Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2016

Meeting: Conference Call—February 18, 2016, 7:30 p.m. EST

Members: Deborah Bailey
Lynn Boak (absent)
Joan Clappier
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier

Meeting called to order at 7:38 p.m. EST.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance (B. Potter, D. Vannier):

- National Show:
  - The show is selling out this year.
  - There are 32 lots in the auction.
  - A spectacular lineup of vendors…more than last year.
  - They have already sold > 200 tickets to the gala dinner. Fortunately the venue this year has enough space for a large dinner.
  - Good sponsor participation.
  - The new National Supreme Championship award will premiere.
- The election committee has been formed. Three directors terms are up, all are eligible to run for re-election. There will be some proposed bylaws amendments on the ballot.
- The annual audit is underway.
- It is the time of year when AOA re-confirms committee appointment. If any current GIRCom members do not wish to continue they should contact Bonnie.
- The 2016 National Fleece Conference will be in Arlington, Virginia, in July.
- Denver, Colorado, has been selected as the venue for the 2017 National halter show. AOA is working on selecting a venue for the 2017 Fleece Conference.
- Membership renewal is still in process.

2.0 Health Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts (P. Long, B. Potter):

- It has been pretty quiet.
- There have been more EHV1 cases reported.
- MERS: old world camelids are the primary host for this disease which can affect humans. WHO has made it a Reportable Disease. MERS has been found in a group of alpacas in the Middle East who had been housed close to camels.
- TX reported WNV last year in horses. TX also had cases of EEE, which is the furthest west Pat Long has heard about this “Eastern” disease.
- There is still some concern among owners that the antibiotics that we can currently purchase OTC from feed stores might be changed to prescription drugs. Thus far we haven’t seen this implemented anywhere.

- Pat continues to inquire about rules in various states for health certificates (CVIs) for animals that are just passing through a state on the way to their destination. Thus far the answer has always been that as long as they are not unloaded and are just passing through, health certificate is not required for the pass-through state.

3.0 Government Related

3.1 Status of Article on "Things You Should Know: (Zoning, UCC, etc.)" (L. Boak):

- Lynn was unable to attend the meeting. She has been working on Part 2 and might be editing Part 1. She will send documents to the committee members when she has them ready for review.

4.0 New Business:

4.1 Personal Property Tax on Alpacas in Virginia (B. Potter):

- Someone at an alpaca show contacted the AOA Board with a concern about his county (Westmoreland County in VA) starting to charge property tax on alpacas. The Board asked GIRCom to discuss it. Apparently property tax laws vary from county to county in VA…at least with regards to livestock.
- Brion was surprised that the counties don't do the same thing and thought that the state constitution should govern what the counties can do.
- There was discussion among committee members about their experiences with property taxes in business situations.
- Suggestions for who the owner should talk to about this:
    - VA Cattle association. It sounds like the county is also taxing cattle, and they are a larger organization than the VA alpaca association.
    - Ag Commissioner or Extension Agent in the county.
    - VAOBA—they should be aware of this and may be able to offer advice or assistance.
    - Grange—the Grange is a lobbying organization that represents agricultural interests.
    - Talk to his State Representative. As how this county can tax alpacas when none of the others do? (Is this assessor overstepping her authority?)
- The alpaca owner can also do research on what entity has the authority to set tax rules within VA.
- Bonnie will email the person with our suggestions.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (J. Clappier):

5.1 The motion was made by Pat and seconded by Joan to approve the minutes of 1-20-16. The minutes were approved.

6.0 Meeting Wrap:

6.1 Review Action Items (B. Potter):

- Bonnie will send an email to the VA alpaca owner with the property tax issue.
- Bonnie will email the committee members to find the best date for our March GIRCom meeting.

6.2 Next Meeting (B. Potter):

- TBD, March 16 conflicts with Nationals.

6.3 Adjournment (B. Potter):

- A motion to adjourn was moved by Joan and seconded by Pat. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. EST.