

A good guardian llama is one who shows curiosity at everything and everyone in his/her environment and is the first one to investigate anything out of the ordinary in the pasture. While gelded males often serve effectively as guardians, there have been instances of them trying to breed (and even injuring) their charges. The chance of this occurring can be lessened by the careful selection of a gelding. There are a number of successful geldings in service today. Females are an equally wonderful choice for the job, especially if they have previously had a cria; their protective instincts are most often



excellent. However, do not pick a female with a cria at side or a bred female; their first priority will be their own offspring. NEVER use an intact male as a guard. Although conventional wisdom used to be that there should only be one llama on duty with a group, there is now strong evidence that two guards can be effective as a team, with one acting as the point guard on the perimeter of the pasture and the other serving to gather the herd to safety should the point guard sound the alarm.

Introduce a new guard to his/her herd or flock over a period of several days, preferably on opposite sides of a fence where they can get used to each other. After putting the guard(s) in with the herd, pay close attention, over the next few days, to the interaction between the herd and the guard(s) to ensure that bonding takes place. A good guard(s) will bond with their herd or flock, not liking when they are separated for any length of time. They take their job very seriously!

Always ask a seller to include a Clause of Suitability in the sales contract; this protects everyone involved, especially the animals. It is only after a month or so of watching interaction that you can determine if the llama(s) you've purchased for guarding are showing the necessary instincts. If they don't, the contract should allow for a replacement animal or a refund.

Not every llama makes a good guardian, but one that shows strong guarding tendencies and is bonded with their charges, will be worth their weight in gold!