

# What to look out for

## Possible Signs and Symptoms of TB

Symptoms can vary dramatically in cases of TB in camelids, from severe to no symptoms at all. Monitoring of your herd closely will very often give you signs of problems even though they are subtle. **The earlier you detect signs of Tb the lower the risk to your remaining herd.**

Not all alpacas have what is classed as 'normal behavior' so:

Be concerned of any respiratory distress and especially if your vets suspects pneumonia or bronchitis. Also be concerned if vet suspects Liver fluke as symptoms can be mistaken and vice versa. Liver fluke will respond to treatment Tb will not  
Do not wait for weight loss to be a first indication - this is usually at the end stage.

**ANY CHANGE IN THE INDIVIDUALS USUAL BEHAVIOUR OR Demeanour** is cause for concern.

For example - if one of you herd usually kicks up a fuss at having toenails/injections done and suddenly is compliant – *that* is what constitutes a change in usual behaviour.

Other symptoms and signs are as follows. These are based on information provided by 30 Alpaca owners who have had or still have TB in their herds.

- \* Sitting more than normal, sitting when others are eating
- \* Sitting away from herd
- \* Lethargy
- \* Stiffness
- \* Groaning sounds when Kushed
- \* Boisterous or first in the queue for food suddenly become subdued and not so pushy
- \* Continuous humming
- \* Foaming at the mouth
- \* Nibbling at grass/hay rather than eating hearty mouthfuls
- \* From a distance appears to be eating grass, but is in fact just mouthing it
- \* Decreased appetite or Stopped eating
- \* Increase in appetite (very common believe it or not)
- \* Nasal discharge – runny eyes
- \* Coughing (see video)
- \* Grunting/groaning noises.
- \* Weight loss but normally at the severe stages and near the end. Most have no weight loss.
- \* Unsteady on the legs
- \* Slow at rising and kushing
- \* Hiccups
- \* Continuous Flared nostrils
- \* Very loud swallowing sounds
- \* Look of general discomfort
- \* Normal resp. rates are 15 - 30 breaths per minute - be concerned at anything above 40 breaths per minute
- \* Breathing taking longer to return to normal after exertion

We are not saying if your animals have these symptoms it is Tb – it could be many other things. It is better to err on the side of caution. **You have nothing to lose** by removing these animals from the group with a mate and seek vet advice, but **you have a lot to lose** if it turns out to be Tb and you didn't take action.

It is recommended to remove any alpaca along with a mate that are showing any of the above signs and seek veterinary advice and do not return to the group until normal behavior returns or symptoms have cleared up.

Don't forget your gut instinct – it is often right.

Dianne Summers,