



Submission by the Australian Alpaca Association Limited to the Australian Government Agriculture Competitiveness White Paper

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1. SYNOPSIS

The Australian Alpaca Association Limited (“**AAAL**”) acknowledges that consistent with our industry, the Australian Government wants an agriculture sector that lasts, and a sector that grows and delivers a greater return to our nation.

We recognize that the White Paper will be the Government’s vehicle for planning to grow agriculture’s competitiveness, farm gate profitability and contribute to Australia’s prosperity, including the growth of our rural and regional communities. In this regard it will be the platform for enhancing the contribution of agriculture to economic growth, employment creation and national prosperity through increased innovation, productivity, investment and trade.

AAAL is aware of various issues impacting the competitiveness of our industry as well as the broader Australian Agriculture community. Our submission specifically addresses:

- *Food security in Australia and the world through the creation of a stronger and more competitive agriculture sector;*
- *Means of improving market returns at the farm gate, including through better drought management;*
- *Access to investment finance, farm debt levels and debt sustainability;*
- *The efficiency and competitiveness of inputs to the agriculture value chain such as skills, training, education and human capital, research and development, and critical infrastructure;*
- *The effectiveness of regulations affecting the agriculture sector, including the extent to which regulations promote or retard competition, investment and private sector-led growth;*
- *Opportunities for enhancing agricultural exports and new market access; and*
- *Other issues critical to agriculture competitiveness.*

AAAL hopes to see outcomes from the White Paper that will facilitate the growth and competitiveness of the Australian Alpaca Industry and cement its place within the broader Australian agricultural sector. To that end we submit the following:

1. In partnership with Government take advantage of the unique growth opportunities in commercial alpaca farming by:

- **Assisting with funding for training of Alpaca Wool Classers as this will lead to industry facilitating collection and collation of fleece for processing.**
- **Assisting with promotion of the healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat through a coordinated approach of educating the retail sector.**
- **Assist with funding of research and development into:**
 - **The development of efficient de-hairing machinery for alpaca fleece and the processing of suri alpaca fleece; and**
 - **The production of high quality and sustainable alpaca meat.**



- 2. A collaborative partnership between Government, the alpaca industry and alternative industries by Government subsidizing field trials for the farming of alpacas.**
- 3. Government, in partnership with existing Australian export suppliers to the alpaca industry, review overseas manufacturing processes for scouring, spinning and weaving/knitting to determine if these services can be supplied efficiently and cost effectively in Australia.**
- 4. A continued long term financial investment by Government into Agri-Food Skills Australia.**
- 5. Financial investment into training by Commonwealth into the agriculture sector.**
- 6. Improved harmonization of State and Territory regulation in respect of biosecurity, and other aspects of animal health and welfare to promote good farm practices and education efforts, therefore ensuring compliance with legislation.**
- 7. Continued strong support and promotion of biosecurity practices from Government, through facilitation of supportive policies, legislation and programs, as well as ongoing assistance with funding of Animal Health Australia.**
- 8. In pursuing Free Trade Agreements with other nations, the Australian Government should not compromise Australia's national interest in relation to biosecurity.**
- 9. Support for Australia's "clean and green" image, providing our livestock industries with a competitive advantage in a range of export markets.**
- 10. In partnership with Government that AAAL takes advantage of the unique growth opportunities in the export of the alpaca product by promotion of and/or research into:**
 - **Supply of the genetic pool;**
 - **Australian Alpaca fibre as a quality product in isolation or as a blend with other fibres;**
 - **The healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat and its supply in frozen or chilled packaging; and**
 - **Australian Alpaca hide as a potential high end exclusive fashion product.**
- 11. Associations like AAAL are given access to resources within ABARES who can produce world class economic and scientific research, forecasts, statistics and other analysis on sound and broadly accepted economic and scientific concepts and principles which would enable our industry to have quantitative information for potential investors.**

To this end the **AAAL** welcomes the Government's development of an Agriculture Competiveness White Paper and looks forward to making a valuable contribution to its evolution as an interested stakeholder.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Alpaca Association Limited (“**AAAL**”) is a peak national body for the Australian Alpaca Industry which is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee.

