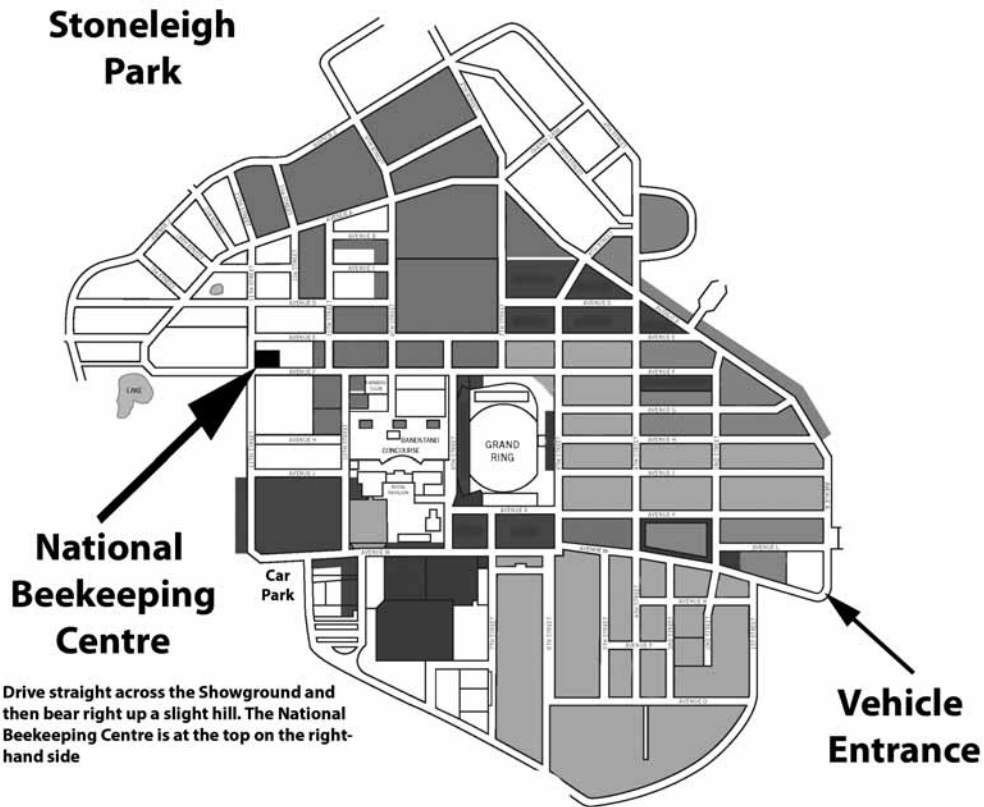
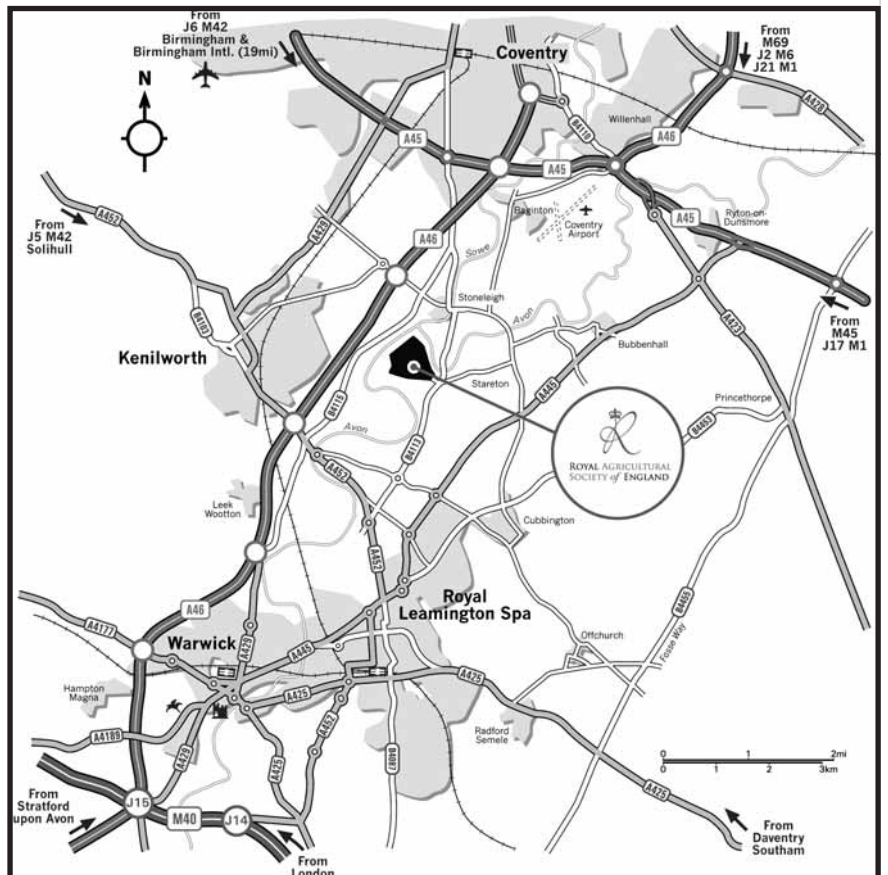


# Directions to the National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ



The Royal Show is proudly organised and presented by the Royal Agricultural Society of England.  
Registered charity number: 209961. Royal Agricultural Society of England, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ.





Dear Members

It has been an interesting and challenging year to say the least!

The BAS Board started the year determined to fully involve the membership and give them the ability to play an active part in the decisions and the direction that the Society takes. The new National Committee structure has been put into place and the first meetings have already produced ideas and actions to move the Society forward. The membership is the lifeblood of the BAS and for us to progress and develop it has to be a two-way street – the more you put in, the more you get out. We need the ideas, skills and enthusiasm that all members, with herds large and small, can bring. As with all ambitious projects, this won't happen overnight but I am sure that as the committees grow in confidence, they will take on a life of their own.

The National Committees cover the important areas of Fibre, Welfare, Media and Marketing, Showing and Education, and reports from all can be found within.

We are also aware of other areas that need dedicated action and are keen to form a new group for Suri breeders to help realise their ambitions and goals.

During the year we have had continued contact with Defra and the devolved Governments and have been in close contact with Animal Health over the TB situation. TB is an issue that the Board decided it could no longer ignore. The enclosed welfare report covers this in more detail. We are pleased that we have been able to work closely with the other camelid societies, the British Llama Society and British Camelids Ltd and we are grateful for their input and support. BCL also funded the movement book that has been sent to all members. Accurate record keeping is vital, as is keeping your herd records up-to-date with the BAS registry.

Most of you will have attended one of the TB awareness meetings that the Society organised recently. It was an ambitious project, with 15 meetings planned. At the time of writing nearly 600 people have attended one of the meetings and the number signed up to attend in total stands at 742. The majority who have attended have given a positive review and I would like to thank all of you who came for taking the issue seriously – it is a credit to the Society and sends a message to the wider agricultural world that we take our future seriously.

We have worked hard on developing our contacts with Animal Health and we were invited to a meeting at AH headquarters at Worcester in November. We are about to attend a meeting on the development of the new Gamma Interferon blood test for TB on 4 March and I hope to be able to update you on its progress at the AGM.

One thing that has come out of the work on TB will be a raising of biosecurity standards in general. I think most of us will agree that up to now our standards have been far too relaxed. We are currently developing a herd health scheme, with an overseas qualified vet working under Claire Whitehead at the Royal Veterinary College.

During the year we have met with the, then, Agriculture Minister; we have had questions asked in the House of Lords; and have met with the Shadow Agriculture Minister. They know we exist!

We have two Directors retiring from the Board at the AGM, Mary-Jo Smith and Richard Beale. Both have put in many hours of unpaid, and often unsung, work on behalf of the Society. I, along with my fellow Directors, would like to offer my thanks for the help and support they have given to the BAS and its membership.

*Mike Birch*

Chairman, BAS Board

*DRAFT Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Alpaca Society  
held at 11.00 am on Saturday 14 March 2009  
at the Stoneythorpe Hotel, Warwick Road, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 0HN*

*1 Chairman's welcome*

The Chairman, Graham MacHarg, welcomed all members present. He introduced Nigel Davis from Nigel Davis Solicitors. As Society Solicitor, he was attending to observe the workings of the Society.

*2 Apologies for absence*

There were 104 members and 2 visitors in attendance. The Society Secretary gave particular apologies from Carole Christian who was standing down from the Board but was unable to be present. Apologies were received from 107 other members.

*3 Minutes of the AGM held on 15 March 2008*

Nick Weber proposed and Tim Hey seconded the approval of the minutes. This was carried unanimously.

*4 Chairman's report*

The Chairman reported that the past year had been a difficult one but one in which he believed the Board had attempted to steer the Society in a direction acceptable to the membership overall.

Particular efforts had been made during the year to keep members informed on the regulations regarding Bluetongue and other diseases and he hoped that this had led to improved welfare within the national herd. He reminded members that it is imperative that they comply with the regulations for the protection of the alpaca community.

Current projects include the voluntary across-herd genetic evaluation through Project Argonaut and the Board was still hoping to establish a voluntary system of stud male certification including DNA testing. Judge training and educational courses had been established and will be expanded across the country where possible. Hopefully the 2009 show season would proceed without interruption.

