



## **The Ideal Alpaca Community**

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Alpacas were domesticated from vicuna over 5,000 years ago. This makes them the world's oldest breed of livestock. The vicuna's coppery-gold fleece is the finest and most expensive natural fiber in the universe, selling for as much as \$2,000 per square yard of cloth.

When the Incas ruled Peru, alpaca fiber measured two microns finer than cashmere. Then came the conquistadors with their merino sheep from Spain. In the Colonial period that followed the Spanish conquest of Peru, the alpaca began a long period of decline until today there are fewer than 2.5 million alpacas in the world.

In 1983, the first alpaca were exported from South America to the United States. Before that export, alpacas were found only in Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. Today alpacas are being raised in Australia, Japan, Canada, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, South Africa, and Israel.

For the last 500 years, alpacas have been tended by the Quechua Indians who have been unaware of the modern advances in animal breeding based on the relatively new science of genetics. Today, alpaca breeders worldwide are unlocking the genetic treasure chest of the alpaca. Both the suri and huacaya breed of alpaca are being rediscovered and rapidly returned to their place at the pinnacle of fiber producing livestock. We, as breeders, are only beginning to understand the ultimate value of the alpaca.

The Ideal Alpaca Community is a group of breeders who believe in the ultimate potential of the alpaca. We are joined together by common principles and goals. Our collective purpose is to raise genetically superior alpacas that produce high volumes of fine fleece. We have chosen the World Wide Web as the communication medium we will use to reach our mutual goals, keeping our individual farms and ranches informed of our collective achievements.

We all share a belief in the [Ideal Alpaca Breed Standards](#), [Ideal Alpaca Type](#), and the use of progeny-tested, impact sires we call [Studmaster™ males](#). It is through the use of high quality males and their progeny that the genetic improvement of our individual herds will be assured.

The Internet allows us a common market place for our alpaca herds. Each member of the Ideal Alpaca Community offers their clients the same opportunity to market their farms and alpacas through our community based web site<sup>2</sup>, [www.IdealAlpaca.com](http://www.IdealAlpaca.com). We believe that the combination of a science-based, breed improvement program and our Internet marketing strategy will give our members the maximum opportunity for success.

### BREEDING PRINCIPALS

Our members believe that the following principals are important to the success of their individual herds.

- A. [Breed standards](#) are an integral part of defining elite alpacas.
- B. Each breeder should have a clear view of the [Ideal Alpaca type](#).
- C. The alpacas' primary purpose is as a fleece animal. The ultimate value of the breed is based on the inherent genetic ability of the alpaca to produce a fine, luxurious fleece for use in high fashion garments.

- D. That by improving the alpaca to their full genetic potential and making them a more productive fiber-bearing animal, the breed will be more valuable to their shepherds and be better cared for over time.
- E. A thorough knowledge of bloodlines, classic livestock breeding theory, and an understanding of genetic selection techniques are prerequisites of success in the alpaca market.
- F. The transparent recording of careful fleece measurements is the key to identifying genetically superior breeding stock.
- G. That showing alpacas in halter classes and promoting the results leads to credibility and sales in the alpaca community. That showing the progeny of our [Studmaster™ males](#) will create sales opportunities for each of the Ideal Alpaca community members.
- H. Alpaca herds must be managed efficiently and consistently to produce maximum profit.

### MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The ideal alpaca community recognizes the power of the Internet in the marketing of alpacas. Each member realizes the value of educating their clients and doing their level best to see that the people who buy their alpacas will have the information necessary to succeed in the alpaca business. By providing our customers with the opportunity to join the Ideal Alpaca Community, we believe that they will have the tools they need to prosper in the alpaca market long term.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

The Internet and this website allow each of the members to profit from our fellow breeder's knowledge and success in the alpaca business. Each breeder member is intent on the success of fellow community participants. This can manifest in many ways:

- A. The members share genetics through the common ownership of males and the availability of breeding stock from community members.
- B. The sharing of knowledge through the website's chat room, educational seminars, and promotional events.
- C. The belief in, and sharing of, common ideas of alpaca excellence which will lead to the creation of an ideal breed of alpacas which will be recognized by the marketplace as superior.
- D. The collective promotion of members' farms and alpacas.

The ideal alpaca network is a collective effort that is intended to create the maximum opportunity for profitable farms and elite herds for the individual members.