Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES February 12, 2018

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

Board Liaison: Andy Merriwether

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether / Huntley

- Nationals are coming up Mar 23-25. The office is busy working on the show. The numbers are looking good (registrations, sponsorships, etc.)
- AOA has resumed extended hours during show season, adding Friday 7:30-5:30 CT to the schedule
- Alpaca registrations are up from last year. Membership renewals are also up.
- The office staff is working hard selling membership packages. That seems to be going well. Comment from Bonnie: She renewed her AOA membership but delayed her husband's renewal to see what would happen. He received a phone call plus an email with a lot of interesting information about AOA and the benefits of membership. Bonnie was pleased with how well it was handled.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- EHV is still being seen across the country. There have been no reports of incidence in alpacas.
- Nothing was reported that is relevant to alpacas.
- USDA is working on input for the 2018 Farm Bill, presenting what they would like to see in the 2018 Farm Bill

3.0 Unfinished Business

3.1. Estate Planning/Preparedness eBlast Status — All

- The eBlast was sent out. Some members of the Committee have heard favorable comments about it. Bonnie reported that it was mentioned as one of the things achieved by GirCom/AOA in the letter of renewal sent to her husband.

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3.2 Alpaca Business Benchmarks — Smoker/All

- Bonnie has been working on the spreadsheet, plugging in her information.
- On one of the chat sites, Bonnie saw topic of "how to make money in the alpaca business". One poster earns a good income from sales and agri-tourism. He sells alpacas but relies on the other activities for primary income. Bonnie talked to him about the business plan we are working on and he will provide some input for it.
- Some states have laws to protect farms/ranches from liability from agritourism activities and other states don't. That is a consideration for farms considering agribusiness.

3.3 Education of State/County Officials — Potter

- Bonnie started putting together some information.
- Assumption that alpacas are NOT livestock is still pervasive.

3.4 ELD Mandate Follow-up — Potter/All

- Bud sent our letter to the Board, Don signed it, and it has been sent to FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The only changes were to contact information.
- The South Dakota legislature sent a resolution to Congress requesting that they repeal the ELD mandate. They expressed concern about financial impact and livestock safety.
- The trucking industry also has concerns, including that there is already a shortage of drivers.

4.0 New Business

- None
- GIRCom might want to revisit what we have put out on insurance and be sure we made a point about liability insurance

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: 12-11-2017 AND 1-22-2018) — Potter

- Pat moved that the minutes be accepted and Joan seconded the motion. Motion passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie will continue communicating with the person who posted on the chat site about sources of income for his farm.

6.2 Next Meeting Date will be: 3/12/18 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 ET pm ET. — Potter