

A young alpaca with white and brown wool is sitting in a green field under a blue sky with clouds. The alpaca is looking to the left.

# Animal Photography

**For Increasing Sales & Brand Visibility**

*Bari Rhys, Paragon Alpacas*

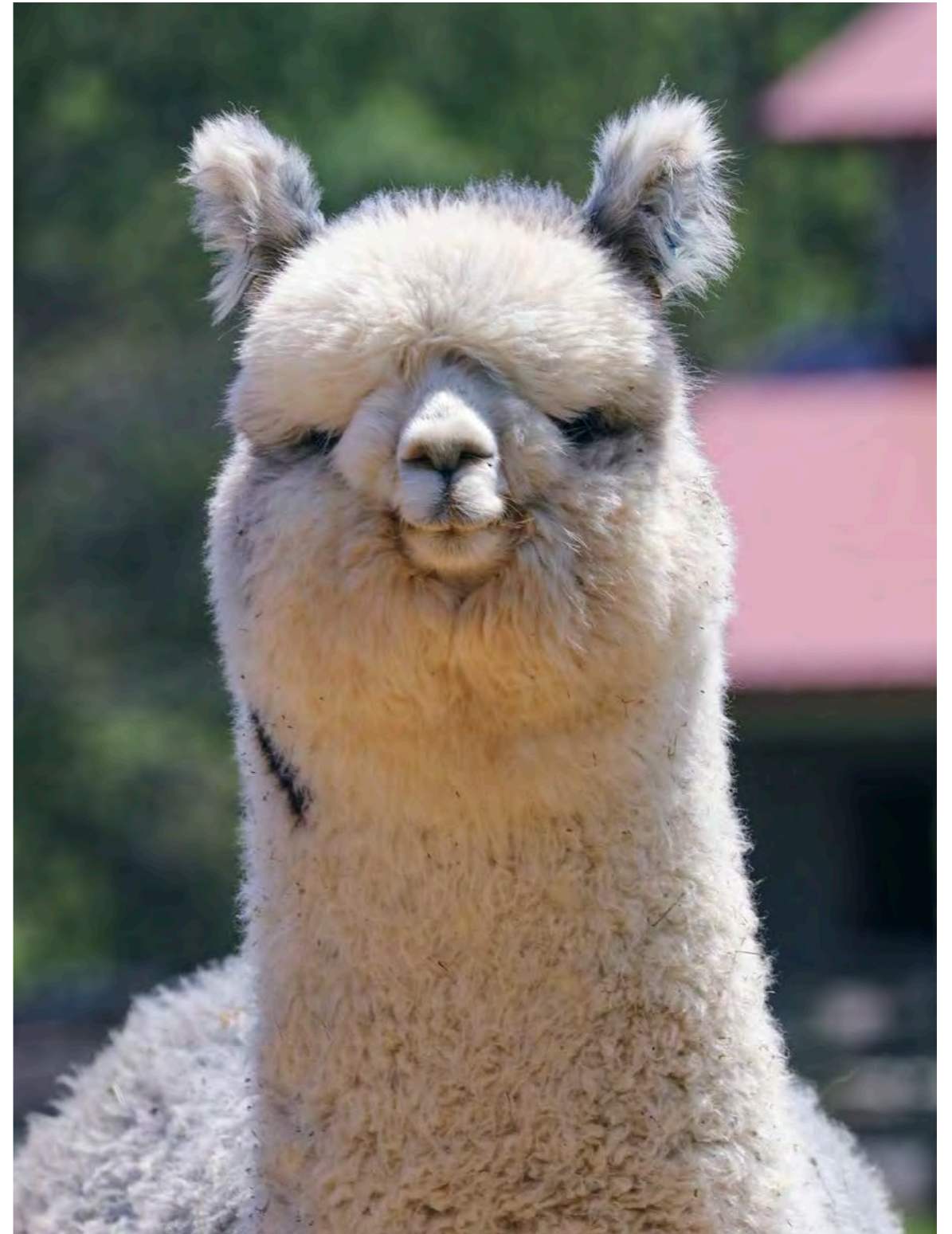
**1. Some things to think about  
before you pick up your camera.**



# What is your goal?

## *Why do you need the pictures?*

- To sell a specific animal?
- Show off the consistency of your program?
- Promote an event?
- Attract followers on Social Media?
- Make farm life look appealing/fun?



# *Who is your target audience?*

What group(s) of people are you trying to reach with your photos?



# For many farms it breaks into two categories.

## *For Livestock Sales:*

- Fellow Alpaca breeders
- People looking to start alpaca breeding programs/farms

## *For Agritourism:*

- General Public
- People interested in alpacas purely as a lifestyle enhancement
- Animal Lovers
- People who like outdoor experiences

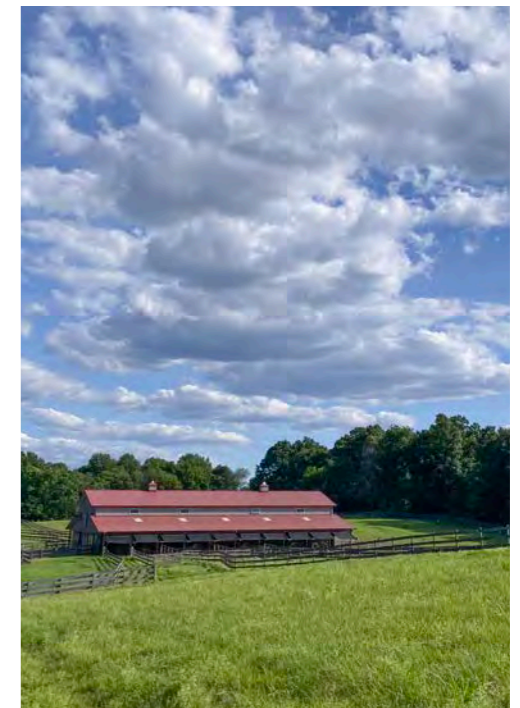
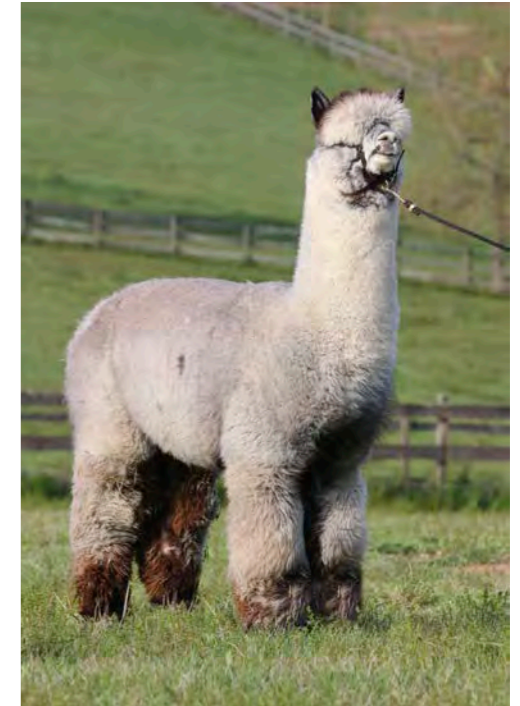
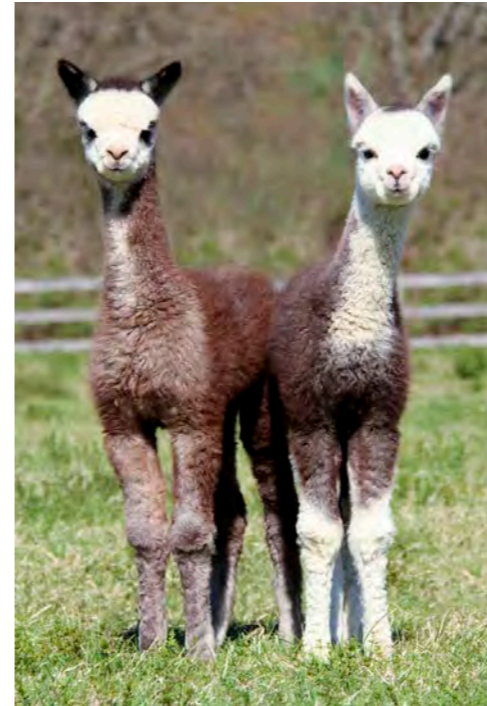


