

Dear Members,

Proposed New Bylaw (requires the approval of two-thirds of members with voting rights actually voting on the measure):

The Association will establish and maintain a registry (the “Percentage Registry”), separate from the DNA validated genealogical registry maintained by the Association, for the registration of alpacas which are not Pedigreed Alpacas. An alpaca may be registered in the Percentage Registry as either a “Listed Alpaca” or a “Percentage Alpaca”, with requirements and criteria for these registrations as specified by the Board of Directors in the Association’s policies and procedures.

How it started:

The concept of the Percentage Registry developed over several years through thoughtful consideration and was formally presented to the Board in November 2025. At that time, a majority of the Board members agreed the concept was worthy of further exploration and approved the formation of a task force. This group was charged with developing a proposal for a new registry and breeding classification system, which was brought back to the Board for review and approval in February 2026 prior to being shared with the membership.

Timeline: (see corresponding monthly board minutes)

Nov. 2025 - Percentage Registry was first presented to the board. The majority of the board voted for a task force to develop a proposal for a new registry to be presented to the board.

Feb 2026 - Fully developed Percentage Registry Proposal was presented to the board. Motion made authorizing work to proceed on drafting bylaw language for a membership vote. Motion passed 7 yay, 2 nay.

March 2026 - Suggestion to provide both pro and con statements alongside the bylaw change to give members a balanced perspective. Bylaw change introduced but not voted on.

April 2026 - Motion made to accept the bylaw change as written for distribution to members to vote on, along with the pro and con statements, and the original percentage registry proposal. Special vote of the membership to occur on Dec. 7. Motion passed, 6 yay, 3 nay.

What is a Percentage Registry?

A Percentage Registry is a structured opportunity to provide those who own an alpaca that is not registered in the closed AOA Registry a means to register and record data for that alpaca even though it lacks DNA validated parentage. The Percentage Registry operates independently and does not alter the closed AOA Registry.

The proposed Percentage Registry represents an opportunity to strengthen and expand the alpaca industry while fully preserving the integrity of the existing closed AOA Registry. The proposal does not alter or weaken the current DNA-validated pedigree registry. Instead, it creates a separate pathway for currently unregistered alpacas and their owners to participate in the alpaca community in a structured, documented, and transparent way.

These are practical industry-building benefits that support both current breeders and the long-term future stability, credibility, and growth of the alpaca industry in the United States.

The proposed Percentage Registry would provide several important benefits to the alpaca industry:

By bringing more alpacas and owners into an organized structure, the program would expand opportunities for education in fleece quality, conformation, husbandry, genetic awareness, and responsible breeding practices, while also increasing participation in shows, educational programs, youth activities, and alpaca events.

A Percentage Registry would also help create a more accurate USDA-recognized population count of alpacas in

the United States by identifying the true number of alpaca farms and animals within the national herd. More complete and reliable industry data strengthens the alpaca industry's ability to demonstrate economic impact when working with federal agencies, state agencies, universities, agricultural organizations, sponsors, and grant programs.

Accurate national herd numbers are increasingly important in ongoing efforts to establish USDA standards and expanded industry opportunities, including:

- Drug testing and "on-label" pharmaceutical research
- USDA terminal market standards
- University and pharmacological animal supply figures
- Alternative product pathways and other member-requested initiatives

In addition, improved animal documentation provides practical long-term benefits for alpaca owners. Registered and documented alpacas are easier to incorporate into formal estate planning tools such as wills, trusts, partnership agreements, and asset transfer documents, helping simplify end-of-life transfers and ownership verification.

Accurate animal records are also valuable during natural disasters and emergency situations, which are becoming increasingly frequent, by helping owners verify livestock inventories, establish ownership, support insurance documentation, and assist with recovery efforts.

Many successful livestock industries operate with more than one registry, appendix system, percentage program, or tiered breeding structure. In most cases, these industries maintain a clearly protected purebred registry while also allowing secondary levels for commercial participation, breed recovery, or genetic expansion.

Examples include:

SHEEP REGISTRIES

The United Suffolk Sheep Association operates a successful Percentage Registry Program alongside its purebred registry. Animals can enter at lower percentages.

This model:

- Expands breeder participation
- Preserves a defined purebred standard

HORSE REGISTRIES

Many horse industries use multiple registry levels or appendix systems.

Examples include:

- American Quarter Horse Association maintains an Appendix Registry for certain crosses, especially Thoroughbred/Quarter Horse combinations.
- Friesian horse registries maintain multiple books with pathways for upgrading over generations.
- Warmblood registries commonly use performance-based open studbooks allowing carefully selected outside bloodlines while maintaining breed identity.

These systems are considered highly successful internationally.

CATTLE REGISTRIES

Several cattle sectors operate successfully with:

- Composite registries
- Percentage systems
- Hybrid/commercial classifications

Examples include:

- Composite beef cattle registries for stabilized crosses
- Dairy and beef associations that maintain categories for purebred, percentage, recorded grade, and commercial cattle

Even highly respected cattle registries often include multiple recording structures beyond strict purebred registration.

CONSERVATION & RARE BREED PROGRAMS

Rare livestock conservation groups frequently rely on open or recovery registries to rebuild endangered populations and preserve genetic diversity.

These programs are common in:

- Horses
- Sheep
- Heritage poultry
- Rare cattle breeds

The proposed Percentage Registry would provide several important benefits to the alpaca industry:

Importantly, the existing closed AOA Registry remains unchanged and protected. Fully DNA-validated alpacas continue to represent the highest standard of pedigree verification and breeding certainty. The Percentage Registry does not replace that standard — it highlights it.

The most successful livestock systems generally maintain:

1. A clearly protected purebred registry
2. Strict and transparent advancement rules
3. DNA verification and pedigree standards
4. Clear distinction between purebred and percentage/commercial animals

Supporters of multi-level systems often argue that successful industries separate:

- Elite purebred breeding
- Commercial production
- Genetic expansion

In summary, the proposed Percentage Registry is not about lowering standards. It is about creating responsible opportunities for inclusion, education, documentation, and long-term industry growth while maintaining the integrity and value of the existing closed registry system.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will this affect our current closed AOA Registry?

As proposed, it will have no effect. The Percentage Registry will be completely separate from the Closed or Elite Registry, which only permits registration of alpacas that are the offspring of 100% DNA validated and registered parents.

Will Percentage Registry alpacas be able to participate in AOA certified shows?

As proposed, yes. Percentage Registered alpacas would be able to participate in AOA show system competitions including Performance, Halter, IFA, and Fleece competitions. Guidelines and inclusions to be determined by Show Rules Committee.

Will there be separate classes for Percentage Registry alpacas?

Guidelines and inclusions to be determined by Show Rules Committee.

Will Percentage Registry alpacas be able to participate in the AOA EPD program?

No. EPDs require fully DNA validated pedigree information and therefore would remain exclusive to the closed Registry.

Would an alpaca owner have to become a member of AOA to register an alpaca?

Yes. Only AOA members would be able to register alpacas within the Percentage Registry.

Will a Percentage Alpaca devalue my fully validated alpacas?

No. Fully DNA validated alpacas would remain the gold standard for pedigree certainty and documented lineage. The proposed registry does not replace or weaken that distinction. Instead, it creates an entry point for currently unregistered alpaca owners to become more involved in education, shows, and the alpaca community while maintaining clear distinctions between registry levels.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this proposal.