



# ALPACA MONTHLY NEWS

**EDITOR: FRANCIS RAINSFORD**

## **EDITORIAL**

### **HEMP CULTIVATION MAKING A COMEBACK IN THE USA ?**

Jon Kelly, writing for the BBC last year, reported that some states in the USA may be about to resume hemp farming after the practice has been banned for many years because of its close association with cannabis.

Hemp was once a major crop in the USA being cultivated as far back as 1607 in Virginia and, from 1619, all planters in the colony were required by law to grow it. Founding fathers George Washington and Thomas Jefferson both cultivated hemp on their land.

Additionally, the sails of Columbus' ships were made from it as was the first US flag. It was also used in the paper on which the Declaration of Independence was printed and the cord around the US Constitution was reputedly made from it.

In 1941, Henry Ford produced a car whose plastic frame was partially made of hemp and whose engine could be powered by hemp fuel.

During World War II, it was so crucial to the military that farmers who grew it and their sons were exempted from military service. It was celebrated in a 1942 public information film, "Hemp for Victory".

Today, however, industrial hemp is effectively banned by the federal government because of its association with cannabis but, while hemp cannot be grown in the US, it can be imported and used to manufacture paper, textiles, rope, fuel, food and plastics.

But advocates of its legal cultivation in states such as Oregon, North Dakota, Vermont, Montana and West Virginia estimate that, if approved, the annual US retail hemp market could exceed US\$ 300 million.

Hemp's problem is that, like marijuana, it contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a psychoactive chemical, albeit in much smaller doses than its better-known relative and, although the US federal Drugs Enforcement Agency (DEA) adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards THC, hemp advocates say one would have to smoke a telegraph pole-sized joint to get high from it.



Hemp's decline in the USA began around the turn of the 20th Century due to two factors: one was the change in the shipping industry which meant demand for hemp ropes and sails fell and the other was its association with marijuana.

In Mexico by the 1890s, marijuana was believed to cause madness and violence - an idea that, by the 1910s, also became established in the USA

The Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 effectively banned all varieties of the plant *cannabis sativa*, although farmers were temporarily exempted from this while they were encouraged to grow hemp during wartime. The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 explicitly outlawed cannabinoids.

However, advocates for the crop have never entirely gone away. Because hemp requires much less irrigation and around half as much land as cotton to produce the same amount of textile raw material, supporters of legalisation say it is much more environmenta-

lly friendly. Hemp seed and its oil, too, are championed by health food enthusiasts.

Canada's decision in 1998 to legalise the growth of hemp under licence appears to have spurred on legislators south of the border with some 17 states having passed hemp-related legislation and 10 (Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia) which have approved bills to remove barriers to its production.

The obstacle remains the federal authorities. Hemp cannot be grown without a DEA permit and the agency remains opposed to its cultivation. However, this resistance is apparently based on the problem of not being able to tell the difference between commercial hemp and crops grown for marijuana.

If marijuana becomes more acceptable then this shouldn't be an issue any more.

## CAMELID CLIPS



*Renowned Peruvian fashion designer Meche Correa*

Promperu, the Peruvian government body that promotes the exports of the country's products, has announced its participation in the upcoming *IM Intermoda* Fair that will be held in Guadalajara, Mexico from 17th to 20th July.

*IM Intermoda* is the leading textile fair for Mexico and Central America and Promperu will be displaying alpaca garments there in a campaign to introduce the fibre to these markets. Alpaca products have been imported by Mexico over the past twenty years or so

but only in small quantities and it is believed that the market has a much greater potential than is currently being realised.

Renowned Peruvian designer, Meche Correa, has been officially invited by the organizers of *IM Intermoda* to present an alpaca collection for the fashion catwalk at the fair which is in its 58th year.



*One of Meche Correa's alpaca creations*



Alpaca Association New Zealand Inc (AANZ) will host *Alpaca 2013 World Conference and Expo* in September in Hamilton, New Zealand.

The five day event will include the who's who of alpaca personalities from around the globe and will feature an Alpaca Expo, an International Fleece Show, the AANZ National Show, trade stands and displays plus a World Alpaca Conference and workshops.

From Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd September, EXPO will present the AANZ National Show culminating in an auction of alpacas followed by a Gala Dinner.

Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th September will be dedicated to the Conference presentations.

A law dating back to 1978 that promotes the exportation of non-traditional products from Peru is under the microscope for violation of workers' rights.

The law, No.22342, has been referred to the government's Work Commission for review as Article Nos 32, 33 and 34 prohibit workers from collective bargaining, strikes, forming unions or establishing any form of stable working conditions.

Six textile companies have joined two congressmen

to complain about the infraction of workers' rights for such a long time. Congressman Yonhy Lescano from the Region of Puno said, "82,000 workers from different sectors throughout the country are affected by this law which, ironically, flies in the face of the right to form a union as laid down in Peru's Constitution."

Arequipa Congressman Justiniano Apaza commented, "It's urgent that we amend the law and improve the working conditions in the country's textile industry."



*Some of the International Alpaca Association's new Board of Directors from left to right: Juan Pepper, Roberto Fioretto, Luca Alvigini, Derek Michell, Cesar Lutgens (Executive Director) and Francis Rainsford.*

The International Alpaca Association (IAA) held its Annual General Meeting in Arequipa on 20th March.

A new Board of Directors was elected for the period 2013 to 2015 and consists of: President: Luca Alvigini; 1st Vice President: Kotaro Kurono; 2nd Vice President: Roberto Fioretto; Directors: Derek Michell, Francois Patthey, Juan Pepper, Francis Rainsford, Herbert Murillo and Fernando Pastor. Additionally, there are two alternative directors: Mauricio Chirinos and Alonso Burgos.

Priorities for the upcoming period include:

- revamping the IAA's website which will reflect alpaca's current main world markets by being translated into Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Korean.
- organizing an Alpaca Fiesta in Arequipa for November 2014.

Peru's Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) recently conducted its IV National Agrarian Census. Included in the study it was recorded that the country's alpaca population has increased by 46% to 3,592,482 animals (from 2,456,642 recorded in its last census).

The Regions where alpaca numbers have increased are Puno, Arequipa, Cusco, Apurímac and Pasco.

The greatest number of alpacas is situated in the Region of Puno where there are a total of 2,776,201 animals.

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## 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:  
[francisrainsford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:francisrainsford@yahoo.co.uk)



Asociación Internacional de la Alpaca  
International Alpaca Association  
Campaña Paisajista 106, San Lazaro  
Cercado, Arequipa Peru  
Telefax +51 54 229344  
<http://www.aia.org.pe>, [www.thealpacamark.info](http://www.thealpacamark.info)  
E-mail: [aia@terra.com.pe](mailto:aia@terra.com.pe)