

# The Farm Weekly

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 8

BLUEBIRDHILLS@VOYAGER.NET

31 JULY, 2009

## ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE A WET ONE

In the past, we have been very lucky to have dry weather for our Open Houses, but our luck came up short last weekend. Even so, we had a good time and about 80 people take a chance to visit the farm.

The wagon rides seemed to manage to go out and return between some pretty heavy downpours. Tim reported that 2.25 inches of rain fell on Saturday, which was great for the garden, but not so great for visitors. The rain also forced a change in the route of the horses, so that passengers didn't get to see the colorful rows of lettuces and the blue green foliage of the broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage plants.

With rain, activity on Monday shifted away from the mud and into things like mowing and tractor maintenance. Plus there were trips to the Clark County Fairgrounds for showing 2 of our alpacas.

Hannah is the only one of our 4 who has consistently been involved in 4H and this year she did very well. At this show, it is mostly the handler that is evaluated although Hannah and her beast, Stradson, had to negotiate an obstacle course as well. The 2 of them trained all last month, jumping hurdles, going on walks, stepping into kiddy pools and generally working on developing a level of trust that helped them win some blue ribbons.

The other excitement was that one of her good buddies was 1st runner up for Fair Queen and also won reserve champion for sheep that she and her brother have raised. This champion was actually the product of several generations of breeding and this year's champion was a great-great granddaughter of one of their first sheep. It's quite an accomplishment!

This weekend I am

off to Gettysburg, Pa. to apprentice judge at a National Fleece show. Tim won't be flying solo though, for his brother is up for his high school reunion. Michael can't sit still for very long and worked construction for many years. I saw him out in the pasture investigating the walk-in shed that blew over last spring, so perhaps he will enjoy tackling that. Neither Tim nor I have had the opportunity to even think about it, knowing that will be a late fall project at the earliest.

Tomorrow, before I leave, a cria will be born. Due to my departure, one of my vets decided that it would be a good idea to induce labor of a dam that is 2 weeks overdue. This is a first for our farm, but it made sense since the midwife will be gone. The shot is given and 22 to 24 hours later, a cria makes its appearance!

Hopefully the little one will present appropriately with nose and toes first, so that no manipulating is necessary, for I don't like having to go in after them. So we will report to you next week how everything came out (pun intended).

Tim wanted me to convey that he was hesitant to put the broccoli and cauliflower in the boxes this week due to the fact that they aren't as pretty as he would like. This is awfully late for both vegetables to

be harvested and they don't look as nice as they would if they had matured in June which is the normal harvest time. I told him to include them anyway and folks can trim out what the don't find attractive if that bothers them. We think that some of it is a virus or mold that has proliferated due to the wet weather, but we really don't know.

This reminds me that I should tell you that one of the varieties of lettuce that we grow has reddish brown spots which are the normal coloration. These are not signs of spoilage, just some splotches that make this variety unique.

The chickens are taking their licks. We have lost 4 chickens in the last 2 days and are fairly certain that the red tailed hawks are the culprits. Those missing in action are the newly added Americanaunas that were smaller and less pasture wise, for they would forage far away from the hen house. We are beginning to think that chickens are just not supposed to be part of our world. We are hoping that the rest will remain safe and sound.

So that's the recap for another week at Bluebird Hills Farm. The rain has started to fall again, the pastures are greening up quite nicely and life is good. A healthy cria tomorrow morning will be icing on the cake! Hope you have a great weekend!

### *This Week's Box*

Lettuce  
Onions  
Summer Squash  
Cucumber  
Cauliflower  
Broccoli  
Potatoes  
Tomatoes  
Garlic

### *Next Week*

Lettuce  
Onions  
Summer Squash  
Cucumbers ?  
Tomatoes  
Cabbage  
Potatoes  
Green Beans ?