

THE COOPECAN COOPERATIVE

MANAGING THE PRODUCTION CHAIN OF ALPACA FIBER IN PERU

The Cooperative Coopecan that operates in Peru developing the overall production chain of alpaca and vicuñas fibers, has been recognized by FAO in November 2018 among the 10 innovative and scalable initiatives for the Sustainable Rural Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Coopecan is also one of the success experiences presented in the Coop Stories Publication of the International Cooperative Alliance-ICA.

The winning strategy adopted by Coopecan is to plan, organize and manage the overall productive chain, from the stage of breeding of alpacas and vicuñas, the selection and transformation of fibres to the commercialization of fibres and finished products, ensuring the conservation of the high Andean eco-system.

The *Cooperative of Production and Special Services Coopecan-Peru* has been created in 2008 by a group of 1000 alpaca and vicuña shepherds and producers from four regions of the country (Ayacucho, Apurímac, Arequipa y Cusco), to achieve fairer and more competitive prices for its alpaca and vicuña fibres in the market.

In 2018 the Cooperative associates 17 organisations that group about 6.000 small producers of the Andes Mountains in Ayacucho, Apurímac, Arequipa, Cusco y Huancavelica Regions. Coopecan today has a wide range of products related to alpaca and vicuña fibres and supports the association among the producers to reach the needed volumes of commercial offer and the quality expected by the national and world market demand.

In 2008, when Coopecan was established, all producers devolved their Alpaca fibres to the two enterprises dominating the 90% of the market in Peru. The principal purpose of the Cooperative was to directly negotiate with the international buyers, in order to achieve better prices and increase the income of the producers and their families.

With a joint analysis work, however, the producers came to the conclusion that the price represented only one aspect of the problem and that to ensure long-term sustainability the Cooperative should define a commercial model adding value to the fibre products, by integrating the primary production



with manufacturing, a stronger quality control and by taking in charge the direct commercialization within the international market.

This strategy was implemented in several stages, combining a series of innovations: in the Cooperative's governance model to achieve a higher professional level of the managing members; in the management of natural resources (water and pastures), improving feeding practices, health and reproduction of alpacas, water management; adding skills in fibre processing and marketing capabilities.

[The article published by the Leisa magazine of Agroecology](#) tells the story of the Coopecan Cooperative in all its working stages and the main results obtained in the overall management of the production chain, increasing the income of the Alpaca producers in a sustainable way. The Journal also underlines that with its innovations, its experience and results, the Cooperative succeeded in breaking a predominant paradigm, according to which it is impossible the cultivation of perennial grasses above 4,000 meter of altitude.

The Coopecan Cooperative develops the overall productive chain of camelids fibre using a mix of international cooperation funds, national funds and micro-financial institutions that grant credits for working capital and investment. In 2011 the [Agriterra Organization from the Netherlands](#) established a cooperation with Coopecan, providing extra funds and technical assistance to support different aspects of the innovative process and also offering opportunities of international partnerships.

Coopecan is headquartered in Lima with a commercial office and manages two fibre Collection Centres and a Processing Plant in Arequipa, acquired by a loan in 2014. According to data of the year 2016 the Cooperative generates 67 permanent direct jobs, more than 100 temporary jobs and about 6.5 million Soles in sales (compared to 300.000 Soles of the year 2008), having a significant impact on the net income of its members. In 2013 the Cooperative designed and registered the *trademark Pachaqaytu* for hand-made yarns produced in its own Plant and the *brand Alpacas* for clothing wear.

Coopecan has been successful in bringing its high quality products on the competitive international market of natural fibres of animal origin (Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Canada) and on the E-commerce, ensuring direct benefits to its members and improving the high Andean ecosystem with its agro-ecological practices.

To know more

[Website Coopecan-Perú](#)

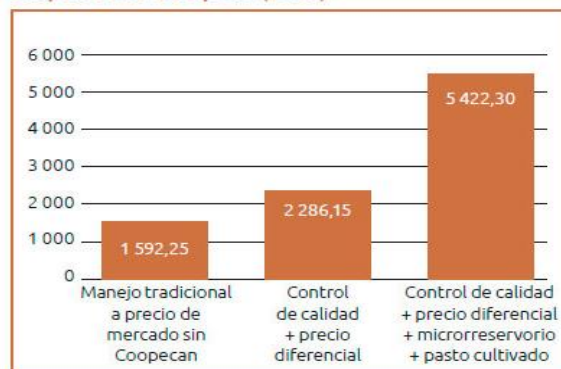
[Coopecan in Facebook](#)

[Video Coopecan](#)

[Video Coopecan in Youtube](#)



Gráfico 1. Cambio en el ingreso neto anual del socio de Coopecan con 150 alpacas (Soles)



Fuente: Coopecan, 2016.



Cuadro 1. Efectos del cambio de las prácticas de alimentación, sanidad y manejo del hato sobre los principales índices productivos en alpacas

Índice productivo		2012	2015
Tasa de preñez		65%	90%
Tasa de abortos		30%	5%
Tasa de natalidad		60%	85%
Tasa de mortalidad de crías (de 1 a 60 días)		40%	5%
Porcentaje del hato esquilado cada año		50%	90%
Peso promedio del vellón (adultos)		4 libras	6,5 libras
Peso vivo por alpaca adulta	hembra	45 kg	65 kg
	macho	50 kg	75 kg
Capacidad de carga de las praderas		1/ha de pradera natural	50/ha de pasto cultivado

Fuente: Coopecan, Proyecto CRIAs, 2016.



[Video CRIA Project Coopecan](#)

[Coopecan in Revista Leisa](#)

[Coopecan in Coop Stories](#)

[FAO Award - América Latina](#)

[FAO Award in Facebook Coopecan](#)

[Article in Agriterra.org](#)

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[Coopecan in ceesvannj.nl weblog](#)

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