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# Q-Alpaca

## Q-ALPACA BIOSECURITY PROGRAM

### GUIDELINES FOR VETERINARIANS

#### INTRODUCTION

The *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Program (the Program) shares many similarities with the AlpacaMAP, but also has some important differences.

Nevertheless, there is the same responsibility on participating veterinarians to ensure that their partners in the Program keep records and maintain contact with you, so that there is verifiable biosecurity of their herd and their property.

The Program is a biosecurity program that is designed to satisfy the requirements of any Emergency Animal Disease Control Program. Your participation is essential to ensure that the *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Program you are helping to run will satisfy all requirements that an Emergency Animal Disease outbreak will place upon it.

Not all *Q-Alpaca* herds will be in the AlpacaMAP but the Program is designed to complement the AlpacaMAP and allow alpaca herds that are also in the AlpacaMAP to maintain their MN status without further faecal testing. The maintenance of MN status of herds that are in both the AlpacaMAP and *Q-Alpaca* relies on the results of your post-mortem examinations, rather than on periodic whole herd faecal tests or maintenance faecal testing

**Note: *Q-Alpaca* herds that are not also in the MAP only qualify to be considered equivalent to MN1 if they comply with the criteria outlined in clause 8 of the *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Guidelines (attached and also included as Appendix 12 in the AlpacaMAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2005).**

The Australian Alpaca Association Ltd (AAA), through the Registrar of the Program, runs the Program, rather than through the State Co-ordinators of the AlpacaMAP who are officers of the State DPI/Dept. of Agriculture

#### STRUCTURE

The *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Program involves your knowledge of and participation in the completion of four forms, all of which can be downloaded from the Australian Alpaca Association website, <www.alpaca.asn.au>.



## **Form Q1**

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 that you will need in your continued surveillance of the Program.

All questions on the Form should be answered particularly:

- The total number of alpaca in the herd, including agistors' animals as well as the owner's. Form Q1 now requires a breakdown of the number of alpaca 12 months and over, and the number of cria, being those under the age of 12 months.
- If the herd is in the AlpacaMAP, ensure that the Certificate No. and expiry date is also entered.
- There should be 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.

**Note:** The following herds must comply with the criteria in Clause 8 of the *Q-Alpaca* Biosecurity Guidelines (attached):

1. a) MAP herds that claim a MAP status credit and/or maintain their MAP status by also being in *Q-Alpaca*; and  
b) *Q-Alpaca* herds that are not in the AlpacaMAP but want to qualify to be considered MNI equivalent.
2. In these circumstances, the other eligible species or the sheep are considered part of the herd and subject to the requirements for post-mortem examination if any of them die. Herds in the AlpacaMAP must also comply with the AlpacaMAP rules with regard to other eligible species (ie. cattle, goats and deer).

## **Form Q2**

This is the signed agreement between you and the owner, which ensures that you agree to supervise the management of "the herd" in order to maintain the quality assurance of the Program. You need to be a veterinarian approved under the Accreditation Program for Australian Veterinarians (APAV) and Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program (MAP) in order to participate in the *Q-Alpaca* Program or MAPs for any species, including the AlpacaMAP.

If you are asked by a client to partner them in a *Q-Alpaca* or MAP and you are not an APAV and MAP - approved veterinarian, you should enrol in these programs immediately.

Before signing Part B of this Form, you should:

- Read the detail in Form Q5 – Guidelines for Appraisal of Property and Herd Management. If the herd is currently in the AlpacaMAP, the Herd and Management program, with the property plan and individual animal identification that you have with the MAP will suffice for the *Q-Alpaca* Program. If the herd is not in the AlpacaMAP, you will need to have:
  1. A list of the individual identification numbers of the alpaca.
  2. A drawing of the property, showing fences, buildings, etc. that go to make up the property layout.
- Make sure that you are satisfied with the integrity of the boundary fences.

- Discuss the owner's responsibilities with them, ensuring that they realise they must:
  1. Keep detailed records of the origin and identity of every animal that comes onto the property, and the identity and destination of every animal that leaves, no matter if the move is temporary or permanent.
  2. Notify you before they purchase any animal that is going to become part of "the herd".
  3. The owner has to observe the requirement that EVERY alpaca over 12 months of age that dies or is euthanased MUST be examined by you at post-mortem, regardless of whether the owner thinks that they know why the animal died. Likewise, any cria that loses weight and has signs suggesting John's disease HAS to be examined by you.
  4. What if the owner moves, and you are no longer looking after the herd? You should:
    - a) Notify the Registrar you are no longer the participating veterinarian for the Program no. 0\*/0\*\*\*, as of a certain date. The Registrar will then notify the National Office, which will send a letter or e-mail to the owner, asking them to arrange for a new participating veterinarian, and a new Form Q2, Parts A and B to be sent to the Office.
    - b) On receipt of the new Form Q2, the Office will ask you to forward a copy of your past records to the new participating veterinarian.

