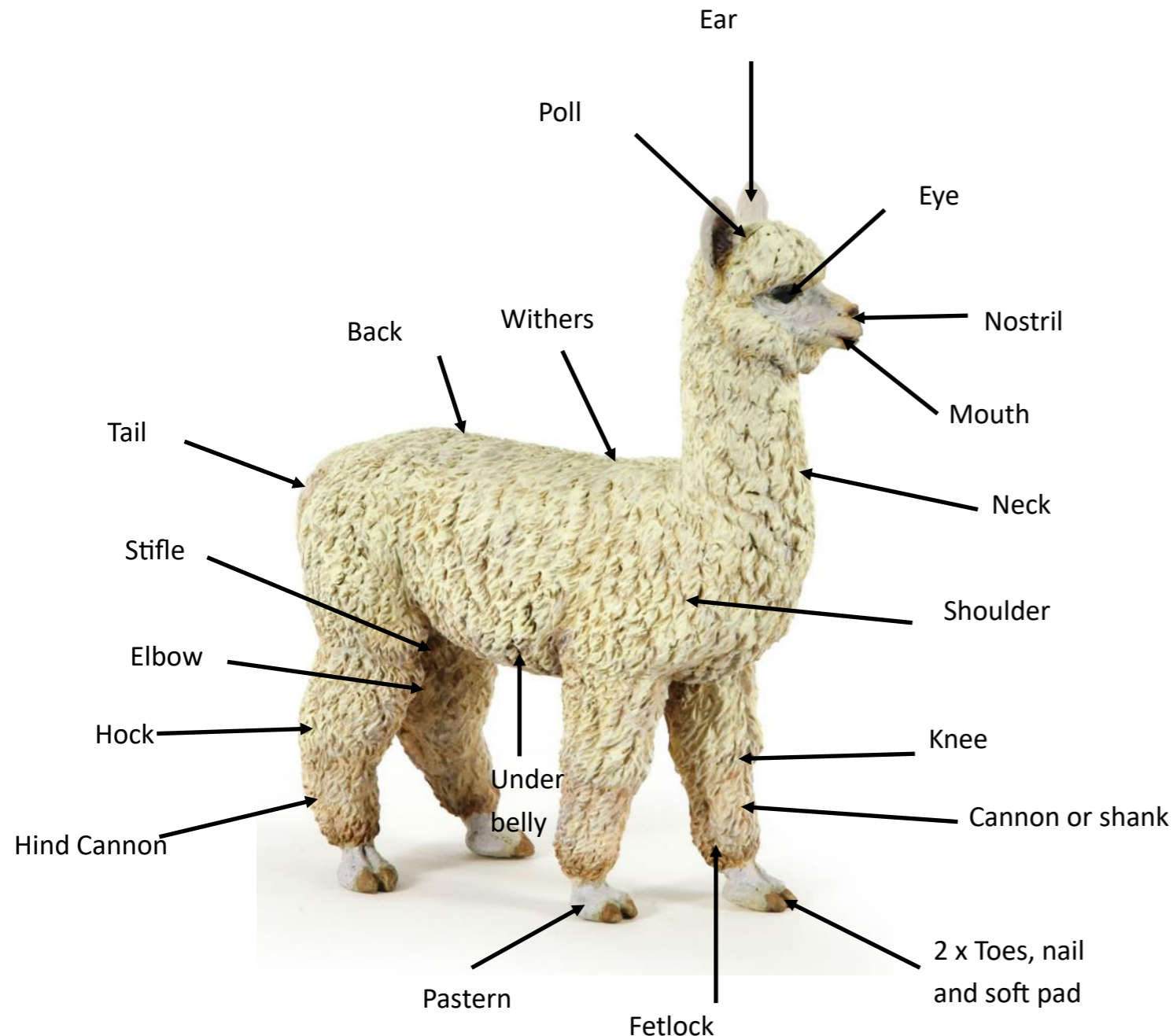




Alpacas—Parts of the body of an Alpaca



Alpacas are considered to be intelligent animals.



Alpacas are related to more than llamas. They belong to the Camelidae family. They have a three-chambered stomach; combined with chewing cud, this three-chambered system allows maximum extraction of nutrients from low-quality forages.



