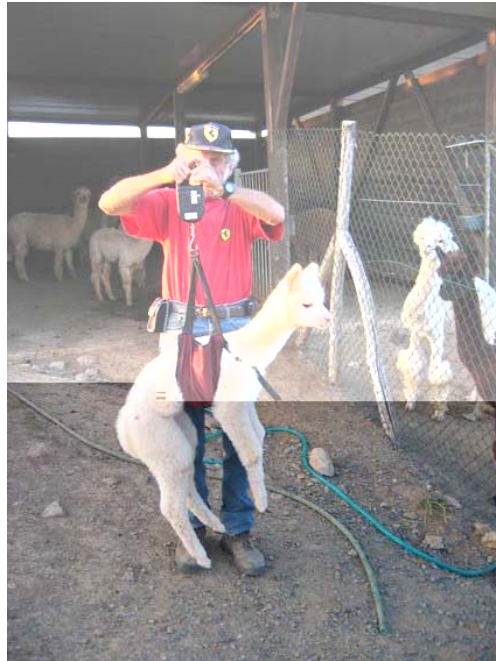


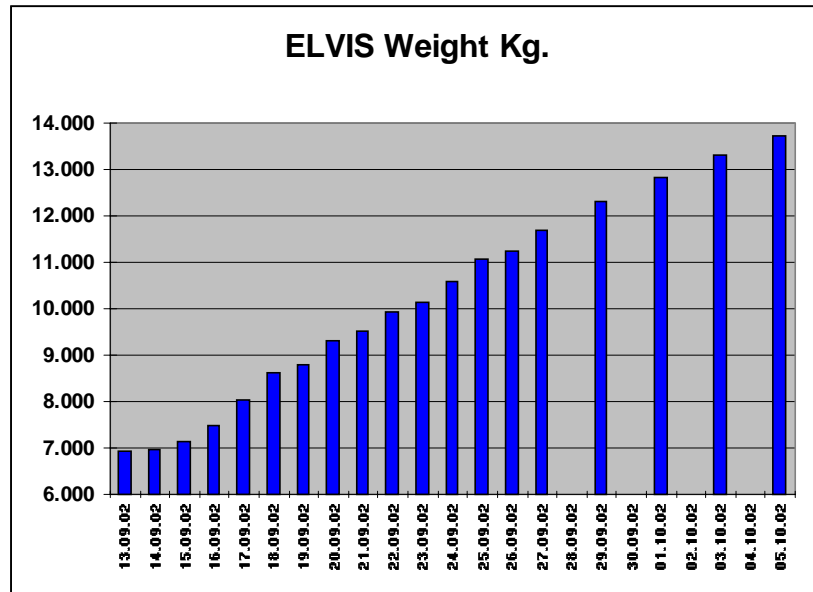
## WHY WEIGH THE CRIA?

Why should anybody want to weigh a cria? Is it not sufficient to check the sex of the newborn, disinfect its umbilical cord, and let nature take its course? Fortunately, in most cases this is good enough. What about the more problematical cases?



