

# MINIMUM BREED STANDARDS FOR ALPACAS

*An asterick (\*) denotes a congenital defect - an inherent serious fault at birth (based on visual observation)  
Animals displaying these traits should not be bred, and can not be registered.*

The alpaca is a fibre-producing member of the camelid family.

## General Appearance:

The **huacaya-fleeced alpaca** should be well proportioned, balance and symmetrical. The length of the neck equals the length of the legs and 2/3 the length of the back. The alpaca characteristics should be evident in the head, ears and the tail set. The fibre characteristics of the “huacaya” alpaca differ distinctly from the “suri” alpaca.

The **suri-fleeced alpaca** should be well proportioned, balanced and symmetrical. The length of the neck equals the length of the legs and 2/3 the length of the back. The suri alpaca may appear to have longer ears, a tapered nose, and a straighter top line than the huacaya alpaca. The alpaca characteristics should be evident in the head, ears and tail set. The fibre characteristics of the suri alpaca differ distinctly from the huacaya alpaca.

## Height and Weight

Minimum height is 81 cm (32 in.) by the age of two

Minimum weight is 47 kg (105 lbs.) by the age of two.

*Faults: <81 cm high at the withers by the age of two*

## Head

The head should be of medium length, triangular, with a square muzzle, and be symmetrically formed with the incisors meeting the dental pad. The ears should be erect and spear-shaped.

*Faults: Undershot Jaw*

*Overshot Jaw*

**\*Gopher Ears** - short, rounded and deformed ears

**\*Curled (fused) ears** - closed opening of the ear

**\*Banana Ears** (indicative of llama traits)

**\*Eyes: entropion** - eyelid rolls in & hair rubs on eye; **ectropion** - eyelid rolls out or is very loose

**\*Juvenile Cataracts**

**\*Juvenile Blindness**

**\*Wry Face** - lateral deviation of frontal nose plate; can be slight to extreme

**\*Choanal Atresia** - deviation of the nose; can be slight to extreme

**\*Deafness**

**\*denotes congenital defects**

## Neck and Body

The neck is straight and near upright. The back is straight to slightly rounded. The rump should be broad and slightly sloping downward to a straight low set tail.

*Faults: Sway Back*

*Too long or short a neck*

*Herniated umbilicus*

**\*Crooked tail** (permanent deviation)

**\*Lateral deviation of the spine** - curvature of the spine

**\*denotes congenital defects**

*Hump Back*

*High tail set*

**Front Legs**

Frontal view, the legs should be strong and straight from the shoulder through the knees to the two toes. A plumb line dropped from the mid-point of the shoulder should fall through the mid-point of the knees, fetlock, and between the toes (Fig. 1 & 2) The toes should point forward.

Side view the shoulder and elbow should have some angulation. The knee should be 180 degrees (Fig. 4), and the fetlock angle should be 190 degrees (Fig. 4)

