Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES October 8, 2018

Committee Members: Bonnie Potter, Chair
Deborah Bailey [absent]
Joan Clappier
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- 134 farms participated in NAFD
- The Board is still working on strategic planning with the facilitator. They plan to meet one more time with the facilitator to narrow the possibilities down to a realistic list.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- WNV is still scattered about the country, but has not been reported in alpacas
- A case of EEE was reported in NJ
- There has been a lot of hurricane disaster prep information posted.
- There have been offers on Facebook of alpaca owners willing to take in alpacas during the disasters.
- 5500 pigs and 3.4M chickens were killed in the recent flooding
- There has been very little lately about antibiotic resistance. There was an announcement at UN Assembly that they want to do more collaboration to slow development of anti-biotic resistance
- Not much being said about farm bill.
- USAHA meeting will be in Kansas City later this month. Pat will give an overview of the camelid industry in US and information about diseases of concern in camelids.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks Intro Letter — Smoker

- Brion wrote an Introductory Letter for the Benchmarks study, Bonnie did an edit pass on it, and the committee discussed it. Bonnie will add a 5th point about the questionnaire providing information for AOA to respond to queries. The questionnaire will also be edited to add a Region selection using the same definition of states-per-region that AOA uses.
- Motion was made by Brion and seconded by Joan to recommend that GIRCom send the Benchmark and cover letter to board. We have requested that the staff put the Benchmark study into an online "fill-in-the-blanks format. The cover letter should then be distributed to the membership to encourage them to enter their data into the online form. We also request that, when information is compiled, GIRCom receive an electronic copy to analyze. GIRCom does not require ranch identification with the data.

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3.2 Education of State/County Officials — Potter

- On September 12 Bonnie sent the document and a proposed cover letter to Bud. But confirmed on September 20 that he has received it, but we have heard nothing further about it.

3.3 ELD Mandate/Farm Bill Update — Potter

- Nothing new. Bonnie checked online tracker which indicates that the House and Senate are targeting mid-November, after election, to finalize the farm bill, recognizing that the previous bill expired September 30.
- Brion: Both a meat manufacturer and an alpaca owner that he is working with are exempt from ELD, thus neither of them are in the primary focus groups of the mandate.

3.4 Member Concern about IRS and State Tax Audits — Potter/Smoker

- Brion's Client who was being audited, which started this thread, has won their audit with the IRS but lost at the state level. States often follow the IRS interpretation but, as illustrated in this case, it is not a guarantee.
- We have discussed talking to our personal accountants to see if any of them are interested in and willing to participate in a group discussion about tax issues and recommendations for alpaca owners. Brion advises that we wait until after October 15 to contact accountants because that is the deadline for filing extensions.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Agritourism… How Can We Help Our Members

- Bonnie sent the committee members a link to an agritourism information website.
- We discussed that some states have laws in place to provide protection to owners doing agritourism and other states do not. If GIRCom should help with agritourism, it may be helpful to collect information from states that do have protection laws in place to give examples of what owners can try to get enacted in the other states.
- Brion pointed out that the states with protection laws also have specific requirements which farms/ranches must meet in order to be covered.
- Colorado has good statues in place.
- NAFD is a form of agritourism and it is being actively promoted among members and to the public by AOA.
- Pat: Which organization within a state should be working the issue? Dept of Ag? Other?

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: 9-10-18) — Potter/Clappier

A motion to approve the minutes of 9-10-2018 was made by Brion, seconded by Pat. Motion passed.

5.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie will contact UCD group that is working on agritourism -- agricultural law center to get more information.
- Bonnie will follow up with Bud regarding the document for educating state/county officials.
- Brion will look into the PA agritourism laws.

6.2 Next Meeting Date will be: 11/12/2018 at 7:30pm ET — Potter

6.3 Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm ET. — Potter