

ALPACA FEED PROGRAM

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By Margaret Valvo, Independent **DYNAMITE®** Distributor as presented at the 2003 ROCKY MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS, 970-568-2276 or www.stoutwildalpacas.com - used by permission of author

The Basic **DYNAMITE®** Alpaca Feed Program

Alpaca Feed (50# bag - single/6 pak/tonnage)
1 to 1 Free Choice (Calcium/Phosphorus 5# or 25# bucket)
2 to 1 Free Choice (Calcium/Phosphorus 5# or 25# buckets)
Izmine (60+ trace minerals & carbon-based detoxifier 5# or 25# buckets)
NTM Salt (Natural Trace Mineral Salt 25# bucket)
Dyna-Pro (probiotic 16 oz pump bottle or 1/2 gallon jug)
Excel (detoxifier and pH balancer 1# jar or 20# bucket)

Forage—Grass Hay or Grass Pasture

It is recommended to feed only grass hay when using **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed**.

*NOTE: Do not feed alfalfa, fortified corn or sweet feed mixes, or other vitamin/mineral supplements, in combination with the **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** Program.*

What's so special about feeding Alpacas?

Alpacas, and other camelids including Llamas, bring with them specific challenges to meet their unique nutritional needs, especially when we want to maximize the production of fiber during breeding in captivity. **DYNAMITE®** MARKETING, INC. has been producing llama and alpaca feed since 1987, providing the broad spectrum of minerals, a key to optimum animal health, that would be available in "nature-grown" grasses from virgin soils. This new, improved formulation continues the track record of feeds which have proven their value through years of animal health.

Why should I feed **DYNAMITE® Products?**

For Digestive Efficiency . . . Highly digestible and palatable digestive aids support gut efficiency and food utilization while facilitating the elimination of toxins.

For Conformational Soundness . . . Increased availability of balanced amino-acid chelated (bioavailable) minerals, along with appropriate vitamins, fosters optimum growth & development while reducing toxicity and water retention.

For Joint Health & Mobility . . . There is less irritation in the joints as a result of less acidic conditions, and freedom in the joints promotes ease of movement.

For Fiber Production . . . Fiber production is supported by the presence of essential vitamins and minerals in the system to produce healthy hair follicles and exceptional fiber that is soft to the touch and rich in color.

For Reproductive Success . . . Proper pH levels and balanced body chemistry with readily available macro- and micro-nutrients support successful conception, full term cria development, and full term birthing.

How do I feed pelleted **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed?**

When feeding a pelleted feed to camelids, put it in a small "line" in the feeder or use a narrow feeder that limits the amount of "gulping" that can occur. One tip is to put some sections of 2 x 4's in the feeder, or some egg-sized stones. This will limit their intake, but their flexible lips will easily reach the feed.

For group feeding, a research recommendation is to allow at least 6' to 8' between animals to reduce competition and gulping of feed.

DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed is a cold-pressed pellet which is soft and easy to chew.

NOTE: Always introduce new feed gradually to your animals.

How much **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed do I feed?**

The recommended feeding protocol for an average adult alpaca is to feed twice a day, one cup in the morning and one cup in the evening. This method allows you to even out the nutritional input over the whole day and will not overwhelm the animals with too much at one time.

When you start using the feed, you will want to transition the animals off the old feed by replacing ¼C or 25% of the old feed with ¼C of **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** at each feeding for about three days; then replace ½C or 50% of the old feed with ½C of **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** per feeding for another three days. Continue with this by replacing ¾C or 75% of the old feed with ¾C of **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** at each feeding for another three days; then you will remove the old feed all together and offer 2C of **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** per day per animal split into two feedings.

How do I monitor my animals?

It is important to observe your animals and see how they are responding. Watch the poop pile for loose stools or diarrhea. This may be the result of the detoxification that will happen during the transition period. Cleaning up the poop pile morning and night will allow you to observe exactly how the animals are responding to the change. If you go slowly, things should be fine. A little loose stool is okay, but if it gets runny, you should cut back on the **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** volume for a couple of days to let them normalize again. The transition is best done slowly, but not too slowly. It should be completed within about two weeks.

If the animals seem to pick around the **DYNAMITE® Alpaca Feed** pellets, or refuse to eat the feed, you can try drizzling a very small portion of blackstrap molasses (the kind you buy at the grocery store is fine) on the pellets for a few days to get them started. Once the animals satisfy their nutritional needs and are eating the pellets readily, you can reduce and eventually eliminate the drizzle of molasses. We want to eliminate any unnecessary sugars from the diet.

To prevent possible choking, be sure to allow ample space

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between feed bowls so the animals do not feel that there is competition for their feed. The research suggests 6 to 8 feet between animals for comfortable feeding. If they gobble the feed too rapidly at the start, you can put chunks of 2 by 4 "in the bowls, or egg-sized stones, to slow them down. After they have been on the feed for a while, they should naturally slow down and eat more calmly because their nutritional needs will be met and they become more balanced.

How do I individualize the program for each animal?

We recommend making four **DYNAMITE**[®] free choice minerals available at all times. This allows each animal to balance itself whatever its particular circumstance. The animals will utilize the minerals at varying rates, sometimes consuming more, sometimes less, and sometimes not consuming any for a long period of time.

The free choice minerals should be in an area protected from the weather so they do not get wet. We recommend four small mineral feeders that attach to the wall so you do not have your minerals duped on the ground. The minerals are offered separately to allow the animals to use only what they need.

