

# Husbandry



Alpacas are easy care animals and require very little annual maintenance. At Surico we follow a simple plan to ensure our alpacas remain healthy and happy. A daily walk around each group is important to check general health, quality and availability of drinking water and feed.

## Trimming Toe Nails

Many Alpacas will never need their toe nails trimmed but others will need them checked more frequently. Trimming is a simple job that you can perform yourself. One person holds the alpaca while another lifts the foot and using clippers trims the nail back. The person trimming always faces the tail end of the alpaca. Hint: Easiest to do in small pen 2m x2m is a good size.



## Vaccinations

A 5in1 vaccination will protect your alpacas from clostridial diseases, black leg, pulpy kidney, tetanus, blacks disease, and pulmonary oedema. Cria should be vaccinated between 4 and 6 weeks old with a booster shot 4 weeks later. Breeding females should be vaccinated every 6 months to ensure high levels of immunity that can be passed on to suckling cria. It is important to check the label of the product you are using for the dose rate and use the same rate as for sheep. The vaccination can be given subcutaneously.



## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is very important for bone growth and health in your alpacas. In South America they are exposed to high levels naturally from the sun. In New Zealand we need to make sure they are getting enough Vit D through the winter and supplement 3 to 4 times depending on sunlight levels that season. Most vitamin D products also include vitamins A & E, and you must ensure that you are giving the right amount of Vit D without overdosing on Vit A. Check the label! We use Hideject by subcutaneous injection, every 2 months through the winter.



**Worming** Alpacas have a low worm burden due to their very clean toilet habits. A communal dung site means not only is it easy for us to pick up the "paca poo" for the garden, but their natural reluctance to feed around the dung, means worms are not so easily spread from alpaca to alpaca. Increasing talk about drench resistance throughout the farming community has led us to a "drench on demand" regime. Therefore we only drench alpacas identified through faecal egg counts, noticing loose dung, or noticing a drop in body condition. Our drench of choice is 3ml (adult dose) of Dectomax given subcutaneous. Many farms carry out a routine 6 monthly drenching.

\*Watch out for more worm problems if cross grazing with other livestock eg sheep and goats.

## Injection Sites

Our preferred sites for giving subcutaneous (under the skin) injections is at the top of the front leg or in the base of the neck. Both these sites make it easy to hold a fold of skin and give the injection under the skin.

For Intramuscular (IM) injections we prefer the muscle at the top of the front leg or the rump.



## Alpaca Dose Rates

Alpacas are relatively new to farming outside of South America and still only in small numbers so they have not had the dose rate trials that many other livestock have. Therefore alpacas are "off label" for almost every product you will buy. Many alpaca breeders and vets approximate the dose rates for alpaca based on those for sheep and you will hear many different opinions on what the best regime is. All of the rates and regimes expressed in this document are from our farm and your conditions may differ so please check back with us or your local vet if you have any questions or concerns.

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