

# The Morning Star

A catalyst for people passionate about exotic fibers

## RUG YARN MAKER NEW ADDITION AT MORNING STAR FIBER MILL

In August of 2008 we added Belfast Mini Mills new rug yarn maker specifically because it makes a great avenue for alpaca seconds and Icelandic spring clip to be made into very thick rug yarn. This yarn is made by twisting roving around a sisal twine core. This whole operation can be done at the carder, keeping the cost low for our customers. By supplying the

twine, our customers can get this yarn for the same price as roving. If we supply the twine the customer cost increases

A bump of rug yarn is about 200 yds. and it will easily transform into a 3'X5' woven rug. Mishler Weaving Mill has agreed to weave beautiful rugs, unlike any we've seen currently in the market place. They will be using a summer/winter pattern called Kentucky Mountain. The cost for weaving rugs is \$1.50 per inch for a 34" X 60" rug. Another option is allowing your fiber to be donated to Mishler Weaving

Mill as a 501c3 and letting them make rugs and sell them at their store.

Taking a rigid heddle rug weaving class (which would include a 32" rigid heddle loom and stand) and actually learning to make your own rugs from your own rug yarn is another possibility that Morning Star Fiber is offering. These rugs can be made in just a few hours and design options can be tailored to your own farm with a little creativity. MSF has become a distributor for Ashford products so we have the ability to order many kinds of looms, wheels, and accessories.

Many creative products can be made with the rug yarn including chair pads, car mats, runners for halls, stair carpets, etc. Footstools have been woven from our rug yarn! Let your imagination go!

For those of you who live in Ohio, this is a great opportunity to use the Ohio Proud logo.

*Our rug pattern is not one we've seen yet in the market place.*

## YARN TASTING 2009

Yarn shop owners are welcome to reserve a spot at the 2009 Yarn Tasting by calling 330-778-0078 and asking for Karen. The event will be held February 7 from 10:00 to noon. Morning Star Fiber will debut some of our new spins and blends, allowing attendees to knit and critique these yarns. We found it very valuable last February to have input on the yarns we were creating, and we look forward to the input and advice we will gain from this year's event. Our desire is to promote the kinds of yarns that yarn stores want to sell to customers and form links to benefit us all.

In 2008 we are aware of at least 4 skein competitions that our customers won ribbons with the yarns they had spun at Morning Star, and we are striving to keep improving our service. We have noticed that yarn stores are filled with yarns that have either unique spins, unique blends or both. We've formed alliances with Ashland Bay and Foxglove Fiberarts to provide our customers with great prices for blending fibers to create that perfect yarn that is uniquely yours. We are here to serve both fiber grower and store owner!

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*Morning Star Fiber exists to glorify God by pursuing a global vision to the ends of the earth*

*as a premier exotic natural fiber organization that brings hope to local communities through economic, social and spiritual transformation.*

## SECOND & FOURTH THURSDAYS FIBER DROP OFF

In 2008 we began a new strategy to help us maximize efficiency that included having fiber check in on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. This new system proved successful and we will continue to ask people to try to use those days for delivery. Of course we will never

turn fiber away on other days of the week, but for personal attention to detail, we request that you plan on the designated Thursdays. We continue to offer skirting to those who are not able to skirt their own fiber for just \$5 per pound. This service does not include fiber sorting, so do not

expect a professional report with this service. We no longer process any fiber that has not been skirted and tumbled. The resulting yarns are worth the extra expense. Seconds designated to rug yarn need to be skirted to be free of manure, sticks, saw dust, gravel and the like, but fiber length variation is

not an issue. These rug yarn seconds will only require tumbling — all prime must be skirted and tumbled unless it has been certified sorted. This restriction is because a certified sorter will shake out dust.

## 2009 CALENDAR OF MSF EVENTS

### January 31, 2009

Saturday

#### **Rigid Heddle Rug Class**

Time: 10:00 to 5:00

Teacher: Jan Cox

Cost: \$325 before 1/15/09

Class Limit: 10

Includes: 32" rigid heddle loom and stand, warp & lunch

Student supplies: rug weft for one 3'X5' rug

Requirements: your own rug yarn (200 Yd.—1 MSF bump!)

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### February Socks!

#### February 7, 2009

Time: 9:00 to NOON

#### **Socks to Dye For!**

Teacher: Jan Cox

Cost: \$75

Class Limit: 10

Includes: crock pot, superwash sock yarn and dyes

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### February 14, 21 & 28

Time: 9:00 to NOON

#### **Sock it to me—2009!**

Teacher: Jan Cox

Cost: \$140

Class Limit: 10

We'll make a beautiful pair of hand dyed socks, learning a section each of the 3 Saturdays.

