

Chat with Rainbow

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2015



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Happy Spring!

Finally, we're done with winter. I can tell you this....we girls in the main barn were getting pretty tired of being cooped up in our "dry lots". It's about time we can stretch our legs and run around a bit. Pretty soon we're going to have a bunch of babies underfoot and you know what that means. No more *doing our own thing*.

Anyway, enough of that. Welcome to Issue #2 of ***Chat with Rainbow***. I hope you enjoyed our first issue and have been looking forward to issue #2 as much as I. In this issue, you'll find the following new sections:

Client Corner will highlight one of Over the Rainbow's clients / friends with alpacas. You'll learn a little bit about their farm, their

animals (they don't have a Rainbow though) and other important stuff.

In **Herd Health**, you will find tips, ideas, reminders, and other things that Sara has learned over the years from her mentor farms as well as just plain ol' on the job training.

Events is an important section. Fun things happening, business happenings, social activities. Every once in a while, it's good to get out of the barn and back with humans. At least that's the motto in our barn. Don't understand the need to hang with humans, but I don't complain.

So, hope you enjoy this issue. Let us know if you have an idea, questions, pics or any news for our next issue out in July.

It's Cria Season..... Now What?

One thing I've learned. In Minnesota, we've got to plan new babies carefully so they're not born when it's freezing outside. So that means May through early October our barn is hoppin' busy with boys coming and going, girls getting all girly and shhhhbreeding going on.

Rumor has it we are expecting 30 new crias by the end of the summer. Good grief! Of course, mine will be best behaved and probably one of the cutest too—just like Rupert.

Getting babies off to a great, healthy start is so important, I

want to take a little time to give you some advice. It doesn't matter if you're having 1 cria or 30, there are some very important things to remember:

Things to have on hand: If you haven't put together a cria care kit yet, now's the time. Here's my suggestions:

Nolvasan: This is that blue stuff that Sara dilutes with regular water to disinfect the cria's umbilical cord. Seems like Sara is dousing the umbilical cord every hour - might be a bit much - but it should at least be done 3 times each day for 3 or 4 days. When you think about it, the umbilicus is a direct opening into the

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cria's body. And there are so many things that can make a cria sick, why would we ever take the chance?

Thermometer: Sara buys quite a few each year (frankly, I think she loses them. After all, how many do you really need?) Anyway, she buys the kind that reads the temperature in 8 seconds. Let me tell you - from my experience, 8 seconds is a long time to stand there waiting. So get yourself an 8 second thermometer—with a flexible tip. Those are great. And take that baby's temperature not too long after they're born. Tells you a couple things: if they are warm enough, obviously, but also if they have any problems *anatomically*, if you know what I mean!

Cria Coat: Next thing to think about is a coat for that little one. Unless it's nice and warm outside, don't expect that new one of yours to stay warm. Their

body doesn't work quite well enough yet—so better to keep them from chilling.

Colostrum: Now, here's the most important part: that new cria MUST get as much of mom's **colostrum** as possible in the first 6 hours after being born. And that means you've got to work hard to get the baby to nurse, soon as he or she can stand.

Hopefully the mom has a bunch of milk. If not, you will probably need to supplement mom's milk with a colostrum supplement. I know that Sara makes sure our new crias get enough milk every 2 hours for at least the 1st 24 hours. Many times, they've had to supplement with bottle (not for my babies of course, but for some other moms for sure.)

Then, about 24 hours after the baby is born, you might think about testing for **IgG** (that's the measure of the cria's

level of immunity it got from mom.) If it's low, like under 600, that means the cria is at risk of getting an infection (called sepsis) and getting very sick very fast. I know at our farm all of our crias are tested when they are 24-36 hours old, and if they have a low IgG, Dr. Matt high-tails it over to our place and he gives plasma to the baby. We think it's definitely worth it.

Guess that's about it. Over the Rainbow and Foggy Bottom always have supplies on hand. Every spring, they order frozen colostrum and make sure they have a good supply of frozen plasma on hand, particularly for the first-time moms. So if you find you need something *fast*, call. It's all about healthy crias.

Happy Birthing! Send us pics!

FYI: you can get frozen colostrum at useful-items.com and frozen plasma from Triple J Farms.

It's Not Just Cria Season.....It's Breeding Season Too!

There are some girls in our barn that are so excited that breeding season is finally here. Living in Minnesota means we have to wait until we are sure the weather next year when the new babies arrive will be warm enough. Around our farm, that means May is the month the perfect herdsire is picked for each of us girls.

Sara spends a bunch of her time looking at our fleece and figuring out just what part of our body she wants to improve. Imagine that! There might be something about my body or my fleece that she wants to improve on?

We've got some nice boys around here....one or two I wouldn't mind spending some

time with! New this year is **Machito**. Now here's a nice boy. He's got a body full of dense, fine white fleece. I hear his first cria won judge's choice on the east coast at 6 months of age.

And of course, Apotheosis and Kahuna Sunrise, a couple of lovely looking boys, will be back on the farm in May. Just in time.

