



We've got success in the bag.™

Home of the *Purse Kits*, *Alter Egos* and the *Project Bag*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Becca Smith, President

Phone: (216) 921-3500

Cell: (216) 496-7475

Becca@BagSmith.com

www.BagSmith.com

MADE IN OHIO: BAGSMITH DEVELOPS NEW, LUXURY YARN
KNITTING COMPANY WORKS WITH OHIO MILLS & FARMERS ON NEW PRODUCT

SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO (Feb. 13, 2009) – When Becca Smith, owner of BagSmith, a Cleveland-based company that creates knitting and crocheting kits and accessories, shared a new product idea with a group of struggling Northeast Ohio alpaca breeders, she created instant hope.

Smith had been working for months on developing a new yarn that would fit with her company's unique product line of super-sized knitting and crocheting accessories.

"My products are one-of-a-kind," Smith said. "So I knew I'd have to get creative during product development."

Her idea came to fruition with **Big Stitch Yarn**, a luxuriously thick yarn used to create incredibly soft, "comfort chic" rugs and home accessories featuring wholesome stitches and cozy textures.

"Big Stitch Yarn is very soft. And, it's thicker than any other on the market," she said. "It just a pleasure to work with; you can make a project in just one day!"

But what makes Big Stitch Yarn truly unique is the way in which it was developed – using Ohio alpaca "seconds." Traditional alpaca yarn is spun with the fiber from an alpaca's back and underbelly. But, alpaca seconds are the fiber that is sheared from the animal's neck and legs.

After doing her research, Smith learned that the alpaca seconds are extraordinarily soft and thick – perfect for her product line. But there was a problem.

"The fibers on alpaca seconds come in shorter lengths, which makes them nearly impossible to spin into yarn. So, unfortunately, the fibers often just go to waste."

Smith turned to Karen Christensen, owner of Morning Star Fiber, a fiber mill in Applecreek, Ohio that specializes in processing Icelandic, alpaca and llama fibers.

"We're always trying to create new products. It's a fun thing to do, especially when we find people as ambitious as Becca," Christensen said. "We also shared the dream of finding a good way to utilize the unused alpaca seconds."

-more-

The two women spent months experimenting with various fiber-blends to create a fiber core that would make the yarn flexible without falling apart. They worked with local alpaca breeders on obtaining samples of the unused seconds to test their creations.

In the end, Smith landed on the combination of 60 percent alpaca seconds, 20 percent merino wool and 20 percent nylon.

Big Stitch Yarn comes as hopeful news to alpaca farmers in Northeast Ohio. The region is often referred to as “Little Peru” because it contains the nation’s higher concentration of alpaca farms. So, with a struggling economy and heavy international competition, these farmers now have a great way to use these alpaca fibers and generate additional revenue.

“This is sustainable agriculture we’re talking about,” Christensen said. “It’s from right here in Ohio.”

The end user also will get the satisfaction of knowing that local breeders are getting the most use out of the animal’s coat, without any waste.

“Without a doubt, Big Stitch Yarn will positively impact the region’s alpaca industry – one *big* stitch at a time,” Smith adds.

This “eco chic” yarn fits with BagSmith’s line of Big Stitch Knitting needles, hooks and designs. This unique method of knitting and crocheting uses super-sized, lightweight needles and hooks that range in length from 16” to 32.”

The user can create gorgeous, richly textured garments and one-of-a-kind home and fashion accessories in no time. The company retails these specialty accessories, which are made from Ohio wood by local craftsman John Higgins, at more than 600 independent yarn shops throughout the world.

Big Stitch Yarn is sold in “bumps,” which weigh 40 ounces and are approximately 125 yards. They are currently available in natural colors including creme, fawn, mocha, gray and multi-colors. More colors will be available this year. Each bump yields a rug approximately 24” x 27”.

###

ABOUT BAGSMITH

BagSmith owner Rebecca Smith is a lifelong knitter who created the BagSmith line of unique products featured at more than 600 independent yarn shops throughout the United States, Canada, the UK and France.

Big Stitch Knitting and other BagSmith products are available at www.bagsmith.com or by calling the company toll-free at 888-879-7224. A list of yarn stores carrying BagSmith products can be found on the website.