



VICTORIAN EASTERN REGION

VER e-Newsletter

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Welcome to the VER e-Newsletter

Hi, with shearing season upon us I have dedicated most of this month's newsletter to our alpacas' fleece. If you have a story you would like to share with others please contact the [eNewsletter Officer](#)

VER Regional Boundaries

The region's boundaries start at Albury/Wodonga, then down the Hume Highway to Benalla, south on the Midland Highway to Mansfield, picks up the Maroondah Highway to Merton, Healesville, Lilydale and on to Melbourne, then follows the coastline to Mallacoota.

The VER covers a geographically diverse area from the vineyards of the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula, to the rich soil farming districts of Gippsland, the coastal extension from Port Phillip to Mallacoota and the grandeur of the Great Dividing Range.

Within the Victorian Eastern Region there are currently over 120 registered alpaca breeders, several with larger studs in excess of 100 alpacas to others with only a few. Many members also promote and sell alpaca products.

Benefits of AAA membership:

- specific member-only resources
- a broad support network of more than 1,200 members, who share your passion for alpacas
- experts who understand the industry and are dedicated to exploring opportunities and helping you succeed
- the tools and resources you need to develop your herd to its greatest potential and enjoy the many benefits of these unique animals.

You'll also have access to the best information, support and services for managing and breeding alpacas in Australia, including access to the International Alpaca Registry (IAR) and alpaca show system, which are both operated via the eAlpaca system.



Membership can be achieved for as little as \$50/annum.

To find out more, click here for the [AAA Website](#)



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VER News

National Fleece Challenge support for VER Members

There are two fleece shows on offer:

1. Fleece shorn from 4 June 2019 - 30th June 2020
2. Fleece shorn post 30 June 2020.

You can enter one or both shows, you can enter two fleeces from the one alpaca if you wish.

Entries are now open via [eAlpaca](#) and close 12MN on 2nd November 2020.

It would be great to have an extensive representation of fleeces from the Victorian Eastern Region members.

To encourage VER entries to the National Fleece Challenge the VER Committee have chosen to support our members by providing additional drop off points and paying the \$5 return transport fee for VER members.

The VER will also acknowledge the region's top fleece scores in each category. This will be promoted over VER social media, eNewsletter and our website once results are finalised.

National Fleece Challenge local VER support guidelines:

- VER to pay the \$5 transport fee to and from the National Fleece Challenge. To access this support when entering via [eAlpaca](#), see the additional line under Extra Show Items:

Collection & return via VER (per fleece – maximum of 5 fleeces per stud) \$0.00each

VER have established the following additional fleece drop off points. Please call number provided to arrange drop off time.

- **Auravale Alpacas** - 1557 Wellington Road, Belgrave South, 3160, Lynda - Mob: 0419 334 276.
Drop off prior to 12MD 7th November
- **Taroola Alpacas** - 85 Bouchiers Road, Kangaroo Ground, 3097, Heather - Mob: 0417 580 507.
Drop off prior to 12 MD 7th November
- **Elm Park** - 100 Thompson Road, Hazlewood South, 3840, Mob: Kylie - Mob: 0412 075 455.
Drop off prior to 12 MD 7th November
- **Pitchingga Ridge Alpacas** - 109 Stony Creek Road, Red Hill, 3937, Jean - Mob: 0436 022 440.
Drop off prior to 12 MD 6th November
- **Merungle Alpacas** – 38 Sellings Lane, Maffra 3860, Jen—Mob: 0412 383 655
Drop off prior to 12 MD 4th November
- **Milestead Alpacas** – 15 Franklin Street, Sale, Jenny - Mob: 0417 392 670 OR 460 Friday Creek Road, Iguanana Creek.
Drop off prior to 12 MD 4th November

Click [National Fleece Challenge](#) to find out more

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Did you see Escape from the City on Thursday 1st October?

If you did you would have seen Alternative View Alpacas!

