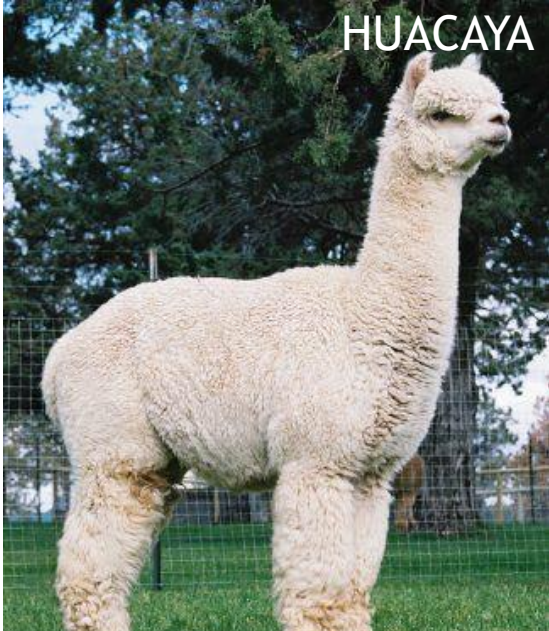




ALPACAS

HUACAYA



ORIGIN OF THE ALPACA

- ▶ Alpacas were domesticated thousands of years ago.
- ▶ The Moche people of Northern Peru often used alpaca images in their art.
- ▶ Alpacas are part of the Camelid family and share many characteristics including excellent water retention, two-toes, prehensile upper lips and a long neck.
- ▶ The Bactrian and Dromedary camels form one branch of the camelid family and evolved from the dry desert environments of Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The other branch evolved in the harsh, mountainous conditions of South America and includes Alpacas and Llamas.
- ▶ The Alpaca is often confused with the Llama. The two animals are closely related and share some similarities; however, alpacas are often noticeably smaller than llamas.
- ▶ There are two types of alpaca: Huacaya, which produce a dense soft fibre and the Suri with lanolin-free wool resembling dreadlocks.



SURI



INTRODUCTION OF ALPACAS TO AUSTRALIA

- ▶ Alpaca farming is now an established primary industry and is an agricultural pursuit that is ideally suited to Australia's fragile environment.
- ▶ Alpacas were first introduced into Australia in 1989.
- ▶ Alpacas can be farmed for fibre, meat and leather but in Australia, are grown mainly for their fibre or wool.
- ▶ Alpaca fibre is soft, light, warm and comfortable. It is categorised as a luxury fibre, being processed into a range of high-quality garments and home wares.
- ▶ Farming alpacas for meat is new in Australia and very small scale with farmers usually selling directly to restaurants.
- ▶ The animals live for 15 to 20 years, producing between one and a half to four or more kilograms of fleece each year.
- ▶ In 2018 Around 2,300 alpaca breeders registered more than 200,000 animals in Australia. It is estimated the national herd is set to top one million alpacas by 2021 pending the demand of the overseas market.





ALPACA FARMING

- ▶ Alpacas are grazing animals and can be run under the same climate and conditions as merino sheep.
- ▶ Alpacas are relatively easy to care for and cause minimal damage to fragile soils as they have soft feet rather than hooves.
- ▶ In addition to farming for production, alpacas can be run with sheep and goats as guards to protect the herd against wild dogs and foxes.
- ▶ The more common breed of alpaca is the Huacaya which accounts for around 90% of the registered herd in Australia. The Huacaya has a soft crimped style of fleece, not unlike that of a merino sheep.
- ▶ The less common type is the Suri, representing around 10% of the Australian (and world) herd. The Suri has a fleece which grows in long locks hanging straight down from the animal's backline.
- ▶ Both Huacaya and Suri come in a range of colours from white, through shades of fawn and brown, to grey and black.
- ▶ For commercial fleece production, white is the preferred colour, but there is also a good market for coloured fleece from niche markets such as hand spinners and craftspeople.
- ▶ Alpacas are shorn once a year in spring. Standard electric sheep shearing equipment is used and there are many shearers now specialising in the shearing of alpacas.





