



STAFF REPORT

MORGAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

PETITION FOR: CONDITIONAL USE

Property location:	2070 Fieldcrest Lane, Madison
Property tax parcel:	044-0581
Acreage:	50 acres
Applicant:	Carolyn Crafts
Applicant's Agent:	N/A
Property Owner:	Carolyn Crafts, 2070 Fieldcrest Lane, Madison
Existing Use:	Alpaca farm and personal residence
Proposed Use:	Alpaca farm, personal residence and Farmstay

Summary

Carolyn Crafts of Crafdal Farm is requesting a conditional use to allow a Farmstay at 2070 Fieldcrest Lane, between Madison and Buckhead.



Aerial showing the location of Field Crest Farms subdivision. Each lot is a minimum of 25 acres; the subject property is a double lot with 50 acres.



An aerial provided by the applicant showing the two proposed guest accommodations. One is a room within the main house. The other is a guest cabin to the side of the house. Should the application be approved, the accommodations will need to be inspected for health and safety.

Requirements for a Farmstay

The definition and regulations for a Farmstay were added to the Morgan County Zoning Ordinance in February 2012. Only one application has been submitted for a Farmstay: Sunflower Farm was approved in April 2015.

A Farmstay is similar to a bed and breakfast in that it allows lodging in a private residence, but it adds an educational component that is not required for a bed and breakfast. In addition to identifying a minimum acreage, maximum guest rooms and number of guests, a Farmstay application must provide an educational program outline that identifies the learning opportunities available to guests. See the attached copy of *Chapter 7.33 Farmstays*. The applicant's support documents also address each point of the ordinance's requirements.

Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map

From Chapter 3 of the Morgan County Comprehensive Plan:

Goal 1.0: Permanently preserve open space and green space throughout Morgan County in order to maintain a sense of rural character, provide passive recreational opportunities, preserve environmental quality, and encourage farming, livestock raising, dairying, forestry, and other agricultural activities that are environmentally compatible.

Objective 4.0: Support the continued existence of a viable agricultural and forestry sector in the county.

Objective 5.0: Support efforts and adopt regulations that help to retain and attract low intensity, land extensive activities, e.g., commercial hunting operations, horseback-riding resorts, and other agri-tourism, heritage tourism, and ecotourism.



The Future Land Use Map shows the parcel as Agricultural/Forestry/Estate Residential, and surrounded by the same classification.

Farmstays are considered an agri-tourism use, as they encourage visitation to, and education regarding, farms and sustainable farming practices.



The subject property has vacant lots to the north and across the road. The lots to the south and east face Baldwin Dairy Road. No house on those lots is closer than 1,300 linear feet from the applicant's house. There are four houses on Fieldcrest Lane in near proximity to the applicant's property:

House 1 – 150' to property line; 850' to applicant's house
House 2 – 419' to property line; 1170' to applicant's house
House 3 – 700' to property line; 1300' to applicant's house
House 4 – 433' to property across road; 1327' to applicant's house

Criteria for Consideration

Section 21.3.1 Required Findings from Conditional Use Approval from the Morgan County Zoning Ordinance:

1. Adequate provision is made by the applicant to reduce any adverse environmental impacts of the proposed use to an acceptable level;
2. Vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement on adjacent streets will not be substantially hindered or endangered;
3. Off-street parking and loading, and the entrance to and exit from such parking and loading, will be adequate in terms of location, amount and design to service the use;
4. Public facilities and utilities are capable of adequately serving the proposed use;
5. Granting the request would not be an illogical extension of a use which would introduce damaging volumes of (1) agricultural, (2) commercial, (3) industrial, or (4) high density

apartment use into a stable neighborhood of well-maintained single family homes, and likely lead to decreasing surrounding property values, neighborhood deterioration, spreading of blight, and additional requests of a similar nature which would expand the problem;

6. Granting the request would not lead to congestion, noise and traffic hazards or overload public facilities, current or planned;
7. Granting the request would conform to the general expectation for the area population growth and distribution according to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
8. Granting the request would not lead to a major negative change in existing (1) levels of public service, (2) government employees or (3) fiscal stability;
9. Granting the request would not have a “domino effect,” in that it becomes the opening wedge for further rapid growth, urbanization or other land-use change beyond what is indicated in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Staff Comments

Regarding the criteria, the limited guest accommodations make it unlikely that an increase in traffic or noise will occur. As stated by the applicant, there appears to be more than adequate parking on the gravel driveway. The proposed use is supported by the Comprehensive Plan, which encourages agri-tourism as a means to maintain viable agriculture in the county. In lay terms, such uses promote additional income for local farmers and therefore, support the retention of family farms.

Should the property be approved for a Farmstay, the accommodations will require a health and safety inspection prior to the issuance of an Occupational Tax Certificate (business license), which should be made a condition for approval.

Crafdal Farm Alpacas

770-519-5731

ccrafts1440@gmail.com

www.crafdalfarm.com

2070 Fieldcrest Lane
Madison, GA
30650

March 14, 2016

Morgan County Planning & Development
150 E. Washington St.
Madison, GA 30650

Dear Morgan County Board of Commissioners,

The Fieldcrest property was purchased in 2002. My dream was to create a working farm. Not wanting to milk or slaughter, I decided on alpacas. A small herd was purchased in 2007 and since then we have grown our herd to approximately fifty animals.

For all structures on the farm we have tried to use locally milled or reclaimed lumber, old rusted sheet metal for roofing and wavy-glassed windows from another century for sheds and greenhouse.

I enjoy sharing the history of the creation of our farm, the hand-hewn timber used, the barn-raising and of course the alpacas.

A Crafdal farmstay will enhance our farm and will enlighten our guests on organic and biodynamic farming and gardening, vernal pools, wildlife and woodland trail.

I ask you to please approve our request for conditional use at Crafdal Farm.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Carolyn Crafts

Below you will find the requirements for a Farmstay.

Chapter 7.33 Farmstays

The property proposed for a Farmstay is at least 5 acres or greater in size.

Craydal Farm Homestay will be on 50 acres, all zoned AG.

No more than five guest rooms shall be allowed.

