



The British Alpaca Society
South West Region
www.swagroup.org.uk



SWAG Newsletter October 2013.

Dear fellow SWAG members,

Thank you for reading this newsletter, remember it is your newsletter for your benefit.

If you have anything which you think may be of value to fellow alpaca breeders please let me know and I can include it in the next issue. This can be anything, a tale of how you got into alpacas, a story of how an alpaca recovered from serious illness or injury, a yarn about the day you rowed across the English channel with your alpacas, literally anything that may interest a fellow alpaca owner! Don't be shy!

This Newsletter comes out just before our Flagship show where we can expect to see some of the best alpacas in the South West and beyond.

The SWAG annual show is a great opportunity to mix with fellow breeders of all sizes and share views, ideas and experiences of the alpaca world. Please come along if you can.

Now I don't know if it's just me but there is sense that some of the membership of SWAG is drifting, maybe becoming somewhat apathetic? The South West Alpaca Group is the biggest regional group in the country, more members, more alpacas, more shows, more knowledge than any other region. The chairman of the British Alpacas Society is a SWAG member! We should celebrate all of this, we should be proud of all of this. We should be at the forefront of everything concerning alpacas in the UK. So come on, get behind your group, become involved, be positive, let us show the rest of the UK how it is done!

Right, I have calmed down now and taken a tablet, so back to the newsletter.

I have included a piece on Liver Fluke in this edition but I am not a vet, please consult with your vet before embarking on any form of treatment.

The next Newsletter will come out in January when we will all be recovering from the excesses of Christmas and looking forward to the arrival of Spring, which will be fabulous and will be followed by another magnificent summer, I just know it!

Who knows what Winter will hold for us this year, I hear that it may be a cold one, but who really knows? If the weather does get seriously bad please remember that although the majority of alpacas do have masses of fleece there are those old girls or late born cria who may need a little more TLC. These animals constantly amaze me but don't ask too much of them.

Thank you. **Mark Steele (Newsletter editor)**

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN.

The SWAG Committee has been looking at ways to help members with their fibre and two points struck me. Firstly, how fast the improvement in the British Alpaca has been in the recent years. Judges both British and from Overseas tell me that the Best of British Alpacas can compete world-wide with confidence which should give our fibre a real lift in improving members returns.

Secondly, the question every breeder must ask is, are their Sires good enough to give that lift to their fibre quality and performance? We are, after all, in the fibre business and we know British fibre is in demand when the quality is good enough. But we need to raise our game. This is the challenge to the British alpaca community. This will be a theme we will return to in next year's programme.

Can I make a plea for members to step up and help SWAG to make next year even more successful. We need fresh blood on the committee and people to help with the shows and events. SWAG is your club please make it your own. We have too few people doing an extraordinary amount of work for the benefit of membership and I would like to be the first to say a big thank you to them on your behalf.

I would like to thank all the SWAG members for their support during 2013 and wish you and your families a Very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Richard Beale (Chairman, South West Alpaca Group)

WELCOME TO NEW SWAG MEMBERS

Guy Watkin, Furzeleigh Alpacas, Buckfast

Cary Wood and Kevin Plumb, Wareham

SWAG WEBSITE – ADVERTISING.

The SWAG website (<http://www.swagroup.org.uk>) is a wonderful resource and a great place to start if you are new to alpacas. Not only that but there is advertising space available which is very undersubscribed and very reasonable priced.

A 'banner' advert on the SWAG website is just £50 for two years! How about that for value! Use the 'contact us' button on the website for details of how to advertise.

SWAG AUTUMN ALPACA SHOW

The SWAG annual show is almost upon us and will take place at The Hand Equestrian Centre, Nr Clevedon on the 16th and 17th of November.

There are 171 alpacas entered into the show and as such it has been decided to show the alpacas on Saturday the 16th only. This should make for an extremely good days showing.

Alpacas are welcome to stay at The Hand overnight which should make clearing up and departure on Sunday morning a very relaxed affair. Any help would be appreciated.

The café, serving food, beverages and a range of drinks will be available throughout the show. Overnight camping is allowed at the Hand and hook ups (electricity) can be booked through the Hand Equestrian Centre.

