be further from the truth. In fact, the reality may be just the opposite—the exhibitor has tried hard but in the wrong way. The exhibitor may have practiced showing the bite so



Working with the mouth in a catch pen before the show using the TTouch can help prepare your alpaca for having the bite shown in the show ring.

many times on the same poor alpaca that any move toward its mouth provokes an immediate and volcanic avoidance response. Repeated practice of unsuccessful techniques only leads to more resistance from the alpaca. Alpaca handling is a skill. It is much more like learning to drive a car than it is like teaching a dog to sit. Experienced handlers, judges

included, often do not realize that they succeed at handling not because others have trained their alpacas poorly, but because experience has taught them to be good handlers with the skill to show a variety of animals under difficult circumstances.

An experienced driver automatically takes in a wide variety of data, makes decisions very quickly and avoids accidents. A new driver does not know what



Using the TTouch on the tail in a catch pen prior to your alpaca's first show will prepare your animal for having his tail handled in the show ring.

to look for, is easily distracted and must react to events (and react with less skill) instead of staying out of trouble. An experienced handler understands what is likely to happen in the show ring. He can read the animal's behavior and can anticipate what might go wrong and when.

An experienced handler knows better than a novice does how to anticipate an animal's attempts at misbehavior and how to preempt the behavior before it happens. A new driver should not drive at night, or in a big city during rush hour, or while talking on a cell phone. A novice handler should not be showing a difficult animal at a big show. (Or while talking on a cell phone!)

It is fair enough for judges to suggest that an exhibitor is in over his head. It may be more useful, however, to point out that the problem is not the animal but the exhibitor's lack of experience. Judges may then recommend handling lessons or that the exhibitor gain experience with an easier animal.

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Exhibitors should note that just as alpacas differ in a color, shape and size they differ in temperament. Some animals are extremely difficult to show. They may have been born with a volatile nature or they may have learned from experience to protect themselves by fighting any attempt at examination in the show ring. It is safe to say that if you are unable to get the animal on and off a trailer and through the preliminary processes without several people to restrain it then you will be unable to handle the animal successfully in the show ring.

The judge is inexperienced and/or unaware of his effect on the animals. The ring steward is inexperienced and either tentative or heavy-handed with the animals.

Some judges or ring stewards have more problems than others have and are kicked, bumped or knocked down with greater frequency. Some shows, rings or color checking stations run like clockwork and others are calamities. Regardless of your role, if you find yourself to be the common denominator when it comes to unruly alpacas, you might want to examine your handling approach. Tiny details make a huge difference. Your breathing, tempo, speed and angle of approach all contribute to the way an animal behaves as you examine him. If as a judge, you assume that responsibility for an animal's behavior lies entirely with the exhibitor then you put yourself at the mercy of inexperienced handling. The pop psychology mantra that "the only behavior you can control is your own" is true even if you are in charge of the show ring. Regardless of the show technique used, animals can get away from handlers. Judging defensively prevents injuries. More



Practice standing in a labyrinth; gives the animal some boundaries and it is much easier and more interesting for both handler and animal.

restraint is not necessarily the best solution to every problem. A judge may check that the animal is standing in balance, or may adjust the ring steward's and the handler's physical positions to resolve a prob-

lem. It takes no more time to practice these techniques than it does to restrain an animal.

Alpacas do not become easier to show with painful holds or wrestling to keep them in position. Hurt or frightened animals become problematic in the ring, many to a point that their show careers end. Using the tail for restraint or lifting the head while pressing down on the spine may work a few times, but most alpacas will sort out very quickly that the show ring is a dangerous place. They will fight hard not to be hurt again. Unwise techniques that may work in the moment will backfire. An alpaca will kick a different judge or ring steward in a subsequent show before anyone can grab its tail again -- the alpaca equivalent of "shoot first and asks questions later."

The animal that had bad handling experiences is ready to act out preemptively to prevent what he perceives as danger.

I cannot leave the topic of shows without pointing out that problems in the show ring almost always arise from a complete disconnect between the way most alpacas are managed at home and what is expected of them in the show ring. It is a common industry practice to chase an alpaca into a corner, grab him and wrestle him for routine management. After that experience, why would an alpaca be willing to stand quietly when a "pack" of humans approaches in the open area of a show ring? We created the alpacas' conditioned response to run from humans; unfortunately, we cannot turn off that response when it suits us.

Look at the way you handle your animals for routine management and how it affects your alpacas' feelings of safety with you. I have written many articles about the effects of various management practices on alpacas' ability to cope in the show ring. * Many techniques will make a positive difference in your animals' behavior. Just three of them are routinely using a catch pen no

larger than 9'x9' for catching, crowding animals together for medical handling rather than physically restraining them, and using a narrow lane way for initial leading lessons.

No show is an island. A bad show experience can be hard for a sensitive and innately difficult animal to forget. The once burned, twice careful axiom applies to alpacas. Everyone's best interests are served by making shows events where animals, judges and exhibitors are treated respectfully and kept safe.

As a professional animal handler and teacher, I find having a big toolbox is efficient and effective. The following photos and captions illustrate some alternatives for showing an alpaca's bite, for examining its fleece and for checking under its tail. There are no specific rules about how to show the bite or to present your alpaca for inspection. The judge is in charge of the ring, and any instructions offered by the judge trump any suggestion that I offer here. Please do not try new techniques for the first time in the show ring. Do not assume that any technique will work on all alpacas. On the other hand, do not assume that just because a



These two photos illustrate a Camelidynamics technique we call the "Show Bracelet." The handler steps into the animal with the right leg providing a brake to forward movement that is much safer. The handler uses the right arm around the neck to steady the animal against his or her body. The lips are parted with the left hand. The technique gives the handler more options for balancing and moving with the animal, is safer and just as effective as the standard approach used in the show ring.

technique didn't work on one alpaca it is not valuable for other animals.

These professional handling and show ring suggestions is just the tip of the information that is available to help you handle and show your alpaca. For more information and some hands-on instruction, consult my website www.camelidynamics.com, books or take one of my Camelidynamics clinics.

For over 25 years, Marty has traveled the world, devoting her professional life to the well being of camelids and the education of their owners. Her clinics, books, and videos have helped thousands of camelid owners more fully understand, appreciate, and enjoy their animals. Marty and her husband, Brad, operate the Camelidynamics Training Center in Bend, Oregon. She can be reached at marty@camelidynamics.com

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Embryo Transfer: A Breeder's Experience

By Peter Kennedy

Background

The use of Embryo Transfer (ET) technology has been a relatively recent advance in breeding technology for alpacas in Australia. The reasoning behind the development of the technology was to increase the use and allow great availability of genetically superior animals both locally and internationally. With long gestation periods for alpacas (11 months), conventional breeding results in slow genetic gain. Also, information gained from these breedings is less reliable as it is difficult to compare results over various years due to the variations in season and other factors influencing the results.

