

# Q-Alpaca

## Q-ALPACA BIOSECURITY PROGRAM

### GUIDELINES FOR VETERINARIANS

#### INTRODUCTION

The *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Program (Q-Alpaca) implemented by the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd (AAA) places a responsibility on participating veterinarians to ensure their clients keep good records and maintain contact with you, so there is verifiable biosecurity of the client's herd and property.

Q-Alpaca relies on the results of your post-mortem examinations, rather than on periodic whole herd faecal tests or maintenance faecal testing.

#### STRUCTURE

Q-Alpaca involves your knowledge of and participation in the completion of four forms (Q1-Q4), all of which can be downloaded from the Australian Alpaca Association website.

#### ***Form Q1 – Application to join Q-Alpaca***

This is the application form, which is completed and signed by the herd owner. You should be supplied with a completed copy of this form as it contains information you will need in your continued surveillance of Q-Alpaca.

All questions on the form should be answered including:

- The total number of alpaca in the herd, including agistors' animals as well as the owner's. Form Q1 requires a breakdown of the number of alpacas 12 months and over, and the number of cria, being those under the age of 12 months.
- A Yes/No answer to questions relating to the presence of dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, goats and deer running on the same land as the alpaca.

#### ***Form Q2 – Agreement between herd owner and veterinarian***

This is the signed agreement between you and your client, which documents that you agree to oversee the management of "the herd" in order to maintain the quality assurance of the program.

Any registered veterinarian can oversee the Q-Alpaca program. The overseeing veterinarian may need to request a colleague from their clinic to conduct a post mortem when he/she is not available at the time. However, it is important that one specific veterinarian from their clinic is named as the

overseeing veterinarian, and it should be this veterinarian who signs all relevant agreements and stock returns.

Before signing Part B of Form Q2 you should:

- Read the detail in Form Q5 – *Guidelines for Appraisal of Property and Herd Management*. You will need to obtain:
  1. A list of the individual identification numbers of the alpaca.
  2. A drawing of the property layout showing fences, laneways and buildings, etc.
- Ensure you are satisfied with the integrity of all boundary fences.
- Discuss the owner’s responsibilities with them, ensuring they understand they must:
  1. Keep detailed records of the origin and identity of every animal that enters the property, and the identity and destination of every animal that leaves, regardless of whether the move is temporary or permanent.
  2. Notify you before they purchase any animal that is going to become part of “the herd”.
  3. Observe the requirement that:
    - a) All alpacas between 12 months and 15 years of age that die or are euthanased **MUST** be post-mortemed by you, regardless of why the owner thinks the animal has died;
    - b) Any cria that shows signs of emaciation or diarrhoea that dies or is euthanased must be post-mortemed;
    - c) Alpacas that are 15 years of age or older are exempt from a post-mortem, unless they are showing clinical signs consistent with Johne’s disease. The overseeing veterinarian **MUST** be involved in this determination;
    - d) Alpacas that have died or been euthanased as a result of dog attack are exempt from a necropsy, unless they are showing clinical signs consistent with Johne’s disease (the overseeing veterinarian must be involved in this determination); and
    - e) Where gross pathology is suggestive of Johne’s disease or an intestinal lymphoma/lymphosarcoma (which grossly appears similar to Johne’s disease), samples must be collected to exclude Johne’s disease.
  4. If the owner moves and you are no longer looking after the herd, you should:
    - a) Notify the national AAA office that you are no longer the participating veterinarian for the Program no. 0\*/0\*\*\*, as of a certain date. Contact will then be made with the herd owner, asking them to provide details of their new overseeing veterinarian, and for a new Form Q2 to be forward to the AAA office.
    - b) On receipt of the new Form Q2, AAA staff will ask you to forward a copy of your past records to the new overseeing veterinarian.

**NB: Participants who continually present alpacas that are too autolysed (decomposed) for a necropsy to be performed will be suspended from Q-Alpaca for a period specified by the AAA Board.**

## ***Form Q3 – Annual Stock Return***

Form Q3 is the Annual Stock Return which needs to be completed by the owner between 1 July and 31 July each year. This is the form that allows the AAA Registrar to ensure there are no discrepancies between numbers of animals at the start and end of the financial year, and that the Registrar has received all post-mortem reports.

You should be given a copy of this Form, and you should check that:

1. The number of animals at the start of the period agrees with your records; and
2. The IAR numbers of post-mortemed animals are consistent with your records of post-mortem examinations.

## ***Form Q4 – the post-mortem report***

Q4 is the post-mortem report form. It is 2 pages long, the first being completed by the owner, and the second by you.

You should ask the owner to have the first page completed by the time you arrive to conduct the post-mortem.

Post-mortem requirements and exemptions:

1. All alpacas between 12 months and 15 years of age that die or are euthanased MUST be post-mortemed by you, regardless of why the owner thinks the animal has died;
2. Any cria that shows signs of emaciation or diarrhoea that dies or is euthanased must be post-mortemed;
3. Alpacas that are 15 years of age or older are exempt from a post-mortem, unless they are showing clinical signs consistent with Johne's disease. The overseeing veterinarian MUST be involved in this determination; and
4. Alpacas that have died or been euthanased as a result of a dog attack are exempt from a necropsy, unless they are showing clinical signs consistent with Johne's disease (the overseeing veterinarian must be involved in this determination).

Complete page 2 either whilst at the property, upon your return to the clinic or when final laboratory results are received.

You should provide the owner with a copy of both pages. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure AAA receives a copy of the results.

**Participants who continually present alpacas that are too autolysed (decomposed) for a necropsy to be performed will be suspended from Q-Alpaca for a period specified by the AAA Board.**

## **AUDITS**

The Q-Alpaca program requires that you and the owner check annually that:

- The list of animals in the herd corresponds with the number listed in Form Q3.
- The register of stock movements is current and complete.
- You are aware of any changes in the fencing or layout in the property plan, and that any breakouts or break-ins have been noted.
- Your records of post-mortem examinations and the identity of the animals correspond with the owner's.
- After completing the annual audit, you should notify the AAA office that the audit either has been completed to your satisfaction, or that there are deficiencies. These deficiencies should be listed.

## ATTACHMENT

### AUSTRALIAN ALPACA ASSOCIATION LTD.

### Q-ALPACA BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES

The Australian Alpaca Association Ltd., following extensive consultation with BJDTAG and Animal Health Australia, proposes that alpaca herds will qualify for recognition under its biosecurity program, Q-Alpaca, if they comply with the following elements.

1. Eligible herds are not known or suspected to be infected with Johne's disease.
2. A written agreement between the owner and an approved veterinarian.
3. A Herd and Property Management Plan.
4. Records of animal identity, origin and destination for movements into and out of the herd.
5. Post-mortem examination on any animal between 12 months and 15 years of age that dies or is euthanased, any cria under 12 months of age that is showing signs of emaciation or diarrhoea that dies or is euthanased, and post-mortem of any animal over 15 years of age that shows signs consistent with Johne's disease (overseeing veterinarian to be involved in this determination).
6. Where gross pathology is suggestive of Johne's disease or an intestinal lymphoma/lymphosarcoma (which grossly appears similar to Johne's disease), samples must be collected to exclude Johne's disease.

Note: As other environmental mycobacteria may cause similar histological lesions as Johne's disease in alpaca, tissue culture should be undertaken to identify the causative agent.

7. Where the Q-Alpaca herd's overseeing veterinarian is not available to conduct a post-mortem examination, he or she may authorise another registered veterinarian to undertake the post-mortem on his or her behalf.