Board Meeting Agenda

Our Mission

We advance responsible alpaca ownership and breeding through our world-renowned registry, comprehensive education, leadership, and vibrant member community. We build a community, through member and volunteer support, where we ensure the long-term sustainability and success of alpaca livestock for current and future generations.

Our Vision

To be the definitive livestock model and global leader advancing all aspects of alpaca ownership—from breeding and health to fleece utilization and business development—while growing a thriving community that champions the alpaca industry's future.

Board of Directors

Jennifer Hack, President
Brian Houchin, Vice-President
Jason Gill, Treasurer
Michael Livingston, Secretary
Gina Glasscock, Director
Scott Miller, Director
Sharon Milligan, Director
Jay Penica, Director
Mike Walsh, Director

Executive Director: Robin Gifford
Guest: Laurel Shouvlin

Meeting: Video Board Meeting
Monday, February 23, 2026; 4:00 PM Pacific/7:00 PM Eastern

1.0 Meeting Opening Hack call to order 6:02 CST

2.0 Consent Agenda Hack January minutes approval, Executive Director's report, Dashboard, and committee reports NOT needing action.
Motion to approve - Penica, second - Gill, all approve

3.0 Financial Report Gill Document reference: January EOY Financials, Year-to-date financials
January financials show **$61,000 under budget** ($40k revenue shortfall, $21k expense overage), though national event revenues are still being posted and will improve the picture.
Registry revenue is tracking **$25,000 below budget** and membership is **$10,000 below budget** for January.
February financials (posting soon) are expected to show a much better picture than January, as the board meeting timing means they're typically reviewing data three to four weeks behind.

4.0 Listed Alpaca Registry Discussion Hack + Task Force
Percentage Registry Proposal Overview

- The percentage registry will be a **completely separate and independent registry** from the closed registry, not serving as a pathway to move animals into the closed registry (which would require a

future bylaw change).
- Purpose is to allow registration of unregistered stock and animals with documented lineage, providing **transparency in lineage for buyers and sellers** and adding value to non-breeders or animals not registered in the closed registry.
- The new website system can support the percentage registry **at no additional cost to AOA**, unlike the old system which couldn't handle a secondary registry.
- Registry will track lineage, parents, gender, breed type, identifying characteristics (ear tags, microchips), and color/pattern—providing valuable documentation for disasters, interstate transport, estate settlements, and contentious situations.
- 'Listed' alpacas represent the first tier (not DNA validated), unlike the current non-breeder status which **loses AOA money**; subsequent DNA validation available at regular fees, ensuring AOA doesn't lose money on these registrations.
- Animals in the percentage registry **cannot participate in the EPD program** since they aren't 100% DNA validated with both dam and sire.

Percentage Registry Benefits Analysis

- The percentage registry would **open the show system to currently unregistered alpaca owners**, requiring them to be members of either the percentage or closed registry to participate. This benefits both AOA and affiliates by increasing show participation.
- Many alpaca owners are unaware of AOA, the registry, or show systems. The percentage registry provides a **means to be more inclusive** and invite current alpaca owners (who aren't currently members) into the organization.
- Youth would be able to **participate in youth halter classes** with percentage registry animals, not just performance classes. This could help attract and retain more youth in the industry.
- AOA registrations have **declined dramatically from nearly 9,000 animals in 2014 to just over 3,000 in 2025** (about one-third). This suggests many alpacas that would normally be registered are no longer being tracked.
- The percentage registry would **increase participation in affiliate shows**, creating more revenue opportunities for both AOA and regional affiliates while making activities more cost-effective.

Registration Structure and Progression

- **Level one would be 'listed alpacas'** with no known parentage validated by DNA. Each subsequent level is determined by DNA validation of parents, with offspring able to progress to higher registration levels.
- Additional DNA testing of parents allows offspring to progress to higher registration levels, **increasing the credibility of their lineage** and encouraging responsible breeding decisions.
- Registration progression starts with listed (0%), then **50% when one parent is 100% closed registry**, and percentages increase with subsequent validated crosses. The percentage is calculated as an average of both parents' percentages.
- **Moving up the percentage ladder will take several generations** since percentages are averaged between parents (e.g., two 50% parents produce a 50% offspring)
- Listed alpacas with **100% DNA validated registered parents** can potentially transfer to the closed registry (along with their offspring), but only with permission from the person who originally registered them as listed alpacas
- Under the current proposal, **no percentage alpacas** (F1, F2, F3, etc.) can transfer from the percentage registry into the closed registry, maintaining a clear separation between the two systems.

