

# British Alpaca Society - ALPACA BREED STANDARD

## Overview

This breed standard has been developed to encourage the objective assessment of the form and function of the alpaca. It is intended as a guide for breeding selection, to promote the pursuit of the alpaca exhibiting high quality fleece traits on a correct frame.

The ideal alpaca should not only be fit for function, but be seen as the embodiment of the very best conformational and fleece traits of the breed. An ideal alpaca is one that produces high quality fibre over a long, healthy and productive lifetime.

Whilst the breed standard places traits into 'ideal' and 'negative/undesirable traits', most alpacas will fall somewhere between the two on the continuum of the different characteristics. However, the standard promotes the goal of reaching the ideal through selective breeding, resulting in genetic gain and phenotypical improvement. Consideration should be given to the longevity of the ideal traits and thus the commercial benefits that this brings.

Note: Traits are not listed in any particular order - It is acknowledged that some traits, especially those of fleece, will continually improve over time and that this standard is not intended to be static, but to evolve alongside alpaca breeding in the UK.

	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Negative/Undesirable traits</b>
<b>Conformation</b>		
<b>Phenotype</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpacas should have a balanced, proportioned frame, free moving, with a strong substance of bone and an alert stance</li> <li>The head should be carried high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obvious lack of balance</li> <li>Light substance of bone</li> <li>Narrow head</li> </ul>
<b>Side Profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Squared-off appearance, neck and legs should be the same length and 2/3 length of the body</li> <li>Topline (back) straight and level rounding off at the croup to tail creating a slightly sloping rump</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obvious incorrect proportions</li> <li>Low neck set</li> <li>High tail set with tail straight from spine</li> <li>Swayback or humpback</li> <li>Curvature in spine, neck and/or tail</li> </ul>
<b>Head</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dense top knot (Huacaya)</li> <li>Dense top knot with well-defined locks (Suri)</li> <li>Wide and deep, wedge-shaped muzzle</li> <li>The eyes should be clear, bright and set well apart</li> <li>The nose should exhibit two well-defined symmetrical nostrils</li> <li>The upper lip is divided and mobile</li> <li>The incisors should meet the front edge of the upper dental pad</li> <li>The ears are of medium length, erect and spear-shaped</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open, thin topknot</li> <li>Very narrow head, shallow muzzle</li> <li>Eyes with cloudy appearance, pale blue eyes</li> <li>Excessive fleece on the bridge of the muzzle beyond the age of 3 years</li> <li>Asymmetric nostrils</li> <li>Incisors excessively under or overshot</li> <li>Ears excessively out of proportion to head, banana shaped, fused or gofer</li> <li>Wry face</li> </ul>

