



July 2012 Newsletter of the Maine Alpaca Association

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Greetings to the Maine Alpaca Association,

We're well into the warm summer weather and I hope it's bringing you and your alpacas good health. We had a great meeting in June at the lovely Frontier in Brunswick. Thank you to all of those that attended and contributed. A special thank you to Janis Piper (our web master) and Jill McElderry-Maxwell for the wonderful presentation on our new website. They have both offered to assist any of you who have questions or need support as we transition from the old to the new site. The feedback was extremely positive at our membership meeting.

Maine Open Farm Day was July 22nd and it sounds as though our membership had a great day. Open Farm Day provides a tremendous opportunity to promote your alpacas and the alpaca farming industry. This was the 23rd official Open Farm Day and there were well over 100 farms taking part across the State. If you did not participate this year, consider adding this to your calendar next summer. More information is available at the Get Real Maine website <http://www.getrealmaine.com/>.

National Alpaca Farm Days is coming up September 29th and 30th. By having your farm open to visitors and being available to answer their routine questions, you may have the opportunity to create interest in raising alpacas or selling your alpaca products. This is exactly how many of us learned about alpacas, a simple farm visit. AOBA offers a great media package and on-line advertising, but you can simply put up signs on your road and posters in your local area to let folks know you are participating.

Planning is underway for the Holiday Gala to be held on November 30th! Stay tuned!

Robin Fowler, President, Maine Alpaca Association
Maine Alpaca Association

UPCOMING EVENTS....

July 22 - Maine Open Farm Day, statewide www.getrealmaine.com
August 6 thru 10 - FiberME 2012 - A Guided Tour of Maine's Fiber Arts Community <http://halcyonyarn.com/landings/fiberme2012.html>
September 4 - MAA Board Meeting www.mainealpacaafarms.com
September 14 thru 30 (Sept 25-27 alpaca show) - The Big E, West Springfield, MA www.thebige.com
September 15 - MAA Regular Member Meeting, location & time TBA www.mainealpacaafarms.com
September 29 & 30 - National Alpaca Open Farm Days, nationwide, www.nationalalpacafarmdays.com/
October 13 & 14 - Green Mountain Alpaca Fall Spectacular, Essex Junction, VT www.vtalpacashow.com
October 20 & 21 - New York State Sheep and Wool Festival at Rhinebeck, NY www.sheepandwool.com
November 3 & 4 - The Fiber Festival of New England at West Springfield, MA www.thebige.com/ese/esevents/Fiber_Festival.asp
November 13 - MAA Board Meeting www.mainealpacaafarms.com
November 30 - 1st Annual MAA Gala, location & time TBA www.mainealpacaafarms.com

Please visit www.maineairs.org for agricultural fair dates in your community



Move and Store Your Hay like A Pro

By Terry Callery, Village Farm Alpacas, <http://www.alpacavillage.com>

When you first pick up a bale of hay for stacking and storing, you are inclined to handle it like a brick. That is to say you'll lay it down *flat* against the back wall of the barn loft...and the slap another bale on top of it. Stack them five high and then place the next column of hay next to it for support. That is if you don't have a *real* farmer watching you. Our Maine hay farmer had delivered a load last year...and I found out that I'd been stacking hay like a turn of the century brick layer... instead of like the able farmer I aspire to be.

"You hoping to get a job at the Pancake House?" the hay farmer asked as he watched me stack my first column of hay.

"Watta you mean? Isn't this the way *you* do it?" I asked.

"If I wanted it to *fall over*...and have the baler twine *loosen up later*...then I would" the Maine hay farmer replied in that sarcastic, parsimonious way of a Northern New Englander. I figured I'd have to drag it out of him.

"You know, I'm a big boy and have a pretty thick skin...I'm not going to start crying if you tell me I'm doing this wrong. Come on and show me the right way to stack it." I asked the hay farmer. And so he proceeded to educate this city boy.

The first thing to remember is that you set the bales on their *sides*. This way the baling twine runs around the bale...so when you put more bales on top, the pressure pushes out against the baling twine making the bale of hay tightly packed. My old way of pancake stacking would squish the bale down and loosen up the pressure against the two loops of baling twine – so that some bales would fall apart when I handled them later.

