

Alpaca Management Advice

Please keep in mind that alpacas are gregarious animals and should be kept with their kind, preferably of the same sex, unless working as herd guards in a sheep flock.

Change of Environment

If you want to introduce alpacas into a new area: Clean and disinfect the stables (e.g. Virkon S, F10), especially for example old shearing sheds. Alpacas are susceptible to all sheep diseases, e. g. clostridial diseases like pulpy kidney. Although we do vaccinate with Covexin 10 twice a year, there is always some risk left.

If the floor of the stable were made of loam/soil, it would be advisable to take the top layer out and replace it by a concrete slab that one can disinfect.

Alpacas are creatures of habit and travelling and change of environment will cause them stress. Stress might encourage sickness like ulcers, or bacterial diseases.

Feeding

Feed / pellets should be fed out of troughs and never from the ground. Fresh water should be freely available. Water standing in warm temperatures increases the chance of growing bacterial diseases.

For any ruminant change of feed, change of environment and pasture causes dramatic impact on their digestive system. One needs to phase out the "old" feed and slowly introduce the "new" feed. The bacteria in the digestive system must get used and adapt to the changes.

If you introduce new pellets / concentrates start with small portions! We will supply some of our concentrate mix for changeover. Please give them a part of this food and about only 25% of the "new" food. Then slowly increase the amount of "new" feed and reduce the old one until you only feed your "new" feed.

When introducing alpacas to new pasture, let them only graze for a short while in the beginning and slowly extend the time.

Alpacas need 1,5 – 2,0 kg of feed every day. We recommend oat hay and / or grass ad lib and some pellets / muesli depending on their age and need.

At this stage we can recommend "CAPSTONE Flexitime" -

www.capstonehorsefeed.com/feeds_flexitime.php

This muesli has a very good mineral content. As it is high in copper we urgently recommend to never feed more than 200 g per head per day!! An overdose of copper can be deadly.

For lactating females we recommend to give some lucerne as additional protein supply.

Please make sure that the lucerne is milled as the hard stems could cause infection of the jawbone.

For extra energy you might need to add a horse muesli or game pellets, especially for your lactating females.

Always make sure that all feed is urea free, so basically all your horse, game, calf or lamb feeds work very well to increase energy levels.

Make sure the fodder is of good quality and does not contain micro-toxins, mould or poisonous plants.

Vaccinations

All alpacas leaving Klein-Landskroon will have an up-to-date Covexin 10 vaccination (MSD Animal Health) and will be due for their booster in May 2014. They also have been vaccinated for Rift Valley Fever (Disease Control Africa), Blue Tongue (Onderstepoort) (if not pregnant at that time), as well as for Anthrax and Botulism (Botuthrax and Botuvax by Intervet).

Parasite Control

Alpaca skin is extremely sensitive – their fine exquisite fibre comes with delicate skin, therefore any open wounds must be treated immediately.

We recommend fly control and “Wipe-out” for their protection. We found a footbath with Amitraz works well as mite control.

Alpaca fibre contains little lanolin and therefore rain can penetrate more easily. We would recommend that especially young animals should not be kept outside without shelter in cold and rainy weather. Some shade is of course also advisable in summer time.

For parasite control we recommend to make diatomaceous earth available to your animals ad lib, which is also very cost effective.

We do not recommend routine deworming. If your animals are looking well, growing well and are healthy, they are coping well with their worm load, if any.

However, if there is a parasite problem in your area, please act accordingly.

If your animals seem to be doing poorly condition-wise we would recommend to take a faecal sample and have it examined by a vet and act accordingly.

Other Management

Depending on your soil toenails might need trimming several times a year. For this we use normal pruning shears and trim the toenails parallel to the ground.

Teeth keep on growing throughout the alpacas life and might, again depending on your circumstances, need trimming about once a year. We are using a dremel with a tile-cutting bit for this.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for toenail and teeth trimming demonstrations.

Alpacas also will need shearing once a year. There might be an alpaca or sheep shearer in your area. Alternatively, we do offer an annual shearing course every year mid to end of September.

SA Studbook / SA Alpaca Breeders Society

We will notify SA Studbook about the change of ownership (where applicable) irrespective whether the seller is or is not or does not intend to become a member of SA Studbook or the SA Alpaca Society.

Information on membership is available on the following websites:

www.studbook.co.za

www.alpacasociety.co.za

Recommended Literature

Llama and Alpaca Neonatal Care by B. B. Smith, K. I. Timm, P. O. Long

Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids: Llama, Alpaca, Vicuna, Guanaco by Murray E. Fowler (May 15, 1998)

After-Sales Support Contact

You are welcome to contact us for advise, but if in doubt, please contact your vet.

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