

Methods of Euthanasia

Sadly euthanasia or culling is something you have to think about should you have any reactors to the skin test or the blood tests.

This doesn't just apply to camelids that are being euthanized because they are showing symptoms or very ill. You may well have to cull reactors that outwardly appear strong and healthy.

Unlike cattle Camelid reactors are culled on your farm and this requires planning and organisation due to AH welfare grounds.

There are 3 methods

1. Lethal Injection
2. Captive bolt.
3. Free Bullet.

Make sure you make it clear to your AHO which method you wish to choose prior to the visit to cull your animals.

There are two methods which may be referred to as 'shooting' which vary in their application. Again, be clear which is being used so that you know what to expect. From the alpacas point of view captive bolt or free bullet is a very quick and effective method of culling, but as an owner you should be prepared for the process and know what to expect.

Captive bolt uses an explosive charge to fire a bolt into the brain. The sound is fairly quiet, more like an air rifle than a firearm. The bolt is retained in the device. Please note that a further action has to be taken to complete the process which involves pushing a rod through the entry wound to destroy the spinal cord and ensure death. This sounds brutal but if you are calm the handling process is little different from many other processes the alpaca will have experienced in its life such as drenching. The bolt gun is quickly positioned on the top of the head and fired. The alpaca is instantly stunned and drops and is very likely dead at that point. The pithing rod is to ensure death after stunning by the captive bolt.

Free bullet is less likely to be offered. The disintegrating bullet both stuns and causes death and no further action needs to be performed.

Lethal injection is as it says. Be aware that if the alpaca or llama being culled is outwardly healthy and showing no symptoms that sometimes it can be a drawn out process. We would advise that you email Dr. Gina Bromage for advise on the drugs to be used prior to culling.

If you wish to discuss methods of euthanasia and setting up please contact Dianne Summers or Mike Birch.