***What are you trying to communicate to them?***



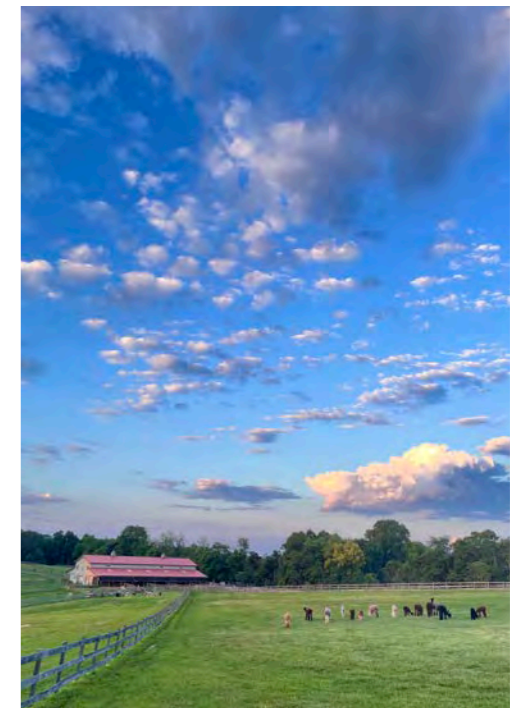
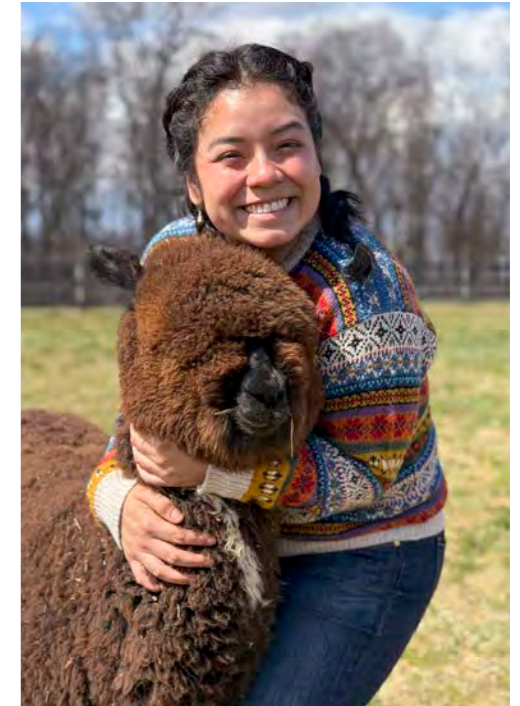
# For Livestock:

- Constancy in your program or genetic lines.
- A specific alpacas positive traits.
- If you offer boarding, the quality of your facilities and how your alpacas choose to use them...



# For Agritourism:

- A story people can relate to.
- People having a good time during the activity or event you offer.
- That the animals are personable, friendly, funny and generally rewarding to be around.
- That your farm is an inviting place to be.



*Where are you trying to reach your target audience?*



## Where are your photos going to be placed/posted?

- Print media?
- Social media?
- Your website?



***Once you know what you want to communicate—and who you want to communicate it to, and where the images will be seen—you can think about the types of images that will help get that message across.***



## **2. Determining the types of images you need and what camera to use.**



# A Quick Overview of Camera Types.

## *Phone Cameras*

### Good for:

- Images for web based platforms like social media and your website.
- Small scale print media.

## *DSLRs*

### Good for:

- Print based media.
- Any large scale printing such as, banners, signs, promotional material etc.



**You don't need to spend multiple thousands of dollars on a fancy camera.**

**These images were shot on a Canon Rebel, Canon's entry level DSLR, that cost around \$500.**





***For animal sales shots you may want to consider getting a telephoto lens in addition to the stock camera body and lens.***

***It will allow you capture images of alpacas who enjoy their personal space as well as detailed “up close” shots like these.***



*What types of images do you need?*



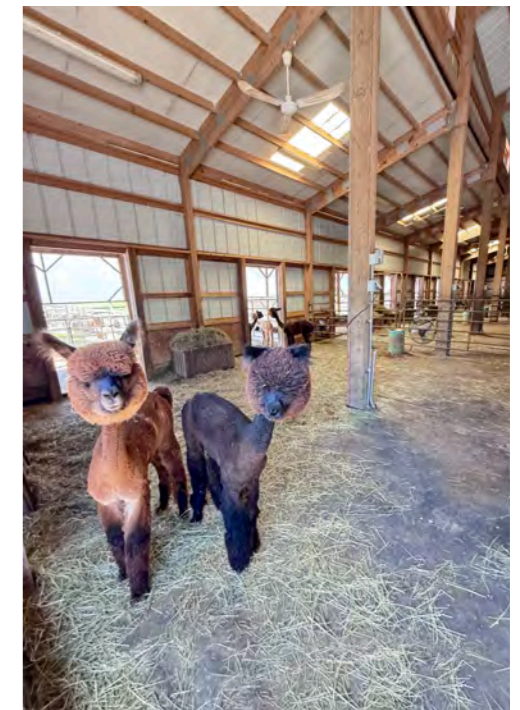
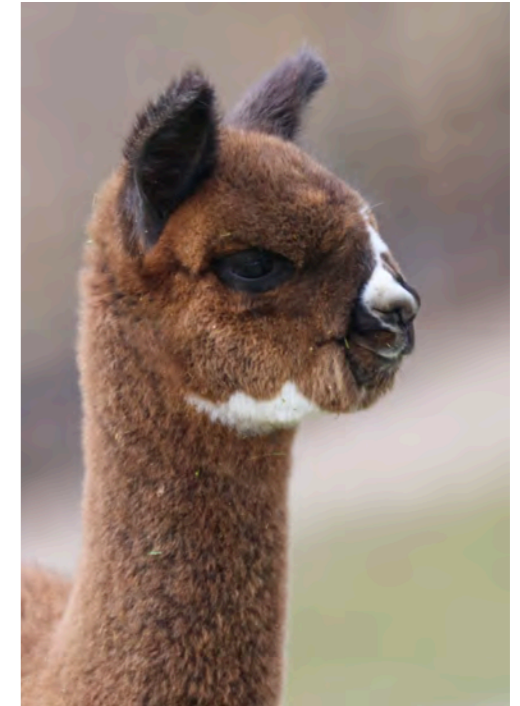
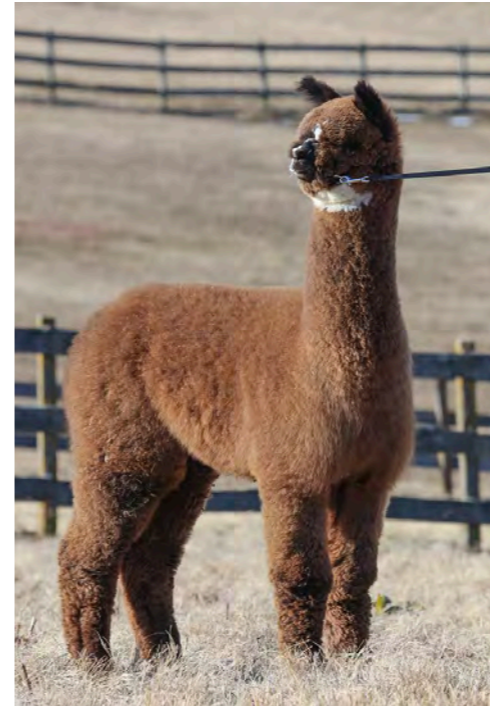
***For Livestock:***

***You are probably seeking to communicate consistency, quality, and specific positive traits in your animals to fellow breeders.***



## So what do breeders want to know?

- Overall look of an animal (full body shot).
- Head style (up close of the head at a different angle than the full body shot).
- Fleece (Shot showing architecture, brightness, organization).
- Facilities (If I send my animal there for breeding will it be in a good situation?).



