

BOOK REVIEWS

“A Definitive Guide to Alpaca Fibre” By Cameron Holt

(1) Graeme Dickson

To my knowledge, this is the first publication to combine scientific subjects such as alpaca fibre histology and modern testing techniques with invaluable information on skinning and classing protocols for alpaca fleece production. While also incorporating advice on practical topics like shearing methods and shearing shed design it includes a chapter on alpaca fleece judging principles which will satisfy even the most devoted show ring fanatic. The subject matter concludes with an overview of the varied procedures surrounding alpaca fleece processing. It is the culmination of approximately fifty years of Cameron Holt's work in natural fibre industries throughout the world.

His interest and research into alpacas and alpaca fleece has taken him around the world educating, training and advising the various alpaca breed organizations and processors across four continents on the properties and attributes of alpaca—justifiably earning him a reputation as an “alpaca fibre expert.”

The extensive knowledge and information contained in this one book is a must for growers, teachers and classers alike. I am sure it will also be a platform to assist organizations and companies to initiate systems for qualified classers that will aid in the standardisation of alpaca fleece lines that can be recognised worldwide.

I believe that Cameron Holt's book will be referred to as the alpaca fleece growers' and classers' “bible” for many years to come.

Graeme Dickson

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Breeder & member of the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd (AAA) since 1992;
Former member AAA National Committee;
Registered teacher of Alpaca Agricultural Certificate;
Life member of AAA (2005)

(2) Graham Day

Cameron Holt's book, A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ALPACA FIBRE has enlightened me and I am sure many others to the fibres great versatility. The section defining the various Camelid fibres is comprehensive, well researched and easily understood.

Skin histology and fibre growth in sheep has always been of interest to me, so I was especially interested in the section on the Camelids.

Cameron's own research and the documentation of other researchers' work in this field has produced an outstanding contribution to the understanding of the factors which influence fibre growth.

The use of fibre measurement to identify elite animals within groups is clearly written and well researched. The research will appeal to a wide range of fibre producers as the principles outlined can be adopted to the breeding goals of many. Breeders of Camelids could well see themselves in the fashion industry and the section "Fleece characteristics" defines the properties that are sought by the discerning buyers and how they can be achieved. The practical handling of animals has not been ignored and the chapter on shearing shed management provides clear guidelines. The book is well presented, extensively researched and documented and is a credit to Cameron's dedication to the breeding of animals for a fashion fibre industry. The book will find a place among other well researched animal fibre publications.

Graham Day

29/12/14

Graham Day (retired) is a well respected consultant to the Merino sheep and Angora goat industries and was a former judge for both fleece and animal in these industries. A former Senior Valuer and Technical Officer for a leading Australian wool broking company, moved to education to head the Melbourne Wool School and later became Principal of the Melbourne Institute of Textiles. Graham is a well known author with his joint book publications in the sheep and wool industries, mainly, "Wool and Mohair" and "The History of the Australian Merino".

"I am sure that you will enjoy this book as the comments so far have been very positive"

eg "Thank you for the book. I'm excited. It is really the Fibre bible for the Alpaca breeders".
Gisbert Henning, SIMAGI alpaca GbR



The production of the book was done by the publishers of Alpaca Culture (Selle Design Group) of Idaho, USA.