ALPACA FARMING

- ▶ How many alpacas a property can support will depend on what sort of pasture and how much pasture your land can produce.
- ▶ Alpacas will eat about 2% of their body weight in feed per day. Alpacas should always be pasture fed. They do well on native pastures, however alpacas can be supplemented with good quality hay and/or various grains.
- ▶ Alpacas need ready access to good quality, fresh drinking water requiring between 2-10 litres per animal per day.
- ▶ Alpacas require similar fencing to sheep, preferably without barbed wire and shade in each paddock.
- ▶ It is important to have a suitable yard or catch pen for welfare checks, to administer injections or to catch animals for shearing.
- ▶ Fenced laneways between paddocks will help facilitate the movement of animals with minimum stress for animal and owner.



ALPACA TERMINOLOGY

- ▶ Alpacas live for 15-20 years, with an adult weight of about 70kg.
- ▶ An alpaca pregnancy lasts 11-12 months.
- ▶ The birthing process of an alpaca is called unpacking.
- ▶ The alpaca female is called a Dam (or Hembra in Spanish) and
- ▶ The alpaca male is called a Sire (Macho).
- ▶ The baby alpaca is called a cria, meaning 'create' in Spanish.





KEEPING ALPACAS AS PETS

Do Alpacas make good pets?

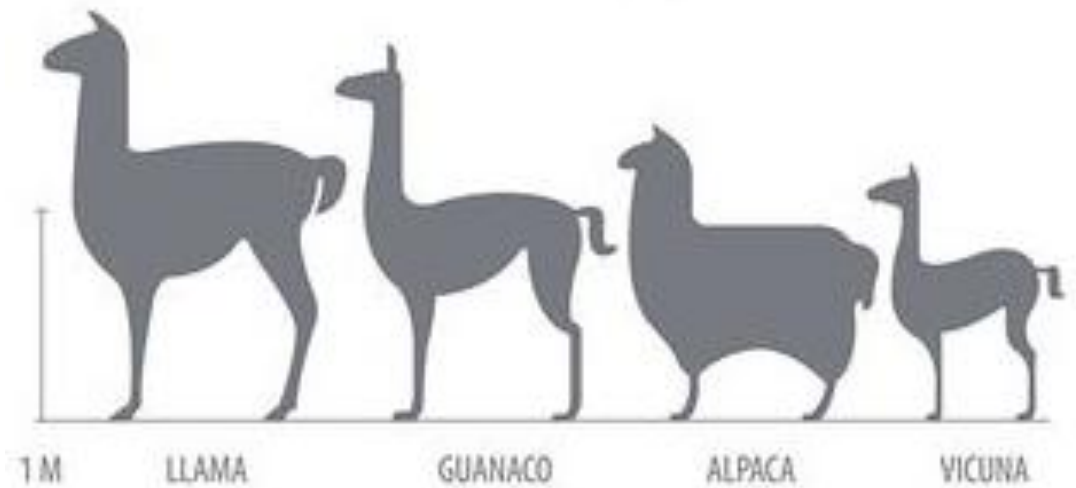
- ▶ Alpaca's, like sheep and cows, are not domesticated animals. They live in herds, in the paddocks, and for the most part prefer it that way.
- ▶ The more handling they receive as youngsters, the quieter they are as adults.
- ▶ Although alpacas look cuddly, they generally don't like being held, and are particularly sensitive to being touched on the head.
- ▶ When alpacas mature into adults, they can engage in herd seniority behaviour.
- ▶ If they have been treated as pets, they may treat humans as competitors and behave in a rough manner to establish their seniority.
- ▶ The best thing to remember is that they are alpacas, and not dogs or cats, and should be allowed to be alpacas.
- ▶ They have become extremely popular more recently for hobby farmers, most likely because they are just so adorable.
- ▶ They are amazingly alert animals who can quickly learn to halter and lead.
- ▶ They constantly communicate with each other through body posture, tail and ear movements, and a variety of sounds. The sound heard most often is a soft humming



