



NEWSLETTER: March 2007

Wet Wet Wet

No, this is not some sort of homage to the 1980's Scottish band, but a précis of the last three months. The endless rain (now subsided at last) has brought its share of problems; with the downpours creating extremely muddy paddocks and other challenges such as having to rebuild washed away bridges. However it's at times like this that I'm pleased we're breeding alpacas and not horses, as the poaching of paddocks is far less of an issue. The alpacas themselves have coped admirably, and even though they have access to shelters, most have chosen to cope with the relentless storms by just sitting down in the middle of the fields.

In common with many other breeders, this winter's weather has contributed to some animals suffering from mange caused by mites. We luckily managed to limit the "out-break" to just two animals, Tia and her cria Ursula – but both of these had rather a rough time of it for a while. *Dectomax* injections took care of the mites, but Ursula's skin irritation was so severe that we had to shampoo her with a medicated dog shampoo and apply liberal amounts of Sudacrem to the most severely affected areas (knees and just under the "arm-pits"). The shampooing was relatively straight forward, but ensuring that she was dry, was another matter entirely, and I wonder what people would have thought had they seen us using our best *Toni & Guy* hair drying techniques on her at around 7.30pm on Christmas Eve!



Tia: Alright Now

Just when we thought we had it licked, Tia appeared to swap her "all-over" mites for a more specific ear and foot strain. Such was the irritation caused by this latter strain that rubbing and stamping of her front feet manifested itself in swollen pads. It was a diagnosis that took some arriving at and we thank our local vets and all at the Cambridge Vet School for their dedication and hard work. *Ivomectin* seemed to make short work of the mites whilst a little TLC and bathing sorted out the pads.

All of the herd are now thankfully mange & mite free. It is difficult to know why this extreme mite pressure arose. Clearly the mild weather was a contributory factor, but given the explosion in fox numbers (partly due to city dwellers kindly dumping their over-spill of them in our "backyard") and the general mangy state of some of the older ones, which would have previously been caught by the hunt you have to question whether there is any correlation. Further, given the sorry state of Ursula over Christmas I wonder whether all aspects of animal welfare were fully considered in the corridors of Westminster during their so-called hunting debate.

Beany: Dengie's New Cover Boy



Since the establishment of the Melford Green herd we've spent a lot of time trying to perfect a suitable feeding regime for the animals. As well as following other breeders' advice we've been working with animal feed manufacturers Dengie.

A number of different feeding regimes have been tried, but alfalfa (in the form of *Hi-Fi Lite*) with supplementary *Fibrebest*, rolled oats and some flaked micronised peas seems to be the most flexible and satisfactory.

When Dengie launched their new alpaca feed recommendations we were delighted that they came to Melford Green for the photographs for their web-site <http://www.dengie.com/pages/feeding-horses/nutritional-advice/feeding-your-alpaca.php> and Beany features as the "cover-boy" on their new leaflet.

Bob & Bert woo the Crowds at Jimmy's Farm



On the last Saturday before Christmas Bob & Bert were once again invited to Jimmy's Farm on the outskirts of Ipswich, (as featured in the BBC TV series). The massive turn out for the Christmas Farmers Market (around 3 thousand cars) meant that they received loads of attention and fuss. As usual they rose to the occasion and behaved with great decorum. Meanwhile, dressed in Santa Claus hats and in between explaining "No they're not llamas, they are alpacas" or "No they won't spit;" we managed to sell loads of our Suffolk spun alpaca yarn.



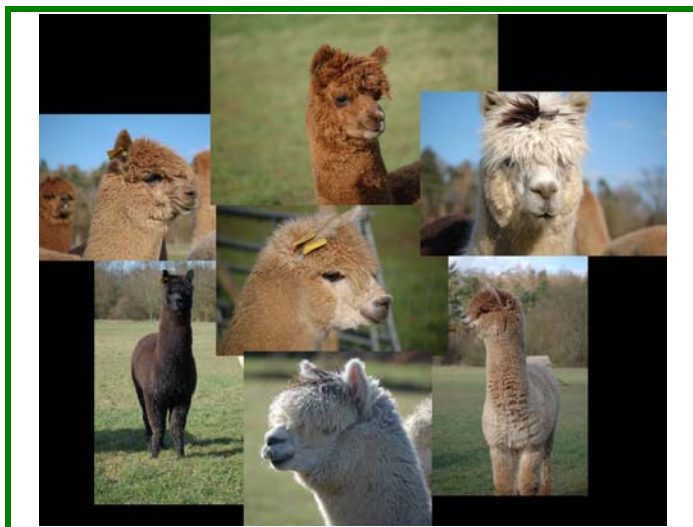
Melford Green Alpaca Yarn

We still have a few balls and some skeins left, so if you would like to buy some please contact us either by e mail: paul@melfordgreen.co.uk or phone 01787 374142.

New Arrivals

February saw our latest selection of boys arrive at Melford Green. This time we have added more colours to the herd including peach, silver and taupe. We have also selected "a patchy" alpaca aptly named Cochise. We're currently busy getting them settled in, starting the

halter training and getting the photos ready for the web-site (not easy with all that rain). Full details of the new boys should be available shortly. In the meantime here are few photographs, and in keeping with the title of the first article it will be no surprise to hear one of them is called Marty.



Up Coming Events:

Bob, Bert and the Melford Green staff will be out and about this spring and summer. The following dates have been confirmed so far:

Grand Easter Egg Hunt & Family Day:
Woodbridge, Suffolk: April 7th

Steam & Vintage Farm Machinery Event:
Melford Hall, Long Melford, July 8th

Heveningham Hall Country Fair:
Heveningham, Suffolk, July 8th

We will also be showing Bob & our promising new white stud male Sean, at the South of England Show and the BAS National in Newark, so look forward to seeing you there

