



# Karakul Tails & Tales

Late Summer 2022

Volume 4, Number 1

## In This Issue

- Alliance & KSAR Happenings
- Karakuls in the Tropics, Florida
- Tropical Karakuls con't
- Education Focus- **C-THE Color - Tail, Horns, Ears**

## Karakul Alliance Goals

are to:

1. find flocks & count Karakul sheep
2. bring together a community of Karakul shepherds

The Alliance has been working toward these objectives and the survival of Karakuls in North America since 2014.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Membership has not been required for any of our services for 8 years. As we move forward with the database, memberships will be one way for the Alliance to fund operations.

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**Sue Bundy, Leesburg, VA is our newest Advisor helping with Alliance Policy issues. Sue started with Karakuls in 1997, developed the Red Gate bloodline & in 2006 co-founded Solitude Wool, a 7-partner woman-owned business.**

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Words of wisdom from the late Page Jacobs ~ Dec 8, 1988

*"Registries are only as good as we breeders make them."*

## The Alliance & KSAR - What's been happening

Welcome! There have been many things going on with Karakul sheep in 2022!

A new breeder inquired in July about the timing of KSAR Newsletters. I am committed to sending two per year. However, in 2021 & 2022 they've both been sent the last 2 months of the year. Not planned, but I've found it's the only time when things slow down & I can work on Karakul news. Spring has intentionally been avoided as it is just so busy for shepherds; I'll send *special* announcements *only* in Spring. BTW Summer, Fall & Winter editions are different color schemes for distinction. **Please bear with me as we grow. And the Alliance is growing!**

**NEW TRANSFER PROCESS** - Original registration certificates *stay with* the sheep & buyer. Do not mail to me unless changes (re-issues) are needed. Transfer service is now FREE if you email or text the Transfer picture-scans within a week. The new process is outlined on the back of all new reg certificates issued in 2022. The transfer system from 1986 currently in place, is not working and has not worked well for the past two decades. As KSAR Registrar for six years, I have found *few* breeders eager to complete, pay for, mail sheep Transfer certificates; KSAR's missed many Transfers **It's time for a new approach. Take a picture-scan of the back Transfer, email or text to me.** Thanks!

### This Newsletter is dedicated to new tropical region Karakul breeders

An intrepid shepherd tells his story of moving Karakuls from their high desert home with 16 inches rain per year, to over 55 inches with the hot humidity of central Florida and rain every day in summer.

## Karakuls in the Tropics

Shepherd Atta Khan and his family, Zephyrhills, Florida

"Back home, we had sheep with tails so big you could eat for a week...you can never find that here." I grew up listening to my dad reminisce about 'back home', in awe at the *tails [pun-intended]* of his past life regarding meat, animals, and fruits that we just can't



match here. Second generation immigrant families have this common story most children grow up hearing from their parents or grandparents. I took my dad's stories to heart though and never forgot about that



L-R upper tails—X-Ig U, large V long, med V very long, medium U-V

unicorn of sheep only found in Central Asia or the Mid-East [supposedly]. We were raised in Northern Virginia on the outskirts of DC, farming or raising livestock was a dream; nice, but one that probably would never happen.

Our lives are busy with work, we have kids, too much snow, animals are hard to raise, land prices are nowhere near affordable were just some of the excuses holding us back. That is until, we decided to move to sunny Florida. Working from home ("okay now I have time"), affordable land ("okay I can buy this"), YouTube ("okay I can raise animals taught on 5-minute videos") all led my wife and our three daughters to purchase a piece of paradise northeast of Tampa. We are called **Diamond Oaks Venue** and we raise Karakuls in Florida!

I searched high and low until I found the unicorns of my dad's *tails [yes pun again]*. Through the Karakul Shepherds Alliance website I was introduced to Mr. Jamil Hindi of New Mexico and Mr. Vitaliy Tymoshchuk of Idaho, both of whom provided me quality animals. I could not wait to show my dad! He thought his eyes were playing tricks when he saw 27 bred ewes, 2 handsome rams, and a month later close to 30 babies with tails so fat they would make Kim Kardashian jealous!

