

# Alpaca, Llamas

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*Alpaca Lama pacos; Llama Lama glama (Camelidae)*

## Fast Facts:

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| Number of Alpacas producers: over 500                  |
| Number of Llama producers: 1,831                       |
| Number of Alpacas produced in Washington State: 15,533 |
| Number of Llamas produced in Washington State: 10,404  |

## Description of crop:

Alpacas produce a fiber that is clipped from the animal without causing it injury. Soft as cashmere and warmer, lighter and stronger than wool, it comes in more colors than any other fiber producing animal (approximately 16 basic colors with many variations and blends). This cashmere-like fleece, once reserved for Incan royalty and prized for its incredible ability to be both lightweight and warm when spun into clothing, is now enjoyed by spinners and weavers around the world. These natural colors are highly prized by many in the textile industry because the fiber does not have to be chemically dyed. Much smaller than llamas, weighing about 175 pounds full grown, alpacas appear to be very delicate; however, they are rugged, self-sufficient and adaptable to all sorts of conditions. Their natural habitat is the high plains of the Andes Mountains of South America, a place that has some of the harshest extremes of any climate on earth. The summers are hot and dry, with very little forage and the winters are extremely cold with little or no shelter. There are 2 different breeds of alpaca, the Suri and the Huacaya. They are very similar in every way with the exception of how their fiber (hair) grows; Huacayas look like overgrown teddy bears with their long soft coat whereas the Suri has a more silken fiber that grows in long locks. Suri alpaca has a very high luster fiber that grows in curly dread-lock forms. Huacaya fiber is very soft, fine, dense and colorful.

Adult llamas' average weight can range from about 250 to 450 pounds. Their height at the shoulder is from 40 to 47 inches and at the head from 5 1/2 to over 6 feet tall. Llamas' lifespan can range from 15 to over 25 years. Llamas' come in a large number of colors-various shades of brown, black, white, gray, red, and beige. They range from one solid color, to various patterns and spots.

In Washington State there is a large range of llama and alpaca production. You may find small herds for 4-H projects to larger breeding herds. The majority of llamas and alpacas are raised on the west side of the mountains. The number of llama and alpaca ranches is on the rise on the east side of the state also, as they grow in popularity.

**Key pests:**

Key pests in alpaca and llama production are internal parasites. On some occasions barnyard flies will pose a nuisance problem interrupting the feeding habits. Lice can also pose a problem by feeding on the animal irritating the skin. Large populations of lice may cause rubbing and damage to the fiber.

**Key pesticides:**

There are no pesticides used in alpaca and llama production. The primary practice of controlling pests is to administer internal medicines.

**Critical pest  
control issues:**

There are known critical pest control issues at this time

**Expert contacts:**

Larry Hunhoff  
Education Chair  
Alpaca Ranchers of the NorthWest  
1-360-978-6647

**Location  
of production:**

Alpacas and llamas can be found in all counties in Washington



Llamas



Alpaca