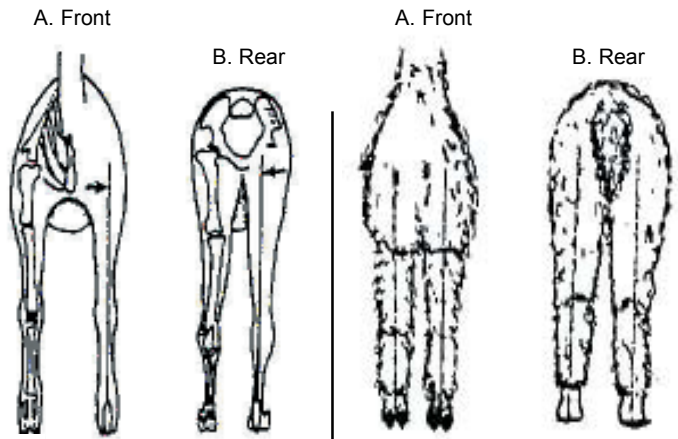


Fig. 1 A) front legs plumb line  
B) rear legs plumb line

Fig. 2 Example of straight front and rear legs

**JOINTS**

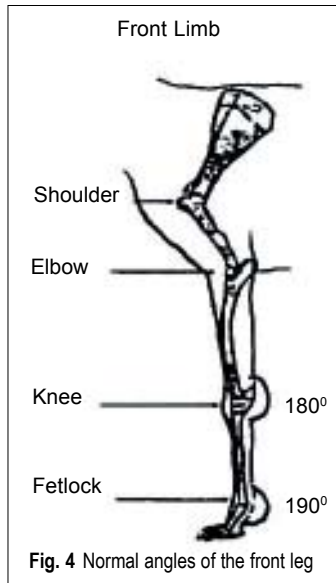


Fig. 4 Normal angles of the front leg

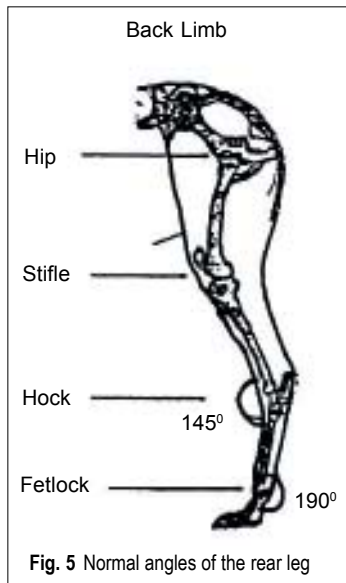


Fig. 5 Normal angles of the rear leg

*Front Leg Faults:*

- Angular limb deformity (Fig. 3 knock-kneed)
- Calf kneed (Fig. 6 A)
- Buck kneed
- Pigeon-toed
- Cocked pasterns (Fig. 7)
- Dropped pasterns (Fig. 7)
- Feet-splay footed, pigeon toed
- \***Polydactyl** - having more than two toes
- \***Syndactyl** - toes fused together
- \*denotes congenital defects**

**Rear Legs:**

Rear view, the legs should be strong and straight. A plumb line dropped from the mid point of the hip should fall through the middle of the hock, fetlock, and between the toes (Fig. 2) The toes should point forward. Side view, the stifle should have some angulation and the hock angulation should be 145 degrees (Fig. 5). Fetlock angle 190 degrees (Fig. 5). The patellas should be stable.

*Faults:*

- Bow legged
- Cow hocked (Fig. 3)
- Sickle hocked (Fig. 6 B)
- Post legged
- Dropped pasterns (Fig. 7)
- Cocked pasterns (Fig. 7)
- \***Luxating patellas** (loose knee cap movement)

**\*denotes congenital defects**

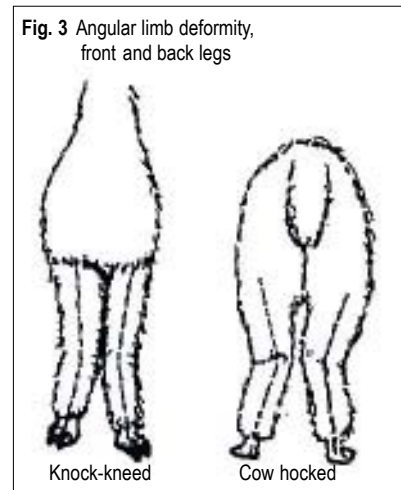


Fig. 3 Angular limb deformity, front and back legs

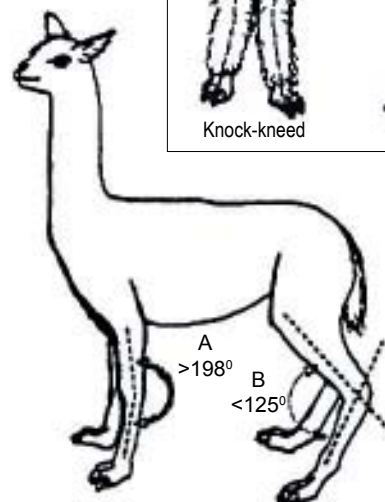
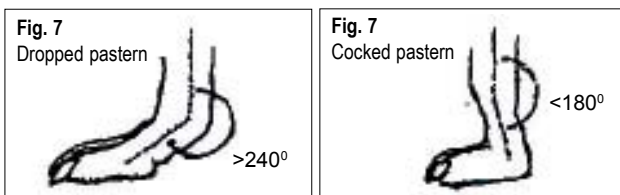


Fig. 6 Example of A) Calf-kneed and B) Sickle hocked (note direction of toes)

### Male Reproductive Organs

Both testicles must be visible, of a firm consistency, equal in size and be >3.5 cm in length and 2.5 cm. in width by the age of three (exception of geldings). There should be four teats.