The objects of the Company are to promote and advance the breed and husbandry of alpacas as an agricultural resource of Australia as follows:

- (a) To promote and advance in Australia the breeding and husbandry of alpacas as an agricultural industry, the purity of the alpaca breed, the harvesting, beneficiation, manufacture and marketing of alpaca products, and the industries associated with those activities;
- (b) To establish and operate a register or registers of alpacas and breeders in Australia and other countries;
- (c) To establish codes of ethics in respect of Members' alpaca-related business activities and to enforce those codes;
- (d) To make representations to Governments in Australia and in other countries about matters affecting Members' alpaca-related business activities;
- (e) To conduct (alone or in co-operation with other companies, agricultural societies or associations) field days, shows, exhibitions, competitions, sales and seminars dealing with alpacas and alpaca products;
- (f) To commission and conduct research of all kinds into alpaca breeding, husbandry and products and as to the marketing, commercialization and use of the end product of such activities, and of alpaca-related industries;
- (g) To establish and operate an alpaca stud book for Members in Australia and other countries;
- (h) To advance Members' interests in respect of owning and breeding alpacas for profit; and
- (i) To advance and promote alpaca breeding and husbandry and the end products of those activities.

The **AAAL** comprises of over 2,000 members from all Australian States and Territories (with the exception of the Northern Territory), divided amongst thirteen regions namely:

New South Wales

- Central Coast and Hunter
- Central Western
- Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains
- Southern
- Sydney Coast and Highlands

Queensland
Southern Queensland/Northern NSW
South Australia
Tasmania
Victoria

- Victoria Central
 - Victoria Eastern
 - Victoria Western
-

Western Australia

The **AAAL** welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper and has prepared this submission on behalf of its members and the Australian Alpaca Industry to assist the Federal Government in developing the White Paper. In considering the 'Terms of Reference' our submission addresses:

- *Food security in Australia and the world through the creation of a stronger and more competitive agriculture sector;*
- *Means of improving market returns at the farm gate, including through better drought management;*
- *Access to investment finance, farm debt levels and debt sustainability;*
- *The efficiency and competitiveness of inputs to the agriculture value chain such as skills, training, education and human capital, research and development, and critical infrastructure;*
- *The effectiveness of regulations affecting the agriculture sector, including the extent to which regulations promote or retard competition, investment and private sector-led growth;*
- *Opportunities for enhancing agricultural exports and new market access; and*
- *Other issues critical to agriculture competitiveness.*

Hence this submission links these 'Terms of Reference' to the Australian Agriculture landscape with a focus on the Australian Alpaca Industry by putting forward outcome based solutions for the Government's consideration and ultimate support.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPACA INDUSTRY

Broadly speaking the South American Camelid (SAC) industry includes **AAAL**, Australasian Alpaca Breeders Association and Lama Association of Australia. However **AAAL** has the largest and broadest membership and due to its early leadership on a range of industry matters has been recognised by Governments as the peak industry body for SACs.

Specifically, in regard to the **AAAL**, we represent the Australian Alpaca Industry on behalf of our members as follows.

- Each of our thirteen regions is supported by a local committee under the direction of the **AAAL** Board via its constitution. The regions generally manage local promotions, host events and assist in growing the industry.
- The regions form an integral part of the **AAAL** and their income is used to provide for marketing the product, hosting local events, informing and educating the Australian public about alpacas and their contribution to Australian Agriculture.

4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPACA INDUSTRY

The Australian Alpaca Industry plays an essential role in supporting the Australian community, both economically and socially. Women are key members and producers of alpacas in Australia. Development of youth programs and exposure to the industry occurs through school programs and youth groups.

