



SURI

Network News

a publication of The Suri Network

From the President

Suri Network Midwinter Meeting, February 24, 2005

The SN hosted a full day of activities coinciding with the AOBA Midwinter Fiber to Fashion conference in Atlanta. This event was centered around the membership survey conducted last fall and started with a presentation and discussion of the survey results. There were 40-50 members present and all had the opportunity to ask questions, express their opinions, and clarify any questions they had regarding the survey. There were spirited discussions on many of the issues and everyone gained a better insight by listening to fellow breeders express their thoughts and ideas. From the feedback we have gotten so far, this was a very successful and well received event for the Suri Network.



Presenting the membership's opinions on these important issues was an important prelude to the afternoon breakout sessions for SN committees. With regard to survey issues such as show rules, breed standards, and fiber research, the committees were asked to recommend strategies to the Board of Trustees for SN to pursue in promoting the positions held by the majority of our members. Some exciting recommendations have come from these groups and the best way to see what they came up with is to read the accompanying committee reports and recommendations.

The Suri Network will be holding their **Annual Membership** meeting at the AOBA National Conference on Thursday, June 2, 2005, from 7:30 am to 8:00 am in Room 300A, at the South Towne Exposition Center in Sandy, Utah to announce the results of the recent election.

Dick Walker

Dick Walker, President

Membership & Benefits

by Cindy Fronk, Member at Large

The newly formed focus group for Suri Network "Membership & Benefits" met for the first time during the face-to-face "working" session that was held in conjunction with the 2005 Fiber to Fashion Conference. As a direct result of member and focus group input, we will begin to actively explore the following **possibilities** and will be working to present these suggestions to the SN Board for formal consideration in the near future:

- 1) Pre-paid "vouchers" for SN memberships (to be purchased by existing members at some discounted price to be given to new buyers/new suri breeders).
- 2) Quantity (discount) purchasing of the new Suri Network pop-up display as a "two-sided" display that could have the member's individual farm advertising on one side and Suri Network information on the other side.
- 3) Discounted membership dues (or a SN "gift" of some kind) if dues are paid before the end of the year.
- 4) Automatic renewal of dues with credit card on file with association office.
- 5) "Group/Association" health insurance discounts for suri breeders.
- 6) Suri "Networking" cocktails or refreshments at 2 events per year to be held in conjunction with face-to-face membership meetings (Mid-Winter and Nationals).
- 7) Discounts for SN members from agricultural/ranch related companies (John Deere, credit cards, Barn Cams, etc.)

If you have any other ideas for "Membership & Benefits," please do not hesitate to contact one of the focus group's members. We thank you in advance for your ideas, encouragement, and input! We are in the process of making Suri Network a force to be reckoned with and an affiliate worth more to you than your annual dues!

"Membership & Benefits" - Cont. on Pg. 2

Membership Committee:

Cindy Fronk, Stargazer Ranch Alpacas,
SN Board Liaison, cfronk@qwest.net
Jim King, Skyview Alpacas
jking@tds.net

Barbara Duvall, Briar Rose Alpacas
info@briarrosealpacas.com
Nancy Walker, SuperSuris Alpacas
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Connie Roach, Peaceful Pastures Alpaca Farm
LarryR@psst.com
Jacqueline Cristini, Sity Slicker Suris
cristija@umdnj.edu

Suri Show Rules Committee

by Miriam Donaldson, Vice President

At the AOBA Fiber to Fashion Conference held in Atlanta this February, the Suri Network met and held a day long membership meeting. This meeting was extremely successful; with members breaking out into working sessions on particular focus groups. The newly formed focus group; "Suri Show Rules Committee" is presenting the following strategic plan of action items for presentation to the SN Board for approval:

ACTION: With the knowledge that the AOBA Show Rules Committee meets annually to update, revise, and revisit show rules; this committee agreed in the value of an annual survey of the SN membership. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Board, at their discretion, include questions regarding pertinent Suri specific show rules on the next annual survey.

