Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES August 9, 2021

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

Board Liaison: Wendy Dittbrenner

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley [absent]

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Dittbrenner/Huntley

- The Fiber Extravaganza went very well. Classes and speakers were excellent. Going forward we have to look at location for future fiber events.
- AOA is moving forward with committees, new board members and the strategic plan.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- Antimicrobial use has decreased by 1/3 across the world.
- WNV has been detected in chickens and mosquitos; very little report in mammals.
- There may be aid available from USDA with regards to Covid impacts.
- The CO supreme court rejected the “animal abuse” measure. It was rejected on a technicality, which means it could be revised and submitted again.
- Pat is actively working on speakers for USAHA. He is plans to go to it, assuming board approval. The meeting will be held approx. Oct 21-23. Bonnie will check with Dan and Robin to be sure AOA will cover Dr. Long representing AOA at this annual event.
- We received information about an issue which should probably be referred instead to alternative the products committee. The USDA food safety and inspection service decided to amend resolution about yaks. The yak industry asked to be added to list of exotic animals that are eligible for voluntary inspection. This option may be helpful to some alpaca owners who are interested in the meat side of our industry. Bonnie will forward the information to the alternative products committee.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 IRS and State Tax Audits - defer — Smoker

- There probably won’t be any activity until September.

3.2 International Transport of Alpacas/Info for website – defer — Potter

3.3 Statement regarding Colorado Initiative 16 — Potter

- CO supreme court threw out based on technicality but it could be resubmitted.
- A similar initiative in OR is still going forward gathering signatures.
- Bonnie has modified her document to reflect the status in CO.
- CA voters passed a measure prohibiting sale or *import* of products from chicken, pigs, or calves raised in spaces that don’t meet California minimums. Pig farmers in mid-west will not change their methods to meet California requirements.

3.4 Communication with members regarding USDA grants — Potter

- Bonnie reported on her conversations with three people who have applied for and received grants.
- #1 found the paperwork onerous when she applied for a California Covid grant but people in local office helped her write the application and she got some money. She said it was worth it.
- #2 work with Northern CA Fibershed and with UCDavis group. There was lots of paperwork but she received grants.
- #3 work with a small business association, Fibershed and US Conservation Service. Got help writing her plans and received grants.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Committee Term Limits — All

- Most current GIRCom members have been on the committee longer than 3 years – several longer than 10 years. Discussion ensued.
- All members feel that having a veterinarian on this committee is very important. There has always been one but Dr. Pat Long has been on the longest. He represents AOA and the alpaca industry nationally at USAHA (US Animal Health Association). He has asked other veterinarians if they would like to assume this position and has not found anyone who wants to. He is happy to stay on. Robin made a suggestion that he could go off for a year as an advisor then rotate back on for 3 years. The committee feels strongly that an exception should be made for a veterinarian on GIRCom and he should be able to remain a voting member for as long as he is willing to stay.
- All members expressed concern about most of the committee leaving at the same time. That would practically eliminate any continuity, which would undermine the usefulness of what has been a very productive committee.
- We have a history of getting new members who, for a variety of reasons, do not stay long or contribute much. That is part of the reason the "working" members stay on. *In the past 10 years, only 1 of the new members has actually stayed and been engaged for even 1 year.*
- Proposal: Raise the number on the committee to 7 immediately and recruit 2 new people. Then continue the process for the next couple of years. That gives the committee a chance to
    a. Integrate new people and help them learn from the working committee, and
    b. Find out which ones are actually going to remain on the committee and be useful contributors.
- This needs to be a smooth transition so that GIRCom maintains momentum and direction.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (6/14/21) — Clappier

- Motion to approve the corrected minutes of 6/14/21 was made by Joan, seconded by Pat. Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie: Talk to Robin about sending Pat to USAHA
- Work with AOA on sending an eBlast to recruit new members
- Send information on the USDA inspection to Jennifer Hack, board liaison of Alternative Products committee.

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 9/13/2021 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment — Potter

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 pm ET.