

Alpaca Needs

On this farm we do the following things to keep our alpacas health and happy, and this is intended as some guidance toward their care and does not replace or supersede any advice from a veterinarian or other specialist in camilid care.

Company Alpacas need alpacas. A minimum of two alpacas are needed. They need to communicate with each other all the time by sight and sound. They get very upset alone.

Water Alpacas need a source of fresh clean water to drink at all times. They generally drink between one and two gallons of water daily. In hot weather they also like to climb right into the water pail or to be sprayed with water.. We hang the water pails just high enough to keep their feet out of them so the water stays clean. On very hot days we will put some water in kiddie pools for them. Care should be taken to not soak their fleece as it will act like a sauna. We wet only the chest, legs, and underside. These areas have mostly hair and little fleece.

Food Alpacas eat two to three pounds of dry matter a day. This would be about two pounds of **hay** (one leaf of a common bale) and **nutritional supplements** (chow) to balance diet. They also need a **mineral supplement**. We feed twice a day and nearly always offer hay in addition to pasture.

Space The amount on land alpacas need to get exercise and to live comfortable is generally considered to be four or five per acre. This does not mean that feeding hay would not be needed. We have a guesstimated three acres fenced for ten alpacas. Alpacas, especially the younger ones, like to play and race and jump about, particularly at dusk. It is one of the big pay-backs in owning these wonderful creatures. I often get laughing so hard that I have to hold onto the fence!

Fences The main purpose of fences for alpacas is to keep out predators. Wild and domestic dogs, and coyotes. Two by four mesh or livestock panels, at least four feet high, work well.

Shelter The shelter needed for alpacas is a three sided, roofed barn or shed, the purpose is to give them shade and wind, rain and snow protection. A good example of that is a loafing shed.. It is suggested by some research that they need about five foot square to get along in the barn. Alpaca do keep their personal space You would probably want to have a hay storage area in the barn, this is particularly nice in bad weather Many people convert horse, sheep or cow barns, which is great if you have them. Don't be surprised to find the whole herd covered with a couple of inches of snow, and the barn empty. We chose to use a greenhouse for a barn so that they get as much sun light as possible, to synthesize vit. D. It is very nice to be in the barn on a rainy day and have plenty of light.

Medicines From approximately May to December alpacas need to be wormed monthly to protect them from a parasite called the Meningeal Worm. This parasite is carried by the white tail deer and snail and slugs are the intermediate hosts. The Meningeal worm is sometimes called the brain worm and it attacks the nervous system and can cause paralysis and even death. We also vaccinate against Rabies and CD/T.

Foot Care The alpaca have soft pads, much like a dogs, and toe nails. The nails need to be cut periodically. The rate of growth and wear of the nails are variable and a general statement as to the frequency of trimming is worthless.

We hope that you have found this to be of help.