

Fiber: End-Uses & Sales Channels

The luxurious fiber of the North American Paco-Vicuña™ is suitable for use in many fine products, especially garments that come into close contact with one's skin, including scarves, shawls, stoles, dresses, hats, fine mittens & gloves, sweaters, formal coats, blankets & throws, and more.

When looking at deriving income from fiber, you can sell raw fiber as individual fleeces to hand spinners and fiber artists, create value-added products to sell on your own or through an intermediary, and/or sell bulk fiber to designers or producers (*as we are still a small breed and lesser-known in the livestock fiber marketplace, this will require some diligence*). Common physical locations to sell raw fiber and value-added goods are fiber shows/fairs, yarn stores, farm stores, and personal networking. Online marketing and sales can be built through Etsy, personal fiber artist websites, your farm's website, farm cooperatives, and of course, your listing as a member on the North American Paco-Vicuña Association's website, where the Association will happily link our audience to your online sales outlet.

Once you've chosen a North American Paco-Vicuña™ farm business model to develop, you then begin to build a livestock herd that fits that business model.

Rebreed Farm Models

A rebreed farm is only focused on producing fiber and, therefore, primarily breeds its North American Paco-Vicuña™ to expand its herd while only occasionally providing a limited number of animals to other farmers. A rebreed farm's goal should be to grow its North American Paco-Vicuña™ herd so that its fiber is as uniform as possible in grade and color.



Trait Uniformity Characteristic of a Rebreed Farm

Photo credits: Jefferson Farms Natural Fibers

Uniformity for a rebreed farm cuts down on time spent preparing the herd's fiber for sale, while allowing more time to produce uniform, larger amounts of fiber to sell in commercially-viable bulk quantities, or to produce enough fiber from which the farm itself can create a specific and repeatable product line and/or brand.

Smaller Farm Models

Smaller farm models that focus on seedstock, rescue animals, or hand-spinner's herd, will likely have – and readily tolerate – a greater variation in fiber characteristics than a rebreed farm would. If your North American Paco-Vicuña™ herd is so small that it can't produce a large enough fiber batch to meet a mill's minimum processing/intake amount and you aren't interested in hand-processing for value-added products, you have to explore more creative options to sell your fiber. Maybe your fiber characteristics match those of another farm and that farm is interested in pooling fibers from multiple farms to create a mill-ready batch. Or maybe if your animals maintain micron diameter and staple length from year to year – and if you can wait a few years – you could save multiple years' shorn fleeces from the same animal(s) until you have a mill-ready amount. If you have several animals that are the same fiber grade, but different colors, you could creatively blend a heathered yarn as 'color of the year' or you could blend the North American Paco-Vicuña™ fiber with different types of fiber, like silk or qiviut, which would help stretch your supply.

Remember that whether your fiber is ultimately processed by hand or in a mill, a thinner yarn takes longer to produce, but also brings out the luxurious aspects of the fiber, while stretching your supply further. Because North American Paco-Vicuña fiber has excellent insulating characteristics, even a lightweight North American Paco-Vicuña garment will still keep one toasty warm.