

AGE Trait Leader List

Col Langford, AGE Consultant

The AGE Working party has decided to publish what we are calling a Trait Leader List. The first of these lists will be a Selection Index Leader List for sires and dams for the three Breeding indexes which have been developed, namely Fibre plus, Fibre Value and fibre Quality. This represents an exciting new development for the AGE as it allows breeders to directly compare objectively the genetic worth of animals.

The Selection Leader Lists will be published on the AAA website and the publication of these lists will allow breeders to identify sires or dams they may wish to use in their breeding, selection or purchase decisions. Lists for the individual traits will be published progressively on the AAA website and the leader lists will be updated after each new analysis.

The Leader Lists are not recommending one sire over another; rather it provides a starting point for interested breeders to identify sires suitable to their objective, taking a balanced approach as previously stated. Breeders considering these sires must look carefully at the individual trait **Alpaca Breeding Values** as well as other traits in their breeding objective but not in the data. This not a ranking of sires' value to the industry, rather it is a useful starting point, as it provides genetic performance for some very important alpaca traits (but not all) that the industry has never had before. A balanced approach to breeding uses a combination of genetic information (ABV's) and phenotypic selection.

There are 747 sires within the latest AGE analysis and the animals on the list comprise the highest 6.7% for the genetic traits reported whilst there are 2136 dams and the animals on the Leader List comprise the highest 2.3 %.

These alpacas are therefore the elite animals for the genetic traits (under the chosen weighting for each Index) listed within the Sires and Dams entered into the AGE to date.

The Leader Tables will list whether the animals are from Australia or New Zealand, the animal's IAR number and Name, together with the index value and rank. (Future tables will list the Alpaca Breeding Value (ABV) for the particular trait being reported). The IAR number and animal name allows breeders to identify the owner of these sires.

You may recall from AGE presentations that an animal's ABVs are based firstly on its own performance and also the subsequent performance of their progeny.

In the Selection Index Leader List for the Sires it can be seen that the IAR number and names are missing for some alpacas. This is because these animals have not been entered into the AGE (or their owners have not given permission for the data to be published), but their ABVs have been derived from the performances of progeny which have been enrolled into AGE.

It is not possible to reveal the identity of these sires unless the owner enters the animal or their herd into the AGE program.