

Suri Fleece Characteristics – AAA Breed Standard

The suri carries a silky, soft-handling fleece that moves freely, yet hugs the body giving the animal a flat-sided appearance. The fleece hangs from a centre part - neck through to tail - with well-defined locks forming close to the skin and twisting uniformly to the ends. The overall effect is similar to the drape of a curtain of silk tassels.

The primary characteristics which distinguish a suri are its lock structure, high lustre, silky handle and long staple length. The ideal suri exhibits little medullation, resulting in uniformity throughout the fleece.

The most important characteristics of suri fleece in order of importance are:-

1. **Lustre and Lock Structure** - (these two qualities define suri fibre). Lustre is the sheen or pearliness in the fleece. The lock structure may be twisted, curled or pencilled. They should be well defined (referred to as architecture), narrow, independent, uniform and form close to the skin. The most highly desirable architecture has a firm uniform twisted lock. The locks should be consistent across the body commencing from the forelock and continuing through to the hocks. When the fleece is opened, the inside locks should be uniformly well defined and hang in similarly well-formed layers.
2. **Fineness and Handle** - A fine microned fleece has a soft handle. The handle of the suri should also have a silky, slippery feel and be evident throughout the body, ideally including the ears, forelock, muzzle, apron, belly, neck and legs.
3. **Density** - The hallmark of the ideal suri fleece is its compactness. This is synonymous with high fleece weights. A more rounded appearance can indicate volume (fluffiness) rather than density. Density is evident by gauging the solidity of lock (or thickness in terms of density, not broadness of lock), the number of locks over a relative area as well as the weight of the fleece.
4. **Lack of Medullation** - Ideally there should be little or no evidence of medullated fibres in the fleece.
5. **Lock Length** - The lock of a suri is relatively long and its fibre should grow one or two centimetres per year longer than a huacaya of similar age and micron.

Other determining factors are as for huacayas:- uniformity of micron, colour and length.

Colour

Suri fleece comes in varying shades of colour from white to black. In between there are shades of fawn, brown and grey including rose grey. Ideally the alpacas are solid in colour, but may be any combination of the above.

FAULTS

- Flat, open fleece with no lock definition (architecture)
- Medullation
- Chalkiness or lack of lustre
- Short staple length for age of fleece
- Coarse handle
- Lack of density
- Rounded appearance indicating fluffiness rather than density