Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES December 9, 2019

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

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley [absent]

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- Margie will be going to CO for judges training.
- The new AOA Executive Director, Robin Gifford, has started. She is getting involved in the budget and working with the staff. She has lots of good ideas for the organization and is well-liked by the staff.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- Despite colder weather, there have still been some reports of EEE, EHV1 and VS.
- Not much else reported that is relevant to camelids.
- According to a report, there are more than 2.8 million cases of anti-biotic resistance in humans in the U.S. each year. This highlights why there is concern about this topic.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks (defer) — Potter/All

3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits (defer) — Smoker

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

3.4 Continued Brainstorming AOA Strategic Plan — All

Note: See 2019-10-14 minutes and 2019-09-09 minutes for preceding discussions.

FACILITATE BREED IMPROVEMENT

- GIRCom function – This topic in the Strategic Plan is not within GIRCom's area of responsibility, unless something like a legislative issue comes up.
- Pat mentioned that if AOA ever has excess funds to invest in research, ARF has additional camelid research they would like to do. Shauna is in the loop with ARF research. Andy commented that AOA is interested in research on alpaca fiber.
- Joan asked how AOA members are being kept informed about research project. Answers:
  - Andy: Facebook
  - Pat: Articles in Alpacas Magazine, including names and information about the researchers so that the owners know who's doing what.

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IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND MAINTAIN FISCAL HEALTH
Sub category: Improve Member Satisfaction

- The primary activities of GIRCom are
  - Investigating and reporting on regulatory issues that can impact the members and our industry
  - Supporting change to regulations when they are bad for our industry; working with organizations that can help with that process.
  - Researching and responding to member concerns with government or industry activity.
  - Providing information to help members with their alpaca businesse, such as our Benchmark Study, camelid educational conferences, disaster preparedness, etc.
- GIRCom feels that the information and support we supply are consistent with the objective of improving member satisfaction and we will continue to work on issues and ideas as they come up.
- Bonnie asked Andy if there are different email lists, e.g. all known alpaca owners, paid members, and other levels. Andy said Yes. Bonnie suggested that, since we are in the annual membership renewal period, AOA might want to send an eblast to everyone, giving examples of the help and information provided to paid members, and give a date after which they will only receive these eblasts if they are a paid member.

3.5 eBlast about CVI/microchips/MI requirement Potter

- The Committee has reviewed, discussed and made a couple of minor changes to a proposed eBlast written by Bonnie.
- A Motion was made by Joan and seconded by Pat to send the modified CVI eBlast to AOA to be sent to the membership.

3.6 Follow-up on CA Fur Law Potter

- CA Assembly Bill 44, which has been passed, will affect California alpaca owners who wish to sell products such as stuffed animals made from alpaca hides. See discussion in previous minutes (2019-11-11).
- Bonnie has talked to the Calpaca President. They were aware of this bill. The President will take the matter to the Calpaca Board and discuss actions to try to get the bill “amended” to give the same exemption status to alpacas that the bill gives to goats, sheep and reindeer. (Yup, reindeer!) The bill does not take effect until 2023, but we don’t want to wait until the last minute to get the bill modified.

4.0 New Business

4.1 None at this time.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (11/11/19) Potter/Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 11/11/19 was made by Pat, seconded by Joan. Motion was passed.

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6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie will send CVI eBlast Andy & Dan to give to new Executive Director.
- Bonnie: Continue pulling together info on agritourism
- Everyone: think about agritourism

6.2 Next Meeting Date 1/13/2020 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment — Potter

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm ET