
CANADIAN LLAMA AND ALPACA ASSOCIATION

Collecting DNA hair samples

In Canada, we are fortunate to have a lab that will do DNA testing with hair follicles. For many farms, this means saving on the expense of calling a vet out to draw blood. Many farms are having 100% success rate with this type of DNA collection, however, some breeders are having to redo samples due to the absence of follicles on the hair samples. The best way to collect a hair sample with follicles is as follows:

1. Have your separate envelope for each animal nearby. Also have your piece of clear tape ready to go, sticky side up and about 6 inches long.
2. Make sure the underside of the tail on each animal is clean, dry, and free of debris.
3. With your thumb and forefinger, grab a small group of fibres right where the fibre growth begins, and to the side of the anus. Do not grab right at the skin but about half an inch to an inch away from the skin.
4. Pull quickly and with force towards the ground.
5. Immediately hold the hair sample up to make sure there are tiny skin follicles on the ends of the hairs (small glassy beads). Every single hair may not have a follicle which is why it is a good idea to take at least 3-5 samples or pulls from each animal. *If you do not see the follicles you will have to pull a new sample. No follicles (roots) – No DNA – No test.*
6. If you pulled a sample and see the follicles, place the hair on the tape with the skin follicles AT LEAST half an inch to an inch away from the tape and continue to place each group of hairs you pull along the tape. Try to place all the hairs on only half the length of the tape or the first 3 inches of the tape. *Make sure you do not cover the hair follicles with the tape as the lab needs to have access to the follicles.*
7. Once you have at least 30 hairs with visible skin follicles, fold the remaining 3 inches of tape over itself to hold the hairs in place. Let the sample dry for a few minutes and then place it in the envelope where it can be stored at room temperature.
8. Mail sample with the Request for DNA Testing form and payment to:
Mail to: Canadian Livestock Records
Attention: Llamas and Alpacas
2417 Holly Lane
Ottawa, ON K1V 0M7

