



Where trust and quality make a difference

The DOUBLE GOOD Digest

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Double "O" Good Alpacas Celebrates 13th Anniversary

With a foundation herd of 12 carefully selected Peruvian alpacas from the 1995 Peruvian importation, Barbara and I officially began Double "O" Good Alpacas. Barbara brought previous alpaca experience to our business since she was one of the first alpaca breeders on the East Coast. She and Earlah Swift were the original founders of Mariah Alpacas in Vermont. After years of working successfully with Earlah, Barbara tired of the commute to Vermont and decided to open her own Virginia based business as Act II Alpacas. After convincing me of the viability of the alpaca business, we merged interests and began working together as Double "O" Good Alpacas. It's a decision we have never regretted. Here are some of the highlights we've experienced and lessons learned in the last 13 years.

Breeding Program

Our experience taught us that the quality of our initial breeding stock, particularly our male herdsires, would forever determine the quality of any resulting herd. Thus we have always focused on genetic improvement. Today, our herd numbers more than 200 huacayas with over a dozen stellar herdsires, we expect nearly 100 babies each year, and we are known for having one of the best breeding programs in the country.

Herdsire Hall of Fame

We have gathered a pantheon of the best, most sought-after herdsires in North America, including such legendary males as Dom Lucilio, Royal Fawn, and Snowmass Invincible. According to Barbara, "Very few males qualify for our Herdsire Hall of Fame. They must have extraordinary fleece, superior genetics, and a caliber of overall quality that will ensure exceptional offspring." The males inducted into our Herdsire Hall of Fame have the progeny to prove them worthy. View them at the farm or at www.doublegood.com.

Herd Management

Barbara and I have always personally managed our breeding program and provided the care and feeding for our alpacas daily, with the assistance of a competent camelid veterinarian. Barbara takes a very personal interest in the alpacas, knows each one by name, and often checks the alpacas late at night, "just to make sure everyone is okay." On more than one occasion, she has been known to rub back to life a cria born in the middle of a cold, frosty night.

Show Winners

The winners circle at shows is a familiar place for our alpacas, thanks to careful breeding and attentive care to our herd. We enter three to five shows and jubilees each year, and proudly display a wall full of ribbons including many champions and blues. We long ago decided that when a customer buys an alpaca from us, they also take home the last shearing from that animal and all the ribbons the alpaca previously won.

Focus on Fiber

Breeding and selling alpacas with top quality fleece has always been a primary focus of our alpaca business. We breed only those sires whose fiber meets our high standard of quality to females with excellent fleece as well as conformation, genotype, and reproduction history. The results are a genetic gain in our crias that makes them equal and often better than either dam or sire alone. We recently had a cria born on the farm whose fiber is so bright, Barbara said you need sunglasses!

Fiber Store and Facilities

As our herd and business grew over the years, we responded to the need for larger facilities. We expanded our barns and paddocks, added an office and a beautiful fiber store, and built an 18,000 square foot event center we call the Breeders Edge® Pavilion. Our fiber store carries inventory ranging from raw fiber to yarns to finished alpaca garments and textiles. As our fiber store visits and sales have grown, we have delighted in exposing thousands of new people to the luxury of alpaca fleece.

Hosting Alpaca Events

In 1997, Double "O" Good Alpacas hosted the first annual Eastern Jubilee sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association (MaPaca). Thirty eastern U.S. breeders and more than 100 alpacas on display lured some 2,000 plus visitors to Falkland Farm for a gala summer weekend. With Barbara's support, I was also the MaPaca Jubilee coordinator in 2000 and 2001.

Two years later, we hosted our first Breeders Edge® Auction. This has since become an annual event drawing dozens of top breeders from across the country who bring their best huacayas for sale. It's always a harvest of quality in alpacas, education and entertainment and is well-attended year after year!

A most memorable event on our farm was our wedding, held in the barn by Barbara's request. Even some of our favorite alpacas attended!

Pen sales, customer appreciation events, county-sponsored farm tours, and ongoing educational seminars have made our farm the destination for thousands of breeders and visitors over the years, many of whom have become customers and lifelong friends.

Industry Support

For years, I have said, "You must give back to the industry and to society." Barbara and I have always made it a part of our alpaca business plan to do just that. Since Double "O" Good Alpacas began 13 years ago, we have been alpaca halter and fleece show sponsors, supporters of alpaca research foundations, and contributors to programs that benefit Peruvian alpaca farmers.

Customer Attention

A hallmark of our business success has been the ongoing attention we give to our customers and farm visitors. We purposely invite customers and guests to the farm to learn more about alpaca herd management, to board their alpacas, or just to have a picnic under the trees and enjoy the alpaca lifestyle we have created. We have made it part of our full-service farm to provide reproductive guarantees, transportation for breedings, financing for alpaca buyers, and other services needed to bring new breeders into the alpaca business and to help insure their success. Always available for questions and assistance, whether in formal education seminars or informal conversation over the fence, Barbara and I love the alpaca business and want our customers to feel the same.

For us, 13 is a very lucky number. We invite you to celebrate our 13th anniversary at a special event we are hosting at the farm on March 28, 29, and 30. Join us for a toast, numerous specials, and a few surprises that could make 13 a lucky number for you, too!

For more information on alpacas for sale, herd sires, and farm events please call us at 1-888-257-7792, email us at doublepaca@erols.com, or visit our website at www.doublegood.com.



Show season is just around the corner, and Barbara has been carefully selecting the show string we will enter. Do stop by our booth at these shows to see our alpacas or just to visit:

- Carolina Alpaca Celebration, Concord, NC, February 16-17, Diamond Sponsor
- Southern Select, Shelbyville, TN, March 1-2, Platinum Sponsor
- Virginia Classic, Lexington, VA, March 15-16, Platinum Sponsor
- The Futurity, Louisville, KY, April 18-21

We are excited to be hosting a 13th Anniversary Celebration at Double “O” Good Farm on March 28, 29, & 30. Join us for seminars, breeding specials, a pen sale, a special coming out party of Titan’s Clash crias, and of course, cake and champagne. Visit www.doubleogood.com for more information and to RSVP.



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*How can 13
be your lucky number?
Look inside...*

Ernie and Barbara

1. Have three positive “bullet points” in mind prior to your interview
2. Respond only to the question asked; do not elaborate.
3. Never say anything “off the record” that you do not want to see in print.

In this column, we share valuable tips to improve your knowledge about being an alpaca breeder and to clue you into some of the lessons we’ve learned since we began Double “O” Good Alpacas in 1995. We are very appreciative of all the positive publicity Double “O” Good Alpacas has received since we began our alpaca business 13 years ago. However, we have also had the experience of being misquoted in a major national publication. To help you avoid this and get the positive press you deserve, follow these rules for communicating clearly with reporters and other media representatives.

