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UNITY, LEGACY, AND SHARED FUTURE

Assuming the presidency of the International Alpaca Association (IAA) is for me a profound honor and a great responsibility. As the first woman in this role, I want to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors, composed of a diverse team that accompanies me, as well as to each of our members for the trust placed in me. This moment marks a milestone in the history of our institution: it shows that our industry is open to new voices and leadership, always in continuity with the values and objectives that unite us under the same purpose.

Our task is complex. The Alpaca Sector faces challenges from sustainability and environmental traceability to recognizing its cultural, social, and economic aspects. Initiatives like the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Alpaca help us gather scientific evidence supporting the sustainability of our fiber. Meanwhile, articles such as the one on the Andean Cosmovision remind us that raising camelids is not understood solely in terms of production, but rather as an ancestral practice that promotes balance, community, and respect for Pachamama.

But it is also vital to recognize those who are the root of it all: the high-Andean herders, guardians of our herds and of invaluable knowledge that we must protect and strengthen. From them to the companies that transform and the brands that bring our garments to the world, we form a "unique chain in the world" that we must safeguard and that deserves to work together to open new markets, innovate in design, and ensure that alpaca is globally recognized as Peru's flagship fiber and a symbol of sustainability.



This spirit of collaboration also guides our participation in Natural Fibre Connect (NFC), an international alliance that brings together the world's leading natural fibers. Being part of this space reinforces Alpaca's commitment to the global dialogue on sustainability and opens new opportunities for visibility and cooperation that we will share in upcoming editions.

The future of alpaca is in our hands: herders, producers, companies, designers, communities, and leaders. Only with unity, dialogue, and joint action can we face the challenges and seize the opportunities ahead. I invite you to contribute your energy and vision so that our fiber shines in the world with the strength it deserves.

"When we walk together, the horizon opens wider and clearer." May this be the spirit that guides our work at IAA.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Jessica Rodríguez". The script is fluid and elegant, with a large, stylized 'J' and 'R'.

Jessica Rodríguez
President
International Alpaca Association

FROM FIBER TO FOOTPRINT:

TRACKING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ALPACA WITH LCA

By Maria Wurzinger



Sustainability in livestock production encompasses three key dimensions: environmental, economic, and social. Each is crucial in ensuring long-term viability and responsible livestock sector development.

A sustainable livestock system strikes a balance between productivity, environmental stewardship, animal welfare, and economic viability. This involves adopting practices that reduce emissions, conserve natural resources, and enhance biodiversity. For example, improving feed efficiency through better nutrition and genetics can reduce methane emissions per unit of animal product.



Improved pasture management can enhance soil health and sequester carbon. Animal welfare and social equity also play key roles. At the same time, supporting smallholder farmers and rural communities through access to markets, technology, and training promotes livelihoods and food security.

Ultimately, policy frameworks, consumer behavior, and industry commitment all shape the sustainability of livestock production. Governments can promote sustainability through incentives and regulations, while informed consumers can drive demand for responsibly produced animal products.'

By aligning environmental, social, and economic goals, the livestock sector can transition toward more sustainable systems contributing to global food security while respecting planetary boundaries.

The textile industry increasingly strives to demonstrate that its products are produced sustainably. The demand for sustainably produced alpaca fiber is on the rise, which makes it essential for the alpaca industry to respond.



A study on the ecological footprint represents a significant first step in this direction.

A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) study covering farm production and alpaca fiber processing in the industry can provide crucial insights for evaluating environmental sustainability. Gathering the necessary data is both time-consuming and costly. Furthermore, it requires collaboration between the industry and the scientific community to achieve reliable results.

The Peruvian textile industry is addressing this challenge and collaborating with three universities and an NGO to conduct a Life Cycle Assessment study. The international cooperation between BOKU-University, Vienna, Austria; Iowa State University, USA; Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina, Peru; and Quechua Benefit, USA, ensures that expertise from various disciplines and profound knowledge of the local conditions of alpaca farming are incorporated into the study.