The Chairman highlighted work done by the three retiring Board members, Lesley Howard in education, judge training and regional groups, Jay Holland in welfare, especially bTB, and Garry Naish in shows. He expressed sincere thanks to Peter Garner for his help with the Accounts and financial matters and to Libby Henson of Grassroots for her hard work in helping to prepare the Accounts for the AGM. He also thanked Claire Waring for her hard work and support for the Society.

Committee reports had been circulated and the Chairman asked for questions on each in turn.

*Education and Training*

Shaun Daniel queried why the judge training courses had to be run at a set fee and this could not be varied in the light of local circumstances. The course fee had risen by £90 from February 2008. Mary-Jo Smith emphasised the need for such courses to be consistent with the same quality of instruction and she believed that they should all run with the same course fee. Graham MacHarg felt that offering the same course for different prices gave the impression of variable quality. He believed that a base price should be set for courses which offered certification. Keith Rushforth considered that quality

was absolute, was not connected with course fees and a regional group should be able to offer a course at their own price.

Nick Harrington-Smith agreed that quality must be a primary factor. He pointed out that those giving the training needed to have a guaranteed standard in place to ensure the same quality of venue, animals, etc. The costing allows for a situation where suitable animals would have to be brought in for the course. In order to have a level playing field across the country it was necessary for some areas to subsidise others.

*Fibre*

Michael Berry expressed concern about the amount of tender fibre being put forward for processing. He was concerned that animals were being bred for fineness and this was at the detriment of the ability to spin the fibre. He asked that the Board look at reasons for the production of tender fibre.

Pat Bentley asked why there was no report on fibre as this was the main reason for keeping alpacas. She believed that the Society had lost sight of the end product and without leadership the industry will fail. She reported that members were leaving the Society because they had become disillusioned and did not know what to do with their fleece. She urged the Board to look at this area urgently.

John Gaye replied that it had been difficult to define the remit of the Fibre Committee as many members were handling the processing and marketing of their fibre themselves. He saw it as a contact point for members who wanted to talk about what to do with their fibre. He noted that Project Argonaut would give breeders the opportunity to breed animals to produce the fibre required for their chosen end uses.

Mike Birch asked why there was a membership of one on the committee. John Gaye replied that he had asked for regional representatives but had had no response. Regional group representatives present were unaware of this invitation.

*Contact with DEFRA and Devolved Governments*

No questions.

Richard Beale took the opportunity to update members. The Welsh consultation on bTB had been sent to Defra but there had been no response to date. BAS has requested a meeting with the minister, Jane Kennedy, and was awaiting a reply. Claire Whitehead has been conducting research into the vaccination regime for Bluetongue. Her recommendation is that a single booster vaccination is required once a year around March. Philip O'Connor queried that advice from Intervet was for vaccination every six months. Richard reported that Intervet is discussing this with Claire.

Carole Christian will continue to represent BAS at Scottish welfare meetings. She will continue discussions with the Scottish Agricultural College Health Scheme Team to investigate if it is viable to establish a BVD Health Team.

*Media, Marketing and Magazine*

Pat Bentley was concerned that alpacas and their fibre were not being advertised to the general public. John Gaye responded that advertising was expensive and the Society had

limited resources. There was a considerable amount of alpaca fibre/end product advertising being undertaken by individual breeders. Pat Bissett felt that members were getting no support and John suggested producing a flier focusing on products. Mike Coghlan considered that good exposure in high quality magazines could be obtained with a budget of £10,000. John Gaye suggested that members producing end products should consider submitting editorial. Pat Bentley was concerned that some of the products being offered were of low quality and were adversely affecting the alpaca image.

Chris Goffey reported a lot of public interest when he had taken a few alpacas to local events such as country fairs. He would appreciate appropriate literature being available. Libby Henson had bought stocks of the existing BAS leaflet and members were invited to take copies after the meeting.

Michael Berry asked if the Magazine Membership category was still available. John Gaye confirmed it is at a cost of £25 per annum. Michael Berry considered that this should be promoted to those interested in keeping alpacas.

Liz Butler suggested approaching local spinners and weavers guilds and asking them to come to shows to demonstrate spinning alpaca fibre. This enables the public to see the transition from animal to yarn to products. Mike Birch reported great interest from the public at the National Show and felt that the Society needed an organised public relations campaign with a media pack available to members with advice regarding local media publicity, etc. John Gaye considered that many owners were already doing this and it would be difficult for the Society to organise as it did not have a full-time Chief Executive.

Janet Small suggested promotion of a trade mark along the lines of the woolmark. John Gaye commented that the Fibre Co-operative had a logo and there was an international alpaca fibre symbol. The problem with a logo available to everyone was that it would be used on both good and bad products and it would be difficult to prevent the value of the logo from being devalued. It must denote quality.

Rob Bettinson believed that members should work together to collect one tonne of fibre of the same colour and quality for commercial processing. The fibre market would not develop until commercial quantities were available. This would have to be achieved through the regional groups. However, John Gaye did not consider that the role of the breed society was to be involved in commercial aspects of fibre. Previous fibre co-operatives had failed and there was a need for a dedicated fibre organisation.

Val Fullerlove believed that the breed society should be involved with fibre and Brian Raine pointed out that cattle societies promote their industries even if they did not get involved in meat marketing. Nick Harrington-Smith believed that the idea of a co-operative was over optimistic. There was a danger of promoting a product which could not be delivered. Education and training needed to be provided so that owners could recognise good quality animals, including their fibre. John Gaye noted that only an average of 6–7 members attended the Fibre to Market courses offered. Melanie Douglas asked for more courses to be held in the north and Val Fullerlove reported that when she ran the course for a local group she had considerably more interest.

### *Regional Groups and Membership*

Michael Berry, Pat Bentley and other members congratulated Maria Leitner on her comprehensive, well researched and interesting report.

Jonathan Russell asked if there was a need to import males from, say, Peru or Australia in order to increase the genetic base. Maria Leitner considered that imports from Peru would be better in terms of the genetic concerns but just increasing the numbers of animals would help the situation, as long as the animals were chosen with quality in mind. Liz Barlow asked if imports would be possible from Peru and Maria Leitner responded that she believed this could be possible in the future. Richard Beale pointed out that animals could be imported from Peru but at present the process was extremely expensive. There was a problem finding sufficient numbers of quality animals. Tim Hey commented that an Australian study had shown that 80 per cent of males imported from Peru were taken out of the breeding programme within a few years. Maria Leitner pointed out that there was great genetic diversity in alpacas and therefore no guarantee that the cria would show the traits exhibited by its parents. An EBV scheme would help to give greater success in breeding.

### *Regional Groups*

Richard Fennell stressed the importance of regional groups as a means of consultation, debate and discussion which would allow all members to be involved. Jay Holland had been disappointed by the lack of response to his letter to all regional welfare representatives and Richard Fennell pointed out that it was necessary to make sure such communications had been received. Rob Bettinson reported that the Heart of England group had elected representatives for various areas but none had been contacted by the Board. There was a need for good communication.

Pat Bentley questioned whether the structure of other breed societies had been considered as a replacement for the existing BAS structure. She considered that Board members were taking on a lot of work which could be done by regional groups. Nigel Davis outlined the structure of the Jacob's Sheep Society where each region had a representative on the central committee and specialists were co-opted as required. Keith Scott supported Pat Bentley's view that regional groups were important and asked why previous plans that included their greater involvement had been abandoned. Graham MacHarg answered that there had been a poor response to questionnaires put to regional groups and members. Di Davies commented that as Secretary of the South West Alpaca Group she had attended meetings regularly over the past three years and she had received responses from the Board if there had been a problem at the regional group. Board members had also attended her regional group meetings. Peter Garner supported her view that questions from regional groups had been dealt with properly by the Board but the main problem was difficulty in communication.

Jonathan Russell suggested that members should be invited to establish a group which would look at the Society's structure and communications in conjunction with the Board. It was difficult to get regional group members involved in running the group. Nick Weber proposed that there was a meeting of regional group chairmen to begin discussions. This was agreed.

### *Registration and Screening*

Robert Reeve was surprised how the changes to the registration and screening rules and procedures had been handled. He believed that the alpaca industry needs higher screening standards rather than no screening. From the membership report, 23 per cent of animals failed screening and with no screening these would have been imported. John Gaye recognised that the consultation paper had been prepared in a rush and that it was wrong. There had been very divergent responses and these would be considered by the Board. Special Resolution 5 was designed to initiate a formal review of the entire screening and importation process. This needed to involve the regional groups but those taking part would need to be aware of the processes involved. In due course, he anticipated a resolution being put to the membership based on consideration of knowledge, experience and science.

Graham Reed asked whether the £6000 spent in legal fees was because of the challenge to the higher registration fees. John Gaye said that the Board had believed it needed full advice but that the legal fees included other matters.

Keith Scott asked what results had been achieved by the Screening and Registration committee. He noted that Listed and Notified males had been available on the register for the past four years. John Gaye responded that the review had encompassed a whole range of policies but in the end there was insufficient time to complete the review which had a knock-on effect in other areas. Work would continue.