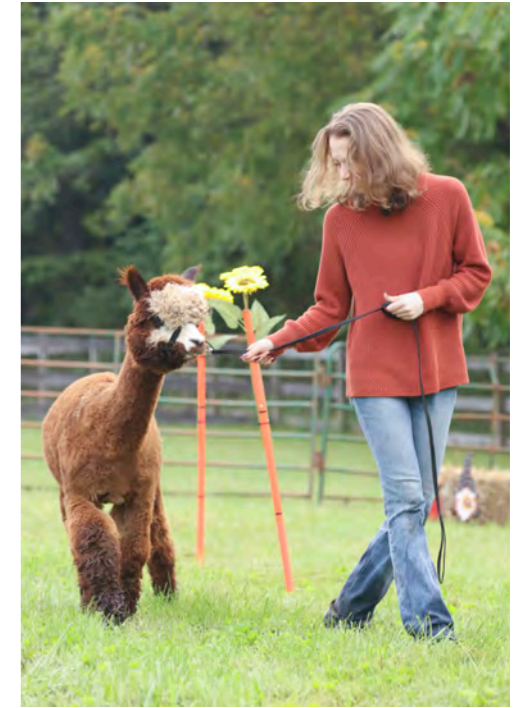
***For Agritourism:***

***You are probably trying to communicate to animal, and outdoor experience loving members of the public that they will enjoy their experience.***



## So what do they need to see to be convinced of this?

- The animals interacting with each other, the camera, and other people.
- People enjoying the specific activity you are promoting.
- The animals doing something funny/entertaining.
- Behind the scenes of farm life.
- Baby pictures.



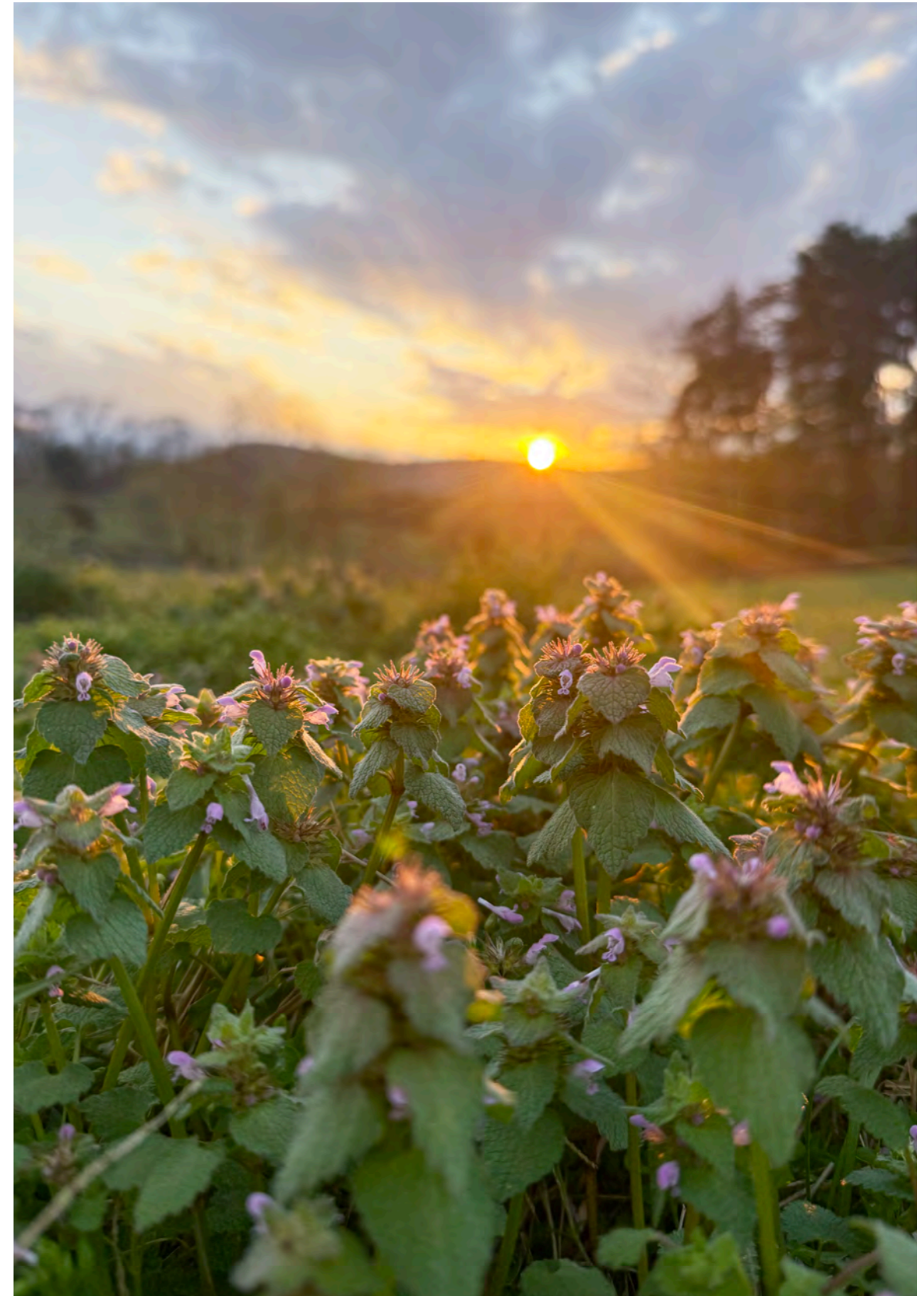
**For both categories I also find it helpful to include “lifestyle” shots.**

**This can include sunrise/sunsets on the farm, seasonal images such as flowers blooming, or colorful fall leaves.**

**In general any images that make your farm look inviting and good place to be.**



*Bari Rhys, Paragon Alpacas*



***So now that you know what you want to say and to whom, along with what types of images and camera gear you need to do it, lets talk about how to take the actual photos!***