| ELVIS    |        | NINO     |        |                         | SCHUMI   |        |
|----------|--------|----------|--------|-------------------------|----------|--------|
| Date     | Kg     | Date     | Kg     |                         | Date     | Kg     |
| 13.09.02 | 6.917  | 05.05.05 | 8.607  | Does not take colostrum | 11.09.04 | 8.647  |
| 14.09.02 | 6.974  | 06.05.05 | 8.278  | Does not take milk      | 12.09.04 | 8.732  |
| 15.09.02 | 7.144  | 07.05.05 | 8.477  |                         | 13.09.04 | 9.185  |
| 16.09.02 | 7.484  | 08.05.05 | 8.902  |                         | 14.09.04 | 9.526  |
| 17.09.02 | 8.051  | 09.05.05 | 9.185  |                         | 15.09.04 | 9.979  |
| 18.09.02 | 8.618  | 10.05.05 | 9.469  |                         | 16.09.04 | 10.490 |
| 19.09.02 | 8.789  | 11.05.05 | 9.752  |                         | 17.09.04 | 10.858 |
| 20.09.02 | 9.299  | 13.05.05 | 10.149 |                         | 18.09.04 | 11.283 |
| 21.09.02 | 9.526  | 14.05.05 | 10.773 |                         | 19.09.04 | 11.624 |
| 22.09.02 | 9.923  | 15.05.05 | 10.603 | Renewed weight loss     | 20.09.04 | 11.879 |
| 23.09.02 | 10.149 | 16.05.05 | 10.376 | Renewed weight loss     | 21.09.04 | 12.332 |
| 24.09.02 | 10.575 | 17.05.05 | 10.376 |                         | 22.09.04 | 12.701 |
| 25.09.02 | 11.057 | 18.05.05 | 10.603 |                         | 24.09.04 | 12.020 |
| 26.09.02 | 11.227 | 19.05.05 | 10.716 |                         | 25.09.04 | 12.587 |
| 27.09.02 | 11.680 | 20.05.05 | 10.716 |                         | 26.09.04 | 12.843 |
| 29.09.02 | 12.304 | 21.05.05 | 10.716 |                         | 27.09.04 | 13.098 |
| 01.10.02 | 12.814 | 22.05.05 | 10.886 |                         | 29.09.04 | 13.551 |
| 03.10.02 | 13.325 | 23.05.05 | 11.113 |                         | 01.10.04 | 14.005 |
| 05.10.02 | 13.721 | 24.05.05 | 11.227 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 25.05.05 | 11.397 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 27.05.05 | 11.567 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 28.05.05 | 11.737 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 30.05.05 | 11.737 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 31.05.05 | 11.850 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 01.06.05 | 12.020 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 03.06.05 | 12.134 |                         |          |        |
|          |        | 05.06.05 | 12.361 |                         |          |        |

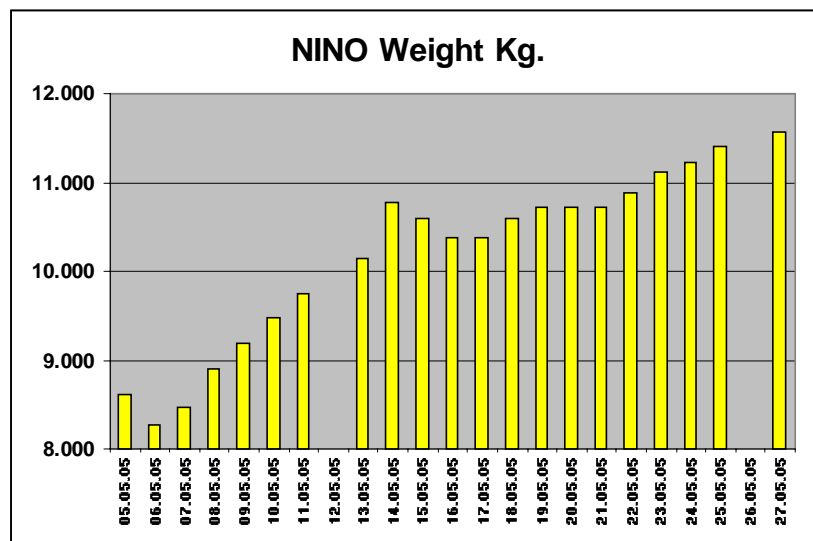
**ELVIS:** Elvis is a cria that develops normally. He drinks and puts on weight from the outset. He obviously has taken the colostrum, and in the first three weeks his weight increased by an average of 309 g/day. The weight increase is obviously not constant. This is quite normal. In this case it varied from 170 to 626 g/day. This cria lets the breeder sleep peacefully.



**NINO:** Nino is a problem cria that forces the breeder into making decisions and taking action. Born at 10.30 he took 2 ½ hours to get up. Tried to drink but did obviously not succeed, because the dam's teats were rather hard as she had had a bout of mange. We washed teats three times with tepid water, but no success. In the evening Nino was given a small portion of artificial colostrum by bottle.