Registry Integrity Concerns

- Scott raised concerns that F4, F5, and subsequent generations in the percentage registry would **never stop degrading the accuracy rating** of the registry (currently at 99.23%), which has been steadily improving with additional DNA markers
- Laurel stated she could not support the proposal if percentage alpacas could eventually become part of the closed registry; the **closed registry must remain closed** and would require a membership vote to change.
- Brian expressed concern that the percentage registry is 'step one' and will lead to future pressure to open the protected/closed registry, calling it 'opening a large can of worms.'

- The bylaws allow any member who obtains **10% of member signatures** to propose bylaw changes, meaning the board cannot permanently prevent future attempts to modify or open the closed registry.
- Laurel argued that importing alpacas from Australia or Peru poses a **greater threat to the closed registry** than the percentage registry, as those registries are less accurate and some countries have DNA validation going back many generations.
- Scott noted that Canadian breeders often register with AOA (not vice versa) to do business where they can get **greater value for AOA-registered products**. The foundation for this value is the accuracy of AOA's closed registry, raising concerns about what percentage registry might affect.

Financial and Membership Impact

- Brian questioned whether the percentage registry would generate meaningful revenue, noting that showing still requires blood draws and BVD testing, with only a 'minuscule amount' saved by not doing full registration.
- Brian estimated he would be **shocked if 100 animals** (let alone 100 people) joined the registry in the next five years, calling it 'a very small percentage of animals' for the complexity being introduced.
- Jennifer shared an example of a new Denver owner who purchased **5-6 unregistered alpacas specifically to show**, creating a negative experience when she learned they couldn't be registered under current rules, potentially losing the industry a member.
- Scott questioned whether the presentation's assumptions about increased participation and revenue streams were based on facts or speculation, noting the board's responsibility to protect member alpaca values.
- Laurel acknowledged this wouldn't be a financial windfall but rather an opportunity to bring people into shows and educate them about pedigrees, EPDs, and quality breeding, though Brian and Sharon questioned whether these groups would engage.
- The registry would **increase revenue streams for AOA** and put the organization in a better financial position to offer education and innovation that benefits members and the industry.

Show System Implications

- Sharon defined the show system's purpose as presenting the breed's **best breeding stock with proper conformation**, raising concerns about how percentage alpacas competing would affect this standard.
- Sharon expressed concern that if a **50% alpaca won a color championship** at a show, it would be difficult to explain the purpose and value of the closed registry, since only half the genetics would be known.
- Jennifer countered that **genetics and EPDs provide value**, not show wins alone; she's seen closed registry animals win championships but fail to reproduce quality, calling them 'outliers' whose genetics don't support sustained breeding success.
- Sharon noted that efforts to educate members about EPD value and genetic lines **have not been very successful**, with a small percentage of people understanding or caring about these metrics.
- The debate centered on whether bringing percentage alpacas into shows would educate new members about pedigrees and quality standards, or simply undermine the closed registry's value proposition without meaningful uptake.

Percentage Registry Vote Decision

- Opening a percentage registry could increase registrations and income while enabling better tracking of unregistered alpacas for research, grants, advertising, and government statistics. Currently, registration numbers are **one-third of what they were 10 years ago**, despite more alpacas existing in the country.
- The board discussed ensuring they've vetted potential issues before taking this to a membership vote, recognizing that fairly unengaged people would need to pay to join AOA before they could even vote on the proposal.
- Summer survey feedback indicated members feel they don't have enough say in the organization's direction. **Presenting this vote** (regardless of outcome) could address that concern and demonstrate the board is listening to membership input
- Robin raised concerns about confirming with grassroots whether adding a **percentage registry** (for tracking heritage percentages) would incur additional costs beyond the current contract, since they're

