



## Happy New Year!

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Happy New Year to all my friends. If we haven't met yet, let me introduce myself. My name is ELK Over the Rainbow but everyone just calls me Rainbow. Yes, I am the one and only alpaca behind Sara's farm name. (That's my picture in the corner)

I suppose you're wondering what this newsletter is all about. Let me explain. One day not too long ago I heard Sara say she had to remember to share with all of you something that she had just learned from my primary veterinarian, Dr. Matt Schoessler. That's when I decided to start a newsletter.

So, welcome to the first *Chat with Rainbow*. I hope you like it. I will try to make each issue something you look forward to reading, cover to cover. Our plan is to

share information that we think might be useful to you, keep you informed of important research, events, activities, etc., and once in a while, maybe throw in a little humor. (Sara will depend on me for the humor, but I'm up to the task.)

If you have questions you want me to answer, just send an email to Sara and we will do our best. And remember, next time you're at the farm, just give a holler for me. And don't be surprised when I wander on in to see you. I usually respond when I'm called.

### “What's New?” you say?

Plenty. There is so much to tell, where do I start? Last year—we met new people, including many of you, we had some great babies born, and my owner Sara (actually the truth is I own her but I let her think she owns me), got married. Wow! I have to share her now with Bryan, but he's an ok guy so that's fine with me.

Guess I'll start with the first news: *We're moving*. Sometime this spring Over the Rainbow will move to Hector, MN where Sara and Bryan will operate Peris

Farms AND Over the Rainbow Alpaca Ranch. I don't have a barn yet to go to, so until that happens, and fences can get put up (for some of my more adventurous barn mates), we'll stay put.

We're sad to be leaving Foggy Bottom—this has been our home for a long time it seems, and we've just gotten Mark and Barb trained the way we like things. But it will be fun to be in a new place, a brand new barn, new people to break in.....holey moley! (con't on page 2)

## What's New? Continued from page 1

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I hope you don't think Sara is going away and will never be seen or heard from again. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sara and Bryan fully intend to grow our farm, with more and more cool alpacas. In fact, they are talking right now to Foggy Bottom about buying some of their herd, including the *working* boys. ☺

And she will still be around to answer your questions, help solve problems, visit your farms and all that other stuff just like

now. She's just going to be living a couple hours away.

Sara and Bryan intend to have an open house when the barns are done and we are all safely delivered to our new home. And of course, you will all be invited. I love parties and can hardly wait!

What about Foggy Bottom? Barb and Mark will stay where they are, and will continue in the alpaca business. But they won't have as many alpacas on the farm, once Sara and Bryan move

me and all of the other Over the Rainbow herd and some of the Foggy Bottom herd. Barb and Mark have been talking some about their next adventure, but with a bunch of new babies coming this year, whatever they've got on their mind, nothing will happen right away. And for sure it will definitely involve alpacas.

After all, we alpacas are like potato chips, you can't just have one! So stay tuned for more news about our new ventures. What a year it's going to be.

## New Arrivals at Over the Rainbow

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Never a dull moment around here, it seems. Just when I thought we were settled in for the winter, some new faces arrived. Sara and Bryan just sealed the deal on a partnership with CCAP Alpacas—a great farm in Ohio. So now, according to Sara, we have new lineages in our herd. Personally, I don't think there's anything wrong with my lineage, but she seems pretty thrilled to have some new alpacas. So let me introduce you to them:

First, we have ***Tropical Delight***, the mom of Rumm Runner. I can see why Sara is excited about Delight. She doesn't look like a gem, but, in Sara's words, "she spits out winners". Rumm Runner has a bunch of fleece and color championships, and Delight has given CCAP a bunch of winners. In fact, she herself gar-

nered the Produce of Dam award. That's a hard one to win, I know. So ok, I'll give it to Sara. Good decision. Besides, she's pretty sweet.

Next up? ***Distance Runner***, son of Rumm Runner. I will admit, this is a very nice looking young man with very nice true black fleece! He's only 14 months old, so he will just be hanging around for a while until he can go to work. These young boys have it easy.

Then, we have a very pretty one: ***Jasmine***. She's 2 years old, hails from STF Jetson and is the granddaughter of Peruvian Jericho. La de dah! I hear she's been bred to Rumm Runner and then, once she delivers, I suspect she will be bred to either Apothecosis or Kahuna. Those 2 boys

are going to live at our farm in Hector. Even though Sara hasn't talked with me about this, I will have to agree—one of those boys is the right choice for this beauty.

You'll notice a new guy in the juvie barn. That's ***Smokey Rumm***. Such a sweet boy he is. Sara says he's small but he still has blue ribbons and could be a good breeder. He's a bit scared about his new home, but he'll settle in soon and hang out with Harley and the others.

Last but not least is ***Machito***. Every time he comes to our main barn, Sara oohs and ahhs over him. She says he's a very dense, white son of Titan's Clash and she is anxiously awaiting his babies. (I hope *dense* doesn't refer to his intelligence.)

