

Appearance

Camelids should be spry, alert, and eyes bright. Fiber should not appear matted or missing. Toenails should not be curling, long, split, or cracking. Body should not have unexplained lumps, bumps, or injuries.

Bony breastbone, protruding hip or rib bones are good indicators that an animal is underweight.

Behavior

These animals are generally aloof yet inquisitive, ear position = mood.

- Ears back: not happy, display of aggression
- Ears perked while aimed forward: eager, interested
- Ears drooping while pointing sideways: content

Camelids that are lying down should get up when approached. If they fail to rise upon approach or need help rising, contact your veterinarian immediately.



Additional Recommendations

BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO BUY A CAMELID

RESEARCH, READ, RESEARCH SOME MORE, then go visit a local breeder followed by more research!

As with any farm animal, there is a significant commitment of time, money, & dedication to the welfare of those in your care. If not properly informed to care for your camelid, lives may be lost.

Recommended Reading

Caring for Llamas & Alpacas
by Clare Hoffman, DVM & Ingrid Asmus

Storey's Guide to Raising Llamas
by Gale Birutta

Common Sense Approach to Alpacas
By Julie Musgrove



For further clarification on accepted animal husbandry practices for camelids, please contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health Section at
(802) 828-2421

If you suspect animal cruelty or neglect, please call
1-877-9-HUMANE or visit:
www.reportanimalcruelty.com

Caring for Camelids (Alpacas / Llamas)



Basic information for caring for
alpacas & llamas.

Vermont's
Recommendations &
Requirements

Offered by

**HespeGarden Ranch &
Rescue LLC**

Camelid Basics

General Terminology

Age defining terms (male or female) Newborn to 6 mo: cria 6 – 12 mo: weanling 12 – 24 mo: juvenile

24 months & beyond

Females are:

Open (non-pregnant of breeding age)

Bred (pregnant)

Males are:

Gelded (castrated) or

Intact (non-castrated)

Alpaca: Descent of vicuna & cousin of llama. Native to S. America. Small, compact stature. Bred for soft hypoallergenic fiber & meat.

Llama: Descent of guanaco & cousin of alpaca. Native to S. America. Large, sturdy stature. Bred as beast of burden, hypoallergenic fiber, and meat.

huacaya: type of fiber; crimped (wavy)

suri: type of fiber; not crimped, hangs in curls

Camelid Care

- Fresh clean accessible water at all times is a must!
- As camelids have a highly efficient digestive system, it's important to provide:
 - During spring/summer/fall months feed sources consisting of a combination of good forage on pasture as well as periodic grain specific to llamas/alpacas to ensure proper vitamin & mineral balance.
 - During cold & freezing months, be sure to provide good hay absent of dust, mold or excessive moisture. Be sure to supplement daily with grain specific to llamas/alpacas to ensure vitamin & mineral balance.

Toe nails

Must be clipped routinely. Generally every 6 months, but at a minimum at each shearing.

Shearing

Due to the climate in Vermont, shearing should be done annually in the spring or early summer. This will help prevent unnecessary hyperthermia (heat stress).



Teeth

Camelids use their teeth for grinding, & they are very important in their digestion cycle. If forage does not include woody plants, incisors may need periodic trimming, either by a vet or you.

Preventative Health Care

Camelids require consistent preventative health care including but not limited to monthly & annual vaccinations. If you are not prepared to administer them yourself, consult your vet. You should consult your veterinarian for vaccination and parasite control recommendations, but at a minimum, camelids require control for internal & external parasites and immunity to clostridium C & D, tetanus and rabies.

Fencing

Camelids are respectful of fencing, however, they can jump 5 feet & if lonely or want a food source, the attempt WILL be made.

To mitigate unintentional breeding; intact males should be housed/pastured/fenced WELL AWAY from females. Fencing should be sturdy, dependable, and a minimum of 5 foot in height.

Females & gelded males are often housed/ pastured together & may occupy an area surrounded by 4' fencing or less.

Always err on the side of caution when it comes to fencing. Camelids are difficult to catch & good neighbors are hard to come by.

Shelter

VT statutes require that adequate natural or manmade shelter be provided. With that being said, llamas/ alpacas are beasts that will seek shelter as needed. A reasonable shelter could be a simple, three-sided structure with a well-bedded floor (hay or the like) approximately 4" deep.

VT is known for strong winter winds! Make sure the shelter opening is on the south or south east side as most of our adverse weather prevails from the north west.

Recommended Management Practices

The best way to prevent illness & reduce internal/external parasites is to practice good housekeeping.

- Routinely collect manure, place in compost pile and sprinkle with lime to reduce odor.
- Keep bedding material free of excessive moisture.
- Keep feed/water buckets clean, being sure to routinely sanitize.
- Store grain in a cool dry place.
- Hay should be stored in a dry, well-ventilated area.

