



Going Green with Alpacas

The North American Alpaca Federation
www.naalpaca.org

*Alpaca is as soft as wool, sleek as silk, light as a cloud and carbon neutral eco-friendly
Buy alpaca – it is eco-aware clothing*



“Agriculture is sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate and based on a holistic scientific approach.” *NGO Sustainable Agriculture Treaty*

Why waste yet more fossil fuels manufacturing petroleum-based synthetic fibers when the natural solution is in our own backyards? Alpaca fiber is:

- **Sustainable** – an ever-growing American herd and source of fiber is on the horizon
- **Natural** – not synthetic; not petroleum based like polyesters, acetates, acrylics, nylon, rayon (a wood pulp product which required dry-cleaning!) or Gore-tex. Cotton uses 25% of all **insecticides** applied to the crops. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deems seven of the top 15 **pesticides** used on U.S. cotton crops to be potential or known human carcinogens
- **Renewable** – unlike mink or baby seal, we do not kill the animal; we simply harvest the fleece
- **Durable** – archeologists have found remnants of Peruvian Inca alpaca textiles from centuries ago

There's more . . .

- Alpacas are the most agriculturally **environmentally friendly** of animals – they live lightly on the earth.
- Their soft padded feet do not cut into the topsoil.
 - Sheep and goats are much harder on the earth.
 - Damage to topsoil decreases long-term soil fertility and in the process, the soil is eroded and weed invasion is encouraged.
 - Alpacas are kinder to pasture, browsing on a variety of grasses and other plants without disrupting root systems, rather than overeating.
 - This allows faster pasture recovery and minimizes **soil erosion**.
 - Where cattle (leather) pull up grass by the roots and compress the soil, alpacas do not.
 - Alpacas can thrive in deserts and mountain plains, by doing something most other domesticated animals (and many humans) haven't been able to master: **They stop eating when they are full.**
 - They don't mind eating brush; fallen leaves and other “undesirable” vegetation, leaving the good stuff for species that don't have the stomach to digest such roughage.

- Alpacas' fur, referred to as fleece, grows quickly and is lighter, warmer and softer than most sheep wool.
- Alpacas **consume far less water** than most other herds. Their efficient 3-stomach digestive system metabolizes most of what they eat.
- Their pellet-like droppings are **Ph balanced** and an excellent, natural, slow release, **low odor fertilizer** and even **bio-fuel**.
- They lack upper, incisor teeth, so they do not chew and tear the native vegetation. Rather, they gently "cut" it against their palate, which **encourages the plants' growth**.
- **No chemicals** are employed either during feeding or during the industrial production of the fleece into fiber.
 - **Sheep fleece contain lanolin. A multi-step detergent wash is needed to remove most of the lanolin.**
 - No need for insecticides (cotton), herbicides and fertilizers which pollute the groundwater.
 - Alpacas come in nearly unlimited natural colors – offering a full array of choices with no **chemical dyes** required. But if desired, only 20% of a normal dye quantity is required.
 - **Manufacturing synthetic fibers is energy-intensive** and can release lung-damaging pollutants such as nitrogen and sulfur oxides, particulates, carbon monoxide and heavy metals into the air, as well as climate-warming carbon dioxide.
- Alpaca fleece **adapted to naturally resist intense solar radiation** in rarified mountainous atmosphere.
- Even the less desirable fleece (lower legs, britch, etc) is being used as **natural weed mats** around trees. (Yes, it is **biodegradable**)
- **Alpaca clothing breathes naturally**, unlike synthetics that cannot remove natural perspiration from next to the skin.
- Alpaca fiber is very strong (durable end products), does not require dehairing, it is easy to process (no lanolin) and **gives a high yield of end-product (twice the percentage that sheep yields)**.

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