



# Raising Alpacas:

Impact on Our Environment



# An Introduction

- Alpacas are the oldest domesticated herd animal, dating back to about 4000 BC.
- Alpacas live for over twenty years, and produce a single baby (called cria) once a year.
- They are quiet, gentle and require minimal care.



# Alpaca Fleece

- Highly desirable in modern textiles
- US cannot keep up with the demand in high-end clothing blends
- Clothing of alpaca fiber is warm, durable, soft & hypoallergenic
- Fiber comes in twenty-two natural colors



# Environmental Effects



- Effects are all positive!
- Solid waste (“paca-poo”) is small & relatively low odor
- Terrific fertilizer: Low protein in feces – can be composted with garden wastes or applied directly without burning
- No air or water pollutants

# Alpaca Products



- Fleece is sheared once a year in late spring.
- Yield is typically 5-8 pounds of raw fiber per animal.
- Fleece is processed into yarn, felt, rovings for knitters & fiber artists and finished products.



# Benefit to Maine's Economy



- Climate in Maine relatively similar to Andes highlands in South America.
- Cooler weather = more healthy, thick fleece!
- Number of Maine alpaca farms has more than tripled in the last 3-4 years! (source: Maine Alpaca Association)
- International demand for alpaca fiber!

# History of Alpacas

- Alpacas, llamas, vicunas, & guanacos descended from early camelids.
- Alpacas played a central role in the economy of early South American civilizations.
- Alpaca fiber reserved for royalty.
- Only white animals (fiber could be dyed) survived, others were eaten!



# History of Alpacas



- Alpacas nearly wiped out during Spanish conquest (An estimated 90% of the animals in South America slaughtered at that time)
- Native Americans saved the other 10% by retreating to the mountain regions, such as Machu Pichu.
- During that time, the animals learned to survive on low protein vegetation and cold climate.



# History of Alpacas



- Alpacas imported in 1983 to the US
- Currently there are >2000 alpaca farms and ranches, (and the number is growing rapidly!)

# Why Alpacas For Us?

- We chose to move to Maine & leave the stressful West Coast.
- Alpacas are livestock that you don't have to kill to enjoy their benefits.
- Alpacas are intelligent, curious, easy-keepers!



# Forticor Farms' Mission Statement



- To open our farm to visitors so that we can share our love of this special and gentle animal with our community



**The  
End**