Rob Bettinson asked what evidence had been presented that there was a chance of the importation of a large number of sub-standard animals. John Gaye responded that the Board had wanted to prevent a large influx of animals prior to the notification of higher fees. The Board had no intention of closing the Registry but it wanted to put a barrier to imports from countries eager to sell animals. He realised that individual breeders had been inconvenienced and their problems had been assessed on a case-by-case basis. Shirley Bettinson queried why the matter had not been left until it could be discussed fully by the members at the AGM. John Gaye said that the Board had always tried to inform members and make the Society more inclusive. Peter Garner noted that there had been a large number of responses putting forward good ideas and these needed to form part of a consultation. The meeting adjourned for lunch at 13.00. It was reconvened at 14.10.

### *Shows*

Liz Butler queried whether it was necessary for pen stewards to have passed the Foundation Alpaca Assessment (old level 1) course. Mary-Jo Smith recommended that this was only necessary for someone acting as an inspection steward. It was proposed by Liz Butler and seconded by Robert Reeve that pen stewards would not be required to have passed the Foundation course.

[Subsequent to the meeting it was established that the only qualification required for stewards is that Inspection Stewards must have passed at least Alpaca Judging Stage 1 (formerly Level 2).]

### *Welfare*

No questions.

### *5 Treasurer's Report, Accounts for year ended 31 December 2008*

Peter Garner presented his report and the Accounts for year ended 31 December 2008.

John Nichols asked why a not-for-profit organisation required reserves amounting to 80 per cent of turnover and asked if some of the reserves could not be used for other initiatives. Peter Garner explained that the Society's lack of resources was not in total funds but in income. He has recommended to the Board that a detailed budget is produced for 2009. Part of the cash listed is client account money which is not available to the Society. Additional funding may be required for Project Argonaut and he did not recommend spending a large amount of the reserves on any one particular project.

Geraldine Thomas queried the amount spent on legal fees which Peter explained had included advice after the proposal to raise screening fees. Graham MacHarg added that part of the amount covered the time taken for the solicitor to assess the Society Handbook with a view to subsequent review. He explained that the Board had felt that the increased fees needed to be brought in quickly and the only way to do this and include a full consultation with the members would have been to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting which could have been more expensive. Roger Mount considered that the matter could have been left for discussion at the AGM but Graham MacHarg explained that it was though that the challenge to the increased fees could have been outside of the rules and advice had been needed urgently. In hindsight, he agreed that delaying the decision until the AGM could have been a better course of action. He explained that the Board had taken competitive tenders before appointing Nigel Davis Solicitors.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by David Barnett, seconded by Keith Rushforth and carried with one abstention.

### *6 Special Resolutions*

Graham MacHarg called for a poll on the Special Resolutions previously circulated to members.

Arguments in favour and against the Special Resolutions were aired. It was suggested that a weakness of the proxy voting system was that the result could be swayed by a large number of blank proxy votes being given to one person (usually the Chairman), allowing them to vote as they wished. It was felt that the response to a postal vote could be low and Roger Mount suggested that this could be overcome by making approval subject to a minimum number of, say, 70 per cent, responses expressing a preference.

Mike Birch asked what the mechanics would be for a postal vote. Graham MacHarg replied that this would be decided by the next Board. It was felt that any such postal ballot should include the views of those opposing the resolution as well as those in favour of it. Kim Kearney suggested that voting on the Special Resolutions at the AGM was premature and there should be consultation through the regional groups first. However, Graham MacHarg pointed out that proxy votes indicating members' wishes had already been received.

Richard Fennell asked what majority was required to pass the Special Resolutions and Claire Waring replied that it was 75 per cent of members voting. Rob Bettinson considered that the affected rules should have been given in full with the Special

Resolutions so that members could put them in context. Keith Scott pointed out that if the Special Resolutions were passed it would give two voting options:

- (a) A resolution at a General Meeting
- (b) A postal ballot.

Option (a) would require a 66 per cent majority and option (b) would require a 50 per cent majority. He asked how the method of voting would be decided in any particular situation.

Keith Rushforth proposed that the meeting proceed to a vote and Nigel Davis confirmed that because the Special Resolutions and the intention to vote had been circulated to members, this must proceed.

The meeting adjourned at 13.55 for the vote to be counted. During the adjournment, John Gaye gave a presentation of Project Argonaut. Richard Beale gave a talk on 'EBVs The proof is in the Pudding in today's Cattle Industry'.

The meeting reconvened at 16.03.

### 7 Election of members to the Board of Directors

285 ballots were cast.

The voting on the first poll was:

	For	Against	Abstain
Rob Bettinson	189	68	25
Mike Birch	190	62	38
Shaun Daniel	151	77	45
Jay Holland	135	115	31
Lesley Howard	109	127	42
Garry Naish	106	119	51
Philip O'Connor	189	63	30
Brian Raine	130	96	19
Graham Reed	152	88	39
Keith Rushforth	92	132	52
Keith Scott	168	79	35
Lynsey Skinner	128	85	61
Freddie Small	124	105	52
Paul Stead	66	143	68

According to rule 3.2(viii), the nominations of Lesley Howard, Garry Naish, Keith Rushforth and Paul Stead for appointment to the Board were not approved.

According to rule 3.2(viii), the following with the greatest number of votes in favour are appointed to the Board:

Rob Bettinson  
Mike Birch  
Shaun Daniel  
Philip O'Connor  
Graham Reed  
Keith Scott

### 8 Special Resolutions

279 ballots were cast.

	For	Against	Abstain
Special Resolution 1	97	167	11
Special Resolution 2	98	166	12
Special Resolution 3	96	167	12
Special Resolution 4	97	166	12
Special Resolution 5	164	95	17

Special Resolutions 1-4 were not approved.

Those abstaining are considered not to have cast a vote. Therefore the total number of votes cast for Special Resolution 5 was 259. To pass, a Special Resolution requires a majority of 75 per cent which in this case is 194.25. Special Resolution 5 was not approved.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. Thanks were expressed to Margaret Hargreaves and Libby Henson from Grassroots Systems, particularly for their assistance with counting the vote. The Chairman made a small presentation to retiring Directors and those who had resigned during the year. Richard Beale proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

The AGM closed at 16.10.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2009

### *DEFRA and Devolved Government Contacts*

*Richard Beale*

Contact with DEFRA, Animal Health, the Veterinary Laboratories Agency and the Welsh TB Group have all been part of this year's work. It is fair to say that BAS and BLS together have made their mark this year. We now do not have to explain what camelid are any more and everybody knows that we want to be part of the National Disease Control System as we are part of the national livestock industry and, as such, share with them the same notifiable diseases.

The main pre-occupation has been TB and to this end we met with Jane Kennedy MP, the DEFRA Minister of Food and Farming, in June and followed this in November by meeting Jim Paice, MP, the Shadow Minister of Agriculture. We have always been received with courtesy and with a degree of understanding to the point that we now have recognition and, as a consequence, many doors have been opened to the benefit of the Camelid community.

The highlight of the year was when we had the first the AH-Camelid Liaison Group meeting at Animal Health Headquarters in December. At this all the Animal Health regions involved with TB were represented as well as Defra, Food and Farming Group, TB Policy and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. It is hoped that it will be repeated on an annual basis. There is a firm conviction that we are all on the same side in the fight against TB.

2010 will have new challenges for BAS and the Camelid community concerning not only animal health issues but also new legislation. A further meeting will take place with the Welsh TB Group in Cardiff as the Welsh TB campaign moves up a gear. The Animal Health Organisation Bill was published on 25 January 2010 for consultation. It covers the principles of 'Responsibility and Cost Sharing' for animals and, therefore, Camelid. The proposed levy, in part to pay for disease prevention, will be published in due time in a separate Finance Bill.

The TB Eradication Group England will be inviting us to meet with them. To date, we have been excluded from their discussions although Camelid were mentioned in their report published in October last year. Their report is on the BAS website. A meeting has been arranged with Animal Health Scotland to discuss the implications of the TB-Free Status for Scotland which is due to come into force on 28 February 2010. Lastly and most importantly, we, as part of the Camelid community, will be involved in the further research and development of a new camelid-specific TB test to be undertaken at the VLA TB Research Unit at Weybridge.

Currently, the Camelid TB Awareness meetings are being presented by Gina Bromage, a vet in private practice in Devon and an author who specialises in Camelid.

I would like to thank DEFRA, Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency for all their support over the past year and their contributions to the TB Awareness meetings.

### *Education*

*Shaun Daniel*

When I was elected to the BAS Board in March 2009, I stated

that, 'I believe that all the BAS members should have equal access to information to assist them in caring for the animal. I believe that there has to be support for the Regional Groups and that the BAS should be the pivotal point for the Groups'.

This statement was made with a belief that I could bring change to the way the BAS deals with Education. This change is now underway. Those involved agree that it is a positive step forward for the Society.

In April, I submitted a proposal paper to the Board recommending that we approach OFQUAL (The Government Office that deals with the National Qualifications Framework). As a result of this proposal, the BAS entered into discussion with OFQUAL to seek a way forward for the Society. This led to further discussion and meetings with LANTRA, an awarding body that primarily deals with the land-based work sector. Subsequently it became clear that the BAS membership would be best served by entering into a Customised Provision arrangement.