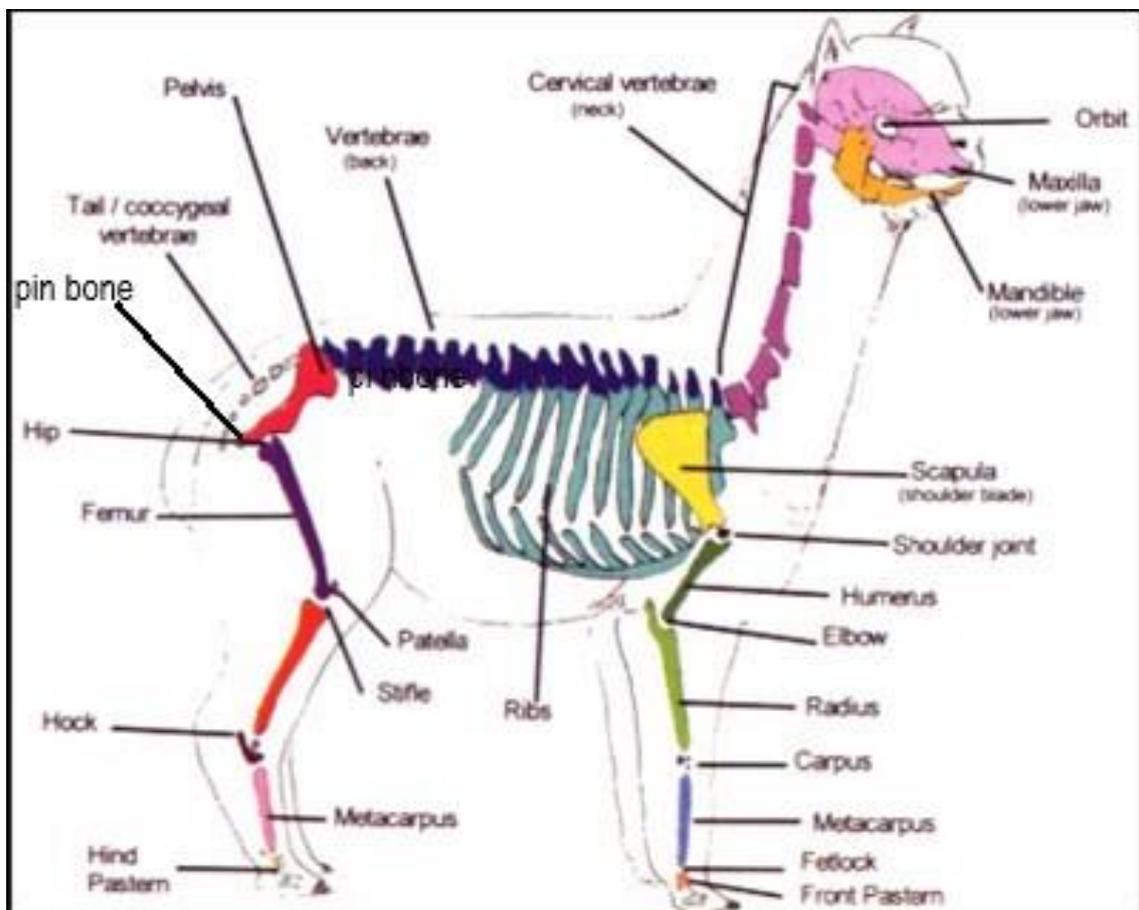
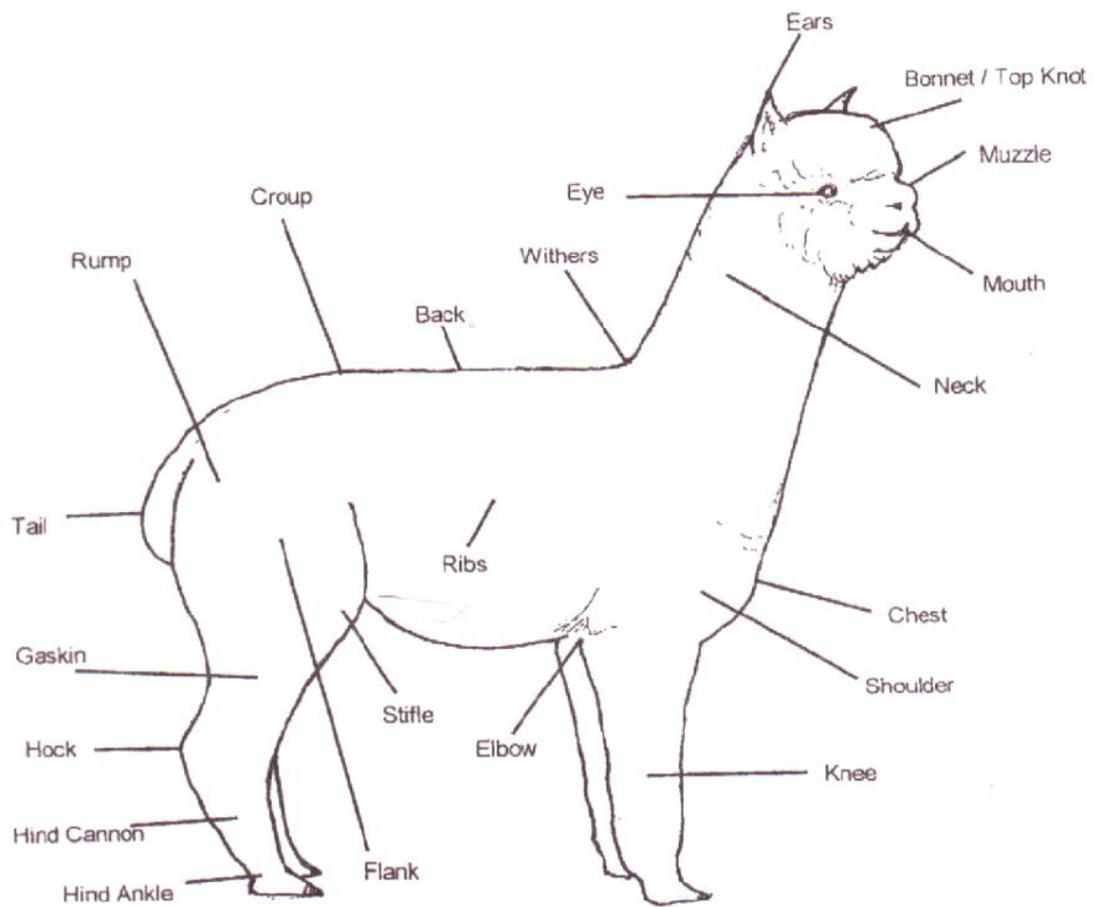
	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Negative/Undesirable traits</b>
<b>Forequarters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chest should be broad and deep, well sprung ribs</li> <li>• The withers well fleshed, set well into the shoulders forming a straight line with the back</li> <li>• Forelegs should be strong and straight</li> <li>• Pasterns should be firm and upright</li> <li>• Feet should be neat and well-formed and bear two forward pointing toes</li> <li>• The sole of the foot should be covered with a callused membrane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very narrow chest</li> <li>• Loose shoulder blades</li> <li>• Severely base narrow or base wide</li> <li>• Buck knees, calf knees, severe knock knees</li> <li>• Very prominent withers</li> <li>• Weak, dropped or camped over pasterns</li> <li>• Polydactylism</li> <li>• Syndactylism</li> </ul>
<b>Hindquarters &amp; tail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rump broad</li> <li>• Well-spaced pin bones</li> <li>• Tail should be straight and long enough to cover the genitalia</li> <li>• Thighs should be well-muscled</li> <li>• Hind legs should be straight from hip to the centre of the foot and parallel when viewed from behind and the correct angulation when viewed from the side</li> <li>• Pasterns should be firm and upright</li> <li>• Feet should be neat and well-formed and bear two forward pointing toes</li> <li>• The sole of the foot should be covered with a callused membrane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe cow hocks</li> <li>• Obvious sickle hocks</li> <li>• Severe post legged</li> <li>• Luxating patella</li> <li>• Very narrow hindquarters</li> <li>• Severe base narrow or base wide</li> <li>• Weak, dropped or camped over pasterns</li> <li>• Bent or kinked tail</li> <li>• Steeply sloping rump</li> <li>• Squared-off rump</li> <li>• Tail absent or abnormally short</li> <li>• Polydactylism</li> <li>• Syndactylism</li> </ul>
<b>Genitalia and reproduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A female's udder should show good capacity, with four uniformly positioned teats</li> <li>• Females should have a normal size functioning vulva</li> <li>• Males should have external genitalia correct in size, shape and position, with two evenly sized, firm testicles descended into scrotal sacs of appropriate size for age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less or more than four teats on males or females</li> <li>• Fused teats</li> <li>• Testicles that are too small or of uneven size or undescended into scrotal sac</li> <li>• Fused vulva</li> </ul>
<b>Height</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mature alpaca should measure no less than 32"/81 cm at the withers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obviously undersized or oversized for age</li> </ul>
<b>Movement &amp; Tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alpacas should move soundly and exhibit an even stride length with two distinct tracks, the hind feet following the front ones</li> <li>• Alpacas should have a fluid movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddling on the front feet</li> <li>• Rope walking</li> <li>• Obvious uneven stride and/or length of stride</li> </ul>

