Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES May 11, 2020

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

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- Elections are open: There are three board positions to be filled, plus voting on breed standards.
- The National Fiber Extravaganza has been scaled back due to Covid-19. The fleece and fiber competitions will be held as well as the photography contest. There will be no workshops, vendors, or public.
- AOA is waiting to see what will happen with fall shows
- AOA's annual re-investment cycle came up while the market was crashing, with the result that reinvested well into the drop and minimized losses.
- Local shows are encountering cancellation problems, sometimes including losses due to non-refundable deposits. MAPaca is merging with two other shows in October to make the event as cost-effective as possible.
- Alpaca ranches are being adversely impacted by Covid due to reduced visitors, fewer alpaca sales, and farm stores being closed. Ranches are also getting creative with shearing in the age of "social distancing".

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- Vesicular stomatitis is being reported, including in AZ and TX. Animal transport may become affected.
- Wisconsin is encouraging vaccinations for EEE and WNV for any alpacas coming into the state.
- The food chain is being impacted by Covid-related closures of processing plants as well as by diseases affecting species such as poultry.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks/Brion Presentation — Smoker/All

- Brion was not on the call; he had, however, gotten a question from someone who was having trouble finding the survey online. Bonnie commented that one of the points of confusion was naming it "Benchmark" but referring to it as a "Spreadsheet". Also, it takes a lot of steps to get to the survey. Bonnie asked Dan if the navigation can be made simpler and more clear. Andy agreed that it is sometimes hard to search for things on the AOA website and said that a website committee has been formed to make recommendations to make navigation about the site easier.
- Bonnie also commented that GIRCom creates a lot of educational information which can be of interest to many members, but it is now embedded within the "GIRCom" committee, below all of the minutes. Bonnie suggested that educational information be posted in a more obvious place. Dan will discuss it with De.
- Bonnie has reviewed Brion's eblast document and will do an edit pass on it.
- Question for Dan – have we gotten any feedback from members about our eBlast with information about ways to apply for Covid-related relief funding? Answer: not yet.

3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits - deferred — Smoker

3.3 Agritourism … How We Can Help Our Members — Potter/All

- This activity is mostly shut down right now due to stay-at-home requirements. The topic is being deferred to a future meeting.
- Bonnie is still working on compiling a document with the resources we have found.

3.4 International Transport of Alpacas - deferred — All

3.5 Covid 19 … do we need to provide more information to members? — All

- We discussed this question and no one thought we need to do anything further right now.

4.0 New Business

4.1 eBlast on Vaccinations — Long/Potter/All

- Bonnie sent out draft; Pat thinks it is OK.
- Motion was made to send eBlast to the BOD with recommendation to send it to the membership. Motion made by Pat, seconded by Joan, approved.

4.2 Disaster Preparedness eBlast — Long/Potter/All

- Bonnie updated the document from last Fall to include hurricanes, which are about to start.
- Suggestion to Dan: Don't send out both eBlasts at the same time … send Vaccinations first, then Disaster later in the month.
- Motion to send eBlast to members was made by Pat, seconded by Joan, and passed.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (4/13//20) — Potter/Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 4/13/20 was made by Pat, seconded by Joan. Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie: send her questions about the Powerpoint presentation to Brion.
- Bonnie: send the two eBlasts to committee members; Joan – do an edit pass on them.
- Continue work on agritourism
- Dan – talk to De about website

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 6/8/2020 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment — Potter

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm ET.