Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES November 9, 2020

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

Board Liaison: Wendy Dittbrenner

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Dittbrenner/Huntley

- Membership renewal: Annual membership renewal is being launched. Dan reminded us that all committee members must be AOA members.
- Tom asked if they would be sending out invoices to members. Wendy replied that the Board had discussed again recently. They decided to roll out with normal membership notification in December. Later they will follow up with targeted mailed invoices to people who renewed in 2020 but not 2021. They are not starting with a mailing to all members because of the cost. Income has been down in 2020 and they are being cautious. Wendy suggested sending postcards instead of letters. Joan liked the idea of postcards because, with a nice alpaca picture on the front, they are more eye-catching in the mail than an envelope. Wendy also said there is an AOA staff member who does extensive phone call follow up to non-renewers. There are currently approximately 2,500 members.
- The GIRCom eBlast on financial assistance went out to the members. There was a good open rate of the eBlast and good engagement on Facebook.
- Results have been received for fiber testing to assess qualities of alpaca fiber (knitted, woven, felted). Alpaca performed well as an anti-microbial material and also for good insulating properties. Details are posted in the Alpaca Academy section of the AOA website.
- AOA is working with SGS to get all of the EPD results. Data may arrive in January. They have added a coefficient of inbreeding and additional sort/filter options.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts/Conference — Long / Potter

- Covid: A UN report on November 2 listed over 800,000 animal viruses that might have potential to transfer to humans. Covid has been found in large mink farms.
- There are still a few reports of mosquito-borne diseases.

2.2 USAHA Annual Conference — Long

- The plenary session focused on COVID and its impact on agriculture in terms of effects on people, animals and our food supply.
- The Sheep, Goat and Camelid committee sessions were compressed down to 2 hours this year in the virtual format.
- The sheep and goat industries have developed animal traceability protocols. It is not currently mandatory for sheep and goats, but those industries feel it will be in the future. It is unlikely that it will ever be required for camelids.
- Dr. Pat Long gave updates on the camelid industry:
  - Covid has affected sales, shows and agritourism.
  - He mentioned the PETA video and the impact of this for worldwide alpaca fiber sales.

- Update on issues facing camelids in Alaska and the Arctic areas with wild bighorn sheep. Another presenter discussed this problem for the sheep and goat industries.
- Overview of camelid nanobodies and their potential use in treatment and diagnosis of Covid. Pat plans to have a longer presentation on this topic next year by one of the companies involved with this research.

- After several years of presentations at USAHA, Pat feels that most state veterinary officials and USDA policy makers know who the Alpaca Owners Association is and they know who to contact if they need advice or industry input on camelid issues.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks/Brion Presentation - defer — Potter/Smoker

3.2 eBlast on Assistance follow up — Potter/Smoker

- The AlpacaGram went out and was well received.

3.3 IRS and State Tax Audits - defer — Smoker

3.4 International Transport of Alpacas/Info for website - defer — Potter

4.0 New Business

4.1 None.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (10/12/20) — Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 10/12/20 was made by Pat, seconded by Tom . Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Clappier

- none.

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 12/14/2020 — Clappier

6.3 Adjournment — Clappier

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm ET.