

Alpacas – Routine Care Needs



Alpacas are hardy, long-lived animals that are easy to care for.

Five Basic Requirements

Secure fencing

- Plain wire is suitable; no barbed wire or electric fences needed

Fresh water

- Dams or troughs

Clean pasture grasses

- Native grasses and/or improved pasture are good; not too many weeds
- Alpacas also love lucerne, clover or oaten hay. Too much may make them fat!

Shelter

- Shade trees in the paddock or a shelter shed

Another alpaca to socialise with

- Minimum of two alpacas together

Basic Health Needs

The following is a suggested schedule of health care. If you are not sure about any of these items, please ask us, or contact your vet.

Once per year	Twice per year
Shearing – October/November, when risk of cold snaps is very low <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selenium• 6 in 1• Check teeth and skin	At shearing and in Autumn <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cut toe nails
Three times / year: Minimum	Once per month
At shearing, June and August. Could need more in very cloudy winters. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vitamin D3• Phosphate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check general condition by Body Scoring (see page 3)• Check eyes (In Spring they may get grass seeds in eyes)
Once per year or on an 'as needs' basis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drench (oral or injectable) This is only required if worm count is too high	

Males

- If castrating, this is best done at about 18 months of age.
- Fighting teeth need to be trimmed at about age 3 years of age.

Please note, Pinjarra Alpacas is not a veterinary practice.
You are advised to check all alpaca care with your vet.

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Shots & Drenches used

Dosages

Most products do not specify a dosage for alpacas. Instead, use the dosage specified for sheep. Always check the packaging for dosages.

Vitamin D3

- Alpacas need vitamin D3 supplementation
- Minimum three times per year

Brand: Hideject AD&E – 500,000 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D

Inject intra muscular

Suggested dose: 1ml 60kg adults & weanlings, 0.5ml cria (double the dose for black or densely fleeced alpacas)

Phosphate & Vitamin B

Inject intra muscular each time Vitamin D3 is administered

Phosphate on it's own stings, the Vitamin B dilutes the sting.

Brand: Coforta 100 or Cophos

Suggested dose 4 ml 60kg adults & weanlings; 1ml cria

Selenium

Alpacas need more selenium than is available in most Victorian soils

Brand: Deposel or Selovin LA

Suggested dose – 1ml per alpaca

6 in 1 Vaccination

This controls or prevents 6 diseases that could affect alpacas.

Brand: Glanvac

Suggested dose – 1ml per alpaca

Cria – 1 ml at age 2 months and again 4 weeks later, then annual dose

Drench

Administered orally or by injection depending on the brand.

Use a different drench (Active Constituent) each time to combat build up of resistance to worms

Brands include Ivomec, Valbazen, Cydectin, Triguard, Zolvix, etc

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Body Scoring

Body scoring is a useful way of assessing the general condition of your alpacas. It enables you to determine whether the alpaca is healthy or it can indicate a health problem.

Body scoring involves placing your hand across the center of the alpaca's back feeling for muscle coverage. Your thumb is on one side of the spine and fingers on the other side. Healthy animals will have a soft convex shape, a score of 2.5 to 3. Bulging shape indicates excess weight, and a concave shape indicates an underweight alpaca.

Score	Feel between spine and ribs	What it looks like
1	<p><i>Very thin.</i></p> <p>Severely concave between spine and ribs.</p> <p>Individual ribs felt very easily; cannot feel any tissue over the ribs.</p>	
2	<p><i>Moderately thin.</i></p> <p>Slightly concave between spine and ribs.</p> <p>Individual ribs easily felt, but some tissue present.</p>	
3	<p><i>Good condition.</i></p> <p>Neither concave nor convex between spine and ribs.</p> <p>Individual ribs can still be felt, but can feel tissue.</p>	
4	<p><i>Overweight.</i></p> <p>Convex roundness makes muscle area harder to feel.</p> <p>You can just feel ribs and fluid movement of tissue.</p>	
5	<p><i>Obese.</i></p> <p>Top of back is almost flat.</p> <p>Very difficult to palpate between spine and ribs.</p> <p>You can barely feel the ribs; tissue movement very fluid.</p>	

Reference: Alpaca Agskills, NSW Government Primary