Reproductive technologies, Artificial Insemination (AI) and Embryo Transfer (ET) have been developed and used extensively to improve fleece and conformational characteristics in similar industries (Merino and Angora goats). However, the reproductive processes of alpacas are quite unique and are less understood, therefore, the direct transfer of these technologies from ruminants to alpacas was not possible.

Protocols evaluated for embryo transfer in camelids have been adapted from protocols originally developed for cattle, sheep, pigs and horses. Embryo transfer can rapidly increase numbers of crias born to superior females. For example, it is possible to transfer the genes from the top 10% of an alpaca herd (donors) into the bottom 90% of females (recipients). Embryo transfer also allows breeders to determine optimal male/female combinations as multiple sires may be used over the same female in one year. Embryo transfer can give smaller breeders access to elite genes through purchase of embryos and will allow for inter-farm/state/national movement of superior genetics.

Alpaca female reproduction explained

The understanding of ovarian function in alpacas has been instrumental in the success of developing non-surgical, transcervical single and multiple ovulation ET. Females exhibit waves of ovarian follicular growth, with new waves emerging every 12 to 22 days (Vaughan

et al. 2004). Females are induced ovulators, and ovulate 30 hours after copulation when they have a dominant follicle of at least 6 mm on either ovary (Adams *et al.* 2001; Bravo *et al.* 1991). A corpus luteum develops on the ovary at the site of ovulation 3-4 days after mating and secretes progesterone. If conception does not occur, prostaglandin is released from the uterus and induces regression of the corpus luteum 10-12 days after mating (Adams *et al.* 1989). The embryonic signal for maternal recognition of pregnancy must be transmitted as early as Day 9 or 10 after mating in order to 'rescue' the corpus luteum of pregnancy as the corpus luteum is the major source of progesterone throughout pregnancy.

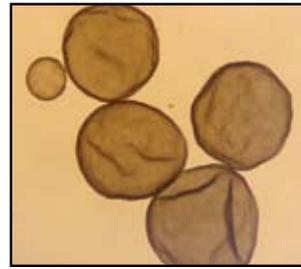
Single ovulation versus multiple ovulation
Single-ovulation embryo transfer of alpacas does not require any hormonal treatment of donor females (Taylor *et al.* 2000). Donor females are mated once and flushed a week later. Approximately 7 of every 10 females flushed will produce an embryo. Follicle growth in the first 10 days after new wave emergence is consistent regardless of subsequent interwave interval (Vaughan *et al.* 2004), an

observation integral to the success of single-embryo flushing of donor females every 10-12 days. More than 400 live births (50% males, 50% females) have occurred over the last 8 years in Australia, following single-embryo flushing performed by Dr. Jane Vaughan and Dr David Hopkins in numerous commercial alpaca herds. Donor females have since given birth to crias from matings performed soon after embryo flushing, indicating donor fertility was not interfered with during embryo collection. Methods of multiple ovulation and embryo transfer (MOET or 'superovulation') are also being implemented in alpacas in Australia and other countries. Both equine chorionic gonadotrophin and follicle stimulating hormone are

currently being used as agents to stimulate multiple ovulation. Techniques are producing an average of 2.5-3 embryos per flush (up to 21 embryos per individual) on most farms. Results have been less reliable on some farms, presumably due to variations in alpaca fertility, nutrition, environment and management. The number of studies on MOET in camelids remains low and further refinement of existing protocols is continuing to identify a MOET program that consistently yields an acceptable number of transferable embryos, and is associated with minimal risk of infertility to the elite donor female. Embryos have been yielded on many consecutive MOET programs in the last six years, without apparent effect on donor fertility as donor females have readily conceived within 2-4 weeks after their last MOET flush.

Embryo development in camelids
The embryos of camelids develop faster than in domestic ruminants and morulae have been recovered in the oviducts of llamas as early as 3 days after mating. The faster rate of embryo development in camelids is likely related to early maternal recognition of pregnancy, which needs to occur around Day 8 to 10 after mating to ensure persistence of the corpus luteum of pregnancy (Aba *et al.* 1997; Del Campo *et al.* 1995). Embryos are flushed from donor females a week after mating.

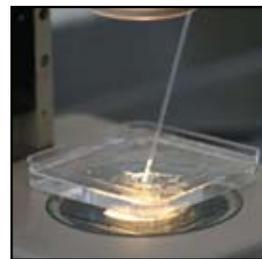
Non-surgical, trans-cervical collection and transfer of embryos
This method involves the introduction of a catheter through the cervix and placement of the catheter in the uterus. Medium is flushed through the catheter into the uterus, and then allowed to drain, via gravity, into an embryo collection vessel. This method is relatively non-invasive and does not have the attendant risks of abdominal adhesions associated with surgical embryo collection. However, females with a narrow pelvis or excessive fat in their pelvis may not be suitable for non-surgical collection and there is also a risk of rectal



Four normal and one smaller embryo prior to transfer.



Equipment used to flush the donor female.



Searching for embryos after flush.

trauma with this procedure. Dr. Jane Vaughan uses the non-surgical method of embryo collection from alpacas and llamas.



Dr. Jane Vaughan preparing embryos for transfer.

The retrieved fluid is examined under a dissecting microscope for embryos. After collection and washing, single embryos are loaded into small plastic straws similar to those used for artificial insemination and then placed transcervically (non-surgically) into the uterus of the recipient female.

The success or failure of an ET program is influenced by many factors. Correct selection and preparation of females (both donor and recipient) is essential.

Registry Issues

In Australia, the registration of ET cria is allowed. The process is as below.

The details of breeding sire and dam are certified by the veterinarian performing the transfer of embryos. Paperwork has to be signed off by the Vet on the sire and the dam

of the embryo and the registration details of the recipient. As all males and donor females used are DNA recorded, testing can be done to confirm the pedigree details of the embryo. All recipients are required to be registered. The registry details are recorded by the Vet at the time of transfer and are also recorded against the embryo at the time of registration of the resultant cria.

Our Experience

Over the last 6 years, working with our veterinarian, Dr. Jane Vaughan, we have become a major user of ET in Australia. We now have over 300 ET cria on the ground and have been very pleased with the results overall.

