

# Building up the size of the herd

When Barbara Linley, one of the partners of Ambleside Alpacas, first evaluated alpacas in the late 1990s one of the big labour efficiencies she identified was alpacas do not require mulesing.

As Barbara and her husband, David, ran a large Merino property at Berrybank in the Western district of Victoria, she quickly identified that this was a major advantage of alpacas over sheep.

"I started with alpacas in 1998," says Barbara. "At first my husband was not so keen but now he is a convert. I have now been joined in the business by my business partner Anne Bean and we have built our alpaca stud to around 120 stud alpacas and have been achieving show success with our animals. Our herd is mostly Suris.

"In addition to the stud alpacas we run on the property, we also run a number of wethers on the property as companion animals for the ewes during lambing season. The guard role that these animals have played in warding off foxes and dogs has boosted the number of surviving lambs and this has created a

positive financial impact on our Merino operation.

"The increase in the size of our alpaca herd has occurred during years of severe drought during which our Merino flock has been reduced from some 7000 down to 3500. It is likely that the future trend will be to increase our alpaca numbers. The alpacas are extremely hearty and they utilise the feed better than sheep," says Barbara.

"In addition to gaining broad ribbons at shows, we are making significant numbers of sales within Victoria and interstate," says Barbara. ■

Sue Maynard and John Hay, the owners of Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas, have one part of their Stud on 2 hectares of land at Galston outside of Sydney with the other located on 160 hectares of land at Running Stream near Mudgee, NSW.

Around 30 of the stud animals are located at Galston while a further 100 located at the Running Stream property. This gives them some advantages. Galston is close enough to Sydney to make it easy for potential buyers to visit.



Sue Maynard with two fine results of Gunnamatta Stud's grey breeding programme.

"We keep our pregnant females here at Galston so we can keep an eye on them," says Sue. "We also have our show animals here so we can work with them. This is where we keep animals that are for sale. It is easier for visitors and buyers to come to Galston that it is for them to drive out to Running Stream.

"The advantage of the

Running Stream location is that we can have a much larger property to run a larger herd of alpacas. We breed for all colours but we have a particular interest in grey. With our ability to supply fleeces in all colours, we find that we have developed a strong market with spinners who want a particular fleece in a particular colour," says Sue. ■

**Gunnamatta Stud Alpacas**  
Galston NSW

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