



Advertorial Feature: Fibregest – Feeding for functional fermentation

Simon Vowles of Gro-Well Feeds Limited explains alpaca digestion and diet.

Alpacas, like other camelids, have symbiotic relationships with their forestomach microflora. They provide a safe, warm, oxygen free environment in exchange for the end products of bacterial fermentation. No mammal on earth is able to produce enzymes that can digest cellulose, hence the natural development of this form of digestion where beneficial bacteria provide the means. The numbers are staggering with each millilitre of fermentative soup containing up to 50 billion microbes! However even though the statistics are huge, the balance of this microbial environment can be on a knife edge.

The criteria for maintaining functional fermentation:

- A constant pH of between 6 and 7 i.e. slightly acidic to neutral conditions
- A high fibre and low/non grain diet to sustain populations of cellulolytic bugs
- A high fibre diet to maintain saliva production, gut motility and gas eructation
- A high fibre diet to maximise regurgitation, remastication and reswallowing

The impact of high levels of grain and the development of acidic conditions can:

- Severely affect populations of beneficial bacteria
- Severely restrict gut motility and gas expulsion which could lead to bloat or even impaction
- Reduce the production of saliva that feeds the bacterial soup and provides buffering to the acid that is produced
- Affect the makeup of volatile fatty acids, the end products of fermentation

In essence, Alpacas developed in cold dry environments where the availability of grains was almost non-existent. The natural diet was almost entirely low grade vegetation and hence its digestive system has evolved to make efficient use of that food source.

The provision of digestible soluble fibre from high quality vegetable sources like alfalfa and extracted sugar beet that are complementary to forestomach fermentative digestion can only be beneficial for both camelid and cellulolytic bacteria alike. The feeding of a better, compatible substrate rather than an incompatible source like starch, can only make logical sense.

Fibregest is a “Super Soluble Fibre Feed”, derived from a blend of alfalfa, sugar beet and oat soluble fibres, mixed with seaweed meal, chelated minerals and OatinoI™ to provide minimal energy with maximum health and vitality for all round conditioning.

In the foregut, Fibregest pellets provide a palatable source of digestible “super fibres” (soluble fibres) that gel with water in the gut to create a texture, which maintains a slow transit time of the feed and a slow release of energy into the blood. In the foregut, a steadier release of energy stops hyper-activity, while a slower passage of feed allows enzymes more time to digest feed.

In the hindgut, Fibregest acts as the perfect food source for these beneficial bacteria, encouraging their natural activity and growth.

In combination with Camelibra, the support from Fibregest will provide a sustained high level of fibre digestion for the benefit of your Alpaca. In addition, the added OatinoI™ in Fibregest provides natural

antioxidants, emulsifiers and membrane fats to help maintain the lining of both the foregut and hindgut digestive tracts.

For further info.....

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