

Camelid Connections

MAGAZINE



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- Record Keeping
- Camel Milk
- FAMACHA® Cards & Camelids
- A Llama Addiction
- 3D Felting
- Fleece Has Value

Issue 3 - March 2018

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Welcome to Camelid Connections

Welcome to the March edition of Camelid Connections.

We hope you enjoy reading the inspirational story of the Brisbane family who have turned their love of camels into a thriving business and how two Queensland alpaca breeders give their time to helping at a Special School in Gin Gin. There is also information to help you keep track of your alpacas/llamas from a health and breeding perspective as well as many other helpful articles.

The lucky winner of our subscriber draw from the December issue was Rachel Pilch of Kebun Alpacas in Victoria. She has received a lovely alpaca throw with compliments of Creswick Knitting Mills and with this issue we shall be offering one lucky subscriber a **FREE quarter page advert** (including artwork) in the next edition of Camelid Connections. So make sure you subscribe before 30th March 2018 to be in the draw for your free advertisement. See [page 35](#) for details.

Don't forget to have a look at our new Services Directory you may find the services you are looking for in the one place. If you would like to add your information to the Directory we are offering this service for \$36 per advert or, if you take adverts in four magazines there is a 10% discount - A new avenue for attracting people to your websites? – all adverts will have a live link direct to your website or Facebook page.

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Meet The Team



Esme Graham - Editor

My husband and I have been breeding suri alpacas for the past 20 years, I have been heavily involved with both regional committees and the national board of the Australian Alpaca Association for a number of years.

My major interest has been in marketing and education and to this end I have been editor of Alpacas Australia magazine for the last six years.

I hope that the experience I have gained editing Alpacas Australia can be extended to educate and inform a wider range of alpaca and llama breeders who are not necessarily association members.



Julie McClen - Designer/Editor

A breeder of ultrafine Huacaya alpacas for over 17 years, I have a passion for fine fibre and the genetic connection to the most diminutive and finest of the camelids - the wild Vicuna.

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

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

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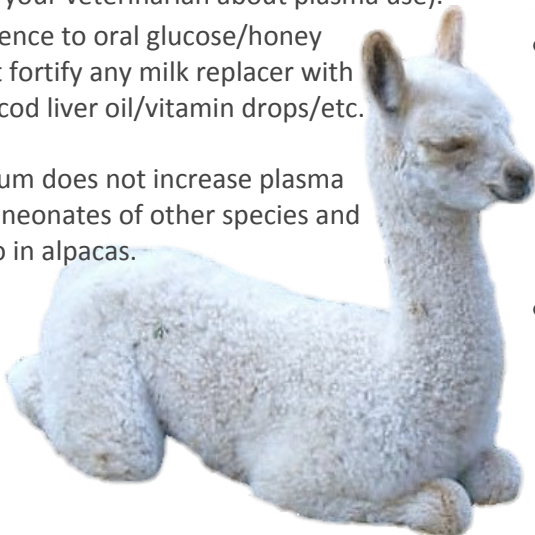
Supplementing crias with milk

By Jane Vaughan BVSc PhD MACVSc - Criagenesis



Rules of thumb at birth

- Crias should stand and begin nursing within 1-2 hours of birth. Give the cria time to bond and suckle.
- If the dam has no milk/has died or the cria is too weak to nurse, feed warm colostrum (frozen and stored from another disease-free alpaca/cow/goat) via teat (preferred method, to optimise digestion) or stomach tube (last resort) for the first 3 days of life to maximise antibody uptake into blood (first 12 hours of life) and to provide local gut protection from microbes for the duration of use.
- If no colostrum available, use milk replacer and strongly consider intravenous plasma transfusion for antibody transfer (speak to your veterinarian about plasma use).
Use milk in preference to oral glucose/honey and water. Do not fortify any milk replacer with egg yolk/glucose/cod liver oil/vitamin drops/etc.
- Powdered colostrum does not increase plasma antibody levels in neonates of other species and is unlikely to do so in alpacas.



Choice and use of milk replacer

- It does not matter which brand or type of milk replacer you use (Table 1), but do not vary the brand of milk replacer once you have made your selection. The way it is fed determines success or failure of bottle rearing, not the brand of milk used.
- Store milk powder below 30° C and protect from moisture. Use clean bottles/teats/feeders.
- Mix according to label instructions; do not fortify. Warm milk to 35° C before feeding.

Frequency of feeding

- Feed to demand (approx. 10-15 % of body weight as milk per day) over 6 feeds for first 2 weeks of life, decreasing to 4 feeds/day until 4-6 weeks, then decrease frequency to weaning at 12 weeks of age. E.g. 6 kg cria requires 600-900 ml/day, equivalent to 100-150 ml per each of 6 feeds. E.g. 10 kg cria requires 1-1.5 L/day, equivalent to 250-375 ml per each of 4 feeds.
- Feed first thing in the morning, 1-2 times midmorning, 1-2 times mid-afternoon, last thing at night. Wait times in between feeds encourage the cria to develop an appetite to:

Table 1. Types of milk replacer available for crias

Milk type	Per litre of reconstituted milk			
	% Solids	% Protein	% Fat	% Sugars
ProfelAC Shepherd Premium Lamb-Kid-Cria Milk Replacer [®]	18	4.5	5.4	5.4
Di-Vetelact [®]	13.5	3.2	4.1	6.3
Palastart Lamb & Kid Milk Replacer [®]	22	5.3	5.5	
Wombaroo Cria Milk [®]	17	5.9	2.7	6.2
Full cream cows' milk from supermarket*	12-12.5	3.2-3.6	3.8-3.9	4.8-5.2
Full cream cows' milk powder	13	3.2	3.7	4.9

*Fresh or UHT milk

- Nurse from dam as much as possible if she is available.
- Start picking at grass/hay/supplements and develop 1st compartment of stomach.
- Drink enthusiastically from teat when offered.
- Crias should double birth weight by 4-6 weeks of age, and gain 200 grams per day from 4-12 weeks of age.
- Weigh cria regularly to monitor weight gain. Keep good records of weight gain and milk intake.

If cria is not meeting weight-for-age targets, speak to your veterinarian.

Method of feeding

- Tube-feed cria (in consultation with your vet) if neonate is moribund.
- Bottle-feed cria with teat, holding bottle vertical and ensuring nose of cria pointing skywards to simulate cria suckling from udder. This posture elicits a reflex in the gut, which allows passage of milk along a groove from the oesophagus directly to the 3rd stomach compartment, bypassing C1&2. In C3, the milk is converted into curds and whey under the effects of acid and enzymes. The whey fraction (sugars and soluble proteins) is then rapidly digested, while the curds (fats and insoluble proteins) are digested slowly over the next few hours.
- Teat feeding is preferred over bucket feeding to ensure milk enters C3 and does not ferment in C1 (appear as pot-bellied, ill-thrifty crias). Teat feeding also stimulates saliva secretion to enhance milk digestion.

Tips to prevent diarrhoea

- Keep concentration of milk consistent, do not fortify by adding more milk powder per litre of water as diarrhoea can develop secondary to higher sugar content of milk.
- If a cria develops diarrhoea, offer oral electrolytes by teat between milk feeds (3 hours apart) and seek veterinary advice.
- Do not dilute milk by adding electrolytes to the milk as this prevents curds and whey formation and exacerbates diarrhoea.

Other hints on rearing crias

- Always have clean, cool, fresh water available to allow normal C1 development.
- Offer high quality, highly digestible creep feed and good quality hay to develop C1 from 7-10 days of age.

Aim to wean from milk replacer by 3-4 months of age provided cria eating good quality forage and weighs ≈ 25 kg (Figure 1). You must ensure the cria is eating substantial amounts of forage/supplements prior to weaning or it will fail to thrive after weaning.

What's In Alpaca Milk?

Following a small survey of milk constituents in 5 lactating alpacas in south-eastern Australia, it was revealed that the average milk fat content was 4.4%, the average milk protein content was 4.2% and the average milk sugar (lactose) content was 5.8%.

Constituents in alpaca milk can vary depending on age of dam, number of days post-partum, nutrition and genetics. Accordingly, alpacas and llamas exhibit small ranges for milk fat (2.7-4.9%), milk protein (3.4-4.5%) and milk sugar (lactose; 5.6-7.4%) in the scientific literature.

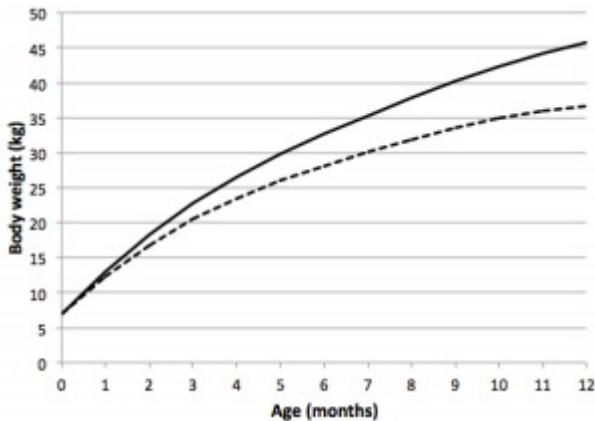
Alpaca milk is very similar to other domestic livestock with respect to milk constituents. For example, cows average 3.6-4.2% milk fat, 3.2-3.5% milk protein and 4.6-5.0% for milk sugar (lactose).

