



UK Alpaca will be opening its doors again for fleece clips from the 2022 season on 10th May.

THERE ARE SOME SMALL CHANGES TO PRICING AND TERMS THIS YEAR, so please take the time to read through these guidance notes to understand the process and to help maximise your returns.

The world uncertainty and rise in energy prices are feeding through to both manufacturing costs and product sales and we are experiencing reduced demand in the craft market as knitters' budgets get stretched. The remainder of this year will be difficult.

Much increased fuel costs reduces margins on collections of low value fleece and in some circumstances a charge will need to be made if collection is required.

As a consequence we are forced to reduce slightly some of our prices and extend our payment terms on invoicing from the current 60 days to 120 days.

We look forward to 2023 slowly return to normality and we continue to offer market beating prices for quality fibre.. We are launching new product lines and continue to impress the market with our British alpaca yarns which everyone loves.

Please ensure you understand our process for moth infected and wet fleeces as these are disposed of immediately without prior advising. Such fleeces will be recorded on your classing report.

Please note that by selling your fleece to UK Alpaca Ltd you have agreed to accept our process and terms as laid out in these notes.

The table below lists our guaranteed prices for 2022 season fleeces delivered into our Devon facilities. Please read our descriptive notes below on how we define skirted, unskirted, outsorts, Superfine and Baby classing. Prices quoted are £/Kg excluding VAT .

Huacaya Classing Grade	Skirted	Unskirted
Baby White	15.00	10.00
Baby Fawn	10.00	6.00
Baby Other Colours	5.00	4.00
Superfine White	9.00	4.00
Superfine Fawn	7.00	4.00
Superfine Other Colours	3.00	2.00
Outsorts White (Bulked)	*	1.85
Outsorts Coloured (Bulked)	*	0.50

The singular fact is that the textile industry revolves around white fleeces as these enable efficient dyeing to any shade. The market for the other natural shades is very small in comparison and thus places a limit on its value. We are able to dye fawn fleeces to some of our darker shades allowing us to offer almost as much as white. We have no sustainable markets at the moment for brown or black fleeces, and our investment in these remain in stock in the hope that we find uses for them in the future.

Baby classed white and fawn fleeces continue to attract premium prices and we are delighted to offer much improved returns to the growers for these. The other coloured shades suffer as for the superfine

classing, and we inevitably end up combining the superfine and baby classings to increase total weights for efficient processing.

The market for white outsorts remains strong in Europe and we are again delighted to offer the price we paid last year.

The market for the coloured outsorts remains constant allowing us to maintain our prices.

The Collection Centre Programme running in previous years has been suspended.

If you have fleeces you wish us to collect, please email or telephone as soon as possible and we will do our best to arrange collection on one of our runs. Telephone 01884 243579 or email info@ukalpaca.com with an estimate of fleece numbers and outsort weights.

GUIDANCE NOTES

It is essential you comply with the following to enable us to efficiently receive, store and class your clip. If you have 2-year Suri fleeces in any colour we are happy to buy. For one year Suri fibre growth please contact us prior to sending in.

ONLY 2022 SHORN FLEECES

We are not able to accept fleeces that have been in storage from previous years. Our experience has shown us repeatedly that moths really like alpaca fleeces, more so than wool, and that stored fleeces are likely to have been contaminated.

Please note that any evidence of moth and/or grub in fleeces will result in them being removed immediately and disposed off forthwith. We cannot risk holding such fleeces in our facilities and they will be disposed of without consultation. Classing reports will indicate any fleeces disposed of for this reason.

Alpaca fleece is not a commodity that can be kept or stored for long periods of time.

FLEECES NOT IN CLEAR PLASTIC BAGS WILL BE REJECTED.

This makes for easier handling and colour sorting prior to classing. Paper based sacks and non transparent plastic-based bags (such as used feed bags) cannot be accepted. Plastic bags can be left open and only lightly tied if absolutely necessary.. No string or tie wraps please as this means we have to cut open the bag, creating large amounts of plastic waste.

We will generally have a good stock of used clear plastic bags which can be turned inside out and reused. Please contact us if you would like some. These are offered free of charge, excluding carriage at cost.

