



## **Guidance on the keeping of Camels, Guanaco and Vicuña**

Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004



- 1. Species Names** *Camelus dromedarius* – Dromedary camel (one-humped camel)  
*Camelus bactrianus* – Bactrian camel (two-humped camel)  
*Lama guanicoe* – Guanaco  
*Vicugna vicugna* - Vicuña
- 2. Additional information** All camelids except the domestic llama and the alpaca require licensing under this legislation. Hybrids between a llama or an alpaca and one of the species listed in paragraph 1 will also need licensing.

The farming of any species of camelid may also be subject to regulation by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). Anyone requiring further information should contact their local DARD Divisional Veterinary Officer.
- 3. Conservation status** Vicuña from some populations are classified as Annex A species under EC Regulation 338/97 (relating to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)).

Special permits must be obtained to buy, sell, breed or use this species for any commercial purpose.
- 4. Housing overview** Camelids are normally kept in a fenced outdoor paddock with some form of shelter.

Camels are the largest of the camelids, followed in size by guanacos and then vicuña. The size of paddock or enclosure should be appropriate to the species kept.

- 5. Keeping experience** In order to protect the welfare of these animals, keepers must be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of husbandry and handling of the species they wish to keep.
- There should normally be a second named person nominated and included on the licence who is competent to care for the animals should the owner be absent or incapacitated.

## Housing Recommendations

- 6. Construction** Outdoor enclosures must be strong enough to resist the animals colliding with the fence.
- Concrete or synthetic floor surfaces should be kept to a minimum, and should be non-slip. Suitable floor-coverings are grass or sand.
- 7. Fencing** Fences should be either wire mesh, clearly visible high tensile wire fitted with droppers and tensioners, or post and rails, at least 1.5 metres high (5 ft) for guanaco and vicuña and a minimum of 1.9 metres (6 ft) for camels. If wire mesh is used, the mesh size should be such that it is unlikely to entangle the animals by the head or legs.
- Fences should be checked regularly to ensure that they have not become damaged.
- High stone walls may also be used to contain these species. Electric wire has also been used as containment for camels.
- The use of barbed wire is not appropriate for these animals in a domestic situation.

## 8. Size

It is recommended that camelids are kept outside at grass.

The size of enclosure necessary depends on various factors, including the pasture type, the species to be kept, and whether supplementary feed is to be provided. The camelids are social animals, and should be kept in single-species groups if at all possible.

Factors requiring extra space include: keeping the larger species (camels), keeping large groups of animals, not providing supplementary feed, and using land with difficult or unusable terrain.

### **Enclosures must be large enough to:**

Allow the animals to graze and exercise freely  
Allow animals held in groups to avoid each other  
Not be overburdened by waste products or a build up of parasites  
Include some form of shelter from the elements

As a guide, a single camel, vicuña or guanaco may be kept in an enclosure measuring at least 5 x 10m (15 x 30 ft). A group of one male and two female camelids may be kept in an area of at least 10 x 20m (30 x 60 ft).

- 9. Temperature and Shelter** Normal outdoor temperatures in Northern Ireland should be tolerable for all camelids, however it is recommended that some form of shelter is made available to camelids to protect them from extreme weather conditions. If a constructed shelter is provided, it is recommended that it be built to allow the animals to be locked inside if necessary. Standard horse loose-boxes are adequate.
- 10. Lighting** Camelids should have access to natural light.
- 11. Ventilation** If the animals are to be housed temporarily, fresh air ventilation must be provided.
- 12. Drainage** The drainage of the enclosure must be capable of rapidly removing all excess water. Drains should be designed to avoid injury to the animals. Any open drains, other than those carrying surface water, should be outside the enclosure. Any faecal material must be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.
- 13. Cleanliness** Outdoor enclosures should be maintained in a clean state, with faeces, food debris and litter being removed on a daily basis. Indoor enclosures should ideally be built with materials that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

**14. Social dynamics and behavioural considerations**

Camelids are herd animals, therefore more than one animal should be kept if possible.

