

What Are Alpacas?

Alpacas are small endearing animals of the camelid family. They were domesticated over 5,000 years ago, and became a cherished treasure of the ancient Inca civilization. Their fine cashmere-like fleece was once reserved for Incan royalty. These amazing animals provided the food, fuel, clothing and transportation for a civilization that thrived in an otherwise hostile environment.

Alpacas have a life span of 20 - 25 years. Adults weigh 100 - 175 lbs and stand 34 - 36 inches at the withers. Baby alpacas, called crias, generally weigh 14 - 20 lbs at birth. Gestation is around 11 months. Alpacas communicate through soft humming noises and unique body language.

Today, in Canada, alpacas are raised for their exquisite fibre, and are enjoyed for their delightful personalities as well as their sound financial returns. Alpacas produce one of the world's finest and most luxurious fibres, known for its fineness, lustre, light weight and insulating quality, which is eight times that of wool! With the exception of mohair, alpacas produce the strongest animal fibre in the world. As alpaca fibre becomes finer, this unique strength does not lessen, thus making it very desirable.