

## **Dear New Alpaca Owner,**

Congratulations on the addition of alpacas to your farm and family! We appreciate your business. We take pride in the health of the animals we have sold to you. Please find below a list of resources for you to continue their care.

### **Feed:**

Feed/Supplement. Alpacas do not eat grain, although some call it grain or feed. It's actually a vitamin/mineral/hay formula that is offered to the alpacas for overall skin, body, and fiber health. Ask your local feed store what alpaca specific feed they carry. We do not recommend cracked corn as it causes acidosis.

We like **Evan's Start to Finish** as we have never seen a choke and we have seen great results in the overall health, skin and fiber, of the alpacas. It formulated like dog food using a cold-pressed process, which causes the alpacas to have to crunch it. It does not turn to paste or mush in the throat of the alpaca like most extruded nugget type feeds. We've seen a lot of choke prior to feeding Evan's Start to Finish, but in the 10 years of feeding Evan's Start to Finish, we have not had a choke victim. It is a higher cost alpaca feed/supplement on the market, but in my opinion worth it! Our local farm store gets it for us. I personally do not like rolled oats or corn. In my opinion it's a filler that you pay for and it's pooped right out!! I've seen it come right out in the fecal matter of the alpaca!! <https://www.buckeyenutrition.com/products/evans-alpaca-start-to-finish.aspx>

**Mazuri and Blue Seal also carry alpaca specific supplements.**

**Llama-Min 101 Minerals.** We offer this mineral mix free choice. It's a loose mineral/salt mix. Alpacas do not lick, so they cannot lick a salt or mineral block. We put a cup a day out and the alpacas will nibble on it if they need it. <http://www.stillwaterminerals.com/order.php>

**Feeders:** We use the goat feeder dishes and space them 4 feet apart. Your alpacas will still play musical dishes unless you give each alpaca a designated stall to eat.

<https://www.jefferspet.com/products/fence-feeder>

<https://www.southernstates.com/catalog/product/p-8952-duraflex-6qt-mini-feeder>

### **Hay:**

The best hay is 2<sup>nd</sup> cutting Orchard grass hay. Do not let a farmer tell you that the 1<sup>st</sup> cutting is soft. Alpacas will not eat 1<sup>st</sup> cutting hay. They will sit on it! You can offer a mixed grass hay as long as its 80% orchard grass. Alfalfa has the highest protein and can be a little too rich and cause scours. It's ok to offer alfalfa to skinnies by the handful. Timothy is ok, it is a step down from alfalfa in richness and has a higher protein.

Here are plans to a hay box like what we have on our farm:

<http://www.grazingbox.com/Pricing.htm>

Another option is a low plastic hay bunk. Drill holes in bottom to let water run out if left outside. Taller ones have known to blow over on top of animals and can seriously injure if not properly anchored. <https://www.southernstates.com/catalog/product/p-11057-tarter-economy-bunk-feeder-10-ft?category=horse-livestock%2Blivestock%2Bfeeders-buckets-tubs>

**Water:** Alpacas should be offered a daily fresh source of water. They do not care for stagnant or water that is smelly. They will also need their water to be heated in the winter, as they will not break ice with their noses like horses. <https://www.jefferspet.com/products/5-gallon-heated-flat-back-bucket>

#### **Tack:**

Please be sure to get a properly fitted halter. If the halter is too snug around the nose or not high enough on the nose bone, it will prevent the alpaca from being able to breathe properly and will highly stress the alpaca. I like halters with an adjustable nose band. If you have adults 150 lbs and above, you will want to get either a large or medium sized halter.

Halter: <https://www.useful-items.com/product-p/002z.htm>

Leads: <https://www.useful-items.com/product-p/003lr.htm>

#### **Herd Health:**

**Toenails:** Alpaca toenails need to be trimmed at least once every 3-4 months. They have a quick like a dog, so be careful not to cut into the nail too far. I trim on each side and then across the top, even or flat with the pad of the foot. We use goat nail trimmers: ZenportQ91 Hoof trimming shear. <https://amzn.to/2skbdUO>

**Meningeal Prevention:** If you are in the North East of the US, and in white tailed deer region, then you will need to give a Meningeal Prevention. We use Ivermectin or the generic form of Ivermectin (Avermax, Ivermax, Avermectin, Noromectin) We give our herd 1cc/70 lbs body weight each every 30-40 days year round. It is a subcutaneous injection. By not treating, you are risking a meningeal infection in your alpaca, which is not contagious, but it is painful and deadly. The alpaca is the dead-end host to the meningeal parasite. The parasite causes paralysis and death if not treated. Once an alpaca is infected with the Meningeal parasite, the treatment (Banamine, Safeguard, and Thiamine) is different than the preventative (Ivermectin) and will require a long term treatment plan. You will need to consult with your veterinarian. [https://www.valleyvet.com/ct\\_detail.html?pgguid=3d70c03d-e24f-4641-8145-5f0a3748c827&itemguid=7e4966c1-f020-471d-a808-897cafc7621f](https://www.valleyvet.com/ct_detail.html?pgguid=3d70c03d-e24f-4641-8145-5f0a3748c827&itemguid=7e4966c1-f020-471d-a808-897cafc7621f)