Do not overthink what you should supplement crias that have been orphaned or require a top up if the dam is not producing much milk. Remember that the milk sugar, lactose, is present in alpaca milk and crias have the enzyme necessary to digest it (for you budding biochemists out there, lactase in the gut of the cria snips the disaccharide lactose into monosaccharides glucose and galactose for absorption and use by the cria for energy).

- Do not humanise alpacas: Do not pat cria. Bottle feed and walk away so cria bonds with alpaca herd. Crias naturally jump on their mothers and other crias, and will try to do it to you when they get bigger if you humanise them too much.

Cria growth rates under Australian conditions.

The solid line represents what is reasonable and ideally achievable by alpacas grazing pasture with appropriate supplementation, whilst the dotted line represents a minimum goal.



USE GOOD HUSBANDRY TECHNIQUES. KEEP GOOD RECORDS. WRITE DOWN TREATMENTS/MATING DATES/MEAT WITHHOLDING TIMES.

NO PRODUCTS ARE REGISTERED FOR USE IN ALPACAS. CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN AND ALWAYS READ THE LABEL BEFORE USING ANY OF THE PRODUCTS MENTIONED. NEVER USE ANY PRODUCT IN ALPACAS THAT IS NOT REGISTERED FOR USE IN FOOD PRODUCING ANIMALS.

FOR ANY SIGNS OF UNUSUAL OR SERIOUS ANIMAL DISEASE, RING THE DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE: 1800 675 888.

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“They say that llamas are the ‘potato chips of the paddock’ because you can’t stop at just having one. That couldn’t be truer for most of us who have had their lives dominated by these endearing and captivating animals.”

Llam-addiction

By Shane Hancock - Southern Cross Llamas
LAA Queensland Branch

Llamas are certainly addictive and like all addictions, once you’re hooked, it takes over your life. In roughly 4 years, I have gone from buying my first three llamas to having one of the largest herds in Queensland, currently at 70 and growing. They are an integral part of my life beyond just a passing infatuation or phase.

I’m often asked, “why llamas?” by many people, all wondering what the attraction is. Usually my response is “why not?” but it does go a lot deeper than that. I’ve always been animal orientated and undoubtedly always will be. From a small boy, my parents couldn’t keep me away from any animal, large or small, domestic or wild. So much so, that they thought they must have bought the wrong baby home from the hospital as they were not animal people themselves. To their credit though, they indulged my obsession and allowed me to keep a menagerie of pets in my suburban Brisbane backyard. On the inside, I felt like a country kid living a city life as livestock and farm life captured my imagination and dreams for the future.

I didn’t meet my first llama until I took a job in the USA in 1994 at 21 years old. I was employed as an international Camp Counsellor at Hidden Valley Camp in New England for their summer break during my final year of university. It was an amazing camp for wealthy children and those on scholarship to spend their summer holidays in the stunning, great outdoors of Maine. Part of my responsibilities was to look after the onsite farm animals in the camp that also

included a small herd of llamas and to educate the children about them. Having never seen a llama before let alone worked with one, it was a steep learning curve. I had to quickly teach the campers about caring for them and lead trail-packing walks into the local woods. It was a baptism of fire that ignited my passion for these noble animals, which still burns to this day. Little did I know then that it would be another 19 years before my dream of owning llamas would become a reality once I moved onto my own farm.

I returned to Australia and began my career in education that took me to remote areas of tropical Far North Queensland and overseas. Locations that were far from suitable for keeping llamas. Despite this, I never let go of my wish to own llamas one day and kept learning more about their husbandry while networking with other llama farmers at every opportunity. In my mind, if I couldn’t own a llama, I was going to adopt someone else’s as my own ‘pseudo herd’ until I could.

In 2004, I met Bob and Sylva Barns for the first time at their long-standing llama display at the Brisbane Ekka and a great friendship soon developed. With their support, I joined the Llama Association of Australasia Inc. the following year, even though I did not own a llama, and before long was attending local social gatherings for the branch. At various public events, Bob and Sylva’s herd became my adopted llama family and they my mentors. I knew most of their llamas very well and even assisted them with naming new cria as needed

and helping where I could. It was as good as the real thing for someone like me who lived and worked in the city and wished they could be a llama farmer too. Looking back, I feel very fortunate to have taken the time to understand what I was doing with llamas before taking the plunge myself. It gave me the opportunity to prepare for something that is exciting and nerve-wracking as well as being a huge investment of money and time.

While I always knew that I would eventually build a sizable llama herd of my own, I never anticipated that it would happen so rapidly. As it turned out, my llama acquisitions were circumstantial as opportunities came my way that were too good to refuse. For those who know me well, I have a hard time saying no which often gets me into trouble with my partner, Darren. In a year, I managed to build a diverse herd that allows me to be self-sufficient with my genetics and have various options for mating. Even though I have 70 llamas, some are gelded or retired meaning that my breeding nucleus is more manageable and focused.

None of this could have been possible without the support of some close friends who allowed me to agist my herd for 12 months in their paddocks until our own acreage was acquired. I cannot thank them enough for the start they gave me and their time helping me to manage my herd. I will always be indebted to them for their generosity and assistance.

Our 80-acre property on the Brisbane River in Ipswich finally settled in September 2014 and we are now in the process of developing it into our home and llama farm with future plans to build accommodation cabins to earn an income from farm-stay tourism. Our farm's development is well underway with further infrastructure planned to support my 'habit', my llama addiction or 'llam-addiction' as I call it. While Darren is not as addicted to them as myself, he does support my habit and enjoys being a proxy llama farmer too.

I can't say that my llama farming has been all smooth sailing. I have experienced the good and bad of owning llamas in a relatively short time. This has included adult fatalities, snake bites, wild dog attacks, still births, medical dramas, cria deaths and various birthing complications. Farmers often say that part of having livestock is having dead stock too, but it is never easy to endure. Deaths are always unpleasant and difficult to accept at the time, especially when they are young.

Even though it sounds macabre, I am looking forward to the day when I begin to lose animals from old age having given them a great life in my care. I'm sure those deaths will be just as hard to accept but acceptable under the circumstances with fond memories attached to them.



Helping out at the EKKA



Seeing the excitement on a child's face when they first see a llama is always rewarding

On a happier note, the birth of my first cria was a moment I'll never forget. He was a complete surprise even though I knew his mum was well into her pregnancy when I bought her. Little 'Ronnie' appeared in the paddock on a very wet and stormy morning only a week after his mum arrived and just a month after buying my first llamas. It was a wonderful moment to know that my herd had grown spontaneously with very little input from me.

Ronnie was handsome, lively and full of life. He was a delightful addition to the herd and taught me a lot about caring for a newborn cria.

Consequently, there will always be a sentimental attachment to Ronnie as the first llama to be born in my herd. My only regret was that he never had other youngsters to play with instead of mooching around with the adults all day. That was the first lesson Ronnie taught me as a llama farmer, to try and have a few births close together to provide playmates in the paddock. Thankfully, since his birth, I have had other cria born relatively close in time to one another. I have personally witnessed the benefits of these cria having herd mates of the same age to play with and explore the paddocks together.



Having multiple cria at the same time allows them to play and socialise away from their mothers



Ronnie and his mum

However, not all cria births go to plan. In fact, I dread birthing and the arrival of cria because I've endured the complications and associated stresses of having premature cria on multiple occasions as well as late gestational mishaps of contorted uteruses, still births and toxic shock fatalities. Breeding llamas is not something I particularly look forward to, but when it goes to plan, it can be an amazing thrill and a very rewarding experience. I strongly encourage anyone looking to breed their llamas to do their research first and prepare for the worst case scenario with resources and neonatal care knowledge. It will put you in a much better situation should something not go to plan.

I look forward to the day when I can observe my herd in the paddock and have generations of my breeding grazing in front of me, all with their own stories, idiosyncrasies and associated memories. While it is inevitable that I will have to sell some of my animals along the way for others to enjoy, if I had it my way, they would all stay. I'm not ashamed to say and I'll say it loud and proud, "My name is Shane and I'm a llama addict with no intention of being cured". Even though my llama ownership journey has only really just started, as you can see, it has been a long time coming with a lot of history behind it. Llamas are truly wonderful animals that should come with this warning label for anyone contemplating keeping them, "CAUTION: Llamas are engaging, endearing and highly addictive".



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Record Keeping



By Richard Williams - Alpaca Manager

Owning camelids, even as pets, isn't quite as straightforward as having a cat! To look after them properly, there are certain things that need to be monitored or carried out on a regular basis. Drenching, vaccinating, toe-nail trimming, not to mention shearing.

If you have only a few animals and you're not breeding, keeping track of these things is relatively simple. You can get away with a manual diary or a document or spreadsheet on your computer. However, this can be slow and cumbersome, especially once you start to increase your herd size. Your information is unlikely to have a structure and it's easy to neglect tasks without an automatic reminder.