ACTION: Submit clear, precise direction from Suri breeders, approved by the SN Board; of recommended Suri specific show rules to the AOBA SRC and JTCC.

ACTION: Two delegates from the SN membership; approved by the SN Board; be appointed to the AOBA Show Rules Committee.

ACTION: Two delegates from the SN membership;

approved by the SN Board; be appointed to the JTCC.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Suri specific show rules; please contact any of the focus group's members listed below. We encourage your input; it is highly valued and necessary for the success of this focus group.

Miriam Donaldson, SN Board Liaison
alpacajack@aol.com

Jim Barker, Sweetbriar Suri Farm
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Bill Pearce, Five Star Alpacas
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Stephanie Barnhart, The Alpaca Trading Co
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Lynn Mulherin, Kettle Hills Farm
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Kathy Klay, Jefferson Laurel Farm
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Connie Linn, Linn Alpaca Suri Farm
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NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

by Marsha Hobert

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION - PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE! BALLOTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MAY 16TH.

GOOD NEWS! To encourage more breeders to join the Suri Network, the Board has approved a change in policy for new members. When a new member joins the Suri Network, their annual dues will run twelve (12) months from the date they join. Please encourage all suri breeders and prospective suri breeders to join the Suri Network!

CONGRATULATIONS to Mary Hayden (Quest1alpaca@aol.com) & Pat Wagner (wagner71@mindspring.com) who have volunteered to be co-editors of the Suri Network News beginning with the next issue. They've got some great ideas up their sleeve, but please do not hesitate to contact them if there are some articles you would like to be included in SNN.

Suri Network Board of Trustees:

Dick Walker, *President* (alpacas@supersuris.com)
Miriam Donaldson, *Vice President & Secretary* (alpacajack@aol.com)
Toni Cotton, *Treasurer* (bestbrd@bright.net)
Cindy Fronk, *Member at Large* (cfronk@qwest.net)

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The Suri Network, Inc.

Committee Members:

Andy Tillman	andy@coloredsurialpacas.com
Ann Hayes	dancingmoonsuris@aol.com
Bill Vonderhaar	Vonderhaar.wd@pg.com
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Laurel Shouvlin	bluebirdhills@voyager.net
Mary Lou Clingan	mlclingan@aol.com

Synopsis of SN meeting at F2F: The group discussed options for future research projects and educational programs for the SN Membership. The items discussed were a full day suri fleece symposium to be held in November 2005, assistance with a scanning electron microscopy study being done at Ohio Wesleyan University, the possibility of measuring fiber luster via the use of a "lustermeter," the gathering of research that has been done on fiber and the establishment of an e-library of fiber research that will be available through the SN website, and a new fiber research project which is described in detail below.

Research Project for TSN

by Toni Cotton, Education & Research Committee and Treasurer

Goal: This study was designed to provide an in depth research project looking at suri fleece characteristics from 100 Suri alpacas using a combination of skin biopsy, micron testing via YM and Whittick and scanning electron microscopy. The project will be designed as a linear study over a two year time frame, from birth until two years of age. The skin biopsies and SEM studies will be performed as specified ages throughout the two year study. The fleece from these animals will also be evaluated for weight, density, staple length, lock structure, luster and handle. Our goal is to determine whether or not lock structure correlates with luster, density, handle, primary to secondary follicle ratio, SD, CV, staple length, micron and scale pattern.

Materials and Method:

1. Two animal study groups, final number in each group to be determined
2. Information on each animal:
 - a. Age
 - b. Color
 - c. ARI number

- d. Weight, Body Condition Score
- e. Sex
- f. Height to withers
- g. Photograph
- h. Study group location
- i. Phenotype diversity will include donors of various lock and luster
- j. Blanket from specified shearing intervals (to be specified in the final research proposal).
 - i. Fleece Weight-overall blanket will be taken
 - ii. Laser scan of sample
 - iii. SEM (Scanning Electron Microscopy) of fiber
 - iv. TEM scan of sample
 - v. OFDA 2000 analysis for fiber length and diameter over a 12 month period
 - vi. Luster Evaluation via refract meter of clean fleece
 - vii. Amino Acid Evaluation of fiber samples
 - viii. Tensile Strength...will need additional funding
- k. Skin Biopsy from the collection sight to measure the ratio of primary to secondary hair follicles.

