

# The Australasian Alpaca Breeders Association Inc.

## ALPACA BREED STANDARDS

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## **PREAMBLE**

These Breed Standards are designed to be an evolving work. Some of the Standards within this document should be reviewed and updated as needed, and should be scheduled for discussion at the AGM.

As with all AABA policies, members are encouraged to contribute to this evolving process.

The Breed Standards will

- incorporate scientific data where available, regarding genetics, heritability, health and fibre production
- provide a foundation for the scientific investigation of all aspects of the Alpaca including genetics, reproduction, fleece type, fleece characteristics, fleece and fibre production, and other husbandry issues of interest and need to breeders of Alpacas
- be the basis for Alpaca Shows and establish judging criteria
- provide education and training, and assist breeders with criteria for selection necessary for herd improvement

**ALPACA**

An Alpaca is a South American Camelid, scientific name *Lama pacos*.

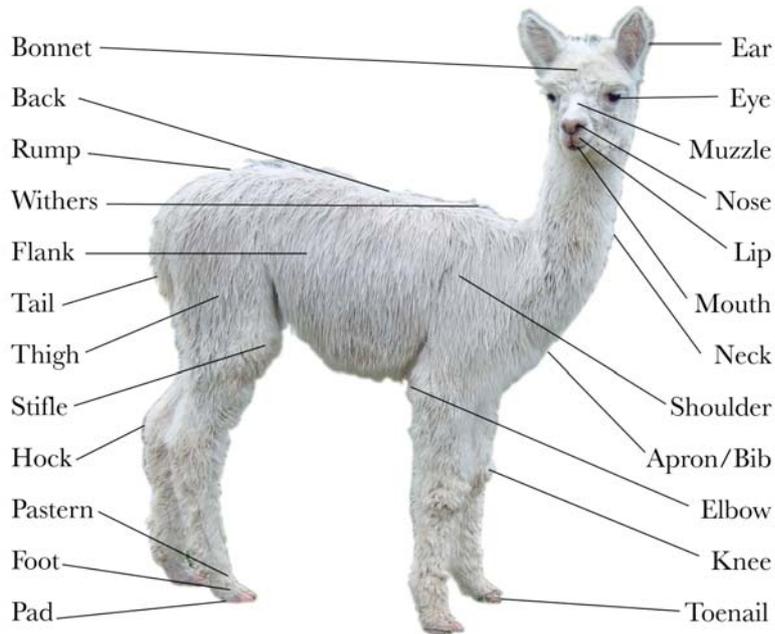
There are two distinct phenotypes: The Suri Alpaca and the Huacaya Alpaca. The visible difference between Suri and Huacaya is fleece type.