These days most households have a computer. If you have even a small herd, having your information on the computer will make life a lot easier. There are many computer programs on the market. While their features vary they should all provide:

- Easy data entry (including downloading from the Registry to ensure accuracy);
- Extensive recording of different sorts of information - genealogy, matings, medications, show entries and results, body score, weight, location and movement history, shearing and fibre sample statistics, etc.
- The ability to search the information you have based on specific criteria so you can answer questions like:
 - How many females are due to give birth in the next month?
 - Which animals on my farm have not had a particular vaccination in the last 6 months?
 - Which animals have been sold, died or had a particular illness in the past year?
- Produce paper reports and Sales Sheets.
- Options to import and export information to and from other computer programs.

Examples include: importing Fleece Statistics from your fibre testing authority, exporting your 'For Sale' animal details to websites like AlpacaSeller or transferring animal records to the new owners for animals you've sold.

Of course, there can be disadvantages too. When considering swapping to a computer program you need to consider:

- Will the program actually run on your computer? Some may be Windows or Mac specific and many won't run on iPhones, iPads and other mobile devices.
- If it is a web-based product, is your internet connection reliable enough for you to use it effectively?
- How much is it? Is this a one-off purchase or are there ongoing costs?
- How easy is it to use? Is training and ongoing support available?
- What do other breeders say about the product?
- Is there a free trial? Some free trials are time limited while others offer reduced functionality with no time limit.
- If you have existing data in another product or a spreadsheet, can that data be loaded automatically?

Starting out with any new software application can be a daunting task.

However, the benefits are worth the effort and, as long as you can get help with learning how to use it, you will not be disappointed and will probably wonder how you ever worked without it.

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Quechua Benefit

A non-profit organization dedicated to social justice for the Quechua people living in highland Peru.

“We work to relieve suffering and provide opportunity in Andean communities through healthcare, education, and economic empowerment”



Quechua Benefit was founded in 1996.

Since that time, Quechua Benefit has spent years visiting remote highland communities in Peru. We have listened to the people, created lasting relationships, and served more than 150,000 patients. We have created three specific pillars that, with your help, will break the cycle of poverty:

- ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
- EDUCATION
- PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE



Economic Empowerment: Alpaca Health Programs

Our Economic Empowerment plan took root as we listened. In January of 2017 Quechua Benefit’s team crowded into the mayor’s office, a 15 x 20 foot room that doubled as a community centre in the town of Aymana, which is located miles above sea level and far from any modern conveniences. The team sat in white plastic chairs along the far wall, across from the local men who came mostly out of curiosity, not quite sure what would unfold.

Women filed in and sat on the cold, grey floor in the back of the room, their wide, vividly coloured skirts billowing around them. Children darted in and out. To show respect, women from our team joined the others on the floor.

Dr. Jose Mosquera, a surgeon and an international public health expert, was there to lead a focus group to identify what issues were most important to the community. Dr. Mosquera – credited with substantially reducing parasitic anemia in the entire country of Ecuador – began by inquiring about the general health of the community.

He asked,
“What is the most important health issue you face?”

One of the men immediately responded,
“The health of our alpacas.”

The team, taken by surprise, asked
“but what about your children’s health?”

A young woman cradling a baby wrapped in a crimson blanket, with two small children at her feet whispered,
“If the alpacas die, our children will not eat.”

This simple fact lies at the core of any effort to break the cycle of poverty in the highlands of Peru. Consider that an average family of four owns a small herd of about 150 alpacas. From these animals, they make 85% of all their annual income, which amounts to about \$100 per month.

The number one killer of alpacas in Peru is enterotoxemia, a bacterium that hits newborn cria. In a bad year, the breeders can lose as many as 80% of their newborns. In a good year, they lose 30%. In 2016, over a very cold winter, Picotani lost 65% of their crias to enterotoxemia. The collective community in Picotani owns 75,000 alpacas. Just think what this fact means to their livelihood.

One of the veterinarians on the Quechua Benefit team asked,
“Did you know that there is a vaccine for this disease?”
Miguel, the community leader in Picotani simply shook his head no and said,

“There hasn’t been a veterinarian in our community for more than eight years.”

Incredulous, the vet said,
“There is a vaccination for enterotoxemia and it costs about 30 cents per alpaca. Would you be willing to pay for the vaccine?”

Miguel thought for a moment and replied, *“Yes, of course.”*

It is not quite as simple as it sounds. The vaccine is temperature sensitive and must be kept cold. The disease mutates rapidly, and a new version of the vaccine must be produced every year. Even so, this is an effective cure for a disease that kills an average of 40% of the alpacas born every year. The cria that survive are immune and will not become infected as adults.

By reducing the cria mortality from 40% to 20% for an average family with 200 alpacas, there will be an additional 14 animals a year available for sale, increasing their income by \$6.60 per day or \$2,412 annually. In 2017 Quechua Benefit executed a pilot program in Aymana with good results. In 2018 we are rolling our program out in 5 additional communities.



Deworming alpaca guard dogs

An enterotoxemia vaccine is just one initiative that Quechua Benefit will undertake to increase the value of the alpaca producers' herds.

A second initiative will focus on Sarcocystis – a parasite which makes meat unfit for human consumption and is the second leading cause of income loss in the herds. This disease is well known to the breeders and is transmitted primarily by dogs through their faeces. Once infected, the alpaca meat becomes worthless.

Each family owns three to four dogs that protect their alpacas from foxes and help the women herd the animals. The breeders have been futilely deworming the dogs with a common treatment for tapeworms, which has no relationship to or cure for Sarcocystis.

The key to reducing Sarcocystis, according to veterinarian Dr. Tim Thompson, who recently volunteered with Quechua Benefit in Peru, is a dedicated three-year program that treats the dogs four times a year. The cost of Fenbendazole is under \$0.10 per treatment, or about \$1.00 per dog, per year. This year the dog deworming program will be trialed in three communities.

Time does not stand still. With your help, neither will Quechua Benefit. Go to www.quechuabenefit.org to see how you can help.



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Felting

By Ursula Ponce Hamner - LANART

In 3D



Alpaca has been a part of LANART for almost 40 years.

Angelo Ponce, a Latino immigrant, studied art and focused on sculpture in New York City. While struggling to provide increasingly better opportunities for his young family, his independent nature took over. Realizing that working for someone else had limited potential, he ventured off starting his own business. Though the business underwent several upheavals, he persevered and created a flourishing import company to bring the world beautiful products made from this rare and wonderful fibre, alpaca. To this day LANART remains a small family business that delivers a big punch in quality alpaca products.

How did we end up in the felting business? Needle felting was something pretty that people did in other part of the world with wool. LANART was an alpaca business that focused on high end teddy bears and textiles. But when a dear customer decided she wanted to retire, she wasn't ready to let her ideas and life's work die. She trained us in the art of needle felting.



We saw the vision of where this could take LANART and decided to run with it. After we learned the process, made samples, and understood the tools, we brought this idea to our studios in Peru and passed on this amazing process to create our new collection of hand- made sculptures. Our artists, with our heavily creative and artistic company culture, resonated deeply with this brand new product. Felting was challenging at the beginning because historically, felting had been done with wool, which has many more barbs and a texture which lends itself much more to the process. The fine, soft alpaca fibre had a much more challenging time matting, condensing and pressing together to form a solid material to work with.



Our skilled artists, used to working with their hands due to the history of the rich Peruvian textiles, were primed for working with something new, and adapted to this medium with a vengeance. It was as if they had been looking to take on something new and found it. We learned about the barbed needles, the adhering process of the fibre, and the difficulties that we would face in felting alpaca fibre. However, as we created new designs and different species, our skills grew and our vision for this collection flourished. While we have had several fantasy themed items, such as our dragons and character mice, our focus has been to grow our skills in lifelike forms.



With our artistic background and company culture being so heavily weighted on art and innovation, we strive to provide the most accurate portrayal possible. Always changing, adapting, and improving, our animal sculptures have been recognized by several museums, wildlife associations, and expedition specialist cruise ships. We are proud to have 8 of the 17 living (non- caricature) species of penguins. While these bi-coloured birds may look similar to most people, we are certain to accurately portray individual markings that help the penguin enthusiast decipher between species. We take great care with detail to portray distinguishing shapes and colour proportions for each type of penguin.



As part of our global involvement, we enjoy creating geographically favoured species. For instance, we have a lovely kangaroo with joey, and koala for the Australian collectors. The polar bear and salmon as well as the moose are favourites in Alaska. And our vast collection of sea and land turtles are very popular with our Florida rescue enthusiasts.



These are just some of the many different animals that we feature in our needle felted collection. Our alpacas, of course, are the most beloved and sweetest of our felted creations. While we hand knit a chullo (traditional Peruvian hat), we are still true to the anatomy of the alpacas. We have a variety of sizes to delineate the various stages of life, including the cria, mama (a term we use referring to the yearling), and herdsire.



In addition, we have the two different breeds of alpacas. The suri alpaca, known for its long silky locks, is made with thick endless layers of alpaca yarn. The huacaya alpaca, known for its crimp and curl, is made from tops (the process before the fibre is made into yarn) that provides that thick crimp look of the huacaya.

