

# A Brief Look at Fiber Processing

process any vegetable matter not removed during carding is separated from the fibre. The top may also go through a further gilling process to make it more even.

## **DRAWING**



Here the “top” is passed through a set of “drafting” rollers. The front set of rollers have a faster surface speed than the back rollers. This has the effect of reducing the top thickness to a size that can be used in the spinning process. This is called a roving. This process is carried out a number of times until the desired thickness of roving is obtained.

## **SPINNING**



The spinning process continues the drawing process, usually bringing the thickness down to around 35/40 fibres in the cross section. A twist is given to the fibre to give the yarn more strength.

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## **SCOURING**



This is the first stage of actual fibre processing. Scouring is carried out to remove the dirt, wool grease and suint. The fibre usually passes through a set of four (4) bowls during the cleaning process. Here it is washed with warm water and detergents and rinsed in the final bowl. Alpaca fibre has a very low grease content.

## **DRYING**

After washing, the fibre is passed through rollers to remove the water content. The fibre then is passed through a drying system where it is dried at around 48 degrees Celsius.



## **CARDING**



This is the first stage in yarn production. Here the fibre is put through a series of rollers of different sizes travelling in different directions and at different speeds. The wire card removes entanglement of fibres caused during the scouring process (Alpaca is usually less entangled than sheeps wool due to its low scale protrusion). The fibre is partially aligned (short and long fibres) and delivers what is called a carded sliver. A large amount of the burr and seed content is removed during this carding process.

## **GILLING**

Here the sliver is straightened and various slivers are blended together to obtain a uniform sliver of thickness and weight.

## **COMBING**

Combing is the process of removing those very short fibres (noil) and placing the fibres in a parallel formation. This produces what is called a “combed top.” During this