This role is defined within various interrelationships depicted by the following statistics as at 31 December 2013:

- International and domestic membership base of close to 2,000
- Registered herd size in excess of 166,000
- Estimated national population (registered and unregistered) of greater than 200,000
- Estimated herd value of around \$300,000,000
- Estimated fleece (fibre) production 500,000 kg annually
- Estimated market value of clip \$12 million
- Exporter of fleece (fibre) production
- Key agriculture employer

From the statistics provided, it is safe to conclude that the Australian Alpaca Industry is an important player in the Australian Agriculture sector.

5. AUSTRALIAN ALPACA INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

Industry Contributors	The Industry	Customers – Deliverables
Breeders, Studs	Breeders	Government
Veterinarians	Administrators	Sponsors
Utility Providers	Owners	Hospitality Services
Feed Providers	Professional	Bed and Breakfast
Product Providers	Hobbyists (25%) ¹	Agriculture Societies
Commercial Investors	Farm Hands	Consumers

From an industry perspective, the total size of the Australian Alpaca Industry and the contribution it makes to the Australian economy is highlighted by the number and variety of industry stakeholders.

6. INTERNATIONAL ALPACA SCENE

In many countries, alpacas are used commercially or for a hobby. Within the major countries that operate a professionally run alpaca industry, Australia is recognized as a world leader. Refer to the below Table for a comparison of Australia's status compared to other major countries that farm alpacas.

	Australia	Bolivia	Canada	Chile	England	New Zealand	Peru	USA
Herd Size	166,000	150,000	27,000	75,000	25,000	14,000	2.5M	168,000

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Other countries with recognized Alpaca industries but not enough animals to be listed in the above table include France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, South Africa and Spain.

¹ Australian Alpaca Stud Size Distribution Schedule as at 31 March 2014

² Alpaca Culture – spring 2012 edition

7. DISCUSSION ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) *“Food security in Australia and the world through the creation of a stronger and more competitive agriculture sector”*

The Alpaca industry recognizes that it has a boutique product which is attractive to niche markets. Alpaca fibre, meat and hide products are positioned as premium end products, and to take advantage of this status we must harness our competitive advantages to ensure the industry is commercially attractive and ultimately viable long term to all investors. We must also learn and share from advanced and well established agriculture industries.

The Alpaca industry does provide the Australian Agriculture sector with growth opportunities for the entrepreneurial investor; the alpaca is lean, environmentally friendly, has highly soft fibre and in the future should be thought of as a holistic commodity.

Alpaca meat is currently available in upmarket restaurants such as the Berry Hotel and Mancora Restaurant at Marrickville, New South Wales. It is one of the healthiest and most flavoursome meats in the world as the meat is lean, tender and almost sweet.

It is not well known in the retail sector nor is it available in large production quantities should demand significantly increase in the short term, nonetheless we see the growth of the commercial meat sector as a longer term objective.

We recommend:

In partnership with Government that AAAL takes advantage of the unique growth opportunities in commercial alpaca farming by:

- ***Assisting with funding for training of Alpaca Wool Classers as this will lead to industry facilitating collection and collation of fleece for processing.***
- ***Assisting with promotion of the healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat through a coordinated approach of educating the retail sector.***
- ***Assist with funding of research and development into:***
 - ***The development of efficient de-hairing machinery for alpaca fleece and the processing of suri alpaca fleece; and***
 - ***The production of high quality and sustainable alpaca meat.***

(b) “Means of improving market returns at the farm gate, including through better drought management”

The Alpaca industry is sustainable as the animal is suited to drought related environments, given they are a cousin to the camel, and can be farmed on diverse and even marginal country. Furthermore they have a:

- Low impact on fragile soils compared with European livestock; and
- Small carbon footprint compared to other traditional livestock.

