



Media Release

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Alpacas out the back, verandah out the front

Rural Australia is undergoing a transformation as increasing numbers of ‘city slickers’ chase a country lifestyle, and alpacas are proving to be the ideal livestock option for many, according to the Australian Alpaca Association Inc. (AAA).

‘Lifestyle’ size blocks, generally between 10 and 40 hectares in size, now account for up to one in three rural property sales¹. Professionals seeking an improved quality of life and people in their 50s moving out of the city are typical of those creating a lifestyle farm boom.

“As alpacas are easy to handle, quiet and kind to the environment and therefore make ideal companions to support a satisfying country lifestyle, we have seen these wonderful animals welcomed by many making the move from city to country living,” said Bob Richardson, Vice President, AAA.

A survey conducted by the AAA in 2004 among its members revealed the main driver behind the first purchase of alpacas was the desire for a lifestyle ‘sea change’. Aspects of alpacas that appealed the most were ‘ease of care’ (23 percent), ‘fleece products’ (18 percent) and ‘lifestyle’ (17 percent).

“Naturally it’s up to individuals how involved they get with their alpacas and the industry. Alpaca Association members span all age barriers and many of them greatly enjoy the broadened social opportunities provided by our many regional shows and other events. There are many possible entry levels into our steadily growing industry, along with opportunities to generate a return on the initial investment,” said Mr Richardson.

While these smaller members of the camel family may look different as they use their long neck to peer over fences, they are gentle and intelligent animals that have minimal husbandry requirements and are easily handled – ideal for those looking for a livestock option that will help them engage in a rural lifestyle. As alpacas have soft, dry fleece and a naturally clean breech, flystrike is virtually unknown and they never require mulesing or crutching. Additionally, alpacas never suffer from foot rot as they have padded feet, not hooves, which also means they inflict much less damage to our fragile soils.

“Alpacas help property owners to manage their land in a sustainable manner. They inflict less damage to the environment than all other livestock because their pads exert less pressure on the ground per kilogram than a kangaroo – helping minimise soil degradation,” said Mr Richardson. “Alpacas also rarely need parasite drenches because they cleverly break the internal worm cycle by placing their dung in piles and not eating nearby. Many owners compost these convenient dung-piles, or use them in other ways for soil improvement.”

No longer seen as unusual, alpacas are proving to be an exciting and burgeoning industry for many Australians and are becoming a popular sight on our urban fringes and rural back roads.

¹ Rural property index, Elders, 2004

[More...](#)

To find out more about the Australian Alpaca industry and the benefits of alpacas as livestock contact the Australian Alpaca Association Inc on 03 9873 7700 or visit www.alpaca.asn.au

About the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

The AAA was incorporated as a not-for-profit Association in 1990 when participants in the fledgling industry recognised the need for a national Association of like-minded people to promote and develop the concept of alpacas as a viable and sustainable primary industry.

With more than 60,000 registered alpacas in Australia, the Association represents owners at all levels and is the collective voice of over 2000 members in all States.

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