



FIBER ENCYCLOPEDIA

Alpaca – Member of the Camelid family which produces luxuriously soft fiber.

Batt – A sheet of carded wool taken from a hand or drum carder.

Blanket – Prime fleece from shoulder, mid-section and rump (2 sides).

Blend – Yarn obtained by mixing alpaca with different types of fiber through combing or carding.

Blocking – the setting of yarn or garment.

Card – An implement used for opening and organizing fibers in order to spin them. There are 2 types of cards – hand and drum, both of which work to pull the fiber apart between two facing sets of wire points.

Character – The evaluation of good breeding through the overall evaluation of the fleece, i.e., handle, luster, staple length, density, softness and fineness.

Chili – Fleece that has consistencies of both Huacaya and Suri. Typically the fleece is coarser than Suri and has no crimp.

Classification – Once skirted, fleeces are sorted and graded as to type, color and quality prior to processing into yarn.

Combing – Another method used to separate and align fibers in preparation for spinning by using hand combs.

Core Sampling – A method used to objectively test the quality of the fleece. A sample is taken by drawing a narrow steel tube through the full length of a bale of fleece. This sample is used to test the average fiber diameter and yield of clean fiber.

Crimp – A natural waviness or curl along the length of the fiber.

Crinkle – The uneven wave along a single fiber. Differing from crimp, as crimp is uniform which encourages the fibers to form locks.

Debris – Any vegetable matter or dirt found in a fleece.

Density – The number of hair follicles per square inch (or millimeter) measured by counting the follicles on the skin.

Down – The finest hair, fur, fiber or feathers found on animals that have more than one coat of hair, fur, fiber or feathers.

Fiber – The individual strand produced out of a single follicle from a fiber producing animal. Non-fur or hair-like.

Fineness – The degree of quality of fiber or fleece which can be determined by touch or scientific measurement.

Fleece – The coat of an alpaca or other woolbearing animal in the shorn and unwashed state.

Flick Card – A small hand carder.

Guard Hairs – Thicker, wiry hairs – a medullated animal fiber.

Hand (handle) – The softness of fiber - how it “feels” when handled.

Histogram – The analysis of fiber utilizing scientific measurement and analysis. The analysis usually includes micron count, coefficient variation, standard variation and the percentage of fibers greater than 30 microns.

Huacaya – The most common type of alpaca in the World – has dense, fluffy fiber with the absence of guard hair.

Loft – Springiness of the fiber.

Lock – A naturally occurring single tuft of fleece (also called a staple).

Luster – A soft sheen caused by the light reflected from the rather large scales forming the cuticle of the fleece.

Matchings – Portions of fleece which have been sorted into different qualities.

Matting – Fiber that has been tangled or “matted”.

Medullated Fiber – The central hollow core found in medium or course alpaca or llama fibers. Coarse fiber (a.k.a. “guard hair”) consists of up to 90% medullated fiber.

Micron – The measure of the diameter of natural fibers (.0000394 inch, 1/25,000 of an inch, or 1/1,000 of a millimeter).

Noils – Short/ broken fibers which remain after the processing of any long fibers which cause lumps and bumps in the finished yarn. Noils reduce the durability and increase the incidence of pilling.

Prime Fleece – The best part of fleece; normally the blanket area. (Tui fleece is the best fleece that an animal will every produce – usually the first full 12 months after growth at shearing.)

Processing – The act of transforming raw fleece into yarn and other finished products.

Rolag – A preparation of short-stapled wools used for spinning made by carding the fibers, removing them into a rolled “tube” of fibers. This is done with the use of a hand or drum carder.

Roving – Long, even strand of carded fibers which has been slightly twisted. Used for spinning.

Scales – Flattened ridges that cover the fiber not visible to the naked eye. Predominant in huacaya fiber.

Scouring – The removal of dirt, grease and vegetable matter from fleece by thoroughly washing with soap or chemicals.

Second Cuts – Short pieces of fiber occurring due to inaccurate shearing.

Seconds – Fiber that is lesser quality than the prime fleece; usually from the upper leg and neck area.

Shearing – To remove the fleece from the animal with a hand clip or electric shearing blade.

Sliver – A continuous, untwisted strand of carded fibers.

Skirt – To remove areas of coarse, dirty or damaged fibers from the main fleece.

Specialty Fiber – Fleeces from the camelid family – alpaca, llama, vicuna guanaco, and camels; as well as fleeces from the goat family – mohair, cashmere, and angora.

Spinning – The act of twisting or drawing fibers into yarn.

Staple – A lock of fiber.

Staple Length – Length of fiber from root to tip of the lock.

Suri – One of two breeds of alpaca with straighter wool that hangs in lustrous, silky pencil-like locks similar to dreadlocks.

Tapada – Medium to long-wooled llama.

Wool – The hair or coat of a sheep, goat, llama, or alpaca, among other animals with similar coverings. In the US fiber industry, the word “wool” is trademarked as referring exclusively to sheep’s wool.



Woolmark – A mark used by the wool textile industry to guarantee that the article in question is made from pure sheep’s wool.

Yield – The amount of usable fiber after processing, or the difference between total and clean fleece weights.

Resources:

Fiber Micron Testing:

Yocom-McColl Testing Laboratories, Inc.
540 West Elk Place
Denver, Colorado 80216-1823
Phone: 303.294.0582

Alpaca Consultating USA
1540 San Bernardo Creek Road
Morro Bay, CA 93442
Phone: 805.772.1774

Official Alpaca Color Chart:

The Alpaca Registry, Inc.
Post Office Box 87
Kalispell, Michigan 59903
Phone: 406.755.3158
Website: www.alpacaregistry.net

Fleece Co-op:

Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America
Post Office Box 12356
Decatur, Tennessee 37322
Phone: 423.334.4298

Fiber Pools:

New England Alpaca Fiber Pool
Contact: Jan Hensle
Post Office Box 519
Adamsville, Rhone Island 02801
Phone: 401.626.4184
Website: www.neafp.com

Shearers:

Kathy Kowal
Marion, IN
Phone: 765.662.1658

Ruth Boyer/Maryl Shasteen
Columbia City, IN
Phone: 260.327.3563

Christi Barnhart
Mishawaka, IN
Phone: 574.257.4954

Dave Binkowski
Ionia, Michigan
Phone: 616.527.1137

Spinners & Weavers Magazines:

Spin-Off and Handwoven
Interweave Press
201 East Fourth Street
Loveland Colorado 80573
E-mail: handwoven@Interweave.com

Shuttle, Spindle, Dyepot
Handweavers Guild of America, Inc.
Two Executive Concourse, Suite 201
3327 Duluth Highway
Duluth Georgia 30096-3301

Fiber Processing Mills:

Frankenmuth Woolen Mill
570 South Main Street
Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 517.652.8121

Frontier Fiber Farm, LLC
7135 W 200 N
Warsaw, IN 46580
Phone: 574.298.4312

New England Alpaca Fiber Pool
(George Litchman & Sons)
994 Jefferson St.
Fall River, MA 02721
Phone: 401.624.4184
Website: www.neafp.com

Ohio Valley Natural Fibers
8541 Louderback Road
Sardinia, OH 45171-9603
Phone: 937.446.3045
Website: www.Ovnf.com

Zeilinger Wool Company
1130 Weiss Street

Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 877.767.2920
Website: www.Zwool.com