- One-room cabin with one full bed, electricity and outhouse. Water available at spigot. Water in pitcher in cabin.
- Two-room guest suite within main house with private entrance, one bedroom, living area, small kitchenette and full bathroom. Queen bed in bedroom.

Food shall be served only to registered guests, and the price of meals shall be included in the price of the overnight accommodations.

Craydal Farm will not prepare any cooked meals for guests. Guest suite has refrigeration, toaster, coffee maker, but no appliances for cooking. Guests in the suite will be provided an assortment of breakfast items and juices. These items are included in room pricing. Guests will be referred to local restaurants or to purchase locally produced foods from neighboring farms. No food provided to guests in cabin.

Lodging and meals shall be incidental and not the primary function of the Farmstay establishment. Must meet the requirements of the Morgan County Health Department, if applicable.

The farmstay will be an extra source of income (and enjoyment) from the farm. Craydal Farm will continue to operate primarily as an alpaca farm.

Must provide an educational program outline which includes the following, at a minimum:

-Why the particular location is suited to be used for agricultural education and how the establishment will promote agricultural education;

Craydal Farm is a suitable location for this type of business as it is situated within Morgan County's agricultural community and is surrounded by other farms. We will share our knowledge and experience with gardening, both organic and biodynamic, native flowers,

vernal pools and wildlife sanctuaries.

-A description of each activity, including proposed equipment to be used, any possible risks and how such risks will be minimized;

Different tours, informative materials and activities are attached.

-A description of any possible adverse impacts to neighboring properties and how such impacts will be minimized;

Cragdale Farm does not foresee there being any adverse impact on neighboring properties of all parcels in the Fieldcrest community are at a minimum of 25 acres. Out of hearing and sight of neighbors!

-A minimum of five educational activities that will be available to guests as soon as the facility opens;

Tours, activities, brochures, educational material and map of farm are attached.

-A map or drawing of the farm, identifying structures and land features that will be used during educational activities.

attached

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No motorized off road vehicles shall be used for recreational purposes, but may be used as part of normal farming functions.

Cragdale Farm will not allow guests to use off-road vehicles during their stay on the farm.

Parking for Farmstay establishments must be contained on the property and cannot be on the street.

Cragdale Farm has more than enough crushed stone surface for both the cabin and the guest suite.

* Farmstays must obtain a yearly Occupational Tax Certificate, which will require a safety code compliance inspection prior to issuance.

Craftal Farmstay: Tours and Activities

- Biodynamics, Compost Preparation

Approx. one hour

Guests will learn about organic and biodynamic farming and gardening, using kitchen waste to create compost and the process of turning animal waste into wonderful additives for the soil. All while touring the fields, the compost piles, the gardens and the greenhouse.

A Biodynamics handout will be given and referenced. (Included with application)

- Alpacas, Llamas, Fleece preparation for mills

Approx. one hour

We will walk around the farm, look at the animals, go into barns or sheds and possibly caress a 'cria' - newborn alpaca. I will demonstrate how to prepare an alpaca fleece for the mill or for submission to a show for evaluation: called 'skirting'.

Handout enclosed

- Woodland Trail

At least an hour!

We have a trail through the back of our property - probably at least 1/2 mile. It goes down to a creek and up to one of our vernal pools. Walking only

- Native Flowers, Meadow and Shade Garden at least an hour!

We have a native flower meadow, a shade garden with many protected species of wildflowers (obtained from the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell), milkweed populations for the monarchs, fennel areas for the swallowtails, a cottage garden with native wildflowers at the cabin and full sun perennial flower areas. Best in spring.

- Vegetable Garden, Greenhouse, Grapes, Orchard Seasonal - 1 Hour

We grow vegetables, grapes, fruit trees and greenhouse tropical plants (some citrus). Any excess fruits and vegetables we donate to the Roswell Food Bank (in conjunction with Chattahoochee Nature Ctr.) We will walk around and discuss gardening and soil!

- Vernal Pools, Purple Martins, Bluebird Trail of Houses at least 1 hour

We will use the golf cart for this. We have created three vernal pools, 2 large and one small, where now frog, toads and salamanders lay eggs, wildlife come to drink and we enjoy! Guests will learn about Purple Martins and their choice of housing and see our expanse of bluebird houses.

Chapter 7.33 Farmstays

The property proposed for a Farmstay is at least 5 acres or greater in size.

No more than five guest rooms shall be allowed.

Accommodations for no more than fifteen total guests shall be allowed.

Food shall be served only to registered guests, and the price of meals shall be included in the price of the overnight accommodations.

Lodging and meals shall be incidental and not the primary function of the Farmstay establishment.

Must meet the requirements of the Morgan County Health Department, if applicable.

Must provide an educational program outline which includes the following, at a minimum:

- Why the particular location is suited to be used for agricultural education and how the establishment will promote agricultural education;
- A description of each activity, including proposed equipment to be used, any possible risks and how such risks will be minimized;
- A description of any possible adverse impacts to neighboring properties and how such impacts will be minimized;
- A minimum of five educational activities that will be available to guests as soon as the facility opens;
- A map or drawing of the farm, identifying structures and land features that will be used during educational activities.

No motorized off road vehicles shall be used for recreational purposes, but may be used as a part of normal farming functions.

Parking for Farmstay establishments must be contained on the property and cannot be on the street.

Farmstays must obtain a yearly Occupational Tax Certificate, which will require a safety code compliance inspection prior to issuance.

Handout for those learning about biodynamics.

Login

Username or e-mail *

Password *

Create

[new account](#)

[Request new password](#)

[Log in](#)



BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION

[About Biodynamics](#) ▾

[Education & Training](#) ▾

[Conference & Events](#) ▾

[Home](#) [Community Resources](#) ▾

[Membership](#) ▾

[Who We Are](#) ▾

What Is Biodynamics?



[Become a Member](#)

Perspectives on Biodynamics

Introduction to Biodynamics: Deep Organic



Biodynamics is a holistic, ecological and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food and nutrition. Biodynamics was first developed in the early 1920s based on the spiritual insights and practical suggestions of the Austrian writer, educator and social activist [Dr. Rudolf Steiner](#) (1861-1925), whose philosophy is called "[anthroposophy](#)." Today, the biodynamic movement encompasses **thousands of successful gardens, farms, vineyards and agricultural operations of all kinds and sizes** on all continents, in a wide variety of ecological and economic settings.