Our felting business has truly been a multifaceted blessing to LANART. We are able to employ a larger portion of artists and support workers, while continuing to reinvest in the local communities for raw materials. This business gives back to our team on so many levels that we are eternally grateful to our customer who helped launch this leg of LANART, and all the individuals who have helped us develop countless samples, animals, and designs. We are so proud of everyone from the designers to the handicapped people who make our base forms, to our local staff who help customers and ship our felted sculptures from North Carolina, U.S.A. Thanks for reading about our wonderful world of alpaca felting. www.lanart.net



Ursula & her father Angelo Ponce



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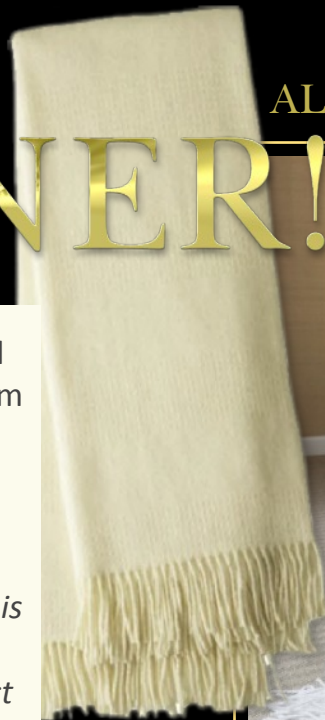
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The Paraders Program

“Our industries future is in the hands of today’s youth and they are so keen to learn”

By Fiona Laughton – Beavona Losdge Alpacas

For several years I have been working with the various versions of Junior Handler, Paraders and Junior Judges. My special interest has been in the positive effect the Paraders program has had with the special needs children.

In the past I worked with Gin Gin State High as part of their GGAP program which was designed to keep kids at school who would otherwise have dropped out. This was very successful both for the school and the students, with the school winning a National competition for their program.

Last year, along with Bev Callaghan (Ivory Park) and Sandra Robertson (Zamzook Park) I have been back at Gin Gin State High presenting the Paraders program for the special needs unit.

We adjust the course to suit the needs of the group each week.

This has been a huge success with the children opening up and responding to the alpacas with great enthusiasm.

From being too shy to talk, too scared to touch the alpacas and lacking any knowledge of alpacas and their management, they have bloomed. Entering the Paraders event at Bundaberg AgroTrend as well as “mock” shows we have organised.

They have spun alpaca, visited the farms, come to shearing, skirted fleeces, made alpaca felted soap and even written stories about an alpacas’ adventure then read them out at a ‘paca picnic day with their families at the school. This is in addition to learning about alpaca basic management, husbandry and history.

Our contact teacher Graham Maskiell is currently writing a paper to present at the Australian Association of Special Education, highlighting the success of the program.

The next step will be to repeat the success of this year with a new group over a 10 week period this year so that the results can be monitored and seen to be repeatable.

Graham is happy to share his findings and notes with the Association.



I have given the school the links to the education resource material available on the AAA Ltd web site so that the teachers can follow up in the classroom to our hands on sessions.

We have seen these children respond and grow at a personal level, gaining confidence in themselves and their abilities. I feel that the Paraders program has a fantastic, positive affect on the special needs groups. Not only school age youth but adults as well, and feel the program needs to be expanded to include these groups by being skill based, not age based.

For example:

Many High school teachers would not see the material listed for Primary Schools that is suited to these groups. Likewise, advanced primary students could be held back by not having ready access to the High school program.

Additional comments from Bev Callaghan;

“I would add that the kids from being very separate units with minimal interaction have joined together and become ONE unit – encouraging each other as well – not seen on the earlier visits. Shows particularly when the mainstream

students interact with them, and also the interaction with us from then to now. The enthusiasm of the kids even with the not so fun jobs like loading and unloading and the setting up – taking responsibility of those little jobs.”

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Camel Milk Anyone?

QCAMEL – CAMEL DAIRY ON THE SUNSHINE COAST QLD
By Yasmin Brisbane - QCamel

Its 6am, and as the sun peeks over the horizon there are two lines already quietly forming at the gates. Mothers stand patiently to the left, their calves to the right. As the staff walk along the fences with “hellos and good mornings!” they are greeted with kisses and nuzzles, the odd low bellow here and there – a gentle chorus of “good morning to you too!”



There is anticipation in the air as the milking machines hum to life and the first girls and babies are through the races. It's a normal day in the dairy... but this isn't any normal dairy. This is QCamel Camel Dairy on the Sunshine Coast QLD and besides producing camel milk, there is a lot more that makes this farm unique.

First of all, it doesn't LOOK like a dairy. There aren't one but two lines of steel milking races. A little gate in-between each allows the babies to suckle from their mums and a gate on the other side to collect the milk. There's a tall canvas ceiling and a stark clean concrete floor, but only one wall, allowing for natural light and a warm breeze. Then there's the view straight out to the stunning Glasshouse Mountains, dancing like pyramids on the skyline. Its calm, bright and peaceful... except for the excited camels now bellowing for their breakfasts.

The first question people always ask is "How do you milk a camel?" Simple. Same as a cow, it's just a bit higher off ground with four teats and suction cups. Except, it's not that simple. Unlike bovines, camel cows will only produce milk while they are nursing a calf and (being the strong-willed creatures they are) they can choose not to let their milk down at all.

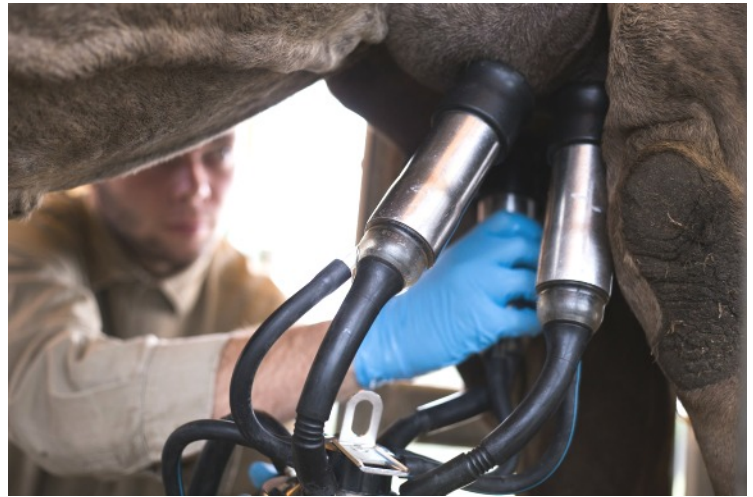
They are also amazingly powerful, weighing 400 - 600kg, standing 9 feet tall and wielding an incredible 360-degree kick range.

Hmm. That makes this more complicated. So how DO you milk a camel?

"You show a camel compassion, you take care of her calf and she will happily share her milk with you. It's about trust and respect. Our camels are family, not machinery" says QCamel owner Lauren Brisbane.

This gentle approach to milking is part of what attracted Lauren and her family to starting their camel production. Although they had no dairy experience whatsoever, they felt it gave them an advantage as they weren't loyal to traditional farming practices. They welcomed the fact you had to share the milk and that a lot of free will is given to the animals.

Lauren says that ethical production is the cornerstone of their business and part of their growing success. If a camel does not want to milk, either that day or in the long term, she doesn't have to. If a baby is sick, they don't milk the mother and camels are never milked before a baby is two months old to ensure their health and development. They also have a strict 'no slaughter' and 'no violence policy' and either rehome their boys or keep their non-milkers in the herd. When questioned about how this fits in with a successful business model Lauren answered, "If you make decisions on the dollar, no one wins."





“A happy camel produces healthy milk. That’s what we always say. If a camel isn’t happy the milk tastes wrong, and if the camels aren’t happy, we aren’t happy. Our staff aren’t happy.”

The QCamel staff are a small and tightknit group of people, most of whom had never worked on a farm before. The only prerequisite for working at a camel dairy it seems is patience and a love of camels. There are even two vegans among the group. They are an incredible bunch who have to memorise a huge catalogue of camels and can tell them all apart with a single look. All 110 of them.

There’s Ruby and her baby Varian, Molly and her Jasper, Margery and Goodman, Rosie and Barney and so on. QCamel doesn’t believe in tagging or branding although all their camels are microchipped. Lauren says this helps with their unique approach to running a dairy. Each camel is known intimately down to where they like being scratched, how much feed they like, where their pecking order is in the herd. One camel, Carly, developed an unusual allergic reaction to paper towels, something only discovered because of their staff’s close bond and intimate knowledge of the camels.

Of course being a family run business, the whole Brisbane clan is also involved in all aspects of production. Lauren and Peter’s three children not only help at the farm but are involved with marketing, sales, bottle labelling and more. Their journey to QCamel began in 1994 when upon moving to Central QLD at the height of the drought, they witnessed the demise of countless agricultural businesses.

“I thought there’s got to be a better way to do this. So I looked for an animal that could be better,” Lauren says of her study into co-grazing cattle with camels, who were drought tolerant.

Lauren and her husband Peter went on to personally fund a feasibility study into the development of the camel industry in Queensland and subsequently became founding members (with Lauren as Chairwoman) of the Australian Camel Industry Association (ACIA).

In 2005, the family moved to the Sunshine Coast and two years later bought their first two camels. Having discovered their potential as a natural resource management, Lauren continued to study camels and of course, their milk.

