



# HIDDEN GEM NEWS

March 2009

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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## Interesting items

A cria usually weighs between 15-20 pounds at birth.

Crias can gain 1 pound a day which is faster (on a percentage basis) than a cow.

The growth rate of an alpaca in the first year is equivalent to 14 years for humans.

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[www.hiddengemranch.com](http://www.hiddengemranch.com)

## Southern Select Show Results



Our first AOBA show was a success! The weather was perfect, we learned a lot, met a lot of people, we had fun showing our animals, and best of all, we brought home 7 ribbons! The Southern Select Show was held on March 7-8 in Shelbyville, TN and is the largest show in the southeast. There was nearly 450 alpacas participating and available for you to see up close and personal. We would like to thank all of you who stopped by to visit with us.

The 7 ribbons that we won consisted of 2 **first place**, 2 **second place**, 2 third place, and 1 fourth place. Romeo was our highest placing winner in both the spin-off and halter class, placing 1st in the spin-off and 2nd in halter. Forrest was a close second with a 2nd place in the spin-off and a 3rd in halter. Romeo and Forrest were placed in the same halter class, so we were competing against ourselves. The other 1st place was in the spin-off for Vanity. Back to the halter class, Rocky took a 3rd place and Joy took 4th.

The halter class judges were Jude Anderson (Huacaya males), Kristin Buhrmann (all Suri's & female Huacaya's), and Cathy Songer for the Spin-off. We would like to thank the judges for their comments.

To celebrate our first AOBA show and awards (and to see if anyone actually reads this) we are offering a **show special** for those interested in breedings to Romeo or Forrest in 2009. We will offer **drive-by breedings for just \$500** (a hidden gem of 50% off!) All you need to do is mention this article when you reserve your breeding and pay by June 1st. You can choose your breeding date anytime in 2009.



### Upcoming activities

Palmetto Classic Show  
*April 4-5 in Clemson, SC*

Kentucky Classic Show  
*April 25-26 in Louisville, KY*

Hidden Gem Ranch shearing  
Days  
*May 16-17 at the Ranch*

### Contact Us

[www.hiddengemranch.com](http://www.hiddengemranch.com)

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## Spring Time = Cria Time!

Spring has arrived here in Tennessee which means that many farms are expecting new crias. We are eagerly awaiting Romeo's first crias. We bred him to Bella and she is due in April. His outside breedings will begin hitting the ground around then also. We have a total of 9 due this year and wanted to pass along to those of you new to alpacas, some basic cria information. The most important thing to remember is that most births go easy, unassisted, and without complications. But it doesn't hurt to be prepared. Alpacas can deliver at anytime from 320 days to 380 days gestation. They usually give birth between 8:00 and 2:00 during the day and have just 1 cria. At our ranch we observe changes in the mothers behavior as a clue to when the time is close. We get our first indication when we see the mother "dropping" her milk. She may also stay more to herself and maybe even prepare a "nest" to have her baby. Last year we were able to tell that the mother would deliver in about half of the crias born. The remaining were surprises. So don't worry if you aren't there, you will probably miss the birth. With this said, it is still important to have some supplies available. We keep a "cria kit" (see photo at left) available which is filled with supplies and have some reference manuals at the ready. Our cria kit is a plastic tote that includes a laminated "quick-reference" card, stethoscope, hair dryer, lubricant, gloves, scissors, an aspirator, thermometer, betadine, a feeding tube, an enema, clean rags, garbage bags, vet wrap, dental floss, various bandaging supplies, blood cards, syringes, a notepad with pen, and a cria coat. Of course we have the vet's phone number available on our cell phone just in case. Once the birth has occurred, it may take up to 2 hours before the cria stands and nurses. Give the mom and new baby time to get acquainted for at least 10 minutes before you sterilize the umbilical cord. Continue to observe both the mom and cria through the afterbirth and standing/nursing to ensure everything is progressing well. If you have any questions or doubts, refer to the manuals, call your vet or another breeder. Part of our service is to be available 24 hours a day to assist our customers.

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## Happenings at the Ranch

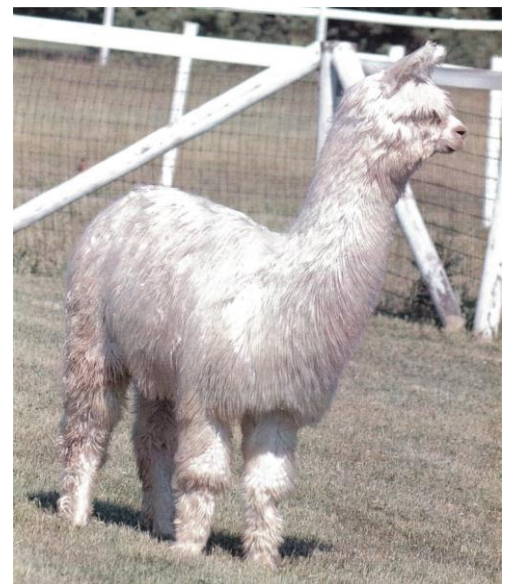
With the month of March here, we begin our busy season. We have started participating in the spring alpaca shows and are on cria watch as we have at least 1 due every month through August. With the arrival of spring here in Tennessee, we have begun the weekly ritual of mowing the lawn, working in our garden, and doing other spring chores. We have also scheduled our shearing dates for May 16-17. Everyone is invited to share in the experience through either watching or helping! Last year we had help from 3 people and visits from a number of others and it took all day to shear the 21 animals. This year we expect to have around 40 animals to shear over 2 days. Come participate in this annual "shearing party" to see the animals, learn about shearing, learn about the fleece, and maybe get dirty and have a good time.

## Featured alpaca(s)

This month features our top award winners in the Southern Select Alpaca Show. We had already featured Romeo in our first newsletter in January (you can see previous newsletters on our website), so this month we have Forrest and Vanity. Los Prados Forrestal has soft, dense fleece, has very good conformation, and is easy to handle. He also has some very good genetics in his background. He started breeding last year with his first cria due in June

ATC Vanity Fair is probably our best suri in regard to fineness of fleece and is the last daughter from the Ricardo line. She had delivered a fantastic cria, Trinity, in October, and she has demonstrated excellent mothering skills. We will be breeding her within the next month to 9-time blue ribbon winner Silver Bullet's Peruvian Forest.

As always additional information on these animals is available on our website.



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