This means that any courses will be accredited by an outside agency and that we will be able to bring training to the membership across the country. The training will be to a set standard and delivered by those members who successfully undergo a training course in presentation techniques.

The courses are now being written by members of the Education Committee and once complete, will be submitted to LANTRA for approval. The Education Committee will then look at options for delivery of the courses to the membership, interested educational establishments and the general public.

There is still a mountain of work to complete but we have the right people and the will to see the project through. I envisage this work producing results in the next 12 months and courses being made available to the membership. There should be easy access to education and the Regional Groups will be central to providing this information to the membership

### *Fibre*

*Maria Leitner*

Over the past few years, it has seemed as if a focus on fibre has been in abeyance, with other industry matters taking precedence. This is unfortunate, since fibre is, of course, at the heart of our industry. The current BAS Board has made an effort to re-focus attention on issues which are core to the industry. With the introduction of a National Fibre Committee, improving the quality of the national fibre yield and supporting members in their marketing and other fibre initiatives is now firmly back on the agenda. As with all the National Committees, the goal of the National Fibre Committee is to draw in the expertise of all the Regional Groups. Likewise, the intention is to disseminate as widely as possible through the membership the information, skills and specific initiatives which the fibre committee identifies as key to the successful transition 'from fleece to market'.

The first meeting of the National Fibre Committee took place on 7 February at Stoneleigh. The meeting was extremely well attended, with 15 representatives of various Regional Groups taking part. The meeting was enthusiastically chaired by Rob Bettinson, who set the committee off to an excellent start with his considerable knowledge and insight into the alpaca fibre

industry. Every representative contributed to the subsequent discussions, addressing a broad agenda ranging from the development of terms of reference for the committee to an in-depth look at a diverse range of possible national and local fibre initiatives. The full minutes of the meeting, kindly taken by Frances Bath, will be available to members as soon as they have been written up and signed off. Briefly put, the issues raised at this inaugural meeting included:

- ◆ The nature of the UK fibre market place
- ◆ The economics of fibre marketing, nationally and internationally
- ◆ The need to build on particular national and local strengths
- ◆ The importance of knowledge and education
- ◆ The fibre quality of the existing national herd and methods to improve this
- ◆ Access to information about shearers, mini-mills and other processing resources
- ◆ The importance of bringing in expertise from other fleece industries
- ◆ Collaboration and networking between regional groups on fibre initiatives
- ◆ Links with Universities and Colleges, through research or design and fashion
- ◆ The importance of sharing success stories

It was, to say the least, a busy, vibrant and informative meeting and the enthusiasm with which representatives have already taken forward many of the action points agreed bodes very well for the future. As Rob Bettinson stated:

*'This is very much a first for the Society as not since the heady days of the old co-operative have we had so many members in a room talking constructively around the issues surrounding our fibre. I think we all agreed at the end of the day it was a very positive and realistic meeting with a great deal of enthusiasm exhibited but also tempered with some real experience as we explored the options of what exists, what we know and what we don't, what is needed and how we might move forward. It's early days, but it was heartening and refreshing to focus solely on fibre issues with the Regional Representatives on the National Committee. This was in no small part because they are all there with the support of their Regional group members back home and because they have a genuine interest in all things Fibre which naturally generates a 'can do' attitude. All the representatives expressed a desire to raise the profile of fibre issues which I'm sure will ultimately benefit us all. I would like to thank all who came to the meeting and especially those who travelled the longest to attend.'*

Growing and maintaining a viable marketplace for UK alpaca fibre within a world market remains a challenging endeavour which raises whole raft of new issues that will need time, research, commitment and talent to resolve. Many of our members are already facing these challenges on various scales. We all have a lot to learn about the science of spinning, processing and retail if we are to grow and maintain a viable and successful marketplace for our fleece. All our members' initiatives will need our support and we are confident that great strides can be made towards taking our

product to the marketplace now that alpaca fibre is very much back on the BAS agenda.

The next meeting on the Committee will be on Sunday 4 July.

## **Judge Training**

*Mary-Jo Smith*

At the beginning of this Board year, the BAS Education and Judge training were allocated to different Board members. I continued with the Judge Training programme and liaison with the Judges Panel. 2009 has been a successful year running our Judge Training programme for the second year under the new structure. More and more members have been getting involved and attending the various Judge Training courses.

We are planning to hold a Foundation and Stage 2 course this spring followed by an Advanced Assessment and a Stage 1 course in the autumn.

In 2010, our current judges have been working hard at maintaining their training through courses and re-certification. When Amanda Van den Bosch was in the UK in 2009 to judge the British Alpaca Futurity Show, we took the opportunity to ask her to teach some suri clinics while she was here. These were kindly hosted by Moonsbrook Alpacas. Amanda taught two clinics; one to our BAS-qualified judges and the other to others who wanted to learn more about suris. I attended one of the clinics and it was an excellent day, focused on learning more about the wonders of suris. I found the day very informative and it was great to see so many suris on one farm.

After the show season finished and the birthing season was over, the judges got together twice in November, firstly to hold their annual Calibration Clinic which was followed a few weeks later with the re-certification tests. The BAS judges need to re-certify every three years in order to continue judging as a BAS Judge.

## **Media**

*Mike Birch and Shaun Daniel*

The media and marketing representatives for the BAS over the past year have been Mike Birch and Shaun Daniel. More recently, this responsibility has been handed to the Media and Marketing National Committee. Their work has only just started and will begin bear fruit through 2010.

During 2009, the membership has seen changes to the magazine, both in appearance and content. This has drawn positive and negative comment in roughly equal measure. Some of the changes to the magazine are as a result of consultation with Deesons who, with their professional overview of the media world, guide us on maintaining a modern image. The content has grown to reflect the way we deal with alpacas and in response to questions posed by the membership. There has been a groundswell of positive comments with regards to the change in content with very little in the way of negative comment. Ultimately the Board acknowledges that whatever the content or appearance, we cannot please all the people all of the time.

The magazine represents the British alpaca industry and retains its position as the main publication for owners and breeders alike. This is a position borne out by the circulation and readership figures published by Deesons. The editorial content is continuing to change in response to demand and through 2010 will begin to move to a more regional

representative publication. This will be driven by the new Media and Marketing National Committee.

The website is also under consideration and again the Board has listened to the membership. The new Media Committee will be examining the website and we look forward to seeing their proposals for the way it should develop.

We have also had to take look at the BAS trailer. It has to be said that that it is starting to show some wear and tear. It has wintered in Yorkshire and is now moving back to its manufacturer, Towability, for service. The Media Committee will then put forward proposals regarding its future. Their remit is to decide whether to keep and re-vamp the existing trailer or purchase a new trailer or possibly two trailers.

Over the past year a lot has changed and a lot more developments are under consideration. The Board is keen to keep the face of the BAS modern, topical and provocative. It aims to stimulate debate and, so far, it appears to be successful.

## Membership

*Maria Leitner*

Following the re-organisation of BAS through the very promising National Committee initiative, there is no longer a Membership Committee as such. However, many of the objectives set out for the committee in last year's annual report have been adopted by the National Committees. For example, the Fibre Committee intends to explore the profile of the UK national alpaca herd and a working party is due to be set up to explore the potential for an estimated breeding value scheme.

Libby Henson of Grassroots Systems continues to collect and collate key data relating to our membership on behalf of BAS and, further re-structuring permitted, these figures will continue to be the subject of an annual report. Thanks again to Libby for her efficiency and speed in providing the figures for the current report.

To maintain continuity and enable the evaluation of trends across time, the membership data reported will follow the same format each year. So, the following tables may look familiar and are likely to become more so in the future!

### i) Membership subscriptions

*Table I Annual membership subscriptions*

	End March 2007	End March 2008	16 February 2009	End January 2010
Single	300	469	629	635
Corporate	N/A	N/A	14	17
Joint	83	218	290	306
Honorary	3	3	3	3
BCA adopted	N/A	105	0	N/A
Single/Joint OS	N/A	16	47	53
Total	416	811	986	1014

Figures in the last two columns of Table I have been collated at a slightly different time of year than previously. However it is nevertheless clear that membership subscriptions have reached a plateau in comparison to the significant increases observed between 2006–2008 and 2008–2009. This 'slow down' is broadly similar across all categories of membership.

As in all previous years, single membership remains the most popular form of subscription. Since the alpaca community is a comparatively young one, the pattern of subscriptions above, with initial rapid increases followed by a plateau, is not unusual and it is promising that subscriptions have not dipped in the last year. This notwithstanding, it does suggest that BAS could benefit from a membership drive. A task which the new National Media and Marketing Committee will no doubt tackle with enthusiasm!

### ii) Alpaca registrations

*Table II New registrations and transfers*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Full Registrations	2183	2616	2441	2799	2687
Notified Males	248	289	421	599	867
Listed Males	69	215	219	253	379
Total Cria	2500	4174	3081	3651	3933
Transfers	1082	2670	1537	2697	2151

Despite the problems associated with moving animals for mating in 2008, as a result of the shifting BTV boundaries, the number of cria registered in 2009 has remained high with a 9% increase over the previous year. It is also clear that members are taking advantage of the opportunity to notify and list males free of charge with the option to fully register males destined for breeding when they have had the opportunity to develop. There has been a drop in the number of transfers, despite the introduction and promotion of free transfers for listed non breeding males. It is possible that this reflect a genuine drop in number of alpaca sales during the international economic recession. However it is less marked than the drop in recorded transfers between 2006 and 2007. We will therefore continue to monitor this closely to see if a real trend is emerging.