Biodynamic farmers strive to create a [diversified, balanced farm ecosystem](#) that generates health and fertility as much as possible from within the farm itself. [Preparations](#) made from fermented manure, minerals and herbs are used to help **restore and harmonize the vital life forces of the farm** and to enhance the nutrition, quality and flavor of the food being raised. Biodynamic practitioners also recognize and strive to work in cooperation with the **subtle influences of the wider cosmos** on soil, plant and animal health.

Most biodynamic initiatives seek to embody **triple bottom line approaches** (ecological, social and economic sustainability), taking inspiration from Steiner's insights into social and economic life as well as agriculture. [Community supported agriculture](#) (CSA), for example, was pioneered by biodynamic farmers, and many biodynamic practitioners

If you are a concerned eater or farmer, you should know about biodynamics. Biodynamics is a farm-forward approach to healing the planet through conscious agriculture. [Read more....](#)

Biodynamics on the

work in creative partnerships with other farms and with schools, medical and wellness facilities, restaurants, hotels, homes for social therapy and other organizations. Biodynamics is thus **not just a holistic agricultural system but also a potent movement for new thinking and practices in all aspects of life** connected to food and agriculture.

The [Biodynamic Association](#) awakens and enlivens co-creative relationships between humans and the earth, transforming the practice and culture of agriculture to renew the vitality of the earth, the integrity of our food, and the health and wholeness of our communities.

8 Ways to Learn About Biodynamics

1. Explore our online resources

Our [What is Biodynamics?](#) page is a good place to start, with multimedia perspectives on biodynamics from several sources.



Watch our free 90-minute [Intro to Biodynamics webinar](#) to explore the basic concepts of biodynamics in more depth. Read articles about biodynamics in the sample issue of our [Biodynamics journal](#), and browse our [research references](#) to find articles, books and other resources about scientific research on biodynamic practices.

2. Participate in a biodynamic workshop or event

Biodynamic workshops and events are organized by [education centers](#) and [regional groups](#) across North America — check our [calendar of events](#) for upcoming opportunities near you.

[Read more.](#)

Origin of Biodynamics

In the early 1920s, a group of practicing farmers, concerned with the decline in the health of soils, plants and animals, sought the advice of [Rudolf Steiner](#), founder of anthroposophy, who had spent all his life researching and investigating the subtle forces within nature. From a series of lectures and conversations held at Koberwitz, Germany (now in

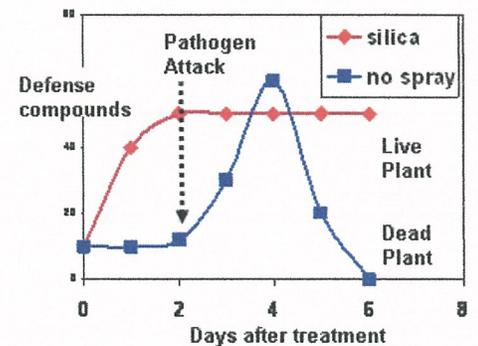
Lexicon of Sustainability

Industrial Agriculture	Biodynamic Agriculture
Yields are maximized by the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.	Yields are maximized by the use of natural fertilizers and pesticides.
Soil is treated as a mere substrate for plant growth.	Soil is treated as a living organism that is nurtured and cared for.
Quality is measured by the amount of product produced.	Quality is measured by the health of the soil and the plants.
Profit is the primary goal.	Profit is a secondary goal.
Health is measured by the amount of product produced.	Health is measured by the health of the soil and the plants.
Genetic modification is used to create new varieties of crops.	Genetic modification is avoided.
Dispossession of land is common.	Dispossession is avoided.

BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION

Biodynamic farming is much more than a method, it is a belief system — a holistic way of seeing and understanding the natural world. This perspective challenges input intensive industrial farming and, instead, focuses on regenerative practices. As one farmer reflects, “it’s harnessing the solutions that already exist in nature.” [Read more....](#)

The Science Behind Biodynamics



Biodynamics (BD) is experiencing an upsurge in interest, along with related organic and sustainable farming practices. However, BD has some unique aspects that

Poland) in June 1924, there emerged the fundamental principles of biodynamic farming and gardening, a unified approach to agriculture that relates the ecology of the farm-organism to that of the entire cosmos. This approach has been under development in many parts of the world ever since. Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, who worked with Dr. Steiner during the formative period, brought biodynamic concepts to the United States in the 1930s. It was during this period that the [Biodynamic Association](#) was founded in 1938.

[Stay connected through our e-newsletter](#)

[Request more information from the Biodynamic Association](#)

are poorly understood and steeped in myth. Biodynamics may not be the cure-all that some practitioners claim it to be, but the BD system clearly holds potential to improve agricultural and horticultural production and to teach us about beneficial microorganisms and biochemistry. [Read more at eOrganic....](#)

Biodynamic Preparations



Biodynamic preparations, made from fermented herbs, minerals and manure, can help enhance the health of your compost, soil, and the food you grow. Preparations can be purchased from the [Josephine Porter Institute](#) and several [regional biodynamic groups](#).

[Read more about the biodynamic compost preparations...](#)

Biodynamic® Certification



Biodynamics has an independent certification system managed worldwide by Demeter International and in the United States by [Demeter USA](#).

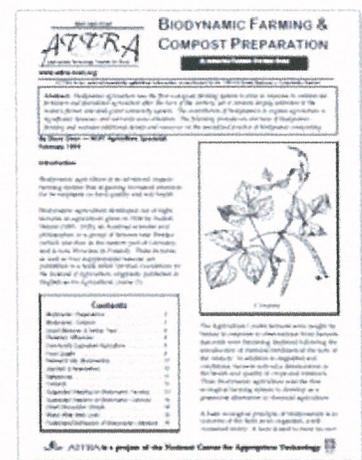
Demeter certification in the United States uses the [USDA organic standards](#) as a foundation but goes beyond them in several important ways. For example, the [Demeter Biodynamic® Farm Standard](#) requires the healthy

What Is Biodynamic Farming?