A bale of hay is typically 36" long but 18 "wide and usually just 14" on the side. So if you place your first two bales on edge side by side...you can then place the second tier running at 90 degrees to the first... and end up with a square column. (18 + 18 = 36) By leaving an inch or two between the bales, you increase the air circulation and aid in keeping the hay dry. This also reduces the risk of fires from any wet hay that heats up due to composting. The third tier of two bales placed on edge and side by side runs parallel to the first tier... the fourth tier at a right angle to the third. Now you have a weave which locks in the bales. This is routinely done on loading docks with shipping boxes - the second tier of boxes always runs across the grain of the first tier. These hay columns are very stable and do not need to be packed in together for lateral support...again a bit of space between the columns is good for air circulation.

When hauling a load of hay in a pickup truck I apply the same cross-hatching principle. I drive a Ford F-150 pick up with a standard eight foot bed. Using a cross-hatching technique and placing the second tier of hay out over the sides of the truck bed, one can safely load 50 bales of hay on my truck. Here is a step by step instruction of the "50 load".

Because the bed of my truck is 19" high, the first tier is placed on its side running along the length of the truck bed. In this way, four bales can be put up front next to the cab of the truck. These first four will be just about level with the sides of the bed at 18" high. This is the start of the bottom layer working from front to back. Only the bottom layer will have all of the hay bales set on their sides. The second...third... and fourth tiers *all* will have the hay laying flat like a brick.

Continued on page 6

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Don't
forget to sign up for
National Alpaca Open Farm
Days, September 29 and 30! Visit
www.nationalalpacafarmdays.com
for more information and to
register your farm for this
event!

Focus on Fiber Seminar October 27, 2012

8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Kennebec Valley Community College,
Fairfield, Maine

The purpose of the seminar is to equip Maine sheep, fiber goat, and camelid producers with the skills and knowledge to improve production, handling, and marketing of high quality fiber and fiber products.

Topics will include:

- Fiber basics – sheep, goat, and camelid
- Management to improve fleece quality and quantity
- Genetics to improve fleece quality
- Preparing fleeces for sale, shows, and processing
- Primary fleece markets
- Marketing and value added processes

Register for Focus on Fiber Seminar



Seminar presenters include Maine farmers, processors, fiber promoters, and customers experienced and knowledgeable in quality Maine fibers.

The cost of the seminar includes lunch and resource materials (printed and on CD in Word and Excel formats). If you have dietary restrictions, please contact Colleen Hoyt

The Maine Alpaca Association is a proud sponsor of this important seminar.

Alpacas OutBaca...

by Ginny Rebar, Alpacas OutBaca, <http://www.outbacaalpaca.com>

OutBaca Alpaca Farm of Harmony, Maine has recently opened a farm stand where you will find hand and machine products including luxurious knit ware, blankets, teddy bears, sweaters, scarves, hats, gloves, mittens, socks, boot liners, toys, eggs, blueberries and much more! When you arrive, you will smell the aroma of hot cider and donuts, you will hear the crackling of a warm wood stove fire along with old time piano music and a friendly staff ready to help you with requests for information. While visiting the farm stand you will be able to experience viewing the alpaca right in the field behind the stand.

OutBaca Alpaca Farm is a scenic farm located in the heart of Maine. It is a diverse farm with products that include apples, blueberries, pears, hay, raw alpaca fiber and fiber products, manure, etc. The general climate on the farm truly depicts the life and heritage of historic Maine, from the barn framing to the old stonewalls that surround the fields hidden in the trees. The views are beautiful!

The use of the farm for alpacas started in 2007. Since then the herd has grown and has been welcomed by the natural landscape, orchards, and fields. This working farm offers peace and harmony for those who visit and want to spend some time with the environmentally friendly inhabitants. The owner, Ginny Rebar, is a member of the Maine Alpaca Association and formerly served on the Board of Directors and as a result benefits from networking with over 60 farms in Maine.

Alpacas belong to the camelid family. They are related to camels and llamas. They are one among three species that move their legs like cats! They are herd animals with diverse personalities. They are not pets in the classic sense. There are two kinds of Alpacas: huacaya and suri. The kind with the crimped texture to the fiber and a fluffy appearance are huacaya and this type resides at OutBaca Alpaca Farm. People find them curious, shy, generally quiet and sensitive to their environments.

Alpacas are becoming increasingly popular as an alternative livestock. Their life spans are about 20-25 years. Farmers find them to be land friendly. With their pads on their feet and teeth in the front only on the bottom jaw, they do not create mud lots but rather leave a golf course venue in their wake. These animals charm you with their tender natures, large and lovely eyes and lashes, low and alluring hums and responsiveness to being herded.

