

Camelids – part 5





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How do you shear an Alpaca?

- Answer – with difficulty...
- Alpaca are not shorn like a sheep
- They are tied up (front and hind legs)
- Low % grease
- Once per year - usually Spring
- 1.5 - 4kg fleece



What is the DSE rating of an alpaca?

- In general the DSE rating of an alpaca is approximately that of a large wether (between 1-1.2 DSE – depending on its weight)
- Similar to a sheep, if it is pregnant or lactating the DSE rating will increase (up to 2 DSE for a lactating hembra)

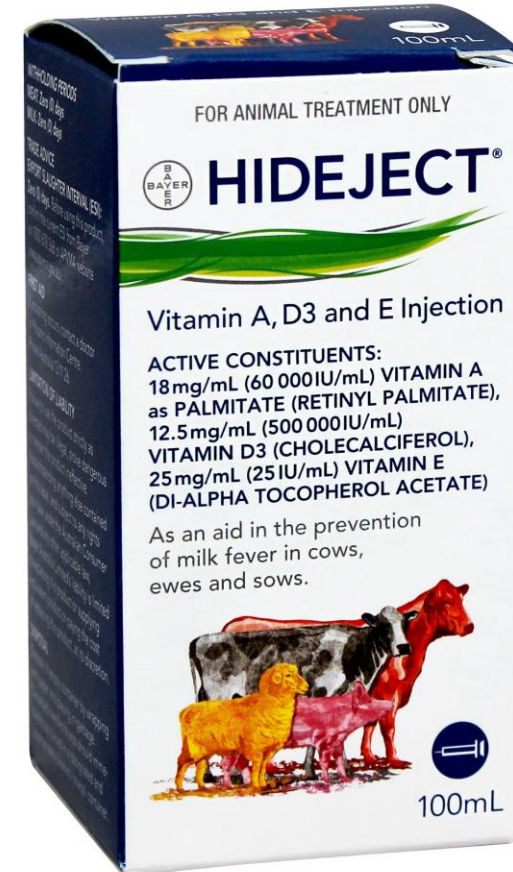
Table 1. Summary of feed requirements in alpacas.

Feed requirements Av. female 60-80 kg Av. male 70-90 kg	Maintenance (> 2.5-3 years of age)	Growth (crias should double birth weight by 50 days of age)	Lactation (peak milk output 2-4 weeks post-partum)
Dry Matter Intake (DMI % BW/d)	1.5% (1.1-1.6%)	1.8-2%	2-2.5%
Crude Protein %	8-10%	14% < 12mo 12% > 12mo	13-15%
Crude Fibre %	25%	20-25%	20-25%
Neutral Detergent Fibre (% BW/d)	0.8-1.0%	0.6-0.8%	0.8-1.0%

<https://criagenesis.cc/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CriaGenesis-adult-nutrition-v2.pdf>

VITAMIN D

- 6000iu/kg for all alpacas <3yo and females due to give birth in winter/ early Spring








Body condition scores- alpaca

Table A1.1.5 Body condition scores for alpacas



The picture on the left is an example of how to body score an alpaca by placing your hand on the backbone, just forward of the pelvic area (or toward the last of the ribs).

Score	Description	Illustration
1	Severely concave between spine and ribs. The backbone is very noticeable, ribs are clearly felt and brisket shows no fat.	
2	Slightly concave between spine and ribs. You can feel backbone, ribs are noticeable and brisket is firm.	
3	Neither concave nor convex between spine and ribs. You can feel the backbone, but it does stand out and you can just feel the ribs and the brisket.	
4	Slightly convex between spine and ribs. You can feel the backbone, but it does not stand out and you can just feel the ribs and the brisket.	
5	Severely concave between spine and ribs, the top of the back feels flat. You can not feel backbone or ribs, brisket wobbles when touched.	

Disease problems/prevention

- Less likely to get fly struck compared to sheep (lower grease content)
- Most are vaccinated against tetanus, pulpy kidney, black vaccine)
- Can also give 7 in 1 (includes Leptospirosis)
- Johnes disease (*Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*)
- Internal parasites (faecal egg counts)
- Fighting
- Trimming toenails (if necessary)



Removal of fighting teeth

Removed using obstetrical wire (these teeth are rudimentary in female, removed in male)



<http://ip-50-62-236-85.ip.secureserver.net/html/articles/head/head1.htm>

Alpaca behaviour

- Dung piles
- Spitting



Vicious, blood-spitting alpaca attack had WA women fearing for their lives before being saved by police

ABC Great Southern By [Ellie Honeybone](#)

Updated December 05, 2018 10:16:07



PHOTO: Karen Stroebe ended up in hospital for weeks after being trampled and attacked by her alpaca.
(ABC Great Southern: Andrew Collins)

Karen Stroebe thought her partner had found the

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Reproduction

- Gestation about 335 days (11 months) – little bit less than a horse
- Physical act of copulation and the stud's ogling noise induces ovulation
- Female is either receptive to mating or non-receptive to mating
- Mate at any time of the year
- Mating lasts for 5 to 65 minutes.....
- Done sitting down.....
- Pregnancy check – failure to sit, “spit-off” (weekly post joining), ultrasound scanning



<http://www.stansburyalpacas.com.au/alpacaMating.htm>

Reproduction

- A.I. (as per all camelids) not well developed:
 - Collection not well established (long copulation times make it difficult)
 - Viscous semen makes storage difficult
 - Single matings (or insemination) not very successful
- Embryo Transfer (E.T.) is being used in Australia
 - Dr Jane Vaughan has provided “Canchones” alpaca stud with >300 cria through E.T.

Mating age

- Generally greater than 45 kilograms and over 12 months
- Males reach sexual maturity at 1-3 years of age
- Male and female cria are generally run separately when weaned
- Generally weaned between three and six months of age



Source: Town and country magazine



What will the Alpaca industry look like in 10 years?

- Improved genetics
 - Lower micron
 - Higher production per head (and per hectare)
- Less labour per animal
- More commercial focus, rather than current “stud-stock”
- Or, will it go the way of some other small, new industries?



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