

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
IS AVAILABLE AT:**

[www.camelidcare.info](http://www.camelidcare.info)

[www.alpacainfo.com](http://www.alpacainfo.com)

[www.icinfo.org](http://www.icinfo.org)

**Information is also available  
from your local or regional  
alpaca or llama organization:**

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# THE BASICS OF ALPACA & LLAMA CARE

Developed by:



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**Before making the commitment of time and money in purchasing alpacas or llamas, please review the following points; you should be able to answer “YES” to all of these:**

## **CAN YOU PROVIDE?**

- **Pasture:** the general rule is (3-4) llamas per acre and (4-5) alpacas per acre, depending on condition of soil and quality of pasture
- **Fencing:** safe and secure fencing can be board, high-tensile wire, field fence or the like; barbed wire is not necessary as alpacas and llamas are not “pushers” and it can damage fiber and cause injury
- **Shelter:** should be adequate for local conditions and allow the animals to get out of extreme weather
- **Clean Drinking Water:** this is an absolute necessity at all times
- **Protection:** from predators such as roaming dogs

## **DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO?**

- **Good quality hay:** alpacas and llamas do not require a high protein hay in most cases (pregnant or lactating moms being some of the few exceptions)
- **Safe Transportation:** alpacas and llamas can be transported in stock and horse trailers, and even in vans. They will usually lie down (“kush”) while transporting and should not be tied

- **Access to Veterinary Care:** while alpacas and llamas are generally hardy animals, access to a veterinarian with large animal experience (preferably alpaca or llama) or one willing to learn, is very helpful in those situations where veterinary intervention is necessary.
- **Annual Shearing:** these animals do require annual shearing, usually in spring; it is a health issue as they are susceptible to heat stress. Either hand/electric clippers may be used. You can easily learn to do this yourself or there are a number of owners/breeders who will do this for a fee.

## **IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO THESE QUESTIONS....**

### **PLEASE “DO”:**

- Provide the right mineral mix; speak to your veterinarian or other camelid owners in your area
- Provide fans for summer heat and humidity relief
- Trim toenails as needed
- Provide properly-fitted alpaca or llama halters and use only when working with the animals
- Talk to experienced breeders or a veterinarian about breeding and birthing
- Join an alpaca or llama organization to learn more and keep up to date; there are numerous local and regional groups as well as national registries and show associations

## **PLEASE “DON’T”....**

- Have only one alpaca or llama; they need a ‘buddy’, preferably one of their own kind
- Leave halters on
- Keep them tied up
- Keep them locked in a stall or small space
- Keep an intact male with female(s)
- Breed alpacas or llamas in hot weather
- Tie during transport
- Bottle-feed an alpaca or llama unless it is a medical necessity

## **HEALTH AND MAINTENANCE....**

- Find a local vet with alpaca or llama experience or a willingness to learn
- Talk to your vet about the recommended vaccinations and de-worming for your area
- Dietary requirements are simple: hay or pasture plus a mineral mix are often all that are necessary
- Pregnant or nursing moms and babies need more supplementation
- Alpacas and llamas will eat many types of plants, so talk to your vet or extension agent about plants poisonous to alpacas and llamas