

VICTORIAN EASTERN REGION

VER e-Newsletter

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Welcome to the VER e-Newsletter

Newsletters can be a great way to stay in touch by letting others know what you are doing during these times of physical distancing. We would love to hear from you with anything you would like to share - photos, stories, marketing your product or service, anything at all that is alpaca related in the Victorian Eastern Region.

2019/2020 Alpaca of the Year results to be announced shortly. Stay Tuned!

Parasites that affect alpacas

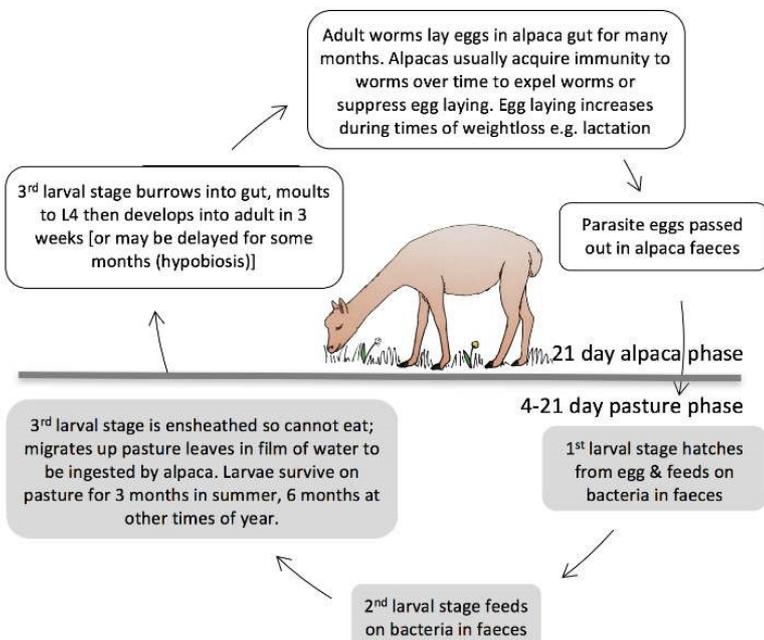
Worms (internal parasites) and external parasites are currently estimated to cost the Australian agricultural sector hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Although economic losses due to parasitism in alpacas have not been quantified in intensive grazing systems, it is expected that parasitic gastroenteritis in alpacas would result in substantial production losses.

Being familiar with the important worms on your property and how they multiply and survive helps you plan effective worm control and maximise profits and health of your alpacas. The common worms in Australia can be divided into 3 broad groups:

- ◆ Roundworms: - Barbers Pole, Scour and Brown Stomach worms are the main ones but there are many others.
- ◆ Tapeworms
- ◆ Flukes
- ◆ Other occasional parasites such as: - Coccidia, Itch Mite

For descriptions, signs and treatments of parasites the [Wormboss website](#) is an excellent general resource.

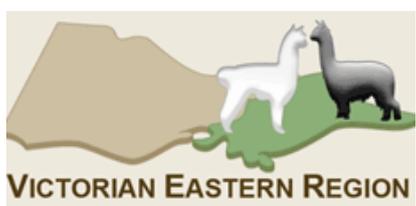
For specific information on worms affecting alpacas, the 2018 [Studies on gastrointestinal nematodes \("worms"\) of alpacas](#). By Jane Vaughan, Mohammed Rashid and Abdul Jabbar is an in depth study providing comprehensive information to alpaca owners.



Left: A typical strongle worm lifecycle.

Image sourced from the "Studies on gastrointestinal nematodes ("worms") of alpacas."

May 10th, 2020



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Want your product to stand out from the crowd?

