

Up Date – Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America, Inc.

By Daryl W. Goodrich, AFCNA President

The Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America, Inc. is the only US-based alpaca fiber cooperative and serves 1,100 members. Cooperatives play a major role in US agriculture. The cooperative business model can bring US alpaca farmers predictable and long-term income from their only consumable commodity – fleece.

Farmers working cooperatively can utilize production and selling practices frequently beyond the reach of individual members. This enables more of the pipeline from raw agricultural commodity to consumed product to be within the control of the farmer. Control is important since agricultural commodities are worth more in the manufactured state than raw.

Accordingly, AFCNA's goal is to open a large consumer market for fine and coarse fleece allowing your entire alpaca fleece clip to be sold. Its volunteer Board of Directors is working hard to position AFCNA for strength, expanded member services, and patronage distributions. They are now building AFCNA's infrastructure to make fleece a prominent component of all successful alpaca farms - large and small. Let me give you a tour of some achievements.

An AOBA certified AFCNA National Fleece Show will be presented the first weekend in August. Show rules, information and registration are at www.alpacawebsite.com.

A "North American Alpaca" certification mark was recently adopted to certify that product alpaca content is 100% North American alpaca. It will be placed on AFCNA products made with member-contributed fleece.



Member 2004-2005 contributed fleece collected at Tapedes de Lana in New Mexico is now being grade sorted. AFCNA's online store at www.americasalpaca.com is being redesigned and will have an expanded product mix for member farm stores. Members without farm stores will also be able to benefit from AFCNA product sales. A member sales commission is planned for retail sales placed through member farm websites to AFCNA's online store. Purchasing division net profits will be distributed to members based on their annual purchases.

AFCNA also markets member fleece in a value added form. Our Extreme Alpaca™ socks are very successful. A new spinning mill will supply sock yarn faster and at lower cost. A US prototype 100% member fleece hat-scarf set has just been completed and hand knitting yarn, gloves and a throw are being developed. Marketing division net proceeds will be distributed to members as payment for their fleece based on their annual fleece contribution total quality factor.

We have suffered disappointments as a pioneer in the uncharted waters of the large volume North American alpaca fiber industry, but a bright and successful picture is now coming into sight. The magic of AFCNA as a farmers' cooperatives is that members benefit to the extent they contribute more fleece, purchase more products, and encourage more alpaca farmers to become members.

There is strength in numbers when alpaca farmers march to the beat of the same AFCNA drum. Members are the only ones benefiting. There is no officer, director or select group of members who benefit in any way all members equally do not. Please visit www.afcna.com for membership and other information.