



ALPACA MONTHLY NEWS

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EDITORIAL

SHAHTOOSH - THE LATEST NATURAL ANIMAL FIBRE TO BE IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION

Earlier this year the United Kingdom's heir to the throne, Prince Charles, spoke out against the slaughter of animals for products to showcase 'prosperity and status'.

Backed by his son, Prince William, he addressed an Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London and gave as an example a recent case of 30 Shahtoosh shawls impounded by the UK's Border Force from a shop in Knightsbridge, London - a haul with a total value of US\$ 181,200.00.

The items, known as ring shawls because they are fine enough to be pulled through a wedding ring, are made from the hair of the Tibetan Chiru antelope which is listed on the endangered species list of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

CITES has completely prohibited the sale of shahtoosh products worldwide.

Traditionally, the hair was collected by farmers once the animals shed it naturally during the Tibetan summer months and who sold it to weavers in Kashmir.

At least this was the practice until the mid-1990's when shahtoosh suddenly became the must-have fashion accessory for wealthy consumers popularly referred to as 'ladies who lunch'. Prior to this explosion in demand the chiru population was around one million head but the increased interest has since led to indiscriminate hunting of the animals whose population has now diminished to around 75,000.

The name shahtoosh comes from the Farsi language and means 'king of fine wools'.

The two royals are fervent animal conservationists: Prince Charles is the President of World Wildlife Fund UK and Prince William is the President of conservation charity, Tusk Trust.



Illegal trading in wildlife products is a worldwide business amounting to US\$ 16.5 billion per annum and is only surpassed by the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs.

A shahtoosh ring shawl retails at around US\$ 6,000.00 and now includes the lives of 3 to 5 chiru

antelopes - something that cannot be priced.

Perhaps the chiru species can still yet defy the seemingly inevitable and follow the example of vicuña to drag itself back from the brink of extinction and become legally commercial under strictly controlled conditions.... but only once its numbers are sustainable.

CAMELID CLIPS



The Province of Caylloma's alpaca farmers are enduring testing times.

During the 5th Alpaca Producers' Congress held in the Province of Caylloma, Arequipa on 24th and 25th July, the President of the Caylloma Alpaca Association (ALPACAY), Fredy Quispe, took the opportunity to air his views on a couple of issues concerning alpaca farmers in his province.

Firstly, he observed that neither the price of alpaca fibre nor meat had increased in real terms during the past ten years. Current prices of US\$ 4.75/kg for fibre and US\$ 2.00/kg for meat had shown no increase in a decade, making life for farmers extremely difficult.

The Province of Caylloma has 3,500 families involved in farming some 400,000 alpacas and 50,000 llamas which yield 6,500 kgs of fibre and 36,000 kgs of meat. These figures reflect an overall increase in production totals of 10% over the past ten years.

Quispe is of the opinion that prices will only improve if speculators can be eliminated from the commercial chain in order to obtain proper market values.

Secondly, he referred to the problems being experienced by farmers due to this year's particularly cold winter in Peru. The majority of alpacas in the Province of Caylloma are raised at altitudes over 4,500 metres above sea level (14,765 feet) where winter temperatures average -15° C.

Mortality rates of newborn alpacas have been in the range of three out of every ten, mainly due to the lack of fodder which has been killed off by the below zero temperatures.





Shares in the French multinational conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy • Louis Vuitton S.A., better known as LVMH, rose by more than 2% in early July after it announced that it had bought 80% of Italian luxury cashmere clothing brand, Loro Piana, for US\$ 2.57 billion.

Loro Piana started as a family-owned woollen mill in Italy in 1924 and is the largest Western manufacturer of cashmere clothing today. The company also specialises in alpaca and vicuña products.

The deal comes two years after LVMH bought jewel-

ler Bulgari and a decade after it acquired leather goods maker Fendi and fashion label Emilio Pucci.

30% of Loro Piana's sales are exported to Asia and it enjoys continued strong demand in China.

It expects overall sales to grow by about 10% this year.

LVMH said that, as well as seeking a wider global presence for Loro Piana, it also planned to expand the Italian brand's leather goods offering.





Perhaps we might see the next Royal Baby wrapped in Royal Baby ?

When Prince William and Kate showed their new baby, Prince George Alexander Louis, to the world for

the first time in July, he was wrapped in a white shawl made from Australian superfine merino wool.

The future British king gave what appeared to be a tiny royal wave from within the shawl as his mother, Kate Middleton, held him in front of a wall of photographers outside St Mary's Hospital, London.

The shawl was made by a small family-run company, G.H. Hurt & Son based in Nottingham, England.

The delicate creation is similar to one the baby's father, Prince William, had as an infant, and which was also made by the same firm.

Within 20 minutes of the first sighting of the future king wrapped in the shawl, the company had a rush of orders for the item which sells at US\$ 75.00.

Are G.H. Hurt & Son aware of baby alpaca as an alternative to Australian merino ? Or has there been a missed marketing opportunity here ?

Towards the end of last year, in an effort to increase consumer awareness of alpaca products within the country, the Peruvian government decided to denominate 1st August as "Alpaca Day".

This year saw the inaugural launches of various alpaca events throughout the south of the country with the District of Callalli, near Arequipa, being just one such example.

Situated at 4,300 metres above sea level (14,110 feet), 75% of the area's inhabitants farm alpacas for both fibre and meat. The region's Mayor, Angel Vilcahuaman, presided over a day of promoting alpaca to groups of visitors who had come to purchase alpaca garments and to sample dishes prepared from the animals' meat.

The mayor indicated that, in order to survive current economic conditions, the alpaca farmers needed fibre price increases of the magnitude of 20% to cover their costs and earn a basic wage.

In this he was backed by the President of the Pachachaca Alpaca Farmers' Association, Albino Sulca, whose organization encompasses the districts of Callalli and Caylloma.

"Alpaca is a wonderful natural resource," he said. "We need to ensure that farmers and consumers alike are made more aware of this natural and sustainable gift.

The fibre is a flagship product of Peru and the meat has a protein content of 57% with low cholesterol levels, making it a much sought-after product for health-conscious consumers. Our members must adapt to be more like small businessmen than just ancestral farmers in order to open up new markets."

The organizers of Callalli's "Alpaca day" estimated that around 2,500 visitors came to the event.



Ladies in Callalli demonstrating their skills on "Alpaca Day"

In a similar vein, on 3rd and 4th August, a “Festi Alpaca” event promoting alpaca was held in the city of Arequipa at the Palacio Metropolitano de Bellas Artes

Mario Vargas Llosa where animals were judged for best in class and textiles and meat products were on sale to the general public.

Festi Alpaca FESTIVAL de la ALPACA
 "Alpaca del Perú para el Mundo"

LUGAR:
 Palacio Metropolitano de Bellas Artes
 Mario Vargas Llosa (Av. Parra s/n)

FECHA:
 3 y 4 de Agosto

ORGANIZA :

PATROCINAN

INGRESO LIBRE

Publicity for an alpaca promotional event held in the city of Arequipa on 3rd and 4th August



IAA ALPACA MONTHLY BULLETIN

The IAA Alpaca Monthly Bulletin is aimed at keeping members informed of news from the IAA. We encourage any member to supply articles of interest to update members about developments in the Camelid world. Articles with a human interest angle are particularly welcome.

Please submit to the Editor:
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