The fiber is a predominant reason for raising and tending to these animals. The lush and soft warmth of the fiber rings of Mother Nature's elegance. It is simply local, lively and lasting. OutBaca Alpaca Farm prides itself on breeding animals with fiber of incredible density, fineness and curvature. The raw fiber is popular for spinners and craftspeople. You can find many of the 22 natural colors on the farm. The fiber is non allergenic and offers amazing insulation while ice fishing, skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, or horse back riding! Just think, over 6000 years ago this fiber was used as a currency by the pre Incas and the alpaca fiber was reserved for the royal classes. Treat yourself like royalty and own some genuine alpaca goods!





Maine Alpaca Criations

Graceland Alpaca Farm, Laila Roukounakis, Lisbon Falls

Dark Chocolate Valentine, F, BB, (H), 2/13/12 Dam: Stormie, Sire: Anazasi's Fernando



CopperLeaf, M, MB, (H), 5/9/12, Dam: Silver Thunder's Maggie Mae, Sire: LAF Royal Storm



Montana Black Gold, M, TB, (H), 6/19/12 Dam: El Camino Real's Selena, Sire: Shady Creek Montana Silver



Mountain Brook Farm, Cindy Mingle, South Paris

Mountain Brook Marin, F, (H) LF, 5/29/12 Dam: MB Canyon, Sire: MB Lexington



Mountain Brook Napa, F, (H) DF, 6/6/12 Dam: MB Chapin, Sire: MB Lexington



Mountain Brook Clara, F, (H) MSG, 6/27/12 Dam: MB Liberty, Sire: Thunder's Best



Mountain Brook Francis, M, (H) DB, 6/15/12 Dam: MB Victoria, Sire: Thunder's Best



Northern Solstice Alpaca Farm, Corry Pratt and Robin Fowler, Unity

Space Cowboy's Riata, F, LB (H) 6/22/12, Sire: AG Space Cowboy, Dam: Stonewall's Posie



Space Cowboy's Effie Mae, F, W, (H), 6/23/12, Sire: AG Space Cowboy, Dam: Chase Tavern Firestar



More babies on page 5...

Bag End Suri Alpacas, Jill McElderry-Maxwell, Pittsfield

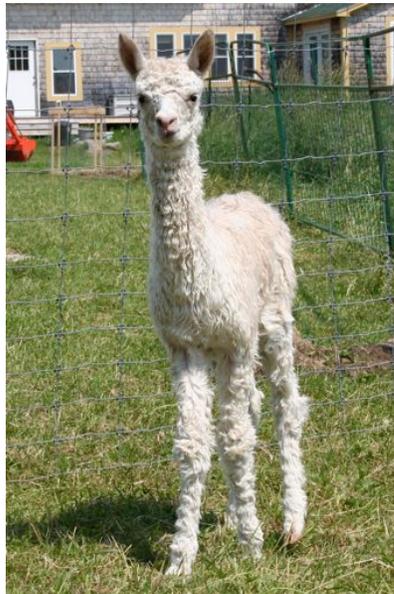
BESAME Araucarauco, M, B,
(S), 6/10/12, Dam: Summerlin's
Jade, Sire: WRSR Peruvian
Payday



BESAME Akallabêth, F,W, (S),
6/10/12, Dam: HHSF Peruvian
Marbella Suri, Sire: WRSR
Peruvian Payday



BESAME Remmen, M, B, (S),
6/24/12, Dam: ATV Empressa,
Sire: WRSR Peruvian Payday



BESAME Aiwë, F, B, (S),
6/28/12, Dam: Linn's Accoyo
Dutchess, Sire: WRSR Peruvian
Payday



MAA

needs member input for our first annual holiday gala! Do you have suggestions for venues and activities? Items for a silent auction or raffle? Skills to contribute? Let's make this the beginning of a wonderful holiday tradition! Please contact any member of the BOD for more information.

Parasite Identification and Management Seminar

Sponsored by the Alpaca
Center of New England

Why do your own fecal testing?

Regular fecal testing allows you to monitor the parasite levels in your herd and to **treat only when appropriate.**

Learning to do your own testing can reduce expenses while maintaining the health of your herd.