Figure 1

*LCA: Life Cycle Assessment

LCA strives to assess the whole life cycle of a product (See Figure 1), in our case, an alpaca sweater. Primary data (from alpaca farms and textile factories) and secondary data from experts and literature are used.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a comprehensive tool used to evaluate the environmental impacts of a product or process throughout its entire life cycle—from raw material extraction to production, use, and disposal.

In livestock production, LCA helps measure and understand the environmental footprint of animal products such as fiber, meat, milk, and eggs.

LCA assesses multiple impact categories, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, land use, water consumption, energy use, and nutrient pollution (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus runoff). By tracing inputs and outputs across each stage—feed production, animal husbandry, manure management, processing, and transport—LCA identifies key areas contributing to environmental impacts.

In livestock systems, LCA can support decision-making by revealing hotspots where efficiency can be improved, such as improving pasture management, improving manure treatment, or optimizing energy use.

Importantly, LCA provides a science-based, standardized framework to inform policy, guide sustainable farming practices, and respond to consumer demand for environmentally responsible products. As sustainability becomes a priority in agriculture, LCA is increasingly used to track progress and design more sustainable livestock production systems.



With the LCA study currently being prepared, the textile industry has a valuable tool at hand for identifying production hotspots and implementing measures for improvement. This will enable the textile industry to guarantee sustainable alpaca production in the long term and meet international consumers' demand for sustainably produced alpaca fiber.



ANDEAN COSMOVISION AND SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELIDS

By Daniel Aréstegui

The Andean cosmovision constitutes a complex system of thoughts and practices that have governed the lives of high-Andean peoples since pre-Hispanic times. Its essence lies in the interconnection between human beings, nature, and the sacred, where balance, reciprocity, and mutual respect are guiding principles. Within this framework, the raising of South American camelids—alpacas, llamas, vicuñas, and guanacos—is not reduced to an economic activity but becomes a living expression of this worldview. These animals simultaneously represent material sustenance, cultural identity, and a spiritual bond with Pachamama and the apus.

I. THE ANDEAN COSMOVISION: FOUNDATIONS AND PRINCIPLES



The Andean cosmovision is based on the idea that the universe is woven through multiple dimensions in balance. Among its main foundations are:

- Human–nature relationship: Pachamama is considered a living being that nourishes and sustains but also demands care and reciprocity.
- Duality and complementarity (Yanantin): opposites are not mutually exclusive but complementary (male–female, up–down, day–night).
- Reciprocity (Ayni): an ethical norm and practice that regulates fair exchange between people, community, and nature.
- Cyclicity of time: time is circular, marked by agricultural, astronomical, and life cycles.
- Sacredness of territory: mountains, rivers, and lagoons are sacred spaces that influence daily life and animal herding.



These principles organize not only spiritual relations but also economic and social ones, as observed in Andean pastoralism.

2. SOUTH AMERICAN CAMELIDS: CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL ANIMALS

South American camelids, domesticated more than 6,000 years ago, are a constitutive part of life in the Andes. Among their functions, we find:

Economic and subsistence functions:

- Alpaca and vicuña fiber, recognized worldwide for its quality.
- Llama and alpaca meat as a source of protein (charqui, chalonga).
- Transport and cargo through the llama.

Social and community functions:

- Herding is organized in the ayllu, where work is collective.
- Herding tasks strengthen ayni and minka.

Symbolic and ritual functions:

- In agricultural or Thanksgiving ceremonies, camelid fetuses (sullu) are offered to Pachamama.
- Herds are blessed during festivities, such as the Chaccu of vicuñas or the marking of alpacas, which unite ritual and productive aspects.



3. THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY IN HERDING

- An Andean saying affirms: "We raise alpacas, and alpacas raise us." This expression synthesizes the logic of interdependence:
- The herder feeds, protects, and guides the animals in the high Andean wetlands.
- The camelids provide wool, meat, and transport, ensuring family subsistence.
- The exchange is not utilitarian but reciprocal and sacred, since animals are also understood to "give their life" to maintain the community's balance.



4. TERRITORY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Camelid herding develops in fragile high-mountain ecosystems: wetlands and natural pastures. There, sustainable management practices based on ancestral knowledge have been developed:

Pasture rotation to avoid overexploitation.
Use of reservoirs and canals for water management in arid areas.

Selection of fibers and colors through planned breeding, transmitted across generations.