**TEMPERAMENT**

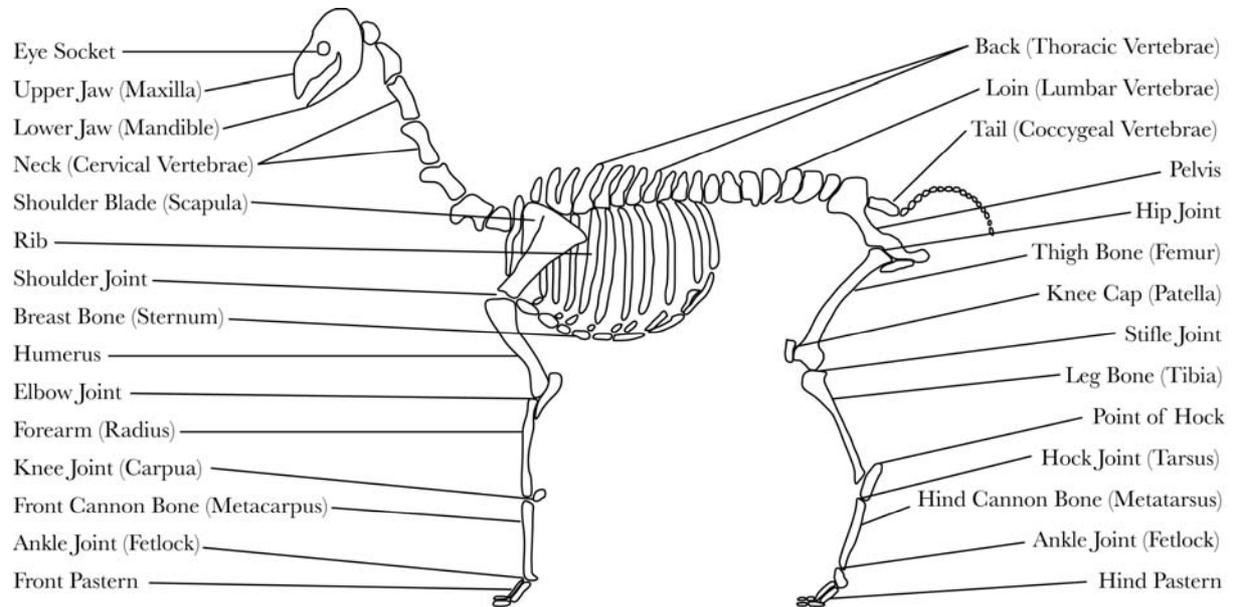
Alpacas are alert and inquisitive.

## ANATOMY OF AN ALPACA

### VISIBLE ANATOMY OF AN ALPACA



### BONE STRUCTURE OF AN ALPACA



**Based on Original Diagram:** Fowler, M. 1989. *Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

## CONFORMATION OF AN ALPACA

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

An Alpaca is a graceful Camelid, with upright stance.

The alpaca when true to type has the characteristics described in these standards.

### ALPACA GAIT

Alpacas have four gaits: walk, amble (or pace), trot and gallop. Alpacas can amble and are one of the only mammals able to do so naturally. There is also a fifth gait usually displayed when playing called pronk, where the 4 feet leave the ground at the same time.

The walk, trot and gallop are similar to those of the horse.

	STANDARD	NEGATIVE TRAIT	UT OR DD	SUBTRACT
<b>HEAD</b>	Wedge shaped with a squared to tapered muzzle	Wry face Head very narrow		
<b>EARS</b>	Medium to long in appearance Proportionate to the head size Mobile The set of the ear should be upright with placement not too low or wide on the head Suri ears can be longer than Huacaya ears	Fused ears short stubby, fused at the tips, curled, pancake, gopher Banana shaped ears Abnormally short Abnormally long	DD UT UT UT	0.5 pt 0.5 pt 0.25 pt
<b>FACE</b>		Wry or twisted face	DD	
<b>EYES</b>	Protrude slightly from their sockets, giving the appearance of being large and round Alert and set well apart Brown or black	Blue Fibre or hair impeding the animal's vision Entropion inversion/infolding margin of eyelid Ectropion rolling outward of an eyelid Blocked tear ducts Cataract, in an animal less than 10 years of age Blindness, with or without apparent eye anomaly Persistent pupillary membrane membrane over the pupil	UT UT DD DD DD DD DD DD	
<b>NOSE</b>	Two well-defined nostrils	Roman nose	UT	0.25 pt