**3. How to take the images you need to communicate what you want to say to your target audience.**



***Some basics to keep in mind as we tackle the different types of images.***



# Lighting

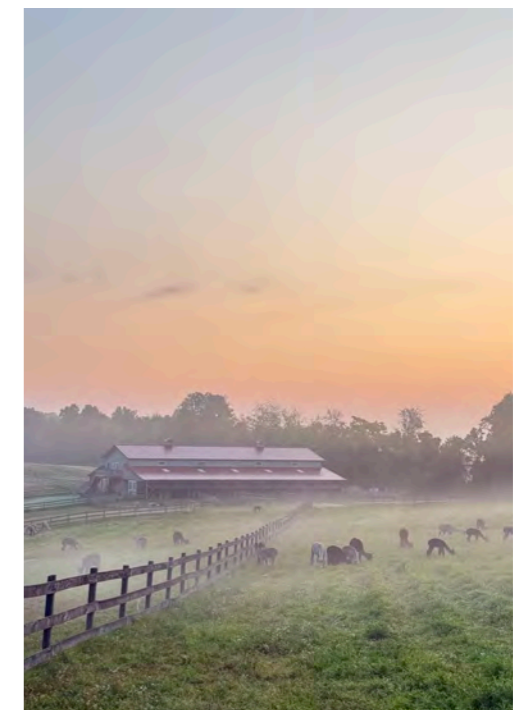
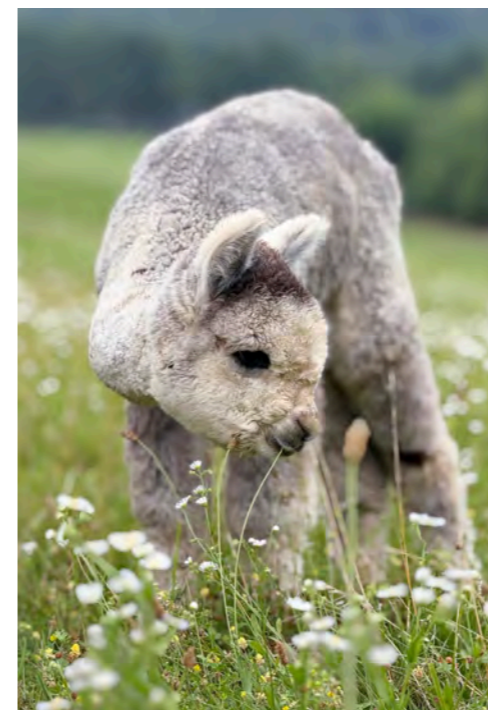
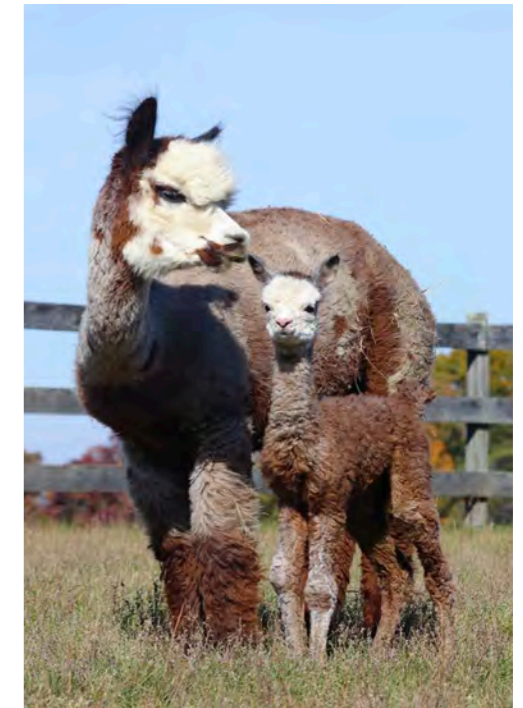
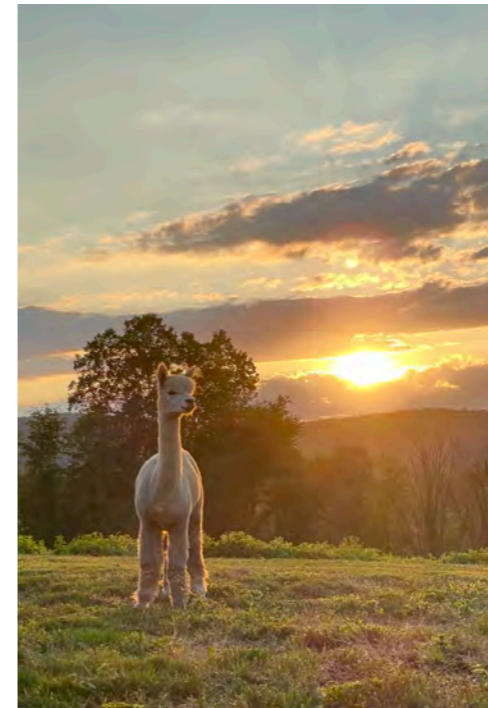
- Pay attention to the direction of your lighting in relation to your subject.

Where is the light coming from?

- Behind the subject (Back Lit)
- In front of the subject (Front Lit)
- From directly above (Top Lit)
- From the side (Side Lit)

- Know the intensity of your lighting.

- Harsh (full afternoon sun)
- Soft (cloudy day)
- Glow Hour (morning and evening)
- Lowlight (lack of light)



# Composition

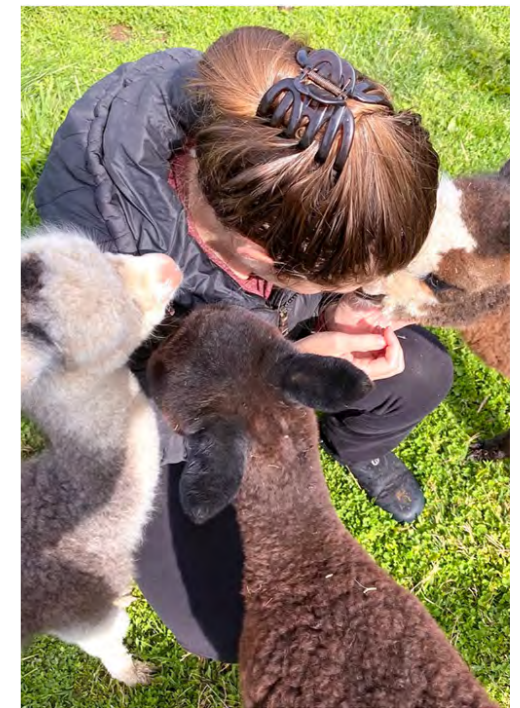
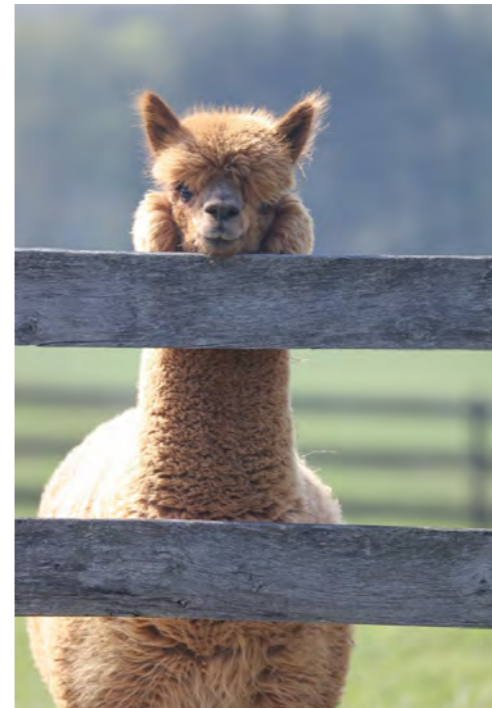
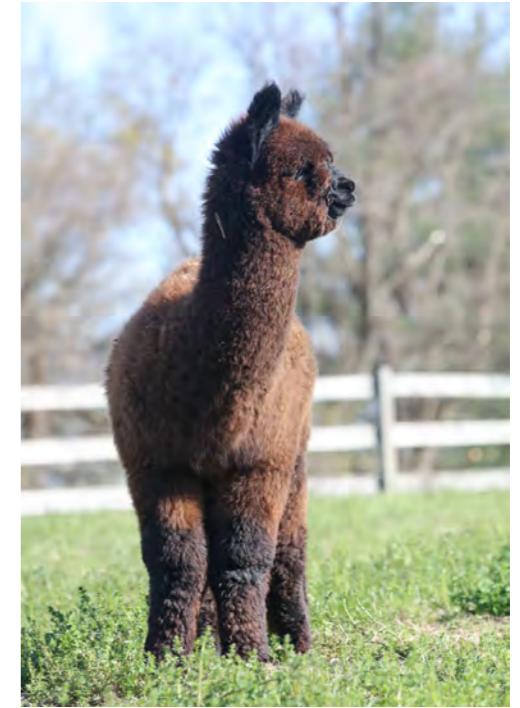
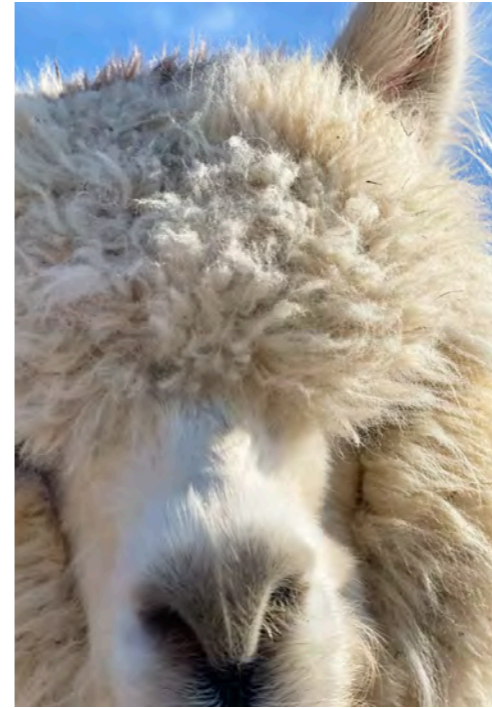
- Pay attention to your angle of perception. Where are you in relation to your subject?