[Watch this short video by OrganicNation.tv....](#)

ATTRA Guide to Biodynamic Farming & Compost Preparation



Why Is Biodynamics Important?

Biodynamics is important to me because it offers me a way, not known to me before, of participating in and consciously influencing the life processes in nature such that harmonious and healing forces can unfold for the Earth and humanity.

[Read more inspiring responses](#) from our survey in which we asked our members and friends what about biodynamics is most important to them.

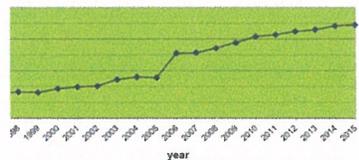
integration of crops and livestock on the farm, as well as a certain amount of wild or uncultivated land as part of its biodiversity requirement. It also requires use of the biodynamic preparations described above. In addition, whereas organic certification can be applied to just one part of a farm, Demeter certification must encompass the whole farm. [Comprehensive presentations](#) offer in-depth information on the seven principles in the Farm Standard.

Biodynamic agriculture was the first ecological farming system to arise in response to commercial fertilizers and specialized agriculture after the turn of the century, yet it remains largely unknown to the modern farmer and land-grant university system. The contribution of biodynamics to organic agriculture is significant, however, and warrants more attention. [Read more at ATTRA...](#)

For information on Biodynamic® certification and products, visit [Demeter USA](#).

International Demeter Certification Statistics

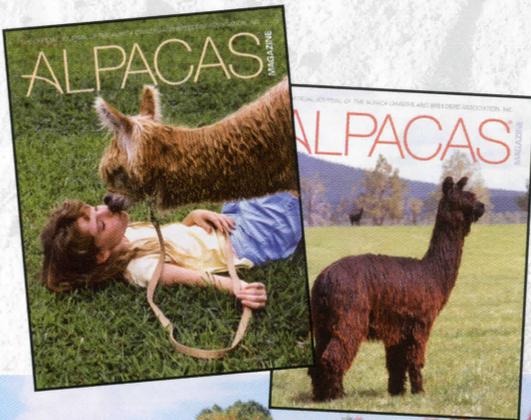
Development of Demeter certified farms



[Statistics on Demeter certified Biodynamic production worldwide](#), provided by Demeter International

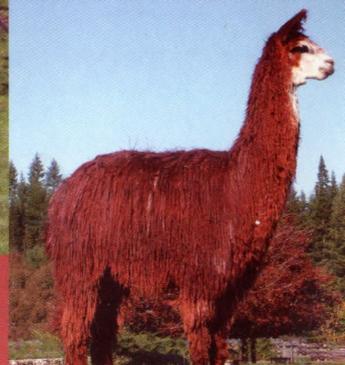
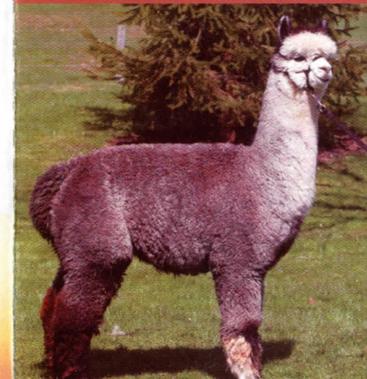
1661 N Water Street Suite 307, Milwaukee WI 53202
 T: (262) 649-9212 * F: (262) 649-9213 * info@biodynamics.com

WELCOME TO THE DELIGHTFUL world of alpaca ownership. Alpacas are gentle by nature, easy to care for, and are a great way to enhance your life, no matter where you live – urban, suburban, or rural. This brochure is designed to answer some of the most commonly-asked questions about this form of livestock. If you would like more detailed information about alpacas or the lifestyle associated with these animals, we invite you to visit the Alpaca Owners & Breeders Association (AOBA) website at www.AlpacaInfo.com, where you can locate existing alpaca operations in your local area; subscribe to *Alpacas Magazine*; or join AOBA (which will give you immediate access to a wealth of reference books in the AOBA library, as well as many other terrific benefits).

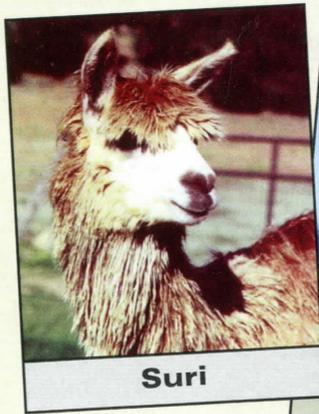


For further information about alpacas, please log on to www.AlpacaInfo.com, or call 1-800-213-9522.

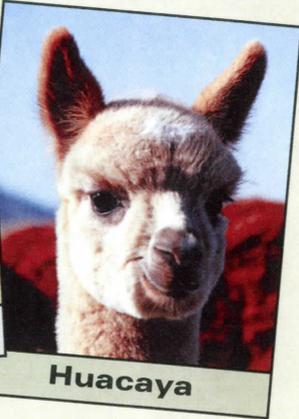
Meet the ALPACA



March 2007



Suri



Huacaya

A Few Basic Facts

- Alpacas are members of the camelid (or camel) family. They are mild-tempered, gregarious animals with an inquisitive nature and a penchant for bringing great delight to their owners.
- There are two different breed-types: the huacaya (wah-KI'-ya) and suri ("surrey"). Although both types of alpacas are physiologically nearly identical, one main physical difference is clearly identifiable: the fleece. Huacaya fleece has a degree of "waviness," or "crimp," thus giving huacayas a fluffy, "Teddy Bear-like" appearance. Suris, on the other hand, have no crimp in their fleeces, so their fiber clings to itself, forming beautiful "pencil locks" that hang down from the body in gentle, silky cascades.
- Indigenous to South America, the alpaca is raised for its soft fleece. This fleece is sheared once a year, yielding roughly five to ten pounds (= 2¼ to 4½ kilos). After only minimal preparation, it is ready to be spun into yarn (for knitting, crocheting, and weaving) or used to make felt (for creating hats, cloth, or moccasins).
- Alpacas stand approximately 36 inches (=1 metre) tall at the withers (the area where the neck and spine come together) and weigh between 100 and 200 pounds (= 45 to 90 kilos).
- They require only modest amounts of food (approximately 1½ to 2% of their body weight in hay per day), plus free access to fresh water and free-choice minerals. Some owners also supplement their animals' diets with additional grains and crumbles, based on specific nutritional needs and preferences.