Date: Saturday, October 6, 2012

Time: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Price: \$75 per household/farm

Microscopes, centrifuge and supplies will be available for your use during the class. Feel free to bring your own equipment and a sample (paca poop) to test.

**Location: Northern Solstice
Alpaca Farm**

141 Crosby Brook Road
Unity, Maine 04988

For more information, Visit:

<http://alpacacenterone.com/fecalseminaroctober2012.pdf>

Or call Corry Pratt at:
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Move and Store Your Hay like A Pro, cont. from page 2

We place two bales laying flat hanging a foot or so over the side wall of the bed of the truck – one on the driver's side and one on the passenger side of the truck right up against the back on the cab. A second bale is placed hanging over the side of the truck bed right behind the first on either side. These four bales will run 90 degrees from the bottom layer and this is the star of the second tier. There should be enough room in the center between the two pair of bales to place one bale running along the length of the truck right in the middle.

The third layer or tier will have four bales set down flat like a brick, but now running front to back along the length of the truck. The fourth layer will have two bales running across the truck with another two behind the first pair. Each layer cross-hatches the next.

Now we move back to stacking the middle section of the truck. Again we place the bottom layer on it *side* running along the length of the truck bed. Due to the rear wheel wells... only three bales will fit side by side this time. The process is repeated with the second layer hanging over the truck bed wall and running across the first. You keep cross-hatching and moving back until you have loaded 50 bales.

We will usually throw a couple of ropes over the load to hold the top layer down from being blow off by the wind...which is also why we don't drive over 40 miles per hour with a load on.

Our hay farmer supplies us with nice leafy hay that has a good percentage of orchard grass in it. He likes to cut before the hay gets lots of buds... and begins to lose its higher protein levels. Even though we get pretty high quality hay, our alpacas do not like to eat the sticks and stems. We are careful to pick up the hay in the feeders, and if it feels real light in weight, it is mostly sticky and stem-like stuff which we remove in order to put more good hay out for them.

Terence Callery and his wife Bonnie own Village Farm Alpacas in Waldoboro, Maine where, in addition to taking care of 30 alpacas, they also run a very busy farm store where they sell their alpaca yarn and alpaca apparel.

I SURVIVED SHEARING, OR, WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Here are a number of links compiled by the Fleece and Fiber Focus Group that may prove helpful as you skirt through your fiber harvest and try to determine what your next steps will be. Included are links to a list of mills, an explanation of histograms, some suggestions for end uses, a discussion of the various coops available and AOBA's guide to shearing day itself.

<http://mainealpacaassociation.com/MAAmilllist.pdf>

<http://mainealpacaassociation.com/histogramfibertesting.pdf>

<http://mainealpacaassociation.com/whattodowithfiber.pdf>

<http://mainealpacaassociation.com/processingyourfibergrouporcoop.pdf>

<http://mainealpacaassociation.com/>

[Shearing_Day_White_Paper_by_the_AOBA_Raw_Fiber_Committee_v2.pdf](#)

The National Needlearts Association 2012 Trade Show Report

by Pamela Harwood, Longwoods Alpaca Farm, <http://www.longwoodsalpacas.com>

Last weekend I had the opportunity to attend The National Needlearts Association's annual trade show in Columbus, OH, as a vendor representing the North American Alpaca Fiber Producers. While TNNA's shows are actually semiannual, the June conference focuses on winter wooly yarns and the January conference focuses more on cotton, hemp, linen and the glitzy fake stuff. All the Big Name yarn companies, such as Classic Elite, Berroco, Plymouth, Tahki Stacy Charles, etc., exhibit at both shows, along with a few commercial mills, and the big names in spinning and weaving, such as Louet and Schacht.

According to TNNA (as of the 2nd day in a 3-day show), there were 311 exhibitors looking to connect with over 1,390 individuals representing 706 stores from across the country and around the world. Shop owners were there to renew relationships with trusted suppliers and to see what is new in the world of yarn, accessories, spinning & weaving, and needlepoint & counted thread. Obviously, my focus is on the world of yarn, specifically alpaca yarn, and what obstacles we as fiber producers face in terms of getting more of our yarn and roving into the hands of knitters, weavers and spinners.