	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>NEGATIVE TRAIT</b>	<b>UT OR DD</b>	<b>SUBTRACT</b>
<b>JAW &amp; BITE</b>	Should have normal correct alignment The jaws should fit together well The incisors meet the dental pad.	Jaw not properly aligned Lower jaw undershot or overshot Cleft palate	DD	
<b>LIP</b>	The upper lip is divided and mobile			
<b>TEETH</b>		Superior brachygnathism the central incisors protrude more than 0.3 cm beyond the dental pad, measured from the outside of the teeth  Inferior brachygnathism the front edge of dental pad protrudes more than 0.5 cm beyond the lower incisors, measured from the outside of the teeth  Filed teeth  These anomalies can amend with age. An alpaca disqualified for this reason can be represented for registration once more at a later date. The Alpaca must pass registration at the second examination.	DD  DD  DD	
<b>NECK</b>	Long and slender Continues directly from the line of the backbone, blending smoothly into the shoulder	Length of neck disproportionate to body size (too long or too short) Neck bent or U-neck Cervical, Thoracic and Lumbar Spine: Scoliosis Abnormal lateral curvature of the spine Lordosis Abnormal forward curvature of the spine in the lumbar region Kyphosis Abnormal rearward curvature of the spine, resulting in protuberance of the upper back; hunchback thoracic wall deformities	DD  DD  DD  DD	
<b>BODY</b>	Deep but narrow chest with well-sprung ribs The back is strong and the top-line is slightly convex The loins are broad, strong	Roach back Sway back Over-long straight back (llama-like)		
<b>HEART</b>		Murmur	UT	0.75 pts

	STANDARD	NEGATIVE TRAIT	UT OR DD	SUBTRACT
<b>LUNGS</b>		Lack of air movement  The test consists in pinching one nostril and observing air movement through the unobstructed nostril (e.g. by holding a piece of light cloth in front of it and observing it moving). The test must then be repeated in front of the other nostril. This test is intended to detect any sign of predisposition to choanal atresia	DD	
<b>FOREQUARTERS</b>	The withers are relatively wide where the shoulders meet, well fleshed and set well into the shoulders forming a straight line with the back	Chest narrow  Withers prominent		
<b>HINDQUARTERS</b>	The rump is broad with a slightly convex top line, good space between the pin bones  The thighs are strong and well muscled  The hindquarters are slightly higher than the forequarters	Narrow hindquarters  Steeply sloping rump		
<b>TAIL</b>	The tail is straight, covered with quality fibre, set slightly lower than in other livestock and should cover the genitalia	Tail absent or abnormally short  A bent, kinked or twisted tail that cannot be manually straightened or where there are no signs of a break/calcification  Too short to cover scrotum	DD  DD  DD	
<b>ANUS</b>		Atresia ani imperforated anus or evidence of surgical correction	DD	
<b>LEGS</b>	The pasterns are firm and are set at an angle of approximately 70°–80° with the horizontal	Weak pasterns (down on pasterns)  Obvious carpal deviation  Cow hocks  Sickle hocks  bow legged  severe splay footed  severe pigeon toed  down on fetlock	DD  DD  DD  DD  DD  DD  DD	

	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>NEGATIVE TRAIT</b>	<b>UT OR DD</b>	<b>SUBTRACT</b>
<b>FORELEGS</b>	The forelegs are strong and straight	severe carpal valgus abnormal outward turning of the hip, knee, or foot, knock-kneed	DD	
<b>HINDLEGS</b>	The hind legs are straight and parallel when viewed from behind	Patella upward fixation Luxating patella	DD DD	
<b>FEET</b>	The feet are neat and well formed and bear two forward pointing toes	Polydactylism more than two toes on each foot Syndactylism fusion of the two toes of the same foot	DD DD	
<b>UDDER</b>	The udder should show good capacity, with four teats	Less than four teats Presence of one or more supernumerary teats that could interfere with the normal function of the four normal teats Inverted teat(s) irrespective of number and position	DD DD DD	
<b>TESTICLES</b>	The scrotum is well attached, non-pendulous and carries two even sized testicles	Testicles of uneven size Testicles too small - relative to age < 2.5cm at less than 18 months of age < 3cm at more than 18 months of age Fewer than two testicles Abnormal consistency	DD DD DD DD	
<b>HEIGHT &amp; WEIGHT</b>	A mature animal measures from approximately 90 cm at the withers and weighs from approximately 60 kg upwards A Body Score of 2 to 4	Oversized - particularly if llama like characteristics present Body condition using a scale of 1 to 5 Body Score 1- emaciated Body Score 5 - obese	DD DD DD	
<b>MOVEMENT</b>	Alpacas should exhibit an even stride length with two distinct tracks, the hind feet following the front ones	Uneven stride length Paddling on the front feet		
<b>OTHER FEATURES</b>		Herniated umbilicus at more than 2 years of age	DD	

**Note:**

The examining Veterinarian is required to report any other serious defects that are present and that may or should, in the Veterinarian's professional opinion, result in disqualification of the male as healthy and sound for reproduction. Whether or not the defect reported will be disqualifying is at the AABA's discretion.

