

Alpacas + Youth = Future



Youth & Alpacas

Shaping the Future of the Alpaca Industry

As we look forward to the year ahead, with an invigorated focus on youth in alpacas, now enthusiastically backed by the AAA board, a look back at 2018 seems a good way to start. 2018 brought with it many changes, challenges, highs and lows, but most importantly it brought with it a change in the tides, where youth in our industry are finally receiving the recognition they deserve.

This recognition began to show itself at the 2018 Australian Alpaca Spectacular in August. In previous National Shows, the Young Paraders ring has been tucked away in a back corner, while the Young Judges competed during lunch breaks. Most breeders' eyes and minds were eagerly on other things at these times and locations. However, this past year we reached a mile stone. Both competitions were conducted centre stage, showing off our industry's youth from across the nation, right alongside the main halter ring. Not only was youth showcased by standing shoulder to shoulder with the animal judging, but it was broadcast across the world in real time!

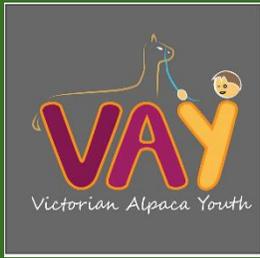
A magnificently set up ring with immaculate competitors wearing huge grins and showing off their skill and alpaca knowledge, was met with high praise from national and international alpaca enthusiasts alike! This huge step forward has shown the Australian alpaca community, as well as the broader alpaca community, just what supporting our youth can do for the health and vitality of our industry. The importance of this milestone, though a long time coming, cannot be understated.

Our youth continued to represent alpacas when the rest of the industry could not, by competing at the

Royal Melbourne Show in September. This show allowed for exciting new ideas and a new format to be trialled. Our most experienced competitors graded fleeces and critically analysed alpacas in a pen in order to make the best breeding decision. Competitors expressed that these tasks provided them with a real challenge and was a rewarding experience. Furthermore, it showcased the skills and knowledge gained through participation in Victorian youth events, and how they can be translated into real-life situations.



On top of this, walk-an-alpaca and alpaca photo booth opportunities allowed for public participation in the camelid world. With participation comes enthusiasm and a drive to learn more. When coupled with beaming youth speaking passionately of their love for these amazing animals... Well, what better ambassadors could we, as an industry, ask for to bridge the gap between city and county?



Alpacas + Youth = Future

The Future Doesn't Just Happen... It Is Created



More events were added to the calendar, with shows such as Lilydale hosting a Young Paraders event. Competitors braved blistering conditions and gained the full

support of the Lilydale Committee, with a very expectant invitation to do it all again in 2019.

But with the highs come the lows. After a year of youth in alpacas going from strength to strength, it came to a sombre conclusion, with the passing of a very special Youth Ambassador and incredibly important member of the Australian alpaca industry, Karen Caldwell. As we near the end of this particular newsletter, we respectfully ask readers to remember a woman who drove huge change within our industry. We ask that you, the industry, continue to encourage growth and prosperity by supporting the opportunities for youth Karen worked tirelessly to build right to the end.

If you would like to get involved, what better way to start than by attending the Victorian alpaca Youth Training and Education Committee's AGM? This is being held at Donvale Christian College on Saturday the 16th of February.

This is an opportunity to get to know the committee, the members of the Victorian youth group, and potentially get involved. We look forward to seeing you throughout the year and thank you again for your continued support of youth in alpacas.

Warmest regards and thank you for reading,
The VYTEC team



In memory of Karen Caldwell

With special thanks to;
BreenBurn Alpaca Stud
Kalpara Alpaca Stud

For their continued support of youth in alpacas!

If you too would like to help sponsor the fantastic activities offered by VYTEC, please contact Taryan Mathews on 0419386068, or by email at taryan.kotsiakos@gmail.com