



Husbandry Hints by Bill and Sherri Duey

Well-planned barns and pastures, and innovative use of high- and low-tech gadgets can make life on the farm much easier. If you have any helpful “husbandry hints,” *Alpacas Magazine* would love to hear from you.

■ Terra Truck Testing Team

Alpaca ranchers, farmers, construction workers, and small acreage owners may just have found their “new best friend.” No, this one is not furry or fleecy. It is the “Terra Truck,” which is best described as a gasoline engine-powered, self-propelled, four-wheel-drive, wheel barrow. It is a great tool for moving small quantities of heavy, bulky materials with very little effort over rough terrain.

The Terra Truck was thoroughly tested at our alpaca ranch and run through a series of practical alpaca ranching tests. We were thoroughly pleased. It is well-designed, easy to operate, and fun to use.

We were a little concerned about how the alpacas would react. To get the alpacas used to the machine, we first set a bale of alfalfa hay in the Terra Truck, fired it up, and drove it into the alpaca pen. The young crias and yearlings were apprehensive at first, but the dams and herd sires actually started eating hay off the bale while the machine was still running. They certainly adapted quickly. The crias and yearlings calmed down within minutes and only seemed concerned as to what goodies would be on the next load.



Kristi Bacon (Iowa State University Engineering graduate) and her father, Greg Bacon (Bacons Alpacas), designed and manufacture the Terra Truck – a self-propelled, four-wheel-drive wheel barrow.

This little wonder packs a lot of power. It can be used to haul hay bales, loose straw or bedding, manure, dirt, rock, landscape mulch, firewood, etc. You pick the material and the truck can handle it.

Unloading the Terra Truck is very easy. First, a trip lever located on the top of the machine near the rear of the dump box is moved to the “dump” position. The operator operates the machine towards the dump target location, releases the clutch and safety brake, and the forward momentum of the machine causes the dump box to tip forward and effortlessly empty the load onto the ground. (The sequence sounds much more complicated than it is. A few test runs and the technique is easily mastered.)

The Terra Truck is only twenty-eight inches wide. Going through small barn doors, gates or maneuvering inside the barn is not difficult. Yet it can handle a load up to five-hundred pounds (175 kilos) and carry it over rough terrain with its four lugged tires.

Kristi Bacon (Iowa State University Engineering graduate) and her father, Greg Bacon (Bacon’s Alpacas), designed and manufacture the Terra Truck – a self-propelled, four-wheel-drive wheel barrow. Almost all of the components are made in the United States and the Terra Truck is assembled in Clear Lake, Iowa.

The unit features a Honda 5.5 horsepower, four stroke, “cold-start capable” engine that will start with temperatures down to minus five degrees Fahrenheit. It comes with a two-year warranty and can be serviced by any Honda engine dealer. The engine is reasonably quiet and starts with one effortless pull almost every time.

The machine has a Tecumseh solid steel transaxle that is made in Wisconsin. It has four forward-speeds, neutral, and reverse. It can travel over three miles per hour in fourth gear. The controls are Teflon lined cables with stainless steel wires.

The paint quality is excellent and meets the rigorous powder coating industry standard “1,400-hour salt test” (one of the toughest in the industry).



Terra Truck is only twenty-eight inches wide. Going through small barn doors, gates or maneuvering inside the barn is not difficult.



Terra Truck features a Honda engine. The red handle on the left is the safety brake, black handle on the left is the clutch, and the throttle is on the right handle. All are conveniently located and easy to operate.



Brent Duey uses an alfalfa hay bale to introduce the alpacas to the Terra Truck. As you can see, the alpacas don’t mind the machine in their pens.

Unloading step one:
At the unloading site –
slide the dump lever to
the side, drive forward
and then release the
clutch AND safety brake
at the same time.



Unloading step two:
The machine will stop,
but the forward inertia
causes the carefully
balanced load to tip the
box forward and dump
the load.





Laura Bortz has plenty of alpaca volunteers to assist in cleaning up some bedding. The Terra Truck is very useful for moving used bedding or wasted hay.



One of the handiest uses on an alpaca ranch is helping transport manure to a transfer pile. The height of the dump box is just right for scooping beans.



With a manual wheel barrow, the operator has to handle a significant portion of the total weight. With a Terra Truck, almost all of the weight is transferred to the four wheels and none to the driver. You simply steer the machine, not manhandle the weight.



The Terra Truck is so easy to use, even an alpaca can operate it. This mischievous rose gray alpaca at Dr. Bill Hedberg and Dr. Julie Jarvinen's Pine Forty Farms alpaca ranch likes to get in on the action at chore time and "help" Dr. Hedberg with his daily duties.

The dump box has a reinforced lip and has been carefully designed to stay about three inches off the ground when dumping the load. It can then be used to "spread" the unloaded material to a certain degree.

Available accessories include a snow plow kit; lift kit for moving landscape plants; hitch for moving all types of trailers; flatbed kit for hauling sacks of concrete, feed, etc.; and sideboard extensions for handling light, bulky materials.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is USD\$2,395. The Bacons, alpaca owners themselves, offer a generous discount to all AOBA members. You will need to contact them for details.

Bacon's Engineered Products

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The Terra Truck performed so well in our intensive testing that we bought one for our own alpaca ranch. What better stamp of approval?

Bill and Sherri Duey operate Southern Iowa Alpacas ranch located in the hills of Southern Iowa sixty miles southeast of Des Moines. They have incorporated innovative features into their alpaca ranch and conduct seminars on business planning, animal selection and ranch setup for new alpaca ranchers. They also enjoy helping existing ranchers learn about new products and techniques for fine tuning their operation. You may view their website at www.southerniowaalpacas.com or contact them directly at alpacas@southerniowaalpacas.com.