Commonly-Asked Questions

Are alpacas easy to work with?

Yes, alpacas are very intelligent animals that respond to a variety of training and handling techniques. They learn to halter and lead in just a few training sessions, and even children find most alpacas to be safe and easy to handle.

Are there organized exhibitions and competitions for alpacas?

Yes, there are many alpaca shows (both showing and fleece-judging competitions) held throughout North America where owners can showcase their animals and fleeces.

Is it OK to have just one alpaca?

As a general rule, the answer is no. Alpacas have very strong herding instincts and need the companionship of other alpacas to thrive. Gender-appropriate (or neutered) llamas sometimes will successfully bond with an alpaca. Otherwise, it is best to provide each alpaca with a companion alpaca of the same gender.

Do I need a lot of land to raise alpacas?

No. The specific answer is quite variable, and is contingent on such factors as: type of terrain, amount of annual precipitation, seasonal factors, availability of pasture and/or hay, etc. For arid climates animals are usually fed on "dry lot," with little or no pasture feeding. In this instance, the number of animals that can be raised is generally

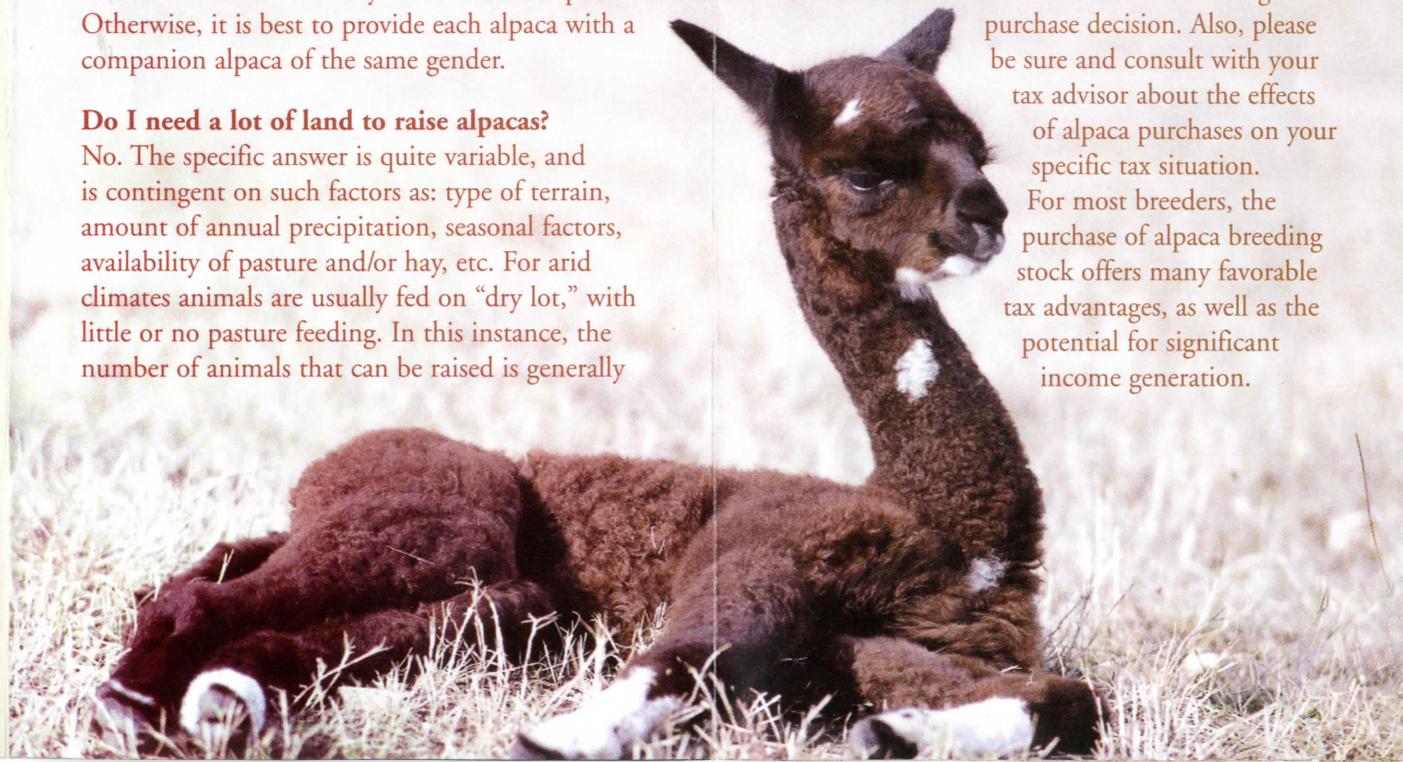
between two to six per acre. In milder, wetter climates with abundant fresh pasture available, however, ten or more alpacas per acre might be the norm.