Most alpacas are 48-54 inches tall and can weigh anywhere from 106 to 185 pounds



Alpacas have soft pads on their feet, which don't churn up the ground like a cow or horse's hooves do.



They "cush" when seated, meaning they fold their legs under their body making them easy to transport in a smaller vehicle.



Alpacas love to sunbathe. "You'll come home and all the alpacas will be laying out in the field. They lie down on their sides, stretch out and soak up that sun,"



Since they are a completely domesticated animal, alpacas can live for a pretty long time. If they are taken care of really well, they can live for up to 20 years or so.

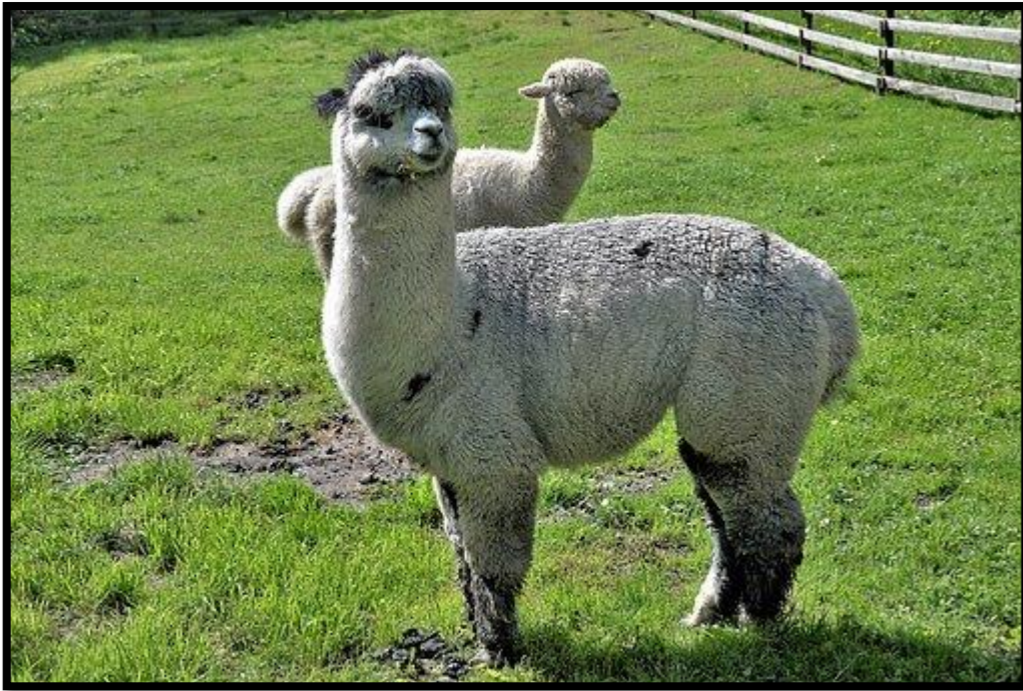
There are no wild alpacas. Every alpaca belongs to a farmer, who raises them so that their wool can be made into clothing.

Alpacas act as guard animals for smaller livestock and chickens. While they can't take on huge predators, they're quite effective at keeping foxes and smaller carnivore from who they are guarding.

There are only two breeds, the huacaya , which has fluffy hair akin to a teddy bear, and the suri , with long wavy hair that hangs off its body.

They have interesting pooping habits. "In the middle of the barn if you have a box that looks almost like a kitty litter box but not as deep. They do all their business there,"

Alpacas are cute, adorable, gentle, charming, and quirky,



The male Alpaca is called a "macho".

A group of Alpacas is called a herd. They will become stressed if kept alone even for short periods. They should be kept in groups of three or more

Alpacas are raised for few purposes:



Meat - It is a very lean meat with a low cholesterol and low fat content.

Wool - Alpaca fibre is often used to make blankets, sweaters, ponchos, and other textiles, with over 52 natural colours.

A female Alpaca is called a "hembra"

From birth until at least six months, mother's and their crias hum to each other constantly.



A baby Alpaca, is called a "cria".



Where do Alpacas live?

Alpacas are very hardy – a hedge or fallen tree will provide adequate shelter, but an open fronted field shelter is best and can be very useful for occasional housing – they tend to use their shelter more in summer. In winter conditions of heavy snow indoor housing of alpacas in a barn is a sensible option.

