Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES July 8, 2019

Committee Members: Bonnie Potter, Chair
Joan Clappier
Mary-Margaret Lannon
Dr. Pat Long
Tom Petersen
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm ET.

Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- The Fiber Extravaganza will be July 19-21. The office staff is busy with planning and packing
- The staff is currently interviewing candidates for the positions of marketing person and event planner.
- Registration is looking good thus far. Fleece registrations are currently about what they were last year. Some of the workshops are already sold out and the others are filling.
- We are hoping for a good turnout of general public like we had at last year's fleece show.
- The three new Board members were in Nashville for a few days of Orientation last week. They are ready for their first face-to-face Board meeting at the fiber show next week
- The Board meeting will include selecting liaisons to the various committees and they will spend a day discussing the Strategic Plan – assigning areas of responsibility to board members and possibly committees.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- The biggest issue being discussed is Vesicular stomatitis, which has been found in TX, NM and CO. It is a disease which is primarily spread by biting insects. Affected animals can become very ill and it is sometimes fatal. It is being seen primarily in horses, but it can affect many other species including camelids. This can affect livestock transport to, from or through those states.
- Not much mosquito-borne illness is being seen yet.
- Meeting registration is now open for the annual USAHA conference in October. It will be held in Providence RI this year. Pat is trying to get a speaker on parasites. Pat asked if AOA wants him to represent AOA at the conference, as he has done for many years. We are glad to have him representing us. Andy will check with Bud and the Board to be sure this is approved and his expenses will be covered.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks — Potter

- Bonnie has incorporated the changes from the May GIRCom meeting and sent the revised version to De Monson. De is currently very busy with the Fiber show next week but will get to it soon.

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3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits — Smoker

- Brion used benchmark info during an audit to show the IRS that his client was doing better than his peers and was really trying to make a profit.

3.3 Agritourism … How Can We Help Our Members? — All

- Mary-Margaret has not yet had the opportunity to visit a farm in WI that is doing agritourism. She'll check them out and let us know what she learns.
- If anyone has any relevant information, please send it to Bonnie so she can start assembling information that we have, with the goal of providing guidance and tips to the membership..
- Pat was at a client's farm and saw a nice sign about agritourism. He learned that their community got a grant to provide the signs for free to participants.
- Tom said that in his California county (Placer county), Farm Tours are supported with marketing and a portable toilet.

3.4 Follow-up on Transporting Livestock Safely Act — Potter/Merriwether

- GIRCom drafted a letter supporting this Act and sent it to Bud. The letter has been sent to the co-sponsors of the bill as well as the committee chairs for transportation and agriculture

4.0 New Business

4.1 Direction from Board Based on the updated Strategic Plan — Merriwether.

- The Strategic Plan will be a major topic of discussion at the face-to-face Board meeting next week.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (6/10/19) — Potter/Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes was made by Pat and seconded by Joan. Motion was passed by all members who were present at that meeting.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie: Pull together info about Agritourism
- Bonnie: Follow up with De on the Benchmark study
- Bonnie: Follow progress of the Livestock Safety bill
- Andy: check with BOD and Bud regarding Pat representing AOA at the USAHA meeting
- Bonnie: Add to next month's agenda – Emergency Preparedness eBlast. Send it to Pat for review

6.2 Next Meeting Date 8/12//2019 — Potter

6.3 The meeting was adjourned 8:06 pm ET — Potter