Pre-requisite: must know how to knit and purl

Those taking the Crock Pot Sock class will already have the yarn for the knitting classes—others will have to pay for the yarn for this class—and additional \$15

### March 21, 2009

Saturday afternoon

#### **Big Stitch Tote Bag**

Teacher: Becca Smith

Time: 1:00 to 4:00

Cost: \$25

Needles, hooks, liners, leather straps and yarns will be available for purchase the day of the class.

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### May 23 & 24, 2009

#### **Great Lakes Fiber Show**

Wayne Co. Fairgrounds

Building 13—Booths 25 & 26

We're happy to take fiber for processing at the booth!

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### October 10, 2009

Time: 10:00 to 5:00

#### **'Cause I Felt Like It**

Presenters: Deborah Galaz, Barbara Morejon & JC Christensen

Cost: \$150

Class Limit: 15

Lunch & supplies provided for all felting projects

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### October 24, 2009

Time: 10:00 to 5:00

#### **Never Felt Like This**

##### **Before!**

Choose one style from:

felted portrait

nuno felting

3-D mixed media felting

Cost: \$125

Class Limit: 15 (5 per teacher)

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### November 14, 2009

Time: 10:00 to 4:00

#### **'Paca to Product**

Keynote Speaker: Linda Cortright

Other presenters to be announced

Cost: \$50 before 11/1/08

Class Limit: 250

This year's focus will be product development, increasing market demand, website development, leveraging existing markets.

Lunch provided. This event will again be held at the beautiful Shisler Conference Center on the campus of the OARDC in Wooster, Ohio



We are so grateful for all the ways we have been able to serve our customers and for all the alliances we have been blessed to form with many knowledgeable people in the fiber industry. Paca to Product 2008 was definitely a highlight of our year and we're thankful for the many who worked to make that event happen! We look forward to 2009 as a year of new insights and opportunities to serve. We welcome growth and we look forward to the possibility of hiring a full time employee of like mind that would be open to serving either here or abroad, as the Lord leads.

Serving others as we serve Him

## A DEAL TO KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF!

We're always trying to find ways to offer processing for less while keeping the mill sustainable, and we have come up with another approach we think you'll like! We need 32 nine lb. batch orders of grade A alpaca fiber with no more than an inch variance in staple length throughout the entire batch. Thirty-two of these 9 lb. batches will enable us to run an entire month without changes to the settings on our machinery, so we'll pass the time saved on to you in \$\$!

If you choose the "sock deal", you will be able to get \$402.56 worth of processing for only \$252—a savings of \$150.56 per 9 lb. batch. You can have as many 9 lb. batches as you want—up to 32, of course! You will be guaranteed to get your own fiber back in a 3 ply sport weight yarn with a 20% Panda blend. This new blend is 60% superwash merino, 30% bamboo and 10% nylon.

Your batch needs to be all one color, and all fibers within 3 microns. If we have all 32 batches in the mill by January 14, we begin the run on January 15 and complete it on February 15. If that deadline is missed, the next opportunity for a one month run will be June 1. in our first "big run" project. If this run works well for all, we'll try it on other processes.

Coupled with this great processing deal, MSF is also offering special classes to create end product with the sock yarn! Jan Cox will be teaching Socks to Dye For on February 7. You can dye ANY color fiber! The large white crock pot used for this class is yours to keep for many more dyeing adventures at home with your own yarns! Also, Jan will be teaching how to make socks February 14, 21 and 28. This will arm you with the ability to make great end product. And end product wouldn't necessarily need to be socks — what about sock kits! What about sock classes of your own, after you gain a little expertise!

## TALES FROM YARN-IA

### A WALK THROUGH THE WARDROBE DOOR!

The first step in making a quality yarn is keeping the fiber animal clean, especially before and during shearing. We recommend having a hand in helping the shearer by pulling away the fleece as it's shorn off the animal BEFORE the shearer goes back over the animal to "clean up" uneven places in the coat. We refer to these little annoying pieces that get mixed in with fiber that has not been gathered in time as "snow" because it falls into the fleece and compromises the entire fleece. The snow, or second cuts, cannot be removed from the fleece after it arrives at the mill, and as they go through the carder and into the roving, they form little noils. Noils are short, knotted fibers that add texture — but are not the desired end for a smooth quality yarn. Anything that can be done to eliminate noils is greatly appreciated by farmer, miller, textile artist and end user — so let your shearer know in certain terms that "there's no time for snow time when shearing the prime".

In addition to having a fleece free from debris and snow, uniform staple length that doesn't vary more than an inch-and-a-half, and exceeds 2 inches is optimum. Our spinners can spin up to 6 inch staple length for

plied yarns. We are able to spin longer staple length if we are spinning lopi singles — but that's another discussion altogether. Uniform staple length and micron count within 3 counts makes the smoothest yarn. If your fiber has more than 3 micron counts variation, the coarser fiber will migrate to the outside of the yarn and yield a coarser texture. Having your alpaca fiber dehaired will greatly aid in getting uniform grades of fiber.

