Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2017

Meeting: Conference Call—September 11, 2017, 7:30 p.m. EDT

Members: Deborah Bailey (absent)
Joan Clappier
Dr. Pat Long
Bonnie Potter—Acting Chair
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

Meeting called to order at 7:33 p.m. EDT.

1.0 Meeting Opening

This was Andy Merriwether's first GIRCom meeting. Introductions were made between Andy and the other committee members.

1.1 AOA News of Importance (Huntley, Merriwether):

- NAFD is coming up in late September. The AOA office staff are working on getting farms signed up and reaching out to farms who have participated in previous years.
- The office had been receiving applications for a new Event Organizer. Interviews are in process, with the ED and other staff members interviewing candidates.
- Staff members recently visited a facility to begin planning and contract work for the 2018 fleece show next July.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts (Long, Potter):

- Andy would like to be on the distribution list for USAHA alerts. Pat mentioned that he may be able to sign up on the website or the AOA office staff can sign him up.
- Quite a few cases of mosquito borne illnesses have been reported, including WNV in alpacas in CA, KY.
- A report of animal responses to the solar eclipse: Chickens didn't go in to roost and crickets started chirping.
- WNV has been reported in Ohio. It is not usually seen that far north.
- EEE has made it to WI.
- EHV has been seen in VA.
- 1.2M cattle were affected by Harvey. Andy saw a picture of a group of alpacas eating hay in an office where they were sheltered during the storm.
- UC Davis has a lot of disaster resources and typically puts out disaster information. On September 8 the USDA put out emergency preparedness information for animals, both livestock and pets. On June 7, GIRCom put out a Hurricane Preparedness eblast. Bonnie proposed gathering information and putting out our next emergency preparedness update in approximately November.
- There is always a lot of chatter about antibiotics in food animals. CA was first, followed by MD in requiring owners to have a prescription from a veterinarian in order to purchase antibiotics. An Expert Commission proposes developing a road map for using antibiotics. 70% of medically important antibiotic use is in food animals.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Estate Planning/Preparedness (Potter, Smoker):

- Bonnie has sent out a revised Estate Planning document and a proposed eblast. The eblast points out the importance of how the ownership of alpacas is listed and AOA provides tools to help change that.
- What is the value of registering alpaca that won't be shown? If an animal is registered and has a microchip, it is easier to locate the owner if animal gets separated from the owner during disasters. It is also easier for others to identify the animals if the owner is incapacitated or passes away.
- Andy should be sure the Board has the document reviewed by the AOA attorney.
- Dan has talked to De about formatting the document with "fill-in-the-blanks" and they can do that.
- Brion still sees this as a living document.
- Motion was made by Joan, seconded by Pat: GIRCom should send the report to the Board with a recommendation that it be reviewed and approved by the AOA attorney, formatted by AOA staff, and sent to the membership. Motion was passed.

4.0 New Business:

4.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks (Smoker):

- Brion has been asked by people how they can figure out what it costs to raise an alpaca. He is gathering information and would like to put together benchmarks that people can use in their planning and self-assessment of their businesses. Some issues with providing data of what "typical" farms may spend per alpaca:
    - Larger farms often have lower overhead/costs per animal (economy of scale).
    - There are regional differences such as weather, cost of feed.
- Brion feels that more farms are expanding their business to alpaca-related activities beyond just breeding in order to make it a profitable business.
- Committee consensus is that we should move forward with this concept.

4.2 Emergency Preparedness Update (Potter):

- Per our discussion in 2.1 above, Bonnie will pull together emergency information she has been finding, send it to the Committee, and put it on next month agenda.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Clappier, Potter):

5.1 Minutes for approval: 8/16/17

Motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting was made by Pat and seconded by Brion. Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap:

6.1 Review Action Items (Potter):

- Estate Planning Preparedness document
    - Bonnie will incorporate a couple of committee comments and send the document plus the proposed eBlast to Dan and Andy.
    - Andy will ensure that it gets reviewed by the AOA lawyer, and then get Board approval to format it and send it out to the membership.
    - Dan will then have it formatted by De, and see that it is sent out.
- Dan will ensure that Andy starts receiving USAHA Alerts.
- Brion will send Benchmark information to the Committee as it becomes available, and we will discuss the topic at the next meeting.
- Bonnie will send info on emergency preparedness to the Committee and put it on agenda for next meeting.

6.2 Next Meeting Date will be 10/9/2017 (Potter):

6.3 Adjournment (Potter):

Motion to adjourn was moved by Pat and seconded by Joan. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m. EDT.