Fiber & Fiber Products Committee (FiberCom)

Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2017

Meeting: Conference Call—March 6, 2017, 8:00 p.m. EST

Members: Stacy Heydt, Chair
Launda Soper, Secretary (absent)
B-J Ellis
Ruth Fuqua (absent)
Chris Reachard
Clarissa Wisner
Barb Ziek (absent)

Board Liaison: Norm Johnson

Staff Representative: Becky Farley

1.0 Meeting Opening: Meeting opened at 8:04 p.m. EST.

1.1 Approve Minutes: Approval of February minutes, Chris made the motion to approve, Stacy seconded, motion passed.

2.0 Old Business:

2.1 Survey Questions:

Norm sent the committee the results of the questionnaire in an Excel worksheet. We were excited to see the results that people want more fiber and fiber art education. We will incorporate as much of their requests as possible in the 2017 conference and plan the 2018 conference accordingly.

2.2 2017 AOA National Fleece Conference:

Becky stated that all of the AOA staff were currently working on preparations for the national show in Denver. She said she needed precise direction in what seminars we wanted at the AOA National Fleece Conference. This became the main focus of our call.

We gleaned the results of the survey to find similarities in what members want to learn at the conference. It appeared to us that the majority of respondents want to learn more about fiber properties, processing fiber options, what to do with their fiber including selling options and the business side of owning alpacas from setting up a farm store to more advanced marketing techniques. We understand that there is a need for new or nearly new members and more in-depth and advanced seminars.

For tonight's meeting goal, we divided these subjects into three categories; 1) Fiber Education, 2) End Results (moving the fiber through the process), 3) Business.

Then we worked on three seminars for each topic using working titles for each seminar. The titles will be formalized later. Be thinking about titles that fit.

1. Fiber Education
   a. Fiber Testing—We talked about Wini, but is there someone else? Will Cameron be there? Other options?
      i. The options, what the results will tell you and how to use the Fiber Lux for your personal use.
   b. Understanding the judging criteria for fleece for the fleece show, cottage and spin-off. Judy Keske.
   c. Sorting and grading your fiber—Wini.
      i. The hows and whys and how it affects the finished product. Do it yourself vs. having it done professionally and how skirting affects the grade of the entire fleece.
      ii. We suggested this topic be divided into beginner & advanced.
2. End results—this category is based on moving the fiber out of the barn.
   a. The latest in the USA Garment Manufacturing—Karl.
      i. 3D knitting machines, etc.
   b. How to process your fiber—Karl or Karen Ball.

i. From a mill owner's prospective. What a mill can do, the processing system, how to they want to receive it, etc.

c. Who buys fiber? What do they want? And How do they want it?

i. Panel of Buyer representatives — Stacie Chavez, Chris Riley, Brian Wilsey.

1. Overview & Q & A.

2. ALCOA, NEAFP, NFP, sock manufacturers, etc.

3. Business.

a. Business startup and planning — local SBA.

b. Farm Store 101 — suggestions please.

i. What products, where to find them, display ideas, etc. It would be great if we could find someone who knows about the psychology of the sale.

c. Marketing — Jay Reeder.

i. 101

1. How to set up and use Social Media, Etsy, Shopify, etc.

ii. 501

1. Beyond the basics — Facebook ads, targeting audiences, etc.

Then we brainstormed to give Becky a list of qualified speakers to present each seminar. This will depend on if they are attending the conference and their availability.

2.3 Informational Fleece Show Signage:

We discussed with Becky what we want for the Fleece Show signage. Chris provided Becky (and the committee) with the sign they use at MAPACA for the Cottage Fleece. It shows the rules from the Show Book. The sign is placed on an easel outside of the fleece room to explain how cottage fleece is judged. After judging, it is placed next to the cottage fleece display. Becky said they can create this sign for the 2017 Fleece Show and that it will have the AOA logo on it. She also said that it can be available for other affiliates to download and they would be able to include their show's logo on the sign. Becky said that an e-blast will go out to all the affiliates.

2.4 Project #10 Fiber as a Business Brochure:

Becky said that De and the office staff were very busy with the national show right now, but that she would check on the status of the brochure and send the committee an e-mail.

2.5 USAFC Update:

Stacy updated the committee. She said that the USAFC committee has been working on compiling information for their website. She asked our committee to send any ideas on specific information on what designers would need to know about alpaca fiber. She said that she would send Ruth an e-mail asking her what information goes out to her student designers.

2.6 Promo for the Fiber Committee:

Stacy is still needing bios and photos of the committee members to finish the promo piece about the fiber committee members and what we do. We would like to have it completed for the AOA National Show.

3.0 Board Update: Norm said that the Board has formed a new Membership Committee that is working on value-added options for membership levels and how to engage alpaca owners. He said they have also started a Youth Committee and that there are 50 entries in the youth performance class and that Nationals is a level V show with over 500 entries.

4.0 New Business: No new business.

5.0 Meeting Wrap:

4.1 Next Meeting: April 3, 2017, 8:00 p.m. EDT.

4.2 Adjournment: Chris made the motion to adjourn, Clarissa seconded, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m. EST.