

US Alpaca Fiber Production- A Snapshot as at October 2011.

PART TWO:

Preamble.

This section of the report deals with suri numbers and fleece production as a distinctly different product.

Suri is limited in both animal numbers and in the volume (weight) of fiber able to be processed. It is not as versatile as huacaya as a processing fiber and suffers, unfairly, from a reputation of being difficult to process.

Suri suffers a little from a period when there was a perception that it was not thought possible, nor desirable, to breed fine fibered animals and when density was measured by weight in the hand in the show ring. A more enlightened attitude and approach to suri breeding programs has proved that suri can be bred fine and that weight in the hand is not a good indicator of density if micron and staple length are not considered at the same time.

The percentage of the various micron ranges within each age group indicates how far behind suri is when compared to huacaya in terms of percentages of alpacas in those micron ranges.

The percentages of animals in each micron range for each color was drawn from the OFDA 2000 testing results over five years.

All weight and animal numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10 for convenience and simplicity.

The weights allocated to each age group reflect skirted fleece weight based on anecdotal information collected by the author over many years and were 3.0, 3.5 and 3.8 pounds weight for the age groups in ascending order. In general, the effect of increased micron was deemed to offset the loss in staple length to simplify the numbers.

Summary:

The figures for silver and rose grey populations have not been extended as the numbers are small, the information from the OFDA 2000 archive is not of sufficient quantity to draw meaningful numbers and the amounts available for processing in each of the sub-categories is of little significance.

The volume of suri fiber available for processing and spinning/manufacture makes the establishment of a national collection and classing chain a little bit further away in comparison with huacaya fiber though it could be argued that suri could be collected at the same centers or collection points.

For the record, the numbers are:

True Black - 1676 of which 318 were under 12 months, 618 were between 21 months and 36 months and 740 were 36 to 72 months of age.

Rose Grey – 540 total comprising 78, 226 and 236 respectively.

Silver Grey – 500 total comprising 92, 164 and 244 respectively.

The total number of registered suri alpacas for the period 2005 to 2010 (inclusive) is 22550 animals.

Tables:

White								
Age (months)/Number of animals								
<12		12.1-36		36.1-72		Totals		
# 1024		# 2212		#3034		# 6270		
Micron	%	Wt	%	Wt	%	Wt		
<20	54	1660	15	1160	6	700	3520	
20.1-23.0	38	1160	63	4880	24	2760	8800	
>23.0	8	240	22	1700	70	8070	10100	
Total Weight		3060		9600		11530		22330

Beige & Fawn								
Age (months)/Number of animals								
<12		12.1-36		36.1-72		Totals		
#1262		#2748		#3034		#6270		
Micron	%	Wt	%	Wt	%	Wt		
<20	47	1780	11	1060	3	440	32800	
20.1-23.0	44	1660	57	6440	25	3700	11800	
>23.0	9	340	22	2100	72	10640	13080	
Total Weight		3780		9600		14780		28160

Brown & Bay Black								
Age (months)/Number of animals								
<12		12.1 – 36		36.1 – 72		Totals		
#1028		#2006		#2628		#5662		
Micron	%	Wt	%	Wt	%	Wt		
<20	46	1420	13	920	6	600	2940	
20.1 - 23	44	1360	60	4220	20	2000	7580	
>23	10	300	27	1900	74	7400	9600	
Total Weight		3080		7040		10000		20120