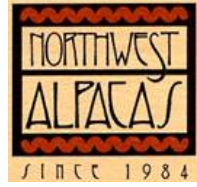




# Very Pregnant Females

---

By Mike Salfey



## Very Pregnant Females...by Mike Safley

---

I am often asked which alpacas are the best value. The answer is simple; [very pregnant females](#), the more pregnant the better. My dad and I built our herd by selecting [very pregnant females](#) beginning in 1984. Dad taught me how to “palpate” (aka balotting) females to determine how far along they were in their pregnancy. In those days no one was ultrasounding females but you could feel the body parts in a later term pregnancy. I would stand behind the dam and rub her belly, if I felt a body part we knew the female was due in less than 60 days.

Eric Hoffman was the head salesman for the importers in the late eighties and he held an import sale at his ranch in Santa Cruz, California. Eric controlled most of the market in those days and he had the biggest group of females for sale outside of South America. The sale format reflected his control, you needed an appointment to even go to the sale and he only allowed prospective purchasers 30 minutes to select their alpacas.

Dad and I arrived at the appointed hour and waded into the available females. Dad would hold the head and I would slip up behind them and massage the momma’s belly. If I could feel a body part we bought the mom.

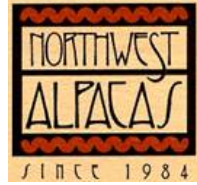
We purchased 7 females that day and they all had cria within 60 days. Lo and behold each was a female cria. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for Eric and his sale after that purchase. Needless to say, the arrival of all of these female cria really accelerated Northwest Alpacas herd growth.

For anyone who wants to make a high value alpaca purchase, pregnant females are the best choice for several reasons:

- 1) They have a proven ability to conceive.
- 2) The shorter the due date, the higher the value of the Dam.
- 3) Pregnant females will have 2 or 3 cria before a six month old female cria might have 1.

For anyone who wants to grow their herd size and have alpacas for sale in the shortest possible time it is point number 3 above that makes pregnant females a high value purchase. You may want to consider the following chart before making your next purchase:

	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Cria</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Cria</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Cria</u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup> Cria</u>
Maiden Female 6 month old	18 Months	30 Months	42 Months	54 Months
Pregnant Female Due in 10 months	10 Months	22 Months	34 Months	46 Months



## Very Pregnant Females...by Mike Safley

Pregnant Females Due in 30 days	1 Month	13 Months	25 Months	37 Months
------------------------------------	---------	-----------	-----------	-----------

(Please note the chart above assumes an ideal reproduction schedule for each female. This is not always the case and sometimes rebreeding a proven female or a maiden can take longer than described.)

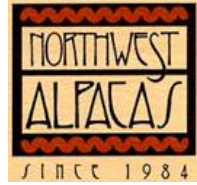
To further illustrate the value of the female due in 30 days, consider the following scenario; 1) the first cria born 30 days following your purchase is a female, 2) you successfully breed her at 12 months of age and 3) she delivers at 24 months of age. This means that your original purchase of 1 pregnant female due in 30 days has turned into 4 cria in 25 months. Compare this to the maiden female in the chart who will not have her first cria until 30 months after purchase.

Now let's compare the value of each females' production in dollars and sense. The value of cria was created assuming each female produced four cria, a 50/50 male/female ratio and that the two female cria were worth \$20,000 each.

	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Cria</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Value of Female per month</u>
Maiden Female 6 month old	4 cria – 54 months	\$40,000	\$740
Pregnant Female Due in 10 months	4 cria – 46 months	\$40,000	\$870
Pregnant Females Due in 30 days	4 cria – 37 months	\$40,000	\$1,081

The female who was due within 30 days would earn \$341 more per month, over 54 months than the maiden female and would be worth \$18,414 more (\$341 X 54 mos). The analysis does not take into account the potential for the female cria of the female due in 30 days to start producing additional cria during the same time frame. In fact, a female cria could produce 2 additional cria by the time a maiden would produce four. If one of these were a female cria, the female due in 30 days could be worth \$20,000 in addition to the \$18,414 for a total of \$38,414 more than the maiden female in 54 months.

Another way to look at this is that a female due in 30 days is worth \$3,069 more than a female due in 10 months (\$341 X 9 mos) or \$6,138 more than a maiden (\$341 X 18 mos). The analysis also demonstrates that a pregnant females' production is worth close to \$1,000 per month to their owner. This makes pregnant female alpacas a pretty good cash flow machine.



## Very Pregnant Females....by Mike Safley

Over the years I have noticed that many breeders take their [very pregnant females](#) off the market when they get close to their delivery date or they raise the purchase price. They know that if the dam delivers a female cria they stand to double their money.

At Northwest Alpacas we keep our near term, or [very pregnant females](#) in a pasture close to the barn. They are all for sale as pregnant females until the day the cria drops, we do not raise the price. Fred and I tell prospective purchasers, that if we shake hands and agree to the purchase, the cria is the purchasers even if they have not signed the contract and paid the deposit. But if that cria is born without a handshake, the cria belongs to Northwest Alpacas. I have closed more than on deal with mom in labor and the new buyer standing there watching the crias birth. It's always exciting to lift the tail and answer what my dad called "The \$20,000 Question": It is a girl?