The alpaca provides diversification as an agricultural risk management tool and for example offers:

- Integration and use of infrastructure for other livestock;
- Buffering against changes (rise and fall) in commodity pricing for natural fibre, hide and meat; and
- An alternative income stream to compliment current farming enterprises.

AAAL believes we can grow the industry by encouraging famers to embrace alpacas as an alternative to their current herds, such as sheep, cattle, pigs and the like.

Similar to sheep, alpacas need to be valued as a total commodity package (i.e. fleece, meat and hide). With increased supply we can meet the ever increasing demand.

In partnership with other agriculture industries, for example sheep, trials could be conducted on properties on how to efficiently farm the alpaca from their top performing farms.

The industry itself would source trial partners but collaboration and potential funding assistance from Government could induce farmers to take part in the trials.

We see the field trials as the avenue to explore and enlighten existing livestock famers on the benefits of breeding, wool production, meat and hide of alpacas.

We understand the sheep industry has previously undergone such trials with ‘new breeds’ being assessed in conjunction with university studies.

We recommend:

A collaborative partnership between Government, the alpaca industry and alternative industries by Government subsidizing field trials on alpaca farming.

(c) “Access to investment finance, farm debt levels and debt sustainability”

The Australian Alpaca Industry is largely self-funded but there is a requirement to develop manufacturing infrastructure which should lead to job creation in regard to fleece processing.

Processing of Australian alpaca fleece is conducted in Australia on a very limited, boutique/niche product basis (mini-mills, specialist processors), with only one scouring facility available in Victoria.

Scouring, spinning and weaving/knitting are generally carried out in New Zealand and Peru, who are Australia’s major competitors.

We recommend:

In partnership with Government and existing Australian export suppliers to the alpaca industry (ie, Australian Alpaca Fleece Limited and Valeiris) we review overseas manufacturing processes for scouring, spinning and weaving/knitting to determine if these services can be supplied efficiently and cost effectively in Australia.

(d) “The competitiveness of the Australian agriculture sector and its relationship to food and fibre processing and related value chains , including achieving fair returns”

No specific comment in regard to this term of reference.

(e) “The contribution of agriculture to regional centres and communities, including ways to boost investment and jobs growth in the sector and associated regional areas”

Some alpaca producers are located in regional areas, providing opportunity for job creation on farms (handlers, shearers, fleece classers) and in associated processing facilities, distribution and tourism. Producers also support local business in these areas (ie, produce/rural stores, feed merchants).

(f) “The efficiency and competitiveness of inputs to the agriculture value chain — such as skills, training, education and human capital, research and development, and critical infrastructure”

The Alpaca industry acknowledges that another key to its short and long term growth, and ultimately competitiveness, is to invest in its human resources. Through increased training and education we feel it will lead to an increase in industry based skills and, in turn, opportunities.

To date the industry has endeavoured to improve the skills of its participants through the establishment of standards for several fleece protocols. In summary the protocols are:

- a. Fleece training course aligned with the National Training Council of Australia;
- b. Quality Assured Alpaca Classing Code of Practice (first in the world for Alpaca);
- c. Contract with Australian Wool Exchange Ltd (AWEX) to register and audit qualified alpaca classers (first in the world for Alpaca); and
- d. Agreement with the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA) to test and issue a certificate of results on each bale.

AAAL has an association and is working closely with Agri-Food Skills Australia to develop and/or deliver on training packages already available for like industries, and do encourage long term commitment from Government to invest in Agri-Food Skills Australia to enable them to further develop and roll out training for industries such as ours.

We are of the opinion that the industry needs funding to subsidise not only Agri-Food Skills Australia to develop the training modules but TAFE Colleges to deliver Certificate II, III and IV in Agriculture embracing specified alpaca units. This will enable participants to be registered and practice alpaca classing to a quality assured standard.

We do note that several State Governments have withdrawn funding from these courses, making the courses financially unattractive when compared to other disciplines.

