



HIDDEN GEM NEWS

April 2010

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

In This Issue

- Shearing Season
- Years first cria
- The Big sale ends
- Happenings at the Ranch
- Featured Alpaca(s)

Interesting items

An alpaca produces between 5 & 10 pounds of fleece annually.

Fleece can be spun into yarn or made into felt.

Our store has both yarn and felt available, as well as some finished products.

Shearing season

Shearing season is upon us once again. Alpaca fleece is harvested to be manufactured into product and to help keep the animal cool in the warm summer months. Some farms may let the fleece grow for 2 years, but additional measures need to be taken to make sure that the animal doesn't overheat. Having a plan (and plenty of help) makes the shearing day easier. Last year, it rained on our shearing days, and we had to come up with a quick backup plan to get the job done. This year we were more prepared.



Preparations for shearing day begins with the selection of a shearer (you may do it yourself – we have decided to hire someone). Plan on adequate space and have supplies available. All of the animals should be as clean and dry as possible. Expect it to rain! Once the shearing begins collect and identify the fleece. Some farms also clean, skirt, and grade the fleece as soon as it's shorn. Clean up the shearing area after each animal to avoid any mixing of fleece.

Our animals were shorn on March 26 using BioSecure Alpaca Shearing. It rained again and we were ready though the animals were not completely dry. The best part was that all of the animals were done in 3.5 hours instead of the 2 full days it took last year. We were quite happy with the work done by John Gunther and his crew. The alpacas look great! Now, Melissa has several bags of fleece to process.

Our first 2010 Cria?

Well, we are still expecting our first cria. Rodie was due on March 25 and we are still waiting. We calculate birth dates using an average of 335 days. Most alpacas are within 2 weeks, plus or minus. Check out next month's newsletter for an update.

The BIG sale has ended

All good things must come to an end and we just can't keep the sale going

New Guy –Abe –Crayola GSON
Alpacas are still holding their value. An auction of Snowmass Alpacas held on Feb 27 averaged \$30,000. The top selling animal went for \$675,000! Even when you take out the 3 selling for 100,000 or more, the average was \$18444.

Visit us on our website:

www.hiddengemranch.com

Upcoming activities

Spring Kick-Off Event-
Tractor Supply, Kimball, TN
April 17

National Alpaca Farm Days
September 25 & 26



Next issue

Summer heat

New crias

on forever. We would like to thank those of you who took advantage of our BIG sale. We did make some room by selling 6 animals and kicked off our year with some sales. Enjoy your purchases and our support. For those of you who missed out, we are still making some fantastic deals and invite you to check our website or come for a visit. If you don't think that our prices are great, see the sidebar note about the Snowmass Auction averages.

Happening at the Ranch

We are anxiously awaiting Rodie's cria and the rest of the spring babies due near the end of the month. The big sale was a success and we purchased 4 suris – including a two grey girls! (So much for making room). See 2 of them in the featured section and one in the sidebar.

Featured alpaca(s)

As mentioned above, we purchased 4 suris – 2 males and 2 females. Here are the 2 females (forefront). Meet Holly (age 5) and her daughter, Ruby (age 8 months). Holly is Silver Grey and her daughter is Rose Grey. We are very excited to finally add grey suris to our farm. Contact us if you would like more information.



Dennis & Melissa McFail
Hidden Gem Ranch
464 S. Industrial Park Rd.

Coalmont, TN 37313
WWW.HIDDENGEMRANCH.COM

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www.hiddengemranch.com