ET has enabled us to reproduce our best genetics at a significantly faster rate than would be otherwise possible. Some of our best females have over 20 cria on the ground from a range of males (at 8 years of age!!) This allows us to then make these genetics available to our clients.

We have seen a rapid improvement in quality of our alpacas.

What have we learned:

Soundness in all the animals used in the program is the foundation of a successful program. We may want to use that female that is stunning but fails to conceive naturally. However the hard truth is that if she is sub-fertile naturally, she will probably perform poorly in ET and also do you really want to produce more progeny from her, as they are quite likely to also have fertility issues.

Data is King. It is essential to record and review the results of your ET program. To improve success, you must be willing to make hard decisions about dropping out donor females or males that do not perform in the process. We also spend a lot of time managing our recipients and their results. Taking into account the difficulty in producing embryos we want to maximize the results. Therefore if a female fails to hold an embryo greater than three times or if her cria is slow to grow out due to poor milk supply or mothering skills she is removed from the program.

As mentioned from our experience, not all females or males will perform in ET. Reproduction is a complex system and we have found that in the altered environment of super ovulation some combinations will not produce embryos. Therefore to improve success, deci-

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sions need to be made to alter the breedings or drop out females or males completely.

In any program, attention to detail will improve results. After every program we sit with Dr. Jane Vaughan, to examine what our results have been and to see if something has changed that may have had a positive or negative result on the program. Major issues we have discovered are:

Nutrition:

All alpacas should be kept in good body condition (we work on a body score between 2.5 to 3 out of five). Donor females have a tendency to get fatter overtime. This will have a negative impact and at times donors will need to be mated naturally to aid in the management of her weight.

Too much of a good thing can have negative impacts on the ET program. We try to have all animals involved on pasture that is a good mix of grasses and herbs. We try to minimize the amount of clover (due to the plant estrogen having a negative impact) and Rye grass also can have a negative impact on fertility.

Soils may be lacking in some essential nutrients. Australia soils are often low in Selenium and this will have a negative impact on fertility. We therefore supplement with Selenium (via injection) where necessary. We are very active in improving our soil health, so routinely take soil samples and address any deficiencies as part of our farm management.



Recipient female with embryo transfer cria at foot.

Donors:

Donors are selected based on their superior genetic qualities. Also they must be free of all known heritable genetic faults.

They need to be sound both conformationally and in regards to fertility. It is easy to fall in love with their fleece but they need to be sound in all other respects before considering to reproduce them in ET.

As mentioned earlier, donors over time tend to put on excess weight. This will have a negative impact on their performance. We therefore try to maintain their weight and ensure they are fit. If they do gain too much weight, we would mate them naturally and let them have a cria then re-assess them for further use in our ET program.

Another issue that may require the females to be mated naturally is their uterine volume. To remove the embryos we flush the donors

uterus with commercial embryonic solutions. Over time, the volume of the donors uterus can decrease and if they no longer flush well, we would breed them and let them carry a normal pregnancy and then use them again after they have had their cria.

We have not observed any negative impacts on the future fertility of the donor females by them being used in our ET program.

Males:

Males used, as sires in ET must of course have the characteristics that you want to reproduce. They must also be fertile. We only use proven males in our program.

As with donors and recipients, the males must be in good physical condition. Leading up to a program, we also ensure that the selected males are not overworked with other breedings.

We have found that over heating will have negative impacts of male fertility. We therefore keep the males in a well-shaded area leading up to breedings to minimize these affects.

Also some males, for some reason do not perform in ET though they are getting pregnancies in our regular breedings. Once this characteristic has been identified, we stop trying to use him in ET and just keep him for our natural breedings.

Recipients:

Selection of recipients is a key factor in the success of your program. We select females that have been proven as good mothers. They need to be fit and healthy. Some fe-

males will not work as recipients and if they fail to carry an embryo more than three times we remove them from our program.

Any female that fails to mother their cria well or whose cria is slow to grow out is removed from the program.

Stress:

We try to minimize stress in our animals so as soon as we start to plan a program, we organize our groups so that the alpacas are able to develop a hierarchy within their groups. These groups are maintained as long as possible.

The animals are used to being run into our barn to be weighed monthly, so the routine of running them into the barn for their treatments is not a stressful event.

Conclusion:

The use of ET has had a significant impact on the success of our breeding program and business. It has allowed us to rapidly improve the quality of our herd. It has also allowed us

to make available these leading genetics to our clients. These results would not have been possible without the close working relationship between Canchones and Dr. Jane Vaughan (Cria Genesis)

Acknowledgements:

We thank Dr. Jane Vaughan for allowing us to use excerpts from her published works in this article.

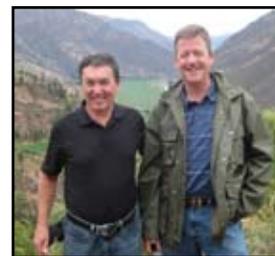
Background:

Dr. Jane Vaughan:

Dr. Jane Vaughan, has been working with alpacas and llamas since 1991. She studied the control of ovarian follicular function as part of her PhD studies. She was also the chief investigator of a study into the development of artificial insemination technology in alpacas. She now performs commercial ET in alpacas throughout Australia as well as in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. She regular presents lectures to farmers, veterinarians and veterinary students on alpaca reproduction and nutrition in Australia and internationally. More information is available about Dr. Jane Vaughan, Cria Genesis and ET at www.criagenesis.cc

Canchones:

Canchones (canchones.com.au) is a specialist black breeder based in Victoria, Australia. The ranch was established in 1998 and is owned and managed by Peter Kennedy and Robert Gane. The ranch is run on a 400-acre property in the north east of Victoria, Australia.