This knowledge ensures the conservation of herds and the ecosystem, today recognized as part of the Andes' biocultural heritage.



5. SPIRITUALITY AND RITUAL OF CAMELIDS

Camelids are not seen as mere productive animals, but as beings with spirit (ánimas), linked to tutelary deities. In this sense:

- Offering rituals (pago a la tierra, challas, sahumeros) reinforces the spiritual bond.
- The marking of alpacas, besides being a herding practice, is a ceremonial act in which protection of the herds is requested from the apus.
- The vicuña, considered sacred in Inca times, was sheared in collective ceremonies under strict regulation, a practice maintained in the Chaccu.



CONCLUSION

The Andean cosmovision and the raising of South American camelids form an inseparable unity. The principles of reciprocity, complementarity, and respect for nature are expressed in the relationship between herders and their herds, where economy, spirituality, and sustainability intertwine. Beyond their economic importance, camelids are bearers of profound symbolism that reinforces cultural identity and the sense of belonging to the Andes.

In a globalized world facing environmental crises, this model of herding reminds us that our relationship with nature must be one of balance and reciprocity, and that ancestral Andean wisdom offers valuable keys for thinking about sustainability in the present and the future.



41ST ANNIVERSARY OF IAA

By Erika Flores

On July 11, the International Alpaca Association (IAA) celebrated 41 years of institutional life since its founding in 1984, holding the Commemorative Ceremony for the 41st Anniversary of IAA at the Jorge Basadre Auditorium of Promperú in Lima.

During the ceremony, the IAA Sustainability Strategy for Peru's alpaca sector to 2030 was presented, along with updates on the Life Cycle Assessment – LCA Alpaca Study, still under development and led by BOKU University of Vienna (Austria), Iowa State University (USA), National Agrarian University La Molina (Peru), and Quechua Benefit (USA).

The event was attended by Mr. Ángel Manero, current Minister of Agrarian Development and Irrigation of Peru, and featured special recognition for various

representatives of Peru's main public institutions that have become strategic allies not only for IAA but for the alpaca sector, such as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), PROMPERÚ, Ministry of Production, National Alpaca Commission (CONALPACA), Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI), Institute of Production Technology, AGROMERCADO, and the CITE Textile Camelids Arequipa.

Finally, on this special date, IAA reaffirms its commitment to the alpaca value chain and expresses gratitude to the participation and dedication of each of its members: textile companies, specialized professionals, herders, and honorary members from Peru and around the world.





ALPACA DAY 2025

As part of Peru’s National Alpaca Day, celebrated every August 1st, the International Alpaca Association, in partnership with the Civil Association Alpaca from Perú and on behalf of the Regional Camelid Board of Arequipa, held the Alpaca National Forum 2025 at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Arequipa. This event addressed key issues for the alpaca sector, such as innovations in alpaca breeding, new market trends for alpaca fiber, MIDAGRI alpaca projects, among others.

The forum was attended by the Minister of Agrarian Development and Irrigation, Mr. Ángel Manero, and the Minister of Production, Mr. Sergio Gonzales, who highlighted the fundamental role of alpaca as an economic engine for more than 150,000 families in Peru and reaffirmed their commitment to the sector. Additionally, as part of Alpaca Day celebrations, an exhibition of alpacas and llamas took place at Yanahuara Plaza in Arequipa. During the main ceremony, special recognition was given to outstanding alpaca breeders, artisans, and SMEs, highlighting their effort, commitment, and contribution to the sustainable development of the sector. The event closed with a fashion show featuring renowned brands and institutions such as Anntarah, Sol Alpaca, Incalpaca, CITE Textil Camelidos Arequipa, and CITE Arequipa.



The event was made possible thanks to the support of companies and institutions committed to the alpaca sector, such as Michell & Cía., Grupo Inca, BCP, CITE Textil Camelidos Arequipa, CITE Arequipa, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Arequipa, the Municipality of Yanahuara District, and the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation. Together, they created a space for dialogue, exchange of proposals, and multisectoral collaboration, involving regional authorities, guilds, artisans, researchers, and companies, thus strengthening and developing the sector for the benefit of high-Andean rural communities.



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