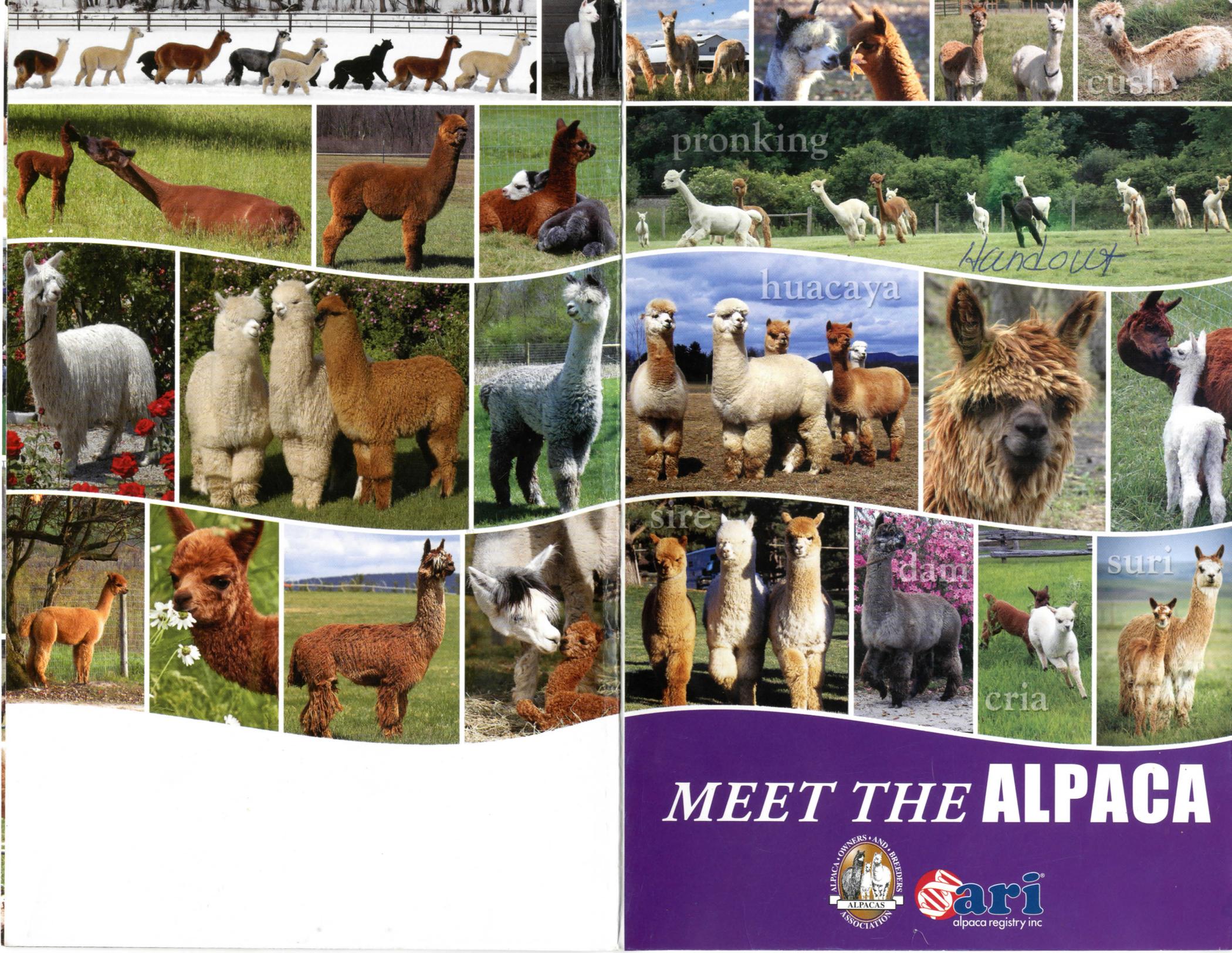
I live in the city; would it be possible for me to own alpacas?

Absolutely. Urban dwellers can board (or "agist") their alpacas at nearby farms/ranches so that they can enjoy the benefits of ownership while living in a large city or suburb.

How much do alpacas cost?

The price of an alpaca will depend on its quality (especially conformation and fleece qualities); its bloodlines; positive traits proven to be heritable in its offspring; whether it is a male or female; age; breeding history; and a host of other traits and factors. We recommend talking to a variety of breeders before making a purchase decision. Also, please be sure and consult with your tax advisor about the effects of alpaca purchases on your specific tax situation. For most breeders, the purchase of alpaca breeding stock offers many favorable tax advantages, as well as the potential for significant income generation.





cushy

pronking

Handout

huacaya

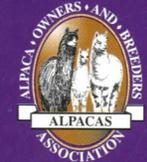
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MEET THE ALPACA





What is an Alpaca?

Alpacas are members of the camelid family. The camels that most people are familiar with are the ones with humps; the dromedary of Northern Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia, and the Bactrian camel of China and Tibet. However, there are four other camelids (without humps) that are indigenous to South America: two of them, llamas and alpacas, have been domesticated for thousands of years; whereas the other two varieties, guanacos and vicunas, continue to roam in wild herds today.

The alpaca comes in two breed-types: huacaya (pronounced wah-KI-ah) and suri (SOO-ree). Huacayas, the more common type, account for about 90% of all alpacas, and have fluffy, crimped fleece that gives the animals a teddy bear-like appearance. Suris, on the other hand, grow silky, lustrous fleece that drapes gracefully in beautiful pencil-locks.

How long do alpacas live?

Generally, around 15 to 20 years. The longest documented lifespan of an alpaca is 27 years.

Is it OK to have just one alpaca?

As a general rule, the answer is no. Alpacas have very strong herding instincts and need the companionship of other alpacas to thrive. Gender-appropriate (or neutered) llamas sometimes will successfully bond with an alpaca. Otherwise, it is best to provide each alpaca with a companion alpaca of the same gender.

How are alpacas different from llamas?

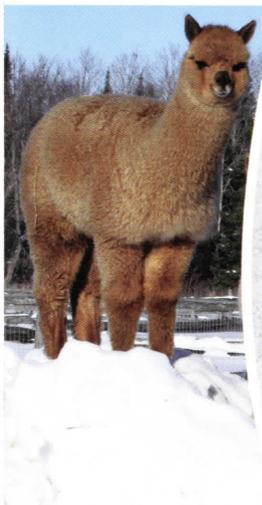
People often confuse alpacas with llamas. While closely related, llamas and alpacas are distinctly different animals. First, llamas are much larger, about twice the size of an alpaca, with an average weight of about 250 to 450 pounds, compared to an alpaca whose weight averages 100 to 200 pounds. Llamas are primarily used for packing or for guarding herds of sheep or alpacas, whereas alpacas are primarily raised for their soft and luxurious fiber.

Are alpacas an “exotic species,” or are they considered simply “livestock”?

Since alpacas have been raised as domestic livestock for thousands of years and since the end product of alpacas is their fleece, like sheep, they are classified as livestock by both the U.S. and Canadian federal governments.

Are alpacas dangerous?

No—they are safe and pleasant to be around. They do not bite or butt and do not have sharp teeth, horns, hooves, or claws as do some other types of livestock. They move gracefully and adroitly about the field and are therefore unlikely to run into or over anyone, even small children. Occasionally, an alpaca will reflexively kick with its hind legs, especially if touched from the rear, but the soft padded feet usually do little more than just “get your attention.”



Are alpacas easy to care for?