AgriFutures provides a **free** provenance toolkit to help rural businesses stand out from the crowd

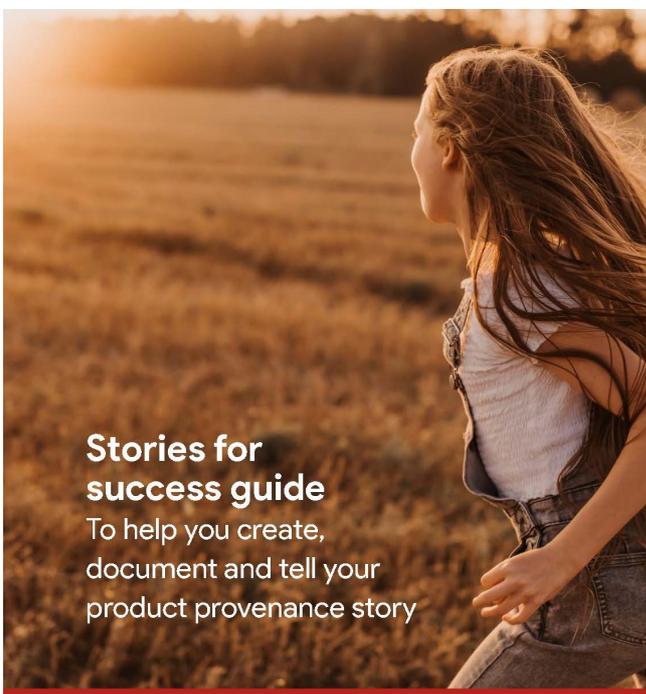
“When it comes to food and fibre, consumers want to know who produced it, where it was produced and how it was produced. New AgriFutures Australia funded work not only confirms that building provenance through storytelling is a critical strategy for bringing brands and products to life, but also offers the practical tools to help small business achieve it. The provenance toolkit, developed by agricultural market research and digital marketing experts Honey and Fox, offers a suite of practical resources available for download via the [AgriFutures Australia website.](#)”

The resources include:

- ◆ Summary of consumer trends towards provenance, and technologies and platforms for sharing production stories
- ◆ Practical guide and templates to help producers to share their story
- ◆ Case studies outlining how producers are capitalising on the benefits of improved provenance storytelling within their businesses.

The resources are practical, easy to navigate and relevant to Australian providers who want to share their provenance story.

It really does not matter how small your alpaca business might be, you may find these resources very helpful.



Stories for success guide

To help you create, document and tell your product provenance story

Provenance storytelling for success
February 2020



[AgriFutures Australia website link](#)

May 10th, 2020



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Local fibre mill -
Fibre Naturally
Make it into the
The Weekly Times.
April 2020



For the full article on Fibre Naturally go to the back page

Pacca Product Promotion

Alpaca product available in the Victorian Eastern Region:

Alternative View - with their hand knitted hats and babies rattle

Pitchingga Ridge - their online farm shop is stocked with soft suri wraps, scarves, throws, ponchos and more.

For further information on these products and more,

visit the [VER Regional Website](#)



Pitchingga Ridge Alpacas
Brushed alpaca throws

May 10th, 2020



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Alpacas and hypothermia.

Whilst recently reviewing and updating our VER website I came across a very interesting and still relevant article on:-

Alpacas and hypothermia.

By Andrea Glew, previously of Hill Farrance Alpacas.

Introduction

It may seem strange that animals who have originated in one of the coldest locations on earth can succumb to hypothermia or cold stress. The fact that such a thing can happen during the warmer parts of the year here in Australia may seem even stranger at first. However, adult alpacas can suffer from cold stress during freak cold snaps following shearing, when they are without the protection of their exceptionally warm fleece. Older animals, nursing mothers, thin animals and those suffering from nutritional deficiency are particularly susceptible. Very young animals born during autumn and late winter can also be at risk. Weather conditions to watch for are a sudden and severe drop in temperature, prolonged rain and cold wind. Each can be dangerous on its own but they are especially deadly in combination. Common sense husbandry practices and property improvements can substantially minimise the risk of hypothermia. As well, having an emergency plan and a supply of treatments on hand in the event of cold stress is a wise move. Animals with hypothermia may live for some hours, which means they have a good chance of recovering if quick action is taken.