<b>FLEECE TRAITS</b>		
<b>Huacaya</b>	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Negative/Undesirable traits</b>
<b>Uniformity of Micron</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformity of fibre diameter (micron) within the staple and across the body resulting in a low standard deviation measurement (SD)</li> <li>• Minimal difference in micron between primary and secondary fibres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of variance in micron between primary and secondary fibres both within the staple and/or across the body (high SD)</li> </ul>
<b>Fineness &amp; Handle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low micron not only in mid-side sample but across the animal into extremities</li> <li>• Low transition line</li> <li>• Soft and silky handling fleece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of coarse fibres</li> <li>• High degree of variability in the fibre diameter</li> <li>• Harsh handle (prickle factor)</li> </ul>
<b>Density</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform, well aligned fibres both within the staple and across the body</li> <li>• High ratio of secondary to primary fibres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks density - open fleece</li> </ul>
<b>Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly aligned fibres with crimp definition</li> <li>• Very well defined staples which break into micro staples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks any crimp definition or organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Brightness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of brightness displaying across the fleece and which enhances handle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very dull</li> <li>• Chalky look and feel</li> </ul>
<b>Uniformity of Colour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformity of colour in staple and throughout the fleece (on solid-coloured alpacas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong variance in colour within the staple, in patches or spots (multi-coloured alpacas and the white tuxedo pattern in traditional greys not included)</li> <li>• Strongly differing colour in primary fibres compared to secondary fibres</li> </ul>
<b>Staple Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing a staple length each year that is suitable for processing and is uniform in length across the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A length not suitable for processing</li> <li>• Variable in length across the body</li> </ul>
<b>Guard Hair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of guard hair across the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of guard hair (stronger straighter fibres) in main blanket area</li> </ul>