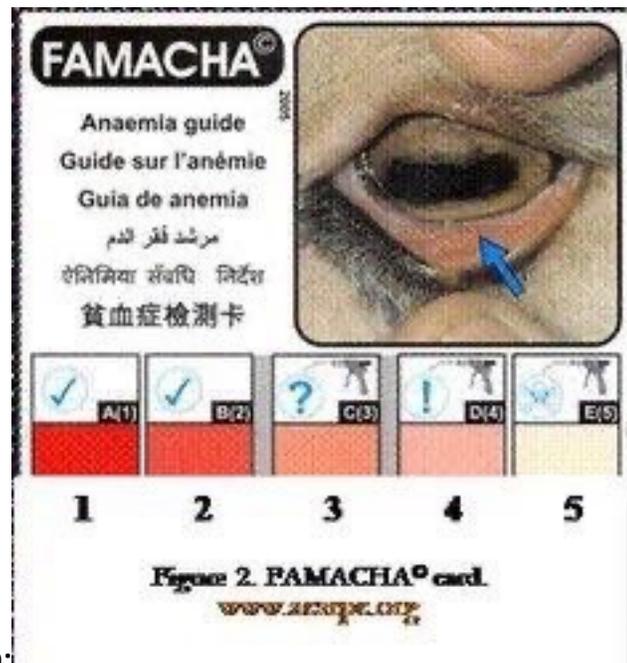
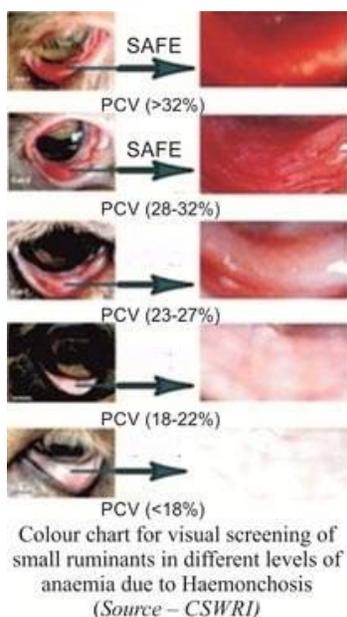
You will also need 3cc syringes and 20 gauge ½ - ¾ inch needles.

Found at Jefferspet.com or Amazon

Syringes: <https://bit.ly/2ro8wAh>

Needles: <https://bit.ly/2KY8JB7>

**Deworming Protocol/Fecal Analysis:** We send our alpaca fecals to Morven Park, Veterinary Clinic or to our state lab (Warrenton State Lab in VA). We check fecals either as warranted and/or each spring and each fall and de worm based on the fecal analysis results. Safeguard is the safest dewormer but requires to be given 5 consecutive days to be effective. Valbazen and Moxidectin should be used with caution and are not to be given to pregnant alpacas.



**Check eye membrane color each month:**

**Extra Vitamins:** We give our fall cria and our black alpacas Vitamin A,D,B12 supplement once every 2 weeks or a Vitamin D injection once every other month. This is to prevent Rickets. If you see an alpaca seeming to be stiff or lying down more than the rest of the herd and it's been overly cloudy/rainy season, you might suspect rickets.

<https://www.jefferspet.com/products/vitamin-ade-b12-gel>

<https://www.jefferspet.com/products/vitamin-a-d-250-ml>

**A good reliable and knowledgeable alpaca (camelid) veterinarian.** It is important to make sure you have a good veterinarian nearby or at least one you can call and consult with over the phone. Alpacas can be stoic and hide when they are not feeling well, so keep an eye on any subtle changes like sitting or laying down more than normal, not eating their supplement when the rest of the herd is eating, stumbling, etc. Sometimes alpacas will be friendlier or hang around you more when they are not feeling well. They look to you to take good care of them.

**Monthly weights:** If you are not a breeding farm you might not have a livestock scale to take monthly weights. Taking monthly weights is a good way of keeping an eye on your growing cria, gestating dams, and to make sure no one is illthrift, as you would see a considerable weight loss if an animal is sick.

