

**NOTES: ALPACA BREEDING – START-UP ASSISTANCE – last updated 3/06/14**

1. Find an alpaca breeder mentor (there are a number of such breeders here in SA which can be found on the [AAA Ltd website](#) but we used [Yaringa Alpacas](#) who continue to provide us with fabulous support – look for a larger, well run, well set-up, quality alpaca breeder in your area to use as a mentor & guide in setting up your alpaca stud or farm business. Your mentor would need to be willing to assist & is likely to be able to provide ‘after-sales’ back-up for any animals you may purchase from them. This may include such services as, advice on purchasing breeding stock & building up your herd, provision of information on feeding regimes, vaccination regimes, documentation & procedure assistance, show preparation & training, access to their ‘on-farm’ shearing & wethering days, access to small volume injectable Vaccination solutions & vitamins, teeth & toe-nail trimming, purchase of equipment (ie halters & leads, ear tags, injector & drenching guns, fleece tables, shearing tables, fleece bags etc) & even short term agistments if required. Consider buying a couple of low cost animals (wethers) just to check them out (ie to see if this is the right choice of animal for you & your property & to ensure you have what it takes to handle & care for them).
2.
  - a. Attend basic alpaca workshops:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> course should cover such essentials as; basic handling & feeding techniques, husbandry & herd maintenance issues (ie vaccinations, shearing, wethering, toe-nails, illnesses etc), birthing & cria care.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> course should encompass the Fleece basics; including breeding for specific fleece properties (density, fineness, crimp etc), shearing & finding a shearer to suit your needs, mid-side samples, fleece testing, fleece handling for sale or shows, classing, skirting & all the specialised fleece terminology (ie micron, coefficient of variant, Standard Deviation, histograms, comfort factor etc).
    - Mating, Breeding & Birthing; including what to look for in a Stud male, buying a stud male, mating services, the mating process, spit-offs, the process of registering a Stud Male, birthing incl pre & post natal care.
  - b. Attend other rural workshops which may be of benefit if you do not have a rural background:
    - The [Natural Resources Management Board](#) (NRM Board), run many courses which may assist (ie 12 week NRM Land Management course which covers most of the basics for beginning life on a rural property).
    - Fencing courses
    - Animal Handling courses
    - Pasture & Water Management courses.
3. Decide on a name for your venture/stud – you will need it when you register with the AAA Ltd, when you apply for an ABN & when you apply for a business name.
4. Find a tax advisor or accountant who is familiar with Alpaca Breeding tax issues. Have your advisor assist you in completing all relevant taxation paperwork in respect of your start-up enterprise. If you are only going to operate as a Sole Trader, then you can use your own Tax File Number (TFN) but if you intend to operate as a partnership, company or other entity, you will need to contact the [Australian Taxation Office](#) to apply for the relevant TFN. You will also need to apply for an ABN (Australian Business Number) & you will need to register your Business Name. An ABN is a unique 11 digit identifying number that businesses use when dealing with other businesses. You do not have to have an ABN, but having one will avoid having amounts withheld from payments to you; and make it easier to register for GST and other business tax registrations such as PAYG withholding. You can apply for an ABN through the [Australian Business Register website](#) or access and update your ABN details online. In addition to the ABN & TFN requirements, you will need to register your Business Name, & this is now done through the [Australian Securities & Investment Commission](#) or ASIC website. Their website also allows you to search for a business name, renew, update, cancel or transfer your Business Name registration.

