



HIDDEN GEM NEWS

August 2009

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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Interesting items

Most alpaca farms have less than 10 animals.

The first alpaca import was in 1984. The last was in 1998.

The ARI is now offering BVDV tests using your registration blood cards. Just \$25!

Accoyo is an Indian word meaning "sandy ground".

Visit us on our website:

www.hiddengemranch.com

Reproductive Seminar Info

Here are some points taken home from the reproductive seminar held at UT Knoxville with Dr. Walter Bravo and some of the resident vets.

- 75% of failed breedings are problems with the male.
- While many female repro problems are treatable, many are genetic. Those females should always be removed from the breeding program.
- Don't be alarmed if you notice a blood-tinged discharge on your female after breedings. The uterus is scratched and damaged during breeding resulting in this discharge. The plasma from this blood actually releases the sperm from its gel coating to allow implantation and is therefore necessary. This is also a good indication that the male has in fact reached the uterus. Because of this damage it is important to allow breeding only ONE time per week for the female. This gives the female time to heal and avoid uterine infection.
- At 7 days post breeding the female should know if she is pregnant as her progesterone level should be high. If she cuses, she may be re-bred. If she spits off, behavior test her again in 7 days. Test her every week thereafter.
- Nursing crias must be weaned from the dam at least 3 months before she is due to deliver her next cria. This allows time for her to build colostrum.
- Colostrum is a natural laxative. If the cria has gotten enough colostrum there should be no reason to give an enema.
- UT Knoxville recommends every alpaca have a CDT shot every year.

Upcoming activities

National alpaca farm weekend
September 26-27 everywhere

Next issue

Preparing for winter

GAA show

Contact Us

www.hiddengemranch.com

National Alpaca Farm Days

National Alpaca Farm Days were established a few years ago to promote alpacas and the alpaca lifestyle. It is held every year during the last weekend in September. This year it will be held on September 26 & 27th. Several farms participate in this event and we are planning on hosting an event this year. We encourage you and anyone interested in alpacas to visit a farm near you. You can find a list of participating farms at www.nationalalpacaфарmdays.com beginning September 1st. In addition, the Tennessee Alpaca Association is trying to “consolidate” a number of farms in just 1 location around the state, where you can visit with many alpaca owners at one time. At this time, the only planned event is on Saturday, September 26th at the Wilson County Fairgrounds. At our ranch, we hope to see many visitors where we are planning events from Noon until 4:00 each day. Bring a friend and spread the news about alpacas!

Fall Breeding

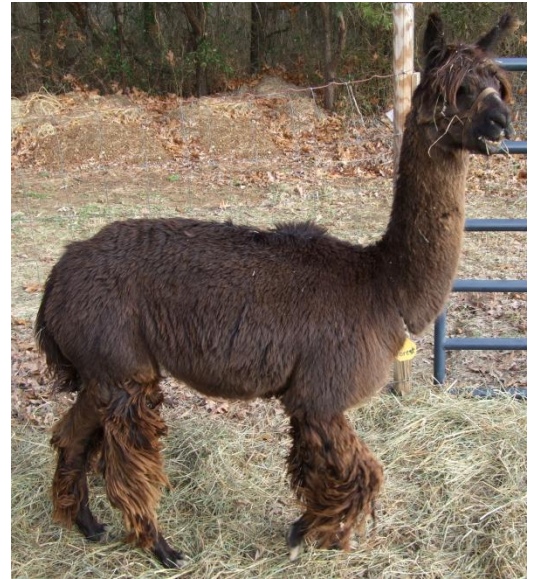
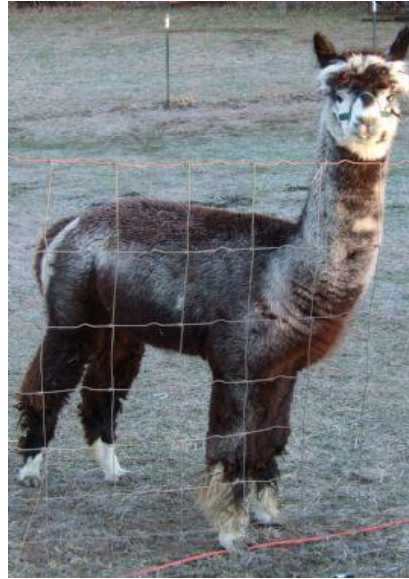
It is time to begin thinking and/or finalizing your fall breeding plans. Most farms will breed their animals either in the spring or fall. We will be breeding 6 females this fall starting around the end of September. It is important to know what you are trying to breed for when selecting the proper herdsire for your females. The focus should be on improving the fleece characteristics followed by conformation and temperament. This fleece characteristics can be for fineness, density, color, crimp in huacayas, luster and twist in suris, and/or shearing weight. Having knowledge of fleece characteristics and a reproductive history is very valuable in assisting in making a proper decision. In addition, there is value in selecting award winning herdsires. These winners have been judged independently for their fleece and conformation. Having award winning genetics can also increase the value of the cria. We are in our second year of selecting herdsires and are still learning, but are willing to pass our knowledge to you just for the asking. As mentioned in our February newsletter, we have obtained partial interest in 2 males (1 each huacaya & suri) until the fall of this year. We still have 3 available breedings to Forest and unlimited breedings to Navigator (see more detail in featured alpacas below). They will be returning to their home in October. If you are interested in a breeding, contact us as soon as possible. We are willing to trade breedings or make us an offer.

Happening at the Ranch

Due to the short time since the last issue, there is not much to report. Melissa attended a reproductive seminar the last weekend in July (see first article in this newsletter). There have been no more crias born, but we are currently watching Halle Berry as her due date is near. School for our boys started on August 10th so the house should quiet down again. We are planning for our National Alpaca Farm Days events and will try to get more information out prior to that weekend.

Featured alpaca(s)

Our featured alpacas are our 2 males that we have partial interest in until October. Navigator is a dark silver/rose grey award winning huacaya male with very good crimp, density, and fineness. Forest is a dark rose grey, 9 time blue ribbon winner (including AOBA Nationals) with very good genetics and has only produced female crias to date. He was also featured in the summer issue of American Livestock magazine. We have bred several of our girls to these boys with hopes for some terrific crias next year. Check our website or give us a call for more information.



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