Symptoms

Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature of an alpaca falls below the normal range of 37.5 to 38.6 degrees C. Some breeders have observed body temperatures as low as 32 degrees C while others were not even able to get a temperature to register on the rectal thermometer. The drop in body temperature in turn causes poor circulation. Apart from low body temperature, shivering would seem to be the other obvious symptom but in fact hypothermia is not always easy to recognise. Shivering is simply a contraction of muscles and is the body's way of generating heat. Once the alpaca has used up its store of energy, shivering stops and the body temperature begins to drop. However, it is easy to miss this initial stage of hypothermia, especially if the onset of bad weather occurs at night. Other signs of hypothermia include slow and shallow breathing, a slow heart rate (around 16 beats a minute), mental depression and coma. Shivering also occurs when the animals begin to warm up. At times shivering can be confined to the head but at other times the whole body. One breeder has likened it to the symptoms of staggers."

To read more of this article [click here](#)

The VER website is slowly being updated and is becoming a great resource for our members and guest.

If you are new to alpacas you may enjoy reading the "New to alpacas" section under Alpaca Resources.

Even long time alpaca owners may enjoy reading some of the "Alpaca health" and "On farm" articles, I have rediscovered them myself recently. These can also be found under Alpaca Resources

I expect to be adding further content to the website in the coming weeks, including an Alpaca Product page.

At the time this eNewsletter was being published, the Alpaca Resources drop down menu was still to be updated, this can be overcome by simply clicking on the Alpaca Resources in the top menu and navigating to the actual Alpaca Resources page, I am hoping this will be resolved shortly.

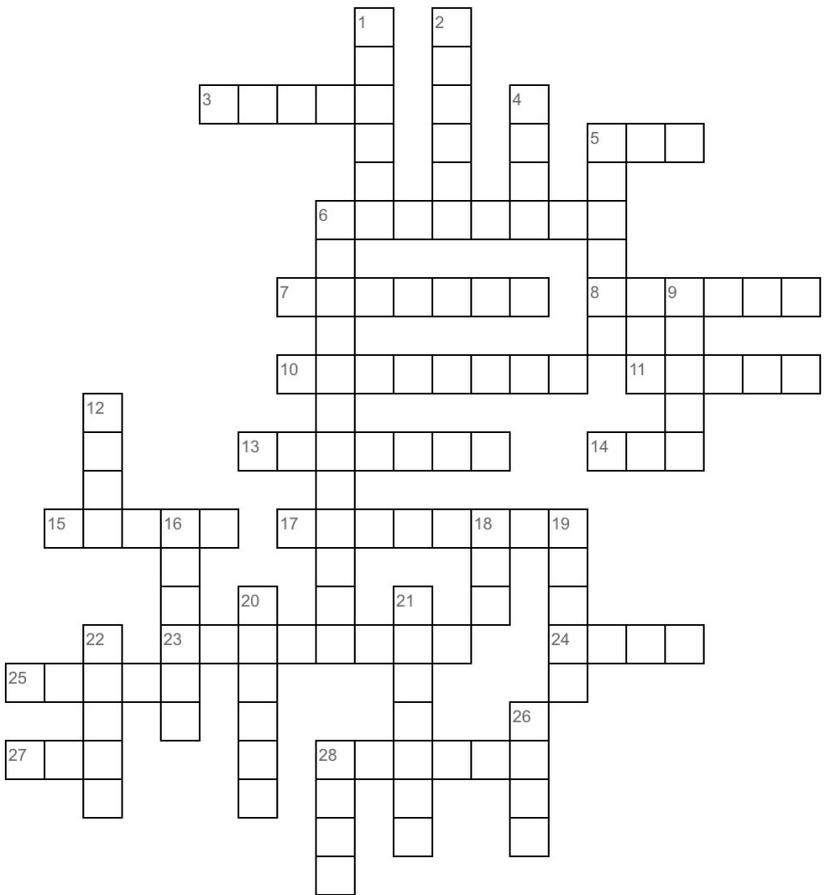


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This issues game!
Thanks Lalirra Alpacas for this
crossword all about alpacas.