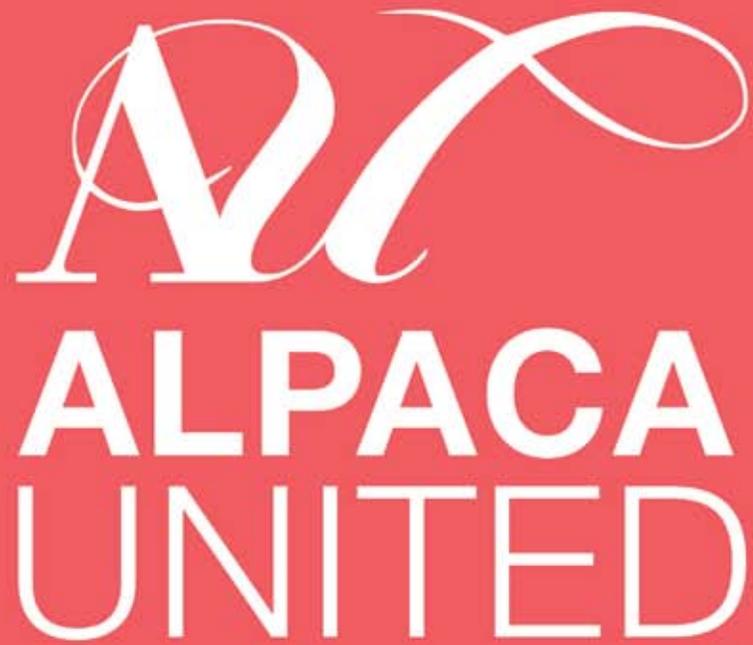


Robert Gane and Peter Kennedy in the Sacred Valley, Peru.

Robert has been involved in many aspects of the alpaca industry in Australia. He has held positions at the regional

(affiliate) and national levels as well as being a director of the Australian Alpaca Co-operative. He has developed and presented seminars on various topics including Marketing and Sales and herd management both throughout Australia and internationally.

Peter is an alpaca judge in both Australia and the United States. He successfully completed the International Alpaca Judging School in Peru in 2004. He subsequently certified as both an Australia Alpaca Association (AAA) and Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) judge. He has since judged throughout Australia and the USA as well as in Canada and New Zealand. Contact Peter at alpacas@canchones.com.au



Feel Luxury.

What are the Alpaca Bloggers Saying?

Processing an Alpaca Blanket for Handspinning

By Cyndy Donohue (aka riverrim spinner)

Author of riverrim.blogspot.com

So it is Shearing Time again! My alpaca farmer friends and my spinner friends are talking about how many pounds, or how many bags of alpaca fleece are lined up in the shed, or in the hallway (tell me, how many bags do you have?) The average fleece of an adult huacaya alpaca can weigh between 5 and 10 pounds, so it can add up quickly. I have at least 15 + pounds of fiber to clean and prepare for spinning and I will be processing all of it by hand. This might sound like an overwhelming procedure, but I assure you, it is not. My motto is: a little bit everyday!

Since I don't raise my own alpacas, I work with fleece from alpacas raised on Finca Alta Vista Farm. Each bag is labeled with the name of the alpaca, and many times there is other information or even a photograph of the animal.

Today, I am working with FAV Starbuck's Fredricksen, a medium silver grey huacaya male, whose heritage is 3/8 Peruvian, and 5/8 Chilean.

I weigh the bag so that I can keep track of how much waste I have from the blanket. Normally, the fleece has been properly skirted by the time I receive it, so the blanket is very clean and free from VM (spinners speak for vegetable matter).

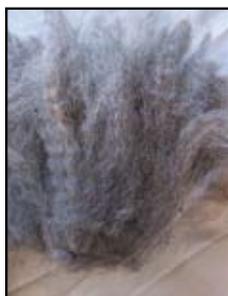


When I start to work with a fleece, one of the first things I do is weigh the fiber and make notes about my overall opinion of it (quality, cleanliness, second cuts, staple length, fiber diameter, guard hairs and color uniformity etc.) Now that I have all the important information for my notebook, the hands on processing begin.

Each spinster has her own method of working with raw fleece, and so, I have developed my method from several years of experience in taking alpaca fiber from the fleece to a finished product. I consider myself a "process" person, and believe that there is so much you can learn by processing the fiber by hand and I would encourage spinners to try it, at least once. I admit that the process is labor intensive, but the finished product is one of superior quality, having been achieved entirely by hand.

As I peek into the bag, I can't resist the temptation of selecting a lock or two of the fiber, and fanning it out between my fingers.

I test for soundness and tensile strength, fineness, crimp and crinkle and "draftability." I spin out a length on my hand spindle. I let the length of yarn ply back on itself. I can feel how the fiber will behave during spinning, and see a sampling of what it will look like



as a finished yarn. There is a lot of information contained in this little length of yarn. I take a few moments and make notes in my sketchbook, and tuck the small sample into an envelope on the page.



I will refer back to these thoughts at a later time, maybe when I begin to design or spin with the yarn from this particular fleece.

Reaching into the bag and removing as much fleece as I can grab with two hands, I place it onto the table, which is covered with an old plastic

shower curtain. Looking at the fleece in good light, I check for the overall color. Ideally, the light and dark areas would be uniformly interspersed throughout the blanket, but if there are obvious areas of color differences, I will sort these areas into separate piles. At some point after washing, I will decide if I want to blend these colors or work with them "as is."

I begin separating locks by the handful, and removing any obvious guard hairs or second cuts (those small bits left behind by the shears). I am careful to keep the locks in order, lining them up with the tips facing the same direction. Keeping the locks orientated throughout the process preserves the lock structure and is important for producing certain types of yarn. Once I have a big batch of locks separated out, I prepare for washing them.



There are some spinsters that are from the school of thought that there is no need to wash alpaca before spinning it, because there is no lanolin in the fleece. Some spinners may say that it is easier to spin unwashed alpaca because the fiber does not slip easily. I respectfully disagree. Though I have spun raw alpaca without washing it, the resulting yarn is never as light and airy as the yarn from the fiber that has been washed first. As most of us know, alpacas like to take dust baths. If it is not washed out before spinning, small particles of sand and silica that coat and stick to the fibers can get trapped in the yarn. These small grains of sand can eventually, over time, weaken the yarn, rubbing like sandpaper, possibly causing breakage to the individual strands of fiber. Besides this, the particles can cause damage to your spinning wheel hooks and orifice, and the dust can leave your finger black, not to mention breathing the dust that is generated while you are spinning. So, unless you don't mind having black fingers, and a dusty house and wheel, and less than quality yarn, I would recommend washing your alpaca fiber before you spin it.

For washing the sorted locks, I use a piece of Tulle fabric, which measures approximately 2 feet by 2 1/2 feet. Keeping the locks orientated by the tips and cut ends, I make one long row of locks and fold them up in the tulle and secure the bundle with safety pins if needed. Filling a basin of hot water and my favorite shampoo (alpaca fiber is protein fiber, just like our own hair), I fold the tulle bundle in half, and place the locks gently into the sudsy water. The tulle bundle will want to float on top of the water, so it is necessary to press down

and submerge the bundle to make sure all of the locks are saturated. While this batch of locks is soaking, I may go back to the table and prepare another batch. I let the first batch soak until the water has cooled.

