



# HIDDEN GEM NEWS

October 2009

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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## Interesting items

-Don't expect your dam to wean her own cria. It may deprive her next cria of vital colostrum!

-Start planning for next year's National Alpaca Farm Days now while your ideas are still fresh.

-Replenish your farm store stock now to get ready for the holidays.

-Alpacas make GREAT Christmas presents! Take pictures of your animals wearing Santa hats and market them as the gift that gives back(fleece and love).

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

## Weaning

It is weaning time for spring crias at most farms. Weaning usually takes place when the cria is 5-9 months old. At Hidden Gem Ranch, we usually wean the spring crias around 6 months of age and the fall crias once there is plenty of grass to graze on (usually around April). There are other things to consider along with age such as health, weight, and body score. You want the cria to be grazing well and eating grain



and most are approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the mother's weight. Most of our crias are in the 60-80 pound range during weaning. The dam needs at least 3 months to build colostrum for her next cria, so her current one should be weaned by her 8<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy. Weaning is stressful for the cria.

"Trailer weaning" –taking the cria off it's dam and straight to a show- can have devastating results, please don't try this. Wean your babies well before taking them to shows. The time of year is also important. Very cold or very hot weather makes it more difficult for them to transition. The cria should be in a pasture where it can see its mother and they are usually easier to wean if they have a buddy. We find that during weaning, the cria becomes very needy and that it is an ideal time to work with them on halter and show training. Weaning times vary from 2-5 weeks or more.

## National Alpaca Farm Days results

National alpaca farm days was held on September 26-27 and this was our first year participating. We opened our new farm store, had spinning and felting demonstrations, and an alpaca obstacle course. Overall, we feel that the weekend was a success. Of course it rained most of the day on Saturday and only had 3 visitors, but we made up for it on Sunday with an additional 42 people attending. We hope that everyone that visited had a good time and learned about alpacas. Thank you Laura, Kathy, Wendy, and Kevin for helping out. We are already looking forward to next year.

## Upcoming activities

**SAFF fiber festival**  
**October 25**

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

**GAA show**  
**November 21-22**

## Next issue

Tax planning

What we learned from the SAFF and vet procedure class

## Contact Us

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

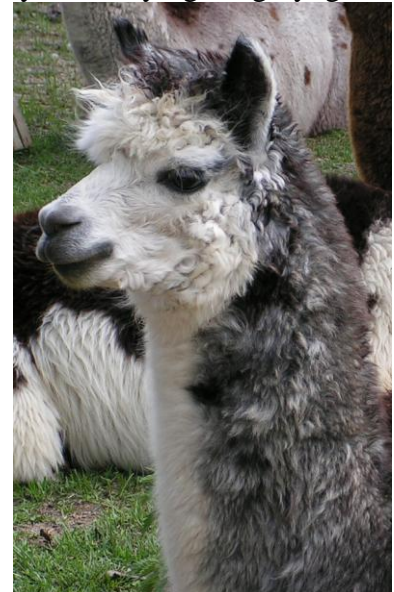
## Happening at the Ranch

Dominique gave birth to a fawn male on September 22 and Ester to a white female on September 28<sup>th</sup>. These are the last crias for the year. October is proving to be very busy. We participated in a local "street fair" in our small city of Coalmont on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. We've taken Navigator and Forest back to Ohio and picked up Serafina & Eddie on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Melissa will be going to SAFF (Southeastern Animal Fiber Fair) on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 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>. In addition, we are preparing our animals for the GAA show next month.



## Featured alpaca(s)

This month's featured alpacas are our grey males, Eddie (20031732) and Storm (20031800). Eddie is a blue-ribbon winner and is proven. We just brought him home from Ohio, so if you want some new genetics in the south you may want to consider him. Storm also has some nice crias on the ground. Both are ready to go to work for you. If you are trying for grey, give us a call.



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