Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES September 9, 2019

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

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

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

Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- The Fiber Extravaganza
  - The event ran smoothly.
  - There were more vendors and attendees this year than last year. However, it is still difficult to get much general public attendance – possibly because of the distance from a major city (Nashville).
  - Educational events were well attended.
  - Andy had hoped for more vendors. He thinks we have this venue for another year but perhaps after that AOA can look for a venue closer to a major city. Attracting more public will help grow the number of vendors.
  - The fleece committee created a display of natural fibers which was very popular. Winnie Labrecque contributed to it. AOA will take possession of the display and package it so that it can be borrowed and used by affiliates.
- Bud Synhorst, the Executive Director, is resigning. The Board is forming search committee. This was done not long ago, thus organizing the search and selection process can be done faster this time. It will, however, consume a lot of Board time, so they will be looking to see what the committees can do to offload the Board.
- Dan: The office staff will not miss a step. Over the past 3 years they have absorbed a lot of the duties previously done by the Executive Director.
- A new Event Coordinator has just been hired: Allysa Winterfeld. She has been through training.
- Tom asked if AOA will use a search firm. Andy's response: The search committee is still deciding that. AOA used a search. If a search firm is not used, AOA could pay someone to do background checks of candidates.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts/Vesicular Stomatitis — Long / Potter

- They are seeing more EEE, WNV -- mainly horses.
- In NJ, 9 horses and 1 alpaca were reported with EEE
- Pat: Studies show vaccinations can be effective if given at appropriate times. Vaccination of alpacas against WNV should be done initially 3 times in the spring. It is now too late in the season to start a series of shots, but if an animal was previously vaccinated a booster could be administered.

Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES September 9, 2019

- Pat suggested that GIRCom: send out May reminders to start vaccinations for EEE and/or WNV if owners are planning to vaccinate that year. Owners should continue testing new crias for BVDV.
- VS is still in news. It has been reported in over 200 counties in several states by mid-August. This year's strain is different (Indiana strain vs. New Jersey strain), thus previous immunity might not help.
- Antibiotic use is still being discussed in conferences
- The USDA wants to have veterinarian involvement in all antibiotic use in livestock. This has already been enacted in CA. Owners stocked up before the law went into effect
- Parasite resistance is on the schedule for this year's USAHA conference. Pat will once again attend the conference in October, representing AOA and paid for by AOA.

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks — Potter

- De Monson has made the requested changes and Bonnie has sent the modifications to the committee members. Bonnie has sent modifications to us. We discussed and decided to eliminate the instruction to enter data for the 2019 tax year. Some people may be entering 2018 data, which is fine.
- In response to Bonnie's question to Andy about whether or not the Board has had a chance to review the spreadsheet, Andy said they approve of it..
- After the tax year fix is made, De can send it out to the members.

3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits — Smoker

- There won't be anything new to report until after the October 15 extension filing date.

3.3 Agritourism … How Can We Help Our Members? — All

- Bonnie has started pulling together information that we already have.
- Bonnie will email Mary-Margaret to see if she visited the farm in WI which is doing agritourism.

4.0 New Business

4.1 We brainstormed about the Strategic Plan to see where GIRCom might help. — All

CULTIVATE DEMAND FOR ALPACA

- Perhaps work on **cull animals**
  - There is an alternative products committee but they haven't been very successful.
  - Different states have different rules.
  - What about the Alpaca Coalition?
  - Bonnie suggested we can take the approach that we did for agritourism, i.e. research and put together information and references for what is allowed in different states, such as selling meat, selling poop as fertilizer.
  - Hides generate more income than meat.
- We could put together something for new (and existing) owners:
  - Examples of business plans or sources for business plans.
  - Bottom line: resources to help people make money.
  - Business planning guidelines.

Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES September 9, 2019

- Engage children - 4H and FFA. The Membership Committee has discussed making it less expensive for children to show and/or join AOA at reduced rate

EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER MEMBERS

- Create resources to help people succeed in business. We are doing that with Benchmark Study
- Pat suggested that the Benchmark Study could be a way to contact former members and get them to re-join.
- Value of membership: Motion was made by Brion and seconded by Tom to let everyone enter their data into Benchmark Study, but they must be at least a $15 member in order to receive the results to see how they compare to others and how people are generating income in the industry. Motion passed.

The GIRCom committee will continue brainstorming about the Strategic Plan at our next meeting

4.2 Disaster Preparedness eBlast — Potter

- Pat moved and Brion seconded adding a suggestion that farms could form a buddy system between farms with different types of natural disaster threats. Motion passed.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (7/8/19) — Potter/Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 7/8/19 was made by Pat and seconded by Joan. Motion was passed by all members who were present at that meeting.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- All – continue looking at the Strategic Plan to see where GIRCom can help.
- Bonnie: Follow up with De on getting the Benchmark Study sent out.
- Bonnie: Contact Mary-Margaret regarding the nearby WI farm doing agritourism.

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 8/12//2019 — Potter

6.3 The meeting was adjourned 8:30 pm ET — Potter