



MAA e-Newsletter

February 2009

Sent via the Yahoo group as text html from the Board of Directors

President – Raini Perry
Vice President – Pamela Harwood
Secretary – Ricki Waltz
Treasurer – Pamela Drew
Director – Patricia Houde

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NEWS

Maine Ag Trades Show was held at the Augusta Civic Center in January. MAA benefited from better booth placement – we were front and center as people came in the main doors. We also had 20 volunteers to staff the booth, which meant shifts could be shorter, allowing volunteers more time to make the rounds of the show. Not only did we sell over \$700 in socks (\$350 profit to MAA, which more than covered the cost of the booth), but also distributed the new MAA brochures and “talked alpaca” with folks drawn to the booth by the slideshow of adorable alpacas.

For the first time, MAA scheduled short seminars conducted in the nearby meeting rooms. While some of these were sparsely attended, we have plans for improvement next year, such as having all of our seminars held on one day, and also holding our annual meeting at or following one of the 3 days. This will enable more members combine travel and time commitments to attend both the Ag Trades Show and the annual meeting at which we hold elections.

Celebrating the UN’s International Year of Natural Fiber with Fiber Maine-ia. In response to the United Nations declaration of the 2009 International Year of Natural Fiber, organizations all over Maine are joining together to celebrate the importance of plant and animal fibers in our State’s history and culture, and to explore fiber’s place in our agricultural and creative economies. The goals of Fiber Maine-ia are to:

- **cultivate** awareness of the importance of plant and animal fiber production to Maine's history, culture, and economy;
- **inform** beginner farmers and others interested in raising and processing fiber animals or crops;
- **inspire** appreciation of the beauty and utility of natural fibers produced in Maine;
- **support** networking among Maine fiber producers and consumers;
- **help** increase marketing opportunities for Maine fiber; and
- **develop** awareness of the impact of sustainable fiber production and consumption practices on our state, our nation, and our planet

Fiber Maine-ia events include:

- Monthly brown bag lunch lectures and interactive workshops on Maine's fiber farming, processing, arts, and multi-cultural traditions;
- Interactive gallery exhibits and programs related to textiles and textile tools at the Page Farm and Home Museum and the Lord Hall Gallery, both at the University of Maine;
- Revival of Maine's participation in the national "Make It With Wool" contest;
- Creation of the Fiber Maine-ia website at www.umext.maine.edu/fibermaine-ia linking users to resources throughout Maine, including other organizations, programs, and activities celebrating the IYNF;
- a week-long fiber day camp for children in Kindergarten through grade 6, investigating fiber farms and production, fiber processing, and fiber arts and crafts;
- programs and resources for teachers and students;
- Senior College course on fiber in Maine;
- special public programming during the August 2009 Maine Fiber Arts Weekend;
- **a statewide conference** to be held October 10-11, 2009, featuring lectures, workshops, and demonstrations on fiber production, processing, and creative enterprise; exhibits of textile arts; a fiber show and sale; and a fiber-theme musical performance.

Contact Mary Bird at mary.bird@umit.maine.edu if you wish to participate as a speaker or demonstrator at any of these or other events.

Make It With Wool Contest, sponsored by the Maine Sheep Breeders Association, is being revived in Maine, as mentioned above. Take part in this national challenge to create a wool garment, ensemble, or wearable accessory, using sewing, knitting, crochet, or other processes. Finished garments will be modeled at the **Fiber Maine-ia Conference** at the University of Maine on **October 10, 2009**. Youth and adults may participate in one of 4 categories: preteen (under 13), 13-16 (junior), 17- 24 (senior), and Adult. Fibers used may be 100% wool or 60% wool or specialty fiber such as alpaca, llama, cashmere, angora blended with up to 40% synthetic fiber. There will be prize money awarded in each category, and champions in Junior and Senior categories will be eligible to show their garment and compete at the national competition in January, 2010. Complete rules for the competition and a participant application will be posted in March, 2009 at <http://extension.umaine.edu/fibermaine-ia/wool.htm>

Northeast Livestock Expo – May 15, 16, 17 at the Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor. The Maine Beef Producers, Maine Sheep Breeders Association and Boer Goat Breeders of Maine have joined together to present the third Northeast Livestock Expo. Last year several farms brought alpaca and sheep to exhibit and fiber products to sell. As this was a success, the Expo is looking for more participants.

