

Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-Op Fleece Preparation and Delivery

INTRODUCTION

Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-op has been established primarily for its member as well as further development of the NSW and Australian alpaca fibre industry. We , support a quality, sustainable production and increasing supply to purchasers in all colours and classes.

The following details how Growers can maximise their return on their alpaca fleeces. These guidelines focuses on preparation and basic classing to ensure we use our classers to class rather than skirt etc. Annex A provides further details on upstream activities that may assist some Growers.

SHEARING

Colour contamination:

When shearing a coloured herd, it is recommended that shearing starts with the lightest colour and progresses through to the darkest.

Keep the shearing area clean between each colour to avoid colour contamination.

Saddle:

Please advise your shearer that the saddle will be use for processing. This will ensure that lesser quality areas such as legs do not contaminate the saddle. Every effort should be made during shearing to avoid cross-contamination of colours, coarse fibres, vegetable matter and stained fleece.

Colours:

The Co-op has adopted the following range of colours:

- White (WT) – white or off white with no contaminating colour
- Light Fawn (LF) – light fawn and white/off white with odd fawn/brown fibres
- Fawn (FN) – medium fawn
- Brown (BR) – dark fawn, light/medium/dark brown
- Rose Grey (RG) – light/medium/dark rose grey
- Grey (GY) – light/medium/dark grey
- Black (BK) – brown/blue black

FLEECE PREPARATION – FOUR STEPS FOR DELIVERY TO THE CO-OP.

It is recommended that Growers conduct the following four steps for delivery of fibre to the Co-Op. This will reduce the time Classer is engaged in non-classing activities and hence improve the efficiency of the process. It will also result in optimising the quality and value of the fleece.

Step 1: Skirt

While the shear has isolated the saddle from the rest of the fleece, there may be areas of course fibres, excessive vegetable mater etc. Growers must skirt the saddle to ensure that cross contamination is limited. For pieces please remove vegetable matter from neck and legs. Excessive vegetable matter may result in the fleece being down graded / rejected.

Step 2: Checking for tenderness:

During processing the fleece is processed via a number of machines that include a carder. If the fleece is tender then this will result in a poor yarn / product. Accordingly, tender fleeces will be rejected / down graded by our Classer and the subsequent processor.

1. Select a small piece of fibre from the saddle.
2. Test for tenderness by holding the fibres at each end and flicking or tugging several times to determine if the fibres break and hence tender
3. If tender class as pieces or discard.

Stage 3: Saddle fibre length

The optimal viable lengths are between 70 – 110 mm. Fleeces with a staple length shorter than 40mm are regarded as under-length. Those with a staple length longer than 140mm are regarded as over-length. Under-length and over-length fleeces will attract lower price than those listed.

Stage 4: Mircon

Growers may not have a detailed understanding of the exact micron of the fleece. However, to ensure that there is limited cross contamination of fine and course saddles the basic rules (see Image 1 and Image 2 below) are:

1. Like colours in same bale
2. Pieces place at the bottom
3. After pieces, then Strong and finest at the top of the bale
4. Paper separating each layer



Waratah Alpaca Fleece Co-Op required butt layers:

Huacaya and Suri White or L Fawn

Sheer Ultra	< 16um
Ultra-fine	16-18.5um
Superfine	18.6-20.5um
Fine	20.6-24.5um
Medium	24.6 -28.5um
Strong	28.6-36.5um
Extra Strong	> 36.5um
Pieces	

This shows the preferred layering of alpaca fleece by Suppliers for delivery to Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-Op.

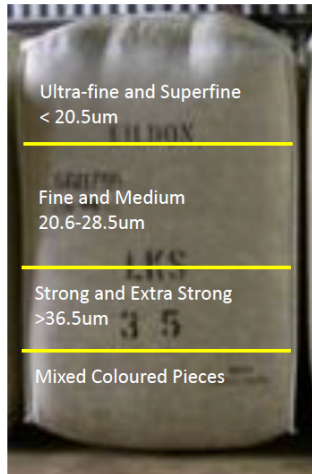
- Each fibre layer is separated by paper and on the paper a brief note that includes the Supplier's Name, details of the layer below including approximate micron (if known) and weight
- The advantages of this approach are:
 - reduced plastic waste
 - ease of access by the classer
 - reduced cost to the Supplier (e.g. you keep your plastic bags for next shearing)

As at 8 Aug 2024

Image 1 - Huacaya and Suri White of Light Fawn

Waratah Alpaca Fleece Co-Op required butt layers:

Huacaya Coloured



This shows the preferred layering of alpaca fleece by Suppliers for delivery to Waratah Alpaca Fibre Co-Op.

- Applies to M/ Dark Fawn, Brown, Grey and Rose Grey and Black in separate butts
- Each fibre layer is separated by paper and on the paper a brief note that includes the Supplier's Name, details of the layer below including approximate micron (if known) and weight
- Micron ranges have been compressed to assist in filling the bales quicker and hence speed to market
- The advantages are:
 - reduced plastic waste
 - ease of access by the classer
 - reduced cost to the Supplier (e.g. you keep your plastic bags for next shearing)

As at 8 Aug 2024

Image 2 Huacaya Coloured

DELIVERY TO THE CO-OP

Director of Operations and Logistics will call class lines to be delivered on specific days. Growers can book a delivery time via the booking calendar via the "Members Login" page or "Contact Us" link. The following steps must be followed to ensure that we collect your fleece in the most efficient manner.

1. Director of Operations and Logistics will call for fleeces via email to members detailing the class lines and options for deliver times
2. Growers to contact Director of Operations and Logistics to arrange a delivery time. Growers to estimate the delivery duration based on the time taken to pack the consignment.
3. Growers to complete the Consignment sheet and provide the sheet to personnel accepting your fleece on behalf of the Co-Op.
4. Growers to ensure that bales are clearly labeled with name, POC and class line of fleeces.
5. Growers to grade fleeces in accordance with Image 1 and Image 2 above.
6. Co-Op personnel receipting the consignment must complete appropriate areas of the the Consignment Sheet and complete the following:
 - a. Provide copy of the completed consignment sheet to the Grower .
 - b. Retain a copy with the fleece, and
 - c. Provide a copy (picture) to Waratah Accounts (accounts@waratahalpacafibre.com.au).

Acknowledgements:

The foregoing is based on Bob Kingwell's work and has been updated to reflect the changes in butt layout and delivery to the Co-Op.

Annex A FLEECE PREPARATION – paddock conditions, testing, colour sorting, shedding overnight

Paddock Conditions:

The quality of fleece can often depend on factors out in the paddock during the year prior to shearing. A tender fleece can reduce its value by limiting its use and contaminants such as vegetable matter can reduce the quantity of acceptable fleece and its value due to additional processing requirements.

Value can be added to fleece by ensuring that alpacas have adequate and consistent nutrition, are kept clean, regularly inspected, weighed and/or body scored to identify those alpacas that may be diseased or be carrying excessive parasites and treated accordingly.

Testing:

It is recommended that all larger Growers have fleeces classed by the contract Classers at the time of shearing. This will reduce the need for the Co-Op to class / reclass fleeces. Mid-side tested (i.e. within one month before or at shearing) can also provide assurances of the micron of the fleeces

Colour Sorting:

Sorting alpacas according to colour prior to shearing will help to reduce colour contamination during shearing. It is recommended that shearing progress from white through to black.

Shedding and Bedding:

Check the weather forecast and shed the night or day before shearing if necessary, to avoid wet or damp fleece. Use bedding material that will minimise fleece contamination. Do not use wood shavings or the like as it sticks to the fleece and contaminates the fleece.