

SOUTH EAST COUNTRY VETS

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BASIC ALPACA MANAGEMENT

Whether it's for flock protection, fleece production or just as a pet, alpacas can make for interesting pets!

Paddock Essentials

Alpacas require fencing similar to sheep and a suitable yard or pen for shearing and check-ups is also required. A good quality shelter where they can escape from the elements is very important in our area. When used as herd guards for sheep flocks, alpacas are very effective against foxes which may attack lambs or down sheep. It is important to remember though that they are in just as much danger from wild dogs as sheep.

HEALTH

- Diet** Alpacas should be fed pasture at all times. Prior to purchase, you should determine how many alpacas your property can support. They do well on native pastures but can also be supplemented with good quality hay.
- Vaccinations** Alpacas tend to be relatively disease free. Like most animals though they need to be monitored to ensure they stay in optimum health. They are vaccinated twice yearly with Ultravac 5in1 to protect against clostridial diseases.
- Worms** Most alpacas like to defecate in one spot so this means there isn't a large amount of faeces spread throughout their paddock. This means they have a relatively low worm burdens. When they share a paddock with sheep and goats, they will pick up the same internal parasites so should be put on the same drenching regime.
- Flies** With regular shearing, most alpacas should remain free from fly strike compared to sheep.
- Shearing** Shearing is the biggest maintenance task required for your alpaca and is usually done once a year in Spring. It is mostly a quick and easy procedure when done by an experienced alpaca shearer.

DO THEY MAKE GOOD PETS?

Most alpacas do make good pets when they are treated well. With realistic expectations, adequate training and lots of handling from a young age, most alpacas will eat out of your hand and be able to lead by a halter.

SPITTING – WHY DO THEY DO IT!?

Alpacas have a great defence mechanism that is actually a very effective deterrent – spitting! This is regurgitated grass and despite its odour it isn't harmful. Spitting is a signal of dominance, displeasure or fear and humans aren't the usual target.

BREEDING

Females become sexually mature at around 12-18m of age however males, despite showing interest, won't be mature until 18m-3yr of age. Females can be mated at any time of the year and they have an 11-12month gestation period.



This information sheet is not intended as a substitute for a veterinary consultation.

It is recommended that a consultation be arranged with a veterinary practitioner if you have any concerns with your pets' health.