If you missed it, click [iView](#) to watch it on catchup TV



Brigitte Kat, Alternative View Alpaca, Mirboo North, teaching the Escape from the City couple about alpacas and their poo!

AAA Webinars

Last week the AAA in collaboration with the Western Australia region hosted a webinar on “**Alpaca genetic testing for colour — Dr Kylie Munyard**”. This was an informative and interesting session for breeders of all colours. It was attended by over 50 studs, with some international alpaca owners attending.

Following the success of the Webinar another is planned for the 26th October at 7.30pm:

“Practical alpaca nutrition — Dr Jane Vaughan.”

“Different classes of livestock have different physiological needs and it is useful to have some rules-of-thumb to assist feeding your herd. You must first satisfy the water, energy, protein and fibre needs of your herd, before worrying about vitamin and mineral supplementation. Nevertheless, alpacas and llamas are susceptible to vitamin D deficiency. Growing animals (< 3 years old) and females due to give birth in winter require supplementation with vitamin D in autumn, winter and spring. Alpacas are typically farmed in Australia on selenium-deficient soils, but not all selenium supplements are suitable for use in camelids.”

This AAA webinar is open to both AAA members and the general public, tickets and further information can be sought from the [AAA Website](#)



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Alpaca Fleece and Fibre

Huacaya fleece should have a uniform fibre with a consistent colour, length, strength and crimping. It is consistently bright and fine, with little guard hair. Suri alpacas provide a fleece of greater lustre, yet share many of the same ideal properties, including integrity of colour, consistent length, strength, and a lack of guard hair. Healthy alpacas should produce a consistent yield across their bodies.

Many of these fleece characteristics are determined by genetics. The fibre types, fineness, colour, length, guard hair, crimp, brightness and yield are all genetically determined; however, nutrition and health also play a large role in the fineness, length, strength and yield of the fleece.

Some important key terms:

Mid Side Sample : A sample of wool (a small handful) taken from the mid point on the side of an alpaca usually at the time of shearing.

Histogram : A method of graphing the distribution of individual fibres in a fleece sample. When comparing histograms, visual impressions may be distorted if the scale frequency differs.

Micron : 1 micron = 1 millionth of a metre.

Mean Fibre Diameter : In a fibre test, a sample of wool is laser scanned to find the mean or average fibre diameter of the measured sample. The fleece is more valuable if the average fibre diameter measured in microns is low.

Standard Deviation : A measure of how much the fibre diameter varies within the tested sample. This is also measured in micron.

Coefficient of Variation : Calculated by dividing the standard deviation by the average fibre diameter and then multiplying by 100. It measures the range of fibre diameter variation relative to the average fibre diameter.

Coarse Edge Micron : Indicates the number of microns greater than the average in the area of the coarsest 5% of fibres tested. Better quality and more uniform fibre distribution is indicated by a lower percentage of coarse edge fibre.

Comfort Factor : The percentage of fibres less than 30 micron.

Crimp : The waviness of a fibre. It can be measured and expressed as the number of complete waves per unit length. Although not always a reliable indicator, finer fibre often has more crimps per unit length.

Staple : A well defined pencil like bundle of fibres that are aligned.

Density : A reference to how much wool an alpaca is carrying and a term that is often used in the show ring. Although there are many indicators of density, they can be misleading due to variations in micron. Skin follicle testing and weighing shorn fleece are reliable methods of determining an alpaca's fleece density.



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Do you want to learn more about your alpacas' fleece attributes?

A trained eye can determine many attributes about a fleece by the feel and look of the fleece. However if you are new to alpacas or just would like more information, fibre testing is a great resource.