A shepherd from Argentina contacted me, Walter Soncini is now part of our Facebook group. Through my basic Spanish & Google translate, I have learned that breeders in Argentina are trying to come together, like us, to form a community. We'll stay in touch

**Unsure about Sires and want to pursue testing? Some breeders have used GENEseek Parentage - now \$20/test - blood drop cards**

**A few breeders have asked --KSAR Policy is to not register known crossbreds. There's a big difference between No History Karakuls and crossbreds. KSAR is an Open Flock Book striving to register the best specimens.**

**Contact**

Deborah Hunter  
 Librarian, Historian,  
 Registrar & Web  
 Shepherd

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 Thanks in advance for helping the Alliance to connect with as many breeders as we can, while we build the Karakul database.

Please keep in touch. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

**A printable Gestation Chart has been posted to the Karakul Sheep page. Karakuls hold their lambs longer, 152 - 155 days The Chart is 147 days (for 'regular' sheep) + 1 week = 154 days**



**Karakuls in the Tropics** *continued*

**I now have close to 40 Karakuls and our fall crop has so far yielded six healthy lambs with at least another 12 more expected. The de-worming schedule has been reduced and I have learned to tame the beast that is raising sheep in Florida!**

**If you are ever in town, feel free to stop by. We do keep Sweet Tea in the cooler.**

~ **Diamond Oaks Venue**  
 Zephyrhills, FL

What an amazing accomplishment, we were so happy! Then it struck, the beast that is Florida. Happiness quickly faded to confusion, sadness and loss. We lost all Karakul lambs in a matter of weeks, close to 10 ewes and both rams. "What is happening? What did we do wrong? This can't be!" We were devastated. We lost so much of what we called our pride and joy.

I was a newer farmer, but not a fool. I knew all about barber pole worms, liver flukes, and the dreaded rain in Florida, but thought I could manage it. Our first sheep were Southdowns, which allowed us to set up with shearers and veterinarians in the area. We sold that flock soon after the Karakuls arrived. I obviously was not prepared, but I did take my losses with lessons learned and found strategies to overcome the same mistakes the following year.



Birthcoat evaluation-CPD walnut & short pipe Curls, geographic Pattern, Persian-Broadtail  
 All Photos by Atta Khan, FL

I ordered a few more rams from Mr. Hindi and decided to *dry lot* my animals during our wet season. It was like magic! The sheep, although still on a rigorous schedule of dewormers, are performing great, breeding and looking healthy again.

In hindsight I realized a gain— those lost animals would never survive in Florida and getting my genetics built up with those that will *thrive* created a flock I could only dream of.

**Education Focus - 4 identifiers C-THE → Color – Tail, Horns, Ears**

In preparation for the database, the Registration application was modified, making it even easier to register Karakul sheep. Four main physical identifiers are all that are necessary to register most Karakuls, a photo or two, along with permanent ID, sire, dam, date (or year) of birth, and birth type (single, twin, or rare triplets).

Lamb birthcoat evaluations are encouraged for all, but only *required* for No History ewes: CLTPD – Curls, Luster, Texture, Pattern, Development. Photos of any newborn Karakul can usually determine Curl types and Patterns (see lamb above). Luster may also be discernible. Shepherds are responsible for determining newborn Texture, and Development (how many days before curls open). Send photos to [info@karakulshepherds.org](mailto:info@karakulshepherds.org) for an evaluation.



Color- Medium red, cream fleece, high luster  
 Tail- upper - large-U  
       lower - flip  
 Horns- small  
 Ears- long

photo by Penny Gelhaus, CA



Color- Black, no markings, fleece med gray  
 Tail- upper - large-U, short  
       lower - short, straight  
 Horns- none, polled  
 Ears- medium

photo Eli Roberts, AOOA, NY

**The Advisors & I thank you for supporting KSAR—Karakul Shepherds Alliance Registry!**

~ Deborah

See 4 other tail evaluations above in FL article