Virtually all fiber is useful, but care should be taken to put grades of fiber to the best end product. The feel of the fiber tells you what the end use should be. A certified sorter is definitely a great boon to developing optimum fiber products. The sorter will place your fibers into grades of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. At MSF, Grade 2 (20 to 23 microns) is best suited for lace & fingering wt. yarn. Grade 3 (24 to 28 microns) is best suited for sport & bulky wt. yarn. Grade 4 (29 to 33 microns) is best suited to felt and should be blended with 25% merino to make a felt that will not shed as readily. Grade 5 and 6 are best suited for rug yarn and should be blended with 10% nylon. Technically, we can make yarn or felt from all grades, but following these guidelines will give the best end products.

Yarns are made by carding fibers to a parallel condition called a roving, then drafting (or stretching) the roving down to a smaller size and, finally, putting twist into the fibers as they spiral down through an orifice on the spinner and wrap around a bobbin to make a single. The thickness or weight of the single determines the finished size of the yarn. The number of twists per inch is controlled by the spinner, with the goal being to put enough twist in to hold the fibers together, but not form a "hard" hand or feel.

Singles are joined together by twisting in the opposite direction using less twist per inch than the singles received to make a balanced yarn. The yarns can be plied with 2, 3, 4 or more — but typically the yarns are either 2 ply or 3 ply. If our customers choose a 2 ply yarn, they are opting for a yarn that will be loftier and feel softer in the skein. However, 2 ply yarns tend to pill and wear down with abrasion from normal use. If our customers choose 3 ply yarn, they receive a sturdier yarn because in twisting back on each ply, the singles cannot relax as much as they are able to in a 2 ply. This means they retain more cohesiveness and resistance to abrasion. A 3 ply yarn will knit up as soft as 2 ply yarn but will wear much longer because the yarn is more stable,

giving your customers a better product for their dollar.

The alpaca fiber industry has been working to develop a standard for alpaca yarns that will enable us to predict yards per pound (YPP) and provide our customers with a reasonable end product prediction for skeins of yarn. At MSF, our bulky yarn is 800 YPP, sport yarn is 1200 YPP, fingering yarn is 1600 YPP and lace yarn is 2000 YPP. The cost for making yarns is determined by the amount of time it takes to make them. Bulky yarn can be made in much less time than any other yarn, so the price per pound reflects this. Another factor to consider is the number of wraps of yarn you can wind around a one inch marker on a ruler — this is called wraps per inch or WPI. The wraps per inch is the same for a 2 ply or 3 ply yarn, but the size of the individual singles in a 2 ply yarn are larger than the singles in a 3 ply yarn. With this in mind, you can see how it would take longer to spin a 3 ply yarn than it would to spin a 2 ply yarn. You can also see how it would be a small change to have a couple different products made from the same size singles. You could ply 3 sport weight singles together for a nice sport weight yarn, but you could also get a nice 2 ply lace weight yarn with some of the yarn because the size needed to make a 2 ply lace weight yarn is the same size needed to make a 3 ply sport weight yarn.

## WEAVING IT RIGHT—3 OPTIONS

In September 2008 we contacted Mishler Weaving Mill in Smithville, Ohio to see if they felt our new rug yarn was going to work well for rugs. We only had the "test" bump that we made during our training, and it was made of "carder fly"! BUT .... the results were great and Mishler Weaving Mill agreed to weave rugs for our customers for just \$1.50 per inch in beautiful Kentucky Mountain pattern — our first option! This rug is called a "summer/winter pattern" be-

cause it is warp faced with light on one side and dark on the other side. This makes it perfect to reverse with the seasons. The turn around time would be a minimum of 6 months for 3'X5' rugs. The mill is totally operated by volunteers who work every Wednesday. Tours to the mill are given on Wednesdays, as well, for those interested in seeing this marvelous historical facility! For those interested in donating their alpaca-

fiber to Mishler (they are a 501c3), they will process the yarn and weave up rugs to sell in their store to help support their mill.

A second option is to take our rigid heddle rug weaving class on Jan. 31 and weave your own rugs! The rugs size can be as large as 32" wide or as small as the weaver desires. This class will explore all facets of products that can be made with this very versatile loom.

The third option is to use our "in-

house" weaving, now available with the renovations, allowing us to bring Karen's floor looms into the clean classroom area. She will offer only rug weaving initially in both plain weave and the Kentucky Mountain pattern. The cost is the same as Mishler—\$1.50 per inch.

We are so eager to offer this new phase of fiber business and we look forward to alpaca, llama and Icelandic rug yarns being produced and woven in the future.

## PACA TO PRODUCT 2009

We are so happy to announce that Linda Cortright, editor of Wild Fibers Magazine, will be the keynote speaker at Paca to Product on November 14, 2009 at the Shisler Conference Center on the campus of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Linda will be sharing how other types of fiber around the world have held their position, gained leverage or lost their advantage based on how those local people decided to be a steward of their fleece. Moving forward, this region here in the Midwest needs to keep these principles in mind and allow the history and experience of other regions in the world to shape how we steward what has been given to us here.

