

Preparation for llama shearing

Animals:

Your llamas need to be penned up and dry in an area without bedding, and close to shearing area. Halters that fit the various sizes of animals should be available and/or already on the animals. If rain is called for, please put your animals inside before it starts, as shearing them wet can be both dangerous and ruin the fiber. I will decline to shear wet animals. Please do whatever you know is best to keep them as little stressed as possible. If animals are out in the field and need to be caught, there will be a surcharge.

Some owners blow out their llamas with a cool blower (a leaf blower works fine) to remove vegetable matter and extra dust, just prior to shearing. This helps a great deal – it not only gives you a better product, but it helps keep the shearing blades cooler (working against grit and dirt wears them down and heats them up quite fast) and so more comfortable for your animal.

Shearing area:

Ideally llamas are sheared standing in a chute. It is the safest method for both the animal and shearer. If no chute is available, I tie their head to a corner in a stable area (fence post or barn post) where there are no objects protruding. My shearing assistant will hold the llama's neck to keep him calm. The area should be flat and dry, and well lit. In the event of inclement weather, please let me know if you do or do not have an area to shear that is protected from the rain.

Manpower needed:

Two people are needed to safely shear a llama: the shearer and a handler. I bring a shearing assistant with me. The owner halts and brings the llamas to the shearing area and collects the fiber. The best way to collect the fiber is to line a large bucket or trash can with the fiber bags, so it can be tossed in as shearing occurs.

Services performed:

In addition to the shearing, typically llama owners want to have toenails trimmed and I will take care of this unless you let me know otherwise. I trim hooves in the manner of a farrier. I can also check for long front teeth as well as fighting teeth, although performing dental work on an unsedated llama will depend much upon his/her level of calm. I use a dremel to file them down, and smooth out front and back edges for maximum comfort for the animal. If your llama is excitable but does need tooth trimming, I will recommend that you call in a vet who can administer a light sedative and take care of this service in a safe manner.

Some owners wish to administer vaccines and/or deworming shots at the time of shearing. This is usually done after the shearing is completed, but is not recommended. There is a lower absorption rate of vaccines when animals are under stress, and there can be adverse effects of dewormers on animals who are already excited by having been handled for shearing.

It's important for the owner to be present at all times while the animals are being sheared. Sometimes physical conditions – scaly skin, bumps, lesions, etc. – come to light when the fleece comes off and I want to be able to alert the owner to any such things found.

I typically shear the entire body every other year, and do a modified barrel cut on alternate years, leaving the neck to grow for two years. Neck fiber grows more slowly. I trim the leg fiber, removing knots and dirty bits, but leaving some fiber to help protect the legs from flies. If you want a specific style of shearing, please let me know and we will work together to make sure you have the look you want.

The Fleece:

Please have bags ready and labeled for each animal. You, the farmer, are responsible for fiber collection. If you need us to collect, label, and bag the fiber, an additional fee will be assessed.

Biosecurity

I travel from farm to farm and in order to not transfer any diseases between flocks, I take the following precautions:

- (1) Wipe down my shoes with disinfectant
- (2) Use new shearing blades and wipe down shearing machine
- (3) Clean mouth guard and dremel for tooth trimming
- (4) Disinfect hoof trimmers

If there are any conditions your animals have that I should know about, please tell me so that I can take extra cleaning steps before travelling to the next farm.

Please let us know if you have any questions or special requests, and thank you for working with Shroeder Shearing.

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