5. Visit your bank & set up a business bank account / credit card facility for your business as this will assist with your Tax & Business record keeping.
6. Your property will be required to register for a [PIC number](#) which can be obtained through the [Primary Industries of SA \(PIRSA\)](#) website, to ensure that you can purchase & move animals between farms, towns & states for sales, shows, or external matings etc.
7. Find a local vet who is registered as a Member of the Australian Alpaca Veterinarians, as you will undoubtedly require veterinary assistance for your alpaca herd at some stage in their history. Also, if you wish to have your Alpaca Stud registered in the AAA Ltd Q-Alpaca program (Quality Assurance program), you will need your Alpaca Vet assistance with the paperwork initially & then when renewing your Q-Alpaca registration each year.
8. Your Alpaca stud should be registered with the [AAA Ltd](#) who can provide instruction & information which is useful for start-up. When you register your animals through the AAA Ltd you will also need to pre-purchase some IAR tags to record each cria birth prior to registering the animal on-line & then receiving their Pedigree Certificate by mail. You should register all your animals with the AAA Ltd to enable their participation at local & interstate shows. If possible, you should also complete the required paperwork to have your property classified as Q-Alpaca compliant (with the assistance of your Vet). Your Q-Alpaca registration number is used for all show entries.
9. Have your mentor visit your property & do a 'walk round' to discuss what you need to do on your property to streamline the handling of an alpaca herd. This should cover such items as, pasture & weeds (types & availability), area to make-up feed & storage of feed requirements, number of paddocks/races/fencing to make movement of stock simple), containment yards for stock handling, maintenance, training & mating, watering/water storage & supply, the number of animals your property can adequately carry (ie stocking rates), trees/shade for animals & areas where animals can be held out of the weather prior to shearing or for medical/birthing treatment.
10. You should now be fairly well set-up & if you have not already purchased stock, you should consult with your mentor or other reputable breeders to purchase a start-up package of breeding females. Our initial purchase was 4 breeding females, 2 pregnant & 2 maidens together with a 5 Stud male mating package. Obviously your initial purchase will depend on your finances or ability to borrow funds, but I would strongly suggest that you purchase the best breeding stock that you can possibly afford in the first instance, as this will set you up for success much faster. You may need to purchase or hire a trailer/van to move your stock to your property, but if you purchase a trailer or van, ensure that it will suit your future needs. Remember that it needs to cater for reasonable numbers when attending shows & you will need to be able to separate your male & female animals inside it & it needs to be easy to secure your animals, keep them sheltered from the elements & be simple to load & unload. However, the Alpaca Stud from which you purchase your animals may also be prepared to deliver them to your property as part of the deal or for an additional fee.
11. You will need to keep regular records for your animals, which should cover such individual animal events as; vaccinations, shearing, illnesses, medical treatments, cria births, IAR numbers, ages, colours, matings etc. This can be done on a simple spreadsheet (copies of some simple spreadsheets for these purposes are shown on the website as Annex A: Animal Records – and includes an individual animal event sheet, a Mating sheet, a Cria Drop list & a cria vaccination sheet) as shown above or you can go to the expense of buying a purpose built alpaca herd maintenance system (ie [Optimate Alpafarm](#), [Alpaca Manager](#) or [Herdmaster](#) – all of which will connect to [Alpacaseller](#) which specialises in online alpaca trading).
12. You will also need to keep regular records for Tax purposes. Your Tax Agent or adviser can assist you here & the ATO also has some specific books on ATO required [Business Record keeping](#). It can again be as simple as spreadsheet records which cover income, expenditure, vehicle log books and yearly stock returns (basic spreadsheet copies have been attached on the website as Annex B: Financial Spreadsheets - & include an Expenses spreadsheet, an Income Spreadsheet, a Log Book Spreadsheet & a Stock Return which is required for your Tax Return) or again, you may prefer to obtain specialised business software (ie MYOB or similar).

13. When starting up, there are some basic maintenance & health equipment (most of these products can be purchased on-line from such websites as [Alpacadynamics](#), [Grande Verge](#) or [1300alpaca](#)) that you will need on a regular basis & it is a good idea to purchase your basic stock early so that you do not encounter an emergency situation where you do not have the necessary item at hand. Your basic kit should include;

- Toe-nail clippers,
- Leads & halters (a range of sizes to fit those animals purchased & any expected cria – a size to fit cria is also available & I find the best range available from [Daisy Bank Alpacas](#) who also stock a range of additional Camelid Dynamic products to assist with the training of your animals.
- Feed tubs, fence feeders or troughs (should be sturdy & not prone to being blown away in strong wind)
- Water tubs if water troughs are not installed in paddocks.
- Buckets
- Tubs or containers to store feed
- If making up bulk feed where you need to combine ingredients, a cement mixer works a treat!
- Start-up Medical Supplies
  - Syringes:
    - 50 x 1ml
    - 50 x 3ml
    - 10 x 10ml
    - 5 x 20ml
  - Needles:
    - 50 x 21 Gauge x 3/8" Kruuse
  - Saline Irrigation Solution
  - Buffered Iodine Solution or Large Betadine Solution
  - 1 x Vytrate Electrolyte sachet (store in a zip-lock bag)
  - Vitamins:
    - 100ml Vitamin ADE Injectable (Hideject)
    - 100ml Vitamin B12 Injectable
    - 100ml Vitamin B1 Injectable (useful for animals suffering from Rye Grass Staggers)
    - 100ml Vitamin C Injectable (useful to treat animals suffering from snake-bite)
  - Other Goods:
    - 1 x Box Disposable Rubber Gloves
    - 2 plastic crates with lids - one for your cria care kit and one for general use
    - 1 box of glucose powder (add one teaspoon to a bottle of Impact powder when you mix it)
  - Cria Care Kit:
    - 1 x Cria Oilskin coat No 2 – small (38cm or 15" for 5-7kg) or large sheet of bubble wrap
    - Digital Thermometer (one that 'beeps' when temperature is attained).
    - Microlax suppositories (for treatment of constipated cria)
    - Umbilical clamps ( 2 or 3)
    - Impact Colostrum powder (25 or 50g)
    - Flutter teats x 3 (these fit standard 600 mL soft drink or water bottles)
    - Marsupial Nursing bottles x 2
    - Marsupial Teats x 2 (keep teats in zip-lock bag in fridge so they don't perish before you need them)
    - 1 x obstetric lubricant sachet to mix if you need it (put an empty milk bottle or such into your cria kit with the sachet so it is ready)
    - Collect up old towels, old blankets, a hot water bottle, and a cheap/second hand hair dryer for warming up cria/sick animals in an emergency.

- Notebook (with Vets name & number entered) & Pen (for taking notes of cria weight, times & amounts of feeds etc)
- Cria weighing scales & a Cria sling to attach to the scales to enable you to lift the cria for weighing
- Book – ABC - Antenatal, Birthing & Cria Care for Alpaca Owners by Caroline Jinks

14. I think that just about covers the basics, but if I recall any other information which I think might be useful to a 'start-up alpaca breeder', I'll be sure to update my notes. Just check at the top of the page for the last update date.