BAGS WITH NO FARM IDENTIFICATION WILL BE PUT INTO GENERAL SORT AND NOT CREDITED TO YOUR ACCOUNT

We do our best to keep each farm's fleece bags separated and tagged in bulk bags, prior to classing, however sometimes confusion can arise, especially after bulk collections by our own transport. It remains your responsibility to mark each bag with the name used on the booking-in form, either on the bag or with a slip of paper inside the bag, writing to face outwards.

FLEECE DELIVERY

Fleeces can be delivered into our farm in Tiverton.

If you have fleeces you wish us to collect, please email or telephone as soon as possible and we will do our best to arrange collection on one of our runs. Telephone 01884 243579 or email info@ukalpaca.com with an estimate of fleece numbers and outsort weights.

DEFINITION OF CLASSING GRADES

Textiles and therefore yarns are a tactile product and alpaca is a much-appreciated fibre for its low scale height and fineness. To preserve the high-quality expectations for alpaca products the fibre has to be classed by a trained hand and a trained eye. Scientific data can be a guide but the lack of uniformity in micron, length and colour in some alpaca fleeces means there is no escaping the human classing function.

Staple Length

Acceptable fleeces must have a minimum staple length of >3" (76mm). This is a necessary requirement for the worsted process which makes the best alpaca yarn. Under 3", no matter how soft, will not make any grade other than outsorts.

Superfine

Fleeces in this grade are likely to fall within the 22-26 micron range providing primary fibre micron within the staple is not much higher than the surrounding secondary fibres. Ultimately it is the handle of the overall fleece that will determine the classing grade. These fleeces are likely to come from animals up to 4/5 years of age and some older animals with excellent fine fibre genetics.

Baby

Fleeces in this grade are likely to be under 21/22 micron providing primary fibre micron within the staple is not much higher than the surrounding secondary fibres. Ultimately it is the handle of the overall fleece that will determine the classing grade. These fleeces are likely to be from the first shearing and some older animals with excellent fine fibre genetics.

Outsorts

These fleeces are those with under 3" in staple length and/or a handle which is coarser than the requirements for superfine. This is likely to be neck and saddle from older alpacas.

Please be sensible on this, alpacas 4-5 years of age and older, neck fibre other than first shearing (likely too short, especially on females) and fleeces with hedgehog primary fibres sticking out of the staples should all be placed in the outsort bag, unless you are very sure they will meet one of the other classings.

We are happy to take as much white and colour bulked outsorts that you might have.

We will only accept these fleeces if placed in a bulk bag, not individually bagged. All white combined in one bag, and all other colours in another. These should be marked as outsorts as they will go straight to weighing and bale pressing and bypass the classing lines.

Please note that outsorts do not include floor sweepings or very short leg fibres and second cuts. Outsorts contaminated with this or other general waste product will be rejected and might affect our willingness to collect from you again.

To achieve the outsort classing value, white outsorts should be bulked as WHITE. This grade should not be individually bagged.

To achieve the outsort classing value, non-white outsorts should be bulked as COLOURED. This grade should not be individually bagged.

Skirting

THE SHEARERS DO NOT SKIRT THE FLEECES, they are simply shearing the fleece into parts. You are required to do this to achieve our skirted fleece prices.

This is best done at the time of shearing. Pre-skirted fleeces save us large amounts of time and this is reflected in the prices paid.

Skirting is best done on a wire grid skirting table at the time of shearing, with the aim to produce a consistent fleece of correct staple length which is free of the coarser or shorter edges. It is not necessary to skirt as severely as you would for a judged fleece show, however, we do require that large pieces of straw, clumps of hay, and poo/urine contaminated areas are all removed. Fleece edges should then be thoroughly inspected, and any obviously coarser or shorter staple areas must be removed.

Fleeces should then be shaken to remove dust and shearing second cuts and then rolled cut side inwards and placed in the plastic bag.

First fleeces full of hay seed or short pieces of hay will not be accepted and must be put to outsorts.

The neck fibre from younger animals is normally of high quality and correct length and should be bagged separately from the saddle fleece. If older animals have neck fibre that is three inches or longer and of a suitable handle, they should be bagged separately rather than going into outsorts.