Alpaca



Across

- 3 Transport
- 5 Dry food
- 6 Mineral supplement
- 7 Breed type
- 8 Hope to win at a show
- 10 Undertaken once a year
- 11 Stud males have extra ones
- 13 Member of this family
- 14 Second chew
- 15 Male
- 17 Leaping
- 23 Need trimming
- 24 Father
- 25 Number of stomach compartments
- 27 Mother
- 28 Fleece measure

Down

- 1 Alternative feeding by
- 2 Grows all year
- 4 Breed type
- 5 Female
- 6 Origin (5, 7)
- 9 Increase the herd
- 12 Baby alpaca
- 16 Head gear
- 18 Official database
- 19 Favourite food
- 20 Male, not for breeding
- 21 We love them
- 22 Fleece term
- 26 Use for yarn
- 28 Cria food

Answers on the next page.

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Cont'd. The Weekly Times, Country Living article on Fibre Naturally!

THEWEEKLYTIMES.COM.AU WEDNESDAY APRIL 15 2020



Start to finish: Gayle Herring with her alpacas, and (inset) with daughter Jamie-Lee with some of the Alpaca Allure products in her shop. Pictures: DANNIKA BOYSER

Gayle force wins in spinning game

COVER STORY

From Page 1

Gayle bought her first two alpacas, Mary and Mim, using a payout from a voluntary redundancy she had happily accepted.

In 2000 she and her family moved to the current location, renaming the stud from Beringya Downs to Glenavon to reflect the new property, which is larger than the first.

To process her fleeces Gayle uses a mini mill, bought in 2007. Before that, Gayle says she was struggling to make up batches of her own fleece that were both big enough to meet the needs of her processor in Geelong, but also consistent across certain criteria, either micron size or colour.

"If I wanted to maximise my return, in a way, and get a good quality product I didn't want to mix anyone's fleeces together. They had to be a certain criteria to be able to get that quantity ... and with a herd of 100 alpacas I couldn't do that, I was struggling to do that," she says.

"So I thought there must be something else out there and one of my friends said, 'You should be looking at mini mills, Gayle'."

The mill is capable of processing fleeces into a choice of final products, whether that be rovings, batts or various sized yarn. They will accept any volume, as well as most natural fibres.

At their best, Gayle's alpacas will produce about 2kg-3kg of usable saddle fleece annually, but Gayle says

the fleece quality of older, breeding or lactating mothers is not as high.

"It is a very luxury fibre because we don't get a lot from each alpaca compared to sheep, yet," she says.

Gayle estimates that about 80 per cent of what goes through the mill is other people's fleeces. The remainder is her own, fleeces and others bought in from select farms, which go towards the Alpaca Allure brand and products. That includes yarns, knits, gloves, scarfs and blankets.

Three generations of the family are involved in the business. Gayle's mother, Kath, is the knitter of the family, while Gayle's daughter Ash hand-dyes some of the yarn and also does spinning and crochet, and her other daughter, Jamie-Lee, weaves.

Gayle is proud that some of the fibre in her products will never have left the farm before it reaches the customer. She channels that passion for local growing and manufacturing into her involvement with the Australian Fibre Collective, which has launched a new trademark for yarn products made entirely in Australia, including processing.

"One of the main people on it would be Trisha Esson from Cashmere Connections," says Gayle. "She was so sick and tired of people



saying you cannot do everything in the fibre industry in Australia, when in actual fact we can."

Gayle had been planning this year to begin running tours at the mill, which was recently upgraded, but due to coronavirus they have been put on hold. The virus has also forced the cancellation of the Australian Sheep and Wool Show, the annual Bendigo event Gayle regularly attends.

In the last couple of years she says she has been taking some of their "interesting" blends to the show, such as alpaca/camel and even alpaca/possum (the possum fur is sourced from Tasmania), and had been going to take another new yarn to this year's show.

Those new ideas are all part of the bigger picture for Gayle.

"We (mini mills) can only pump out so much," she says. "We're not a big production thing. But we can do small and interesting and totally traceable yarns. We can do all that."

Please send any proposed content to Lynda Holdsworth via the VER Secretary or directly to queries@auravalealpacas.com.au