AOA BREED STANDARD

Huacaya

ALPACA Owners Association Inc

AOA Huacaya Breed Standard

The ideal Huacaya alpaca is the epitome of true alpaca type with an attractive head, outstanding conformation, and a fine, dense, uniform, bright, and adequately-stapled fleece. As alpacas approach the ideal state, they express more positive fleece characteristics than less improved types. The Huacaya fleece exhibits highly aligned staples of fine fleece with little guard hair. The concept of the ideal alpaca is not a static model. It is the process of the pursuit of excellence that will fuel genetic improvement for decades. Highly heritable traits are selected for genotypic gain in the individual offspring's expression of positive breed characteristics, which exist along a continuum.

Note: The included characteristics all relate to the form and function of the breed and are not prioritized in any specific order. The standard* is a livestock guideline for breeding selection dedicated to correctness and longevity, which is inclusive of both commercial and cottage fleece production attributes.

	Ideal Traits	**Acceptable But Less Desirable Traits**	**Unacceptable/Undesirable Traits**
A. Conformation			
1. Phenotype	Elegant profile showing balanced proportions of neck, body and legs with a true to type head, level topline and strong substance of bone fit for efficient function.	Often phenotypically true to type, yet subtle differences in frame and overall appearance are expressed.	Lacks overall balance, proportion and substance of bone.
2. Balance and Topline	Proper proportions demonstrated in a squared-off appearance of one-third legs, one-third body, one-third neck and head. Length is the same as height, with a level topline from withers to the hip, rounding at the croup.	Slightly off in balance with the square profile being elongated in any direction.	Obvious lack of balance and proportion and/or topline deviated in a humpback or swayback condition.

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A. Conformation			
3. Head	Dense top knot over a strong, wedge-shaped muzzle. Ears erect, spear-shaped and of appropriate length to be in balance with the head. Eyes clear and bright, free from congenital anomalies. Nasal passages symmetrical. Incisors meet the forward edge of the upper dental pad and the mandible and maxilla are vertically aligned. Lower jaw gum line is approximately 1/2 inch behind the upper dental plate.	May exhibit slight deviations in jaw alignment. Incisors may extend beyond or slightly behind the forward edge of the upper dental pad. Mandible is slightly wider than maxilla.	Topknot fluffy and open. Overly long, narrow and weak muzzle. Ears out of proportion with the head, banana-shaped or fused. Jaw alignment incorrect with lower teeth extending well beyond or behind the upper dental pad. Asymmetry of nasal passages and crooked tooth alignment.
4. Movement and Tracking	Movement demonstrates a fluid gait and balanced stride, with both toes pointed forward and tracking evenly in a straight line on upright pasterns.	Deviations exist in foot placement and leg angulation when viewed from both the front and the side indicating improper joint structure. Gait not smooth.	Extreme deviations in angulation of the shoulder or hocks or collapsed pasterns. Resultant movements are short, choppy, winging out, toeing in or rope walking.
5. Front Legs	Show excellent substance of bone, with correct angulation when viewed from the front and side with toes pointed forward, also demonstrating adequate chest width.	May be slightly fine boned, have a moderate deviation in angulation from either front or side view, leg rotated slightly in or out as evidenced in foot position.	Very light boned, front or side view deviation in angulation is extreme, position of feet very close or too far apart, extreme outward or inward leg rotation.
6. Hind Legs	Hindquarters are broad, with strong, well-muscled thighs and rounded croup. Legs show excellent substance of bone with correct angulation of the hock joint when viewed from the side and rear.	May be slightly fine boned or narrow in hindquarters. Hock angulation may be slightly deviated when viewed from the rear (cow hocked) or the side (sickle hocked).	Hindquarters are light boned and very narrow. Hocks touch during standing and movement. Extreme deviation appears from the side when the hock joint is either extremely angled (sickle-hocked) or too straight (post legged).

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A. Conformation			
7. Body Capacity	Shows breadth and depth of body, chest and abdomen. Females show the breadth and depth for successful cria-carrying and birthing capacity. Reasonable size for age with broad, well-sprung ribs.	May demonstrate a slightly smaller frame for age or be slower to develop.	Very narrow through the chest and lacks spring of rib, resulting in a flat, slab-sided look. Small in overall size and stature for age.
8. Tail	Tail set centers off the rounded croup and is palpated just off the pelvis as a natural extension of the spine. Tail is straight and easy to flex with a length sufficient to cover the genitalia.	Tail set may be slightly high and length may be less than ideal.	Tail set high on the croup, kinked or bent and unable to be straightened, too short to cover genitalia.
9. Genitalia	External genitalia are anatomically correct in size, shape and position. Four teats are uniformly positioned. Males have two evenly sized, firm testicles that are descended into the scrotal sacs.	Small vulva opening. Testicles small, but descended into scrotal sac.	Vulva that is too small, incorrectly positioned or angled, closed at birth requiring surgical intervention. Males with only one testicle, very small testicles, or very soft testicles. Other than four teats.

