

'Getting Started'

By James Humphreys

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On my first date with my wife-to-be, we learned of a mutual love for animals and that we had both dreamed of becoming veterinarians. Our plans for becoming vets had run aground somewhere along the way but we still felt a need to be surrounded by animals. When we married and moved into a small townhouse it wasn't long before we, and our very active Springer Spaniel, outgrew the townhouse...with a strip of grass the size of a bowling lane! Then one fateful day in February of 2000, Helen ran into a friend who was selling an old farmhouse a few miles north of Pittsburgh. A farm? Growing up, my family had an old farm used as a weekend getaway so farm life wasn't completely foreign to me...but a farmer? And that small strip of grass had become 10 acres of land with an old bank barn. Well, needless to say, we "bought the farm".

Knowing Helen, it wouldn't be too long before she had filled that barn with some kind of critters. We wanted something that was relatively easy to care for and something we didn't eat or send out to be slaughtered. Helen was sold on raising alpacas after looking at several other possibilities and researching the animals, as well as the investment and tax advantages of being an alpaca farmer. She eventually won me over after we visited a few farms and fell in love with these fleecy, humming beauties.

We educated ourselves by joining AOBA and attending auctions and shows, taking in as many seminars as we could. We also visited 15 farms across the US and in the process garnered reams of invaluable information and advice from some of the leading alpaca breeders in the industry...as well as some of the nicest and most diverse people we'd ever met!

When we began searching for our starter herd, we felt quality and diversity were the keys to creating a magnificent herd. We started with 20 beautiful females of renowned bloodlines from east to west of the US. Our starter herd includes offspring from **Hemingway, Caligula, Camilio, Bueno, Microsoft, Vengador, Desperado, Felix, El Niño, Royal Fawn, and Altiplano Gold.**

We felt that the key to getting off to a good start in this business was to avoid making costly and irreversible mistakes. We'd like to thank all of the gracious alpaca people who gave us their time and shared their advice so that we might avoid the inevitable stumbling blocks along the way.

Dr. Doolittle was a vet who could talk to the animals. I'm no Doolittle, but I believe I can 'hum' a few bars...

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