By 2014, QCamel became the first accredited camel dairy on the East Coast and the first to sell pasteurised camel milk in Australia. Four years on and their once-tiny dairy is making a splash in the market with their products available in over 100 stores, including David Jones and Harris Farm markets as well being shipped to Singapore and New Zealand.

“Starting a camel dairy just perfectly fitted in with who we are. We fell in love with camels and wanted to work with them. We also understood what it was like to struggle with health problems and we turned to holistic and organic approaches. Camel Milk gave us chance to combine our love of camels and being able to help people with a really beautiful, healthy product”



The Brisbane's health struggle began with their middle son who was diagnosed with a severe physical disability. When Western medicine provided mixed results, they turned to alternative healthcare where they finally found a holistic approach. Their eldest daughter also battled a debilitating gut disorder, but then found reprieve with camel milk. Now the whole family drinks it and say it has changed their entire health and well-being.

Which is something you're all probably wondering right? Why Camel Milk?

It might be the new kid on the block in the health food market, but this ancient superfood has been a staple of the Middle Eastern diet for thousands of years. Bedouins, nomadic and pastoral tribes would give camel milk to their babies, rub it into their skin and sing its praises for health and wellbeing. Modern science has since revealed that camel milk is not only naturally antibacterial, it is the closest thing to human milk meaning it is easily digested by even the fussiest tummies and heals the gut and bowel. It has 3-5 times more iron and 10 times more vitamin C than regular milk, but with significantly reduced fat and cholesterol. And despite its very low lactose, it does not contain the casein proteins that cause dairy intolerances so it is safe for most dairy allergies. There is also ongoing research from across the world to suggest it aids in the treatment of Autism, Diabetes, Food Allergies, Gut and Bowel Disorders, Autoimmunity and more. Much of the camel milk customer base across Australia source it for these health benefits as well as being a healthier milk alternative.

And the taste? Surprising! Once you've gotten over the mental 'hump' of drinking a different type of milk, it is a refreshing and tasty drink. It's light and crisp, but with a lovely, creamy body. Not watery like skim milk but not heavy like full cream milk. A delicious somewhere-in-between with a slightly salty finish.

In addition to their Premium Australian Camel Milk, QCamel's product range includes a Mango Honey Yoghurt Smoothie and soaps. They are also trialling a new camel cheese and yoghurt, and are finalising their Freeze-Dried Powder and new range of cosmetics.

But the product generating the most buzz at the moment is their soon to be released Camel Milk Chocolates. Lauren says QCamel has already received overwhelming orders from their usual customers and has had massive international interest too.

"We are very excited about the chocolates. We collaborated on them with a local master chocolatier and they are really something else. We are only the second company in the world and the first in Australia to make them."

It seems QCamel are working towards another first this year as well: Organic Certification. While Lauren says they have always produced their milk with organic practices, they wanted to make it official. In 2018, QCamel will be the only Certified Organic Camel Milk company in the world. It's a move that is not only important to their health-conscious customers, but important to the well-being of their camels.



Notes/QCamel

- No forced milking
- Sharing milk with calves
- Gentle yields, only taking whatever is left after the babies
- No slaughtering
- No violence
- No bragging or tagging
- No hormones or antibiotics
- Holistic healthcare
- Organic feed
- Camels are pasture fed
- Camels roam in a natural herd
- Sustainable farming
- Recyclable bottles, PET BPA free

To read more about QCamel go to www.qcamel.com.au

Fleece Has Value

By Liz Mason with Paul Vallely of AAFT



UK alpaca fleece is a high quality product and needs to be valued by all sectors of the industry to realise its potential worth.

Owners, shearers and mills all need to treat alpaca fleece as a high quality product, according to speakers at a shearers' workshop which began in Northampton. The workshop, sponsored by fibre testing company AAFT, brought together UK and European alpaca shearers from Norway, Holland and Belgium to discuss issues affecting fleece quality and alpaca welfare.

Lulu Oliver hosted the workshop at Lusi Alpacas. She has been breeding alpacas for nearly 10 years and has a herd of about 25 mainly black Huacaya. As a committee member, and former chair, of the Heart of England Alpaca Group, Lulu has organised many fibre sorting and skirting training days. But she finds that many owners are still not making use of their fleece. "Many people do not understand the value of their fibre and they don't understand that all fibre has a use."

Shearers have a valuable part to play in getting across basic information to owners about fleece sorting and skirting. They can offer information about the need to separate neck and leg fibre from the blanket fibre and they can also encourage people, especially owners with pets or new alpacas, to use their fibre. "The more information that you can give people who don't understand the value of fibre then the more fibre we are going to get into the system and that means it's not going to be left in bags at the top of the barn."

Raw fibre is processed to add value and is in turn created into a product to add further value.

Some owners may not be interested in using fibre, but others who are may find fleece quality terms 'a bit technical' when they look into micron and Standard Deviation (SD).

"Sometimes I think they find it all a bit mind boggling, so I think they need to have information that is quite simple, including the reason why we take certain parts of the fleece off separately from others. I think that's where shearers can help," Lulu said.

Shearers also need to be more "customer friendly" as some owners may find shearing time rather daunting and as a result, may feel uncomfortable asking questions or seeking advice from their shearers. Paul Vallely, AAFT owner and manager, said the workshop was set up following an AAFT customer survey which found a significant number of breeders suggested more shearer training and development. Further discussion found some owners have difficulty at shearing time because they have not had the benefit of training aimed at how to manage a shearing.



“The problems associated with training and development relevant to alpaca fleece harvesting is a two edged sword,” Paul said. “On one hand, there is a lack of effective and thorough training programmes for shearers. On the other hand, breeders are not being provided the information required to prepare and operate their shearing, which in turn, is constraining the shearers’ ability to provide the best service they can. In the end, we see many potentially valuable fleeces being rendered relatively worthless due to inadequate fleece harvesting.”

“What is also troubling is that there are instances where you see alpacas that have been shorn and their welfare has been impacted. “In saying all that, it was obvious from the shearing workshop there is a clear push by the shearers to provide the best service possible, and that within the sector, there are a core of professional shearers who are well trained and experienced enough to drive their industry to much higher levels.”

It is noteworthy that some UK shearers send customers a worksheet setting out their requirements for shearing as a way of passing on their expertise to breeders so that they become better prepared for managing the shearing of their alpacas. During the shearers’ workshop, some shearers suggested they create a set of industry protocols as a way of establishing self regulated minimum standards to guide shearers on how they might carry out their service.

In Australia the merino sheep industry has a shearing code of practice displayed as a wall chart in wool sheds. The code sets out what is required from both breeders and shearers to achieve good shearing practice.

Building a fibre industry

Underpinning AAFT’s push towards a viable alpaca fibre industry is Paul Valley’s wool industry background. Paul (at right) has a flock of 3000 superfine Australian Merino sheep and supplies fibre to the Italian suit making industry. Last year, Paul also headed the wool industry’s ‘Future for Superfine’ taskforce.

Paul recounts how almost two decades ago, AAFT was set up as a fibre testing service for the sheep industry and the company became involved with alpacas after it was asked by breeders to test alpaca fibre. To ensure the company’s service matched breeders’ needs, Paul met them at shows and sales and listened to their breeding objectives.

He found that “fleece was the name of the game”. Breeders aimed for good quality uniform fleece and alpacas were judged heavily on their fleece at shows. Fleece was widely known as “the fibre of the gods” but it sold for \$5\kilo and in many cases was used as garden mulch or stored in bags in sheds.

“I was scratching my head and wondering what the heck was going on because when the fleece is on the alpaca it’s magic, it’s important. The impression I was given was that as soon as the fleece comes off the alpaca it becomes a liability,” said Paul. “I was ready to walk away from the alpaca industry. I thought why the heck are people paying me money to get the fleece tested when the fibre is useless? It costs much more to shear the alpaca than the fleece is worth. At that stage of the game I thought my involvement with the alpaca community would be very short lived.”

But a committed group of breeders in Australia asked Paul to stay and create a fibre industry. He set out to showcase alpaca fibre and to achieve this he set up the ultrafine alpaca bale scheme. Fibre was collected from large and small breeders with three or four alpacas, and the bale broke world records for micron. The finest fleece tested was just 13.7 micron. “We sold the bale for \$18,000 dollars so each fleece averaged about \$80 dollars\kilo which is about £50\kilo,” said Paul.

The ultrafine bale was sold under contract to Italian fashion designers, including Giorgio Armani, and their alpaca garments were showcased on the catwalk. The scheme succeeded in creating demand and breeders were asked for as much fibre as they could supply. “All of sudden we were asked for container loads and we said sorry we can’t supply that much fibre.”



The scheme also succeeded in generating a sense of pride amongst the alpaca owners who produced such a highly valued product. One elderly lady who made the ultrafine grade with one of three fleeces was moved to tears by her achievement – and so was everyone else at the fleece collection depot.

“That lady showed that there was a lot more to having alpacas than the money. There was a sense of purpose, a sense of pride, and that showed me there is a lot more to this than just the money. This seemed to me more about recognition of alpaca fleece’s true value as a luxury fibre, and so I decided to support the alpaca community to help them improve the quality of fleeces” said Paul.

