Storage techniques of alpaca fibre prior to processing in industries

Satyanarayn Panigrahi
University of Saskatchewan, Canada, sap382@mail.usask.ca

Radhey Lal Kushwaha
University of Saskatchewan, Canada, lal.kushwaha@usask.ca

Sujata Panigrahi
University of Saskatchewan, Canada, sup292@mail.usask.ca

Written for presentation at the
CSBE/SCGAB 2013 Annual Conference
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
7-10 July 2013

ABSTRACT There are an estimated 25,000 alpacas and 4,000 alpaca producers in Canada. Each year every animal produces a fleece that could potentially be converted to fibre products such as socks, gloves, hats or other apparel, yarn, or home décor such as rugs and blankets. Producers shear the animal and store the fleece. Producers are sending their fibre to textile mills to process without giving proper attention to pre-handling the fibre and wait for a long time to process. It is estimated that on an average a producer stores the material 4 to 6 months before sending to a mill and mill then stores the fibre for another 6 to 14 months prior to processing. Long storage period deteriorate the quality of fibre and its product due to current storage practice. The current practice of fleece handling, fleece packaging and storage conditions are not ideal in reference to fibre quality. Producers should systematically handle alpaca fibre staring from the pre-shearing to storage stage to obtain a good quality product. Fibre sorting, cleaning, washing, drying and packaging are very important for fibre processing. This paper looked at the present practices of storage of alpaca fibre and developed the systematic storage procedure for consistent quality of the fibre and final products.

Keywords: Alpaca fibre, storage, fibre processing, environmental stress, Packaging