2005 Suri Bronze Winning Bidder

by Cindy Fronk

Leraso Farm Alpacas sure knows how to make the Suri business exciting!!! Bidding at the April 16, 2005 Futurity Show and Sale was quite lively, but in the end, it was Ray and Maria Rodriguez that took home the coveted Suri bronze sculpture. Ray offered up the incredibly generous winning bid of \$7000. for the privilege of taking the bronze sculpture to display at his farm in Long Grove, Illinois for one year.

In addition to the Suri sculpture, Ray also took home an artist signed commemorative picture of the sculpture, a 2-page "Farm Spread" in the next Purely Suri publication, two full-page "Thank You" ads AND a full day of veterinary work at Leraso Farm which was very generously donated by Dr. Toni Cotton, DVM.

The Suri Network was so very pleased to offer this limited edition bronze Suri sculpture as a "traveling good will ambassador"! Each year the sculpture will be re-auctioned off and will be proudly displayed at different Suri farms around the country. 100% of the bidding proceeds are dedicated to **The Suri Fiber Research Project**. Having this sculpture at your farm is a wonderful way to show-off your passion for Suri alpacas and to support this extremely important fiber research sponsored by the Suri Network!

Who's going to be the 2006 winning bidder?

F2F Marketing Meeting Notes

AOBA Midwinter Conference - Atlanta Georgia

Participating members were; Stacy Wilkins, Brad Sprouse, Jim Hulbert, John and Peggy Curtis, Rebecca Black.

SN Board Liaison: Stacy Wilkins

The primary topic of discussion was a proposed website, or sites, to be constructed, promoted, and maintained by SN. To that end SN has obtained the following web addresses: www.purelysuri.com, www.purelysuri.net, and www.purelysuri.org. to be used by SN in a marketing program. SN Board anticipates that the initial website will be devoted primarily to the education of the general public about suris and why they might be interested in investing in suris. To this end the primary goal would be to raise the public's awareness about suris and to generate leads for our membership.

The following web pages were discussed as content on this website:

- Introduction
- Guest page, offer free copy of SNN and perhaps other items in return for names and contact information.
- About Suri Alpacas
- Suri Alpacas - Investment
- Find a Farm
- Calendar of Events

- FAQ New and Prospective owners
- Available publications
- Products and Services
- Purchase

The committee acknowledges that further thought needs to be given regarding mechanisms for creating traffic to this website and identifying revenue sources to promote such a program.

SN Board would, in the future, like to explore the concept of a website devoted exclusively to the marketing and sales of member's animals. This could be a follow on project to the above outlined website and could use one of the above web addresses. The www.purelysuri.org site could potentially be used exclusively for publication of research relevant to suri alpacas as well as veterinary, genetics, etc. articles.

Several other ideas not related to the website were discussed:

- Encourage members to give new customers a one year membership in SN as a thank you for purchasing a suri
- Banner advertising on Alpaca Nation
- SN Logo items, hats, shirts, etc.
- Host an all suri auction
- Host an all suri show
- Identify new breeders and send them info on SN
- Design SN Banner that SN members could display at show booths that would indicate 'Purely Bred Suris'



Suri Fleece Symposium Sponsored by the Suri Network

**Friday, November 11, 2005
Ohio State Fairgrounds
Columbus, Ohio**

The Suri Network is hosting a Fall Fleece Symposium for apprentice judges and Suri breeders who would like to learn more about evaluating Suri fleece. Speakers are Dr. Norman Evans and Andy Tillman. This event is being held in coordination with the OABA AlpacaFest 2005. The symposium will include hands on sessions as well as seminars discussing the process of preparing Suri fleece for a fleece show, the scientific methods of evaluating Suri fleece including Scanning Electron Microscopy and the new Skin Biopsy technique for fleece evaluation.

