

Preparing for a birth.

What to do before the birth:

- Prepare a maternity paddock, close to the house so that animals can be easily observed with minimal interference. Move your pregnant girls into this maternity paddock in plenty of time for them to adjust to their new surroundings.
- Remove previous cria from mothers. The mothers first milk (colostrum) has vital antibodies for the newborn cria, previous cria may drink this if still with their mothers. Males should also be well removed from the females.
- Ensure that your cria care kit is fully stocked and in good working order.
- Watch & Wait.

Cria Care Kit

- Cria Coats
- Glucose
- Thermometer
- Scales
- Umbilical Clamp
- Fleece/Bubble wrap
- Bottles/Teats
- Pen & Paper
- Vets Phone Number
- Birthing handbooks
- Managing Alpacas in Aust. handbook

What to expect as normal:

The birthing process can be broken up into 3 stages.

- Typical signs of stage 1 are frequent trips to the dung pile, restlessness, moving away from other animals, rolling, rubbing neck along the ground, repeated sitting and standing, sitting on one hip. The normal duration of this first stage is approx. 6 hours.
- Stage 2 is when the foetus enters into the birth canal, and delivery usually occurs within about 30 minutes. A normal delivery will present head & front feet first; the feet usually rupture the membranes. If the head is visible and membranes not ruptured tear the membrane with your fingers and delivery will proceed. Short rest phases are also normal, encourage standing every 10 minutes to help to keep the process moving. The cria will hang from the dam for up to 20 minutes, this is important to ensure that the lungs are free from mucous and fluid.
- Stage 3 is the expulsion of the placenta, this usually takes places about 45 minutes after the birth of the cria. Some dams do not acknowledge their cria until the placenta is passed; others will mother their cria immediately. Humming & clucking by both mother and cria is very normal, alpaca do not lick their cria, the cria will wriggle and remove the membranes this way.

When to call the vet:

Common sense is the key, if you're not sure or if you think its not quite normal – Call the vet.

If in doubt – get it checked out.

OR if any of the following occur, it is possibly time to call the vet.

- * Stage one goes beyond 6 hours
- * Stage two goes beyond 30 minutes
- * The cria is obviously stuck or malpresented
- * Afterbirth is retained beyond 6 hours or only partially delivered

‘Alpaca Breeders Birthing Handbook’ available for purchase from AAA.

NB: This article is written from personal experiences and references (see page 2). It is in no way to be taken as gospel and every alpaca birth is individual and may require varied treatment. Please do not hesitate to call your vet.