They are a small and relatively easy livestock to maintain. They stand about 36” high at the withers (where the neck and spine come together); weigh between 100 to 200 pounds; and establish easy-to-manage, communal dung piles. The alpacas need basic shelter and protection from heat and foul weather, just like other types of livestock, and they also require certain vaccinations and anti-parasitic medicines. Their fleece is sheared once a year to keep them cool in summer. Additionally, their toenails need to be trimmed on an as-needed basis to ensure proper foot alignment and comfort. Interestingly, alpacas do not have hooves—instead, they have two toes, with hard toenails on top and a soft pad on the bottom of their feet, which minimizes their effect on pastures and makes them an “environmentally friendly” animal.

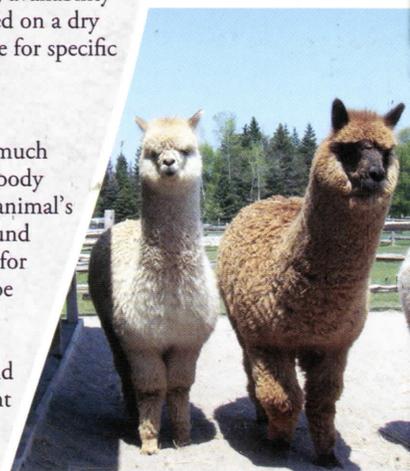
How much space does it take to raise an alpaca?

Because these animals are environmentally friendly and require so little pasture and food, you can usually raise from two to eight alpacas on an acre of land, depending on terrain, rain/snowfall amounts, availability of pasture, access to fresh water, etc. They can also be raised on a dry lot and fed grass hay. Consult with your local USDA office for specific local recommendations.

What do alpacas eat?

The main things alpacas eat are just grass or hay, and not much of them—approximately two pounds per 125 pounds of body weight per day. The general rule of thumb is 1.5% of the animal’s body weight daily in hay or fresh pasture. A single, 60-pound bale of hay can generally feed a group of about 20 alpacas for one day. Grass hay is recommended, while alfalfa should be fed only sparingly, due to its overly rich protein content. Alpacas are pseudo-ruminants, with a single stomach divided into three compartments. They produce rumen and chew cud, thus they are able to process this modest amount of food very efficiently. Many alpacas (especially pregnant and lactating females) will benefit from nutritional and mineral supplements, depending on local conditions. There are several manufactured alpaca and llama feeds and mineral mixes readily available; consult with your local veterinarian to ensure you are feeding the appropriate diet for your area. Alpacas also require access to plenty of fresh water to drink.

Alpacas have two sets of teeth for processing food. They have molars in the back of the jaw for chewing cud. But in the front, the alpaca has teeth only on the bottom and a hard gum (known as a dental pad) on the top for crushing grain, grass, or hay. Unlike goats and sheep that have long tongues which they sometimes use to rip plants out of the ground, alpacas have short tongues and nibble only the tops of grasses and other plants, resulting in far less disturbance of the vegetation. However, they are also browsers and will often eat shrubs and the leaves from trees if given an opportunity, which requires monitoring to ensure they do not consume harmful products.





What do I need by way of shelter and fencing?

While the shelter requirements vary depending on weather and predators, as a general rule alpacas do need at least a three sided, open shelter where they can escape from the heat of the sun in summer and from icy wind and snow in winter. If predators (dogs, coyotes, bears, etc.) are present in your neighborhood, then a minimum of five-foot-high, 2" x 4" no-climb fencing is strongly recommended. Traditional horse fencing with 6" x 6" openings is not recommended, as curious alpacas have been harmed by putting their heads or legs through the openings.

Are alpacas clean animals?

Yes, they are much cleaner than most livestock. Alpacas have minimal aroma and don't tend to attract as many flies in the summertime as other forms of livestock. Furthermore, alpacas defecate in communal dung piles. There may be three or four of these areas in a pasture, spread throughout about 10%–20% of the pasture. This makes for easy clean-up, reduced opportunity for parasites, and better overall hygiene in the herd.

Can alpacas thrive in locations with very hot or very cold climates?

Generally, yes. Alpacas are amazingly resilient animals and have adapted successfully to the extremes of both very hot climates and very cold climates. In hot, humid climates, alpaca owners need to take extra precautions to make sure that the alpacas do not suffer from heat stress. These include: shearing fleeces early in the year, providing fans and ventilation in the barn, offering cool fresh water for drinking, and hosing off their bellies (where heat is dissipated) on very hot days.

Are alpacas easy to train?

Alpacas are very smart animals and are fairly easy to train. It is best to start training them when they are young so they will accept a halter and will learn to follow you on a lead. Many owners also enjoy training them to walk through obstacles; some even compete with their animals in shows where they walk over, through, and around objects and jump over small hurdles. Since they often need to be transported to shows and other farms, it is helpful to train them to ride in a trailer or a van. Alpacas are easy to transport, as they normally cush (lay down with their legs folded under them) when traveling.

Do alpacas make noise?

Alpacas are very quiet, docile animals that generally make a minimal amount of sound. They generally make only a pleasant humming sound as a means of communication or to express concern or stress. Occasionally you will hear a shrill sound, called an "alarm call," which usually means they are frightened or angry with another alpaca. Male alpacas also "serenade" females during breeding with a guttural, throaty sound called "orgling."



Do alpacas spit?

All members of the camel family use spitting as a means of negative communication. They do get possessive around food, and thus may express annoyance by spitting at other alpacas that they perceive are encroaching on "their" food. Also, they often spit at one another during squabbles within the herd (usually involving two or more males). From time to time alpacas do spit at people on purpose, but it is more common that humans get caught in the cross-fire between alpacas, so it's best to study their behavior and learn to avoid the most vulnerable situations.

Does the birthing require human assistance?

In most cases, cria are born without intervention, and usually during daylight hours. A cria normally weighs between 15 and 19 pounds and is usually standing and nursing within 90 minutes of birth. The cria continues to nurse for about six months until it is weaned.

So what do you DO with these animals?

Alpacas are fiber-producing animals raised for their soft and luxurious fiber. Each shearing produces roughly five to ten pounds of fiber per animal, per year. This fleece, often compared to cashmere, can be turned into a wide array of products from yarn and apparel to tapestries and blankets. The fleece itself is recognized globally for its fineness, softness, light weight, durability, excellent thermal qualities, and luster.

