

by Barbara Parry

***I was a guest at Barbara Parry's [Springdelle Farm](#) this past weekend ahead of my hanging out at Fiber Twist, and while there I found out that there has been some lovely developments for her this late summer. So let's check in with our Yarn Farm columnist, shall we?***

Exciting news on the wool front: our Cormo ram, Teaberry, won the Champion Purebred Fleece Show at the [Eastern States Exposition](#) Fleece Competition on Friday! That's his fleece, the tall white one in the center. And it's a beauty!



Last Wednesday Holly and I delivered a carload of very special fleeces from this year's shearing to the exhibit hall at the Eastern States (a.k.a. the Big E), the largest agricultural fair in the Northeast. This show, held every September in West Springfield, Massachusetts draws competition from all over the country. I reserve the best of our best to enter.

There's a division for Purebred fleeces and a division for Handspinning fleeces. Within each

division are classes for specific breeds. I spent hours last week dithering over which Cormo fleeces best represented the breed and which ones might be deemed worthy of an award in the handspinning category. Each farm may enter only two fleeces per class, so it's important to choose wisely. I ended up taking four Cormo fleeces, one Border Leicester fleece, and four cross-bred fleeces, including two for the colored wool category.

It was very exciting to see Teaberry's fleece awarded the purple rosette for the Purebreds. Kind of like watching your kid score a winning goal in a soccer match or get an A+ on a science fair project.

The flock was well represented. Tea's son, Cody, took second place honors in the Purebred white Finewool class (with Tea taking the blue ribbon). Verbena's fleece captured a red ribbon in the white Finewool Hand Spinning Fleece class. Arcadia's locks placed third in the Border Leicester class and this was the BL National Show. We had some 5, 6 & 7th placings as well in the Handspinning Division. Not bad.

You can celebrate with us in a special contest. Describe a milestone or success, either yours or someone close to you, in the comment section. On Friday, October 9th I'll draw a winner from all commenters for a basket of my hand-dyed Cormo Silk Alpaca yarn, which happens to be made from the wool of many Teaberry offspring.



Tea's doesn't understand all the fuss — he already knows he's hot stuff. Here he is, looking rather George Clooney-esque in this photo taken last summer. All it takes is field of grass to make his day. That and my Cormo ewes. What a guy.

Soon it will be time for him to try his luck with the ladies. It's hard to believe, but we've reached that time of year again. I'm reviewing the flock list, deciding how many and which ewes shall be bred. You can read more about the thinking that goes into breeding for good wool in my article for the fall issue of Twist Collective: The Ram is Half the Sweater.

Another busy week. Time for our Sheep Shares members Foliage Open Barn this coming weekend (and time to reserve shares for 2010 soon). Then the New York Sheep & Wool at Rhinebeck comes up mighty quickly, where we have double-sized booth this year in Building A. I'll be sure to bring a lock of Teaberry's wool for fondling.

Somehow, we must finish haying in between the fall fiber festivals. I counted the square bales in the barn yesterday and we're still short of what we need to carry the flock through winter. Making hay in fall is challenging. The dew dries off the field late morning and begins setting again by 3:30 in the afternoon, as soon as the shadows creep across the fields. That doesn't leave much dry time for raking and baling. It takes a good 4 days for mown grass to dry well enough for baling at this time of year and we're just not getting that break. The pattern has been one or two sunny days wedged between periods of overcast and drizzle. It's maddening, really, with so much to do here. If you see a four day window of decent weather, you'll know what we're up to. Keep your fingers crossed for us.