### ***Form Q3***

This is the Annual Stock Return, which needs to be completed by the owner between June 30th and July 31st each year. This is the Form that allows the Registrar to check whether there is a discrepancy between numbers of animals at the start and end of the financial year, and to check whether 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.
  2. The IAR numbers of post-mortemed animals check with your records of post-mortem examinations.

### ***Form Q4***

This is the post-mortem report Form. It is in 2 pages, 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.
- Collect page 1 and take it with you when you go back to the practice to check the small intestinal contents for *E. macusaniensis* prior to completing page 2.
- You should provide the owner with a copy of both pages, and ensure that you fax/e-mail a copy to the National Office.



## AUDITS

The 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 Registrar the audit either has been completed to your satisfaction, or that there are deficiencies. These deficiencies should be listed.

If the herd is already in the AlpacaMAP, the annual audit for the AlpacaMAP fulfils the requirements for the *Q-Alpaca* Program, but you should still notify the Registrar that a satisfactory or unsatisfactory MAP audit has been completed.

## THE MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

The Registrar or the National Office will issue the herd owner with their Membership Certificate, which will be current while ever the owner satisfies the three requirements listed at the bottom of the certificate. These are:

1. You maintain the conditions you have noted in your application, including your ongoing partnership with your APAP-approved veterinarian.
2. You submit annual stock returns (Form Q3) to the Registrar.
3. You pay the current annual administration costs billed to you by the Australian Alpaca Association Inc.

You do not need to issue any certificate under this Program, unlike the AlpacaMAP. The National Office of the AAA and the Registrar will arrange any issuing of a Certificate, or withdrawal of a Certificate.

Likewise, the National Office and the Registrar will notify the relevant State AlpacaMAP Coordinator of any deficiency in *Q-Alpaca* Programs that would cause any AlpacaMAP herd to lose its quality assurance under the Program (i.e. maintenance of MN status by post-mortem examination) and revert to a faecal testing requirement as spelled out in the AlpacaMAP manual.

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## ATTACHMENT

### AUSTRALIAN ALPACA ASSOCIATION LTD. *Q-ALPACA* BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES

The Australian Alpaca Association Ltd., following extensive consultation with BJD TAG 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 would not be 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 to a standard comparable to that in the AlpacaMAP.
4. Records of animal identity, origin and destination for movements into and out of the herd.
5. Post-mortem examination of any animal over 12 months that dies or is euthanased and of any cria under 12 months that is showing emaciation or diarrhoea and dies or is euthanased.
6. Where clinical signs are suggestive of Johne's disease, post-mortem investigation will be undertaken and samples collected for culture and histopathology as described in AlpacaMAP Section 7 and Appendix 10.

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 approved veterinarian is not always available to conduct post-mortem examinations for *Q-Alpaca*, he or she may authorise another veterinarian who is approved for MAPs in alpaca or other species to undertake them on his or her behalf. Where another approved veterinarian is not available, the herd's approved veterinarian may apply to the CVO to nominate another veterinarian to undertake the examination in compliance with clause 6.
8. *Q-Alpaca* herds do not automatically qualify as being equivalent to MN1 in the AlpacaMAP. A *Q-Alpaca* herd would qualify for equivalence to MN1 if it:
  - a) Is not run with other susceptible animals; or
  - b) Is run with sheep with a minimum ABC score of 2 (i.e. the number of credits for a sheep flock in SheepMAP that has had one Sample Test); or
  - c) Is run with animals, classified as eligible animals in the AlpacaMAP, that are part of a MAP herd or flock or any other herd or flock that would be eligible for unrestricted entry to a MAP herd or flock.

Note: "Unrestricted entry" means that the numbers and types of animals are not restricted and are not subject to additional testing or management rules by the MAP. Rules for introduction to CattleMAP herds are being reviewed in light of new assurance base trading schemes.

9. Alpaca could be introduced to *Q-Alpaca* herds from:
  - a) AlpacaMAP herds; and
  - b) *Q-Alpaca* herds that have been enrolled in *Q-Alpaca* for at least 6 months; and
  - c) Non-assessed alpaca herds, subject to isolation and a negative faecal culture.