

# Identifying Superior Suri Alpaca Fleece

By Cameron Holt

**M**uch is said about what a superior fleece should look like, and does it mean more money. In my opinion:

- An elite fleece will hopefully be lustrous, finer and softer due to its low C of V, denser and longer, therefore having a greater fleece weight. Finer and more fleece weight = more money.
- Will the mills pay more money for excellence? Yes. There is a given price based on micron and style and the overall return per fleece is subject to the total fleece weight.

## *So, do we breed for the Average?*

No!! Definitely not. You should always select for excellence because in time that will be “the norm” and those with average fleece will be left behind.

## *So how do we recognise superior fleece?*

Look at all the characteristics and breed for the best of each characteristic.

- Lustre
- Acceptable fineness
- Softness (handle)
- Density of lock
- Good staple length over a 12 months growth period
- Lack of medullation
- Well nourished fibres
- Free flowing locks

## SUPERIOR TO GOOD STYLED FLEECE



*GOOD TWISTED RINGLET*



*SUPERIOR WAVE and TWISTED RINGLET*



*GOOD TIGHT TWISTED RINGLET*



*SUPERIOR CORKSCREW RINGLET*



*SUPERIOR -- LARGE WAVE and BROAD LOCK -- good lustre*



*GOOD -- LARGE WAVE and BROAD LOCK -- good lustre*

## AVERAGE TO POOR STYLE FLEECE



*AVERAGE RINGLET LACKING TWIST - SOME LUSTRE*



*AVERAGE RINGLET LACKING TWIST and LUSTRE*



*PLAIN with some lustre*



*LARGE WAVE and BROAD LOCK -- No lustre*



*NO STYLE OR LUSTRE*