



NEWSLETTER: March 2010

Spring is finally here.....

No we haven't been on the gin; we are referring to our new arrival, which has been as eagerly awaited as an end to the cold, wet weather. Spring, or to give her full pedigree name, Spring Surprise is the latest addition to the Melford Green herd. She is a smashing one year old, double-coated llama and is rapidly becoming a firm favourite with the girls.



Spring: A Llama, not an Alpaca!

Spring is due to take up her duties of helping to look after the weanlings at the end of April, though we anticipate that she will also help enormously, when people ask – “*So what is the difference between a llama and an alpaca?*”

Futurity 2010: Most Successful to date



The 2010 British Alpaca Futurity, held at Stoneleigh Park, (home to the Royal Show for many years), was widely acclaimed as the most professional UK alpaca event to date and featured art & craft exhibitions, veterinary seminars, fashion shows and trade stands as well as halter classes and a fleece show.

It was also our best Futurity to date. Viki & Kat took charge of leading the animals into the show ring and did a really terrific job. In all, the Melford Green show

team won 7 rosettes and 2 championships. Full details of the results can be found at www.melfordgreenalpacas.co.uk

We were particularly pleased that we were placed either 1st or 2nd in each of the colour classes entered: grey, black, fawn and white, which helps demonstrate the strength and depth of the genetics now contained within the herd.



Kat the latest member of the team with Mo our latest Black Champion

Once all of the points awarded over the two days were tallied up at the end of the show, we were shocked, but very proud, when we were awarded the trophy for the “*Most Successful Small Breeder 2010*”.



Paul & Jude accept the Award at the Gala Dinner

It was a goal that we had been working towards since we attended our first Futurity show 4 years ago and testament to the concept of the show, as it was by studying the results from earlier shows, that we were able to confidently select the genetics we needed to add quality and value to our herd.

In addition to our success in the show ring, with help from Shirley Simpson & Becky Poynter of the Mid-Essex Guild of Spinning, Weaving & Dyeing, we were also awarded 4 rosettes and “**Best in Show**” for our yarns & knitted garments. Thanks very much ladies.

Bluetongue

Blue tongue vaccination boosters should now be administered. We urge you to get all your animals vaccinated in order to protect them and other livestock in your area. As last year, we cannot accept any animal onto the farm unless it can be proven it has been vaccinated.

Snowmass Males

We are currently preparing for the arrival our new elite stud males selected from the Snowmass herd in Idaho, which is arguably the world's greatest alpaca stud. The team of 4 males includes *Incan King*, the US Futurity Champion, along with three white males: Quetzacoatl, Invincibly Elite & Royal Vision who all have the sort of pedigrees and fleece statistics to take UK alpaca standards to exciting new heights.



Our Snowmass Males: Setting the Pace

Further details of how you can access these stunning new genetic lines will be found in our Stud Services Catalogue or simply e mail paul@melfordgreen.co.uk.

Country File Come to Melford Green

"Wow - is Matt Baker coming?" - was the typically 'under-stated' comment from Viki, when I mentioned that the BBC Country file team was coming over to film the alpacas.

On the following Tuesday at 7.30am vans and cars stuffed full of equipment arrived along with the Cameraman, Sound Engineer Dan the Director and to Viki's great delight...Matt.

They had arrived early to film the morning feeding, but it was soon clear that the early start was essential if they were to stand any chance of meeting the crazy deadlines they had set themselves. They also planned to film us weighing and assessing cria in readiness for weaning, and administering vitamins. Then we would travel to

one of our other sites to film the stud males and get footage (pardon the pun), of Matt trimming their toe nails. Finally it was over to see Sue, who had bought three alpacas from us to help protect her chickens from the ever present fox population.



Preparing for the Opening Shot

It would have been a tall order at the best of times, but given the wet weather and bad light we were up against it. I had wondered if they might shoot some the following day, but Dan explained they had only the one day for filming as it had to be edited in readiness for voice-overs on Friday and broadcast on Sunday. So, there was no time to waste. Luckily, Matt was a master at putting us at ease and despite the crane onto which they hitched the camera continually getting stuck in the mud and us having to "take it again" because the lens needed clearing of raindrops, or I was standing on the wrong side in the second take, we made surprisingly good progress.

As the light faded at around 4.30pm we got the final shot and just managed the afternoon feeding before collapsing. We were absolutely exhausted.

Our appearance can be seen on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBlfgRFXpY> and add Melford Green Alpacas as one of your friends on Facebook to see more behind the scenes photos and keep up to date with what's happening on the farm.

Open Days

Shearing is due to take place this year over the May Bank Holiday weekend – which unfortunately means that we will be not be holding our usual open days on that weekend. We will however be opening the gates on July 3rd & 4th as well as over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Check the website & press for further details.

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Photo of Paul & Jude courtesy of Chris Agar & British Alpaca Futurity