There is a list of alpaca fibre testers on the [VER Website](#)



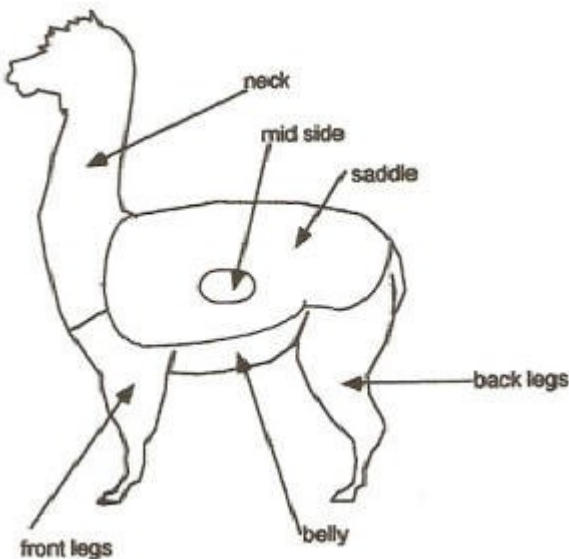
The sample of fleece for testing can be taken prior to or during shearing.

If comparing one animal to another it is important to maintain a consistent sample site.

The midside is the preferred site to take a sample. It is also preferable to stick to the left or the right side for all samples

The sample must be cut as close to the skin as possible to provide the full length. If you are sampling at shearing it is advised to take the sample before the animal is shorn as it is easier to take a consistent sample.

Be sure to label the sample and check the fibre tester you are planning to use for their requirements as to the size of the sample as this can vary.



This diagram shows the mid side sample area.

Source:
Southern Tablelands
Fibre Testing



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Once tested you will be provided with a comprehensive report on each sample's attributes and a histogram, see sample below.

The following Alpaca Fleece Testing Definitions may help with understanding the results.

Micron: The mean (average) micron result of a sample. Can also be stated as FD (fibre diameter) or UM.

Mic Dev: (Micron Deviation) Extent (in microns) to which a sample deviates from the mobs tested av.

SD: (Standard Deviation) Measures in microns the spread of fibres either side of the mean FD in which 68% (two-thirds) of the fibres lie. The lower the SD the more uniform the fibre.

CV: (Coefficient of Variation) The CV is the SD divided by the mean FD X 100. CV measures the FD variability as a percentage. CV tends to fall in the range of 15% to 30%. 22% to 24% is desirable for alpaca breeders. The higher the number, the more variable the fleece.

CF: (Comfort Factor) Is the % of fibres equal to or less than 30 microns.

CE: The % of fibres that are greater than the average fibre diameter by 10 microns.

<15%: The % of fibres less than 15 microns.

CRV: Fibre curvature expressed in degrees/millimeter. CRV is related to crimp frequency.

SDC: (Standard Deviation of Curvature) Is the SD of all fibres measured for curvature.

SF: Spin Fine. Is the calculation of micron CVD to represent the spinning quality expressed in microns.

Micron Profile: (line graph) The vertical axis is micron & the tip of the fibre. The horizontal axis is length. This can also be viewed as time. Variations along the graph in microns can be related to health or environment.

SL: Staple length expressed in millimeters.

Max Mic: The broadest point along the staple, expressed in microns.