The fundamental premise of Paca to Product is to drive research, development and innovation that will increase sustainability and profitability for state alpaca growers. Paca to Product will strive to expand the markets for Ohio alpaca fiber. This is done by the development of business in new and existing markets. Fundamental to the ongoing success of Ohio alpaca fiber is the creation of innovative fiber products and technologies that are sought-after by the global markets and consumers. This will ensure the continued demand for alpaca fiber products and offers the greatest return to alpaca growers. Paca to Product partners will work very closely in collaboration with others in the market to create products that open new possibilities within these new and existing markets. Paca to Product recognizes the influence that fashion designers can have, both on markets and consumers worldwide, and the potential that they have in creating demand for alpaca products. Paca to product works with selected designers to profile Ohio alpaca in the market place.



## NITPICKER FIBER SORTING

BY ANGIE DAPORE

There are several aims of fiber/fleece sorting. First is to produce quality fiber that will provide a high degree of consistency that processors may use with confidence. Also important is to maximize the financial return to alpaca fiber producers by less waste at the mill. Sorting the fiber according to the fiber characteristics of color, length, and grade (micron) will prepare it for the mill. You will also be provided with information about the fleece so you can make informed decisions about processing.

This is where I can help. Whether it is because you don't have the time, the desire or know-how to skirt/sort your fleece, I can do this for you so your fleece doesn't go to the mill with excess dirt or seconds (pay for more weight), or go to waste sitting in your barn or basement. Once I have your fleece processed, it can be sent to you, a mill or co-op of your choice. The fleece can be sorted by individual alpaca or if you have several alpaca

of the same color, it can be sorted by color, length and grade. The "Fleece Assessment" sheet about, grade, color, length, tenderness, weight, and vegetation will be sent to you so you can decide how to process your fiber. This sheet can also help you with decisions on breeding for future years since you will know more about each alpaca's fleece.

My husband and I have a small alpaca farm in SW Ohio. When we were getting started, I wanted to learn to sort and assess the fleece to insure the quality of our alpacas and their products. I attended the "Fibre Sorting/Classing" course at Olds College Natural Fibre Center, Alberta, Canada. I have attended other fleece seminars and worked as a scribe with the judges at fleece shows. I am ready to use this knowledge to help you get the best from your alpaca fleece if it is for processing or a show fleece.

I can be reached for pricing and scheduling at Nit-Picker Fiber Sorting: 937-996-4175 or [dapores@embarqmail.com](mailto:dapores@embarqmail.com).

## MATERN METALWORKS

MSF purchased a tumbler from Matern Metal Works, Inc. this past summer. In assessing the advantage it gives us in the mill to get alpaca and llama fiber cleaner, the difference has been noticeable. We tumble 3 lb. loads, and have lost from 4 to 8 oz. of dust from fiber. In terms of processing costs, this is huge when you consider that many customers will have 54 lbs. processed at a time. We charge on incoming weight, so this could translate into 9 lb. of dust that was treated as useable fiber. It is critical to get the dust out before the fiber goes into the wash, so Morning Star Fiber is now charging an extra dollar per pound for fiber that has not been either tumbled or sorted by a certified sorter (who will get the dust out in the process of sorting). We highly recommend the Matern Tumbler for large farms, and suggest that several small farms might want to purchase one to share. They also make a rugged light weight stainless steel & aluminum skirting table that will allow dust to fall out as you skirt.

Contact information for Matern Metal Works, Inc.: 210 N. Adams St., Mansfield, Ohio 44902 419-529-3100

## BIG NEEDLE KNITTING

We are pleased to introduce Big Stitch Needles/Extreme Needles to our retail store in 2009. These needles are perfect to use with our lopi, lopi lite and rug yarns to make great bags, rugs, wraps

and more. Because of the size, all projects knit or crochet up very quickly. Becca Smith, owner of Bagsmiths—developer of these great products—will be teaching two classes for us this

year. Tentative dates are Big Stitch Rug Class on January 24 and Big Stitch Tote Bag on March 21. These are great ways to make great end products for your own venues very quickly!

## DREAM MESSENGERS

BY ROBIN KOCHER



Dream Messengers LLC, has designed a series of plush all-natural electronic companions for young children. These soft, winged, baby animals were created to comfort children and assist parents and caregivers during Early Childhood Development. A Dream Messenger offers families and professionals the ability to address a child's needs from any culture and for a multitude of issues,

because the device's audio content can be personally customized to address each child on an individual basis. Dream Messenger features include text-to-speech, bilingual, record / playback, and downloading capabilities. Dream Messengers LLC plans to establish its manufacturing and assembly facility within Northeast, OH in 2009. These products will be "Ohio Proud" and manufactured in the Ohio, using Ohio alpaca fleece and wool for their fabrics

and fill materials. Preorders are being taken and the production electronics are currently underway. Look for these unique interactive companions to premier in the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati areas in Spring of 2009. A Dream Messenger meets the technological, environmental and social desires of our new generation while bringing families closer - one child at a time.

