

Alpaca - Breed Standard

HUACAYA AND SURI CONFORMATION

Overview

The alpaca is a tall, graceful animal with a smoothly blended body and upright stance. It carries its head high. It is strong boned and vigorous. It has good conformation with all its parts in correct proportion and when true to type has the characteristics described in this standard.

Head

The head has a strong appearance and is not coarse. It is neatly formed, of medium length and with a square muzzle. The eyes are oval in shape, alert and set well apart. They protrude slightly from their sockets, giving the appearance of being large and round. They may be blue, brown or black. The nose has two well-defined nostrils. The upper lip is divided and mobile. The ears are of medium length, covered with short soft hair, erect and bayonet-shaped, pointing forward in the alert stance. Suri ears can be up to 2cms longer than huacaya ears. The jaws fit together well, with the lower incisors meeting the upper dental pad.

- FAULTS**
- > *Muffled face (fibre or hair impeding the animal's vision - particularly after first shearing)*
 - > *Wry face*
 - > *Head very narrow*
 - > *Face hard and open*
 - > *Roman nose*
 - > *Lower jaw undershot or overshot*

Neck

The neck is long and slender and continues directly from the line of the backbone, blending smoothly into the shoulder.

- FAULTS**
- > *Length of neck disproportionate to body size (too long or too short)*
 - > *Neck bent or U-neck*

Forequarters

The chest is broad and deep, well sprung in the fore-rib. The wither is relatively wide where the shoulders meet, well fleshed and set well into the shoulders forming a straight line with the back.

- FAULTS**
- > *Narrow chest*
 - > *Loose shoulder blades*
 - > *In or out at the elbows*
 - > *Prominent wither*

Body

The body is deep through the girth, with well-sprung ribs. The back is strong and the top-line is slightly convex. The loins are broad, strong and flat, with the back barrel large and deep.

- FAULTS**
- > *Roach back*
 - > *Sway back*
 - > *Over-long straight back*

Hindquarters

The rump is broad with a slightly convex top line. There is good space between the pin bones. The tail is straight, covered with quality fibre, set slightly lower than in other livestock and should cover the genitalia. The thighs are strong and well muscled. The height of the pin-bones equals that of the shoulders.

- FAULTS**
- > *Narrow hindquarters*
 - > *A bent or kinked tail that cannot be manually straightened or where there are no signs of a break/calcification*
 - > *Steeply sloping rump*

Legs

The forelegs are strong and straight. The hind legs are straight and parallel when viewed from behind. The pasterns are firm and upright. The feet are neat and well formed and bear two forward pointing toes each carrying a long strong toenail. The sole of the foot is covered with a callused membrane.

- FAULTS**
- > *Weak pasterns*
 - > *Obvious carpal deviation*
 - > *Cow hocks*
 - > *Sickle hocks*

Udder

The udder should show good capacity, with four working teats.

- FAULTS**
- > *Less than four teats*
 - > *And/or presence of one or more supernumerary teats that could interfere with the normal function of the four normal teats*
 - > *And/or inverted teat(s) (irrespective of number and position)*

Note: The presence of one or more supernumerary teats is acceptable providing they do not interfere with the normal function of the four normal teats.

Testicles

The scrotum is well attached, relatively small and carries two even sized testes.

- FAULTS**
- > *Testes of uneven size*
 - > *Testes too small (relative to age)*

Height and Weight

A mature animal measures from approximately 90cm at the wither and weighs from approximately 60kg upwards.

- FAULTS**
- > *Oversized - particularly if llama like characteristics present*

Movement

Alpacas should exhibit an even stride length with two distinct tracks, the hind feet following the front ones.

- FAULTS**
- > *Uneven stride length*
 - > *Paddling on the front feet*

Disqualifying Faults

- Polydactylism (more than two toes on each foot)
- Syndactylism (fusion of the two toes of the same foot)
- Fused ears (short stubby ears or fused at the tips)
- Banana shaped ears
- Tail absent or abnormally short or bent
- Fewer than two testes
- Jaw not properly aligned
- Jaw excessively overshot
- Jaw excessively undershot

HUACAYA FLEECE

Introduction

A guide for both breeders and Judges that will evolve with time. Huacayas are distinguishable from suris in that they carry sheep like fleece, which stands at right angles to the body. The fleece should exhibit a strong wave or crimp across each fibre and have strong staple definition. The alpaca should be well covered with a rounded appearance. Coverage should extend down the legs and up to a bonnet on the head with a clean muzzle and ears.