## ALPACA FLEECE

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The alpaca should be well covered.

A Huacaya should present with a rounded appearance.

A Suri should present with a flat-sided appearance.

Coverage should extend down the legs and up to the bonnet with a clean muzzle and ears.

**DENSITY** is a measure of the number of fleece follicles per square centimetre of skin. A commercially viable alpaca fleece should ideally exhibit good density. A dense fleece will also inhibit dirt and moisture contamination.

**FINENESS** is the measure of diameter of an individual fibre in the fleece. It is measured in microns ( $\mu$ ) – a millionth of a metre.

Fineness should be uniform across the entire fleece.

A good commercial fleece meets manufacturers and processors needs. It is usually referred to as:

Super Fine	under 20 $\mu$
Fine	from 20 $\mu$ to 23 $\mu$
Medium	from 23 $\mu$ to 28 $\mu$
Strong	28 $\mu$ and above

**HANDLE** Soft handle is often, but not always, a characteristic that is exhibited in concert with low micron. The handle of an Alpaca should be silk-like and slippery.

**LUSTRE** Lustre is a complex optical phenomenon and can be described as silk-like or pearly. A good commercial fleece should be high in lustre.

**MEDULLATION** Medullated fibres are straight, broad micron fibres. A good commercial Alpaca Fleece should be free of medullated fibre.

**LENGTH** The fleece should be the same fibre length throughout the entire saddle. The neck fleece is usually a little shorter than the saddle. A good commercial fleece will ideally have neck and saddle fleece of the same length.

**TENDERNESS** means fleece breakage at points along the length of the fibre. This is a negative trait in Alpaca fleece.

**COLOUR** Alpaca grow fleece in many natural colours. The colour range is from white to fawn, brown, grey and black.

Alpaca should be solid and uniform in colour; however colour variation is not unusual in fawns and greys.

## FLEECE STANDARDS

	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>NEGATIVE TRAIT</b>
<b>SURI</b>	<p>Fleece that grows out from the body in locks or curls and should drape, following the shape of the body</p> <p>The fleece will part along the back line</p> <p>The locks should be well defined and start at the skin</p> <p>The locking and curl should be uniform throughout the body from Bonnet to Tail and Hock</p> <p>The lustre should be obvious and the fleece of a good Suri can be described as “curtains of silk”</p> <p>The handle should be smooth and slippery</p> <p>The fleece should feel cool when you run your hand down it.</p> <p>The Suri Alpaca Fleece will be longer than Huacaya for the same fleece growing period</p> <p>The lock structure or architecture can be twisted, curled or pencilled</p> <p>The locks should be independent</p>	<p>Flat, open fleece with no lock definition (no architecture)</p> <p>Fluffy rather than dense fleece</p> <p>Chalkiness</p> <p>Harsh handle</p> <p>Short staple length for age of fleece</p> <p>Medullated fibre</p> <p>Lack of overall coverage</p> <p>Tenderness</p>
<b>HUACAYA</b>	<p>Huacaya Alpacas have crimped fleece, much like a merino sheep, that stands at right angles from the skin</p> <p>The crimp should be regular, deep and carried across the entire fleece</p> <p>Staples should be strongly defined</p>	<p>Uneven crimp</p> <p>Open fleece with no density</p> <p>Chalkiness</p> <p>Harsh handle</p> <p>Short staple length</p> <p>Medullated fibre</p> <p>Lack of overall coverage</p> <p>Tenderness</p>