In addition to selling the fleece and the animals, many breeders of alpacas operate an end products retail store on or off their farms. They sell alpaca apparel, yarn, fleece, teddy bears, and household goods directly to consumers who visit their farm or over the Internet. Many also sell the products through craft fairs, farmers markets, and retail sites. Sales of these end products can provide considerable supplemental income to the farm or ranch.

What about the fiber?

Let's start by comparing alpaca fiber with wool from most breeds of sheep. In general, alpaca fiber is stronger, lighter, warmer, and more resilient. Finer grades of alpaca fiber (known commercially as "Baby Alpaca") are believed to be hypo-allergenic, meaning they do not irritate your skin as sheep's wool sometimes does. Unlike sheep's wool, alpaca fiber contains no lanolin and is therefore ready to spin after only nominal cleaning of the fleece. Prized for its unique, silky feel, and superb "handle," alpaca fiber is highly sought-after by both cottage-industry artists (hand spinners, knitters, weavers, etc.) as well as the commercial fashion industry.

One facet of alpaca fiber that makes it so much in vogue is its great variety of natural colors: pure white, several shades of fawn and brown, several shades of gray, and true black — some 16 official colors with many other subtle shades and hues. White, light fawn, and light gray can be readily dyed, thus offering a rainbow of colors for the fiber artist. Alpaca fiber can also be readily combined with other fine fibers like merino wool, cashmere, mohair, silk, and angora to attain incredibly interesting blends





Are there organized exhibitions and competitions for alpacas?

Yes, there are many alpaca shows (both show ring and fleece-judging competitions) held throughout North America where owners can showcase their animals and fleeces. In addition to fairs and other local shows, the Alpaca Owners & Breeders Association (AOBA) certifies larger regional shows all over the United States. AOBA provides the rules, trains the judges, and offers other assistance to these regional shows, while also hosting the National Alpaca Show each year. To find more information about AOBA shows near you, visit www.AlpacaShows.com.



What is AOBA—Alpaca Owners & Breeders Association?

Started by a handful of alpaca owners in 1988, the organization had an initial cadre of just 87 members, representing an alpaca population of just 392 animals. AOBA now has thousands of members, representing over 100,000 alpacas in the United States, Canada, and several foreign countries.

Providing a plethora of marketing, educational, and support functions to the North American alpaca industry, AOBA is structured with an elected Board of Directors and a national office located in Nashville, Tennessee, overseeing all support functions. Reporting to the Board are major committees and divisions, such as the Education Committee, Show Division, Marketing Committee, Fiber Committee, Communication Committee, and Government & Industry Relations Committee. Regional Affiliate organizations also contribute to the overall support network for alpaca owners. Through these major committees and affiliates, the business of promoting alpacas and alpaca end products, as well as the education of members and the general public, all comes together.

AOBA hosts several online properties to support its many functions. These include:

www.AlpacaInfo.com— Everything you need to know about alpacas—how to get started, visit a farm or ranch near you, request information, and subscribe to Alpacas Magazine.

www.AlpacaOwners.com— AOBA membership offers an unparalleled value and investment in the future of the industry. Belonging to a national association lends credibility to members of any organization. AOBA is no different. Visit www.alpacaowners.com to learn about the many benefits AOBA members receive.

www.AobaAlpacas.com— The perfect solution for displaying your farm, services, products, and alpacas on the Internet!

www.AlpacaShows.com— Search the official AOBA show winnings page. Visit the calendar of events for all AOBA certified shows and find a show near you!

Do I need to purchase a registered alpaca?

Simple answer—**yes**. Anytime you are investing money, you need to take all the necessary steps to help assure that your investment maintains its value and registered alpacas do just that.

Alpaca Registry, Inc. (ARI) is the largest alpaca pedigree registry in the world. While ARI provides services to alpaca owners all over the world, they primarily provide pedigree registration and member services to the United States and Canada. ARI is one of the few livestock registries of any kind that requires that every animal be DNA tested back to its parents before being registered. As a result, ARI registered alpacas are highly desired.

What is ARI—Alpaca Registry, Inc.?

Alpaca Registry, Inc. (ARI) is the largest alpaca pedigree registry in the world and the only organization of its kind in the US. Since its inception in 1988, ARI has maintained and administered a database housing the scientifically-qualified genealogy and blood typing/DNA records of more than 200,000 alpacas across North America and other countries.

Appropriately enough, the people that make up ARI are those who benefit most from its existence. ARI is an independent organization created by and for alpaca farmers and ranchers. ARI was created specifically to protect the alpaca gene pool in North America, and helps ensure each breeder's investment is protected from cross-breeding with other camelids.

In 1998, members of ARI closed the registry to new alpacas; currently only alpacas born to ARI registered sires and dams qualify for registration. Purchasing registered alpacas is very important as is registering all new cria from registered parents. This protects your investment by tracking the pedigree of your alpaca and maintains the genealogical integrity of the breed as a whole.

ARI hosts three online properties to help alpaca owners and potential alpaca owners navigate the industry. These include:

www.AlpacaRegistry.com— This site houses ARI's scientifically based, searchable alpaca pedigree and Expected Progeny Differences (EPD) database where members manage their herds and memberships with ARI. New registrations, registration transfers, and all updates can be completed on this site in addition to research about pedigreed alpacas.

www.ariACADEMY.com— This site houses a wealth of information for current owners of alpacas as well as those considering joining this great industry. Educational topics on the site range from care of alpacas and farm to in-depth articles on genetics and Expected Progeny Differences (EPD).

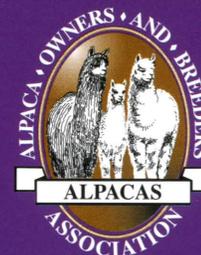
www.ariLIST.com— Interested in purchasing an alpaca or a breeding, but don't know where to start? ariLIST.com is a listing site which provides searchable information linked directly to ARI's validated pedigree database on alpacas that are currently for sale or stud. It is a great place to find a farm and research your alpaca options, while assisting you in your breeding or buying decision.



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