Are you:

- Directly in front?
- Off to the side?
- Underneath?
- Above?
- Some combination?

- Be aware of the background. What is behind your subject?

- Is it busy?
- Is there something there you don't want to show?
- Will your subject blend into it, or does it stand out?



# Shape Of The Final Image

- Aspect Ratios. What is the shape of your image?

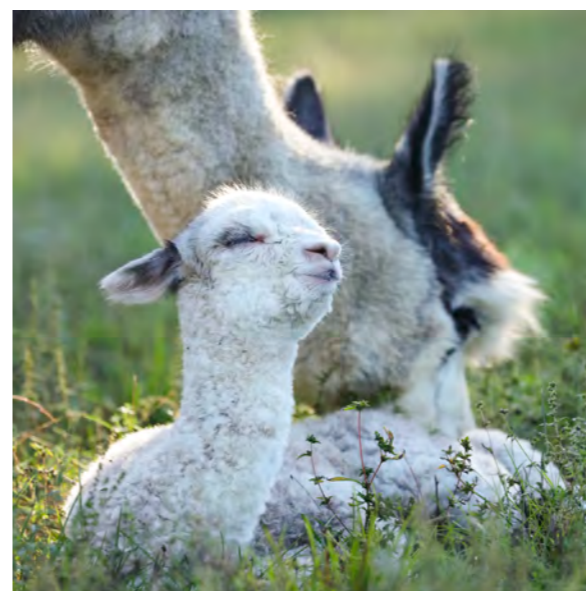
Basic shapes include :

- Portrait (vertical)
- Landscape (horizontal)
- Square

- Social media platform display ratios to keep in mind:

- Instagram/Facebook
  - Feed 4:5 (portrait) or 1:1 (square)
  - Stories/Reels 9:16 (narrow vertical)

-Most platforms will use some combination of these 3 ratios with the exception of YouTube that uses landscape 16:9 for it's main thumbnails.



1:1



4:5



16:9



# The Basics Of Brand Photography To Keep In Mind.

## *Consistency*

- Location
- Time of day
- Time of year
- Subject
- Background
- Type of image

## *Image Quality*

- In focus
- Well lit
- Easy to visually process
- Gives the intended audience the information you want them to have



# ***Types Of Images For Livestock***



## Full body shot, your main image.

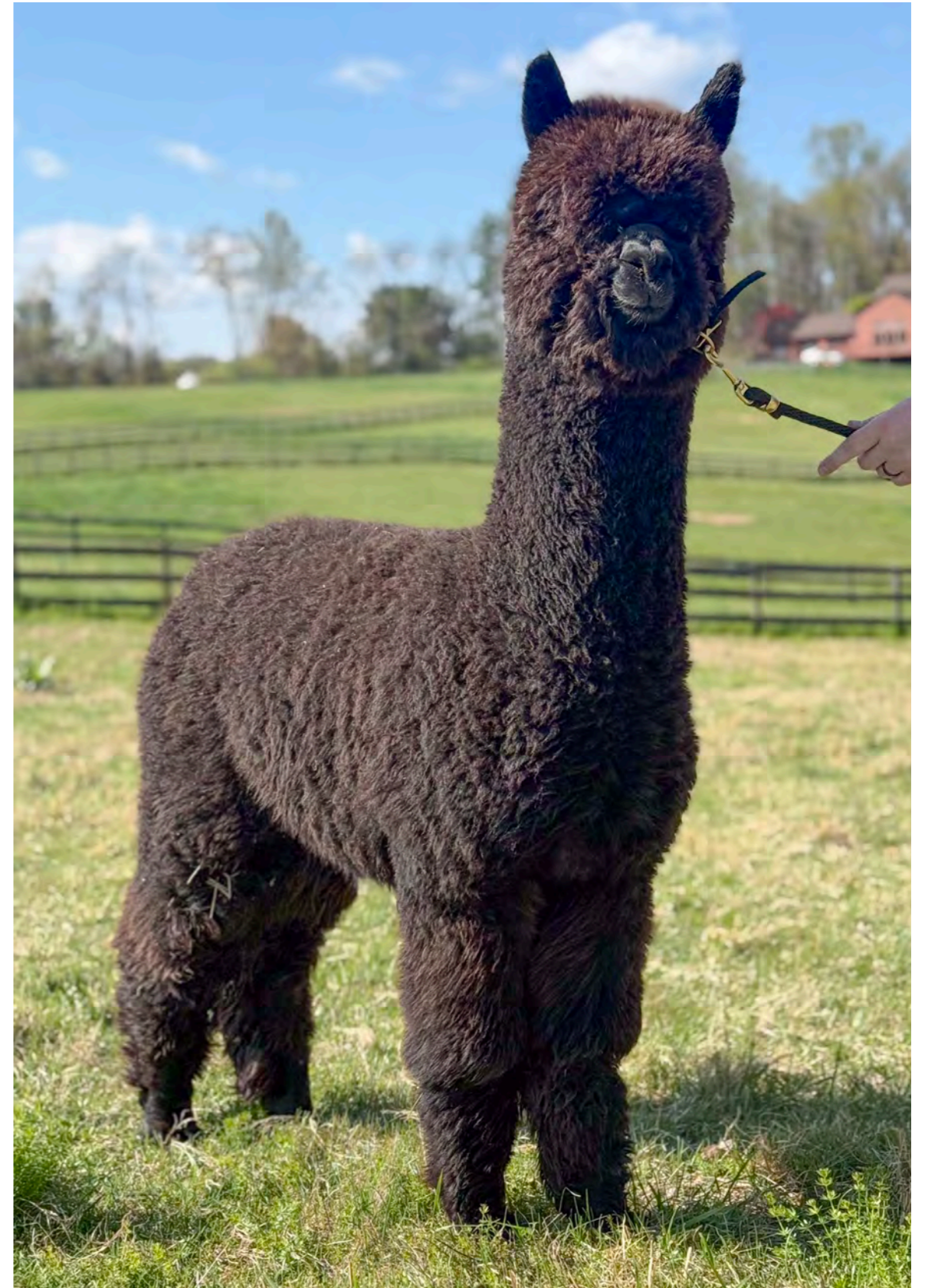
- Don't use show photos as you main image for your herdsire or sales animal.
- Pick a background that is clear from distractions and makes the animal stand out.
- If you can, have someone controlling the animal on a halter and "set them up".
- If you don't have help, bring something that makes noise to get their attention.
- Pay close attention to your angle of perception. A good guideline is to have the camera on level with the animals chest if they are standing.



Image taken while standing with a “downward” angle of perception.