According to Clara Parkes, Maine's own writer of *The Knitter's Review*, this TNNA featured a lot of color and "glitz" as in the past, but now blended with more natural fiber bases such as wool, alpaca, cashmere, mohair, and so on, rather than acrylic. This is good for us! While one of the "takeaways" that NAAFP's Robyn Kuhl brought home from ITMA 2011 in Barcelona last September was the manufacturers surprise that a) alpaca is a natural fiber, and b) it is available in 22 natural colors, we recognize that our customers also appreciate color and bling. How nice that alpaca fiber producers can cater to both markets!

As I walked the aisles, I stopped to inspect as many alpaca yarns as I could. Other than NAAFP's yarns, I saw nothing that was US-grown alpaca processed in the US. Alpaca is still coming in from Peru and China as combed top or finished yarn. And as soft as we know alpaca can be, the majority of yarns are still quite hairy.



This is what the mills, shop owners, and fiber enthusiasts think of when we start talking about alpaca yarn:



Whereas this is alpaca the way it should be.

Softness isn't the final word, either – acrylic is soft, and a lot less expensive! We need to produce yarns that don't pill, that don't prickle, that don't shed, and that don't grow. "Growing" is especially important to weavers, many of whom said they can't use alpaca to warp their looms because it stretches and breaks. Imagine their delight when we showed them an alpaca yarn with 15% Tencel that is suitable for both weft AND warp. In fact, Schacht Spindle Co. was so impressed with that yarn, they are including it as a woven scarf in an upcoming book!



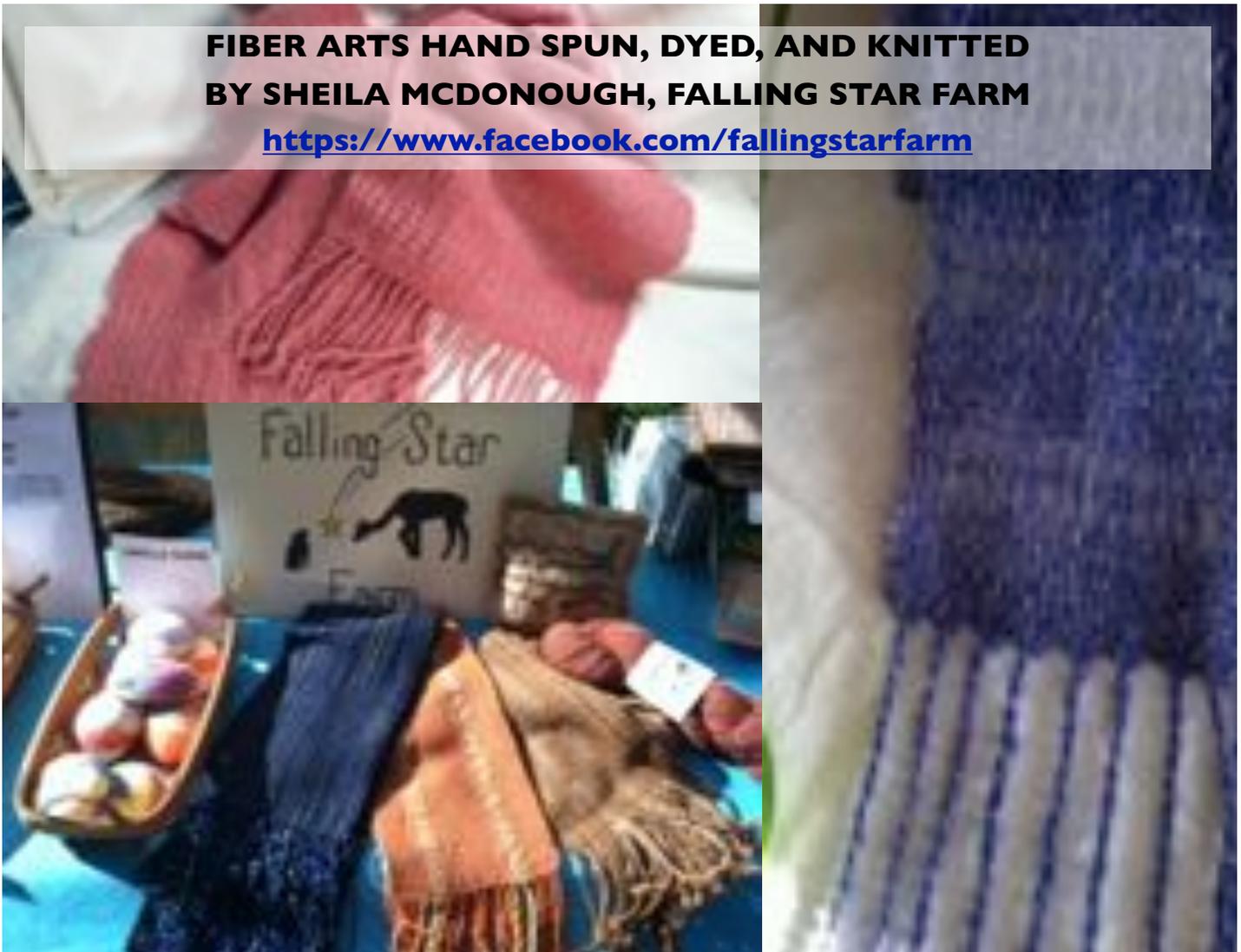
The National Needlearts Association 2012 Trade Show Report, continued