### iii) Registered Alpaca

*Table III Current live population of BAS-registered alpaca*

	Intact Males	Castrated Males	Females	Total
Full Registrations	4837	0	13456	18293

Notified	1905	0	0	1905
Listed	1114	1525	126	2765
Pending	113	1	158	272
Totals	7969	1526	13740	23235

The total live population of alpaca registered with BAS has increased by 15% (N=3108) since 16 February 2009.

Despite proportionate increases in the recent registrations for males, the total percentage of the (BAS-registered) national herd which are female continues to stand at around 60%. The proportion of all registered males remaining intact remains very high in comparison with other livestock at 84%.

As previously, this is likely to reflect the fact that male alpaca are part of a purely 'pet' market as well as representing breeding stock.

*Table IV Age distribution of live registered alpaca owned by BAS members*

Below 1 Year	1–5 Years	6–10 Years	11–15 Years	16+ Years
Born 2009	2004–2008	1999–2003	1994–1998	to 1993
1960	11136	4412	1826	205

Despite ongoing concerns regarding the welfare 'time bomb' of an aging alpaca population, the proportion of older alpaca in the registered alpaca herd currently remains comparatively small (less than 1% aged 16+ and 9% aged 11+). The proportion of aging alpaca is, of course, increasing year on year and so it remains important that BAS ensures that its membership is well informed with regards to the care of the older animal.

Overall, the proportion of the registered national herd of prime breeding age remains fairly constant, although it has decreased slightly (by about 3%) since 2008, possibly as a result of an aging alpaca population..

*iv) Distribution and breeding profile of BAS-registered alpaca*

*Table V Geographic distribution of alpaca herds in the UK<sup>4</sup>*

England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
821	36	47	6

Compared again with the profile in 2008, the broad geographic 'imbalance' in the distribution of alpaca herds within Great Britain is becoming increasingly polarised. This is primarily due to an expansion in the number of herds owned within England, with the numbers of herds in other areas of the UK remaining fairly stable.

The number of herds owned in England has increased by a very encouraging 12% since 2008. In total, 90% of UK registered herds (87% of all European BAS-registered herds) are owned by BAS members located in England.

*Table VI Regional distribution of BAS members in the UK at the current date<sup>2</sup>*

Region	Central England	Eastern Counties	East Midlands	Isle of Man
Total number of members	139	57	52	1
Total number of alpaca	3015	1262	618	187
Region	Northern England	Northern Ireland	Lancs & Yorkshire	Scotland
Total number of members	40	6	67	44
Total number of alpaca	926	207	1124	453
Region	South East	South West	Devon & Cornwall	Wales
Total number of members	137	185	114	51
Total number of alpaca	3503	3461	2414	788
Region	West Midlands			
Total number of members	93			
Total number of alpaca	1235			

The regional distribution of UK herds is a matter of substantial ongoing debate. Table VI indicates that the commonly held assumption that the bulk of UK alpaca herds (and alpaca) are located in southern regions is evidently correct. The proportion of members listing 'South East', 'South West' and 'Devon and Cornwall' as their location equals 44% of the total current membership with a known regional location. Similarly, the alpaca owned by these members is equal to 31% of the total national herd with a known regional location. In contrast, Northern England, Northern Ireland and Scotland together account for only 9% of members and 8% of alpaca.

*Table VII Herd size and alpaca distribution between members at current date*

Number of alpaca	% of all registered herds	% of all registered alpaca
> 100	22 (2%)	5073 (26%)
50–99	57 (5.5%)	3779 (19%)
20–49	173 (16.5%)	5202 (27%)
10–19	228 (22%)	3183 (16%)
5–9	185 (18%)	1358 (7%)
1–4	281 (27%)	944 (5%)
0	102 (10%)	0 (0%)

The distribution of herd sizes between members has changed very little indeed between this year and the comparable period last year (February 2009). Table VII almost mirrors that in the annual report last year. This underscores the fact that the alpaca industry in the UK remains an extremely polarised industry in comparison to other livestock industries, with nearly half of all animals owned by a very small (circa 6%) of breeders, primarily sited in the south of England. This continues to be a disturbing characteristic with regard to the likely economic health of the alpaca industry.

*Table VIII Productive males*

Total number of males siring cria in the last 10 years: 1774	
Total number of males siring cria in the last 10 years which remain alive: 1290	
Total number of crias sired in the last 10 years by males still currently alive: 18,204	
<i>Numbers of cria sired by currently live males, where known</i>	
1 cria	240 males
2 crias	148
3	101
4-5	154
6-10	208
11-20	202
20-29	79
30-39	53
40-49	26
50-99	61
100+	23

Table VIII presents a more promising picture of the likely health (economic and otherwise) of the UK alpaca industry.

While, as with the majority of livestock industries, the number of males siring significant numbers of offspring in the national herd remains worryingly low (1%, as identified also in last year's report), this picture appears to be improving slightly. The total number of males siring at least one cria in the past 10 years has risen by nearly 25% since 2009 and the number of males siring cria in the past 10 years which remain, currently, alive (and hence potentially breeding) has increased by 29%. Note here that changes in the likelihood of registration cannot wholly account for these sizeable increases.

While such changes are a function of increases in the breeding population as a whole, they are not a necessary function of this expansion. Either more people are choosing to breed from their males, or breeders are choosing to breed from more of their available males. Either way, the gene pool has expanded quite significantly. This is a trend which, if maintained, can only improve the genetic 'health' of alpaca in the UK. One caveat, of course, is that we need to ensure that the expanded breeding opportunities remain of an appropriate quality.

#### *In summary*

Whilst there is now no longer a Membership Committee as such, many of the objectives and initiatives identified in last year's report have been taken up by the new and very promising National Committee initiatives. It is hoped that

membership data will continue to be collated and reported on annually, following a consistent format, allowing the Society to track ongoing and emerging trends.

This year, membership subscriptions appear to have reached a plateau. However, there is no obvious downward trend and, given the comparative youth of the industry, this is to be expected. Year on year, there is evidence of continued expansion in the number of new registrations. Promisingly, strategies to encourage the registration of males, including non-breeding males, appear to be working. There is a slight decrease in the number of transfers, however despite an adverse economic climate, alpaca continue to change hands!

The total live population of alpaca in the UK increased by 15% in 2008-2009. The proportion of both breeding females (around 60%) and intact males (around 84% of all registered males) remains constant. The ageing population (11+ but, in particular, 16+) remains small but growing and reflects a need to consider welfare issues over the longer term. The proportion of the national herd of prime breeding age has shown a slight decline (3%) over time as a result of aging, but remains broadly constant. The number of live males siring at least one cria continues to increase, which bodes well for the genetic health of the future UK national herd, provided that we keep an eye on quality.

Less encouragingly, the geographic distribution of both members and alpaca remains extremely polarised, with a very substantial proportion of UK alpaca and sizeable breeding herds still located in the south of the country.

Time for a membership drive!

- 1 In addition there are 36 BAS registered herds in the rest of Europe.
- 2 Discrepancies between total numbers here and in comparable tables are due to missing data.

## *National Committees/Regional Groups*

### *Rob Bettinson*

A great deal of progress has been made in the back rooms since last March with regard to the BAS Regional Groups leading to the formation of the BAS National Committees.

We now have operating five single National Committees formed from representatives put forward by the BAS Regional Groups. Those committees are: Education, Fibre, Media and Marketing, Shows and Welfare. Welfare and Shows have existed for some time in various incarnations and the rest are new initiatives. These have now been approved by the Board as the formal sub-committees of the Society.

They all have detailed terms of reference with a clear purpose, aims and objectives, and an outline structure of the parameters within which they operate and their relationship to the Regional Groups, the Membership and the Board of the Society.

We publish here the Purpose and Aims and Objectives of these Committees for your reference. Full copies are available from the Society Secretary if required.

## *Terms of Reference*

### *National Education Committee*

#### *Purpose*

To work with the membership, BVCS, BCL and BLS, colleges, schools and established educational bodies to provide, administrate and promote a variety of standardised

educational materials on a National level to an accepted standard pertaining to all things alpaca for as diverse a clientele as is deemed appropriate.

#### *Aims and Objectives*

- ◆ To provide a progressive educational focus and national framework for the membership through which the development of standardised educational materials pertaining to all aspects of alpaca ownership, husbandry and management can be achieved.
- ◆ To develop and make generally available the appropriate standardised materials on all aspects of alpaca ownership, husbandry and management for use in all aspects of Further Education.
- ◆ To develop the appropriate standardised materials to educate and inform new and prospective alpaca owners on all aspects of alpaca ownership, husbandry and management.
- ◆ To develop the appropriate standardised materials to educate and inform established alpaca owners in current 'best practice' in all aspects of alpaca husbandry and management.
- ◆ To develop the appropriate standardised materials to educate and inform those people pursuing or wishing to pursue careers in agriculture on all appropriate aspects of alpaca husbandry and management.
- ◆ To develop the appropriate sustainable working relationships with established educational and training bodies to facilitate the aims and objectives of the Committee.

