Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES February 9, 2026

Committee Members: Bonnie Potter, Chair
Dr. Signe Balch
Fred Cripe
Derrick Letsinger

Board Liaison: Mike Livingston (absent)

Staff Representative: Robin Gifford

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

1. **Meeting Opening**

1.1. AOA News of Importance: Working on National Show preparations; more than 600 alpacas are registered. Finishing audit. Color Coat testing being beta tested; currently testing requires nasal swabs. Marie is retiring after 21 years. She takes 100 calls a week!! Working on new IT system. Suggestions made about new website, including space for more than one microchip. EPDs are done.

2. Health / Government Related

2.1. USAHA Alerts: Not much of concern for alpacas. HPAI is still showing up with bird flights as expected. Seeing a few cases of EHV and Vesicular Stomatitis. Screwworm being seen less with the cold weather. Ivermectin may provide some protection.

2.2. USAHA Report

- Producers and academia meet and discuss diseases, prevention, treatment, etc. We are the voice of the alpaca community. We help propose policy via the sheep/goat/camelid subgroup.
- Recommendations discussed:
    - Alpacas are at the forefront of using electronic ID and 840 chips are the future. Microchips and ear buttons, but chips could be considered contaminant in food animals. We may want to recommend preferred location – base of ear or possible base of tail. If re-chipping is needed, second chip should be far away from location of first chip. Consider future eblast.
    - CVIs are very important when transporting animals. Concern raised about Brucellosis testing and risk of false positive. It helps when vet and state vet have good relationship.
    - New World Screw Worm is within 70 miles of Texas. Millions of sterile flies have been released. We should start educating owners. Derrick will draft an article.
    - Continue to remind owners of importance of biosecurity.
    - Start thinking about policies that will help shape our industry. Who we are and what our goals are. Could learn from the sheep industry.
    - Consider sponsoring producers to the USAHA meeting.
    - Collaborate with other livestock industries.
    - Advocate for agriculture.

3. Unfinished Business

3.1 Articles on “Risk Management”. Fred incorporated our suggestions and the articles were published on Paca Post. Fred is starting to work on Slips and Falls. Also will do one on pests … stinging/flies/rodents. Then move from the barn to the pasture. Bonnie will review information in previous GirCom articles.

4. **New Business**

4.1: Brief discussion on shearers who give shots, trim teeth. Relationship with veterinarian is important. Bonnie will start drafting an information article.

5. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 1/12/2026: Signe made a motion to approve the minutes as written; second by Fred. Motion carried.

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6. **Meeting Wrap**
   - 6.1 Bonnie reviewed the action items.
   - 6.2 he next meeting will be held on 3/9/2026.
   - **6.3** Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm EDT.

Respectfully submitted, Bonnie Potter