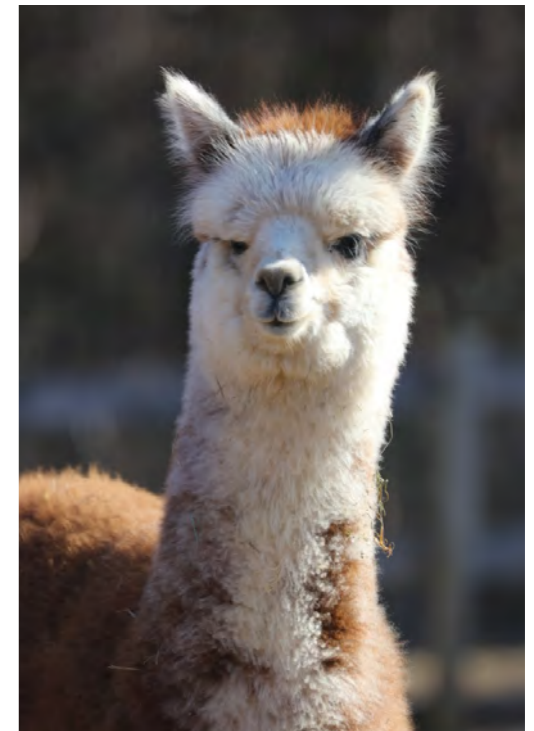
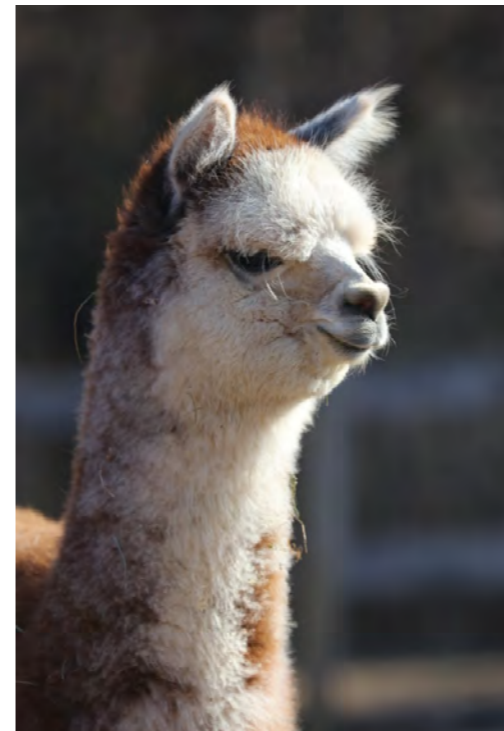
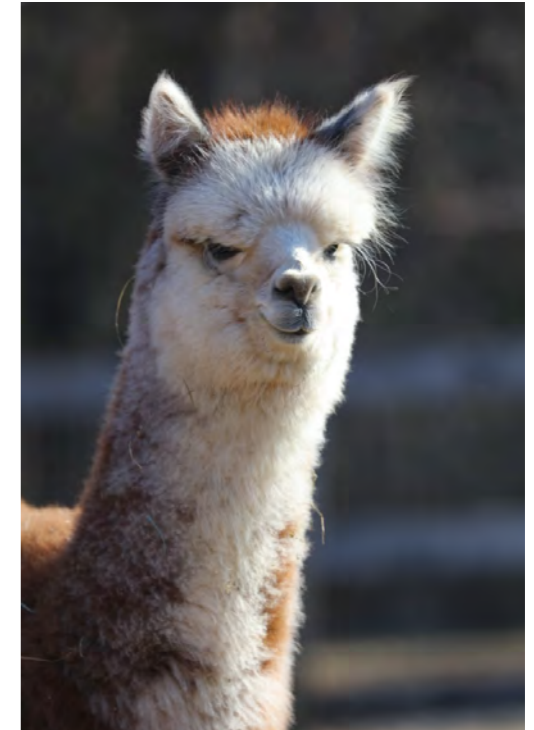
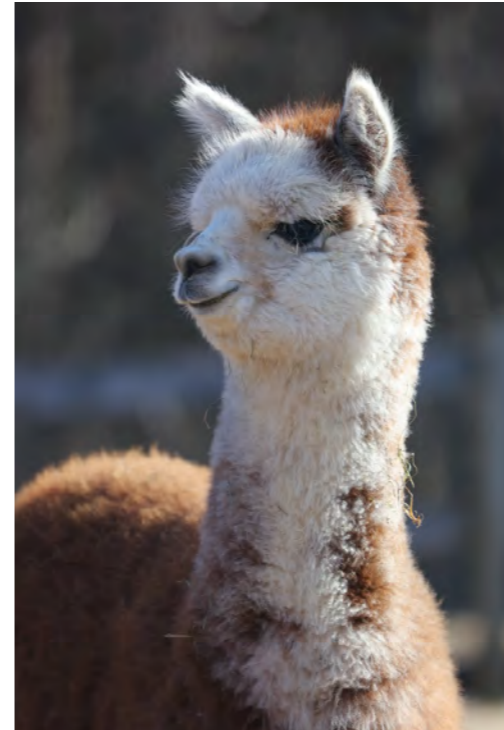


**Same image with an angle of perception that is on level with the animals chest.**



# Head shots.

- Take multiple shots. What angle shows then off the best? Straight on? 3/4? Full profile?
- Telephoto lenses or portrait mode on you phone really come in handy here to blur the background and keep the viewer's eye on the alpaca's head.