#### *National Fibre Committee*

##### *Purpose*

To provide a National focus through which the membership can advance their initiatives towards the creation of a viable commercial market for alpaca fibre and product in the UK.

NB: This Committee is not tasked with creating a marketplace for UK alpaca fibre. It is solely tasked with creating a resource infrastructure through which members can gain access to researched factual knowledge pertaining to this arena, through which they can gain perspective and assess the viability, enhance and develop their own commercial initiatives.

##### *Aims and Objectives*

- ◆ To develop and provide an open-access factual, educational, resource/archive focused solely on fibre, fibre processing, marketing, retail, etc, through which the membership can gain a real insight into the challenges and commercial viability of this marketplace.
- ◆ To research and explore existing, developing and potential markets for UK alpaca fibre and to provide a grounded, factual, well-researched perspective for the membership at large, via the website, e-mail, reportage, magazine and presentation.
- ◆ To keep the membership up to date with the demands of fleece processing in all markets, providing a contextual framework through which the members can appraise their breeding objectives aimed at this marketplace.
- ◆ Encourage and facilitate all members' fibre initiatives.

- ◆ Coordinate with the National Media and Marketing Committee to provide a focus and framework for members' fibre initiatives to gain higher profile within the alpaca community in the UK and the world at large.
- ◆ Provide a general up-to-date, ongoing, global perspective for the membership on the current worldwide alpaca fibre market.
- ◆ Work with the membership to facilitate any regional or National fibre initiatives which may emerge in the coming years.
- ◆ To maintain a current contact list of fibre processors, purchasers, spinners and retailers on the website, in the magazine and available from the BAS office, which the membership can access at all times.
- ◆ To maintain a current contact list of recommended shearers on the website, in the magazine and available from the BAS office, which the membership can access at all times.
- ◆ To maintain and keep current a 'best practice' guide to shearing and fleece preparation for processing on the website, in the magazine and available from the BAS office, which the membership can access.
- ◆ To maintain a list of quality speakers with experience in any and all aspects of this arena which the Regional Groups can access for the benefit of their members.

#### *National Media and Marketing Committee*

##### *Purpose*

To work with the membership and the media to promote the alpaca and the alpaca-related activities of the membership to the membership and to the world at large through whatever resources are available for promotion and communication that are deemed appropriate and within the policies as agreed by the Board of the Society.

##### *Aims and Objectives*

- ◆ To consult with the membership and the Board to develop and refine existing policies for the promotion of the alpaca and the Society.
- ◆ To utilise the limited resources of the Society in the most efficient and cost effective way to facilitate and administrate an infrastructure for the Society which enables the Society and the membership to promote their initiatives within an emergent worldwide alpaca scene, the UK agricultural landscape and to the media at large.
- ◆ To administer, facilitate and develop the Alpaca magazine for the benefit of all Society members (reference existing magazine policy).
- ◆ To administer and develop the website resources for the benefit of the membership and the Society.
- ◆ To provide a focus and information resource for the membership related to marketing and promotional activity.

#### *National Shows Committee*

##### *Purpose*

To work with the membership to administrate, improve and develop the showing of alpacas and alpaca fleece throughout

the UK within the policies as agreed by the Board of the Society.

#### *Aims and Objectives*

- ◆ To consult with the membership and the Board to develop and refine the existing policies for the showing of alpacas.
- ◆ To administrate and maintain the existing showing rules.
- ◆ To refine and develop the rules for showing through consultation with show organisers, the Judges' Panel and the membership.
- ◆ To administrate, encourage and develop the showing of alpacas throughout the UK.
- ◆ To educate and promote standards for showing of alpacas appropriate for a progressive and vibrant marketplace.
- ◆ To administrate and organise annually the BAS National Show.
- ◆ To work with the Judges' Panel to maintain a list of suitable qualified judges and chief stewards available for adjudicating at BAS-approved shows.
- ◆ To liaise with international alpaca breed societies on the showing of alpacas and to keep the Board and membership informed of current trends and practices.
- ◆ To liaise with the National Media and Marketing Committee to raise the awareness of alpaca showing and maximise its public relations value.
- ◆ To liaise with the National Welfare Committee to develop practical welfare policies appropriate to the showing of alpacas.
- ◆ To participate in any complaints procedure initiated by members in relation to showing.

#### *National Welfare Committee*

##### *Purpose*

To work jointly with the BLS, BCL, BVCS and the membership to develop and refine the existing joint welfare policies and create a progressive National welfare support structure which is dealing with current welfare issues, initiating research, communicating with members and providing representation with DEFRA which is to the benefit of all camelid and their owners in the UK.

##### *Aims and Objectives*

- ◆ Advise the Board and the membership on all aspects relating to the welfare of all alpacas in the UK.
- ◆ Monitor, promote and develop the established welfare policies, best practice and guidelines, as agreed by the Society.
- ◆ Provide the Board with detailed proposals, policies and initiatives relating to the health and welfare of all alpacas in the UK.
- ◆ Provide members with accessible up-to-date information and advice on general health and welfare of alpacas via the Alpaca magazine, website, newsletter or e-mail, whichever is appropriate.
- ◆ Provide a regional point of contact for all issues relating to welfare via the regional representatives.

- ◆ Provide a National welfare information network via the regional representatives and the National Welfare Committee to create a proactive fast response information service on health and welfare for all members in case of emergency or in times of national crisis.
- ◆ Liaise with the BLS and the BCL on all issues relating to camelid welfare in the UK.
- ◆ Liaise with the BLS, BCL and BVCS to provide a coordinated approach to DEFRA and devolved government departments on behalf of all camelid in the UK
- ◆ Liaise with BLS, BCL and BVCS to collect data and develop research projects to the benefit of all camelid in the UK.
- ◆ Liaise with BLS, BCL and BVCS to develop any educational welfare initiatives that may be of benefit to all camelid in the UK.
- ◆ Structure and administrate a safety net for the health and welfare of all alpacas in the UK.
- ◆ Facilitate and administrate a 24-hour first point of contact for all welfare issues relating to alpacas.
- ◆ Provide a structured and immediate advisory and support response from the Society to any regional situation which arises where alpacas are neglected or mistreated.
- ◆ To provide an information and advisory focal point for any other national animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and advise, as necessary, to facilitate the recovery and rehabilitation of neglected and mistreated alpacas.

A proposal clarifying and formalising the relationship between the Society and all the Regional Groups and proposing their ongoing involvement in providing representatives for the National Committees was put to the Regional Group Organisers on 31 March. The response was very positive and a meeting was held at Stoneleigh on 13 June where the proposals were accepted by the Regional Organisers and subsequently agreed by the BAS Board.

The Terms of Reference for each committee were then drawn up and approved by the Board and the Regional Organisers. Then each Regional Group was asked to formally put forward a representative and deputy to sit on each committee. Finally these committees had their inaugural meetings throughout January and February 2010 where the Terms of Reference were approved, discussion and debate ensued and action points were taken forward to progress towards the next meetings.

These committees will be in constant communication and will have access to all the information available to their particular areas of expertise. They will physically meet at least once or twice a year. Minutes will be taken and, once approved by the committees, will be published on the Society website.

It is early days with this initiative but the response has been very positive and encouraging. As your Board, we believe that this is a necessary and very important initiative for the Society not only in terms of communication, representation, standardisation and transparency but also in spreading the workload, enabling the Society to make real sustainable progress on the many fronts that it must.

We anticipate that by enabling these single-focus National Committees to become the 'engine room' of the Society involved in formulating policy and initiatives, harnessing the membership input through the direct involvement of the Regional Groups can only accelerate the progress we can make in the many areas that need addressing. This initiative will also automatically ensure that any initiative implemented by the Society will have the support of the majority of members. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank all the Regional Group Organisers for their support over the past year and all of the representatives who have put themselves forward to take on these responsibilities, and for their time and commitment in attending the meetings. As a Board we look forward to enabling these committees to progress and flourish and fulfil the potential and promise that they already exhibit.

## National Committee Representatives

### Education

Freddie Small (AFS); Mary Harvey (CCA); Frances Bath (ERAG); Mel Hopkins, Helen McDonald (Glos/Wilts); Carolyn Birch, Caroline Roberts, Paul Stead (HoE); Jonathan Russell, Judith Russell (NEBAG); Barbara Hetherington (NWAG); Jane Burnett, Annette Callow (SEAG); Keith Taylor (Southern); Barbara Humphreys, Sue Lloyd-Denman (SWAG); Shaun Daniel (YAG); Mike Birch, Mary-Jo Smith (Board); Rosemary Aylett, Victoria Barrett, Susan Davies, Lyndsey Malcolm, Imogen Mann, Lindsey Russell, Liz Tarleton, Janet Westcott, Trevor Westcott (volunteers).