SWAG AGM.

After showing on the Saturday the SWAG AGM will take place in the café area at 6pm. We would like as many SWAG members as possible to attend so that we can hear your views as to how you want the South West Alpaca Group to progress over the next few years. Questions up for discussion, for example:

- Is an Autumn show a better option than a Spring show?
- What sort of events/courses/education days would you like to attend and would you be willing to pay an attendance fee?
- Have you something to offer the SWAG membership?
- What do you expect from your SWAG membership?

So please get behind your alpaca group, come to the show even if you are not exhibiting and make it the place to be for sharing views and ideas to help us make SWAG even more successful. Stay for the AGM and get involved. You may surprise yourself!

LIVER FLUKE – WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Our vets (Endells in Salisbury) have formed a Smallholders Club and hold regular meetings to educate us about medical problems that we may encounter in alpacas. The last meeting was all about Liver Fluke and they had a guest speaker who was an expert on the subject. I couldn't go but Sue went and came home with lots of information that I thought I would share with you.

WHAT IS LIVER FLUKE (Fasicola Hepatica)?

Liver Fluke is a parasite that affects livestock by burrowing through the liver on their way to the bile duct where it attaches and feeds on the blood of its host. So in short it is a nasty little bugger! It is potentially fatal and it does affect alpacas.

WHERE IS LIVER FLUKE PREVALENT?

Liver Fluke was traditionally found in the wet low lying areas of the South West, Wales and Scotland but with a string of wet summers and warm winters it has spread at an alarming rate and is now found all over the place. Any wet or damp ground has the potential to be ideal breeding grounds for fluke and the risk of infection. Even a wet patch around a drinking trough, or a muddy gateway, anywhere wet or damp.

THE GORY DETAILS.

As with all parasites there is a life cycle. The liver fluke cycle involves not only a warm blooded host such as an alpaca but also a small snail, the mud snail.

Fluke eggs are deposited on the pasture in the dung of the warm blooded host. The eggs will hatch if the weather is right, typically above 10 degrees Centigrade and wet. When conditions are right the eggs hatch into Miracidia, the first stage of the flukes life.

These Miracidia are microscopic and have about 24 hours to swim about and find the specific species of mud snail that they are looking for (*Lymnaea Truncatula*). Once they find one of these little critters they burrow into it and start to multiply. After six weeks one Miracidia will have multiplied into around 1000 Cercariae, the second life stage.

The Cercariae erupt from the snail (not very nice for the snail) and move up blades of grass where they encyst in a tough casing (*Metacercariae*) and wait for an unsuspecting animal to come along and eat them whilst grazing. The process from egg to animal ingestion can take, if all conditions are favourable, two months, or longer of the summer months are very dry or cold.

Once inside the grazing animal the Metacercariae come out of the encysted state and migrate from the intestine to the liver where they begin feeding and burrowing their way towards the bile duct. It takes about 12 weeks to burrow all the way to the Bile duct where it attaches and starts feeding on the blood of its host. Here it sheds approximately 50,000 eggs which pass into the stomach and then back out onto the pasture where the whole process starts all over again.

What a horrible little thing a Liver fluke is!

HOW IS IT TREATED?

As with all parasites the life cycle has to be broken. Break the cycle by removing one of the stages and the fluke cannot continue.

It would appear that there are two periods of potential infection:

SUMMER infection – In wet summers snail populations multiply fast and these snails become infected from May to July. In wet weather the snails shed massive numbers of Cercariae onto the pasture between July and October. Animals will become unwell during the winter if conditions are good for the fluke and they are present on you pasture.

TREAT ALPACAS IN LATE AUTUMN (NOVEMBER) WITH A FLUKICIDE SUCH AS FASINEX.

WINTER infection – Less commonly snails become infected in late summer or early autumn and the development is delayed as the snails hibernate. The Cercariae are not shed onto the pasture until late Spring. This can produce a significant problem in Spring or early Summer.

TREAT ALPACAS IN LATE SPRING / EARLY SUMMER WITH A FLUKICIDE.

