



Stomach Ulcers



Stomach ulcers can be a common problem in Alpacas on some farms. The reasons for ulcers developing with Alpacas are not clear. High stocking rates or stress factors may have a bearing in ulcers developing. Medicating for too long a time with non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Metacam or Ketoprofen can also aggravate the stomach lining and lead to ulcers. Ulcers can range in size from small pin point spots to large deep ulcers. (See our photo of the severe one).

Ulcers can have serious health consequences, ranging from blood loss to peritonitis, when the ulcer erodes, breaks through the stomach wall and perforates.

Stomach ulcer affected animals often abort, where as severely sick animals with worms that are also pale and anaemic, don't usually abort.

Use the following 6 point check list to check your Alpacas every day.

In animals affected with stomach ulcers you may notice:

A = Appearance – Check the mucous membranes in the eye and mouth (gums). Normal mucous membranes should be pink. With ulcers the membranes may be very pale pink or white. Also animals may be weak and in severe cases collapsed or dead. Occasionally animals may show signs of colic also.

L = Locomotion – Affected animals are unlikely to move much as they are weak from the anaemia

P = Poo – Animals may have very black poo, and likely diarrhoea.

A = Appetite – appetite is often poor.

C = Condition – Weight loss or reduced weight gain is common with stomach ulcers.

A = Attitude - Affected alpacas are lethargic, weak or collapsed depending on severity of the disease.

Treatment of ulcers can be successful, with either Losec tablets, Gastrozol paste, or with ampoule doses of Zantac by injection in the muscle twice a day. Some Vets feel that Oral treatment has not been proven to make a difference for Alpacas, so the results can vary between farms and Vets.

Blood transfusions of severely ulcerated animals that have bled internally, can be required in severe cases, after Vet assessment.

For any questions or concerns on this or other health issues in your Alpacas, please call us at Levin & Horowhenua Vets 06 368 2891.



*Large, deep
stomach ulcer in an
Alpaca*