



Llamas



HEALTH

Height: 5½ - 6 ' at top of head

Weight: 280-450 lbs.

Lifespan: 25 years in captivity



OVERVIEW

The llama (*Lama glama*) is a South American camelid, widely used as a pack animal by the Incas and other natives of the Andes mountains. In South America llamas are still used for beasts of burden, fiber production and meat.

The height of a full-grown, full-size llama is between 5.5 feet (1.6 meters) to 6 feet (1.8 meters) tall at the top of the head. They can weigh approximately between 280 pounds (127 kilograms) and 450 pounds (204 kilograms). At birth, a baby llama (called a cria) can weigh between 20 pounds (9 kilograms) to 30 pounds (14 kilograms). Llamas are very social animals and like to live with other llamas as a herd. Overall, the fiber produced by a llama is very soft and is naturally lanolin free. Very intelligent, llamas learn simple tasks after a few repetitions. When using a pack, llamas can carry about 25% - 30% of their body weight for several miles.

Llamas originated from the central plains of North America about 40 million years ago. They migrated to South America and Asia about 3 million years ago. By the end of the last ice-age (10,000 - 12,000 years ago) camelids were extinct in North America. As of 2007, there were over 7 million llamas and alpacas in South America and due to importation from South America in the late 20th Century there are now over 100,000 llamas and 6,500 - 7,000 alpacas in the US and Canada.