Fleeces not skirted at the time of shearing are likely to have been placed inside plastic bags, such that when emptied out for skirting, cross contamination will have already occurred, and classing will have to go to the lowest level for the contamination.

Guide to Skirting

Try and collect the saddle fleece from the shearing floor by scooping it up in your arms whilst ensuring you are not folding the cut side into the external side.

Place the fleece cut side down onto the grid of your skirting table and open it up to get as much of the cut side down onto the table, especially the edges.

Within the main part of the fleece, if there are large amounts of high micron primary fibres sticking out of the staple tips or the staple is not 3" or over in length (have a ruler or a piece of something that is 3" in length to use as guide) or its handle is coarse, then the fleece needs to go straight into the bulk outsorts bag. Often this can be seen at the point of shearing, so there is no need to bring to the table.

Look along the edges and remove anything that looks much coarser than the bulk and or is not 3" in staple length. Try placing one hand in the middle of the fleece and use the other hand to feel along the edge areas. This comparative method will make it easier to spot the coarser fibres that need removing.

Next remove any heavily VM (vegetable matter) contaminated fleece areas (especially the base of the neck area on younger alpacas)

Finally, gently raise the fleece edges and shake to dislodge dust and short bits such as shearing second cuts and dust, so they fall away and drop through the grid.

Skirting is now done, and you can place the fleece into your clear plastic bag. Remember to mark the bag with your name or herd.

SHEARING

Shearing is sometimes a lost opportunity to make money from your fleece. It is crucial to keep the shearing area clear of contamination. We see many fleeces with second cuts and waste from a different coloured fleece. This sort of contamination is an absolute 'no no' for fibre processing and is easily avoidable.

Please make sure you start with your white animals, then fawn, brown, grey and then black. Clean the shearing mat after each animal, making sure the shearing area is even cleaner when you move on to the next colour.

Second cuts should be avoided. Your shearer should take the blanket off first with single blows and not go back to tidy up the alpaca until the blanket is off. If you shake the fleece and find yourself in a snowstorm, speak to the shearer.

HOW IT WORKS

UK Alpaca has been buying and processing British alpaca fleeces for well over twelve years and has a thorough understanding of the complicated processing needed to produce luxury yarns that do justice to the alpaca fleece and adequately reward the efforts of British breeders. The yarns are successfully sold at retail through e-commerce and retail shows and through trade accounts for re-sellers, sock and textile designers.

Producing such luxury yarns at a price that allows adequate margins at both trade and retail sales requires high volume processing, which for UK Alpaca is over 1000kg per colour and per classing grade.

Fleece is received into our facilities in Devon for the classing and baling process. Each farm's clip is graded individually, and the results recorded on a classing sheet which is sent on to the fleece owners once their total clip has been classed.

The owner is asked to raise an invoice to UK Alpaca Ltd for the amounts detailed on the grading report, adding VAT if appropriate.

Funds are generally transferred to the owner within 120 days of invoice receipt.

Selling your fleece to UK Alpaca Ltd deems you have read and accept the process and terms as laid out in these notes.

Those wishing to add further value to their clip can buy back finished yarns at trade prices with no minimum order quantity, for re-sale at local craft events or for knitting into finished products for sale. Fleece suppliers can do so on an account basis, with final amounts being due either way, settled upon completion of their fleece classing.

END PRODUCT

UK Alpaca specialises in British alpaca yarns with full provenance. Our natural and dyed fully worsted yarns are processed in the traditional mills in England. The aim is to maintain our reputation for top quality British alpaca yarns. We sell wholesale to knitwear designers, sock makers, weavers, hand dyers, retail shops and our yarns are also sold by the major online knitting websites. UK Alpaca is at all the major yarn shows promoting British alpaca.

UK Alpaca was set up by Chas Brooke and Rachel Hebditch. We support British alpaca farmers by buying around ten tons of fleece a year which is hand graded on farm for colour and fineness. The large quantities of fleece processed mean prices are competitive with South American imported yarns.

UK Alpaca's range of yarns is available for wholesale and retail customers on cone and in balls for next day shipment. Alpaca breeders who sell their fleece to us can buy back yarns at wholesale prices with no minimum order.