Llamas as livestock guards

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Use of Livestock Guarding Animals (LGA’s)
Llama trial Hume/Cooma/Yass RLPB

- started in 2004 (funded by NPWS DECC)
- 21 Llamas across 13 properties – 2 year trial
- Llamas purchased or handed back after 2 years
- currently all Llamas have remained on farm
- landholders identified consistent trend
  - decrease in number of stock attacks – wild dogs
  - over longer term – more than 2 years
  - Llama behaviour – moving sheep
  - increase in lambing rates – finding dead lambs
How do they work?

- Llamas naturally aggressive towards canids
- role reversal – advance towards threat
- observant - vigilant - high ground
- stand between threat and sheep
- lead sheep away
How many Llamas?

• Singles or pair
• no Llama in adjoining paddock
• More than 2 form own group
• Female or gelded male (crush injury risk to sheep)
• 2 years or older – live to around 15 – 20 yrs
• Cost - $400 - $500 (transport?)
Llama vs Alpaca
**Bonding - key to success**

- small paddock
- 10 - 20 sheep
- same sheep to be protected
- initial avoidance
- about a week
- before lambing
- bonding is vital
- no bonding = no protection
- introduce Llama when things are quiet (no kills)
Llamas can only guard what they can see

- small paddock 20 – 30 hectares
- around 300 sheep

Photo: G. Tyrell
Llama maintenance

- Shear 2/3 years (barrel)
- separation anxiety sheep shearing
- 5 in 1 injection (shoulder not neck)
- Broad spectrum drench (injected)
- Trim toe nails
- not susceptible to OJD
- can carry BJD (no cases in Aust)
- live 15 – 20 years
Llamas

“as well as not instead of”
Llamas as livestock guards – Why not?

- Consistent decrease in wild dog attacks
- Increased lambing rates
- Live for 15 – 20 years
- Low maintenance
- Cost $400 - $500
Acknowledgements

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- Local wild dog working groups
- Landholders involved