### Fibre

Laura Falconer, Pamela Fennell (AFS); Peter Swann (CCA); Frances Bath, Liz Giblin (ERAG); Helen McDonald (Glos/Wilts); Val Fullerlove, Caroline Trotter (HoE); Melanie Douglas, Barbara Hetherington (NEBAG); Diane Hall, Sheila Truelove (NWAG); Vicki Agar, Bridget Brown (SEAG); Sue Hipkin (Southern); Jean Field, Sue Wilson (SWAG); Sylvia Sharpe (YAG); Rob Bettinson, Mike Birch, Maria Leitner (Board).

### Media and Marketing

Richard Fennell (AFS); Tracy Birch (ERAG); John Clarke, Janet Ireland (HoE); Doug Steen (NEBAG); Viv Cook, Mike Griffiths (NWAG); Rose Thirkell (SEAG); Donna Line, Karen Oglesby (Southern); Bernard Northmore (SWAG); Debby Richardson, Derrick Richardson (YAG); Mike Birch, Rob Bettinson, Shaun Daniel (Board).

### Shows

Janet Small (AFS); Gary Sanders, Peter Swann (CCA); Tracy Birch (ERAG); Helen McDonald (Glos/Wilts); David Barnett, Paul Stead, Matthew Tims (HoE); Debbie Rippon (NEBAG); Mike Henderson, Brian Mackreal (NWAG); Liz Butler, Robert Reeve (SEAG); Nikki Hayton, Lynsey Skinner (Southern); Di Davies (SWAG); Jean Waddington, Lawrence Waller (YAG); Mike Birch, Rob Bettinson, Keith Scott (Board).

### Welfare

Carole Christian, Lorna Renshaw (AFS); Sue Cooper, Dianne Summers (CALG); Peter Swann, Julie Taylor-Browne (CCA); Lesley Howard (Derbyshire); Sandra Scott, Liz Taylor (ERAG); Stuart Drysdale (Glos/Wilts); Shirley Bettinson, Nicki Jones (HoE); Yvonne Wilkinson (NEBAG); Brian Raine, Mary Tollit (NWAG); Vicki Agar, Liz Butler (SEAG); Karen Oglesby (Southern); Jay Holland, Nick Weber (SWAG); Debbie Forsyth (YAG); Richard Beale; Rob Bettinson, Mike Birch, Philip O'Connor, Graham Reed (Board).

## Screening and Registration

### Graham Read and Philip O'Connor

During 2009, the Society screened 176 alpacas for 17 individual members (slightly less than the number published in the December issue of *Alpaca*). Most of these members have had animals screened through the BAS in the recent past. The numbers of animals in each batch is small with an average of seven alpacas per contract/member. Of the alpacas screened, one-third was male and two-thirds female.

Most of the BAS screenings during 2009 were conducted for our members primarily in Australia and New Zealand with one batch of 15 from Chile, a small number from the USA and a group screened in Ireland for the BAS EU Directory.

Number of clients	Location	Animals	Pass	Fail
13	Australia	80	56	24
1	Chile	17	15	2
1	Ireland	23	13	10
6	New Zealand	47	44	3
2	USA	9	8	1
17	Total	176	136	40

Income to the Society during the year from Import Screening was:

£3998.45 inc VAT for failure fees (40 for 2009 and 6 for 2008).

£24225.77 inc VAT for import registration fees (101 for 2009 and 39 for 2008).

£6258.29 inc VAT of outstanding unpaid invoices as of 31 December 2009 for 35 2009 registration fees.

There have been no significant problems associated with screening in 2009 and the screening process continues to be managed at arms length, on our behalf, by Robert Terry under the auspices of Grassroots.

The screening committee met once during the year to review screening and to consider the recommendations made by Robert Terry under the review he had carried out during 2007, initiated by the previous Board. These recommendations were mostly of a procedural nature and did not materially affect the screening rules or regulations.

Any changes which might affect the rules have to be discussed at Board level and notified to the membership. The only changes we wish to notify to the membership are:

1. On the screening inspection forms the recording of height and weight has been moved from the top of the phenotypic screening form to the top of the veterinary screening form. This is a practical procedural matter. Under the rules, if an animal does not reach the minimum height or weight it has failed screening and the process does not proceed. This means that the height and weight need to be recorded first and the vet normally does the first part of the inspection.
2. On the veterinary form, the reference to number of teats has been made clearer. It used to say 'four anatomically placed teats'. The wording now makes it clear that this

means no more or less than four.

The committee is also actively working to increase the number of available screeners on the panel. During 2009, we appointed one new veterinary screener in Australia. For 2010 we want to continue and add to this list of screeners.

## **Shows**

### *Keith Scott*

The 2009 show year bounced back from the previous year's interruptions caused by Bluetongue movement restrictions and the cancellation of the National show. A full and geographically diverse show calendar throughout the country and throughout the better part of the year demonstrated that participation at shows in both halter and fleece classes remains well supported.

Biosecurity has become a key consideration for showing this year. Whilst measures to deal with all types of possible disease control may appear to be inconvenient and possibly costly it does provide the opportunity to demonstrate the seriousness with which alpaca owners take this issue and to promote a professional and responsible attitude, not only within the alpaca community but also within the wider livestock community.

Following the annual review of Show Rules there have been a number of minor amendments. Of these the most notable for the coming season are the inclusion of an additional Light Fawn class, the expansion of sash awards for colour championship events and variations of the number of awards depending on class entries.

The new National Shows Committee, comprising representatives from Regional Groups across the country, is now in place and will take on the responsibilities of recommending and proposing future changes to all aspects of shows, liaison with other bodies and administering the BAS National Show.

All of our members are encouraged to participate in showing if at all possible and to support regional and national shows whether as exhibitors, stewards or attendees. Once again, the Society would like to express its appreciation to those who volunteered their time and effort in making the show season such a success and, in particular, the panel of BAS judges for maintaining the standard and consistency of judging across the country.

## **Welfare**

### *Mike Birch*

The Board members responsible for welfare this year have been Graham Reed and Philip O'Connor. As you will be aware, the issue of TB has dominated the welfare agenda this year and so the workload has also been shared by Mike Birch and Richard Beale. That is not to say that other issues have been ignored and the newly formed National Welfare Committee is now addressing all aspects of welfare and liaising with the National Media Committee to update and improve sources of information. There will also be a crossover with the National Education Committee with long overdue training courses being written to include health and husbandry.

Information has been shared with the National Shows Committee and this will be reflected in higher and more professional biosecurity standards at shows in 2010.

From an initial meeting with owners affected by TB in June 2009, we were made aware of the lack of support and information within the Society and also the shortcomings and lack of consistency in the way the government agencies sometimes dealt with the problem.

A Board meeting was held at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in August and BVCS vets Robert Broadbent, Karin Mueller and Claire Whitehead advised us on the disease, the lack of an effective test and the need to take action to prevent a possible escalation of the problem.

An outcome from this meeting has been the move towards an accreditation scheme, currently being investigated by an overseas vet on a temporary placement under the ORBIS grant scheme, working under the supervision of Claire Whitehead at the RVC. This is a six month project. The scheme will help with many potential diseases but sadly not TB, according to our BVCS vets, until such time as a more accurate test becomes available.

Also following the RVC meeting, investigations were made about a potential new TB test currently under development. After initial investigations, BCL has, in principle, agreed to provide funding to support its development if required. In fact, the test seems to be further along than we had understood and it is already being used experimentally. We are to learn of developments and the possible input required from the three camelid societies at a meeting with Animal Health (AH) on 10 March.

In reaction to the growing concerns about TB, we formed a TB Action Group (TBAG), to offer both a source of information and advice and also a confidential contact within the Society to any members affected by TB. Practical support to those under restriction has been offered on behalf of the TBAG by Dianne Summers, who has also gathered invaluable data from the herds under restriction, while also liaising with AH in several cases to move things along on occasion.

At a meeting attended by five BAS Directors and the members of TBAG in October, it was decided to hold a series of meetings to inform the membership of the facts about the disease so that best practice could be applied to help prevent its spread until such time as alternative measures and an accurate test become available – possibly a long way off. The costs of the meetings have been generously supported by BCL, along with a contribution from BLS.

At the time of writing (16 February) we have held nine meetings, with 574 attendees. A total of 742 people in total have signed up to attend. The meetings have been presented by Dr Gina Bromage, MA, Vet MB, DVM, MRCVS. They will have been completed by the date of the AGM.

The purpose of the meetings has been to make camelid owners aware of the disease, how to recognise it, how to deal with it if present in their herd and, importantly, how best to avoid it. In the absence of any other tools, knowledge is our best and currently our only defence.

The TB problem hasn't been created by the membership being informed, but by increasing our knowledge and raising our standards we may be able to deal with not only TB but many other health issues facing our industry.

We have introduced a code of conduct 'Biosecurity, Tuberculosis' and also a self-declaration form to be exchanged between holdings when alpaca are moved. We have introduced a herd record and movement book, again thanks to BCL who has paid for them. Accurate record keeping is important if we are to keep our own house in order and it is a requirement of the code of conduct.

We have had considerable involvement with Animal Health this year and we are grateful for the level of involvement they

are showing in support of the TB issue. We have been involved in meetings with AH staff at the highest levels.

We have discussed and had questions asked on camelid health issues in the House of Lords and have met with the, then, Minister, Jane Kennedy, as well as the shadow Minister, Jim Paice.