During the three days of the event, the Expo hosts sales and shows for Beef cattle, Boer goats and sheep. There are large commercial vendors and others selling food and livestock supplies. A full schedule will soon be available at www.northeastlivestockexpo.com.

On Saturday morning at 8:30, alpaca breeders will host "Alpaca 101 – Basic Needs", followed by the sheep and alpaca auction at 10.

Available for the Fiber Area are nineteen 10x10 inside stalls available at a cost of \$50.00 each, which covers the three days of the event. There are also ten stalls available with outside access for display of livestock and inside space for product display/sales. These are also available at \$50.00 and are based on an early applicant requests. As many know, animals draw a crowd; the greater the crowd, the higher potential for sales.

In keeping with the lower cost for the Fiber Area vendors, the items sold must originate from livestock on your farms (Coop and other "pooled" yarns apply as long as your farm has contributed to the coop or pool). They cannot include food products. Keeping in tune with the alpaca, llama and sheep, we are mainly looking for fiber products – items to be sold for display or clothing.

The booths will be locked at night. You will need to bring your own tables, chairs and livestock pens. For more information and/or application, please contact Cindy Kilgore at cindy.kilgore@maine.gov or Cell: 215-4968

Agriculture Day at the State House has been rescheduled to **Tuesday, March 31st** 8AM – 2 PM at the State House in Augusta . The Maine Alpaca Association is participating in this event for the first time in this event. We are in need of volunteers for the day. If you are interested, please contact Raini Perry at lcblowers@hotmail.com, and please specify whether you are available for the full day or part time. Raini will set up a schedule once she has the volunteer list together. Partial day shifts would be 7:30-10a / 10a-12:30p / 12:30p- 2:45p.

We are also in need of baked goods. I am anticipating we will need close to 1000 pieces based on the amount of people which usually attend. If you can bake and mail Cookies to Raini by Monday the 30th, please let her know.

The Maine Fiber Frolic – Maine's own Sheep and Wool Festival – **Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7 (set-up is Fri the 5th)**. Don't forget to put "the Frolic" on your calendar. Whether you attend as a vendor, volunteer, or simply plan to attend the membership meeting that afternoon, we need your presence! Go to www.fiberfrolic.com for more information.

Special note: Heidi West of the Maine Llama Assoc. will be organizing "**Lamalimpics**", featuring an obstacle course, a leaping contest, and limbo for llamas **and** alpacas on Sunday 1:00 PM at the Fiber Frolic. Now is a good time for handlers and lamas to begin training.

2. Leads – Another Benefit of Membership in MAA. Since December, all visitors to the MAA website who request the e-Newsletter are asked to submit their contact information and are given the option of hearing from our members. The contact information for those who "opt in" is sent to members via email.

3. Upcoming Meetings & Events

7th Annual Spa, Knit and Spin – Feb 28th – March 1st (this weekend) at the Hilton Garden Inn and Harraseeket Inn. Freeport

Next BOD Meeting – 4:00 PM Tuesday, March 10th – If you want us to add anything to the upcoming membership meeting agenda, please contact Raini before our meeting at Friendly's in Freeport.

Next Membership Meeting – Saturday, March 21st 11:30 AM at the Great Wall Buffet, Augusta \$5.00/person. RSVP to Pat Houde, alpacafields@earthlink.net. Speaker soon to be announced by the Education Committee

Maine Open Farm Day July 26, 2009. http://www.getrealgetmaine.com/visit/open_farm_day.html
Deadline to be listed on website and advertising is April 1 . Call Judy Blaisdell at 287-3702

North American Alpaca Show April 2-5, 2009, West Springfield, MA

2009 New England Alpaca Fest May 9 and 10, 2009
at the NH Sheep & Wool Festival, Hopkinton State Fairgrounds, Contoocook, NH

**The next MAA e-Newsletter will go out in early June. Deadline for submissions of articles or events is May 25, 2009. Please send Newsletter ideas, articles, comments, etc. to Pam Harwood at pdh@longwoodsalpacas.com .
Thanks for your time and support of MAA!!!**