## SHEARING SMART IS THE PERFECT START

As you may have heard we've begun a renovation project to section off the 2700 sq ft of usable space we have here into mill, office and retail space. All of the labor for this project has been done "in-house". We jokingly have repeated a phrase that is commonly heard on construction sites by some contractors, "we'll let so and so deal with that". And so the foundation layer passes error onto the framer who passes error onto the electrician who passes it on to the dry wall guy who passes it on to the trim guy who passes it on to the painter who says, "best we could do" or "it is what it is". It's easy for specialists to notice the flaws of another worker who they are dependent on. Very rarely do you find a crew put together that treats their job with "zero" tolerance for error. But when you find one you have a very well built house. In the fiber industry here in North America we are experiencing similar "it is what it is" issues. Whether it's the farmer, harvester, processor or person trying to sell it in the market we often end up with a "best we could do" product.

As a fiber processor, it is quite easy to tell with a quick look at your fiber the quality of the harvesting and with a closer inspection the quality of your breeding program and management and

breeding practices. The practices at each step along the way will dramatically effect the final yield received (and it's quality) and ultimately the profits from that particular animal's fleece. While five to twenty dollars can be saved on the front end while shearing/skirting/sorting you also can potentially miss out on fifty to hundred and fifty dollars at the end of your value added steps from that same fleece. Don't think it's so? Consider this...

When you're having your fleeces processed, your goal should be to harvest 100% of the usable fiber that exists on that animal. (Obviously not including the small amount of fiber left on for responsible husbandry practices.) Poor shearing practices alone can account for 15 to 25% of that usable fiber being compromised. The percentage compromised directly translates into potential revenue lost. Unfortunately this 25% is often magnified because double cuts and staple length differences result in greater inefficiency in skirting and sorting not to mention that end products will show the imperfections of the inconsistent clip. Ultimately the end product you receive back will sell for less, require more time to skirt, not to mention that it wasn't very easy to process. When you consider that camelid fiber can sell for \$3 to \$5 per

ounce and Icelandic fiber can sell for \$2.50 to \$4.50 per ounce these high percentage losses add up.

So practically speaking if your usable fiber yield off of your animal is 5.5 pounds (or 88 ounces) that translates into \$264 to \$440 for camelid farmers and a \$220 to \$396 for Icelandic farmers just off one animal! So why is that typically never realized? Well your yield after shearing is only 4.5 pounds with the other pound going in the trash bin, so you've already lost 18% of your potential revenue. Now as you are skirting it you determine that only 3.5 pounds is adequate for making yarn for an additional 22% loss. Some, however, decide not to skirt out their fiber well and will send in close to or all of the 4.5 pounds to the mill for processing paying an increased amount up front to process the additional weight but they also experience 25% processing loss. Because of poor harvesting techniques these types of fleeces almost always experience at least a 20% loss in processing especially when no attention to detail has been taken in skirting. A best case scenario in Icelandic sheep yields 30% loss and camelids 10% loss, at least in our 18 months of observations.

So what would be the ultimate? We should focus our harvesting methods on collecting a consistent product which processors can use with

confidence so that high quality products can be yielded consistently. Currently in the North American industry we (personally) have yet to see anyone begin to establish the harvesting standards that would create this kind of consistency specifically at the shearing level. We feel that too much responsibility is being placed on those who skirt, sort, and process to turn dirt into diamonds. From our perspective what is needed at the farm level are breeding and husbandry practices that will allow for the most uniform fiber on a given animal both in length and in diameter from head to tail. And also management practices that account for the least amount of foreign matter contaminating the fleece. At the harvesting level a code of practice is needed for harvesting a maximum yield in each grade of fiber from a given animal. Many times there are two or even three grades on one animal. This will require close work by both those who shear and those who skirt/sort. Practically speaking it might even be better for the shearer to be trained to do some of the preliminary sorting before he begins shearing so that total time in harvesting can be reduced to a minimum. At the mill level high quality products need to be developed for each grade of fiber that will realize that maximum amount of revenue from that type of fiber.

