

Ten Reasons to Raise Suri Alpacas

1

The Suri Alpaca is rare: It is estimated that the worldwide suri alpaca population is only around 100,000—less than 10% of the total worldwide population of alpacas. In the US, there are currently 32,000 registered Suri Alpacas. This represents about 24% of the total U.S. population. Suri fiber is second only to the Vicuña as the rarest type of processed camelid fiber. Does rarity equate to higher value? It does with other products/commodities. Only time will tell in the alpaca industry, but many breeder's are basing their business plan on it.

2

The Suri Alpaca is a Rescued Breed: Although suri alpacas have been a distinct breed in South America for thousands of years, they are not the alpaca of choice because commercial fiber mills are not geared toward processing the relatively small amount of suri fiber. For this reason, many suris were culled from alpaca herds in South America making them extremely rare. Fortunately, forward-thinking importers recognized the Suri's unique qualities and brought them to the U.S. where their numbers have grown steadily over the past 20 years.

3

The Suri Alpaca has an elegant style: Suri fiber locks, made up of high-luster fibers, drape down the sides of the body in a twisted or flat form of various types. There are few animals more beautiful than a suri alpaca running through the pasture; fiber swaying back and forth with every step, catching the sun with its brilliant luster. Suri fiber has a slick hand and softness with exquisite luster.

4

Suri fiber has unique characteristics compared to other natural fibers. One large advantage suri has over cashmere, camel and vicuña is the longer staple length, which means items made from suri will not pill as easily. It has an unusually high tensile strength, which does not diminish with increased fineness, thus making it suitable for industrial processing. No one can question the elegance of a finely tailored suri garment.

5

Suri fiber is in demand: The fiber from suri alpacas is coveted by the fashion industry and cherished by the hand spinner. It has the softness of cashmere, the luster of silk, the warmth of wool, the durability of wool and its ability to accept color dyes makes it a favorite of all fiber enthusiasts. Suri fiber blends well with other natural fibers and can be knit, crocheted, or woven.

6

The Suri Alpaca adapts well to climate extremes: Suri fiber forms a part and lies flat down the back of the animal exposing skin along the top line to the elements. This can be a plus in hot climates by allowing more evaporative cooling at the skin. In the winter this same area can allow for a loss of heat. However, several well-known and successful suri breeders from northern climates have proven that with proper management techniques, suris adapt quite well to harsh winters.

7

Suri Network Affiliate: Suri breeders have a great resource available to them with membership in the Suri Network. As an affiliate of AOBA, the Suri Network is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the suri breed. Members can take advantage of marketing, research and educational opportunities all designed to increase knowledge and awareness of this wonderful breed, both to alpaca breeders and the general public.

8

The Suri Breed Standard: The recently adopted U.S. suri breed standard will help the suri alpaca achieve recognition as a production livestock breed. It is difficult to attain such recognition in the U.S. livestock industry without a standard that defines a breed. This standard was written with input from many Suri breeders from all over the country who wished to contribute to a standard that will help guide the future development of the suri breed.

9

Suri Network Research: How do we let the world know about the marvelous characteristics of suri fiber? The Suri Network Research Committee actively seeks to identify, fund and conduct research projects that will delineate the unique characteristics of suri fiber, to allow the North American Suri industry to be competitive in the world market. All suri breeders will benefit from this research by means of a more informed and educated textile industry.

10

U.S. will become world's premier producer of Suri fiber: Because of increasing numbers of Suri alpacas in the U.S. compared to South America, the U.S. is positioned to become the world's leading producer of suri fiber in 5-10 years. This gives the suri breeder tremendous opportunity in shaping future demand and marketability of suri fiber, genetics and value added suri products.