## Some Tips For You

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It's getting colder outside. And while it's true our fleece is warmer than wool and for the most part will keep us warm in the upcoming cold winter days, remember there are times when we might not feel so great, and the cold can get to us just like it does to you humans. So some tips for keeping us warm:

- Keep us protected from the wind.
- We may need a coat once in a while to take the chill off.

If you don't have a coat, pick up a cheap thermal blanket and wrap it around the animal's trunk and pin it with safety pins over the back. That will work.

- For the smaller ones, put regular white rice in a tube sock and heat it in the microwave. This will act like a heating pad and keep them warm if you lay it by their side when kushed.

- We might lose weight in the winter trying to stay warm (Barb wishes she could lose weight like this!). So we need extra energy to generate heat. Sara and Mark have been feeding us Chaffhaye mixed with our grain—very tasty, smells great, and helps us keep our weight on. If you want to learn about this—just let Sara or Mark know.

## Things We Are Thinking About

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**Fiber and Farm Festival:** As some of you may know, other than the Shepherd's Harvest each year on Mother's Day we really don't have any significant fiber extravaganzas in our state to promote alpaca and other fleece and products. So, Sara and Barb are seriously considering starting a Fiber Festival to be held in the fall each year.

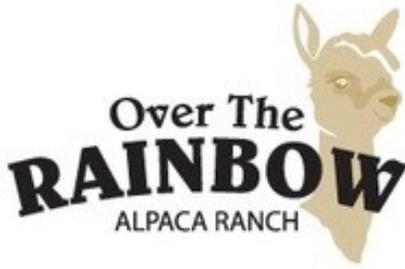
This isn't a small undertaking but is so important to our industry. They are thinking about a town called Hutchinson as a centrally located spot. If any of you are interested in being part of this venture, just let them know.

**A New Alpaca Show?** Last year, Minnesota lost its only AOA sponsored alpaca halter show when Minnesota Alpaca Expo ended. Barb and Sara have talked to many farms who confided they don't feel they can compete with larger farms, and so have not considered the Expo as a venue for their business. What are Minnesota farms to do?

How about a new show that will level the playing field for all farms, give everyone exposure and opportunity, regardless? Consider this: alpacas classed not only by color, and age, but also by fleece micron grade. Maybe my

fleece isn't Grade 1 or 2, but if Sara ever decided to sell me (heaven forbid), I would be a great catch for any farm. And I know that there is a market for my fiber and all grades of fiber, not just Grades 1 and 2. So why shouldn't we celebrate alpacas with Grades 3, 4 and maybe even 5 fleece? If farms are concentrating on fleece for rugs, they need Grades 3 and up, not grades 1 and 2.

Next step? Talk to AOA about certifying this idea. Want to learn more? Talk to Barb or Sara.



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*Owned and operated by Sara and Bryan Peris, Over the Rainbow is quickly becoming an elite breeding farm in the Midwest. Sara began her life with alpacas in 2009 with the purchase of her first bred female. Since then there has been no looking back. Mentored by Double O'Good Alpacas, one of the country's elite breeding farms, Sara has received extensive hands-on training in herd health and management, breeding, neonatal care, and conformation and fleece analysis. And each year, Sara takes time out of her busy days to focus on her continued learning from some of the best in the industry. She has an eye for the best. The herd has grown to include color champions and multiple ribbon winners, crias with fleece that "will take your breath away", (to quote one national judge) and personalities to boot! See for yourself – get introduced to Rainbow, the most remarkable, personable and delightful alpaca you'll ever meet.*

## Hats Off To New Farms and New Friends

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We are so proud that you have entrusted Over the Rainbow Alpaca Ranch and Foggy Bottom Farms to help you build your herds.

**Avalon Alpacas:** Cassandra Olson and Jeff Wazenegger

**Casweck Alpacas:** Jacquelyn Hansen and Athene Westergaard

**Coast to Coast Alpacas:** Kim and Jermain Sherman

**Flying High Alpacas:** Cameron Deml

**Headwaters Alpacas:** Pam and Scott Johnson

**Homeplace Farm Alpacas:** Lisa and Ron Deml

**Northern Prairie Alpacas:** Deb and Les Wellinghoff

**Rum River Alpacas:** Jim and Judy Riess

**Shepherds Hill Alpaca Farms:** Dan and Laura Darst

**Top Hat Alpacas and Products:** Randy Dorn

**Wildflower Alpaca Farm:** Susan Campbell and Ken Mariette

**Wendy and Ken Kowalke**

**YaYa's Alpaca Farm:** Karl Blandin

That's all for now. **Thank you** for a wonderful 2014, for your friendship, your business and your trust in Over the Rainbow Alpaca Ranch. We are all looking forward to 2015 and the opportunities it will bring for all of our farms.

**Happy New Year!**