



HIDDEN GEM NEWS

December 2010

An informational newsletter published by Hidden Gem Ranch

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Interesting items

People love hot cocoa when it's cold outside, alpacas love warm water! Take your "babies" a nice hot bucket of water to warm them up.

Older, thin, weak, and very young alpacas are easily chilled on windy, wet, and cold winter days. These animals should be covered with a coat if you see they are shivering. Warming mats used for piglets are great, too.

Take extra care of your guard animal during winter, too.

Year end preparations



It is the last month of the year. Winter officially arrives on the 21st and we will be looking forward to the spring warmth. We are fortunate that our winters are mild here (at least compared to our previous home in Michigan). Still, there are items that need to be ready for the season. Basic items of food, water, and shelter are essential for our alpacas especially in the

winter. There is little or no grass for grazing, water sources freeze, and the wind chill can cut through even the densest of fleece. Make sure that you have enough hay until spring. Our hay usage in the winter is approximately 2 bales of hay per animal per month. Additional calories are also needed to help the alpaca stay warm, so we increase the amount of grain fed daily. Water is also just as important in winter as it is in summer. Using automatic waterers or heated containers is ideal. We use the heated containers and find that a lot of water is lost through evaporation, so you will be filling them more if you go that route. Shelter needs depend on where you live. We have mild winters so we don't need to close our animals inside a barn, but the alpacas like to get out of the wind. We also put coats on our older animals and crias when the temperature drops quickly or stays very cold for extended periods.

Upcoming activities

Southern Select show
March 5-6, 2011

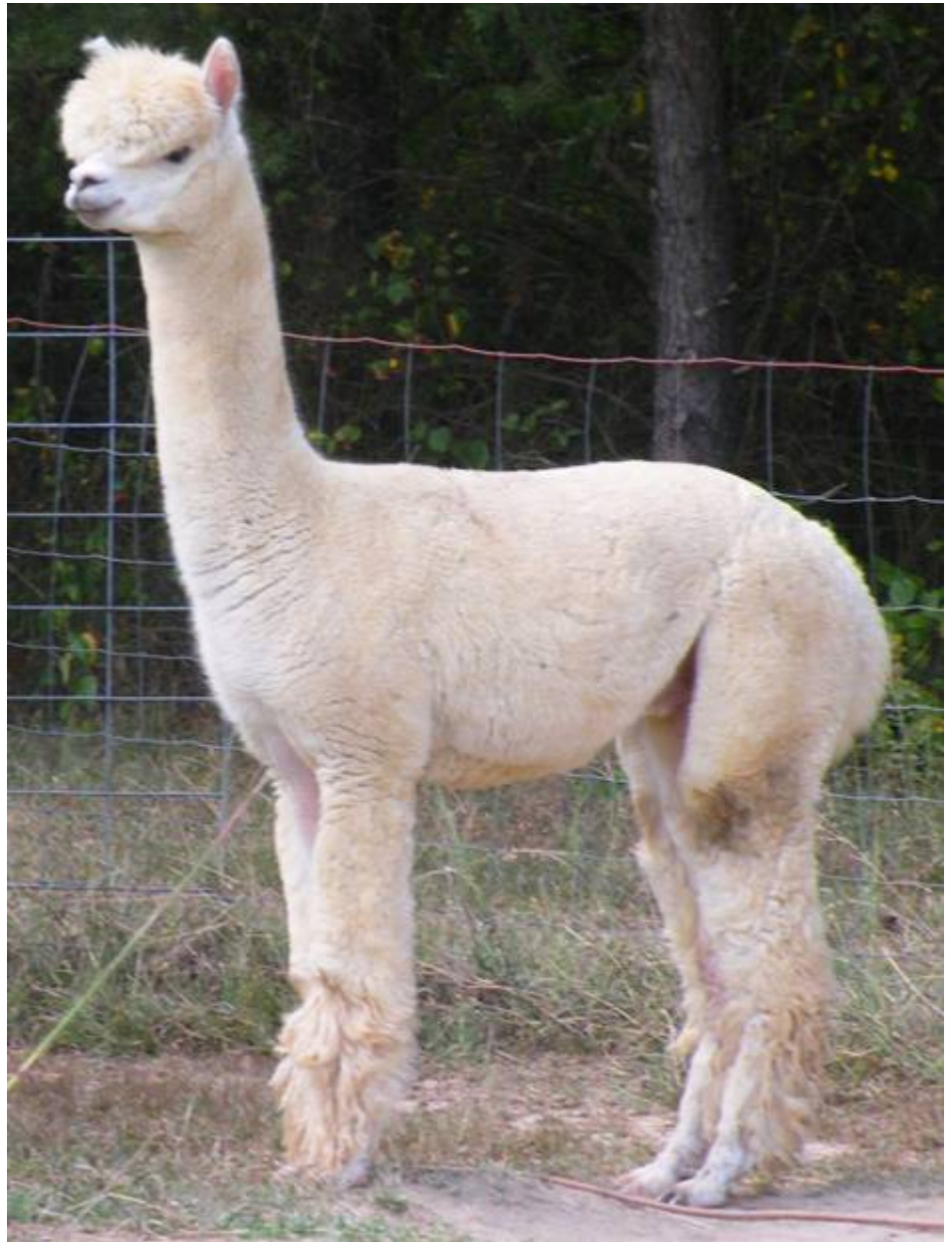
Happening at the Ranch

We will be getting our last load of hay as we prepare for old man winter. Other winter preparations include installing heaters in the water troughs and checking the perimeter of the pastures to check the fences and gates. We have reunited our weaned spring crias with their mothers and moved all of the animals to their winter pastures. We'll be participating in a local Christmas parade. Many folks are beginning to stop at our farm store to buy gifts for Christmas. Melissa has kept busy helping some friends learn to spin.

Dennis & Melissa will both celebrate birthdays this month!

Featured alpaca(s)

The end of the year is a good time to plan for Spring breeding. With this in mind, we decided to feature our 2 award-winning males from the Royal Alpaca Challenge for you to consider.



Randy (ARI 31754163) took 5th place in a very competitive white class. He brings some great genetics including Royal Fawn, Zephyrus, Snowmass, and Hemingway.



Cristo (ARI 30702189) took 1st place with the judge commenting that he has the typey suri head and suri look. His fleece is lustrous and has very nice lock structure. He has a lot of grey in his background and has settled his first female.

Dennis & Melissa McFail
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