

Hartman's, Kearney, Nebraska by Sue Wilde

The name Hartman's is almost a place itself. Fred Hartman has been hosting llama sales for the last 24 years and this October's sale was an interesting gathering of 86 llamas and people. Marie Towells and I drove from Alberta for almost 2 days pretty much non stop and arrived about 7:30 Thursday night in Kearney,(locally pronounced Karny) Nebraska. The sand for the pens was down and the pens were being set up. Fred welcomed us and as we began unpacking a few other consigners began to arrive.

I attended a Hartman's sale in 1989 in Omaha but this was my first visit to Kearney. Friday, we washed the miles off our llamas and enjoyed the friendly chatter with the Ruckers, the Abbots and Charlie Cornet in the large wash area. The facility was great, we could drive right in and unload, very clean sand was in all the pens and there was a crew of very helpful, polite, young men that filled our water buckets and provided hay to the llamas that needed it and continually asked us if they could do anything for us. Saturday morning was an alpaca sale and we llama consigners took the opportunity to shop the llamas there and promote our own. There were a lot of local people who regularly attended the sales and those, like Charlie Cornet, that came from as far away as Maryland.

Sunday, the sale started at 11:00 and the all the chairs in the sale area were full so those that came in after 11:00 had to bring in their own chairs and continue to fill the room. The sale order is slated according to the postmark on the

consigners entry envelope, first come first serve. Sally Rucker's expertise on pedigrees and colorful encouragement to bidders made the sale of each llama an event. Our llamas were brought to the sales area by the (did I mention cute?) crew of young guys so all we had to do was take our llamas on stage and the rest was up to the bidders. The prices of the llamas were as varied as the llamas themselves. Breeding quality was rewarded by brisk bidding. At some of the sales there have been as many as almost 200 llamas but in the 86 consignments on display there was a wide variety of males and females to choose from. The phones seem to ring on most of the lots sold and the high selling male, consigned by Pat Peters was sold over the phone. Larry Stark who had been raising llamas for 25 years dispersed the last of his llamas so he could retire. It was hard, I am sure to see the last of his llamas go. The Ruckers were the volume buyers, there were 19 llamas that Sally, knowing their backgrounds, just couldn't resist adding to her program and I must admit she took a few home that anyone would have loved to add to their own programs.

The sale was concluded by about 2:30 and consigners were given checks right away for their sales. The bustling activity of everyone packing up and loading llamas to go to new homes lasted about an hour and then the building was quiet, the last llama sale of 2005 concluded.

Next year will be the 25th anniversary of Fred Hartman Sales and I am sure there will be some celebrating to do to continue the tradition of "Hartman's" and the excitement of llamas!