## PREDICTABLE YARN PROJECTIONS

ALPACA/LLAMA	NON-BATCH	9 LB.	18 LB.	27 LB.
Lopi—300 ypp	\$29.50	\$254	\$486	\$628
8 oz./150 yd skeins		14	28	42
Lopi Lite—500 ypp	\$29.50	\$254	\$486	\$628
8 oz./250 yd skeins		14	28	42
Bulky—800 ypp	\$34.25	\$292	\$558	\$715
4 oz./200 yd skeins		28	56	84
Sport—1200 ypp	\$39.50	\$340	\$648	\$823
4 oz./300 yd skeins		28	56	84
Fingering—1600 ypp	\$42.00	\$360	\$684	\$877
4 oz./400 yd skeins		28	56	84
Lace—2000 ypp	\$46.00	\$396	\$756	\$958
2 oz./250 yd skeins		56	112	168

*All alpaca or llama fiber coming into the mill with dust will incur an extra \$1 per pound charge for tumbling.*

ICELANDIC SHEEP	NON-	12 LB.	24 LB.	36 LB.
Lopi—300 ypp	\$20.75	\$237	\$456	\$594
8 oz./150 yd skeins		14	28	42
Lopi Lite—500 ypp	\$20.75	\$237	\$456	\$594
8 oz./250 yd skeins		14	28	42
Bulky—750 ypp	\$26.50	\$300	\$576	\$738
4 oz./200 yd. skeins		28	56	84
Sport—1000 ypp	\$30.75	\$366	\$696	\$882
4 oz./300 yd. skeins		28	56	84
Fingering—1250 ypp	\$33.25	\$390	\$744	\$954
4 oz./400 yd. skeins		28	56	84
Lace—1500 ypp	\$37.25	\$441	\$80	\$1080
2 oz./250 yd. skeins		56	112	168

## THE FELTER'S HUB

MSF has increased our supply of products for felters to include pre-felts in beautiful landscape colors. Our pre-felts are made of batting, usually several colors of fiber—either dyed or natural. They are 4—6 oz. per 4'X4' square. The fibers are barely entangled, making them a great base for backgrounds or to use to cut out shapes to apply to another work in progress.

We now carry 59 colors of solid color merino combed top, 21 different multi-colored blends of merino top, and 13 different multi-colored blends of merino/tussah top. Our ecru combed top selection includes merino/tencel, merino/bamboo, merino/tussah and merino/angora. We continue to stock Hook On Felt's wonderful foam forms and a full line of felting needles and felting needle tools. A good supply of Icelandic batts that always felt up superbly

are in stock. We have made up kits from some of our foam hat forms, our pre-felts and our 6 needle tools.

Last year we began to offer rented felting studio time, and many folks have found this to be of great service. The studio can be rented by appointment only, and rents at \$30 for a half day and \$50 for a full day. This will allow you to use either/both of our flat bed felting machines — one 3'X4' and the other one 4'X4'. There is a mandatory training period for first time users for instruction in how to use the felting machines appropriately.

Our classes in October continue to teach the latest in felting, and this year will be especially grand. 'Cause I Felt Like It will feature using pre-felts in a tea cozy, making lariats and felted purses. Our brand new class this

year is called Never Felt Like This Before and features a 3-D mixed media project, a nuno felting project and a portrait/picture work ready to hang. For this new class, each student will need to pick one of these 3 projects to spend the entire day learning. There is a limit of 5 per class.

Some of you have asked, and we now have the ability to order corriedale combed top in 6 lovely pastel shades. You must order in one pound increments and the order will be shipped in approximately 2 weeks.

We are so excited about the new direction several folks have taken felting this past year. One lady does creative felting with pictures she created from drawings done of horses or rabbits, etc. Another has applied her own unique style to several pieces

in nuno felting and in marvelous needle felted pictures. A watercolor artist by trade, began felting in 2008 and has experimented with felted portraits that are exquisite. She can take a picture of your favorite animal and make a portrait of the animal using the animal's fiber for a very close rendition! It's a great tool to have to remember your favorite animal that is no longer with you. She's also done 3-D felting using mixed media to make wonderful works of art. Yet another gal has continued honing her felting skills to include marvelous sculptures, but also basket weave felted scarves and so much more!

**"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."**

*Vince Lombardi*

## 2009 THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF NATURAL FIBER

2009 has been designated by the FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) as the International Year of Natural Fibers. The International Year of Natural Fibers will be officially launched on January 22, 2009 at FAO in Rome.

Natural fibers may be defined as "those renewable fibers from plants or animals which can be easily transformed into a yarn for textiles".

Animal fibers are largely those which cover mammals such as sheep, goats and rabbits, but include also the cocoon of the silk-worm. Vegetable fibers are derived from the stem, leaf or seed of various plants. Close to 30 million tons of natural fibers are produced annually in the world, of which cotton is dominant with 20 million tons, wool and jute each around 2 to 3 million tons followed by a number of others.

Natural fibers form an important component of clothing, upholstery and other textiles for consumers, and many of

them also have industrial uses in packaging, papermaking and in composite materials with many uses, including automobiles.

Apart from their importance to the consumer and in their various industrial uses, natural fibers are an important source of income for the farmers who produce them. In some cases they are produced on large farms in developed countries, but in many developing and least developed countries proceeds from the sale and export of natural fibers contribute significantly to the income and food security of poor farmers and workers in fiber industries. For some developing countries natural fibers are of major economic importance, for example, cotton in some west African countries, jute in Bangladesh and sisal in Tanzania. In other cases these fibers are of less significance at the national level but are of major local importance, as in the case of jute in West Bengal (India) and sisal in north-east Brazil.

Since the 1960s, the use of synthetic fibers has increased, and natural fibers have lost a lot of

their market share. The main objective of the International Year of Natural Fibers is to raise the profile of these fibers, to emphasize their value to consumers while helping to sustain the incomes of the farmers. Promoting measures to improve the efficiency and sustainability of production is also an important aspect of the Year.

Several events have been planned to coincide with the International Year of Natural Fiber including:

**June 3—7, 2009:** Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) national conference and the 2nd annual world conference, fashion show at the IX Center in **Cleveland, Ohio**.

Check out their website at <http://www.naturalfibres2009.org/index.html> for a wonderful video on the world view of natural fibers.

It's very exciting to be on the cutting edge of developing products in America with the Icelandic sheep wool, alpaca and llama fiber. We are also

excited to be working in conjunction with the widows and orphans of Asia's Hope in developing opportunities for them through fiber related products. JC is looking forward to traveling to Kyrgyzstan for the International Felting Symposium in July—anyone interested in going, too? And, Debora Galaz, a local felting artist, has agreed to do research on alpaca felting techniques and properties. Julie Ganim, of Julie Ganim Collection, will be continuing her exquisite work with high end fashion design—be sure to see her fashion show at the 2nd Annual World Conference at the IX Center! Icelandic shepherds like Judy McDowell have been making wonderful felted rugs and bags and writing articles to encourage others to explore the wonderful world of felting with Icelandic wool. Lopi yarn has been very popular with the current surge in interest in knitting among the young people, and we've had great success making lopi with alpaca!

## GREAT BLENDS FOR 2009

MSF continues to increase our knowledge of fiber blending, and we'd like to share some of these new finds with you. Adding 10% blend of most fibers will do wonders for the end product for just a few dollars!

**TENCEL** - adding tencel to suri alpaca will keep the gorgeous shine, but provide grip so that the slippery fiber can be spun easier and smoother! We also love the way adding tencel to any fiber will give a smoother yarn with lots of sheen. Adding 10% - 20% tencel to your fiber will yield a wavy effect to your felt, making it perfect for nuno felting Impressionistic art effects! We carry 100% tencel combed top or merino/tencel blend combed top. *Tencel is made from wood pulp and the most environmentally friendly of plant fiber products and also the strongest. It is breathable, drapable and comfortable to wear.*

**BAMBOO**— adding bamboo will add lots of slip to fiber, and we recommend using one of our merino/bamboo top blends. Bamboo alone tends to create slubby yarns

like silk, but in both cases a little blending with merino makes everything right. Bamboo is a really "hot" item on the current market, so this could give added appeal to yarns for you. *Bamboo fiber is made from the bamboo plant through a very extensive and caustic process, so even though bamboo grows without pesticides and fertilizers and needs no irrigation, it is not as environmentally friendly as tencel when making into fiber. Bamboo is antimicrobial and has the ability to both absorb and transmit moisture, making it very comfortable to wear.*

**HEMP**—adding hemp will give yarns a nubby, rugged look that is great for sweaters for men. *Hemp is made from a bast fiber similar to jute, flax and ramie. Hemp excels in fiber length, strength, durability, absorbency, antimildew and antimicrobial properties.*

**MERINO**—adding our fine (64s) or superfine (80s) merino top will bring loft to everything and add softness because of the low micron count—even to alpaca! Me-

merino also comes in a wide variety of dyed colors and can be used to provide colored yarn or roving without actually dyeing your fiber! We carry merino in multi-color combed tops, too, which gives even more fun to your choice of color. And speaking of multi-color tops, we carry merino/tussah silk multi-color tops for the added pizzazz of silk to your fiber! *Merino is the finest sheep wool, and has converted many people who thought they were allergic to sheep's wool, but found out after wearing merino that it was only the micron factor (high) in most wools that made them scratch!*

**NYLON**—adding nylon will help hold fibers together and brings lots of added strength and wear to yarns with as little as 5%. Adding enough nylon seems to give a machine washable quality to alpaca!

**BLENDED BLENDS**— We've begun using several blends of combed top so that our customers only have to pay for one blending fee, but can enjoy the value of 2 or 3 blending fibers. Our most recent find

is a Panda blend that is 60% superwash merino, 30% bamboo and 10% nylon, and because all three fibers are machine washable it can make the end alpaca product machine washable with a 20% blend. Other favorites are our merino/tussah, merino/tencel, merino/bamboo and merino/angora blends.

We suggest carder blending—only \$2/lb. plus the cost of blending fiber. Check the shelves of the yarn stores and see how all the "hot" yarns are blended! Time to create some "hot" yarns of your own!

Morning Star Fiber continues to form alliances with distributors of other fibers like sea cell, soy silk, corn fiber, milk protein and blends that will add value to your products. Our goal is to give you the best product at the best price. Our motto states it best: we want to be your natural choice!

