

A BEND IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Regardless of how diligent you are about herd management and nutrition, you can end up with a cria that has an angular limb problem. They appear to be knock-kneed, usually in the front legs. Though there are a number of reasons this can occur, it is most often nutrition related, caused by a condition called rickets. Unless corrected, the angular deviation can pre-dispose the alpaca to other injuries and diseases, such as bone breakage, tendon problems, or arthritis as the animal matures.

Traditional rigid splints applied to the legs have tended to be ill-fitted to alpaca's limbs, causing sores or making the alpaca less steady and more apt to slip and fall. However, until recently, nutritional adjustments and traditional size splints were the only treatments available.



We had one female, named Unsinkable Molly Brown, who had such a splint on the day VA Tech Animal Science graduate, Morgen Flynn visited Double “O” Good Alpacas. A graduate in Equine Sports Medicine specializing in limbs, Morgen's trained eye noticed the splint. After numerous questions, she left to confer with her colleagues in the Veterinary Division of Dynasplint Systems about the possibility of developing flexible splints that could help straighten the fragile legs of young camelids with angular limb deviations. This addition to their existing line of splints for horses and dogs was thus inspired by Molly.

We tried the Dynasplint with very positive results. The flexible splint allowed our alpaca to bend her leg and move nearly normally while healing, and the correction took less time than we thought it might. The splint gently stretched the connective tissue on either side of the joint

without pain to the alpaca and was low-stress and non-invasive. Meanwhile, we also adjusted our alpaca's diet to insure that calcium, vitamin D, and phosphorus were plentiful and in balance, to assure good bone mineralization and prevent rickets.

Morgen reports that the average young alpaca case takes 30 days or less to correct. She recommends to camelid breeders that they maintain nutritional programs with the guidance and counsel of their vets to help maintain the limb correction. “The combination of the splint and appropriate nutrition is the best assurance of a lasting limb correction,” says Morgen. She says Dynasplint has had 100% success with permanent correction of angular limb deformities in camelid patients as long as nutritional support is maintained.

The fee for a Dynasplint is \$450.00 for up to 30 days. This rental includes on-site custom fitting of a splint to your alpaca in those geographical regions where the company has representatives. It also includes two on-site follow-up visits within the first month. If the splint has to be drop-shipped, the local Dynasplint representative does a telephone consultation with your vet, and sends both an instructional DVD and photos of the splint in various stages of application and fitting. If you need to keep the splint for longer, an additional \$250.00 buys you five more months of rental.

We are certainly glad Morgen decided to visit Double “O” Good Alpaca Farm that day in November of 2005. We are the first alpaca breeder she visited. She has been back many times, to follow up with Molly Brown's progress, to present educational seminars for our Breeders Edge Events, and to learn more about alpacas and how we run a successful alpaca business. She also likes to be here to do what so many of our farm visitors enjoy doing; that is just taking in the alpaca lifestyle. We welcome you to visit our farm anytime to do the same!

To research more about Dynasplint, visit www.dynasplint.com or contact Morgen Flynn at mflynn@dynasplint.com or 866-902-9595.



We are continually striving to make sure we have a cohesive, hardworking farm operations team that is knowledgeable, friendly, and committed to our customers. After some recent changes, the current Double "O" Good farm team are Roberto, Wellther, Wilmer and Augustine Zepeda, Justin Falkenstein, Brett Gibson, and Sean McCarrick. Nancy Ogan has recently joined Brenda Thompson and Linda Moyers in the office to assist with marketing and sales. Please feel free to contact any of us any time!

Double "O" Good Alpacas is proud to announce the following results at recent shows:

- ELK Princess Bianca took First at the Southern Select in Tennessee
- Royal Fawn son, ELK Royal Dalton, won Blue at the Virginia Classic
- 6 month old Dom Lucilio daughter, ELK Southern Excess, took Reserve Fawn Color Champion at the Virginia Classic

Special thanks to all who attended our 13th Anniversary Celebration and Pen Sale on March 28, 29, & 30. Those who came found just the right alpacas in the pen sale, booked breedings at special pricing, enjoyed the first showing of Titan's Clash crias, gained knowledge at seminars, and toasted it all with cake and champagne.



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*What can the right
 bend mean to you?*

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Ernie and Barbara

1. Lack of weight gain can indicate poor milk supply, illness, the presence of parasites, or that the new cria is not connecting on all four teats.
 2. Angular deviations such as knock knees or splayed limbs can be an early warning of poor nutrition. We give vitamins A, D, E and B-12 to help with growth and development.
 3. Sluggish activity level. Typically developing crias are playful, energetic, and mischievous.
 Consult your veterinarian for these or other health concerns. Careful attention to your youngest alpacas can insure their healthy development and many enjoyable hours of watching them prunk happily across your pastures!



In this column, we share valuable tips to improve your knowledge about being an alpaca breeder and to clue you into some of the lessons we've learned since we began Double "O" Good Alpacas in 1995. With birthing season in full swing, we are very excited about all the new crias being born here at Double "O" Good. Over the years, we have learned the value of being diligent as new crias mature. Here are some things to watch for with young alpacas that can be easily addressed or corrected if caught soon enough: