



Why I Need an SRS® Alpaca Breeding Consultant for my Herd

By Dr Jim Watts, M.V.Sc., Ph.D.

The SRS® breeding system is based on maximising the density and length of fibres grown by the alpaca so that high fleece weights of fine diameter fibre of unsurpassed quality can be produced and placed in luxury retail markets.

To do this, each breeding program needs to be skilfully designed, carefully implemented and closely monitored.

The whole strategy is customer-led and demands a high level of quality control and expertise. We will only get one shot at this – if we breed and supply the wrong fibre, or if insufficient quantities of the right fibre are available (because not enough of it is being produced quickly enough), then the customer will be lost.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants know how to assess the fleece markers that indicate high density and length – the long and thin staples of deep crimp and high lustre and softness. They know the required standards which are high. They also know how to accurately position each animal according to these criteria so that the animals can be mated precisely to achieve the breeding objective.

Breeders who try to do it on their own do not often get it right because it is not that simple to assess density and length and combine it with the other features the animals must have – impeccable conformation, excellent constitution and high fertility.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants know when to recommend density and length tests and how to use this information to improve the breeding program.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants know the top males that are available and their breeding performances.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants know when to recommend embryo transfer, and when not to.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants have your commercial interests at heart. They are there to speed genetic improvement and promote suitable animals that you breed.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants will recommend to me which animals are worthy of certification.

SRS® alpaca Breeding Consultants will ask you to generate information that allows the genetic productivity of your herd to be assessed through AGE and by W/D3. These measures provide a means of independent assessment of an animal's worth and that of the herd.

Members are expected to have their animals classed at least every 2 years, depending on numbers. Booking for classing must be made by down loading the Herd Assessment Booking Form from the www.srsalpacas.com and sending it to the SRSAA office via email.