The Camelid Family



Size Comparison



HEALTH CARE, PESTS & DISEASES

- ▶ Animal health, welfare and biosecurity are all important stages of the livestock production chain. If managed poorly each can have adverse impacts on productivity.
- ▶ Biosecurity programs for farming industries are designed to prevent the spread of infectious disease and contain disease outbreaks when they occur.
- ▶ Parasites and disease impact on all animals, including Alpacas. Animals affected by disease may not always show obvious clinical signs.
- ▶ Biosecurity is important at the national, regional and property level.
- ▶ Producers are governed by Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. State and territory governments are responsible for animal welfare laws and their enforcement. These are enforced through animal welfare or prevention of cruelty to animals' legislation.



RISKS & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Like any primary production enterprise there are risks associated with commercial production of Alpacas. Some will be outside of a producer's control however experienced producers are usually able to manage these risks.
- ▶ Risks include the loss of vital export markets. The COVID-19 outbreak had a massive impact on a lot of our export markets.
- ▶ Disease and pests, it is extremely important that we maintain Australia's freedom from major diseases through strict quarantine laws and procedures.
- ▶ Here in Australia weather events such as drought, fires and flooding take a huge toll on our farming communities. They really need our support.



POP QUIZ

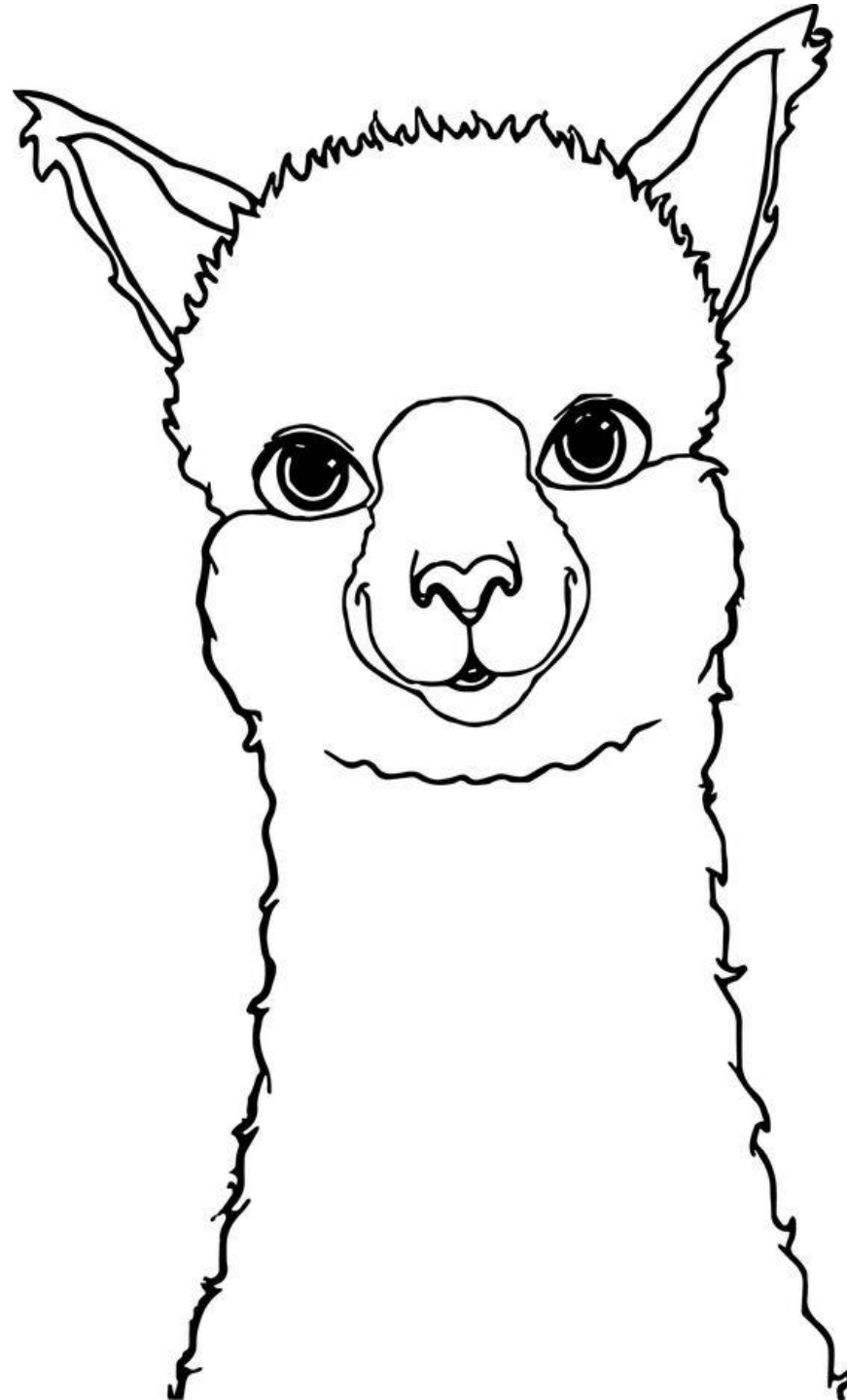
- ▶ The male is called a _____ and the female is called a _____.
- ▶ A baby Alpaca is called a _____
- ▶ Alpaca pregnancy last for about _____.
- ▶ A Alpacas average natural lifespan is _____ years.
- ▶ Alpacas are apart of the Camelid family TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ The two types of Alpaca are the _____ & _____.
- ▶ Alpacas where introduced in to Australian in _____.
- ▶ Alpacas and Llamas are exactly the same TRUE/FALSE.
- ▶ Alpacas communicate by _____.
- ▶ What are three challenges farmers face in Australia _____, _____ & _____