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B. Fleece			
1. Phenotype	Clearly demonstrates the ultimate function of being a fiber producing species, forming well defined staples of fine, dense, uniform, bright fleece, with adequate staple length.	Exhibits good character of average density and organization throughout. Staple length sufficient, but not ideal.	Exhibits little evidence of staple organization and density resulting in a very open, lofty appearance. Staple length insufficient for yarn or other types of processing.
2. Uniformity of Micron	This highly critical trait for optimal processing is evident within organized staples and across the blanket of the alpaca. Little difference can be seen between the size of primary and secondary follicle fibers.	Variation in the size of primary and secondary follicle fibers is distinctive and easily recognized.	Extreme micron variation exists within the staple and throughout the entire fleece.
3. Fineness	Low micron fibers relative to age are expressed across the blanket of the alpaca and extend to the extremities. The rate of change in micron over time is minimal.	Higher micron fibers relative to age exist and vary in their expression within the staple and across the blanket.	Coarse, high micron fibers exhibited throughout the blanket and produced at a young age and throughout the lifetime of the alpaca.
4. Handle	Extremely soft, well-nourished feel throughout the fleece that also exhibits a high degree of uniformity of micron.	Less smooth and soft, the fleece will demonstrate some variation in micron.	The fleece is not soft, but rather harsh and dry, and has excessive variation and/or high micron fibers throughout.
5. Character	Highly defined and aligned crimp with individual staples that are often comprised of smaller, tightly organized groups of micro-staples that are evident throughout the fleece. The staple groups exhibit firmness and solidity. The style of character/crimp is less important than the uniformity of the style across the maximum blanket area.	Good crimp definition with some degree of amplitude, but staple groups are less organized and firm.	Very open, unorganized fibers characterized by volume rather than firmness, lacking crimp definition, alignment and clear staple formation.

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B. Fleece			
6. Density	While understanding that this trait is difficult to assess on the animal, fleece that exhibits highly aligned fibers growing in tightly packed staple groups, demonstrating firmness and solidity throughout.	Fleece is comprised of staple groups that are less solid and firm, more open, demonstrating less highly aligned fibers.	Fleece is open, lacks clear staple definition, and exhibits loft rather than firmness.
7. Brightness	The fleece demonstrates extreme brightness throughout, similar to high-luster Suri fiber.	Average levels of brightness are present throughout the fleece expressed as a warm glow or sheen.	Poor level of brightness evident. While some shine may be evident in broad coarse fibers, the overall fleece is dull, flat and chalky.
8. Color Uniformity	Color of fleece is appropriate for the intended use. Solid color fleeces, intended for commercial processing, should be uniform in color through the maximum blanket. Easily removed spots of different color are acceptable. Grey, multi-tonal, and pattern fleeces should maintain other desirable fleece quality traits.	Solid, grey, multi-tonal, and pattern fleeces have a wider range of variation in micron.	Insufficient uniformity of micron for processing. Fleeces that are not consistent in color often vary in consistency of micron.
9. Staple Length	Consistent adult production of processable staple length of at least 2 1/2 inches of annual growth.	Rapid decline in staple length production with age.	Insufficient staple length for any type of value-added processing.

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C. Maternal Traits			
1. General	Dam exhibits longevity in her ability to produce healthy offspring throughout her lifetime.	Dam has difficulty in achieving pregnancy, has delayed milk production, or remains unintentionally open for an extended time after delivery.	Dam is repeatedly unable to deliver full term cria, is unable to achieve pregnancy, or is unable to produce milk.
2. Birthing Ease	Female has the ability to give birth with ease and without assistance.	Occasional minor dystocia requiring minimal assistance without damage to the dam or cria.	Repeated major veterinary intervention.
3. Mothering Skill and Maintenance Efficiency	Dam bonds well with her cria and has the udder capacity to consistently produce quantities of good quality milk in order to rear and wean a healthy cria, while maintaining her own health and body condition during lactation.	Female does not bond with cria and needs human intervention to develop bond, although sometimes occurs with maiden females. Dam produces minimal milk and cria is slow growing or needs supplementation.	Dam rejects cria, offspring development indicates failure to thrive and requires medical intervention and supplementation.
4. Fertility	Healthy, well grown female achieves pregnancy with a minimum of breedings.	Female requires multiple breedings, or suffers early embryonic loss.	Female requires hormonal intervention regularly to achieve or maintain pregnancy.

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D. Temperament			
1. General	Alpacas demonstrate a calm, docile nature as a herd species. Expression of dominance is expected as they form herd groups, but overt aggression is not acceptable. Females may be protective of newborn crias.	Female is overly protective of her cria and asserts dominance in the form of spitting and kicking when approached. An alpaca that is overly and inappropriately interactive with humans.	An alpaca that aggressively challenges and attacks humans.
2. Breeding Vigor	Males have good libido and breed females with high impregnation success on minimal matings. Females are receptive to mating during the appropriate period of the follicular maturation cycle.	Male that is timid and reluctant to breed. Male with low sperm viability that requires multiple matings to achieve pregnancy.	Male or female lacks interest in breeding.
3. Handling	Alpacas should accept handling and training, managed appropriately for the species.	An alpaca that is more difficult to handle, resists restraint, or consistently spits, kicks or runs away.	An alpaca that is dangerous to handle, and aggressively challenges and attacks humans.

References:

The Suri Breed Standard, The Suri Network, 2005, revised 2016.

The Art and Science of Alpaca Judging, AOBA, (2011).

Show System Handbook, AOA, (2016).

The Alpaca Emphasis Guide, AOBA, (2007).