We estimate that funding in the order of \$50,000 for Train the Trainer courses and \$187,500 for student subsidies for the initial intake (ie, 75 students @\$2,500 per course) would be required by industry if we were to undertake this exercise in isolation.

The outcomes from this investment will be the ability for the Australian alpaca producer to deliver a world market standard quality assured product to meet the demands of the luxury fibre market.

We recommend:

A continued long term financial investment by Government into Agri-Food Skills Australia and specifically a financial investment into training in the agriculture sector.

(g) “The effectiveness of regulations affecting the agriculture sector, including the extent to which regulations promote or retard competition, investment and private sector-led growth”

In relation to regulation of our sector, we are mindful that much of the regulation impacting on our members and industry has been developed to ensure access to domestic and overseas markets for the larger extensive grazing industries, as well as to protect human health. Although still a developing industry, **AAAL** reiterates its commitment to being a good corporate citizen through promoting awareness of, and compliance with, relevant legislative and regulatory requirements within our industry.

The Association strongly supports and promotes good biosecurity practice within the industry and looks to Governments to facilitate this through supportive policies, legislation and programs, as well as assistance with funding of Animal Health Australia to develop practical farm biosecurity tools in partnership with Governments and industry.

We believe the Australian community expects Government to take all necessary steps to ensure our food is safe and to provide a regulatory framework that appropriately balances the welfare of farmed animals, environmental concerns and the profitability of farming enterprises.

It is **AAAL**’s view that in pursuing Free Trade Agreements with other nations, the Australian Government should not compromise Australia’s national interest in relation to biosecurity.

It is imperative that Australia maintains the highest possible standards of biosecurity.

In our view, Australia’s “clean and green” image, and ensuring this is a reality not just a perception, provides our livestock industries with a competitive advantage in a range of export markets. Effective quarantine and other biosecurity measures to prevent the incursion or minimize the impact of exotic plant and animal diseases are also essential to keep farm input costs (eg for herbicides and pesticides) to a minimum, thus facilitating enterprise profitability.

In the biosecurity area, we have not identified any regulations that are disproportionate to the risks they are supposed to address. However, for a developing industry such as ours, harmonization of State/Territory regulation in respect to biosecurity and other aspects of animal health and welfare would greatly assist our Association’s efforts to promote good farm practices and education efforts to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. For example, there is variability between jurisdictions in regard to whether compensation might be payable to producers whose animals are destroyed as part of an emergency animal disease response.

AAAL generally supports regulatory efforts that aim to improve animal welfare. The Association lauds the efforts of all Australian Governments in developing and implementing uniform national standards for transport of livestock. However, there are some other areas of contention within our industry as well as variations in practice between producers and jurisdictions. The castration of male alpaca and minor dental procedures (eg trimming of overgrown front teeth) are governed by variable

State/Territory regulation. Apart from the lack of uniformity between jurisdictions which impedes our education efforts, there is also a lack of research data to support best practice in these areas. In NSW, for example, the law allows that only a vet may castrate an alpaca (even under 6 months of age). This is a significant production cost for larger, commercial producers but there is only very limited research data addressing the relevant animal health and welfare considerations. The Association is actively pursuing sources of assistance to help us in answering research questions in our priority areas.

We believe the Commonwealth is best placed to provide leadership in promoting the harmonization of State/Territory regulation where this will aid in reducing production costs and improve the opportunities for commercialization within our industry, as well as ensuring best practice in biosecurity. We are concerned that the abolition of Standing Council on Primary Industries and Primary Industry Standing Committee may reduce the opportunities and capacity for inter-jurisdictional collaboration in Australia.

The Association has viewed with concern the downgrading of endemic disease control capacity in several jurisdictions in recent years, including reductions in the numbers of field officers available to assist industry. The reduction in oversight of Johnes' disease in some states is a case in point. However, we would concede this may provide an opportunity for livestock industries to drive home the need for those closest to the problem (ie, producers themselves) to take action to mitigate their risks.

