



Alpaca, the Rare Specialty Fiber

What defines specialty fiber? Scarcity or rarity is the primary determinant. Wool is not considered a specialty fiber due to its abundance. Besides its scarcity, alpaca fleece is valuable because it combines many positive, commercial attributes into one fiber. Here are the major producers of Specialty fiber in comparison to wool production.

| Fiber | Major Producers | Production |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Alpaca | Peru | 4000 tons |
| Cashmere | China-Iran | 5000 tons |
| Angora | China-France-Chile | 8500 tons |
| Llama | Bolivia | 600 tons |
| Vicuna | Peru | 3 tons |
| Mohair | South Africa-USA-Turkey | 22,000 tons |
| Wool | New Zealand-Australia-South Africa | 1,851,000 tons |

The other thing that makes this a rare specialty fiber is the fact that there is not an abundance of animals here in the U.S. or North America.....

| Country | Huacaya | Suri | Total |
|---------|---------|--------|----------------------|
| Peru | – | – | 2.5 million ± |
| Canada | 6648 | 309 | 6,957 |
| U.S.A. | 77,817 | 17,609 | 95,426 |

NEW ENGLAND

| State | Alpaca Totals | Huacaya Totals | Suri Totals |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| <i>Connecticut</i> | 786 | 696 | 90 |
| Maine | 1195 | 1057 | 138 |
| Massachusetts | 1182 | 1124 | 58 |
| New Hampshire | 1006 | 887 | 119 |
| Rhode Island | 229 | 216 | 13 |
| Vermont | 1254 | 1170 | 84 |
| TOTAL | 5652 | | |