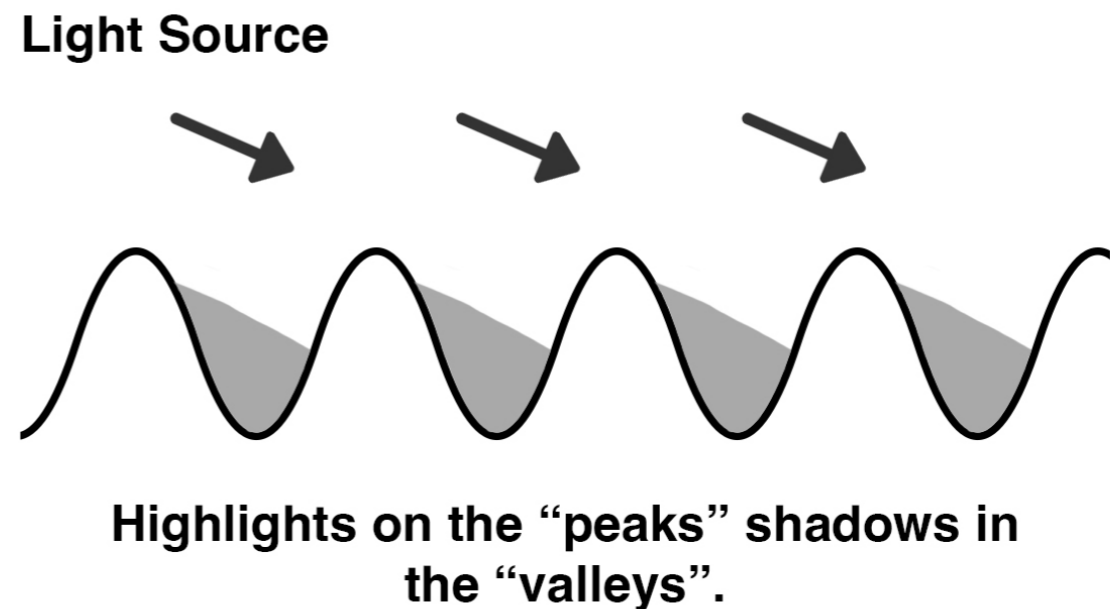
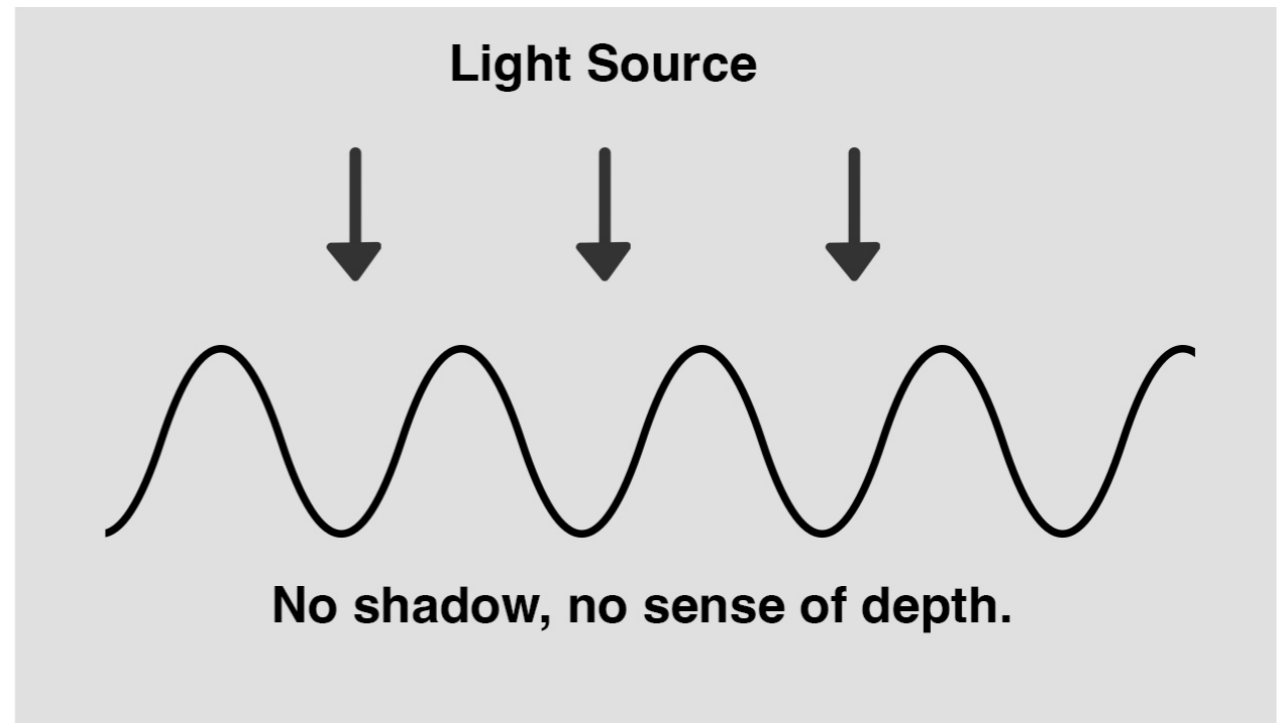


# Fleece shots.

The most important thing to be aware of in taking good fleece shots is where your light is coming from.

Our eyes perceive crimp through the contrast of light and shadow.

You need light coming in at an angle that will highlight the “highpoint” of the wave form and cast the “low point” in shadow.



**For example, here is a fleece sample taken with 2 different lighting angles.**

**Same camera, light source, fleece sample, background and settings, the sample was just turned 90 degrees to change how the light fell on it.**



## Different types of fleece shots

- On the animal.

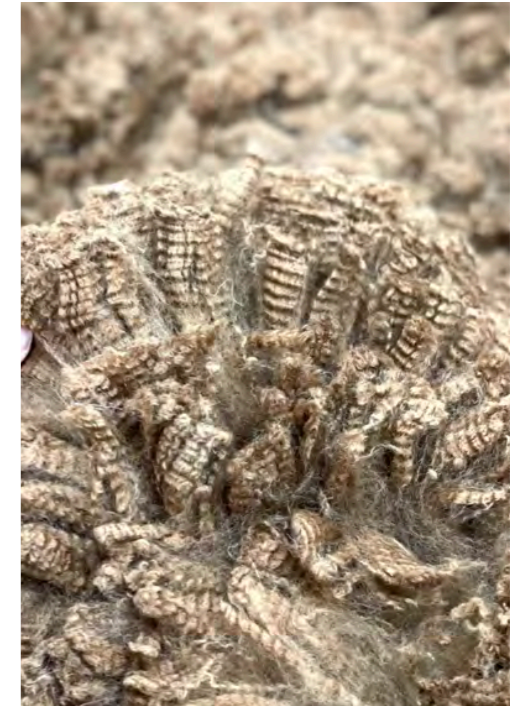
Make sure you have help! Two people is manageable, 3 is better.

- Whole fleece in a bag or on a table.

Don't feel like you have to show EVERYTHING, Sometimes it's better to focus on just one part.

- Small sample.

Make sure to use a contrasting background. Take time to get a "clean" sample. If you have a bunch of stray fibers, the camera will have a hard time knowing where to focus.



# ***Types Of Images For Agritourism***



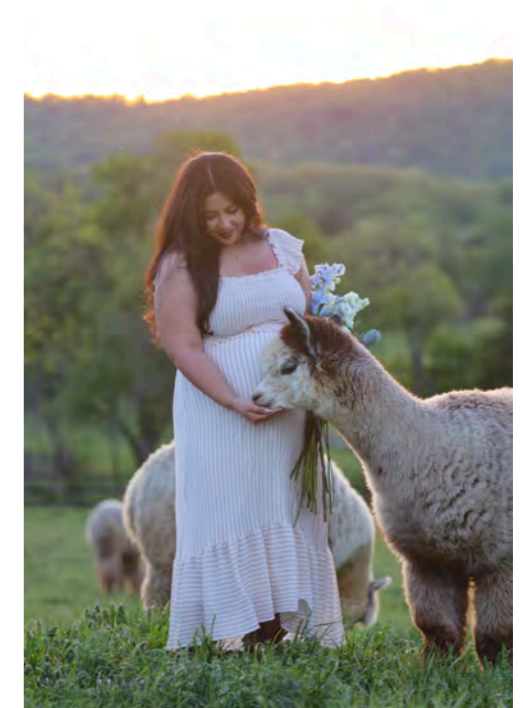
## Animals interacting with each other, the camera and other people.

- Using portrait mode on your phone is a good option for this.
- Be aware of image rights when taking pictures with people especially kids.
- Pay attention to you angle of perception, so you don't distort your human models.



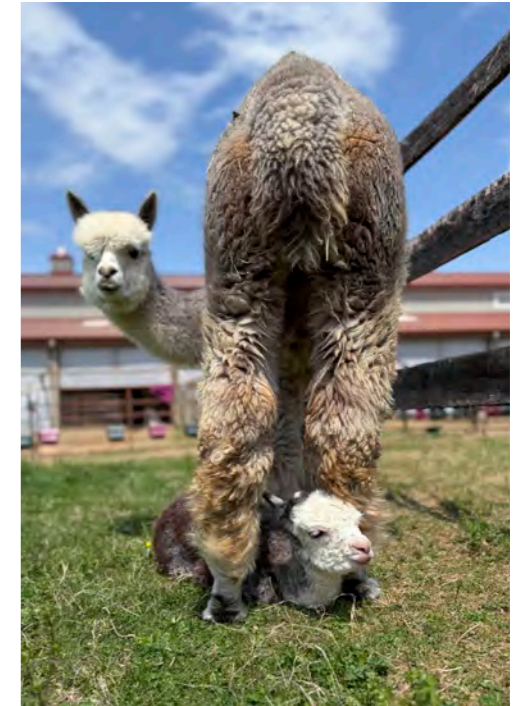
## People enjoying the specific activities you are promoting.

- Use family and friends as models to get pictures of activities that haven't actually launched yet.
- Invite people to a “pre launch” class/tour/activity with free attendance with the agreement that in exchange you can use image you take for marketing.



