Government and Industry Relations Committee (GIRCom)

Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2015

Meeting: Conference Call—September 23, 2015, 7:30 p.m. EDT

Members: Joan Clappier
Jan Hamby
Dr. Pat Long
Brion Smoker (absent)

Board Liaison: Bonnie Potter

Staff Representative: Darby Vannier

Meeting called to order at 7:34 p.m. EDT.

1.0 Meeting Opening

1.1 AOA News of Importance (B. Potter, D. Vannier):

- A New Board Member orientation was held in Lincoln on Monday, September 21. This is a standard procedure to familiarize new board members with people, functions, and operations of AOA.
- National Alpaca Farm Days. 286 farms signed up this year, compared to 152 last year. The staff made a big push to get the new "Meet the Alpacas" brochures mailed out.
- Fiber to Fashion brochure: The draft was completed by the fleece show and the brochure is now finished and selling well.
- AOA is receiving many hits on the video and Facebook page.
- Lead information is being collected via postcards.
- The next *Alpaca Owners Guide* (AOG) is in production. Farm listing costs $75. The AOG includes articles about alpacas, getting into the business, organizations, and more. The number of listings in the new AOG is 480, up from 226 last year.
- Gearing up for March Nationals. AOA is looking at potential venues for 2017 and 2018, trying to plan further ahead. The results of a survey showed that the favorite month for having the show is April, with March being the second choice. Unfortunately, there are many shows every weekend of April and scheduling Nationals that month would be problematic for existing shows.
- The board is working on the strategic plan and setting priorities.
- The Show Rules committee will be reporting at next Board meeting. This is the time of year that the show rules book gets updated for next year.
- Work is starting on the last 2015 issue of *Alpacas Magazine*. We are back to 4 issues per year after several years of 3 issues per year.
- Question from Pat: Is there still a checkbox on the renewal form to make donation to ARF? Darby: Yes.

2.0 Health Related

2.1 USAHA Alerts (P. Long, B. Potter):

- A lot of news about mosquito-transmitted encephalitis and WNV.
- Parasite-resistance discussion: They are seeing a lot of it in sheep and goats, some in alpacas. It takes about $100 mill to develop and get approval for a new drug to treat for parasites. 0.2% of agricultural sales in US are products from sheep and goats, thus the financial incentive isn't there to develop a drug for those species.
- There are concerns about avian flu transmission when the fall migrations kick in. The biggest effects may be in the East.
- The Department of Defense has appointed some major researchers and veterinarians to study use of antibiotics.

- There have been livestock losses in WA fires.

2.2 TB testing:

- TB has been detected in alpacas transported from Canada to Norway. Europe has better TB testing than what is done in the US and Canada. This may hamper transport of alpacas from US/Canada to Europe. The Market may dry up if we don't improve testing of animals for export.

3.0 Government Related

3.1 IRS Farm Audits — Status of Lessons Learned/1099 Article (B. Potter, B. Smoker):

- Bonnie has reviewed Brion's article and sent it back to Brion with comments.
- At the Fleece Conference, David Kreps gave a good presentation about business vs. hobby farms. When we put out the eBlast we can reference his talk and his article in *Alpacas Magazine*.
- We need to add more references and put a disclaimer up front that we are not giving tax advice.

3.2 Status of Article on "Things You Should Know: (Zoning, UCC, etc.)" (B. Potter):

- This is close to completion. Bonnie will incorporate committee member comments, re-circulate it, and the committee will do final approval by email.

3.3 Status of new GIRCom Member Applications (B. Potter, D. Vannier):

- Responses have been received from several people who are interested. The Board will make a decision.

4.0 New Business:

4.1 Potential eBlast on USDA Offers to Help Fire Affected Farmers (B. Potter):

- Committee voted to send it out in eBlast, along with info about how to subscribe to that email list.

4.2 Scam Alert (J. Hamby):

- Jan and several others had received emails from the same individual. Jan decided to check him out. She did Q&A with him via email and it was obviously a scam.
- It was moved and seconded that this be the next eblast after the fire-affected farmer eblast.
- Will run it by the attorney before sending it out, but Jan verified with the FBI that it is a scam.

5.0 Approval of Minutes (J. Clappier):

The minutes of 8/26/15 were approved.

6.0 Meeting Wrap:

6.1 Review Action Items (B. Potter):

- Bonnie and Brion will continue work on the IRS Farm Audit report.
- Bonnie will add our suggestions to "Things we Should Know" and send it out.
- AOA Board will work on selecting a new GIRCom member.
- Finalize fire victim support email and send to AOA membership.
- Finalize scam report email, have it reviewed by lawyer, and send to AOA membership.

6.2 Next Meeting (B. Potter):

- Normally this would be October 28. However, since the November and December meetings would be right before Thanksgiving and Christmas, it was proposed that we have two meetings between now and the end of the year on November 18 and December 16.

6.3 Adjournment (B. Potter):

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. EDT.