What is the gestational period for Alpacas?

Females have an 11-month gestation period and about 90 percent of the time don't need help in the delivery of the babies. "They just go into labour and deliver the baby within an hour,"

Mothers almost always have their babies in the morning. This is also related to life in the high desert in South America where temperatures are very cold at night. By having their babies in the morning, the little ones will have the whole day to dry off, begin walking around, and nursing from the mother before the temperatures begin to drop.

A new baby should get 10-20 % of their body weight of colostrum the first 24 hours



What do Alpacas eat?

Alpacas are herbivores with a three-chambered stomach. Their diet includes mostly grass/hay, but they are also known to eat wood, bark, leaves and stems.



When alpaca eat grass, they snip off the top of the plant unlike some other animals that pull the grass up by the root when eating. (Which is why they have a reputation for being good lawnmowers.)

Do Alpacas have teeth?

Alpacas have inherited their bizarre teeth from their wild ancestors. ... Alpacas have molars, incisors and canines, but the tongue sides of their teeth, teeth are not encased in enamel and keep growing throughout the animal's lifetime.



Communication

Alpacas' tails are used to express feelings to each other. If they're bothered by something they will twitch it back and forth. If an animal is being submissive it will raise its tail over its body and crouch down



Do Alpacas make friends?

Alpacas are known to be friendly with people, including children. They are also sociable with family dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, as well as sheep and goats.



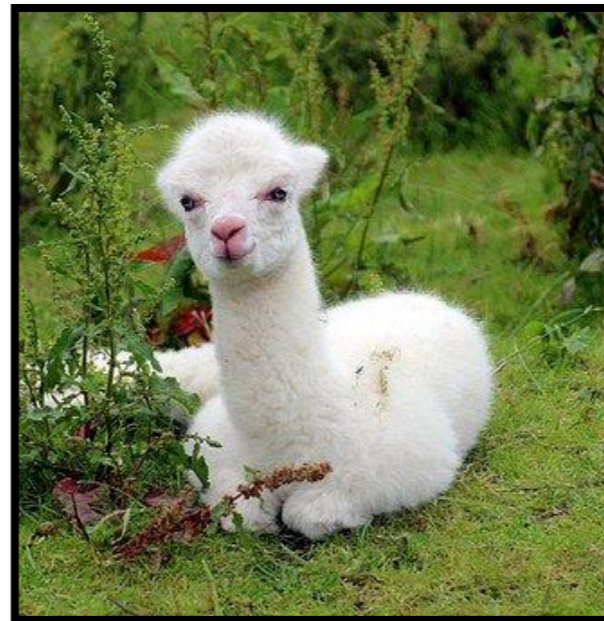
Do they have good eye sight?

They have excellent eyesight and hearing, and will alert the herd and their human keepers of perceived danger with a staccato alarm call.



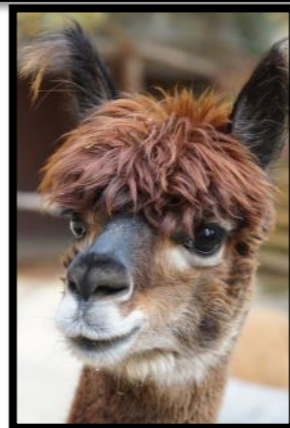
Do Alpacas sleep?

Most alpacas sleep lying down in a cush (also spelled kush) position at night. Alpacas are also great fans of sprawling out in the sun for afternoon naps



Why do Alpacas spit?

Alpacas are known to spit when overexcited. They rarely spit at humans however. When they do spit it may contain saliva and a bit of hair, or it may contain stomach bile. They usually only spit at other alpacas. Sometimes they will spit when quarrelling over food, but may let one fly in your direction if you happen to be giving them shots or trimming their nails.



Where do Alpacas originate from?

Alpacas originate from the Altiplano (Spanish for high plain) in west-central South America. Spanning the borders of Peru, Chile and Bolivia, this area of the Andes averages nearly 4000 metres above sea level.



Domestication

About 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, the natives began the domestication of the vicuna into the present day alpaca as a fibre producing animal