Let's be honest: there is a lot of awful alpaca yarn in the marketplace. We have no control over what China and Peru produce and how they price it, but we DO have control over what WE put out there as the "Fiber of the Gods". So what can we do to make sure our yarns are the best they can be? Proper nutrition, better pasture management, shearing with an eye toward maximum harvest rather than fewest minutes per alpaca, consistent grading and sorting, and better breeding decisions so we don't have to rely on dehairing will all go a long way towards our long term goal of improving the public, the local yarn shops, and the mills' perceptions of alpaca.

To that end, the Co-operative Extension Service of the University of Maine is hosting a fiber seminar for all animal fiber producers on October 27, 2012 (see sidebar on page three) See you there!

For more information and to register, go to: <http://umaine.edu/livestock/fiber/> .

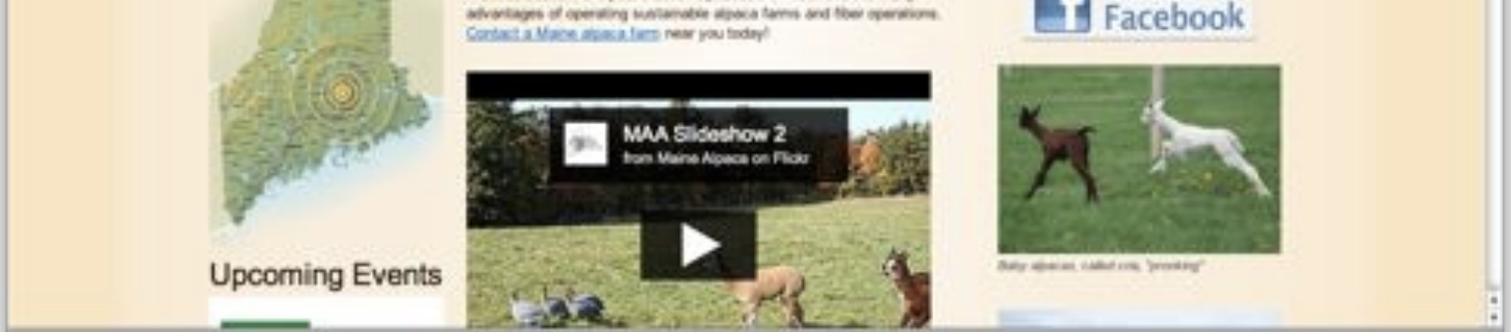
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<https://www.facebook.com/fallingstarfarm>





Coming soon to a browser near you - the new MAA website!

The folks at OpenHerd have been working hard on the new MAA website and it is looking great. Everyone who attended the last member meeting had a chance to preview the beta site and offer comments - and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Members will have the ability to add as much or as little information to their *free* OpenHerd page as they wish, and not can you sell alpacas, you can also showcase products for sale. So if you haven't set up your *free* OpenHerd account yet, don't delay - once the new site goes live, you'll need that account to show up when anyone searches the MAA site for farms, alpacas, products, etc.



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The next issue of the MAA Newsletter is scheduled for release October 1, 2012 - don't miss your chance to reach a growing audience of alpaca enthusiasts! The newsletter link is not only emailed to MAA leads, but it is also hosted on the new MAA website for all visitors to see.

Member classifieds - FREE
Advertising spots - small (approx. 1/4 page) (\$10), medium (approx. 1/3 page) (\$15), large (approx. 1/2 page) (\$20) Dimensions may be adjusted at the editor's discretion.

Deadline for submissions and advertisements is September 25, 2012. Email materials to Jill at bagendsuris@roadrunner.com