



# HIDDEN GEM NEWS

September 2009

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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## Preparing for winter

It may only be September, but if you haven't started making plans for winter it is time to start.

If you live in the south, you will have some additional time. But we can tell you that when we lived in Michigan, snow can start falling in October! The most important things to consider for the winter are basic survival skills – food, water, and shelter. Do you have a source of hay? Will your water supply freeze? Is there

shelter from the wind and cold? Now is the perfect time to prepare for winter before the weather changes and we get into the holiday season. The final cutting of hay is near and if you haven't found a source, you may run out. You also need to determine how much hay you need and maybe a place to store it. We have been fortunate as we didn't have a drought this year and hay is plentiful. We have also found a source of good hay that the animals like and we got a bargain on a portable garage in which we will store our hay this year. Our past experience tells us that in winter, we need 2 bales of hay per month per animal beginning with December and going through April. That will be around 300 bales of hay. Adjust these numbers based on your animals consumption and length of your winter. Water is the next topic. Even here in Tennessee, temperatures regularly drop to around 20 degrees. Our pond even freezes every year. Unless you have automatic waterers or a heated barn, you will probably need heaters or a heated water bucket. We have both. A heater for our large 110 gallon water trough and heated buckets. Both work well for our applications. Finally there is shelter. Most of us will use the same shelter year round, so there usually isn't a need to build or buy a new one (we can't wait to get a barn). What should be done is a routine inspection to identify areas that may need repair. It is much easier to make repairs now instead of waiting until a problem occurs



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

## Upcoming activities

**National alpaca farm weekend**  
September 26-27 everywhere

**SAFF fiber festival**  
October 25

**Vet Procedures you can do at your farm**  
October 31

**GAA show**  
November 21-22

## Next issue

Weaning

## Contact Us

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when it is cold and dark. Check for loose panels or doors/gates that don't quite function correctly. Do all of the latches work? Is there something that didn't work well last year that you planned on fixing this summer, but got too busy? Take the time now to make your list, so you can start working on it before you get busy for the holidays.

## Royal Alpaca Challenge

The Georgia Alpaca Association (GAA) is having its first show on November 21-22 at the Olympic Horse Park in Conyers, Georgia. This is expected to be a level 3 show (300 - 499 alpacas). We have already reserved a stall and plan on entering 4 of our animals. More information can be found at [www.royalalpacachallenge.com](http://www.royalalpacachallenge.com). Hope to see you there!

## Happening at the Ranch

It is fall cria time at the ranch, and we are anxiously waiting on the final crias of the year. Halle Berry had a black boy on August 15 whom we named Black Berry. We are preparing for National Alpaca Farm Days on the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> where we will have spinning and felting demonstrations. We hope to have many visitors. We will be having a busy October. We will be taking Navigator and Forest back to Ohio and picking up Serafina & Eddie on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Melissa will be going to the SAFF fiber festival on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and both of us are going to a class on vet procedures you can do at your farm on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

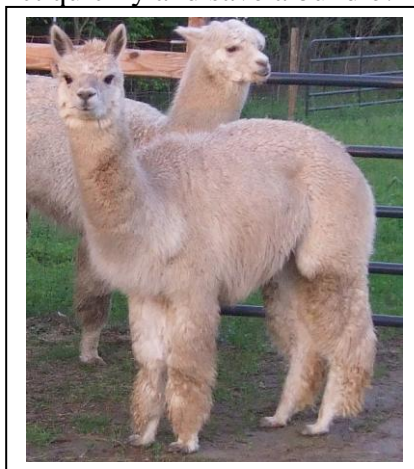
## Featured alpaca(s)

This month's featured alpacas are Dominique and Ester. These 2 ladies are good friends, proven dams, and are going to have their crias very soon (October 1 & September 19). They both have very good fleece characteristics and exceptional conformation.

If you are looking for expanding your herd, new genetics, or even beginning your alpaca adventure, these girls may be for you. For just \$13000 you can have both of these ladies until they have their crias **and** get 2 free breedbacks each for a total of 8 alpacas (that is only \$1625 per animal).

Once they have their crias, a mother/cria package will be available.

Act quickly and save a bundle!





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