In order for this event to be successful, the current SN Board is asking SN members to donate fleeces for this event. We are in need of 100 Suri fleeces. Please refer to the fleece collection protocol below, send us your fleeces and mark your calendars to attend this event in November!

Fleece Collection Protocol is shown on the back page.

A Special Memory

by Toni Cotton DVM

This past month, the camelid community suffered a great loss, Craig and Chase Wilkins. Craig was the husband of Stacy Wilkins and the son of Mike and Janet Wilkins and Chase was the son of Stacy and Craig Wilkins and the grandson of Mike and Janet Wilkins. The memorial service for Craig and Chase was held on April 11, 2005 in Geneva, Nebraska. Most of us in the community have had the pleasure of knowing Mike and Janet, Stacy and Craig and Taylor, Chase and Dakota. Over the years of my experiences in the camelid community, I have enjoyed fellowship with this family on many occasions.

This family is a cornerstone in this community and this was very evident at the memorial service on April 11, 2005. I knew that the only way that I could express my love and concern for this family was to attend this service. It was very evident from the number of people who attended the service that this family has touched many lives. To experience this has truly changed my life.

The Suri Network Board of Directors will miss Stacy as a member and we thank her for making the commitment to serve the Suri Network during her term. Our prayers and thoughts are with you Stacy, Dakota, Taylor, Mike and Janet.

In memory of Craig and Chase Wilkins, a Educational/Memorial Fund has been set up in Stacy, Taylor and Dakota Wilkins' names. Those of you who are interesting in contributing to the fund may simply write a check to: The Wilkins Children Education/Memorial Fund, c/o Michael Collins, Charles Schwab, Inc, 725 N. 98th St., Omaha, NE 68114.

SURI NETWORK 2005 SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

IT'S NOT JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL - IT'S A NEW AGE

THE SURI NETWORK BOARD IS RESPONDING TO ITS' MEMBERSHIP BY HOLDING A SUMMER SYMPOSIUM.

AUGUST 19 TO 21, 2005, ESTES PARK, CO

1. Kickoff; Welcome and Membership Meeting
2. Continuation of Focus Committees:
 - a. Breed Standards
* Speaker(s) to be announced
 - b. SN Suri Show Rules
 - c. Research
 - d. Education and Conference
 - e. Membership and Benefits
 - f. Marketing
3. Panel Discussion from Fiber Processing Mills
4. Presentations by Dr. David Anderson, Andy Tillman AND MORE!

Suri Network Breed Standards Committee

by Dick Walker, Board Liaison

AOBA Midwinter Conference - Atlanta, GA

Seven SN members participated in the first meeting of the SN Breed Standards committee held in conjunction with an all day gathering sponsored by SN at the midwinter AOBA Fiber to Fashion conference in Atlanta.

Participating members were: Kristina Flagel, Carol Karsten, Liza McArthur, Greg Mecklem, Susan Tellez, Dick Walker, and Janet Wilkins. Dick Walker, SN President is the Board of Trustees liaison to this newly formed committee.

There was a round table discussion regarding a variety of issues.

- Pros and cons of developing a breed standard.
- Difference between a Show Standard and a Breed Standard.
- How best to insure a broad based of input when establishing a breed standard.
- The importance of including commercially important fleece characteristics in a breed standard.
- Identifying areas where more investigation is needed in order to establish a preferred breed type base on objective data rather than an individual's aesthetic preference.
- Identifying key constituencies with a vested interest in this process to be certain they are represented.

It was felt that the process of developing a Suri Alpaca Breed Standard would proceed in several stages.

Phase One – Establish a pheno-

typic standard to define and delineate the preferred characteristics of the breed. Genotype could be addressed here as well, most appropriately regarding the issue of cross breeding with Huacaya alpacas.

