Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES February 8, 2021

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

Board Liaison: Wendy Dittbrenner [absent]

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

Executive Director: Robin Gifford

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Gifford/Huntley

- Reorganization on board: Three board members have resigned for various reasons. Two of them have retained their positions as committee chairs. All positions have been filled by candidates from the last election.
- AOA's primary focus right now is on the National show. Approx. 300 registrations have been received thus far.
- Nominations are now open for the next election.
- The membership levels are being restructured to ensure AOA is addressing the needs of all ownership models. The changes were proposed by the Membership committee and have been approved by the Board
- AOA is expecting EPD calculations at the end of the month.
- The Board has discussed forming an ad hoc Health and Wellness Committee. Goal would be to pull together and present recommended practices, health and wellness information for alpacas. They have been following Facebook posts of new alpaca owners and many of them don't know anything about alpacas. Some of their animals are not thriving. One of the FB sites AOA has been looking at is Alpaca Farm Life.
  Ensuing discussion:
  - Pat mentioned the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (AASRP.org) as a place for information. He also said he is not seeing as many alpaca care classes these days at AOA shows and AOA or affiliate meetings. "Recommended Practices in Caring for Llamas & Alpacas" is available at isinfo.vet.ohio-date.edu [https://icinfo.vet.ohio-state.edu/sites/camelid-sta.osumc.edu/files/documents/Practices2005FINAL.pdf]
  - Bonnie brought up that GIRCom used to compile lists of camelid symposiums for veterinarians and owners and sent it to AOA members every year. There haven't been many in the Age of Covid.
  - Other comments from Bonnie: Years ago we had an Education Committee and perhaps we should have one again. The Alpaca Academy on our website has a lot of basic information available for free. More detailed information is available for paid members (but that is available for only $15/year). Some of it probably needs updating. The Suri network posts a lot of information. We don't have a process in place to monitor our website and see what needs to be updated or augmented. That could also be handled by an Education Committee.
  - Robin suggested that information should be free because she wants everyone to come to AOA for information.
  - AOA could pay speakers to create online videos, which would be free to members.
  - Tom asked if we have any guidelines for Sellers.
  - Another problem some new owners have is lack of access to camelid-knowledgeable veterinarians. That led to a small discussion about possibly resurrecting and updating lists of shearers, veterinarians, fiber processors. We have done that in the past, with a caveat that these

lists do not constitute AOA recommendations. This, too, could be done by an Education Committee.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- There has been a lot of information about Covid in different species. No mention of any in camelids.
- Feb 5 – Article about Animal Rights vs. Animal Welfare. There is an important difference. Activists don't think anyone should ever own animals.
- AOA has posted on our website our response to the PETA shearing video fiasco.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Livestock Appraiser Application/Discussion — All

- This topic came up when we were contacted by USDA to find out if we knew of any alpaca appraisers. After further discussion, we decided that AOA is not interested in getting involved in recommending or certifying appraisers. There are livestock appraisal services online.

3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits - defer — Smoker

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

4.0 New Business

4.1 Cria Health Information Request — Potter/Huntley

- This request came in to AOA. Pat mentioned the book he co-authored, which several of us used and recommend. "Llama and Alpaca Neonatal Care" by Smith, Timm & Long. It is available from Amazon for $35 and from Quality Llama Products for $29.95 [llamaproducts.com].
- Robin mentioned that the Affiliate Presidents meeting is looking for a speaker to cover scientific information such as potential uses for camelid nanobodies. Pat said he would be available to talk about it. He also mentioned that Dr. Julie Dechant at UC Davis Vet School talks about emerging topics in camelid medicine.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (1/11/21) — Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 1/11/21 was made by Pat, seconded by Joan. Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- .Everyone: look at educational information on AOA to see what needs updating.

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 3/8/2021 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment — Potter

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm ET.