



BIOGRAPHY CAMERON HOLT

Born in the mid 1940's to a farming father and a mother who was the daughter of a wool buyer, Cameron seemed destined to join the fibre industries.

He attended school in Melbourne with many visits back to the family farm. This involved not only sheep work but many hours on the tractor turning the soil etc.

When he left secondary College he attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (now RMIT University) where he studied the wool classing course for skills not only in classing, but selling and buying wool. Cameron spent six months at a wool classing facility then joined a woolbroking firm where he had a six month cadetship and then moved to the wool store to

become a "junior wool valuer".

In 1966 Cameron took up the position of "Wool Valuer" in the Australian Estates Portland wool store (Western District of Victoria, Australia).

Cameron was responsible for the preparation of the wool sale and also spent time in the local area advising clients on wool and classing sheep for them. Although learning to judge wool in Melbourne his main judging adventures started here at Portland. Some years later Cameron moved back to Melbourne

Australian Estates had requests from wool clients (who also had angora goats) to start a rehandling centre for mohair. This was done with Cameron being given the job to make it work. The fibre was received in containers ranging from wool bales to shopping bags (just like the start of the alpaca classing.) It was during this time that wool and mohair buyer, David Williams and Cameron developed a working relationship and they have maintained this in the alpaca classing area today. Cameron continued with his studies, particularly in fibre measurement and Mohair production.

His talents were quite broad, from breeding and flock management of sheep and goats (in later years Alpacas), to classifying and valuing wool in the company stores, as well as on the wool production farms for the international wool markets. He advised wool growers on fibre preparation, flock improvement, animal classing, purchasing of stud stock and also arranging farm finance. His experience also included management (Mohair department of this Company).

In the early 1970's, Cameron conducted fieldwork where fibre sampling of sheep was required, so enabling classing by fibre measurement to take place.

After some 20 years with "Estates" Cameron was approached to join the education side of wool and allied fibres (Melbourne Institute of Textiles). After teacher training and receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Teaching, he conducted training in wool, mohair and cashmere classing.

Cameron jointly wrote the curriculum for the Mohair Certificate and developed the original curriculum for the Cashmere Production Certificate, as well as project manager for the development of the two wool Associate Diploma's of Applied Science and one Advanced Certificate in Shearing Shed Management.

Cameron first became involved with the Australian alpaca industry when working at the Melbourne Institute of Textiles. Because of his background and long association with wool, mohair and cashmere industries, Cameron was asked by the founding fathers of the Australian Alpaca Association to develop an education program and to advise and set up standards for both the testing and judging of alpaca fleece. Because there was little written about Alpacas in modern times, knowledge needed to be obtained, so a research program commenced in 1990 initially using the Purumbete alpaca herd of Roger Haldane

An alpaca training syllabus was developed and as a result of this research project, he developed a sampling procedure for alpaca fleece to be tested.

Throughout the next decade Cameron spent countless weekends educating alpaca breeders about the qualities of alpaca via a series of workshops all around Australia, while continuing to conduct valuable research.

Cameron proudly lays claim to being the ring steward at the first ever alpaca show in Australia (Melbourne) in 1991, which was judged by the well-known Peruvian vet, Dr Walter Bravo.

In 1995 Cameron went to the USA to conduct a training course in Portland (Oregon). He judged the fleece and co judged the halter under the ALSA system. At Mike Safley's request he helped develop some of the fleece screening characteristics for the US screening protocol.

He was also asked to demonstrate the Australian shearing of alpacas and had the alpacas stretched out on the ground for this process. Up until then in the USA they were all shorn standing up. Not long after the shearer had shorn a couple of alpacas, Cameron had a tap on the shoulder from Animal Welfare informing him that if he continued this cruelty to the animals he would be arrested. The rest were shorn standing up.

In 1997 Cameron and his wife were invited to join an American group to attend the Fiesta in Arequipa, Peru which gave him the opportunity to meet with leaders of the Peruvian textile industries. Whilst there he also was able to meet the famous breeder Don Julio Barreda and legendary judge, Julio Sumar of whom he has become good friends.

Cameron became Head of the Wool and Fibre studies department of R.M.I.T. University School of Textiles (formally the Melbourne Institute of Textiles), where he was responsible for the delivery of the training for the Wool and allied fibres Industries.



Early in the year 2000 Cameron was asked to participate in training for the first AOBA judging scheme. He became a member of the show committee for a number of years as well as being on the initial judges committee. He wrote training manuals for the committee on fleece assessment, both on and off the Alpaca and conducted along with a veterinarian, who did the conformational structure, the initial judge training program for AOBA. He as a senior trainer for AOBA continued for a number years doing this training.

It was also in 2000 when Cameron visited Britain to attend and speak at their first National conference. Cameron's wide-ranging knowledge in commercial fleece and textile matters, combined with his practical research into alpaca characteristics has led to his being sought after by Alpaca Associations all around the world. He has been instrumental in setting up the judging standards for alpaca fleece, not only in Australia but in the USA, UK, Canada and New Zealand.

He has provided Alpaca education on fleece and animal characteristics including judging criteria to alpaca breeders in all these countries and worked extensively with the AAA to initially implement and then re-evaluate their fleece standards as required.

He has been a Competition Judge for the Wool, Cashmere, Mohair and Alpaca industries and is currently judging and training Judges for the Australian Alpaca Association. Cameron as a senior AOBA

fleece judge, judged for many years in the US as well as in Britain, Canada and New Zealand to also judge.

Cameron has published 5 Animal fibre research papers (3 jointly), as well as Course Manuals for Alpaca Production, Mohair Production and Cashmere Production.

In more recent times Cameron has been the main contributor to two documents written and published exclusively for the AAA.

These are:

The Shearing Shed & Pre Classing Code of Practice, originally produced in 2006 and revised in 2011

The Alpaca Classing Code of Practice, the first such standard for alpaca developed anywhere in the world and just completed this year.

In 2012 Cameron was honoured for his work to the Alpaca Industries in Britain and Australia with Life Memberships to their organisations. In June 2013, Cameron was awarded the "AOBA Distinguished Judge Award" to recognize the lasting and significant contributions to the alpaca industry he had made which was well beyond general expectation.

In 2014 Cameron finally put together his knowledge in a book titled "A Definitive Guide to Alpaca Fibre".

Cameron has now had some 50years in the fibre industries. He is still conducting training programs on a global basis in alpaca fibre preparation and selection and continues to consult internationally with various alpaca organisations, as well as writing articles for various magazines. Cameron continues with his research into Alpaca fibre.



In his semi retirement of grandchildren, golf, fishing and community support, still manages to find time to continue with his commitment to the Alpaca industry.