Phase Two – Develop a grading system that incorporates objective measurable criteria important to advancing the quality of desirable heritable qualitative and quantitative traits.

The committee thought that a discussion regarding Phase One could begin utilizing two existing documents: AOBA Show Rules and the Screening Criteria used initially to screen all suris imported to the USA. Many of the issues that will need to be considered in developing a breed standard will be included to some degree in those sources. What is not necessarily included, however, is a designation of relative values given to important suri phenotypic traits. For example: is lock type and definition more or less important than luster; is density more or less important than fineness, etc.? Similar consideration needs to be given to conformation traits as well. These and other issues will be very important to consider as our industry contemplates a standard. The heritability of any given trait will deserve consideration.

Several areas were identified that urgently require further investigation:

- How does lock structure correlate with luster, density, handle, primary to secondary follicular ratio, SD, CV, staple length, micron, scale pattern?
- How does lock structure affect the processing of suri fiber?
- With regards to suri fiber what are the most important determinants of commercial value that should be

incorporated in a breed standard?
Suggested actions for the board to consider implementing:

- 1) Officially notify the AOBA board and the ARI board that SN plans to move forward in developing a prototype Suri Alpaca Breed Standard.
- 2) Establish a timetable for implementation.
- 3) The following sequence of events are felt to be necessary for completion of this process:

- identify participants and mode of communication, i.e. conference calls, newsletter, e-mail, face to face, etc
- disseminate information for review by participants
- draft initial Breed Standard document; a face to face meeting is suggested
- review period for comments, additions, changes to draft
- finalize the prototype Suri Breed Standard, another face to face is recommended
- approval by Board and membership,
- schedule the first Suri Breed Standards Review Conference for 1-2 years post implementation. A built in review process will facilitate evolution of the standard as research indicates the need for adjustments. Procedures for this periodic review should be established as part of the initial Breed Standards document.

At every step it will be vital to keep our membership fully informed on this process. The education committee may be of assistance for this task.

- 4) Employ a consultant to assist in implementing this process.



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SURI NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The Suri Network Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2005, from 7:30 am to 8:00 am in Room 300A, at the South Towne Exposition Center in Sandy, Utah. This meeting will be held to thank the outgoing Board of Trustees (Stacy Wilkins & Cindy Fronk) and to announce the result of the elections.

Suri Fleece Symposium Fleece Collection Protocol

1. Suri Fleeces needed: The Suri Network is requesting a minimum of 100 Suri fleeces to be donated for the Suri Network fleece bank for both the November, 2005 Symposium and for other Fleece Judge's Training Clinics. These fleeces will eventually be retained in a central location for use around the country.
2. The donated fleeces should be of show quality with the following specifications
 - a. Any age between 6 months to 5th birthday and older if show quality
 - b. Any color
 - c. Any weight as long as it is the entire blanket
 - d. Yocum-McColl or OFDA fiber testing results included with the fiber
 - e. 2005 and/or 2004 clip. Fleeces with dampness, mustiness, live insects will need to be discarded. (The fleeces will be skirted later for vegetable matter, etc).
3. Packaging:
 - a. Place each fleece in a clear plastic bag
 - b. Include the following information:
 - i. Alpaca's DOB
 - ii. Date of shearing
 - iii. ARI registered color
 - iv. Copy of Yocum-McColl or OFDA micron testing results
 - v. Farm name and contact information. (This information will not be shared with the judges, but is for purposes of advertising your farm as a donor and for sending an acknowledgement regarding your donation.
4. Shipping: Send the donated fleece(s) to:
Alpaca Jack's Suri Farm
16259 St. Rt. 224 E
Findlay, OH 45840
Attention: Mary Lou Clingan
5. Deadline for receiving fleeces: August 15th, 2005. This will give time to prepare the fleeces for the November 11th Symposium.

Contact Mary Lou Clingan at 419-423-3890 or Claudia Raessler at 207-846-4984 for additional information.