#### Faults:

Small testicles

Testicles too soft/too hard in consistency

\***No more or less than 2 equal sized testicles** in the scrotum (exception of geldings)

\* **Eptopic testicles** (not in scrotum; located in abnormal location)

\***No more or less than 4 teats** (exception of geldings)

\***Hermaphroditism** - - male and female genitals

\*denotes disqualifiers

### Female Reproductive Organs

The vaginal opening should not be too small and should be situated in a near vertical plane. There should be four teats. (A vaginal opening is not near a vertical plane is more susceptible to infection)

#### Faults:

\***No more or less than 4 functional teats**

Small vaginal opening

Enlarged or tipped up clitoris

\***Vaginal opening not near vertical plane**

\***Lack of or incorrect anatomical position of any visible part of the reproductive system**

\***Hermaphroditism** - male and female genitals

\*denotes disqualifiers

### Movement

The legs should move freely and evenly. They should travel in straight lines with the forward plane of movement. The distance side to side between footfalls should match the breadth of the individual alpaca.

#### Faults:

*Winging or arcing of the feet*

*Rope walking*

### Fibre

Ideally the alpaca should have a fine, soft, uniform, and dense fleece that has a minimum of medulation (guard hair). The alpaca should grow significant length of staple.

Quality characteristics of the fleece are:

- **Fineness:** thickness of the fibre is measured in microns (AFD on a histogram)
- **Density:** is the number of fibres in a given area of the skin. The more fibers per unit area the denser the fleece. Density is an attribute to the weight and cleanliness of the fleece.
- **Lustre/Brightness:** is the light that is reflected from the fleece
- **Hand:** is the tactile quality of the fleece to the hand. Hand is related to the Standard Deviation and C.V. numbers from the histogram.
- **Staple Length:** is the length of fibre from the skin to the tip of the fibre. This is the length of the fibre grown between shearings, generally reported on a one year basis.

### **Huacaya Fibre**

Huacaya fibre has a fluffy, spongy appearance. The fibre grows perpendicular to the skin. The hair follicles are situated close together in the skin, giving density to the fleece, with groups of fibres bunching together to form defined staples. The staples have a crinkle and or crimp along the length of the fibres.

#### **Faults:**

*Lack of coverage*

*Short staple*

*Lack of strength*

*Lack of density*

*Lack of uniformity through the blanket*

*Medulation in the prime area*

*Chalky/Dull fleece*

### **Suri Fibre**

The suri fibre falls close to the body, moves freely, and gives the suri a flat sided, lustrous appearance. The locks can have penciled ringlet formation, curling to the left or right, or wave structure that forms from the skin of the alpaca. This fleece lock structure should begin at the forelock and continue down the neck, and across the body including the legs.

#### **Faults:**

*Lack of coverage*

*Short Staple*

*Lack of strength*

*Lack of density*

*Lack of uniformity through the blanket*

*Dull/chalky fleece*

### **SUMMARY OF CONGENITAL DEFECTS - that disqualify an animal for registration**

- \*Gopher ears
- \*Banana ears
- \*Juvenile Cataracts
- \*Juvenile Blindness
- \*Wry Face
- \*Choanal Atresia
- \*Curled (fused) ears
- \*Entropion, Ectropion (eyelids)
- \*Deafness
- \*Lateral Deviation of the spine
- \*Crooked tail (permanent deviation)
- \*Polydactyl
- \*Syndactyl
- \*Luxating patellas
- \*No more or less than four teats on a male (exception geldings)
- \*No more or less than 2 equal-sized testicles in the scrotum (Exception geldings)
- \*No more or less than four functional teats on a female
- \* Eptopic testicles on a male
- \*Vaginal opening not near vertical plane
- \*Lack of any part of the reproductive system
- \*Hermaphroditism