Once the water has cooled (15 to 20 minutes) I lift the tulle bundle out of the water and let it drain. I empty the dirty water from the basin onto the compost pile because it is muddy and I don't want my drains to clog. Next, fill the basin with hot water again and rinse the bundle in the same fashion that it was washed, placing it into the water and letting it soak until the water has cooled down. After the rinse, the bundle is lifted out of the water, drained and then rolled in a bath towel to remove excess moisture. I open the tulle bundle, and remove the individual locks (always careful to maintain direction), and place them onto a drying screen.



In a few hours the locks will be dry. They puff up light and fluffy, while still maintaining the original lock structure that they had when I separated them. From here, I will collect them and place them into a basket for spinning. The locks will be combed using two tine hand combs, and the fiber will be pulled through a diz and spun into either a worsted or woolen yarn. Whatever fiber is left in the comb (or what I call the combing waste), will be set aside and used in the drum carder or on hand cards for woolen spinning or felting projects. As I work with the fleece, and handle the individual locks, I can't help dreaming up designs and can sometimes picture exactly what I imagine the yarn and finished project will be like. It may take months to accomplish a project from fleece to a finished item, but it is an enjoyable and creative process.



There isn't anything that can motivate me to spin more than looking at a basket full of beautiful clean Alpaca locks! Let the spinning begin!



About the author: Cyndy Donohue (aka riverrim spinner) lives with her husband in a tiny log cabin that sits along the banks of a beautiful river in the Pocono Mountain Region of Northeast Pennsylvania. She writes the riverim blog, <http://riverrim.blogspot.com> where you can read her random thoughts about spinning, antique spinning wheels, weaving, knitting, gardening, flax, chickens, angora rabbits, alpaca and whatever wildlife wanders by...and of course, her works in progress. At the 2011 MAPACA Jubilee, her spindle-spun skein from Finca Alta Vista's Herdsire, FAV Starbuck's Fredricksen, was awarded the Judges Choice Ribbon for the Handspun Skein Division.

MAPACA FIBER SURVEY

On January 21, 2011 MAPACA sent out a short survey to the membership using Survey Monkey. 73 members, or 28%, responded to the survey. Of those who responded, 79% own huacayas and 21% own suris. Below are the results to one of the questions.

If you sent your fleece to a mill to be processed which mill(s) did you send it to?

A Plus Alpaca Fiber Mill
 Autumn Mist Alpacas & Fiber Mill
 Capon Bridge Fiber Works LLC
 Cotton Criation Fiber Mill
 Falls Edge Farm & Fiber Mill
 Flaggy Meadows Fiber Works
 Georgia Mountain Fiber
 Gurdy Run Farm and Woolen Mill
 Mills Hill Alpaca & Fiber Mill
 Morning Star Fiber Mill
 Rach-Al-Paca Fiber Processing
 Sallie's Fen Fibers LLC
 Singleton Fiber Processing LLC
 Still River Fiber Processing Mill
 Stramba Farm
 The Fiber Factory
 The Shepherd's Mill
 Windswept Farm Alpacas & Fiber Mill
 Worthington Acres Alpacas - Farm & Fiber Mill

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We're just one farm, but our suris are in many locations throughout the U.S., because Flame Pool Alpacas agists across the country at select farms.

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Kathy Graziani

Columbia, MD

Home: 410.884.5397

Mobile: 443.812.1102

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Part III: What Are You Doing with Your Alpaca Fleece?

A Fun, Fiber Adventure

By Deb Nevells

“What do you people do with this stuff?”

That’s not the most eloquently expressed question but still, it was asked of me seven years ago and forever sticks in my mind. I was a new alpaca farmer at my first show, gazing at walking specimens of a hand-spinners dream fiber. I had been introduced to an alpaca breeder as a ‘hand-spinner’. There are more of us out there than the general population may realize but even so, I am accustomed to being looked at like I have a third eye when people realize my hobby is playing with animal hair.

The woman who asked this question of me was serious though, and for one of the few times in my life I was speechless. Upon recovering a bit and continuing with the conversation I was stunned to find out that she had over 200 fleeces in her barn and garage!

Raw fiber does have an expiration date depending upon how it is stored. Temperature and humidity have an effect upon it, as do moths and rodents. Raw fiber should be stored in a ‘container’ that will allow the fiber to breathe. Many people use plastic trash bags, however, these should always be left open to vent. Never place fiber in direct sunlight or where it can get wet. Humidity plays a role too and being too damp can cause mold to grow. Mice and rodents love to nest in fiber as they have excellent taste in nesting materials and clothing moth larvae can eat through a bag of fiber in no time. If you wouldn’t store your good winter coats or your grandmother’s heirloom tablecloth there, don’t put your fiber there.

Back to the original question the woman with the bags of fleece asked of me. “Why aren’t you processing your raw fiber into roving for spinners and yarn for knitters/crocheters?” I asked.

The answer was some response along the lines of whether or not it’s worth it, it takes too much time to skirt, it costs money to process and there really isn’t that big a market for it.

Unfortunately, this wasn’t the last time this scenario and these comments were repeated. Each time I heard comments like

seems that it wasn’t until the recent difficult economic times that I began to see a sudden serious interest in the fiber itself. Farms began looking for every market angle and there it was.... sitting next to the family car in the garage.

Time to get down off of my soapbox and time for you to follow me on a fun fiber adventure.

It’s May and the newly shorn alpacas are in the pasture. A pile of carefully marked bags holding a year’s growth is stacked in the barn or in the garage. Now what?

Step 1. Well, of course, the first thing I do is skirt the fleece. I would rather shovel manure in a sideways sleet storm than skirt fleeces, however it is a necessary evil. Thank goodness Nascar races are on every weekend to keep me company during this task. If you are not skilled in skirting there are many workshops, videos, and classes to consult for the how-tos of completing the process.

Step 2. The next step is an adventure and learning experience. Since utilizing a co-op was discussed in the What Are You Doing With Your Alpaca Fleece? Part II article in the Spring newsletter we will explore sending fiber off to a mill for processing.

Mini-mills have become a fabulous cottage industry for the alpaca farmer. These mills operate on a small scale and offer the service of custom processing a farm’s fiber without combining it with other farm’s fiber. These small-scale mills take batches that

large mills won’t or can’t process. But how do you choose a mill? Since the product the mill produces will reflect on your herd, you want to find a reputable, quality mill to process your fiber.