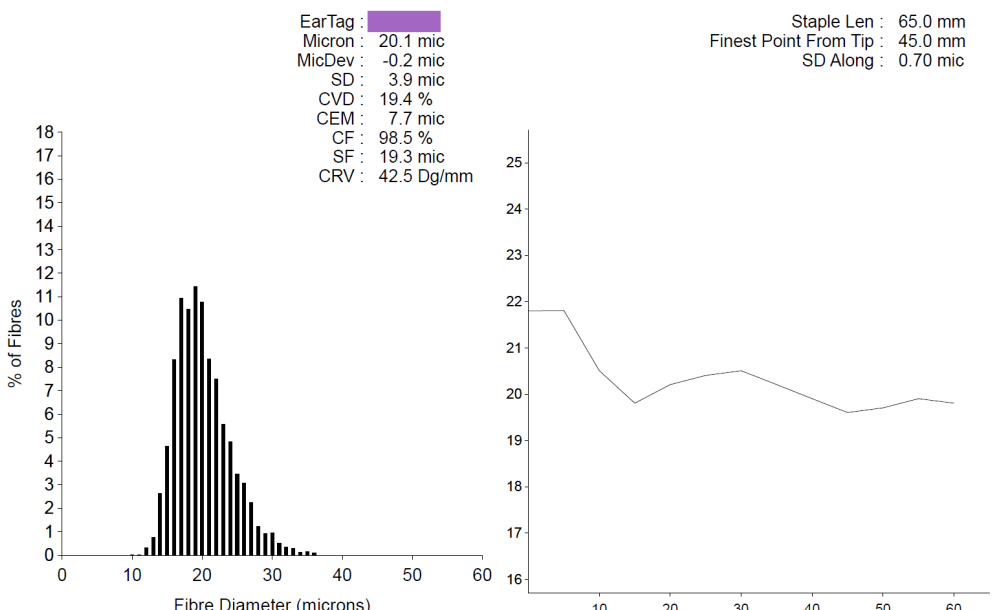
Min Mic: The finest point along the staple, expressed in microns.

FPFT: (Finest point from the tip) A measurement in millimeters from the tip to the finest micron point in the staple. An indicator for the 'point of break' along the staple.

MFE: (Mean Fibre Ends) The average fibre diameter of the fibre ends [tip & base] expressed in microns.

CEM: (Coarse Edge Micron) The number of microns above the mean diameter where the broadest 5% of fibres lie.

HAUTER: The amount of usable wool to a spinner after it has been scoured (tops)



Alpaca Fleece Definitions and above histogram sourced from:

Southern Tablelands Fibre Testing.

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Ebony and Ivory

Whilst travelling in country Victoria one of our members spotted two very over fleeced alpacas. It was obvious these alpacas had not been shorn in a number of years.

The VER members contacted the owners of the two alpacas and arrangements were made to have the alpacas collected for shearing.

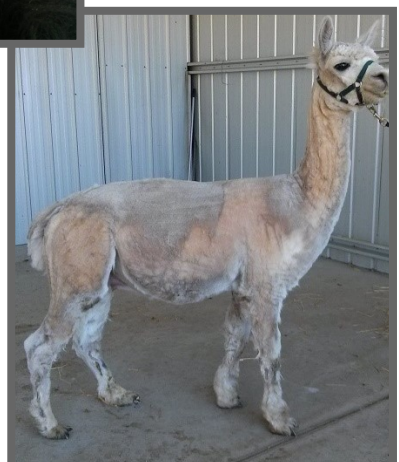
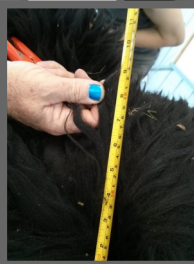
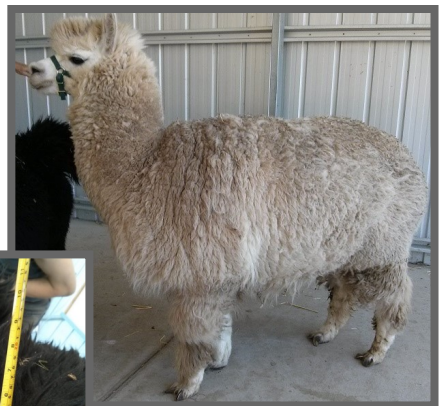
On a rather hot December day Ebony and Ivory were collected, both were already suffering from the affects of not being shorn for many years. They were sitting in a small area of shade and did not move when approached.

Upon shearing Ivory's fleece was recorded at 170cm long and Ebony was an incredible 230cm long!

Toenails were clipped, vaccinations and other required husbandry attended to.

We are confident Ebony and Ivory were much more comfortable following their shearing.

Shearing is an important animal welfare issue as alpacas do not shed their fleece. So even if you have your alpacas as pets, and have no interest in their fleece, you will still need to have them shorn annually, to keep them healthy and comfortable.



Thanks-you to the VER Member who submitted these photos