We recommend:

Improved harmonization of State and Territory regulation in respect of biosecurity, and other aspects of animal health and welfare to promote good farm practices and education efforts, therefore ensuring compliance with legislation. National uniformity will build consistency and it will make life simpler for businesses and consumers, while continuing to provide the necessary protections and access for consumers and the community.

Continued strong support and promotion of biosecurity practices from Government, through facilitation of supportive policies, legislation and programs, as well as ongoing assistance with funding of Animal Health Australia to develop practical farm biosecurity tools in partnership with governments and industry.

That in pursuing Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) with other nations, the Australian Government should not compromise Australia's national interest in relation to biosecurity.

Strong support for Australia's "clean and green" image, and ensuring this is a reality not just a perception, provides our livestock industries with a competitive advantage in a range of export markets.

(h) “Opportunities for enhancing agricultural exports and new market access”

In relation to enhancing agricultural exports and new market access for our sector, we are mindful that there are significant opportunities but to realise these, consistent with our view on biosecurity, we strongly support further enhancement of Australia’s “clean and green” image to provide our livestock industries with a competitive advantage.

Alpaca fibre is one of nature’s wonder fibres and the Federal Member for New England and Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, said with the industry in a consolidation phase the future is as marvellous as the fabric that can be produced. Mr Joyce, speaking from the lawns of Parliament House said the celebration of Australian Alpaca Week indicated a pivotal time for alpaca producers as it moved towards a whole of animal production system.³

Furthermore, Australia has a reputation as being a world leader in alpaca genetics. In late February 2014, a herd of pregnant alpacas was flown out to establish a new industry in Turkey.⁴ The export is the first such deal with the Turkish Government to breed high quality alpacas for both their fibre and meat. In the next six months, another 250 will be sent to Turkey.

Following the above breakthrough we recognize the Government’s involvement and support to enhance further international trade opportunities to advance the interests of our sector.

As already referenced in the “*Food security in Australia and the world through the creation of a stronger and more competitive agriculture sector*”, Alpaca meat is one of the healthiest and most flavoursome meats in the world as the meat is lean, tender and almost sweet.

In conjunction with Government, we are encouraged to explore opportunities in the retail sector locally and internationally and suggest research in this regard.

We are also encouraged by the overseas prospects for hide. Similar to crocodile farming, we are of the view that alpaca hide is a potential high-end exclusive fashion product (ie, alpaca bags, belts, purses and alike).

Alpaca fibre is renowned around the world for its quality silky texture and is something that requires promotion, in isolation or as a blend with other fibres.

³ <http://www.barnabyjoyce.com.au/News-and-Media/Joyce-Australian-alpaca-industry-consolidates-for-the-future/>

⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-26/alpacas-to-turkey/5284752>

We recommend:

Consistent with our view on biosecurity, we strongly support further enhancement of Australia’s “clean and green” image to provide our livestock industries with a competitive advantage in the export market.

Government continues to be involved and works with industries to enhance further international trade opportunities.

In partnership with Government that AAAL takes advantage of the unique growth opportunities in the export of the alpaca product by promotion of and/or research into:

- ***Supply of the genetic pool;***
- ***Alpaca fibre as quality product in isolation or as a blend with other fibres;***
- ***The healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat and its supply in frozen or chilled packaging; and***
- ***Alpaca hide as a potential high end exclusive fashion product.***

(i) “The effectiveness and economic benefits of existing incentives for investment and jobs creation in the agriculture sector”

No specific comment in regard to this term of reference.

(j) “Any other issues critical to agriculture competitiveness”

AAAL and like emerging industries do not have the funds, resources and/or expertise to generate high level economic statements on the current and potential future worth of an emerging Agriculture sector.