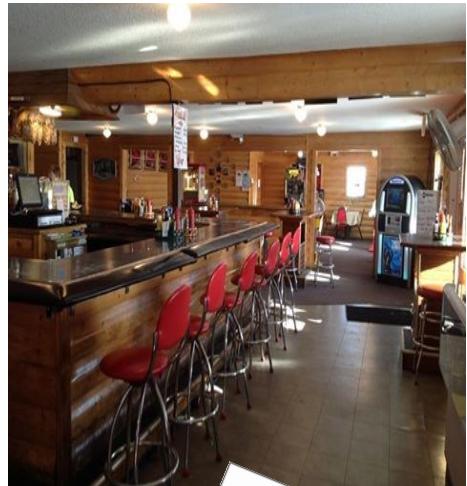
Headwaters Alpacas is where my sister, Mimosa (like the brunch beverage) and a couple of her kids live. She is owned by Pam and Scott Johnson and their cute son, Parker. The farm is in Becida, up near Bemidji, MN. brrrr...talk about cold in the winter.

So a bit about the Headwaters crew: Scott and Pam run a bar and grill in town, the Becida Bar. I'm thinking they have a tag line: *Mosey on over and grab a stool becida neighbor.*

OK. Maybe I should keep my day job!

So, Scott owns his own insurance agency besides the bar and, of course, alpacas. He's got some very nice animals up there. Last year, they had a fabulous boy born, Master Chief, who's daddy is Apotheosis. Maybe we'll see Chief breeding soon.

If you're up in the north country, grab a stool and some food at Becida Bar. Sara says it's a great place.



What's Coming Up? Mark Your Calendars!

Shearing: 'Tis the season. We can hardly wait to get these winter coats off. Over the Rainbow and Foggy Bottom have scheduled shearing for **May 4 and 5**. It's always a busy day around here. This year, something different. Instead of packing our blanket into bags, I hear Sara is planning to "noodle" it so it can be sorted by people who are Certified Sorters. Then, I understand some of our fleece is going to the UMA Fleece show, and some going to the UMA Fleece Pool.

I'm not sure what Sara means by "noodling" my fleece, but Dana Tiedeman is going to be here to help skirt and noodle. Sounds kinky.

Let us know if you are coming to the farm with your animals for shearing so we can be ready.

Weaving Clinic: This June Foggy Bottom will be host to a weaving clinic, taught by C & M Acres. Barb's very excited. She has a weaving loom but I don't think she's done anything with it except dust it once in a while. Rugs are great to make out of seconds and course fleeces. Stay tuned for more info on this.

UMA Fleece Pool. Something new this year, UMA members now have the opportunity to pool their fleece with other farms. Why you ask? To purchase product as a "group" and get a better price. It's either that, or store it in your barn / house until you get around to doing something with it, then paying regular price to buy from processing vendors.

I can tell you, I'm sure Sara has

some of my fleece still sitting around, and probably a lot of the others in my barn as well. Lot of good it's doing in the basement! I make nice yarn. But not when it's still in the bags.

This is the reason for the Certified Sorting after shearing. Got to pool fleece that's the same color and similar micron. So you might think about pooling some of your fleece. Join UMA. Take advantage.



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Owned and operated by Sara and Bryan Peris, Over the Rainbow is quickly becoming an elite breeding farm in the Midwest. Sara began her life with alpacas in 2009 with the purchase of her first bred female. Since then there has been no looking back. Mentored by Double O'Good Alpacas, one of the country's elite breeding farms, Sara has received extensive hands-on training in herd health and management, breeding, neonatal care, and conformation and fleece analysis. And each year, Sara takes time out of her busy days to focus on her continued learning from some of the best in the industry.

She has an eye for the best. The herd has grown to include color champions and multiple ribbon winners, crias with fleece that "will take your breath away", (to quote one national judge) and personalities to boot! See for yourself – get introduced to Rainbow, the most remarkable, personable and delightful alpaca you'll ever meet.

Bragging Book

Got an animal you want to brag about? Send us your picture and a brief description and we'll post it here for you. OTR will start. :)



MOPACA 2015 was a great show: We took 10 animals to Missouri (1 belonged to Avalon Alpacas), and ALL 10 took ribbons.

Congratulations to **Avalon Alpacas**—their little Fiori took 1st place. So good.

Over the Rainbow is very proud of Opal and Ginger Spice, right from our own barn. These two young girls each took 1st place and then Reserve Champions in their color class. What fun.

H ERDSIRE ROW

Kahuna Sunrise has had a good show year just finishing up and earning his 12th championship! He will return to Minnesota 1st week in May and his breeding scheduled will get created.

Apotheosis is a dark brown grandson of Snowmass Matrix and has won 7 Championships. At the age of 4.5 years, this beautiful boy has now ended his show career to breed, breed, breed!

ELK Titan's Clash's Machito hails from the Titan's Clash line of Magical Farms. Machito brings dense AND fine white fleece to our breeding program— plus with this boy — he can also add color to our program when bred to a female with color. What more could we ask?

Matrix' Gold Alert will have his first cria on the ground this spring. Son of Snowmass Matrix, this boy is one of the most gentle herdsires we've seen. He's a regular Don Juan, loves company and the attention. Fleece is so fine it's tough to part to get a good look at.

Our Motto: Apples don't fall far from the tree. Pick a good tree!