The most important characteristics of huacaya fleece are:-

1. **Density** - this is perhaps the most important as it determines the commerciality of the fleece ie. the quantity of saleable fleece to be sold. It also prevents dirt and moisture penetration.
2. **Fineness & Handle** - fineness sets the value of a fleece per unit weight. The finer the fleece the more per kilo it will make. Soft handle goes with fineness. The softer the handle the finer the micron.
3. **Character** - is closely related to density, as strong crimp definition and staple formation is necessary to achieve heavy fleece weights.
4. **Lack of Medullation** - fleece should not contain broad microned straight medullated fibres, especially throughout the main blanket. The aim being to eliminate it completely.
5. **Lustre** - this is the amount of light reflected from the fibre, which enhances its appearance when processed into a garment.

Other determining factors are:-

1. **Uniformity of micron** - processors require fleece with minimum variation in fibre diameter. This also helps to eliminate fleece tenderness (fleece breakage).
2. **Uniformity of colour** - an even colour is preferred by processors, but allowances need to be made for greys and fawns which can have colour variation.
3. **Uniformity of length** - the fleece should be of the same length for 12 months growth. The ultimate aim is to have the neck fibre match the main blanket in length, thus increasing the weight of the prime fleece.

Colour

Alpaca fleece comes in varying shades of colour from white to black. In between there are shades of fawn, brown, and grey as well as rose grey. Animals may be solid in colour or be any combination of the above.

- FAULTS**
- > *Open fleece with no density*
 - > *Chalkiness*
 - > *Harsh handle*
 - > *Short staple length*
 - > *Medullated fibre*
 - > *Lack of overall coverage*
 - > *Tenderness*

SURI FLEECE

Introduction

The suri carries a silky, soft-handling fleece that moves freely, yet hugs the body giving the animal a flat-sided appearance. The fleece hangs from a centre part - neck through to tail - with well-defined locks forming close to the skin and twisting uniformly to the ends. The overall effect is similar to the drape of a curtain of silk tassels.

The primary characteristics which distinguish a suri are its lock structure, high lustre, silky handle and long staple length. The ideal suri exhibits little medullation, resulting in uniformity throughout the fleece.

The most important characteristics of suri fleece in order of importance are:-

- 1. Lustre and Lock Structure** (these two qualities define suri fibre) - Lustre is the sheen or pearliness in the fleece. The lock structure may be twisted, curled or pencilled. They should be well defined (referred to as architecture), narrow, independent, uniform and form close to the skin. The most highly desirable architecture has a firm uniform twisted lock. The locks should be consistent across the body commencing from the forelock and continuing through to the hocks. When the fleece is opened, the inside locks should be uniformly well defined and hang in similarly well-formed layers.
- 2. Fineness and Handle** - A fine microned fleece has a soft handle. The handle of the suri should also have a silky, slippery feel and be evident throughout the body, ideally including the ears, forelock, muzzle, apron, belly, neck and legs.
- 3. Density** - The hallmark of the ideal suri fleece is its compactness. This is synonymous with high fleece weights. A more rounded appearance can indicate volume (fluffiness) rather than density. Density is evident by gauging the solidity of lock (or thickness in terms of density, not broadness of lock), the number of locks over a relative area as well as the weight of the fleece.
- 4. Lack of Medullation** - Ideally there should be little or no evidence of medullated fibres in the fleece.
- 5. Lock Length** - The lock of a suri is relatively long and its fibre should grow one or two centimetres per year longer than a huacaya of similar age and micron.

Other determining factors are as for huacayas:- uniformity of micron, colour and length.

Colour

Suri fleece comes in varying shades of colour from white to black. In between there are shades of fawn, brown and grey including rose grey. Ideally the alpacas are solid in colour, but may be any combination of the above.

- FAULTS**
- > *Flat, open fleece with no lock definition (architecture)*
 - > *Medullation*
 - > *Chalkiness or lack of lustre*
 - > *Short staple length for age of fleece*
 - > *Coarse handle*
 - > *Lack of density*
 - > *Rounded appearance indicating fluffiness rather than density*
 - > *Crimp*