We look forward to continuing to raise the welfare standards in the coming year with the input of the regional groups via the National Welfare Committee.

# TREASURER'S REPORT TO THE 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 13 MARCH 2010

Despite an international recession in 2009, the BAS finances have remained very strong with a post-tax profit of £42,333, up from £11,844 in 2008.

We have put in place a number of checks and balances in 2009 to ensure that our accounting procedures are completely transparent and easy to follow. Our thanks to Bush and Co for preparing the 2009 accounts on our behalf.

If we turn to page 11, of the accounts, and look at the profit and loss account, we see that membership has held fairly steady. In fact we have an increase in the number of members over last year but, because the subscription year runs from April to March, some of the funds already collected for subscriptions will be carried over into the next financial year.

The overall registration income has also held steady. The registration component has increased by about £2,000, despite the suspension of the £7.50 fee to notify or list males. Notification and Listing of males is now free of charge. We have added 3,933 crias to the database in 2009 which is 282 more than in 2008. The registry income from transfers has dropped from £27,000 in 2008 to £19,000 in 2009. This partly reflects the waiving of the transfer fee for listed non-breeding animals and animals exported to non-BAS members. However, there has also been a reduction in the total number of transfers reported to the registry from 2,697 in 2008 to 2,151 in 2009, a drop of 546 animals. This does represent a 20% reduction and is probably the impact we might have expected from the recession.

Other income is predominantly made up of £15,250 of advertising revenue from the magazine for 2008 and 2009, £1791 from merchandise and £1,100 from membership mailing lists. A donation of £200 is also included.

DNA testing was initially introduced at a subsidised rate in order to encourage participation and create a base of DNA-tested animals. It was hoped that all stud males would be tested so that their offspring could be parentage verified as they were born, if the purchasers of the stud services wished to do so. The variation in exchange rates has impacted on the DNA costs and the DNA rates will need to be reviewed in 2010. 807 animals have now been DNA tested (4% of the population).

Training courses run for members are run at cost. Those provided for the judges have been subsidised in 2009.

In terms of expenditure, registration, management fees and secretarial overheads have been kept to a minimum. There were investments made in terms of developing the web site and upgrading the web site management systems. This has been reflected in the reduction in the web site management overhead. The increased 'general meeting' expenses reflects the facts there were additional full membership mailings carried out prior to the 2008 AGM and the large number of

nominations and resolutions meant that printing and distribution costs were much higher than normal.

The profit and loss account shows a total reserve of £184,587 with £222,713 in the bank and a profit of £42,333.

The Board has already made a number of commitments which will ensure that this surplus is put to good use in 2010, on behalf of the membership and for the good of the whole alpaca industry.

We have established National Committees, made up of representatives from all of the Regional Groups, to develop ideas and report back to the Board. This will have a dynamic impact on the amount of work the small volunteer Board can get done in the coming year. There is, however, a cost implication in that volunteers are eligible to claim travel expense in order to attend one or two meetings per year.

We have entered into an Orbis contract. This project enables us to part-fund a graduate to work for the Society for six months. She is due to start in March and will be working under Dr Claire Whitehead at the Royal Veterinary College with the guidance of Graham Reed. Her brief is to carry out a full feasibility study for a national camelid health scheme along similar lines to the FABL-type accreditation used by sheep and cattle producers.

We have committed to the development of our training and education programmes to national standards with Lantra.

We have also committed up to £20,000 to the TB Awareness meetings and associated literature. British Camelid Ltd has contributed £7,000 and the British Llama Society £1,500 to this venture. The meetings are expected to come in under budget and are being very well received and well attended. At the time of writing 742 people have signed up to attend. We are very grateful for the support of BCL and the BLS.

Finally, we have indicated to Defra that we are willing to support trials on a new camelid-specific gamma interferon blood test for TB in camelid. Both the BLS and BCL have made similar commitments and we are hoping to see progress in the coming months. A meeting is scheduled with Animal Health for 4 March to update us on the new test.

We are not therefore expecting to show a profit in 2010. In fact, we are expecting to eat into reserves, but the Board is of the opinion that this is the time to use some of the accumulated funds held by the Society to alleviate the pressures of the recession and the health threats we face. We believe it is our responsibility to act promptly to ensure members are well informed and equipped to protect the health and welfare of their animals in the longer term interests of the alpaca industry.

*Shaun Daniel*

# NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE BAS BOARD AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 13 MARCH 2010

## DR MARIA LEITNER

*Proposed by Janet Westcott*

I have served on the BAS Board for two years now, working with two quite distinct Boards and a diverse range of personalities! My rationale for joining the Board initially was to help take forward our developing industry by encouraging the Society to take advantage of the many benefits of modern livestock science.

I am a geneticist by training and have worked in a broad range of research fields over my 20-year career as an academic and, more recently, as the Director of a research company which focuses on evidence-based livestock husbandry. Bringing science 'to the stable door' through the BAS Board has proven slightly more challenging than I had hoped but, in standing for re-election, I am expressing a determination that the UK alpaca industry should benefit from the technologies which are now available. It cannot take advantage of the economies of scale which benefit other fibre producing countries such as Peru and Australia. So, we have to develop our own niche market and this will be a great deal easier if we utilise the recent advances in 'alpaca science'.

By way of example, an estimated breeding value scheme can improve the quality of the UK herd's fibre eight times faster than standard breeding practices. Adding to this type of scheme the use of more recently developed molecular genetic markers, either at the national level or at the level of individual farms and breeding herds, speeds up the process of herd quality improvement still further.

Advances in fibre processing technology are another example of an area in which the industry could gain significant benefit simply by actively pursuing the evidence provided by recent and emerging science.

In the context of health and welfare, taking on board the scientific evidence base is equally important. The Society and its members should be able to take advantage of what is known (not assumed) about the best ways to care for alpaca. There is substantive international research into alpaca health and welfare, with topics ranging from worming to pregnancy and a particular focus on disease and the control of disease. The recent TB scare is a good case in point. There is research out there which could help BAS (and BAS members) to formulate a coherent, long-term strategy in relation to TB, but we are not currently utilising this research.

As a career researcher, I do have an inherent bias towards 'evidence-based practice', but I also know that it works! Together with colleagues in the UK and in other research centres internationally, I am committed to carrying out the research which is essential if we are to develop the evidence-based strategies needed to support an expanding and sustainable alpaca industry in the UK. I am equally committed to continuing in my efforts to encourage BAS to take advantage of existing and ongoing research and, yes, I do use the research in running my own alpaca herd!

In terms of my practical 'credentials' for re-election to the board, I am not just a desk-based scientist. In addition to the

research centre, I also run a 190-acre farm in Cheshire, handling just over 100 animals, including suri and huacaya alpaca, fleece and milking goats, and horses.

In terms of other practical skills, my academic career has resulted in quite a long-standing acquaintance with committee and other organisational work at a number of levels. Formal appointments in this context have ranged from working with volunteer groups to working on committees reporting directly to the Home Office and Scottish Executive. In my last academic appointment before moving into the private sector, I was line manager for 900 staff with sole responsibility for developing and taking forward the research strategy for an entire academic sector within the University. Within this role and throughout my academic career I have been extremely successful in raising funds for key projects – something of a necessity in any venture these days! Having moved to the private sector, I have gained additional skills in respect of strategic planning and marketing.

Whatever skills I have, whether academic, commercial or practical, I would happily continue to use these to further the development of a vibrant and well thought out alpaca industry in the UK, committed to keeping alpaca welfare at the heart of its agenda.

### *Formal Qualifications*

1983 BA (Hons) Experimental Psychology and Philosophy, University of Oxford, UK.

1985 MSc Quantitative Genetics, Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, USA (International scholarship).

1987 MA University of Oxford, UK.

1992 PhD Quantitative Genetics, Faculty of Pure Science, University of Sheffield, UK.

### *Appointments*

2004– Director, ER & IC Ltd; Owner and Director of Wild Valley Alpaca.

1999–2004 Research Director, School of Health Sciences, University of Liverpool, UK.

1997–1999 Senior Manager, NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York, UK.

1996–1997 Consultant Statistician and Research Advisor, Research Advisory Unit, Sheffield, UK.

1991–1996 Research Fellow, Biotechnology & Genetics, Faculty of Law, University of Sheffield, UK.

## *Anthony Turner*

*Proposed by Graham Reed*

I am a chartered Work Study Practitioner with 40 years post-qualification experience in early business structure Architecture and Town Planning, which in recent years has leaned more frequently toward agriculture and, specifically, alpaca breeding.

During the past five years, I have been closely acquainted with the alpaca farming industry in the United Kingdom and alpaca breeders throughout the world. For the past four years I have been farming and breeding alpacas.

One of the most common concerns in the alpaca industry is the apparent lack of knowledge and communication between the general public; in particular local authorities, Defra and alpaca breeders. Textile and ancillary fibre products are still woefully under-developed. Starting an alpaca breeding programme is not cheap, can be quite daunting and needs all

the help possible rather than ill-informed resistance that is frequently offered by potential investors and local authorities. I feel certain that my knowledge of planning procedure, coupled with that of the alpaca industry, could be an interface of benefit to our British Alpaca Society.