A good place to start is to ask other alpaca farms which mill they use. Find out about the service by asking these questions of your alpaca friends:

these it was just as disheartening as the first time.

The question kept repeating itself in my head, “Don’t we breed these animals for their amazing fiber?” Ever since alpacas were imported into this country we have been gleefully (and sometimes smugly) extolling the attributes of the fiber being hypoallergenic with low micron counts. Yet it



How was the finished product?
 Did the mill receive good feedback from knitters and spinners?
 Did the mill adhere to the turn-around time?

At this point you might want to determine what turn-around time is important to you. Is there an event coming up in a few months for which you need the product and can the mill get your product to you in time?

I called many mills with my list of questions before making my final decision. In the end I chose a mill that had received an enthusiastic review from a fellow alpaca farmer. I have never regretted the time spent researching on the Internet and during initial phone interviews. My Internet search gave me the basic information regarding pricing, minimum quantities, and what type of fiber the mill was experienced in processing. Once I chose a few mills the telephone interviews began, and yes, it was definitely a full-blown interview. The product would have my farm name and I wanted return customers. Here are some important questions that I asked during my phone interview with the mill:

What is processing time for various products? (Some mills have turn-around times close to or over a year.)

Do they process rovings for spinners?

Do they process yarn?

Is yarn processed in-house or sent to another mill?

Do they have a picker? (A picker separates fiber and vegetable matter. This can work wonders on that cria coat that couldn't be 'tipped'.)

Do they have a de-hairer (mohair and suri)?

Are they capable of processing alpaca fiber? And if yes, ask specifically about Suri.

Do they have a felting machine?

If processing yarn do they offer 'skeining' into various lengths or weights and final washing/steaming?

Do they offer dyeing?

Do they offer blending with other fibers (wool, silk, bamboo, mohair, etc.)? If so, do they have on-site for mixing or do you need to purchase and ship with your fiber?

After the conversation ask yourself if you felt comfortable with the mill personnel with whom you spoke. Were they knowledgeable about the fiber? Did they offer suggestions?

I interviewed five mills before choosing the one I wanted to work with. I interviewed an extra two since some were immediately eliminated because they didn't have wool on hand to blend with my alpaca fiber. This was an important item on my list of questions.

Step 3. Now that you have completed Step 1 and 2 you need to determine what products you are going to have made. First, you need to research your demographics. What is your competition? Are there many local yarn shops, box stores, etc. in your area? Do you have a farm store? Will you be vending at fiber festivals or local community events? How will you get fiber to knitters, crocheters, weavers, and spinners? Will you sell on-line? Is there a local craft or yarn store that may be willing to sell product from a local farm?

If you choose to have your fiber made into yarn a visit to a local craft store or yarn shop is very important, especially to those fiber farmers who are NOT crafters. Crafting has 'ins' like other areas of life. Reality television is 'in' now but in time something will take its place (hopefully). Knitting

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and crocheting are HOT right now in the crafting world.

That being the case, you need to find out what the market competition is among major brands. What are they selling? You will discover that there are yarns being advertised as 'alpaca yarn' that only contain 30% alpaca with the balance comprised of man-made fibers. There are brands that have higher percentages.

What is the price of a skein of yarn at the local yarn shop? What patterns are available? Are sweaters in? Hats? Scarves? Shawls? What about colors? Are solids, variegated or tweeds popular? In recent years 'glitzy' yarn was everywhere but that has faded. Read the labels for fiber, yardage, and weight. Most importantly, feel the fiber. Don't be overwhelmed. A knitter or crocheter will spend hours, days, weeks, even months searching for the perfect yarn for a project. That perfect yarn should be from a local farm!

More questions to ask as you walk along with fiber adventure: What yarn do you want from your animals? Do you want to market a 'farm blend' from a few animals? These mixes are amazing. Or do you want skeins of yarn from specific animals so that the knitter who fell in love with 'Marshmealow' can take her home to knit a scarf? How about mixing various colors in a 'tweed' or 'marl'? Ask for suggestions from the mill. Many have fabulous websites that has pictures of yarn ideas.

I must now acknowledge that I am not a 'purist'. I mix other animal and plant fiber with alpaca. I even mix sheep with alpaca! I realize this can be a delicate subject for any group of fiber farmers, especially alpaca farmers. I realize that you spend years or decades making breeding decisions to produce that perfect fleece.

It's important to remember that each fiber has attributes that set it apart from other types of fiber. Alpaca yarn has amazing 'draping' qualities when knit, crocheted, or woven into a shawl or scarf that makes the garment dramatic. However, the lack of 'memory' in the fiber creates issues when producing sweaters, socks, even gloves, mittens and hats. Sheep wool has 'memory' and will return to the shape it was originally crafted once it is hand-washed. Alpaca fiber will 'grow' and a perfectly fit hand-made sweater can become a shapeless dress and mittens and hats will slip off. Imagine selling sweater quantities of your yarn instead of just scarf quantities. I had a woman buy 17 skeins of my yarn for a sweater because she loves alpaca and my yarn had 15% merino wool in the mix for that 'memory' that I mentioned. That is a considerable

difference in skeins sold over 1-2 skeins for a scarf. Have some skeins made in a blend and keep some 100% alpaca skeins for those who have allergies.

Consider having a range of yarn available for customers. Have some in 100% alpaca for those seeking the hypoallergenic qualities. Create some with different percentages of sheep wool - 5% to 30% or even 50%. Have something for everyone. Mix silk or bamboo in with neck and hindquarter hair to stretch your product. Remember that alternative fibers come in many colors too. You can mix 22-micron white merino sheep in with that 22-micron white alpaca. What about mixing dyed merino in with white alpaca for a variegated yarn?

I do something a bit different with each animal every year and my customers can't wait to see a new product each season. Last year I mixed a bay black and rose grey into a 2-color tweed yarn that sold out. My yarn made with light fawn alpaca and white mohair (from my angora goat) with multi-colored dyed merino fiber also sold out. Two years ago the yarn that sold out was a light fawn, medium fawn and a bay-black spun into a tweed. Three years ago I spun that same bay-black with 10% black merino and 10% bamboo and you guessed it.... it sold out!