<b>FLEECE TRAITS</b>		
<b>Suri</b>	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Negative/Undesirable traits</b>
<b>Lustre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of lustre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severely lacks lustre</li> <li>• Extremely chalky, dull or flat</li> </ul>
<b>Uniformity of Micron</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformity of fibre diameter (micron) within the lock and across the body, resulting in a low standard deviation measurement (SD)</li> <li>• Minimal difference in micron between primary and secondary fibres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of variance in micron between primary and secondary fibres both within the staple and/or across the body (high SD)</li> </ul>
<b>Fineness &amp; Handle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low micron not only in mid-side sample but across the animal into extremities</li> <li>• Low transition line</li> <li>• Silky and cool handling fleece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of coarse fibres</li> <li>• High degree of variability in the fibre diameter</li> <li>• Harsh handle (prickle factor)</li> </ul>
<b>Density</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform, well aligned fibres both within the lock and across the body</li> <li>• High ratio of secondary to primary fibres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks density - open fleece</li> </ul>
<b>Lock Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock can be wave &amp; twist, tight twist, corkscrew, or straight but should be highly aligned and start close the skin, layering and carrying solidity to the lock</li> <li>• Individual locks breaking down into micro locks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks any lock structure or solidity to the lock</li> <li>• Lofty</li> </ul>
<b>Guard Hair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of guard hair across the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of guard hair (stronger straighter fibres) in main blanket area</li> </ul>
<b>Uniformity of Colour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformity of colour in lock and throughout the fleece (on solid coloured alpacas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong variance in colour within the lock, in patches or spots (multi-coloured alpacas and the white tuxedo pattern in traditional greys not included)</li> <li>• Strongly differing colour in primary fibre compared to secondary fibres</li> </ul>
<b>Lock Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing a lock length each year that is suitable for processing and is uniform in length across the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A length not suitable for processing</li> <li>• Short annual fleece growth</li> <li>• Variable in length across the body</li> </ul>