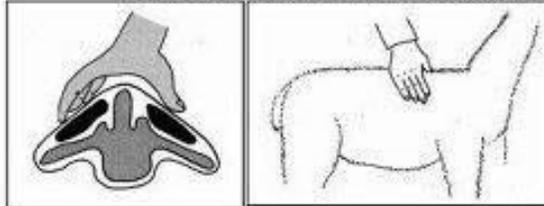
You can use a body scoring method to keep an eye on body condition:

# Paddock Card - Body Scoring



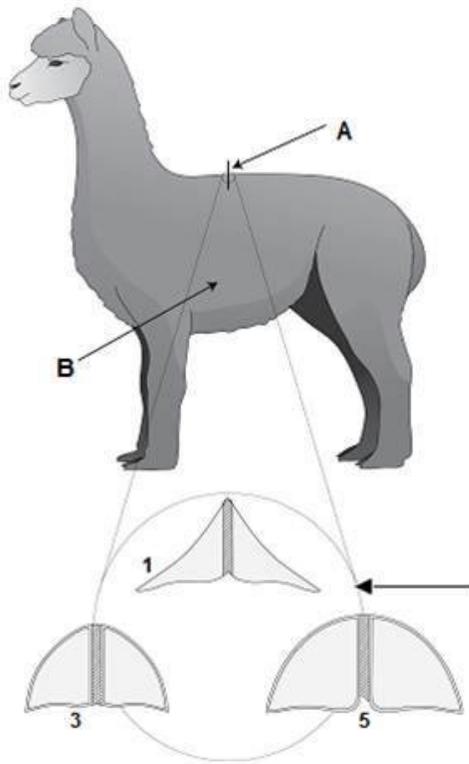
## Alpaca condition or body scoring, a health check

Quick & simple to do & can easily be done on a regular basis



- ✓ Check the spine as per diagram
  - ✓ Keep a record of each body score
  - ✓ Check the ribs at fibreless area behind elbow
  - ✓ Look at upper rear legs
  - ✓ Feel the chest
  - ✓ Look at front legs and chest
- Score 1 requires vet inspection asap. Score 4 and 5 may require nutritional advice, or just a diet (no extra feed). Beware of sudden changes in BS.

	<h1 style="color: red;">1</h1>	<p><b>EMACIATED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- very steep angle along spine &amp; curves inward</li> <li>- ribs are very easily felt</li> <li>- hard bony v-shaped chest, sternum extremely boney</li> <li>- very increased space between rear legs</li> <li>- very little muscle &amp; absolutely no fat</li> </ul>
	<h1 style="color: orange;">2</h1>	<p><b>THIN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- spinal slope more than 45 degrees</li> <li>- ribs can be easily felt</li> <li>- hard bony v-shaped chest, very little fat covering sternum</li> <li>- some increased space between rear legs</li> <li>- some loss of muscle</li> </ul>
	<h1 style="color: green;">3</h1>	<p><b>OPTIMAL (for adult huacaya )</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- about 45 degree angle along spine</li> <li>- ribs felt with slight pressure</li> <li>- firm muscular chest</li> <li>- chest makes straight line between front legs</li> </ul>
	<h1 style="color: orange;">4</h1>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT (for adult huacaya alpaca)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- convex shape between the backbone &amp; upper ribs <i>(ideal for adolescent huacaya alpaca under one year old)</i></li> <li>- ribs felt with some pressure</li> <li>- somewhat rounded soft feeling chest</li> <li>- inner thighs smooth &amp; less defined</li> </ul>
	<h1 style="color: red;">5</h1>	<p><b>OBESE (for adult huacaya alpaca)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- backbone looks flat <i>(normal in suri and cria &lt; 6 months)</i></li> <li>- firm pressure needed to feel ribs</li> <li>- rounded soft feeling chest</li> <li>- large area of contact between rear legs</li> <li>- little or no definition on inner thighs</li> <li>- may have difficulty walking properly</li> </ul>



**1 = Too thin**

**3 = Optimal weight/condition**

**5 = Overweight**

**Additional Resources For Your Reading Pleasure:**

<http://www.alpacainfo.com/academy/about-alpacas>

<https://www.amazon.com/Camelid-Companion-Handling-Training-Alpacas/dp/0970991606>

<https://www.amazon.com/Llama-Alpaca-Care-Book-Reproduction-ebook/dp/B00JBSPUSE>

<https://www.lightlivestockequipment.com/product/dr-evans-alpaca-field-manual-3rd-edition/?v=7516fd43adaa>

**We wish you all the best with your new herd of alpacas! Enjoy 😊**

**Sincerely,**

**Double 8 Alpaca Ranch**

**Lovettsville, VA**

**www.Double8alpacas.com**