I also offer different roving for the hand-spinners: some 100% alpaca and some in farm blends or mixed with wool or bamboo. One of the spinners' favorites was a 'vanilla swirl' roving from light fawn and medium fawn animals. These same customers helped me confirm my mill choice was worth the research time as they have indicated the yarn to be consistently spun and does not 'split' on the needles and the spinners indicated that the roving 'drafts' like a dream. Splitting yarn is when your knitting needles pierce a ply of the yarn but not the whole strand. Drafting is done while prepping roving to be spun. These two simple items can turn a relaxing crafting session into irritating experience. I confirm these facts as I knit and spin with the product also.

Next let's tackle the area where I receive the most questions from non-crafters. Yarn comes in plies: 2-ply, 3-ply, 4-ply, etc. Also, a 'grist' (the diameter of the plied yarn) needs to be chosen for the yarn. Do you want lace weight, fingering weight, sport weight, DK weight (double-knit which is slightly thinner than worsted), worsted, or bulky? This is where that field trip to store or label reading can help.

Which is a better? Let's say a pound of alpaca produces 3,000 yards of 2-ply finger-

ing weight yarn but the same pound would only produce 900 yards of 2-ply DK weight yarn. It seems like you get more from the fingering weight yarn, right? That is perfect if your customer wants to make a shawl or lace-work project. But that weight of yarn would not really suit a customer who wants to knit gloves or a hat. They would want the DK weight yarn. Have a variety of weights (grists) available for various projects/patterns. Many weights or grists would be easier for a large farm with many animals. A smaller farm may want to choose some lace weight or DK weight skeins. Worsted and bulky weight would utilize too much fiber and not enough product.

Step 4: Let's Sell It! Whether is it rovings, batts or bumps for spinners; or yarn for knitters and other crafters make sure you include your farm information on a card or insert in your product with the animal's name or picture. I have had many crafters call to purchase additional fiber from a specific animal of mine. This is something that commercial yarn companies can never compete with: the personal aspect of local farms. This is your marketing advantage!

For yarn tags or labels crafters will need yardage, grist or weight of the yarn, ounces or grams, and fiber content.

Again, don't be overwhelmed. As alpaca farmers we already wear assorted 'hats' in caring for these wonderful animals. It's important to process your fleeces. It's also exciting and rewarding to see someone model a garment handcrafted from your animal's fiber. Now get those barns and garages empty of fiber and your farm store full of product!

Deb Nevells is owner of Black Diamond Alpacas. She has been crocheting since she was 8 years old and has been a spinner for 15 years. She would love to increase awareness of the fiber aspects of the amazing alpaca and is sad to vacuum up dog hair because it is a waste of fiber that could be spun!



Show Follow Up: Getting Prospects to Your Farm or Ranch

By Julie Wassom

How you follow up with the prospects you met at that recent show can make ALL the difference as to whether or not they come to your ranch to consider buying your alpacas or breeding services. Three things make a critical difference in that follow up:

1. **When** – Contact the prospects who talked with you or signed your guestbook within the first week to ten days after you return from the show – no more than that. Remember that people forget fast. Also, some prospects will actually wait to see who really does get back to them, show enough interest to pursue the lead, and really be there to help mentor them through the process of buying alpacas. The sooner your name and information get in front of them, the sooner they will begin to believe that about you. The early bird really does get the worm.

2. **What** – Depending upon the seriousness of their inquiry, send somewhere between the following minimum and maximum of information:

a. Minimum – Note or letter inviting a farm/ranch visit and indicating your follow up intentions, business card, brochure about the farm or ranch

b. Maximum – Farm packet including items such as ranch brochure, information about alpacas, invitation to upcoming event, farm newsletter, one-sheets on specific alpacas in which they expressed interest, AOBA brochure, copy of any good press you have received, fiber samples, and business card.

Do not send everything you have, since you want to have something else to give them when they visit the farm or ranch, and in follow-up contacts thereafter. Be wary of sending a price list for all your animals, as they may not be comparing apples to apples when they put your list beside another they have received. In these follow up mailings, indicate that you will give them a chance to read all this and then you will call them (tell them when) to follow up.

3. **How often.** One mailing does not good follow up make. The old adage in sales says that the 10% of salespeople willing to make at least five follow up contacts, make 80% of the sales! It can take at least three contacts before they even take you seriously.

I recommend using my **M-M-C Follow Up System**. M-M-C stands for Mail-Mail-Call. After your initial follow up, tickler your prospects into a contact management system database. Then each month, re-contact them, first with a mailing or an email (if you have their permission to email them). The second mailing might be a farm newsletter or an invitation to an event in which you are participating. The third follow up in M-M-C is a call to see where they are in their search for alpacas, to schedule a farm visit, and to get their permission to continue to communicate with them.

Remember what I like to say, “*The fortune is in the follow up!*” Do it well, and you will have lots of farm or ranch visits that translate into opportunities to sell your alpacas and breeding services.

For more on how to follow up, look in Chapter 3 of Julie’s book, **101 Ways to Marketing and Sell Your Alpacas**. Don’t have a copy? Click on <http://www.juliewassom.com/alpacas%20order%20products.html> and get one today!

Julie Wassom is the owner of Grand Champion Marketing in Denver, Colorado, and is the author of The Alpaca Marketing Success Library of books, special reports, and other marketing resources, and the e-newsletter, Wassom’s Marketing Wisdom, available at www.juliewassom.com.

She can be reached at 303-693-2306 or julie@juliewassom.com.

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ALPACAS IN THE NEWS: *The Knitter's Edge* By Diane Beauchner

Even though I co-chair the Knitting Committee for my church's holiday bazaar and have yarn and knitting needles in my house, I must admit that my hours spent knitting are few and far between simply because of lack of time. However, I have many expert knitter and fiber artist friends who happily purchase my alpaca yarn and create amazing garments from that yarn. These friends are fans and customers of our local yarn shop, The Knitter's Edge in Bethlehem, PA. This shop, that just celebrated its second year in business, sells a wide variety of yarns, knitting supplies, gadgets, gifts and magazines and has classes to instruct on everything from beginning knitting to special projects. An article in this shop's weekly newsletter prompted a friend to send the newsletter my way. Reprinted below, with permission, is what appeared in a recent edition of The Knitter's Edge newsletter.

People ask a lot of questions about alpaca fiber. Alpaca fiber is considered a luxury fiber due to its properties of being very fine and lightweight while being exceptionally warm. It is also relatively rare on the world market due in part to the small number of alpacas producing fiber globally.

Alpaca is known for its great warmth (reported to be five times warmer than sheep wool), and the fineness and length of staple, with a year of growth commonly being about 5-6 inches (12-15 cm). It also has excellent crimp, with individual fibers usually showing crinkle (like a chemically treated "permanent wave" in human hair).