On day two the weight loss was obvious, albeit not of an alarming scale. He was given a mix of 2/3 goat milk and 1/3 low fat yoghurt, drinking very little without much enthusiasm. Mum's teats were washed again.

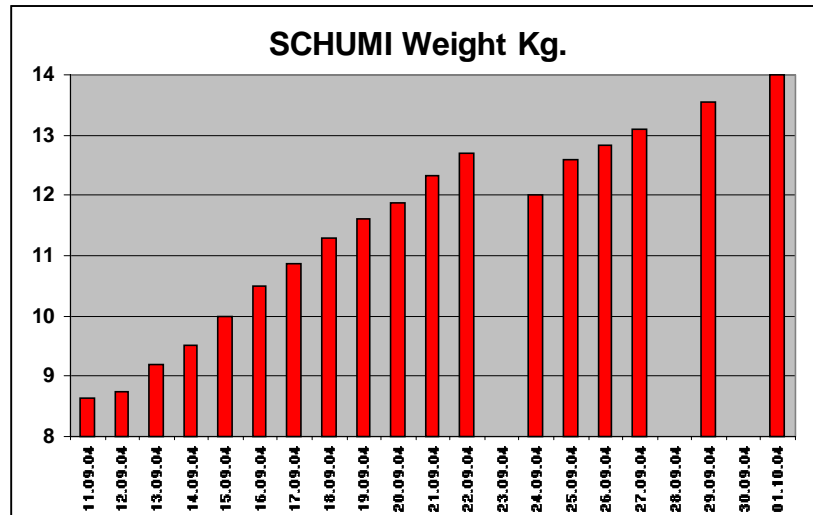
On day three finally some success. Apart from some milk from the bottle, Nino finally managed to get mother's milk flowing. A second feeding crisis developed around day 9/10. Nino was losing weight again. On day 11 he lost 120 g during the day. In the evening and the following morning he drank small amounts from the bottle, and judging from the weight gain of 120 g during day 12 he had begun drinking his mother's milk again. From then on he developed normally, although gaining only 135 g/day on average during the first three weeks is obviously below normal. Nino remained a small animal.



**SCHUMI:** Schumi starts life as a strong and healthy cria. Up to a certain point he puts on weight at an average rate of 369 g/day. Then, on Sept. 24, 2004 weighing showed that something worrying was happening: Schumi had lost nearly 700 g in two days. What was the matter? The only clear fact was

that the little fellow did either not take or get his milk rations. Was the problem with the dam or the cria?

An examination showed that Almendra, the mother, had plenty of milk, but that her teats appeared somewhat hard. The teats were washed with tepid water. In the afternoon Schumi was found to have a slightly elevated body temperature of 39.2° C. Still no explanation for the obvious problem. Then it was noted that Schumi had rather bad smelling breath and a close examination of his mouth finally revealed a foxtail stuck and hidden underneath his little tongue. This was removed immediately and, as data shows, the problem had been resolved. Great relieve for the breeder. This case certainly is another good example that weighing the cria is an effort well worth making.



## Conclusions

The three examples show very clearly that weighing the cria, if possible at around the same time every day (at Poggio Piero we usually weigh the crias early in the morning), is a practice all serious breeders should adopt. If nothing else it puts the breeders mind at rest, in some cases it alerts him/her immediately when something is not working out alright during the crucial first two to three weeks of a cria's life.

The method has nevertheless also one shortcoming: it cannot ascertain whether or not the cria has taken enough of the mother's colostrum during the crucial first 24 hours of it's life. One reason for this is the fact that many crias actually loose weight during the first day and that it is not clear how much of this weightloss is in fact compensated by the intake of colostrum. Here the breeder's observations of the situation are of crucial importance. The best signs of everything being the way it should are free flowing colostrum from the dam's teats and a „milkmoth“ when the cria leaves the teats after an extended/intensive try.

One last consideration: weighing the cria establishes early contact between the breeder and the cria and gets the latter used to the fact that at times it will be handled by the former. A good school for its later life.

René Steiger  
ALPACAS POGGIO PIERO  
September 2006