



For Immediate Release

World-first conference puts alpacas on the map

April 1, 2008: Marking the 20th anniversary of the Australian alpaca industry, the inaugural World Alpaca Conference held in Sydney over the weekend attracted an overwhelming response, with over 400 delegates attending over the three days.

“This is the first time a World Alpaca Conference has been held and we are thrilled with the response received. It is a credit to the Australian alpaca industry and to the enthusiastic conference organisers for putting on such a successful event,” said Dr Ian Davison, President, Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.

The historic event, officially opened by Austrade CEO, Peter O’Byrne, brought alpaca industry leaders from all over the country and the world to Sydney to share their common interests and concerns, from alpaca breeding to fleece production. Reflecting the theme *‘Shear Delight – sharing the world of alpacas’*, the World Alpaca Conference highlighted the industry’s ongoing growth and development towards becoming a sustainable primary agribusiness with a prosperous future.

The brainchild of Australian alpaca industry leaders, the World Alpaca Conference will now be taken around the world with other countries already planning to follow in Australia’s footsteps. “Alpaca breeders from around the world have well and truly embraced the concept, so much so that the rights to host the conference for the next four years have already been reserved with America in 2009, to be followed by Peru, Britain and New Zealand,” said Dr Davison.

Highlighting the future direction of the global alpaca industry, the conference covered all areas including alpaca breeding, health & nutrition, fleece production and manufacturing. Delegates at the conference heard from industry experts including Dr Jane Wheeler, Vice President for Research, CONOPA, Peru; Paul Taylor, expert in Frozen Embryo Transfer, USA; Derek Michell Lopez De Romana, Director of Michell & Co. Peru; Dr Kylie Munyard, Lecturer/Researcher in Molecular Biology, Curtin University; and Dr Jim Watts, creator of the SRS[®] breeding system, amongst many others.

The Conference engendered great enthusiasm and camaraderie between all the countries represented and opened doors for international discussion and involvement in alpacas. Conference organisers hope that these new relationships will be sustained for the future good of the industry on a global basis.

“We have already built invaluable exporting alliances with countries such as Peru and China, and have set plans in motion to maintain close relationships with alpaca leaders from around the world to encourage the sharing of knowledge and experience on a regular basis,” said Dr Davison.

The Australian alpaca industry is growing from strength to strength, with over 97,000 registered alpacas in Australia. If you would like to find out more about alpacas, please contact the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. on 03 9873 7700 or visit www.alpaca.asn.au

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MEDIA: For further information or images please contact:

Laura Rodrigues or Rachel Lockley

McGregors International

Tel: 02 9967 9399

Email: laura@mcgregors.com.au or rachel@mcgregors.com.au