Some provision should be made to separate animals if necessary, if a group of camelids is kept together. Some form of quarantine may be required if an animal requires veterinary treatment. If the animals are to be kept indoors at any time, males may need to be housed individually.

**15. Prevention of escape**

In addition to the fencing requirements, gates to enclosures should be securely locked at all times.

If the enclosure is accessible by the public, for example, adjoining a public highway, steps should be taken to prevent the possibility of the public gaining access to, or being injured by, the animals. This may require the erection of a secondary fence (a stand-off barrier), or a solid wall on the accessible sides of the enclosure. Warning signs may also be required.

**16. Food, drink and bedding**

Grass, hay and browse are the main diet of these animals. They are capable of surviving on fairly sparse pasture. Depending on the pasture type and the number of animals held, hay or a suitable concentrate diet should be given to supplement the camelids' diet. The provision of unlimited hay is especially important where these animals are kept on high quality pasture with lush grass. Concentrated commercial diets are normally given to young and breeding animals. Any supplementary feed should be provided in a way that allows all animals to feed at the same time. Salt licks may also be provided, and supplementary vitamin E is recommended if fresh grass is not available.

Sufficient fresh drinking water must be provided at all times.

The animals must not be tethered in their enclosure so that they can graze freely.

Straw may be provided as bedding in constructed shelters.

**17. Visiting interval**

The animals must be monitored at appropriate intervals, normally at least once every 24 hours.

**18. Exercise and enrichment**

The enclosure should be large enough for the animals to graze and take exercise. Some camelids will create a dust bath in which to roll in dry weather.



- 19. Provision for capture and transportation** Most camelids can be trained to be approached and led on a halter by known keepers. Veterinary care will usually be provided on site. A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify restrictions on the movement of these animals and procedures to be followed.
- These animals can be transported in a normal horsebox. Straw bedding should be provided, and the trailer used should be large enough for the animal(s) to stand and sit comfortably. The trailer must be well ventilated. Hay and water should be provided for long journeys. Male animals should be transported separately (alone, or separated by a solid partition from other animals).
- 20. Emergency planning** There should be a written contingency plan in place to be used in the event of an emergency, for example fire, flood, animal escape or injury to the keeper.
- 21. Notification Requirements** A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify procedures to be followed in the event of an escape and on the provision of information to the Emergency Services (e.g. the Fire Service) on the dangerous wild animals being kept.
- You are required to notify the Department of the Environment of any intentions to breed the animals.

**22. Prevention and control of spread of infectious disease**

Provision should be made to allow separation of sick or injured animals from the group. This may be achieved by isolating the animal in the shelter, or by fencing off an area of the paddock.

The keeper should provide details of their veterinary arrangements with a practice prepared to treat these animals. A schedule of veterinary care, including vaccination against clostridial diseases, routine parasite control and foot checks is necessary, and the keeping of records of veterinary attention is essential.

There are no transmissible diseases carried by these animals that pose a risk to the general public as long as there is no direct contact, and visitors are not allowed to handle the animals or their by-products.

## Explanatory Notes

These notes have been produced to provide people wishing to keep dangerous wild animals with guidance on the requirements they may have to meet. In determining whether or not a licence should be issued, the Department of the Environment will consider the information provided by the applicant when applying for a licence. The Department will also arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out an inspection of the premises at which the animal or animals will be kept and the inspector's report will also be taken into consideration. It is at the Department's discretion to waive certain recommendations, or add additional ones, to the guidance provided in this document. There is a right to appeal within 21 days if a licence is refused or if the applicant contests conditions applied to a licence.

## Contact Information

*For further information on the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, contact the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Biodiversity Unit on (028) 9056 9557*

### **For CITES enquiries:**

Wildlife Licensing and Registration  
Service  
Global Wildlife Division  
**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**  
Zone 1/17 Temple Quay House  
2 The Square, Temple Quay  
Bristol BS1 6EB

Tel 0117 372 8691

### **For rabies quarantine enquiries:**

Quarantine Section  
**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**  
Area 209  
1a Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

Tel 020 7904 6918

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