

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 like to hear from you.



Bill & Sherri Duey

## Husbandry Hints

# Security Camera Systems for Alpaca Trailers

Ever wonder what your alpacas are doing in their trailer as you roll down the highway? Well you might be surprised! With one of the new, high-quality, low-cost security camera systems installed in your vehicle, you can find out!

Electronic equipment has gotten less expensive and is of much better quality at the same time. This applies to security camera systems, as well. Some manufacturers have met consumer demands by providing security camera systems to assist recreational vehicle owners with backing those monsters. A camera is mounted on the back of the vehicle and a monitor is placed in the driver's area. The same system is required on garbage trucks in some metro areas for safety purposes in backing up and also monitoring the compacter.

### What You Need

You can install this same system in your alpaca trailer and tow vehicle and keep a watchful eye on the alpacas day or night while on the road. The systems sell for about \$300 and usually are packaged with:

- Camera: wide angle, waterproof, about 3" x 3" x 3", complete with stainless steel, universal mounting brackets. We purchased stainless steel bolts to mount to the trailer.
- Video monitor: seven-inch viewing screen, small enough to mount in most any vehicle.
- Connecting cable, forty-five feet long
- Power cable to connect to the electrical system of your vehicle.

- (A second camera can be added to the system for about \$200, but is only needed for extra long or multi-compartment trailers.)

You may want to purchase a five-way connector (available at automotive parts stores for about \$15) to install near the bumper of your tow vehicle. The connector will allow you to permanently mount the wiring on your tow vehicle and still be able to disconnect the cable when unhooking the trailer.

These monitoring systems utilize "green phosphorous technology" in the monitor. Home TVs use white phosphorous. Green phosphorous is used in military instrumentation and is easier to view in both day- and night-time lighting conditions. By turning on just a few lights in the trailer compartment, the monitor works exceptionally well at night. We were very pleased with the performance on an all-night transport.

Get ready for this! The system even has sound monitoring! Yes, you can hear whatever is going on in the trailer... humming, road noise, a spit fight, etc. The volume is adjustable and can be turned completely down.

Ever wonder what those alpacas do while traveling down the road for hours in that trailer? Well, now you can find out!

### Alpaca Spy-Cam

The first time we used our camera and monitor, we learned that alpacas don't always cush or lie down after the first few minutes on the road. Ours actually stood up for hours before lying down.

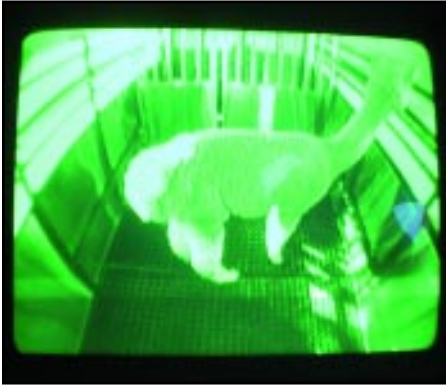


An RV security camera used for assisting RV owners in backing makes a great alpaca trailer security camera system.



The three inch camera covers a wide, 130-degree angle, has a stainless steel mounting bracket, is water-resistant, and handles road vibration very well.

After that, it was really a toss up as to when they decided to lie down and when to stand. When we pulled off the road for fuel or food, they almost always stood up as soon as we stopped, looking around at the new sights.



A small seven-inch monitor with 'green phosphorous technology' has a good picture, even while traveling at night.

On one transport, we had a pregnant female (with a drastic hormonal change) who decided she would bite at every alpaca she could reach in the trailer. We noted this on the monitor, pulled over to the side of the road, and resolved the situation. No more biting problems the rest of the trip, even on the way back home. Without the camera, we would not have known there was a problem.



Wireless temperature and humidity monitoring equipment is simple to install and invaluable for transporting in hot weather. The temperature and humidity sensor is easily mounted in the trailer (no wires to run), and is very accurate.

Another piece of equipment that is valuable to alpaca ranchers towing their alpacas around in the warmer climates is a wireless temperature and humidity monitor. These units have a sensor that can be mounted in your trailer and then sends the information to a digital gauge in your vehicle compartment. You can monitor the actual temperature and humidity levels in the trailer as you move down the road, being watchful for un-

acceptable heat index levels. These wireless monitors cost about \$60 and can be purchased at major electronics stores.

The trailer camera proves to be some great entertainment for our passengers going to shows. Our safety rule is the driver drives and the passengers enjoy the show. With the price of security camera systems dropping into the \$300 range, most alpaca ranchers can afford these systems and may find them to be worthwhile investments in alpaca handling equipment.

So go ahead! Get a system and watch for those wild alpaca parties going on in your trailer as you motor down the interstate!

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*Bill and Sherri Duey operate Southern Iowa Alpacas ranch located 60 miles southeast of Des Moines, Iowa. They have incorporated a number of innovative features into their alpaca ranch and are happy to share their experience in new ranch setup with alpaca owners or fine tuning of existing ranch setups. See their website at [www.southerniowaalpacas.com](http://www.southerniowaalpacas.com) or contact them directly at [alpacas@southerniowaalpacas.com](mailto:alpacas@southerniowaalpacas.com).*