## Bibliography

REGULATIONS B12 BREED STANDARDS – Alpaca Association New Zealand  
ALPACA BREED STANDARD – Australian Alpaca Showing Rules Manual  
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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Balance</b>	Neck should be same length as legs and 2/3rds the length of the back
<b>Base Narrow</b>	Legs set close together
<b>Base Wide</b>	Legs set to wide apart
<b>Blanket</b>	Prime fleece from shoulder to mid-section to rump, both sides
<b>Buck Knees</b>	Knees bowed forward (viewed from the side)
<b>Calf Knees</b>	Knees bowed backward (viewed from the side)
<b>Camped over</b>	Bowed out at the fetlock (viewed from the side)
<b>Character</b>	The demonstration of the crimp throughout length of staple
<b>Consistency</b>	The uniformity of the micron, crimp, character, and density within the lock and throughout the fleece
<b>Coverage</b>	The distribution of continuously growing fibre across the whole body of the alpaca
<b>Cow Hocks</b>	Rear legs turned inwards at the hock (viewed from behind)
<b>Crimp</b>	The natural wave or curl of individual fibres, grown into the fibre from the follicle
<b>Density</b>	The number of fibres measured per square unit area
<b>Dropped Pasterns</b>	Too much angulation at the fetlock (viewed from the side)
<b>Fineness</b>	The diameter of fibres measured in microns
<b>Fleece</b>	The fibre from a single live alpaca, in its natural state
<b>Fused Ears</b>	Ears look normal from the outside, however, the inside of the ear's cartilage is fused together
<b>Fused Teats</b>	Front, back or both quarters teats are attached to each other
<b>Gopher ears</b>	Very short stubby ears
<b>Guard hair</b>	Coarse, modulated (hollow or partially hollow) primary fibre, usually greater than 30 microns in diameter and straight
<b>Handle</b>	A tactile feel of the fleece to the hand – soft, harsh, etc.
<b>Humpback</b>	The backline is convex
<b>Knock Knees</b>	Knees bending inward (towards each other – viewed from the front)
<b>Lock</b>	A group of fibres of similar character, usually when referring to Suri
<b>Lustre</b>	The amount of light reflected by the fibre. The sheen or gloss. Can vary with lighting
<b>Luxating Patella</b>	Loose patella (knee cap)
<b>Mid-side</b>	An area midway between the front and rear legs on the side of an alpaca and approximately 6-8 inches down from the backbone

<b>Organisation</b>	How the fibre lays within the lock/staples that make up the overall appearance of the fleece
<b>Phenotype</b>	The alpaca's appearance
<b>Polydactylism</b>	More than two toes on a foot
<b>Post Legged</b>	Rear Legs straight - no angulation from hock to fetlock (viewed from the side)
<b>Rope Walking</b>	Front and back feet are walking on the same centre line, or crossing over the centre line
<b>Sickle Hock</b>	Too much angulation at the hock (viewed from the side)
<b>Staple</b>	The group of fibres or lock
<b>Staple length</b>	The length of the staple from skin to tip
<b>Strong</b>	Thick, coarser fibre having a higher micron measurement
<b>Style</b>	A cumulative and overall aesthetic effect of fibre characteristics found in a fleece
<b>Substance of Bone</b>	Circumference of bone
<b>Swayback</b>	The backline is concave
<b>Syndactylism</b>	Fusion of two toes on the same foot
<b>Uniformity</b>	The even distribution of characteristics within a fleece – micron, crimp, length of staple, colour, fineness
<b>Withers</b>	Area at the base of the neck along the first part of backline