

Ccara Llama Screening Score Explanations

The Ccara llama is first and foremost, a working breed. The applicant for registration is required to demonstrate suitability for packing/carting through optimum structural and behavioral characteristics. The llama must be free of obvious congenital defects.

Athleticism in llamas appears to be directly related to a high leg-length/girth depth ratio. Leggy and lean is preferable to short-legged and heavy. Llamas cut up high in the flank are preferable to those animals with a thicker-bodied build.

Height is considered to be an asset in the pack animal. A tall, long striding animal has a distinct advantage over the short animal, as long as the athletic structure is there. A tall athletic animal can cover the ground in a very energy-efficient manner (stamina over distance), is able to step over obstacles that would require a jump in a shorter animal and has ample ground clearance for the panniers.

Height seems to be a very difficult characteristic to maintain in a breeding program. It is hoped that by stipulating a minimum requirement, the Ccara registry can help to ensure that height remains a characteristic of the Ccara breed.

For details on measuring llamas, see **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**

The ideal coat has an outer layer of coarse guard hair which sheds moisture and debris and keeps the coat tangle-free. The finer insulating layer of short fibre provides protection from excessive heat/cold. Heavy-woolled llamas, shorn to work, can suffer from cold when hiking in the mountains. .

An undercoat which molts on a regular basis is considered highly desirable but this characteristic is difficult to assess during a one-time check. Density of the undercoat varies widely according to llama type and climate.

1. 10 Points

Wool on legs, neck and face is permissible if minor. If present – subtract points.

There are very few breeding llamas left which possess both the true Ccara coat and athletic structure. When screening the first llamas, the NACA Board of Directors saw a few exceptional working-type llamas with more wool than is defined for the true Ccara coat. At this point the decision was made to allow – at least in the foundation stock – a little more wool than was considered to be ideal. The contribution to the gene pool being made by these few woollier athletes appeared far too valuable to eliminate them from the registry.

Because of the scoring system, such animals will need to excel in other areas to qualify.

Smooth gait is essential to stamina and performance. Llamas with short choppy strides or llamas whose necks and shoulders rock from side to side at every step do not generally have adequate stamina over the long haul. **Subtract a point** for a wide stance, if combined with a lateral sway.

Slight lateral rocking motion of head/neck when viewed from the front, **subtract 1.**

Obvious lateral rocking motion, **subtract 2.**

Relatively long necks are desirable for balance. A neck and head carried slightly ahead of the vertical is preferable to an erect, vertical neck, and is usually associated with a long stride. Erect neck carriage (particularly when combined with a short, choppy stride) when viewed from the side, **subtract 1.** *Llama must be viewed in a relaxed stance to assess this.*

Disproportional short or long neck, **subtract 1.**

Angular limb deformities are exaggerated and stress on joints is intensified when the llama is carrying a load. **Subtract points** for knock knees, calf knees, over at the knee, cow hocks, sickle hocks, bowed legs, excessively toed in or out.

Long stride appears to be associated with bone length and joint angulations. Long upper 'arm' bones (humerus, radius, ulna) and long upper rear leg bones (femur, tibia) are desirable in the working llama, as are short strong cannon bones. Overly heavy bone is not considered desirable for endurance but may be balanced by exceptional muscling in some llamas. Fine bone may not have adequate strength.

Overly heavy bone, **subtract 1.**

Overly light bone, **subtract 1.**

Short choppy strides, **subtract 1.**

Long backs in llamas may be a weakness but are difficult to assess. While long-backed llamas may be lacking in strength, what *appears* to be a long back may simply be a long sloping shoulder blade and pelvis, (seen in the lanky type of athletic llama) resulting in a long *body*.

Unlike the horse, the llama's neck does not rise up at an angle from the withers but extends forward on a horizontal plane for a short distance, giving the appearance of a long back.

Back length is the distance from the highest point of the withers to point of the hip (lumbosacral joint). Body length is the distance from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttocks. **See Appendix B**

2. 5 points

Llamas need a V-shaped back to hold a saddle well. Llamas with broad flat backs will need to be tightly cinched to hold a pack in place and this is stressful for the animal. 45-degree slope down both sides from the spine is optimal. **Subtract points** according to decrease in slope. Steep slope may be a result of underfeeding – do not penalize. Flat or rounded backs may be a result of poor conformation or overfeeding.

3. 5 points

Llamas with a topline which is level or slightly higher at the shoulder seem to hold a pack better than those with high hips. A slight arch to the back (roach back) does not seem to detract from performance but if extreme it is hard to keep pack in place. Top points for back which is level or slightly higher at the shoulder.

Subtract points for abnormally high hips, roach back or a swayed back.

4. 5 points

The llama's foot needs to leave squarely from the ground, travel straight, and land squarely. A foot that twists as it leaves the ground and swings inwards or outwards puts undue strain on the fetlock, knee & hock joints.

If Llama swings feet out or inwards from the midline (winging or paddling), **subtract one or more points** depending on severity. **Study carefully.** Llamas are amazingly flexible creatures and may *appear* to walk abnormally, particularly if they are not used to being handled and are being studied at close range by humans. Try to study this from a distance so the llama is more comfortable.

5. 5 points

Dropped pasterns are a major fault in working llamas and heredity is thought to be a factor. Some degree of sag is tolerated in older females who have produced many offspring.

Pasterns should be relatively upright and strong – not slack. A llama, and particularly, a young llama, who demonstrates upright pasterns when standing in a relaxed stance, but whose pasterns stretch and drop noticeably at the walk or under a load, may have difficulty at a later date. Some very tall, long-legged llamas do seem to have long springy pasterns. Perhaps the length is necessary absorb the shock, but these llamas must be studied carefully at the walk to determine strength of pasterns. There is a noticeable difference between the *spring* in longish strong pasterns, and the *sag* in weak pasterns.

Study this carefully, with the llama both standing and walking.

Subtract points for pasterns that 'sag' at a walk depending on degree of severity.

6. 5 points

Many different types of llamas excel at packing, from the lean and lanky animals to the heavier boned, more compact bodied llamas with heavier muscling. All must have adequate strength for the job however, and these two locations seem to be indicative. Lack of muscling in these locations, **subtract points** depending on severity. *Do* study the animal in an attempt to determine if lack of muscling is simply due to poor nutrition.

7. 5 points

A broad foot with short toes and toenails is preferable to a long narrow foot. Some llamas who have been pastured on wet ground (i.e. slushy spring snow) will have spongy or broken pads.

Foot size needs to be adequate to support a packed llama in a variety of terrain.

Subtract points for crooked or malformed nails, unless this is a result of an injury.

Subtract points for excessively small feet.

8. 5 points

Misalignment of lower incisors and upper dental pad is a common fault in llamas.

Subtract one or more points depending on severity. Check for overall balance and bilateral symmetry of head, when viewed from the front.

Ears slanted too far forward – **subtract points**.

9. 5 points Spitting, excessive 'friendliness' or aggression are severe faults.

Disqualify if excessive. Try to determine the handling background on the llama if it appears shy or frightened.