

Q-Alpaca Program 5th Annual Report

April 2009 – March 2010

Introduction

Five years have passed since the beginning of this voluntary quality assurance program. The successful implementation of the program in 2005 enables AlpacaMAP members to maintain their MAP status without the expense of ongoing faecal testing and in addition provides the industry with further information about herd health. Gross post-mortem examinations are required for any adult over 12 months of age that dies or is euthanased and cria under 12 months of age showing emaciation or diarrhoea and dies or is euthanased.

Q-Alpaca membership

There are now 280 studs enrolled in Q-Alpaca representing 19,940 alpaca. These figures exclude 11 studs currently under suspension from Q-Alpaca for failure to provide an Annual Stock Return.

Thirty five studs (NSW 19, Vic 8, SA, 7, Tas 1) have joined since the last Q-Alpaca annual report, including one non-AAA Member.

Twenty four studs have resigned from the program in the last year. Twelve studs reported that they had sold their alpacas; one stud cited trade restriction - presumably the inability to purchase animals from non-assessed herds without faecal testing from states other than Qld and WA; two studs have claimed the cost of post mortem is too expensive; two studs due to loss of APAV approved veterinary support. Five studs provided no reason for their withdrawal from the program.

Current Q-Alpaca membership statistics by state are as follows, excluding the studs under suspension;

STATE	No. OF STUDS	No. OF ALPACA
NSW	171	11,263
Vic	59	5,387
Qld	1	24
Tas	4	514
SA	45	2,752
Total	280	19,940

Registered alpaca on AAA Ltd IAR database is 122,000. Australian Alpaca Breeders Association (AABA) reports 1,818* animals registered with their organisation. It is noted that some animals may hold dual registration. Estimated total national herd number (registered and non-registered) is 151,159*.
(Information supplied by Background to the Development of NLIS Alpaca and Llama, September 2009 by Simon Winter)*

Since June 2006 Q-Alpaca membership has been open to all alpaca breeders irrespective of association affiliation or non-affiliated.

There are currently 74 APAV Approved Veterinarians overseeing Q-Alpaca participating studs.

Administration

The Annual Stock Return for 2009 was amended to accommodate the nuances of industry and to alleviate previous difficulties experienced by some members in completing the return. Further enhancements are planned for the 2010 return.

On completion of the 2009 Annual Stock Return, AAA Ltd. identified inconsistencies in reporting and post mortem requirements of two studs. By resolution of the AAA Ltd. Board of Directors, these studs were suspended from the program pending the findings of an on-farm audit by Dr Jeremy Rogers of PIRSA. One stud chose to withdraw from the program prior to an audit, the second stud elected to proceed with an on-farm audit and was found to be satisfactory with further recommendations on enhancement of recordkeeping; the second stud was duly reinstated to Q-Alpaca..

AAA Ltd. extends its thanks to Dr Rogers and PIRSA for their assistance in maintaining the integrity of the program.

Since the last Q-Alpaca Annual Report the following change has been made to the Program by resolution of AAA Ltd Board of Directors to enhance the integrity of the program;

AAA Ltd has identified that a small number of Q-Alpaca participants chose to withdraw from the program rather than addressing anomalies in their Q-Alpaca Annual Return, only to reapply for readmission a short while later. It is a requirement for participants who voluntarily withdraw from Q-Alpaca to wait for a 12 month period before seeking readmission. Only under exceptional circumstances would that requirement be waived.

Results - Post-Mortem Reports (data submitted by Dr Nicky Stone, Q-Alpaca Registrar)

231 reports were returned from 116 properties.

54 % were from NSW, 29% from VIC, 15% from SA. (3 reports were received from TAS).

Spring 22%, Summer 25%, Autumn 19%, Winter 33%.

No. of PMs	Age at death
10	0 < 1 yr
75	1 < 4 yr
71	4 < 10 yr
38	10 < 15 yr
23	15 - 24 yr
14	Unknown

173 reports were from properties where worming was routinely performed with Cydectin being the most frequently used drench. 59 reports were from properties performing faecal egg counts (FEC). This is an increase in the use of FECs prior to drenching or as a decision making tool for drench programs. Despite this, the death rate from haemonchus or parasite related disease was commonly reported as main cause of death or contributing factor.

Cause of death

No diagnosis	31
Gastrointestinal	33
Trauma/musculoskeletal	27
Parasitism	23
Dog attack/predation	17
Non productive/ill thrift	15
Aged	12
Pneumonia/respiratory	12
Neoplasia	11
Hepatic	9
Dystocia/perinatal	9
Hypothermia	6
Cardiovascular	5
Skin	3
Other	18

- Autolysis was the cause of 3 cases recorded as non-diagnostic.
- The GIT deaths were from a combination of intestinal accident, peritonitis, and enteritis including assumed clostridium perfringens.
- Perforated C3 ulcers were reported as the cause of 6 cases of peritonitis.
- Mandibular abscesses caused the death of 7 cases recorded as musculoskeletal.
- Lymphosarcoma was the most commonly recorded neoplasia.
- Wastage through dystocia and perinatal mortality remains low.

Future Objectives

Slaughter for human consumption is becoming an increasing trend in the alpaca industry. The requirement to post mortem all alpaca over 12 months of age is proving problematic for some participants in this instance, particularly those who send their alpaca to abattoir. This issue was raised at the NJDCP meeting in January 2010. The general consensus was that whilst home slaughter would still require the attendance of the Veterinarian, industry should look toward developing systems whereby alpaca slaughtered at registered abattoirs may be excluded from Q-Alpaca post mortem requirements under certain criteria.

Q-Alpaca Registrar

Dr Nicky Stone has advised that she will be unable to continue as Registrar of the Q-Alpaca. AAA Ltd. extends its most sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr Stone for assisting industry in the capacity of Registrar after the passing of Dr Richard Dixon.

Dr Alison Lee has agreed to replace Dr Stone as Registrar, overseeing the Q-Alpaca Program. AAA Ltd. welcomes Dr Lee.

Libby Garner-Paulin - Chairperson, AAA Ltd Animal Health, Husbandry & Welfare Reference Panel
28 April 2010

Q-ALPACA POST MORTEM RESULTS - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Autolysis - Rotting of tissues after death. Decomposed body therefore no PM

Clostridium perfringens - aka Pulpy Kidney

Dystocia - Malpresentation of cria or abnormal/difficult birth

GIT - Acronym for Gastro-Intestinal Tract

Lymphosarcoma - Malignant cancer of lymphocytes

Mandibular - Pertaining to the lower jaw

Neoplasia - The process of abnormal and uncontrolled growth of cells

Perinatal - Immediately before and after birthing