Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2015

Meeting: Conference Call—August 26, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EDT

Members: Joan Clappier
Jan Hamby
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier

Meeting called to order at 7:48 p.m. EDT.

1.0 Meeting Opening

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

The National Fleece Conference was very successful. There was good attendance and approximately 550 fleeces were submitted for the fleece show. The annual membership meeting was held and the board members and officers were announced.

Two new directors were elected (Don Greene and Mike Vigus), and Steve Hull was re-elected. Dianna Jordan resigned due to time constraints so Norm Johnson was appointed to fill her position.

The annual halter show will be held in March in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Board has been meeting twice per month rather than once per month. Scott Miller and Don Greene are forming a task force to explore revenue generation options.

The AOA newsletter will be out shortly. It is also posted on the website.

AOA is encouraging members to sign up for National Alpaca Farm Days the last weekend of September.

The *Alpaca Owners Guide* is being finalized and will go to press in 2–3 weeks.

It appears that AOA membership is up this year. It is difficult to compare AOA membership this year with last year because last year the membership was in two separate databases (AOBA and ARI).

Despite having reduced staff, AOA has not reduced services. In fact, some services have been added.

Current active membership is 11,000. This includes everyone who has signed onto the member site and accessed the website this past year.

Paid membership is 2,700.

There are 200K alpacas in the database. Excluding those sold without ownership transfer would bring that number to approximately 170K. Some deceased alpacas have not been marked deceased, so the number of registered, live alpacas is estimated 150K–170K.

The Board is working on implementing the areas of the strategic plan which were selected by the membership as being of the highest interest.

AOA has exceeded every target set for the merger…by a significant margin.

2.0 Health Related

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

NJ has an animal emergency systems website, with information about what to do before, during, and after an emergency.

MS had their first rabies case in 50 years.

CO has incidence of vesicular stomatitis and WY has some cases. It looks similar to foot and mouth disease. Those diseases makes it difficult to transport animals from those states.

EEE was seen in VA and WNV in VA.

Biosecurity on farms: the alpaca community has gotten lax since the BVDV and "snots."

Pat Long talked to a testing lab that does testing for BVDV. The lab said the alpaca industry was smart for getting on top of it so quickly; we haven't seen major problems in several years.

USAHA—a speaker from Vermont will speak to the committee about slaughter of animals in their state.

2.2 Miscellaneous health-related:

Jan has been asked by a couple of farmers about the advisability of pasturing alpacas and sheep together. Pat strongly discourages it because sheep and goats are indiscriminate about where they defecate which makes the spread of parasites much worse. Rotating pastures between horses and alpacas is OK because they don't share parasites.

3.0 Government Related

3.1 Farm Bill (Livestock Designation) eBlast (B. Potter):

The document has gone out. We have not yet received any feedback.

It has prompted some people to question why we don't get free inspections for slaughter since alpacas are classified as livestock.

3.2 IRS Farm Audits—Status of Lessons Learned/1099 Article (B. Smoker):

The article is in a review/edit cycle with Brion and Bonnie.

3.3 Status of Article on "Things You Should Know: (zoning, UCC, etc.)" (B. Potter):

Bonnie has sent a draft to the GIRCom committee members. She asked us to review and comment.

She changed her approach to a Q&A format.

3.4 Disaster Preparedness eBlast (B. Potter):

This eBlast went out to the membership about a month ago. It was also posted on social media and we got a lot of "Likes."

4.0 New Business (B. Potter):

The AOA Board will look for a new GIRCom committee member.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (J. Clappier):

The minutes of 6/24/15 were approved.

6.0 Meeting Wrap (B. Potter):

6.1 Review Action Items:

Bonnie review IRS Audit document from Brion.

All committee members should review the "Things You Should Know" document and send suggestions to Bonnie.

Darby will send eBlast requesting applicants for the open GIRCom position.

6.2 Next Meeting:

Wednesday, September 23, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EDT.

6.3 Miscellaneous:

Darby reminded us that AOA staff and board members are available to speak at Affiliate meetings.

6.4 Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m. EDT.