## The animals being funny/ entertaining.

- Take images from unexpected angles
- Use .5 mode to intentionally distort an image.
- Turn the camera on your phone towards you, then place it low to get pictures from “below”



## Behind the scenes of farm life.

- Your phone is the perfect camera for this as you most likely have it with you as you go about your day.
- These can also be images of the animals doing something funny.
- Pay attention to your background. When we see something everyday, like a trash can, we can forget it's there only to have it be a not so great addition to a “in the barn” shot



# Baby pictures.

- I mean... who doesn't like cute baby pictures???
- Even not so great images can still perform well if it shows a cute cria, but you still want to keep the quality and consistency of your brands visual style in mind.
- Portrait mode can be a good way to “just snap a cute picture” and still have it feel intentional.



**4. Some simple editing tricks for making your pictures stand out and work across multiple platforms.**



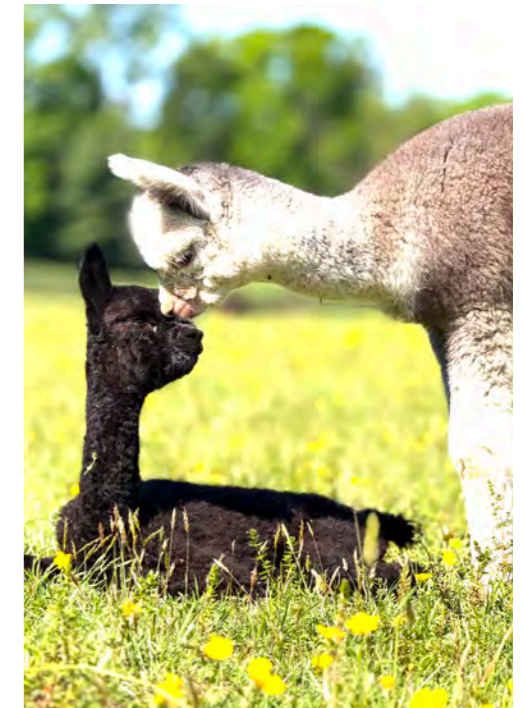
# Crop.

- One image when taken with enough “extra space” can be cropped to fit the dimensions of all the different platforms
- This is when having a DSLR comes in handy as phone images often don't have enough resolution.
- Most crop tools also have a “tilt” function. This is great for fixing photos that are a little askew, or to intentionally make the subject of the image come in at an angle



# Brighten/Recover

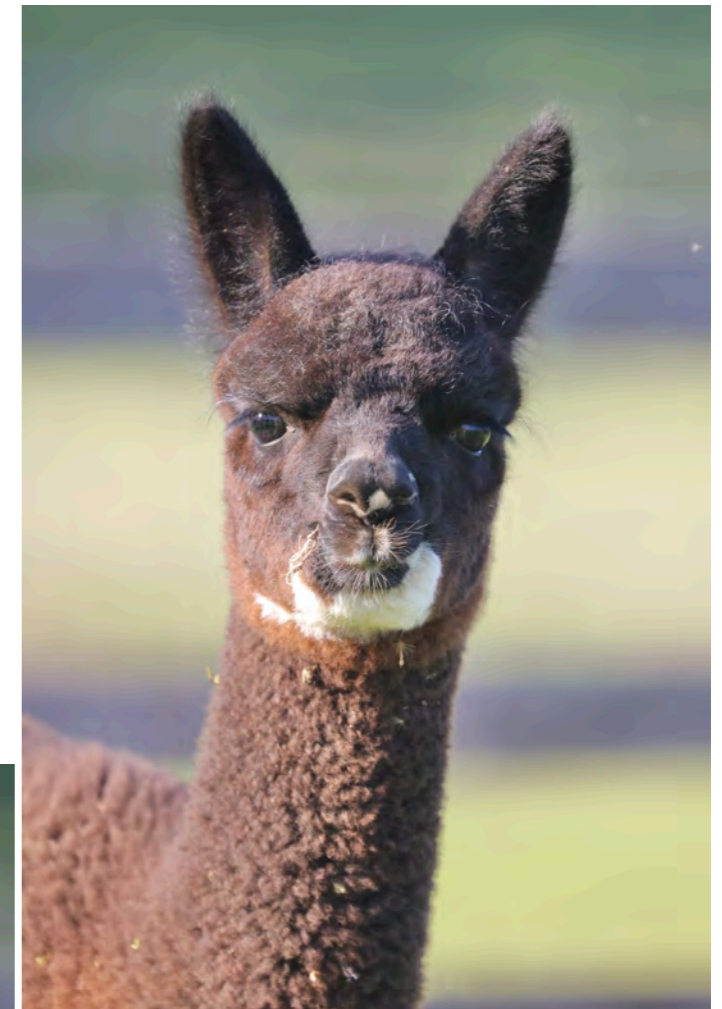
- Under or over exposure can make a huge difference in an image
- You can use the brighten and recover features to lighten or darken the image over all to compensate.
- Keep in mind it is generally easier to fix under exposure.
- Images that are over exposed have areas that are “blown out” and the pixel data just isn’t there.



# Lighten Shadows

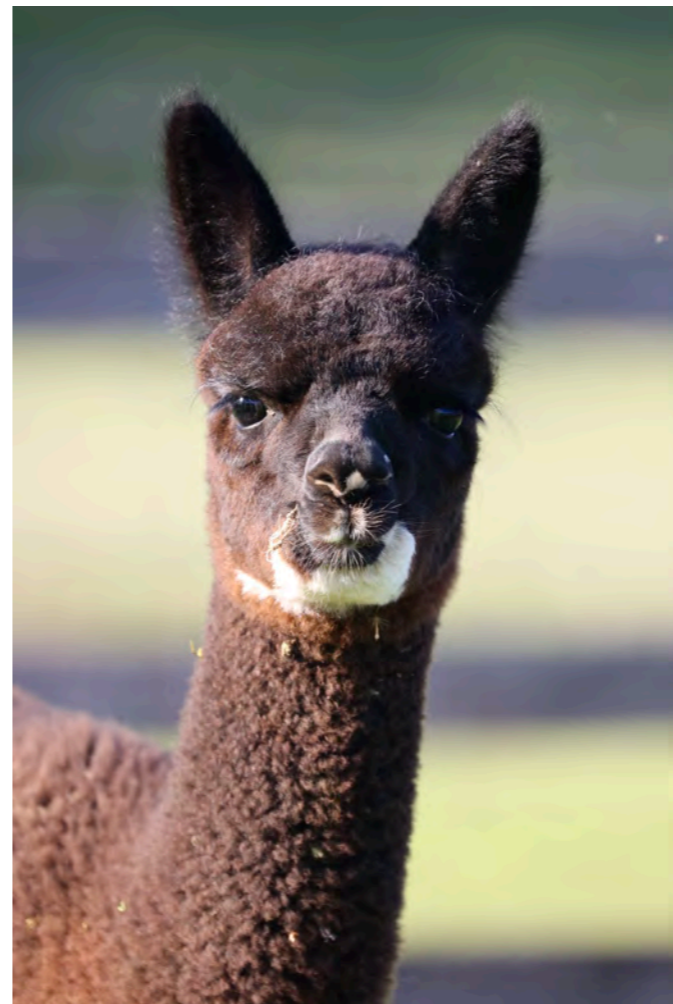
- Shooting in strong lighting can create harsh looking shadows. Lightening them can make an image feel softer.

Harsh Shadows



# Using Presets

- Editing presets, or filters, will make all of your images look cohesive together.
- Can be useful for branding.



Shadows lightened



***When used intentionally, photography is one of the most powerful tools you have to communicate the value of your animals and your brand.***





*Bari Rhys, Paragon Alpacas*

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