Based on my experience with producing superfine and ultrafine merino fibre, I am fully aware that all our efforts devoted to our genetic pathway, management programme and successful partnership with Mother Nature, can be made redundant just in the last five minutes of harvesting the fleece. It is for this reason we jumped onto the comments from our customer survey, and are now absolutely behind the shearers developing their own set of minimum standard protocols and developing both breeder and shearer training.”

Spoiling a fine fleece

The best fleece in the world can be ruined by poor shearing, Paul told the workshop. Incorrect shearing, where shearers have gone back over the fleece leaving half-length fibres within the fleece, will mean it will have its value dramatically reduced.

Contamination during shearing can also spoil a high quality fleece. To protect fleece quality the Australian industry has adopted a “saddle first” approach. This means the finest quality saddle or blanket area is shorn before the shoulder and belly area which often contain excessively broad (high micron) fibres.

Shearers are trained to read the fleece and understand how fleece quality changes in individual alpacas from the saddle to the shoulder and belly. They can then remove the saddle first and avoid contamination with coarse belly and shoulder fibre. Owners also need to ensure they separate the different parts of the fleece and they do not come into contact on the skirting table.

Emma Taylor, co-owner of East Anglia Alpaca Mill, a medium size dedicated alpaca mill, and BAS Fibre committee chair, has run many skirting demonstrations and workshops. She underlined the importance of correct skirting to remove coarse guard hair and provide good quality uniform batches of fibre for processing into high quality yarn.



Emma explained that guard hairs and second cut short fibres within the fleece will affect yarn quality as they create a prickle factor or neps which result in a poor spin result. Even with a fine quality 15 micron fleece there will be a prickle factor if incorrectly skirted because the coarse fibres cannot be twisted during spinning. “When they can’t twist the fibres stick out and nobody wants to wear an itchy garment,” Emma said. However every grade of fibre has a use.

To demonstrate how fleece can be ruined by poor shearing and skirting, Paul tested a fleece at the workshop which measured 26 micron and showed it was contaminated with 80 micron fibres. A 25 micron fleece is worth \$15\kilo-\$20\kilo in Australia but with 80 micron fibres it would earn just \$5\kilo, Paul said. “It is a beautiful handling fleece and you can do something special with it but when there’s 80 micron fibres in there the game is over.”

At the conclusion of the day, the shearers agreed to hold a ‘within industry’ discussion with a view to developing a set of self regulated, alpaca shearing protocols.

During the visit to East Anglia Alpaca Mill, lunch was provided courtesy of Colin Ottery (shearer), Legacy Alpacas, Hill Ridge Alpacas and Suzanne Coldham of AlpacaArte.

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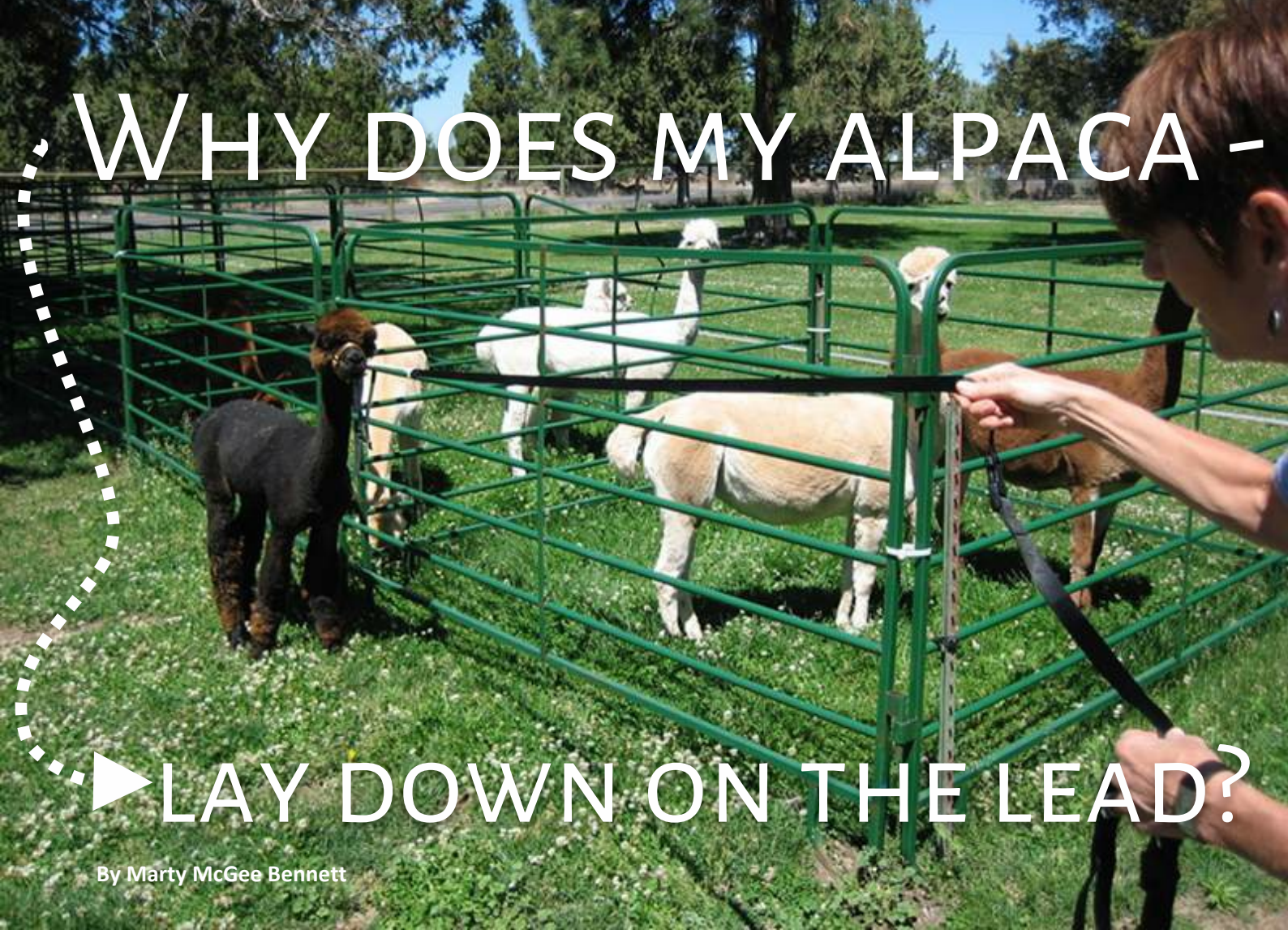


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WHY DOES MY ALPACA -

▶ LAY DOWN ON THE LEAD?

By Marty McGee Bennett

It is spring show season and many of you are training your youngsters to lead. In my opinion this is the easiest aspect of alpaca training and the most fun. If I am having trouble with a skill that other people think is easy I remind myself, "Anything thing is easy if you know how to do it!"

Teaching alpacas to walk nicely on a lead IS easy provided that you have an understanding of how to avoid the pitfalls AND that you have a proper set up. This article focuses on one very common problem and that is alpacas that lay down when you are training them to lead.

If your alpaca lays down in the middle of a lead training lesson YOU have made a mistake. When I am training I make mistakes. Mistakes are the way that I learn what TO DO. It is no good to just try random ideas and hope one works. I evaluate each step of the process as I go and make an educated choice about what will work in any given situation. Animals are not all cookie cutter versions of each other. There is no way to work with an animal and not make a miscalculation now and again. Making a mistake is not the problem, repeating the same mistake over and over IS the problem. Repeating the same mistake TEACHES the animal to do what you don't want him to do. Understand why alpacas lie down instead of walking and you are three quarters of the way to "that was easy!" Alpacas that lie down on the lead

have a reason for doing that, labelling the animal as stubborn, stupid or obstinate only reduces your chances of fixing the problem.

There are number of possible reasons for the behaviour listed below. More than one reason may apply.

- The animal is overwhelmed and frightened
- The halter doesn't fit
- The alpaca does not know what you want
- You are being heavy handed
- Your set up is not good enough and does not provide limits
- You are standing too close to the animal

Now lets look at each of these possible miscalculations in more detail along with solutions.

The animal is overwhelmed and frightened and laying down feels safer that standing up.

Getting small is a coping strategy for alpacas. They don't all use it and some have more of a hair trigger "cush" button than others but in my experience, in a stressful situation it means the same thing. The animal doesn't know what else to do and it feels safer to get small. It is similar to a child putting their head down on the desk when they don't understand the

material and the teacher is not noticing the signs of confusion and or fear. Teaching animals to lead that are too young either mentally or physically is probably the biggest reason for this problem. An 8-10 month old animal will learn to lead twice as fast as a 4-6 month animal. Lessons that are over long, do not include any breaks or are too frequent, teaching in a location away from other animals will all cause “overwhelm.”

The halter doesn't fit and laying down seems safer than moving.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of proper halter fit, particularly in the early stages of teaching an animal to lead. I have written many articles on halter fit, it is not a simple subject. For purposes of this short article the most important aspect of halter fit is that there is plenty of room in the nose band for comfort and that the crown piece (the part that goes behind the ears) has plenty of “take up” meaning that you can snug up the crown piece and the halter nose band will slide well up on the nose bone resting quite closely to the eye AND that it will stay there no matter what! If the nose band slides forward and off the bone onto soft cartilage it will compress the cartilage and compromise the airway creating panic.