already doing percentage registries for other livestock.
- The initial motion was **amended to be contingent on cost neutrality** from grassroots, ensuring no new fees would be added to implement the percentage registry system.
- Sharon expressed concerns about feeling **rushed** and wanting more time to understand registry implications and rumors she'd heard, indicating she would vote no until the board had time to become better educated on all aspects.
- Motion to put the Percentage Registry to a member vote - Gill, second - Walsh. The amended motion **passed 7-2** (Yes: Jason, Brian, Mike Walsh, Michael, Gina, Jay, Jennifer; No: Sharon, Scott), authorizing work to proceed on drafting bylaw language for membership consideration.

Implementation Planning

- Sharon emphasized the need to clearly document what the process would cost members financially, noting that **money is the biggest reason** many have chosen not to register animals. Without transparent cost information, members cannot make an educated vote.
- The task force proposed a **$20 fee to list an alpaca** (similar to the non-breeder status fee), with no cost to AOA since the new registry system handles listing for free. The information would be uploaded by the owner.
- Members would need to maintain AOA membership to register animals. Additional fees would apply for DNA validation beyond the basic listing fee, though animals could be DNA tested even without parents to validate against.
- The goal is to present this as a vote for the **May 2026 election**. The ballot must be posted by early April (4-6 weeks out), with candidate disclosures due any day and petition process opening at the national show in two weeks.
- Education strategy would include presentations at shows, webinars, website content accessible to non-members, and social media posts—similar to how the ET (embryo transfer) bylaw change was handled. Task force members, including Jennifer, volunteered to present.
- Jennifer clarified that AOA would **not spend money promoting** this initiative. Education would rely on volunteers presenting at shows or pamphlets sent to exhibitors at no cost to the organization.

5.0 Other Business Hack

Farm Family Insurance Partnership

- Partnership offers **bundled insurance** (home, auto, farm, farm liability, agritourism, animal insurance) at rates projected to be lower than competitors, plus a **10% discount for AOA affiliated members** with estimated savings exceeding $200 per family.
- Farm Family is **quadruple-A rated** and operates in most states where alpaca owners are located, with three exceptions including Michigan (due to auto insurance component).
- National rollout planned at Nationals featuring CR Fogendorf as the national agent, videos, dual marketing efforts, and a booth with two national agents; Farm Family committed **$10,000 for 2026** with potential three-year extension based on member satisfaction.
- Farm Family is also committing funds to local affiliates for their shows and aims to become the **biggest farm insurer in the United States** over the next five years.
- Legal agreement between AOA and Farm Family is pending final approval, after which the compliance process for creating brochures and leave-behind materials can proceed; webinars and Alpaca Gram articles are planned for member education.

6.1 Membership calls Gifford

Lapsed Member Outreach Campaign

- Board members received lapsed member spreadsheets organized by state to review, annotate (for retirements or business exits), and conduct renewal calls.
- Database terminology clarification: 'association' refers to old business members, 'registry' means primary members, and 'corporate' may appear instead of industry partner (terminology never updated in Ames system)
- Outreach strategy includes encouraging family members of business members to join for **$20** and reminding lapsed members about upcoming votes requiring current membership.
- The new **Farm Family insurance benefit** (10% discount) will be used as a key selling point during

renewal calls for business members and industry partners.

6.2 Spin Off Status. Keep or Not
Cost: $1514 Revenue: $1440 Loss: $74

The spin-off competition had about **40 participants** last year and resulted in a **$74 loss**, with Margie questioning whether to continue offering it given the declining participation.

- The competition involves a **months-long process** where fleece is submitted, repackaged by staff, sent to judges who must spin each sample, then returned with results—creating significant staff handling time.
- Scott argued to **continue the competition** to keep members engaged, noting that $74 is a small cost and aligns with efforts to bring new people into the organization and retain existing members.

6.0 Adjournment Hack Next regular meeting: March 23, 2026 Motion to adjourn - Glasscock at 8:20pm CST