The most cost-effective way to purchase these minerals is in the 25# bucket, but if you have only a few animals, you may only need the five pound bucket. In my experience, the animals do not consume as much **Izmine** as the other minerals, so if you have a small herd you might consider a 5# bucket of **Izmine** and 25# of the other three free choice minerals for starters.

The four free choice minerals are:

1 to 1 & 2 to 1 Free Choice Minerals . . . These two products are the same formula except for the ratio of *calcium* and *phosphorus*. Offering these two ratios allows the animals to adequately adjust themselves whatever their need. There is *diatomaceous earth* and *Montmorillonite clay* included in these mixtures and these ingredients are also included in the feed pellets. Having these minerals available as free choice allows the animals to increase the volume of these minerals when they need to.

Izmine . . . This is a carbon-based detoxifier with over 60 trace minerals. Because it is made of ground-up ancient seabed, it is pollution-free plus is totally bio-available due to its organic origin.

Natural Trace Mineral (NTM) Salt . . . This is recommended when the other 3 free choice minerals are offered. It is mined deep in the earth and has no pollutants like surface salt or even sea salt. It is a "real salt" rich in trace minerals and with no bleaching or pouring additives.

Are there important products that I may use periodically, not necessarily daily?

Two other products that are important to have on hand for use when they are needed are:

Dyna-Pro . . . This is different than other pro-biotics because it contains fermentation elements that change the gut environment to support growth of natural, beneficial bacteria. Introducing a new "live culture" into an environment that is destroying the natural bacteria will only cause the new bacteria to either go dormant or die off which can cause excess gas in the intestinal system. **Dyna-Pro** is very supportive when administered during times of stress like shearing, traveling, vaccinations or worming, or just making changes in the barn community. Some of the components in **Dyna-Pro** are also in the alpaca feed pellets, but one squirt of the **DynaPro** liquid on the feed, once per day, is an easy way to increase the probiotic support.

Excel . . . This is very useful during the transition period, or anytime the animals experience very loose stools. It contains *Montmorillonite clay* to help absorb toxins the animals are trying to eliminate during the transition. It also contains *diatomaceous earth* and various herbs and other ingredients which help to support the alpaca's digestive process, balance the animals' pH, and help neutralize toxins. Some of the components of **Excel** are present in the feed pellets, but top-dressing with a small amount (¼ teaspoon per adult alpaca per day is recommended) helps during times of digestive disruption. This is not

necessary on a continuous basis, but is good to do for a week or so whenever the herd seems to need it.

Are there any other products which may be of use for my alpacas?

Yes, there definitely are variations depending on personal preferences and needs:

Ruminant Salt/Mineral Mix . . . This is a salt-driven pasture mix with added vitamins and minerals for those who choose not to feed their alpacas individually or as an addition to the other free choice minerals. Field studies have shown animals on this product alone have increased fetal and general health plus better fiber.

Exotics Plus . . . A separate Vitamin/Mineral Pellet which can be fed if no grain, included in the **DYNAMITE**[®] **Alpaca Feed**, is desired: feed 1 teaspoon for each 125# of body weight; this amount may vary depending on age, stress & activity level.

Multi Species & Topicals . . . **DYNAMITE**[®] carries a complete line of products, eminently suitable for camelids, which can aid in the handling of both acute and chronic care of a wide variety of health challenges. Your **DYNAMITE**[®] Catalog contains brief descriptions of each but discuss both the products and your health questions with your **DYNAMITE**[®] Distributor for more in-depth usage.

Who do I ask when I have further questions?

These are the basic components of the program. Once your animals have been on the basic **DYNAMITE**[®] **Alpaca Feed** Program for about 60 days, you should be seeing some significant results. If at that time there are additional nutritional, or other, issues you feel are not being resolved by the basic feed program, please contact your **DYNAMITE**[®] Distributor for guidance. ■



"My young male stud lost a large patch of hair on his nose in June when his halter rubbed it off while he was at a weekend show. Four months later most of the hair was still missing. A couple of weeks after I started using **DYNAMITE**[®] his hair had grown back completely, and it's still there.

Maintaining condition was a problem for my 4 year old female after her second and third cria. When I started her on **DYNAMITE**[®] she stabilized at a normal weight and attained excellent body condition with no excess water retention. Her fleece developed a healthy sheen, her eyes sparkled and she began to prong as she had when she was young. She also appeared more relaxed, moved with greater ease, and was much more flexible and lively than before.

When I first started the **DYNAMITE**[®] **Alpaca Feed** Program I noticed that my animals seemed to be urinating more than usual so I put down wood pellets to absorb the extra liquid. They also had slightly loose stools for a short time. I transitioned them to the new feed slowly, but the detox process was still apparent. They had been fed small amounts of grain mix with molasses and alfalfa hay to increase their milk production and help them maintain their condition after giving birth. I was concerned when they initially appeared to lose condition, but I learned that they were eliminating toxins in the form of sugars and high levels of protein that caused an overly acid condition and excessive water retention.

Now that they have eliminated the toxins and extra water, their metabolism is balanced. They have filled out proportionately and show excellent body condition. They move with greater ease, and appear to be more healthy and content.

I'm glad that I found **DYNAMITE**[®]!"

Margaret Valvo, Stout Wild Ranch Alpacas