The alpaca doesn't know what you want because you haven't taught him what a signal on the halter means.

Education NOT brute force is much easier with less blow back. Most people don't teach an alpaca the meaning of a signal. When I train an alpaca to lead I give a very specific signal on the lead - a squeeze release signal that shifts the

animal's weight forward. When the alpaca takes a step I drop the connection indicating that taking a step was the desired behaviour. I call this “turning on the lightbulb” and I teach this inside a catch pen after the animal is comfortable in a halter but BEFORE I take him out of the catch pen into a larger area.

You are being heavy handed

Alpacas have tiny heads on the end of a long stalk putting a lot of pressure on the head only pulls the head forward lowering the neck. Pull harder and the animal widens his stance and grows roots. Pull harder still and the animal will simply pull back balancing backwards on the anchor that you are handily providing. Keep pulling and “down she goes!” Pulling steadily on a lead - essentially making the animal uncomfortable and ‘rewarding’ with a release - is much slower than teaching a signal. The animal must try by process of elimination how to make you stop pulling down also provides a release in pressure but is hardly the behaviour you are after. Once you teach your alpacas to lay down as a way of relieving the pressure you apply to the head you are in big trouble. This particular learned behaviour is a tough one to retrain.

Your set up does not provide limits and the shape of the training area doesn't provide options for influencing behaviour.

Leave the confines of a catch pen and walk out into a square area and you have no way to influence where your animal goes EXCEPT to hold steadily on the lead. Hold steady on the lead and many animals respond my bucking and rearing then



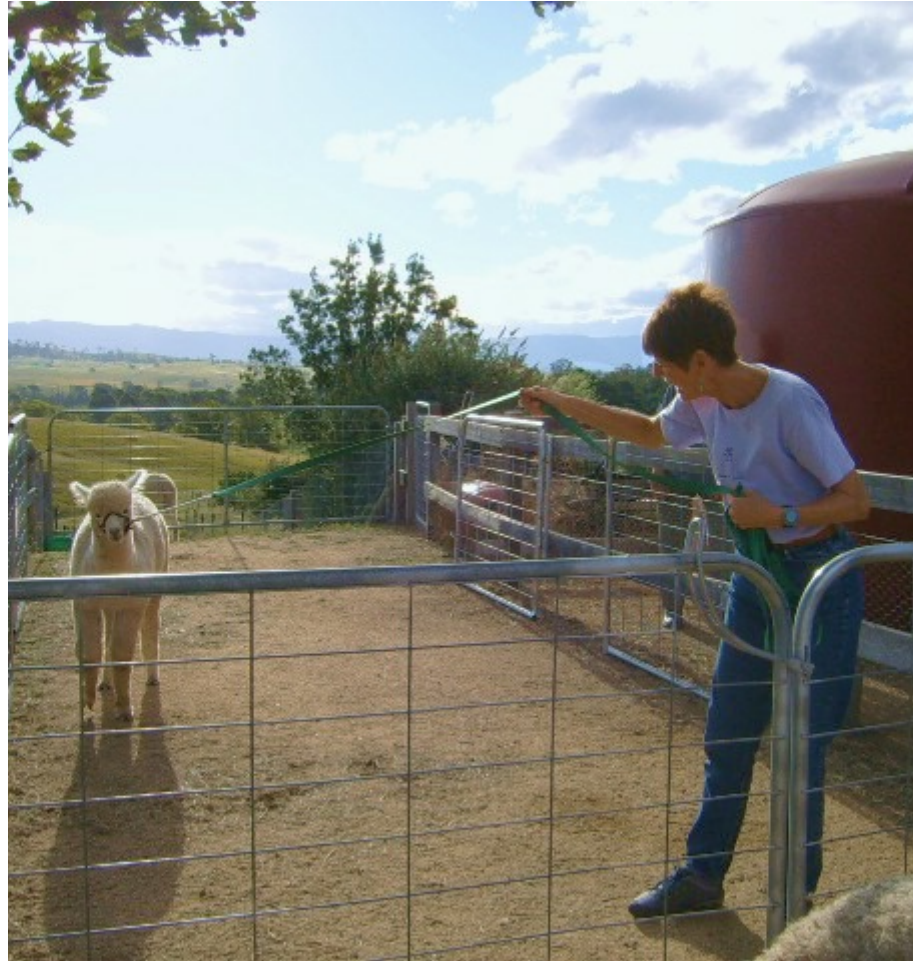
Heavy Handedness

they collapse on the ground in a heap. Instead, work in a catch pen that adjoins a long narrow aisle way and you can stop an end run simply by stepping in the animal's way. The shape of the pen says to the animal follow me and stay behind.

You are standing too close to the animal triggering a learned behaviour to run away in the opposite direction.

If you are among the many people that rely on trapping your alpaca in a corner to catch him, consider how this affects the animal's behaviour when learning to lead. In all previous situations your approach signals to the animal to move away in the opposite direction from your approach. When you hook a lead to him and stand near him in a large area his natural inclination is to run in the opposite direction NOT to go with you. If you want your alpaca to feel comfortable trying a new behaviour - moving toward you - your best bet is to be well away from him. (I also advocate not using a corner for catching but that is another topic) Use a long lead in a long narrow lane way, use a light connection stay well away from the animal and BREATHE!

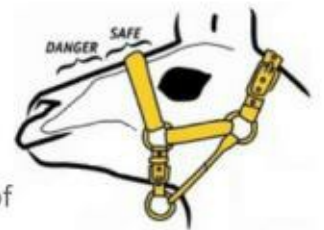
Loyalty to a technique that isn't working will only teach your animal behaviour that you don't want. Pay attention to what works and modify your approach, the result will be a more efficient training session and one that is more fun and less frustrating for both you and your animal student. Happy Handling!



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FAMACHA® Cards & Camelids

Assistance in identifying the presence of Barbers Pole Worm

By Dr Sandra Baxendell, PSM, BVSc (Hons), PhD MANZCVS, GCertAppSC(RurExt), GCertPSectMgt, PGDAppSc, MRurSysMan

What is a FAMACHA® card?

FAMACHA stands for Faffa Malan's chart and was developed by him in South Africa. This has 5 colours and these are numbered from 1 (red) to almost white (5). Unfortunately this is the opposite way from the 1 to 5 scores of condition scores where 1 is severely thin, which can confuse some people. The colours and scores can be linked to the Packed Cell Volume or PCV, which is the most common method for identifying anaemia. However a PCV measurement requires plastic tubes and a centrifuge as well as a well restrained goat from which to take a blood sample. This is not very practical on farms. The card is a much easier method to work out the level of anaemia in a small ruminant. The card is held against the colour of their mucous membranes of their inner lower eye lids.

Research undertaken in 2017 on 10 alpaca and 7 llama farms over a 2 year period, found that FAMACHA® cards closely correlated with their PCV levels. ¹ In turn, PCV levels were strongly correlated to worm egg counts and condition scores.

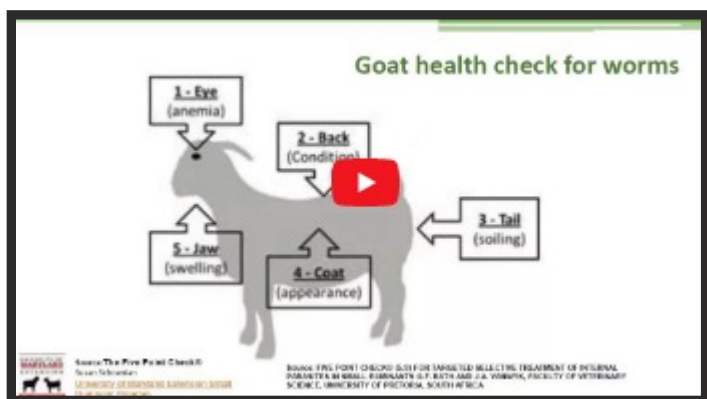
How should FAMACHA® card be used?

By far the common cause of anaemia in small ruminants is *Haemonchus contortus* (barbers pole worms) although in a small number of cases liver fluke and some mineral deficiencies can also cause anaemia and high FAMACHA® scores.

Meat & Livestock Australia have a good video that discusses how to use these cards in goats and the principles apply to all



small ruminants including alpacas and llamas - see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcaufcxjcis> or click on the image below to watch now.



The main benefit of using FAMACHA® cards is to stop unnecessary deaths by identifying animals in danger from barber's pole worms, which is a common cause of sudden death. Animals can die of severe anaemia before they lose any body condition. There is a chart listing the US drenches recommended for camelids on this website <https://www.wormx.info/dewormers> and this can be used with your Australian veterinarian to decide on the best treatments for your camelids.

Another benefit is to drench only those animals that actually need it. This means that the animals that are not drenched produce worm eggs and larvae which are not exposed to any drenching and hence are less likely to have drench resistant genes. If only a small number of animals in a group are drenched then any resistant worms will mate with non-resistant worms and not pass on their resistance. Resistance to drenches of the "mectin" family was recorded in Australian alpacas in 2013.²

Another benefit is that FAMACHA® scores can be used for selecting breeding animals and this selects for resilience to barber's pole worms. By breeding only with animals with very low scores, the livestock should eventually become more resilient and able to cope with worm burdens.

