

Caring for your pet alpacas

Disclaimer: This is not to be construed as veterinary advice; this information is industry standards of care for non-breeding alpacas. If in doubt, call your veterinarian.
This is designed for Southern California, Arizona, etc.

Never give medicated feed designed for goats or other species. The medicated feed will kill your alpacas. If there is ANY doubt, don't give it.

Alpacas must be shorn yearly, before the heat sets in. They need shade in the summer, and a clean supply of water at all times. Alpacas need alpacas as a companion.

The alpacas can survive just fine on good quality orchard grass hay and nothing else. Unlike horses, you can free feed them, they'll only eat what they need. Small amounts of alfalfa can be given as a treat. If you want to give pelleted treats, many Purina dealers will carry Mazuri Llama Chews, but you should give no more than about a small soup can per day.

Alpacas should receive a yearly CDT vaccination. 2cc's are given regardless of weight. This is available at most feed stores. Your alpacas received their last vaccination on _____

Alpacas are wormed according to specific parasites in the area. Some people use a prophylactic worming protocol. Wormers used are Fenbendazol orally (Safeguard or Panacur) and Avermectins injected. (Ivermectin or Dectomax) Safeguard and Panacur are exactly the same product, Ivermectin and Dectomax are slightly different, but do the same job, Dectomax stings less. There is an overlap on the parasites they kill, and Safeguard is sometimes used exclusively.

The dosage of Safeguard from the Dr Evans manual is 1mg/10 pounds. This equates to 4 times the horse dose. If it is the small tube from the feed store, the dial would be turned to 600 for a 150 lb alpaca. Under dosing is more dangerous than overdosing.

For Dectomax, he calls for 1cc/50 lbs.

A common protocol is alternating Safeguard and Dectomax every 3-6 months. A better protocol is to do periodic fecal testing, and only deworm if the parasite load warrants it.

Training your Alpaca

The recognized expert in training is Marty McGee Bennett. She has many helpful hints at <http://www.camelidynamics.com>

Some basics:

Halter fit is extremely important. A loose halter that slides down the nose will cause a normally calm alpaca to panic.

If you chase your alpaca, he will run. Work calmly with him, he'll learn to trust you.

The more time you spend with him, the more he'll trust you.

Working with 2 alpacas at a time is much easier than working with one alone. They are herd animals, and if you take 2 boys on a walk together, they'll begin to work as a team.

Feeding your alpacas in a small catch pen will make it much easier, as they become accustomed to going in there, it's easier to get them haltered up for training.

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