Our vet suggested using a different Flukicide in Spring to the one used in November.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE BEST PERSON TO SPEAK TO ABOUT LIVER FLUKE IS YOUR VET. THEY CAN GIVE YOU THE BEST ADVICE AS TO WHETHER YOU NEED TO TREAT, WHEN TO TREAT AND WHAT TO USE.

If you have any experience of dealing with Liver Fluke that you would like to share with the group, (come on don't keep it to yourself) the please let me know and I can include it in the next issue. Thank you.

Mark Steele, Patou Alpacas

FEEDING CLOVER – ONE BREEDERS EXPERIENCE by Fred Ellis (ACER ALPACAS)

Many of us will remember seeing Gabriel release the gas from the stomachs of blown sheep after they had eaten legumes in a field somewhere in Dorset. Watching the scene in 'Far From The Madding Crowd' would be the first time most people knew of the problem in ruminants but I can remember seeing this done to animals when I was ten years old.

Later in my teens an uncle visiting from New Zealand explained how at milking every morning, he drenched his cows to prevent bloat when on clover.

My father often said that white clover never killed an animal despite him having several cows die after breaking through a hedge and gorging on broad leaf red clover which he was growing for a hay crop.

We have a high percentage of white clover in the pastures here and despite some folk telling us that alpacas do not like clover, our animals, especially the younger stock, seem to enjoy eating it.

Here are a few of our observations found with alpacas and white clover;

Older animals, probably the imported ones, tend to eat the grass in preference to clover. To date we have not had digestive problems with alpacas on white clover (hope I am not tempting fate).

We have an abundance of grass without applied nitrate due to the nitrogen fixing capabilities of clover. Clover and alfalfa have very similar nutrient content in the growing crop.

Haylage with a high clover content fed to lactating mothers appears to cause slight scour in cria.

To date we have no experience of red clover as alpaca feed.

Cria appear to eat clover in preference to the grass.

When grazing on paddocks with a high clover content, alpacas eat less supplementary feed.

We have never turned animals from a non-clover sward onto a rich clover pasture. The clover always appears in the Spring with animals in the field ensuring a gradual introduction.

What is your experience of feeding clover?

THANK YOU TO FRED FOR TAKING THE TIME TO CONTRIBUTE!

2014 – THE SHOW SEASON – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

THE BAS NATIONAL SHOW. - 15th and 16th of March at The International Centre, Telford, Shropshire.

ALPACA SHOWTIME - 29th and 30th of March at Houghton Hall, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.

HEART OF ENGLAND SHOW - 26th and 27th of April at The National Agricultural Centre Stoneleigh, Nr Warwick.

SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOW - 4th and 5th of May at Ardingly, West Sussex.

NORTH SOMERSET SHOW - 5th of May at Wraxall, North Somerset.

DEVON COUNTY SHOW - 22nd to 24th of May Nr Exeter, Devon.

THE ROYAL BATH AND WEST SHOW - 28th to 31st of May at Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

THREE COUNTIES SHOW - 13th to 15th of June at The Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire.

NORTH DEVON SHOW – 6th of August at Umberleigh, N Devon.

HONITON SHOW – 7th of August at Gittisham, Nr Honiton, Devon.

ELLINGHAM SHOW – 9th of August at Ellingham, Nr Ringwood, Hants.

ROMSEY SHOW – 13th of September at Broadlands, Nr Romsey, Hants.

This list is not exhaustive and there are of course other shows across the UK. This list is of known shows within striking distance of SWAG members.

MID SOMERSET SHOW – FROME – 17TH OF AUGUST 2014.

The organisers of the Mid- Somerset Show are very keen to have an alpaca show at their agricultural show. This is a really good and busy one day event and it would be a great showcase for alpacas. However an organiser is required. Have you got the time and energy? Are you up for a challenge?

Full support will be given by the SWAG committee and there is a complete written guide to organising an alpaca show available which will make it a doddle I am sure!

If you are interested please let me know – mark@patoualpacas.com

I APPRECIATE THAT MEMBERSHIP OF SWAG IS NOT DUE FOR RENEWAL UNTIL THE END OF JANUARY BUT THIS IS A REMINDER AND AN INVITATION TO RENEW EARLY!!

