Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2017

Meeting: Conference Call — November 13, 2017, 7:30 p.m. EST

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

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

Meeting called to order at 7:32 p.m. EST.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance (Huntley, Merriwether):

- There has been online chatter about opening the registry again. The topic is on the AOA Board agenda. It would require a bylaws change to re-open the registry to some "outside" alpacas/bloodlines. The reason the subject is coming up is that too many (most) of the top alpacas in the US today link back to a small number of bloodlines. Thus it might be beneficial to bring in some outside stud bloodlines. Pat, who worked on screening alpacas for import, said they would need to do a similar protocol, e.g., screening for medical issues and fiber quality. The animals would have to be quarantined. There would be a selection process — perhaps a drawing — for rights to breed to the studs, making this a way to raise money while increasing genetic diversity.
- AOA is testing the latest software enhancements and starting the annual membership renewals.
- The Registry now has the first two alpacas produced by ET.
- Orientation was held last week at the AOA offices for the new Board members. They found it to be a good and useful experience.
- AOA is bringing advertising in-house for *Alpacas Magazine*. They now have the experience and staff to take it over.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts (Long, Potter):

- 24 cases of EEE and 22 cases of WNV were reported in horses WI. A higher number of EEE cases than usual were reported this year. That should all be dropping off now that we are moving into winter and mosquito-borne diseases will drop accordingly.
- There were evacuations of livestock during the CA fires, undoubtedly including alpacas.
- Oregon State closed their clinic to horses and camelids for a couple of weeks after a horse came in with EHV1.
- Bonnie sent committee a CA doc about law going into effect January 1. Owners will no longer be able to purchase antibiotics over the counter in feed stores. They must have a prescription from a veterinarian and the feed store must have a veterinary staff person to dispense the drug, thus most feed stores will no longer carry them. Bonnie said that her camelid veterinarian is not thrilled about having to keep a large stock of the medications and having to dispense them directly to owners. It will be both a financial burden and a time-consumer for veterinarians.

2.2 USAHA Meeting (Long):

- The annual meeting of USAHA (US Animal Health Association) was held in San Diego in mid-October. Dr. Long represents the alpaca industry in this organization, which keeps us connected and visible in the livestock industry. These meetings bring together researchers, diagnosticians, veterinarians, livestock stakeholders, government organizations and regulators.

- Camelids have been moved from the cattle/bison committee to the sheep/goat committee, which is a better match based on veterinary factors. Pat is vice-chair of that committee.
- Bluetongue was discussed. While incidence in camelids is low and it was believed that alpacas did not actually become ill from it, there were a few camelids in WA that exhibited clinical illness and even death.
- Screw worm, which not been seen in the US since the 1950's, was found in Keys Deer in Key West FL. A report was given about the eradication methods and progress.
- OH animal welfare regulations were put into effect about 6 years ago. State Veterinarian from OSU gave presentation of what has happened. There are a large number of camelid farms in OH. The state veterinarian reported that they have received only one complaint from a camelid owner and they work with owners to correct problems and resolve all complaints. Most producers are quick to correct any violations noted.
- With new regulations and restrictions regarding antibiotic use in animals, there is concern about sick animals not being treated in a timely manner.
- There were no pressing issues reported concerning camelids.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Estate Planning/Preparedness (Merriwether, Potter):

- Andy asked the Board president if the lawyer has reviewed the document yet. Hopefully it will move from the lawyer to the Board soon.

3.2 Alpaca Business Benchmarks (Smoker, All):

- Brion has talked to more owners and consistently find that most of them don't know what it costs them to raise an alpaca. He still feels a benchmark spreadsheet will be useful to them.
- Andy looked at the spreadsheet. He explained it to the board and they like it. Perhaps if we put it out there we'll get feedback from more people.
- Bonnie would like a bit more time for to work on it and plug in her numbers. She asked if anyone has heartburn about waiting another month for the committee to have more time to provide input. Nobody did.

4.0 New Business:

4.1 Education of State/County Officials about Camelids (Potter):

- This idea came out of a Membership Committee meeting. There are many locales where the "officials" don't have any knowledge of alpacas when there are livestock evacuations. What should we, as an industry, do to educate people outside the alpaca industry?
- Alpaca owners need to report fiber production to local ag departments. It helps our visibility and being considered "real" farmers with "real" livestock.
- What can we do as a committee to help owners/affiliates.
- Joan: Encourage affiliates to participate in their state's "Ag Day" to educate their state government about the alpaca industry.
- Pat: Talk to state veterinarians about making presentations at the state level. Suggests Bonnie produce a White Paper.
- Brion: This is a reasonable project for GIRCom to work on.
- Bonnie: Suggestion to Andy that he inform the board that we're thinking of working on this.
- Brion: In general, it is harder to work with lower level government (e.g., counties, local) vs. state level.
- Affiliates: Office tries to keep up with who the affiliate presidents are. Andy — board wants to improve relationship with affiliates.
- Over NEXT 2 – 3 months, lets put together ideas/plan for getting members, state veterinarians, affiliates, etc. involved.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Clappier, Potter):

5.1 Minutes for approval: 10/13/17

- Joan moved that the minutes be accepted and Pat seconded the motion. Motions passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap:

6.1 Review Action Items (Potter):

- Andy: Check status of Estate Planning document and report back next meeting.
- Andy: Let the AOA Board know that we are thinking of working on educating local and state officials about alpacas.
- Committee: Continue to work on spreadsheet.
- Committee: Think about ideas for educating officials about camelids.
- Bonnie: White paper about presentation to state veterinarians about alpaca industry.
- Bonnie: Email to the committee (a) Pat's USAHA report and (b) the document about the CA anti-biotic regulations taking effect January 1, 2018.

6.2 Next Meeting Date will be 12/11/2017 (Potter):

6.3 Adjournment (Potter):

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m. EST.