Government & Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom) MINUTES July 13, 2020

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

Board Liaison: Wendy Dittbrenner [joining next meeting]

Staff Representative: Dan Huntley

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm ET.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance — Merriwether/Huntley

- The Fleece show wrapped up yesterday. It was a successful show with over 700 entries.
- The next focus of AOA is fall events. It is unknown right now what events might occur due to the uncertainties of Covid-19.
- The GIRCom Disaster Preparedness eBlast was sent to the membership on June 11.
- Outgoing liaison Andy Merriwether was unable to attend. Incoming liaison Wendy Dittbrenner was just appointed and had a prior commitment. We will welcome her to the Committee at the next meeting.

2.0 Health/Government Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts — Long / Potter

- There was nothing reported that was directly affecting alpacas.
- VS (vesicular stomatitis) is still be reported in several states: AZ, KS, NE, NM, TX, OK. This could impact alpaca transport for anyone headed to those states.
- 3 cases of rabies were reported in cattle July 6, and there was a rabid bat in OR. Alpaca owners can check with their veterinarians for recommendations about giving rabies vaccinations to their alpacas since prevalence varies from region to region.
- There are starting to be more cases of EEE in SC. A case of (rare) WEE (Western equine encephalitis) was reported in UT. Pat hasn't heard of WEE in alpacas.
- EHV-1 is still being reported in horses.
- Another dog has been reported with Covid, in TX. Thus far it doesn't appear that animals play a big role in transfer to humans

2.2 2020 USAHA annual meeting

- The meeting is tentatively scheduled for October, but of course there is uncertainty due to Covid-19.
- Pat attends each year, representing the alpaca industry. He is currently working on getting some camelid topics added to the agenda. His current ideas include
    - Another move to ban llamas and alpacas from Alaska (as well as sheep) because of the fear of crossover of disease from the domestic livestock to the bighorn sheep.
    - The unique antibody in camelids and how it might become useful in the search for a vaccine for Covid-19.

Unfinished Business

3.1 Alpaca Business Benchmarks/Brion Presentation — Potter/Smoker

- Bonnie and Brion are working on refining the presentation which Brion gave at an alpaca show.

3.2 IRS and State Tax Audits - defer — Smoker

- It is too early for audits.

3.3 Agritourism … eBlast — Potter

- Per the Committee's discussion last month, the eBlast has been modified to include cautions about public events during the pandemic. Pat moved that the revised version be sent to the Board with recommendation to send it to members. Motion seconded by Joan. Motion passed.

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

3.5 PETA Response update — All

- AOA already sent information out in response to (rebuttal of) the PETA video.
- Pat is working with someone to help a mill in Peru craft a response to the PETA video.
- Pat commented that, if PETA is successful in undermining the market for alpaca fiber, the people most hurt will be small farmers in S.America who rely on the sale of their fiber for their livelihoods.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Ideas for promoting Alpaca Industry during Covid — All

- Discussion deferred until new Board Liaison can attend.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (Minutes for approval: (6/8/20)) — Clappier

- Motion to approve the minutes of 6/8/20 was made by Pat, seconded by Joan. Motion was passed.

6.0 Meeting Wrap

6.1 Review Action Items — Potter

- Bonnie check with Wendy to see if 2nd Monday, 7:30pm ET, works for her for GIRCom meetings.
- Bonnie: send the Agritourism eBlast to Board, requesting that it be sent to the membership.
- Bonnie and Brion: continue to work on benchmark presentation.

6.2 Next Meeting Date: 8/10/2020 — Potter

6.3 Adjournment — Potter

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm ET.