South West Alpaca Group renewal or application for subscription 2014

Name.....

Herd Name and BAS herd letters, if any.....

Address.....

.....**Tel:**

Email address.....

Website.....

Vet's name and contact detail.....

.....

Your details will be kept in the SWAG electronic database by the membership secretary. Abridged details i.e. name, geographical area, herd name, telephone numbers, email are displayed on www.swagroup.org.uk **If you do not wish to be included in any of these please indicate here**

Swag may pass on full details to third parties who have a direct interest in the alpaca industry. **If you would prefer that your details are not used in this way please indicate here**.....

Do you have any suggestions do you have for training and/ or events?.....

Do you have any particular alpaca/fleece related interest?.....

Are you able to help with shows and other events?

SWAG show, Bath and West, North Devon, North Somerset, Honiton, Devon County, Royal Cornwall, Mid Devon, Ellingham,

The approximate number of animals in your herd is

None, 1 – 5, 6 – 10, 11 – 20, 21 – 50, 51 – 75, 76 – 100, >100

Please can you tell us of any fly repellent that you have found to be effective.....

Signed **Date**.....

Please send this form with you payment of £15.00 (by 31st January2014) to Mrs Barbara Humphreys, Homers Farm, Hartgrove, Shaftesbury, Dorset,SP7 0JY

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Since we have owned him, Alta Lyn Octavian had given us 20 crias, of which 14 are female. The odds are clearly in favour of females – so much so, that we will offer a half-price return mating if your female has a male cria first time round! Take a look at our website www.blacklandsalpacas.co.uk, where you can see photos of Octavian's progeny. You can also see on the website photos of how our Inca Picasso's progeny are improvements on their dams – amongst many gorgeous crias he has sired three beautiful greys, all from white mothers.

Call Bernard or Pat Northmore on 01934 733172 or 077 1515 9530,

email us at info@blacklandsalpacas.co.uk,

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Alpha Alpacas Stud Services 2014

Mobile or Drive By - Quality Stud Males, verified by BAS and International judges, at affordable prices – from £350 per serve with a buy back option for unwanted male cria.

Peruvian Concepts Jack – Solid White Huacaya

Supreme Champion BAS National Show 2013

Sire – **Accoyo Killiwasi** Solid White. Dam – **Peruvian Concepts Caroline** Solid White
Progeny already winning in the show ring

Hanley Hall R.A. Polaris – Solid White Huacaya

Supreme Champion – Three Counties Show 2011, 2012, Kennilworth Show 2010

Fleece – **Best British** and 1st 24-48 Months BAS Autumn National Show 2012

Supreme Champion Fleece British Alpaca Futurity 2013

Sire – **Hanley Hall R. A. Tiberius** (Solid White) Dam – **Hanley Hall Evenstar** (Solid White)

Jessamine Redlands - Steel Grey Huacaya

Best Grey Male – Devon County Show 2013, British Alpaca Futurity 2012

HOE Spring Fiesta, North Somerset, Romsey and Three Counties Shows 2012

Sire – **Alpaca Stud Nyetimber**. Dam – **Jessamine Grey Ghost**

Solid grey genetics for 3 generations. A compact male with a very dense, evenly coloured fleece with great organisation.

Alpha Saturn – Solid Dark Fawn Huacaya

BAS National Show 2005, 2006 – **Best Fawn**.

SWAG Spring Show 2008 **Adult Male Champion**.

BAS National Show 2013 – 2nd Senior Fawn Male (Aged 81 months)

Sire – **Windsong Valley Mateus of Wessex** (Imp Aus) Solid White .Dam – **Coollaroo Nemesia** (Imp Aus) Dark Brown

61 progeny registered to date – many now winning in the show ring

Great bone and retaining a dense, soft, even coloured fleece with considerable character.

Alpha Bundy – Solid White – Pure Australian Genetics

Motcombe Amos – Solid Mid Fawn (UK15690)

2013 Fibre Stats and Photos available on request

Please e-mail didavies@alpaca.fsnet.co.uk

or phone 07739382483 or 01308 488661 for further details.

PATOU ALPACAS



BROWN ALPACAS

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