AAAL understands the statistical and analytical expertise of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) within the Department of Agriculture. **AAAL** recognizes ABARES professionally independent research, analysis and advice for Government and private sector decision makers on significant issues affecting Australia’s agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

To this end, our industry has found it difficult to promote confidently to external parties locally or internationally on the size, scope and therefore opportunities associated with the Australian Alpaca Industry until credible statistical modelling on the economic value of the industry is available.



We recommend:

Associations like the AAAL be given access to resources within ABARES who can produce world-class economic and scientific research, forecasts, statistics and other analysis on sound and broadly accepted economic and scientific concepts and principles which would enable our industry to have quantitative information for potential investors.

8. CONCLUSION

AAAL is appreciative of the extensive support it has received from Governments since the establishment of our industry and Association. In this regard, we acknowledge the recent bipartisan support from government highlighted during Australian Alpaca week as an emerging industry in Australian agriculture and what we now require is true value added commitment and support.⁵

AAAL sees the White Paper as a positive instrument to ensure the long term viability of the Australian Alpaca Industry and congratulates Government for undertaking this exercise, and in summary recommends:

- ***In partnership with Government that AAAL takes advantage of the unique growth opportunities in commercial alpaca farming by:***
 - ***Assisting with funding for training of Alpaca Wool Classers, which will lead to industry facilitating collection and collation of fleece for processing.***
 - ***Assisting with promotion of the healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat through a coordinated approach of educating the retail sector.***
 - ***Assist with funding of research and development into:***
 - ***The development of efficient de-hairing machinery for alpaca fleece and the processing of suri alpaca fleece;***
 - ***The production of high quality and sustainable alpaca meat; and***
 - ***The production and supply of frozen or chilled alpaca meat.***
- ***A collaborative partnership between government, the alpaca industry and alternative industries by government subsidizing field trials for the farming of alpacas.***
- ***In partnership with Government and existing Australian export suppliers to the alpaca industry, we review overseas manufacturing processes for scouring, spinning and weaving/knitting to determine if these services can be supplied efficiently and cost effectively in Australia.***
- ***A continued long term financial investment by Government into Agri-Food Skills Australia.***
- ***Financial investment into training by the Commonwealth into the agriculture sector.***
- ***Improved harmonization of State and Territory regulation in respect of biosecurity, and other aspects of animal health and welfare to promote good farm practices and education efforts, therefore ensuring compliance with legislation. National uniformity will build consistency and it***

⁵ <http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/politics/barnaby-joyce-and-joel-fitzgibbon-meet-baby-alpacas-named-after-them-as-part-as-national-alpaca-week/story-fnkerdda-1226866415943>

will make life simpler for businesses and consumers, while continuing to provide the necessary protections and access for consumers and the community.

- *Continued strong support and promotion of biosecurity practices from Government through facilitation of supportive policies, legislation and programs, as well as ongoing assistance with funding of Animal Health Australia to develop practical farm biosecurity tools in partnership with governments and industry.*
- *In pursuing Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) with other nations, the Australian government should not compromise Australia's national interest in relation to biosecurity.*
- *Support for Australia's "clean and green" image, and ensuring this is a reality not just a perception, provides our livestock industries with a competitive advantage in a range of export markets.*
- *In partnership with Government that AAAL takes advantage of the unique growth opportunities in the export of the alpaca product by promotion of and/or research into:*
 - *Supply of the genetic pool;*
 - *Australian Alpaca fibre as quality product in isolation or as a blend with other fibres;*
 - *The healthy and nutritional value of alpaca meat and its supply in frozen or chilled packaging; and*
 - *Australian alpaca hide is a potential high end exclusive fashion product.*
- *Associations like the AAAL be given access to resources within ABARES who can produce world-class economic and scientific research, forecasts, statistics and other analysis on sound and broadly accepted economic and scientific concepts and principles which would enable our industry to have quantitative information for potential investors.*

Overall we welcome the opportunity to contribute to the White Paper and await the findings with interest.