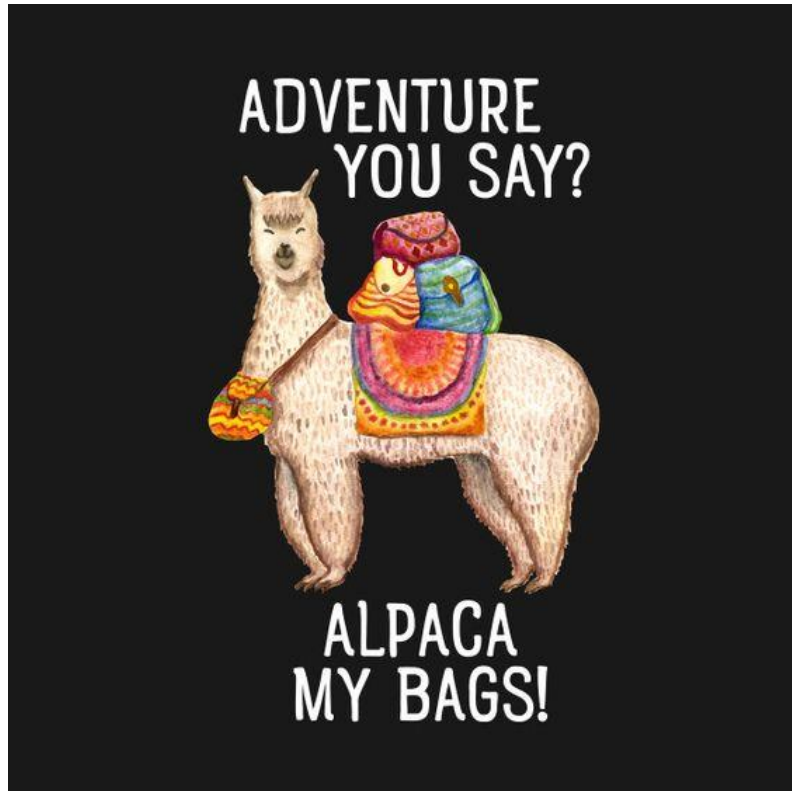


NOTES

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ALPACAS





RESOURCES

<https://www.abc.net.au>

[agriculture.vic.gov.au](https://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au)

<https://www.agrifutures.com.au>

<https://alpaca.asn.au>

Wikipedia