The FAMACHA® system only works for barber's pole worms and not for worms that cause scouring and not anaemia.

How to access FAMACHA® cards?

While cards are shown as photos on the internet their colours are often not correct.

Cards must be kept away from the light so they don't fade and may need to be replaced every few years. The copyright for FAMACHA® cards belongs to a South African group and they have agreements with countries so that a professional group takes the responsibility for quality control for

FAMACHA® courses. In the USA, it is the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (www.wormx.info) who has the responsibility for quality and distribution of the cards. In Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands, the Small Ruminant chapter of the Australia New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (www.anzcvs.org.au) has taken on this role.

There is also a LinkedIn group which has been set up to share information between professionals about parasite control in small ruminants in Australia (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4301659>) this was set up after the visit to Australia by Professor Ray Kaplin, USA to promote the FAMACHA® system and is managed by Dr Baxendell.



Another alternative to access cards is to do the online course from the University of Rhode Island (<https://web.uri.edu/sheepngoat/famacha/>). Students watch 2 videos then answer questions to demonstrate their understanding, then send in a video of themselves doing the process of using the FAMACHA card and scoring a small ruminant.

The best way to get a FAMACHA card is to attend a hands-on course in Australia. Goat groups often organise these courses and they have been run in Townsville Qld and Tocal NSW. In 2018, courses will be held in the Gold Coast hinterland in February, inland from Bundaberg in March by Dr Baxendell and another in NSW by Dr Kylie Roundtree. Any member of the ANZCVS Small Ruminant Chapter i.e. those who have passed their membership exams in either sheep or goats can run these courses, although courses to date have been run only by Dr Sandra Baxendell (goatveto@gmail.com) and Dr Kylie Roundtree of Hunter Land Services, NSW. Courses are promoted by the WormBoss team or on the events section of Dr Sandra Baxendell's Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/goatveto/>.

All participants have their details taken and are given a certificate which will allow them to purchase replacement cards in the future if their cards fade. The responsible professional body in each country must report annually to South Africa about the courses that have been held.

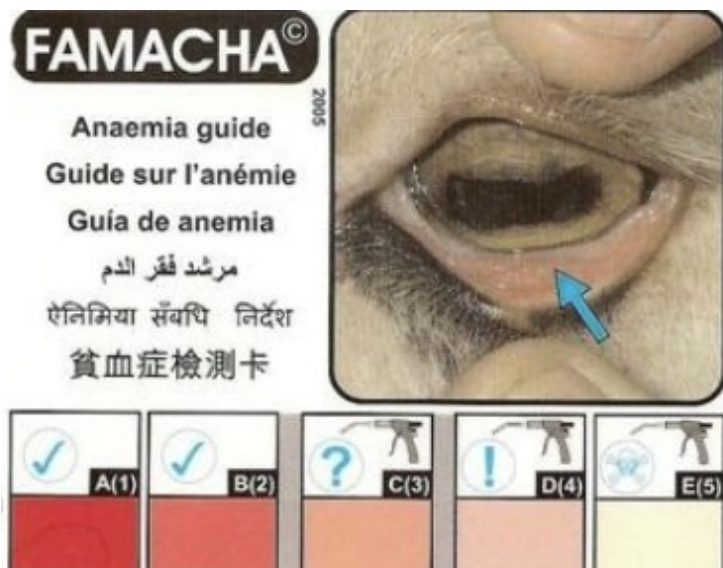
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Jabbar, A., A. J. D. Campbell, J. A. Charles and R. B. Gasser (2013). "First report of anthelmintic resistance in *Haemonchus contortus* in alpacas in Australia." *Parasites & Vectors* 6(1): 1-6.

Storey, B. E., L. H. Williamson, S. B. Howell, T. H. Terrill, R. Berghaus, A. N. Vidyashankar and R. M. Kaplan (2017). "Validation of the FAMACHA(c) system in South American camelids." *Vet Parasitol* 243: 85-91.

1 - Storey, B. E., L. H. Williamson, S. B. Howell, T. H. Terrill, R. Berghaus, A. N. Vidyashankar and R. M. Kaplan (2017). "Validation of the FAMACHA(c) system in South American camelids." *Vet Parasitol* 243: 85-91.

2 - Jabbar, A., A. J. D. Campbell, J. A. Charles and R. B. Gasser (2013). "First report of anthelmintic resistance in *Haemonchus contortus* in alpacas in Australia." *Parasites & Vectors* 6(1): 1-6.



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ALPACA EVENTS

AAA AUSTRALIAN ALPACA

Shearing Shed Set-Up & Fleece Prep Workshop Sunday 3rd June 2018

All of Your Fleece has value!

This is a great opportunity to learn the value of all parts of your alpaca fleece. Feel free to invite others who may have alpacas, but who are not members of AAA, to attend too. (Consider who you have sold wethers to!)

Cost: Members \$10 & Non members \$30

It is essential that you contact us to book your place, as numbers will be limited. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided.

If you have several suri or huacaya fleece to bring that is great, however for new members or people interested, if they do not have a fleece to bring, they can let us know and we will provide suitable fleece. Come and have a great day of learning and fun. Phone 63377388 or email rjmenzies@activ8.net.au to secure your place at the workshop.

Junior Event - Paraders & Jnr Judges workshop - 9th March
Maleny Equestrian Ctr | Contact Cheryl Cochrane
0417127625

Know & Show Social day & ORM - 10th March
Maleny Equestrian Ctr - Learn how to show your alpacas
Contact – Paula Leeson 07 54829497

Worm Identification FEC workshop - 17th March
Presented by Dr Emily Pelling BVSc at Gin Gin High School
Contact Fiona Laughton Ph 07 41563364 | Bookings Essential

Worm Identification FEC Workshop 24th March
Presented by Carmen Pearson BVSc at Rockhampton
Grammar School | Contact Fiona Laughton Ph 07 41563364
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Sydney Royal Alpaca & Fleece - 30th March 3rd April 2018
Convenor: Keryn Burns Ph 0400 780 722

Shearing Class - 12th May
Learn How to Shear & Maintain your equipment
Conducted by Chris Norris at Ivory Park Alpacas
Contact – Fiona Laughton Ph 563364

Fleece Harvesting & Skirting - 13th May
Conducted by Shane McMahon at Ivory Park Alpacas
Contact - Fiona Laughton Ph 563364

Alpacafest - 16th - 17th June 2018
Convenor: Glen Sharp Ph 03 5565 9267
glendenise@aussiebb.com.au

LLAMA EVENTS

We are wanting to share with all Llama owners what the year ahead looks like for the Queensland Branch. We have several events coming up in the next few months and we want to share these dates with people who are interested in attending.

We always have Llamas on display at all these event and it's a great time for people to see a Llama up close and personal and ask any questions they would like to know about owning a Llama. The events we have coming up this year are:

1. The Olive Show which is on the 8th of April, 2018
2. The Cooroy Fusion Show which is on the 12th of May, 2018
3. The Ipswich Show which is on the 18th, 19th & 20th of May, 2018
4. The Nambour Show which is on the 15th, 16th & 17th of June, 2018
5. The Dayboro Show which is on the 7th & 8th of July, 2018
6. The RNA Show which goes from the 10th of August to the 19th of August, 2018
7. The LAA Queensland Branch Open Day which we are looking at having in September 2018, after the RNA Show

We would love to see you there, so please come along if you can and meet a Llama or two.

Kind Regards
Tanya Brind | Secretary of the LAA QLD Branch

New Zealand Llama Assoc. AGM – 5th May 2018
Commence 10am Venue: Manakau, Levin
Contact: secretary@llamas.org.nz

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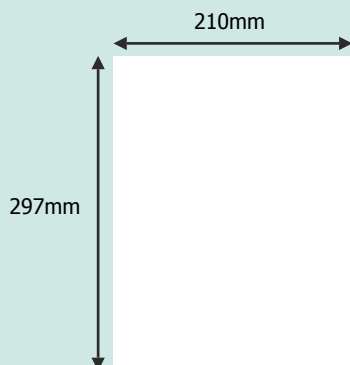
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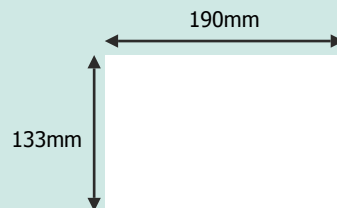
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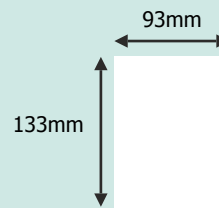
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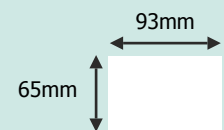
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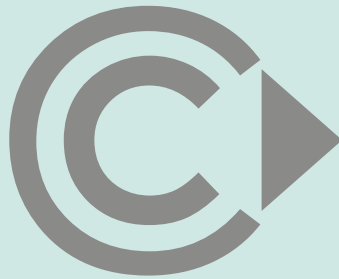
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