Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2015

Meeting: Conference Call—March 25, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EDT

Members: Joan Clappier
Erin Egan (absent)
Jan Hamby (absent)
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier (absent)

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m. EDT.

1.0 Meeting Opening

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

1.1.1 The two major recent activities of AOA have been Strategic Planning and the National Halter Show.

1.1.2 Strategic Planning has been a major activity for AOA. AOA members plus Board members and staff got together for a very productive meeting. Things discussed included:

a. Discussion of cost savings from consolidating offices, staff and phone system, not having an election last year and generally integrating the organizations: $275,000.

b. Participants in the meeting understand that AOA is a new organization—it is not ARI or AOBA.

c. Participants split into five discussion groups and came up with ideas and suggestions in each of these areas.
   1. Attracting more people to the alpaca industry and alpaca ownership
   2. Marketing fleece and fiber products
   3. Increasing alpaca registrations
   4. Improving the show system
   5. Increasing AOA membership

d. With the results of the planning meeting (and being past Nationals), the Board hopes to have a strategic plan ready in a month or so.

1.1.3 Nationals Halter Show:

a. The show went very well. The venue was wonderful and the weather was good. There were > 600 halter entries and everyone seemed to have a good time.

b. Starting in 2016, there will be a Supreme Championship awarded at Nationals.

c. The Board is reviewing when and where to hold Nationals.

d. A Town Hall meeting was held during Nationals. Information about the Strategic Planning meeting was discussed.

1.1.4 The audit of the financials and budget is in process. Results will be posted when the audit is complete and will be presented at the annual membership meeting at the fleece conference in June.

1.1.5 AOA has resumed producing four issues of *Alpacas Magazine* each year. Everyone who makes an inquiry about alpacas receives a copy. The magazine is also available online. Between more issues and more availability, the advertisers are getting more exposure and ad revenue has increased. The magazine is back in the black.

1.1.6 Some positive indicators for AOA and the industry:

a. Last year AOA had seven benefactors; this year there are twenty.

b. More members are interested in being on committees.

c. Nationals was very well received.

d. There seems to be generally more interest in everything.

2.0 Health Related

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

Avian influenza: there has been some cross-over from wild to domestic fowl.

Sporadic cases of HV1 are being seen.

Pat is working on the agenda for USAHA meeting this fall in Rhode Island. He would like to include talks specific to camelids, such as drug residues in camelids.

There are still discussions about antibiotics.

3.0 Government Related

3.1 Development of "Talking Points" for Members (B. Potter, B. Smoker):

Bonnie passed the GIRCom writeup to the Alternate Products committee.

Bonnie has not heard of anyone who has used the emergency livestock assistance programs.

GIRCom did a post in 2013 about livestock designations and federal assistance programs.

Bonnie will draft another eblast with info about the livestock designation for alpacas.

3.2 IRS Farm Audits — Status of Lessons Learned (B. Potter, B. Smoker):

1099 information was well received by members. Coming at tax filing time was especially useful. Brion suggests we do an article on the topic. Audit season starts in September, so that would be a good time for an article. Brion will work on it and will ask Erin to work with him on it.

3.3 UCC Issue with Ranch Stores (B. Smoker):

We should let members know that this might be an issue.

We discussed combining several legal issues in a single communication including:

a. Check property zoning to be sure your expected number of alpacas are allowed.

b. Should you carry Farm Insurance instead of traditional homeowners insurance? Farm Insurance often includes liability coverage if you take your alpacas to shows, fairs, etc.

c. Possibly include information about requirements (or lack of requirements) to have alpacas licensed when you take them places. See 4.1 below.

4.0 New Business & General Discussion

4.1 Licensing Issue brought to light by *Llama Drama* (B. Potter):

When two llamas got loose in Arizona recently, the question was raised if the animals came under the Animal Welfare regulations and needed to be licensed to have been taken places.

An AOA member wrote to the board of directors expressing concern about the possibility of needing to license our alpacas when we take them places.

The definition of "animal" in the Animal Welfare act specifically excludes farm animals such as livestock or poultry used for food or fiber. Based on that, it sounds like alpacas are excluded.

Bonnie will respond to the AOA member who inquired.

A suggestion was made that we might want to have the AOA attorney look into this and see if she is comfortable putting something in writing about the issue.

Bonnie will try to contact the llama owner in Arizona to find out what actually happened or is happening about the issue there.

5.0 Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2015 (B. Potter):

Pat made a motion and Brion seconded it to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap (B. Potter):

6.1 Review Action Items:

Brion will draft an article about 1099s.

Bonnie will draft another eblast about livestock designation.

Bonnie will work on a document with various legal issues that owners should be aware of (UCC, zoning, etc.).

6.2 Next Meeting:

Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EDT.

6.3 Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. EDT.