The fiber from alpaca is unusually strong and resilient. The strength of the fiber does not diminish as it becomes finer, thus making it ideal for industrial processing. Raised at high altitudes in freezing cold, the alpaca has developed more thermal capacity in its fiber than almost any other animal. The fiber contains microscopic air pockets, which create lightweight garments with high insulation values. Alpaca is soft, supple and smooth to the touch. The cellular structure of the fiber produces a soft handle unmatched by most other specialty fibers.

Alpacas produce a fine fiber with an absence of guard hair in their prime fleece. Their fiber has a natural, rich luster, which gives garments made from 100% alpaca high visual appeal. It is easily dyed any color and always retains its natural luster. Fabric made from alpaca can range from bulky tweeds to fine gabardine. Those who own alpacas sweaters will find they practically last forever. This fiber does not easily tear,

pill, stain or create static and it is easily cleaned.

Alpaca produces beautiful yarns, either hand-spun or machine made. The long staple length makes it ideal for processing as either woolen or worsted yarns. Manufacturers also like to blend alpaca with cashmere, mohair, silk, cotton and wool. These blends make into exquisite luxury garments.

The terms luxury and alpaca are becoming synonymous. The treasure, which the Incas harvested from the back of the mystical alpaca, will soon be enjoyed by discerning consumers everywhere.

JoAnne Turcotte, a knitter since she was six years old, owns the Knitter's Edge. After a career as a chemist, Turcotte worked for several years teaching knitting classes and selling yarn before joining Plymouth Yarn Company in Bristol PA. Currently, in addition, to owning The Knitter's Edge, Turcotte is Design Director for Plymouth Yarn Company. With over 100 yarns in the Plymouth product line, a large portion of her job is to produce over 400 new patterns a year.

"Due to the sheer numbers, my main design focus is on simple garments that show off a yarn's best features," says Turcotte. "I have learned how well the simplest of designs can appeal to both the beginner as well as the experienced knitter who wants a 'laid back' project to relax with."

"JoAnne shines at teaching; she's skilled and patient and full of fun," says Anne Spreng, customer who is a frequent attendee at The Knitter's Edge classes. "She's never at a loss for an answer to even the most baffling knitting question. Her technique classes are my favorites; as soon as she offers one I sign up. There's always more to learn. Many yarn shops are well stocked with supplies, but few offer the gra-



JoAnne Turcotte, owner of The Knitter's Edge and Design Director for Plymouth Yarn Company.

cious welcome that makes customers sit in the bright alcove and knit a while with friends. A trip to The Knitter's Edge is good for the soul!"

As a designer for Plymouth Yarn Company, the oldest and one of the largest importers of alpaca in the country, Turcotte says she has probably produced several hundred designs for alpaca.

"At The Knitter's Edge, alpaca is a very important product, primarily the baby alpaca grande which is a 2-ply soft spun worked at a bulky weight gauge," says Turcotte. "It is used primarily for smaller items and for scarves which are absolutely scrumptious in this soft fiber."

When asked about blending fiber with alpaca, Turcotte says when cut with merino, alpaca maintains its softness but loses a bit of its drape.

"On the other hand, silk, even just a small amount, can add a lot of shine as alpaca has a bit of sheen to begin with. Lately, manufacturers have been blending it with bamboo which leads to some confusion on the part of consumers as to which 'season' it belongs in."

Today, I'm not only a fan of The Knitter's Edge; I'm one of the suppliers of the shop's alpaca yarn! When I approached Turcotte about selling the yarn of Shepherd Hills Alpacas, she was very impressed with its quality and liked the "buy local" component of featuring the yarn from an alpaca that

resides in the Lehigh Valley. If you haven't done so already, investigate your own area's local yarn shop and see what alpaca yarn they stock and what they have to say about our precious fiber.

The Knitter's Edge www.theknittersedge.com is located at 1601 West Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA. Phone: 610-419-9276. Store hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Email: theknittersedge@aol.com

Diane Beauchner owns Shepherd Hills Alpacas in Wescosville, Pennsylvania, and is Editor of the MAPACA newsletter. Contact Diane at dbeau@ptd.net or visit www.shepherdhillsalpacas.com.



Boy, Oh Boy!

Prince Ali Ababwa

After three beautiful girls, we were ready for our foundation female, Blankstone's Desiree, to show us what a little boy would be like. What a fine future herdsire she and sire, AW Magic, have produced!

At his first show, Prince Ali Ababwa took **THIRD PLACE** at the MAPACA Jubilee 2011 and **THIRD PLACE** at PAOBA, against very stiff competition! In a private judge consult, Judges Jill MacLeod and Kristin Buhrmann were impressed with the brightness of his fleece.

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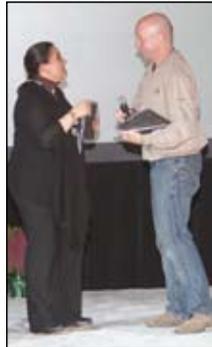
At the 2011 MAPACA Jubilee Saturday Evening Festivities, President Alan Clark presented three awards to deserving MAPACA members for their service to the organization and the alpaca community.

Lifetime Achievement Award: Presented to the MAPACA member(s) who have a strong history of consistently demonstrating their support for the organization.

Bud and Gail Stewart
Rocky Run Alpacas

Most Active New Member: Presented to the MAPACA member(s) who have contributed the most to the organization in their first year of membership.

Robin Shatzkin
Autumn Kiss Alpacas



President's Award: Presented to the MAPACA member(s) who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to advance the goals of the organization in the past year.

Diane Beauchner
Shepherd Hills Alpacas

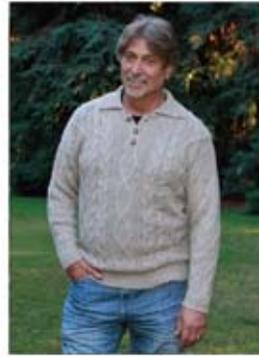
To nominate deserving individuals, send their name(s) and a brief statement of why you think they deserve the particular award to our Executive Director, Trish Tyler-Davis, at trishtylerdavis@verizon.net.



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Editorial content: If you are interested in submitting an article or blog entry, please contact Diane Beauchner, Editor at dbeau@ptd.net with your idea.

Photographic submissions are encouraged. Photographs should include photographer name, farm, and a caption. Send photos to Trish Tyler-Davis at trishtylerdavis@verizon.net

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TO ALL THE FARMS THAT VOLUNTEERED AT THE
WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!



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