### A NEW LOOK AT THE MILL FOR 2009!

Increasing static electricity issues with our alpaca orders during this extremely dry fall prompted us to do some major renovation in the mill to close the milling area off from the retail and office area. We then installed a ventless gas heater, which adds 1 gallon of water to the air every hour in the mill. This has aided our two industrial humidifiers and our steamer in keeping us able to process during the dry times. We typically had to shut down the mill for a couple of weeks each year for static, but we are hoping that now we will be able to run year round.

This was the perfect time to make a retail area with a classroom/weaving area in the back. We love the way we don't have to contend with all the mill dust on our retail items as much! We also like the electrical outlets now available in the classroom! And Karen especially loves having her

floor looms set up! She hopes to be able to start weaving rugs for customers from our new rug yarn soon!

Another great feature is having our office area separate.....and quiet! It's so very nice to not have someone on the other end of the phone line asking "what's that noise I'm hearing?" and we have to explain, "oh, that's just the carder and the dehaier and the picker and the air compressor.....could you speak a little louder? I can hardly hear you!" The other nice thing is that we can think better in the quiet! It has been fun to grow and fun to work on something other than wool for a bit, too! It's given the men time to get more tools!

We are hoping that we can do some consignment work with our customers now that we have a better retail area.

### OHIO NATURAL FIBER NETWORK

BY KAREN BURKE, FOUNDER

*Weaving Connections in the World of Natural Fiber*

The *Ohio Natural Fiber Network (ONFN)* is a grassroots endeavor which strives to unite and promote enthusiasts of natural fiber. We are a unique and diversified "family" of fiber producers, fiber artists and crafters, fiber processors and those who are simply interested in learning more about natural fiber and its many offshoots.

ONFN meets monthly at Places In Time Farm & Fiber Arts in the Seville, Ohio area of southern Medina county. Our meetings consist of a short

business discussion followed by a demo, project, or presentation. Even if you are unable to attend meetings, you can enjoy the many benefits of membership within ONFN including being part of our website directory. Members also are eligible to participate in ONFN events and take advantage of discounts and trade opportunities within the Network.

Please join us and be sure to check out our website:  
[www.ohionaturalfibernet.com](http://www.ohionaturalfibernet.com)  
for more information.

**MSF thanks you for your continued business.**

**We highly value our customers.**

**It is our pleasure to serve you.**



*from farm to fashion, we want to be your natural choice*

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## UPDATE ON ASIA'S HOPE

Last year we reported that the sale of our mystery bumps enabled us to purchase a sewing machine and supplies for an orphanage in Cambodia. This past summer we were privileged to have the director of Asia's Hope, Dave Adkins, and the director of the orphanages and widow's home of Asia's Hope in Cambodia and Thailand, Tutu Bee visit our mill! We gave them a tour of our facilities and explored ways that we could work together. Tutu agreed to have the orphan girls make small cotton drawstring bags for our lavender buds, and they arrived late August! Many of you noticed them when you received your shipment of finished product—what a great way to package this great moth repellent! Tutu also told us about the widows beginning a

silk farm, and we are eager to see how that develops. The hill tribes in Thailand have so many creative natural projects and we are excited that Hillary Parris, a fiber artist from Wooster, Ohio, will be observing while visiting them in February. Hillary will be gathering information on the fiber animals indigenous to the region, as well, and bring back ideas for new ways we can work together. In lieu of toys this year, JC's children opted that money go to purchase a 32" rigid heddle loom for use by Asia's Hope and Hillary will be instructing how to use it while she's visiting. She will also be teaching color theory. We are also very grateful for the presence of Bobbi Campbell on the MSF advisory board—as she and her husband John are on the board of Asia's Hope.

## WANT A 37% SAVINGS ON PROCESSING ?

Cash in on a pilot program we are launching at the beginning of 2009!

Start the New Year off on the right foot! Specifically, with our incredible **SOCK YARN RUN!**

We are offering a way for individual alpaca farmers to join together with others to gain savings on processing simply by choosing to process 3 ply sport wt. yarn in 9 lb. batches. This yarn will be blended with 20% Panda combed top—which is a blend of 60% merino, 30% bamboo and 10% nylon.

We need 32 nine pound batches to begin this run. The cost is NOT the customary \$340 plus the blending cost of \$18 plus the blending fiber cost of \$44.56 for a grand total of \$402.56. **It is only \$252 if you catch this deal..... Only \$28 per pound!**

Fiber needs to be in the mill by January 14 for this special deal. Fiber needs to be grade A alpaca with staple length variation of no more than an inch. **Time is of the essence, so don't delay!** You'll be ready for the spring shows in plenty of time and able to realize much more profit — a win/win situation! There is no limit of how many 9 lb. batches you send in—even if you want to do all 32 yourself! Call today to let us know of your intentions so that we can plan accordingly—330-778-0078.