





Camels in Afghanistan

info sheet

Type	Dromedary (or Arabian) Camel	Bactrian Camel
	 <p>http://www.longwarjournal.org</p>	 <p>Douglas R. Powell, Dept Geography, UC Berkeley http://geoimages.berkeley.edu</p>
Where?	Mainly found in the Lowlands of Afghanistan, with the Kuchis.	Mainly found in Northeast Afghanistan.
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single hump • Light color, short wool, and long neck. • Riding camels' legs are long, with thin bones and thin skin. • Burden camels' legs are shorter, with strong bones and concentrated muscles. • Adult weight is 300-560 kg. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two humps • Highly valued wool, with thick, shaggy winter coats, which they shed during the spring. It varies in color from dark brown to sandy beige. • Adult weight is 300-690 kg.
Uses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation of heavy goods • Riding, by Kuchis • Animal power • Dung provides fuel • Meat and milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Dromedary, but not (or rarely) used for riding.
Working capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding camels can carry one person and 50 kg load, and travel at 10-15 km/h. • Burden camels can carry around 150 Kg load, and travel at 4 km/h. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can carry loads up to 270 Kg.
Endurance	<p>Compared to Bactrian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withstands extremely high temperatures, but are not as well adapted for very low temperatures. • Better at using tree foliage, and walking long distances to feed. • Better resistance to thirst. They can endure periods of up to 17 days without drinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withstand both very low and very high temperatures.
Feeding	Mainly desert vegetation that other animals do not consume, like thorny plants, dry grasses, saltbush, although can consume practically anything when food is scarce.	
Life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mating season: Winter. • Gestation: 13 months. Usually single offspring. • Life span of 40-50 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mating season: Fall. • Gestation: 15 months. Usually single offspring. • Life span up to 50 years.
Cross breeding	The Dromedary and Bactrian camel can crossbreed, producing an offspring that is generally bigger, heavier and faster maturing than either parent. They are easier to work with and more patient.	
Healthy signs	When well fed, humps are plump and erect; as resources decline humps shrink and lean to one side.	
Opportunities	Camel milk commercialization is a potential market opportunity.	

Prepared by Maria Paz Santibanez, Hussain Sharifi and Mark Bell 2012

Reference: Livestock Husbandry Afghanistan, Feed and Products (AREU); Camelus <http://www.cogsci.indiana.edu/farg/harry/bio/>; Camel types and Breeds <http://camelphotos.com/>; Animal Diversity Web <http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/>; Bactrian Camel (Large Herbivore Network) <http://www.lhnet.org/>; Old World Camels (USDA) <http://www.nal.usda.gov/>

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