



# HIDDEN GEM NEWS

September 2010

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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This year will be our 2<sup>nd</sup> time participating in National Alpaca Farm Days.

We had about 50 visitors in one day last year!

Our cria petting pen and alpaca obstacle course were the most popular activities.

Farm Days is a great way to get your crias used to being handled but can be very stressful for them. Be sure to give them lots of breaks away from the "two-leggers".

If you let your visitors feed the alpacas don't let them be overfed. Our alpacas get "snacks" all day on Farm Days so we don't give them their usual grain ration, only hay.

We DON'T let Farm Days visitors

## Fall Cria Time!

It's time for the fall crias to make their appearance. Our last spring cria was born in May and we can't wait to see the rest of this year's babies! Amber just gave birth to a grey girl and we have 2 more due in the next 6 weeks. Fall crias usually have a shorter gestation period and thus, may be smaller than those born in the spring. The weather may still be hot (early fall), so you have to watch for heat stress in both the mother and the cria. In late fall, it may be cold. Crias can't regulate their temperature very well for the first few days and will often need to wear a coat.



Cria time also means that it is breeding season again. This is a good time to evaluate your breeding choices based on the results (cria quality) of your breeding program. Did the cria have the characteristics you were working for? Does the cria show improvement? Did the mother have a difficult pregnancy? Do you want to repeat the breeding to the same pair? All of these are items that should be considered in your breeding program. Now is the time to shop around and schedule any breedings you may want to buy.

## Happening at the Ranch

Last month we stated that we had selected our entries for the Royal Alpaca Challenge show held in November. Well, the show dates have changed and that means that 2 of this year's crias that we were going to enter won't be old enough. They need to be 6 months old to show and with the show now 2 weeks earlier than originally announced, we won't be able to take any of our spring crias. We attended the South East Alpaca Association annual meeting and listened to a presentation from a geneticist (Andy Merriweather) about determining color in alpacas and learned very much. This month will be busy for us. We are participating in the Mountaineer

in our pastures. Pens are set up for the alpacas in our yard. This is for several reasons: Parasite control, safety of visitors, & safety and comfort of our alpacas.

### Upcoming activities

Mountaineer Days Festival  
Tracy City, TN  
September 11-12

National Alpaca Farm Days  
September 25 & 26

Ketner's Mill Country Arts Fair  
October 16-17 Whitwell, TN

SAFF (Southeast Animal Fiber Festival)  
October 22-24 Asheville, NC

Royal Alpaca Challenge  
November 6-7, Conyers, GA

Days Festival held in Tracy City September 11-12, we will have family visiting us from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and National Alpaca Farm Days are September 25-26. We would love to see you and your friends at the ranch. We will have activities planned both days from 10:00 to 4:00. You can find other participating farms at [www.nationalalpacaфарmdays.com](http://www.nationalalpacaфарmdays.com).

## Featured alpaca(s)

This month's featured alpaca is Amber (ARI 832228). She just gave birth to a grey female cria who's sire is grey and has won several awards. Amber has excellent conformation and fleece characteristics and will be bred later this year. She has won awards and her crias have all won awards. Her last cria was Ember, who took 4<sup>th</sup> place in his first show (Royal Alpaca Challenge) at 6 months old and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in his 2<sup>nd</sup> show (Southern Select) at 10 months old. We sold him to our friends Pat and Roxanne at Cedar Rock Ranch, and he continues to be shown. We can work out a mother/cria package deal and you can choose the next breeding!



Amber

Last year's cria – Ember



This year's cria Destiny



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